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POETS FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

Central American literature has not been dealt with exclusively in the English speaking world. A number of Spanish-American anthologies have appeared in translation over the last decade but very few of them include writers or poets from Central America. And even the Spanish anthologies that are published in Central America are generally restricted to one particular country. The two anthologies that immediately come to mind are Poesia Contemporanea de Costa Rica (1973) and Antología General de la Poesía en el Salvador (1972). They present the development of modern poetry in their respective countries, but do not attempt to place the poets in an overall picture of modern international poetry. Therefore, the present selection in this
issue of *Mundus Artium* has not been broken down according to the six Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama), but represents poets who have gone beyond the limitations of a purely nationalistic and regional concern. They have written poems that can be understood and enjoyed without any historical or political orientation. This does not mean that none of these poets has written social and political poems dealing with specific problems of his country; but such poems are less accessible to the uninitiated person from the outside. When preparing the selection, we discovered that there are a great number of Central American poets writing today. Because of space limitations we had to impose certain restrictions, and decided to focus on the younger generation of poets active in various countries of Central America today. We wanted to present poetic voices at the beginning of their career, not to repeat some of the already established writers. This explains the omission of poets like Ernesto Cardenal, who has already been published in book form in English. Furthermore, his poetry is dominated by a rather strong social and political didacticism which would have made it difficult to include him within the frame of the present anthology.

In selecting these poets our primary concern was not to represent each country with an equal number of poets. This would have been impossible, since some countries are much more active in their literary and cultural production than others. In all cases, however, we have stayed with the younger generation. Most of them were born in the 1930's and 1940's. Roberto Sosa (1931), Carmen Naranjo (1931), Oscar Acosta (1933), Alfonso Quijada Urías (1940), Agustín del Rosario (1945), Manuel O. Nieto (1951), Mauricio Marquina (1946), Ricardo Lindo (1947), Roberto Fernández Iglesias (1941), Laureano Albán (1942), Ronald Bonilla (1951): All of these poets represent an oeuvre in the making; their poetic and aesthetic direction has not yet been fixed into categories of literary criticism. It is too early to trace definitive developments in their works, since they all are very productive and some of them have already exhibited certain changes in their poetic outlooks.

Consistent with the development of modern international poetry, these poets are keenly aware of the precarious state the modern poet finds himself in, regardless of whether he comes from South, Central, or North America or from Europe. A certain uneasiness about the function of the poet in our modern society speaks from their lines, and at the same time we find an affirmation of the modern tradition that started with Baudelaire, Lautréamont and Rimbaud. Among their immediate Spanish-language models are Lorca, Alberti, Neruda, Vallejo,
Rubén Darío and Machado, to name just a few. It is interesting, however, to see their own poetry rooted in poets who, during the first few decades of this century, freed poetry from its national boundaries. The uncertainty that rises from the ill-defined function, or uselessness, of poetry creates the need in many of these poets to define their poetic outlook not only through the actual creation of the poem but also through critical statements on their own poetry. The poet wants to clarify for himself and possibly also for others what it is that makes a poem come into existence and how the poet sees himself in relation to his own poetry. This is not new in the development of modern poetry: Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valery, T. S. Eliot and many other modern poets have tried to formulate statements on their poetry. Octavio Paz often matches the creative intensity of his poems in his critical essays. The Central American poets are not repeating what previous poets have already said, but they try to focus on themselves in the exciting moment of creating a combination of words, a line, a stanza, a poem. In each case their situation is unique, different from previous historical and literary situations, violent in the uncertainty of a new creation. After all, the artist's task is not to record history, but to establish a new unique relationship with the present in which he lives. José Roberto Cea writes: "Art is not a luxury, it is a necessity. It is an aspiration for that which does not exist in tradition and at the same time the tool to realize this aspiration", and Carmen Naranjo sees the making of poetry as "creating a rock of intimate substances in the architecture of time."
Laureano Albán

FUTURO

Alguien volverá herido con la tarde en la cara. 
Señalará con su silencio a todos. 
Tendrá una gran mirada donde llevarse el mundo.

Dejaremos aquí la fuerza de la muerte 
como un monumento.

Pagaremos con muerte la hondura de las manos.

Dejaremos el ancho caminar de los niños.

Dejaremos las manos para que le señalen 
al futuro, los huesos.
Laureano Albán

FUTURE

Someone will return wounded, with the afternoon in his face.
He will mark us all with his silence.
He will have a grand gaze for bearing the world.

We will leave death’s power here
like a monument.

We will pay, with death, for the depth of hands.

We will leave the wide wandering of children.

We will leave him these hands to mark
the future, the bones.
Laureano Albán

AQUI TODO

Nos mira todo. Las entrañas miran al hijo
hacer eterno el viaje. El mar
regresa hasta la punta de los hondos dedos.
Todo cabe en la llaga de los labios. En la
señal que deja un brazo muerto.

Entre la sangre hay ecos de recién nacidos
llegando a nuestras palmas. En la mirada
de todos hay un pueblo de niños haciendo
a la luz entre los ojos. Oímos caer lluvia
entre los brazos. Todo está fijo dentro del
corazón del hombre. Todo está hundido entre
lo inacabable de nosotros. Cae el final del brazo.
Cae el mar por las venas, moviéndonos.

Todo nos mira cavando las señales. Pasa
la fuerza de la savia por nuestro cuello,
cuando se deshace. Pasa el fondo de la noche
por el beso. Y nuestra entraña impregnada
por los astros. Y el mar se extiende en la mirada
porque sólo ahí podrá extenderse.

Todo nos mira respirar. Hablar.
Sujetar la señal para que bese.
Hacer de lo hondo un labio entre los niños.

Todo nos mira desde adentro.
Desde el encenderse largo de la luz en nosotros.
Desde el peso de la muerte que se hace en las llagas.
Desde la sangre que golpea los fondos imposables.

Y vamos rompiendo cada ojo contra otro ojo más hondo.

Cerrando cada mano en otra más profunda.
Moviendo cada brazo en otro inacabable.
Sujetando la luz con las luces ya muertas.

Nos mira todo.
Y el mar nunca llenará nuestras huellas.
Laureano Albán

HERE EVERYTHING

Everything watches us. Entrails watch the son
make his journey eternal. The sea
withdraws to the cape of deep fingers.
Everything will fit in the wound of the lips. In the
dead signal left by an arm.

In the midst of blood there are echoes of the new-born
reaching our palms. In the gaze
of everyone there is a village of children heading
for the light between their eyes. We hear rain fall
among arms. Everything is fixed within
the heart of man. Everything is sunken amidst
what is inexhaustible in us. The conclusion of the arm falls.
The sea falls through our veins, stirring us.

Excavating signals, everything watches us. The strength
of sap pours through our necks
when they are undone. The depth of night
pours through a kiss. And our impregnated entrails,
through the stars. And the sea extends outward in one's gaze,
for only there can it extend itself.

Everything watches us breathe. Speak.
Subdue the signal, so that it will kiss.
Create from the depths a lip among children.

Everything watches us from within.
From the slow kindling of the light in us.
From the weight of death that gathers in wounds.
From the blood that beats against the impassable depths.

And we go breaking every eye against a deeper eye.

Enclosing every hand in another that is deeper.
Moving every arm in another that is inexhaustible.
Subduing the light with lights already dead.

Everything watches us.
And the sea will never fill our tracks.
Laureano Albán

URGENTE


Laureano Albán

URGENT

Urgent. We watched the sun flee from us.
The dust forms flowers from the silence.
The ocean stays deep in the mouth. The sun watches us,
watched us when we break open with blood to watch the sun.
Everybody. Working. Mining the eternity of the rocks.
Kissing without end.
Hearing ourselves breathe at dawn. Feeling
our deep blow of ashes between the eyes.
The prepared escape. The forehead prepared to bleed
always at night.

Urgent is the pain. Urgent to cut the fruits
from our lips. Urgent to sob replete with sun.
Urgent not to fall.

To open the depth. To measure the depth with breathing.
To make this an endless breath. Urgent to die alone.
searching, breaking our arms against a fullness of flowers.
Slowly everything turns around towards the eyes. Outside
the ocean filling lonely mouths.

Urgent. Alive. Loading ashes into one hand.
The weight of the earth in the mouth.
The throat sharpened like the sun. Urgent.
José Mejía González

POEMAS IGNEOS

entre espinas crepúsculos pisando

Góngora

I

Esta tierra inminente,
este faro de sombras,
esta muerte que arrasa frente al tiempo de piedra,
ardimiento perpetuo,
horizonte hialino,
nacimiento de llamas,
fue acumulando lentas transparencias
hasta encender el fuego en sus orillas.

Hombres, este es el día primero de la creación!
Ved los cielos recientes,
la curva de las aguas,
el diámetro infinito del espacio en que tiembla
la larva del caído terremoto,
o la brizna del caos con que escribo.

Tal el grano en el surco,
la palabra en los labios.
Tal la vida en el tiempo
o el deseo en la sangre
quiero nombrar la tierra alucinante.

II

Vieja tierra solar. Alta tierra quemante,
el día lento en tus escombros muere
junto a la sangre antigua del crepúsculo.
Alta tierra solar. Vieja tierra en escombros,
arqueológica tarde desleída,
electrizado mundo sin orillas,
yo por tus transparencias voy a pique
circulado de inéditas pasiones,
desvelando penumbras invisibles,
José Mejía González

IGNEOUS POEMS

among thorns treading on twilights
Góngora

I

This impending land,
this beacon of shadows,
this death that it demolishes facing the stony time,
perpetual burning,
hyaline horizon,
blazing birth,
it slowly gathered slow transparencies
until it lit the fire upon its shores.

Men, this is the first day of creation!
See the recent skies,
the curve of the waters,
the infinite diameter of the space where trembles
the larva of the fallen earthquake,
or the fragment of the chaos with which I write.

Like the seed in the furrow,
the word upon the lips.
Like life in time
or desire in the blood
I want to name the dazzling earth.

II

Old ancestral earth. Tall burning earth,
the slow day dies among your rubble
next to the ancient blood of dusk.
Tall ancestral earth. Old earth in rubble,
archeological evening dissolved,
electrified and shoreless world,
through your transparencies I founder
impelled by unheard-of passions,
peering at invisible shadows,
mundos inconcebibles,
apenas sostenidos en la flor o la piedra,
frente a este cielo inédito de siempre
que atomiza la tarde legendaria.

III

El aire inmemorial ciñe mi rostro.
Despiertan viejos signos
en mi sangre,
y una ciudad en llamas es mi frente.
Atado al simple tiempo
de la imagen,
veo morir el día con su carro de llamas,
mientras la noche avanza
con su paso de sombras
despertando el olvido por los viejos rincones.
Con la sangre sitiada
por el cielo,
leo el tiempo amarillo en esa rama.

Alto día celeste,
imperioso invasor del fuego tenso,
tu corona de flores y de llamas
a mi tiempo caída
en la imprecisa carpa del crepúsculo
me hace desfallecer contando signos.

V

De pronto todo cesa.
Nada es temblor o grito.
Ella, la danzarina, tornará en el espacio
con su mirada de agua.
Con sus alas de azogue,
su vestido de música,
su casa de temblores,
la misteriosa clave de su sangre encendida,
su falda de reflejos,
sus tobillos gimientes,
su geometría de cristal herido
sangrando claridades y músicas lejanas.

Ella, la flor lejana de los mares astrales,
inconceivable worlds,  
sarcely sustained in the flower or the stone,  
face this familiar and unheard-of sky  
that atomizes the legendary evening.

III

The immemorial air encircles my face.  
Old signs awaken  
in my blood,  
and my brow is a city in flames.  
Tied to the sheer time  
of the image,  
I see the day die with its chariot of flames,  
while night advances  
with its shadow step  
stirring up oblivion in the old corners.  
With my blood besieged  
by heaven,  
I read yellow time in that branch.

Tall heavenly day,  
imperious invader of the tensity of fire,  
your crown of flowers and flames,  
fallen in my time  
into the vague tent of twilight,  
makes me falter as I count the signs.

V

Suddenly everything stops.  
Nothing is earthquake or outcry.  
She, the dancer, will spin in space  
with her watery gaze.  
With her wings of quicksilver,  
her dress of music,  
her earthquake house,  
the mysterious key of her blazing blood,  
her skirt of mirrors,  
her moaning ankles,  
her geometry of wounded crystal  
bleeding simple truths and distant music.

She, the distant flower of the astral seas,
la novia de los ríos,
el arma de los cielos,
la flecha del poniente.
Ella, la solitaria,
la tristísima estrella de la tarde,
helada transparencia
en los altos jardines de la noche
que deshoja los cielos en su ciudad callada.

Guardiana de los bosques,
anillo de los vientos,
veste del tiempo que muda
sus calendarios sin fondo,
altiva precursora
de la noche solemne
con su lluvia de estrellas.

Vaso del sortilegio,
escala del amor,
calendario del agua,
blanca soledad.

José Mejía González

EL PAJARO DE POLVO*

Viaja a seiscientos mil años luz por segundo. Es el instante mismo
en que va a aparecer y ha aparecido sin embargo un fragmento de
segundo antes. Tal es la sensación que nos acomete al contemplar
este misterio. Tocadlo y os incendiareís. Porque EL habita adentro de
nosotros y ha echado raíces en nuestros corazones desde hacía ya muchí-
simo tiempo. Y nos contempla desde el fondo de los años, en su trono de
brasas, presidiendo las rebeliones de la sangre, sus mecanismos antiguos,
que son los mismos de la tierra.

La mirada se abre siempre al mismo paisaje. Siempre la espina
frente al cielo, desolada, y atrás los páramos de polvo, indiferentes. El
polvo sitiá todo lugar y el pájaro, amasado con el polvo mismo, es el
espíritu que se escapa. Ya lo sabéis. El sitiador es implacable. Pero un
segundo antes que toda muerte, en cualquier lugar de la naturaleza,
extacto como una cuchillada de pedernal, el pájaro pude deslizarse y
tocar las orillas del cielo. Lo demás es el polvo y sólo él. Encontrad ese
instante en que el pájaro aparece, un segundo antes de aparecer.

*Ante el cuadro “El pajaro de polvo”, de M. A. Quiroa.
the bride of the rivers,
the weapon of the skies,
the arrow of the west wind.
She, the solitary one,
the sorrowful star of the dusk,
frozen transparency
in the tall gardens of the night
that strips the skies of their petals in its silent city.

Keeper of the woods,
ring of the winds,
garb of time that changes
its fathomless calendars,
proud precursor
of the solemn night
with its shower of stars.

Vessel of sorcery,
love's port of call,
calendar of the water,
white solitude.

**José Mejía González**

**THE DUST BIRD**

He travels at six hundred thousand light years a second. It is the very instant in which he is going to appear and he has nonetheless appeared a fragment of a second earlier. Such is the feeling that seizes us as we gaze at this mystery. Touch him and you will burst into flame. Because HE lives inside us and he has taken root in our hearts a long, long time ago. And he gazes at us from the depths of the years, on his throne of embers, presiding over the rebellions of the blood, his ancient mechanisms, which are the same as those of the earth.

The eyes open always upon the same landscape. Always the thorn facing the sky, desolate, and in back, the indifferent wastelands of dust. The dust lays siege to every place and the bird, kneaded with the dust itself, is the spirit that escapes. You know this. The besieger is implacable. But a second before every death, in any place of nature, like a stab with a flint, the bird can slip away and touch the shores of the sky. The rest is dust and only dust. Find that instant in which the bird appears, a second before appearing.

*Upon seeing the painting, "The Dust Bird," by M. A. Quiroa*
Mauricio Marquina

SUENO DE INFANCIA

Esa noche yo tenía que permanecer acostado sobre los muertos y darles de comer el pescado seco que había sobrado la noche anterior. Unos habían sido condenados por inocentes y eran la mayoría; otros, por encontrarse desnudos durante los servicios religiosos. Pero no es la hora de esclarecer recuerdos difusos. Yo buscaba una mano caliente todavía en cuyas arterias desgarradas corriera un poco de sangre inoficiosamente coagulada. En vano. Soy incapaz de decir cómo estaba vestido y ansiosamente apretujado de odio. De temor. Pero los cuerpos ya estaban disecados de antemano: restos de músculos, nervios, huesos oscuros, todo sumergido en un charco de formalina entonces comencé a sacar timbales y anteojos oscuros de los cráneos y fui construyendo, en el punto más alto de la fiebre ritos obscenos, diálogos desnudos para el amor, fragmentos de poemas sin odio ni tristeza, y así llegó el tiempo de mirar lentamente cada una de las órbitas vacías—cegadas por lágrimas purulentas—inclinado violentamente sobre un seno arrugado me puse a mamar en el más atroz de los silencios. Para entonces había dejado de creer en todo. Algunos de mi generación subterránea siguen empleando, desde aquella noche y como única arma, la ironía contra las cosas; otros, meditan sentados sobre la tumba de Vallejo, bebiendo a grandes tragos una especie cícuta metafísica. Pero ninguno estuvo conmigo aquella noche, y algunos conservan todavía sus máscaras pintadas colgando de los agujeros cerebrales amenazando destruir las palabras, las oraciones, los salmos. Esa noche, al final del corredor, me entregaron un par de manos y un libro en blanco, para encarnar el Testimonio y la Locura.
Mauricio Marquina

CHILDHOOD DREAM

That night I had to sleep upon the bodies of the dead and feed them the dry fish left over from the previous night. Some had been condemned for being innocent and they were in the majority; others, for having been naked during the religious services. But this is not the proper time to clear up diffuse memories. I was looking for a hand that was still warm in whose lacerated arteries still flowed a trickle of blood uselessly coagulated. It was in vain. I am unable to say how I was vested with and anxiously oppressed by hatred. Fear. But the bodies had been dissected beforehand: remnants of muscles, nerves, dark bones, everything submerged in a puddle of formaldehyde so then I began to pull kettledrums and dark glasses out of the skulls and started constructing, at the apogee of fever, obscene rites, dialogues denuded for love, fragments of poems without hatred or sadness, and so the time came to look slowly at each of the empty sockets—blinded by pus-filled tears—leaning violently over a wrinkled breast I began to suck in the most atrocious of silences. By that time I had stopped believing in everything. Some in my underground generation continue to employ, since that night and as their only weapon, irony against things; others meditate while sitting on Vallejo’s tomb, drinking in great draughts a kind of metaphysical hemlock. But not one of them was with me that night, and some still preserve their painted masks dangling from cerebral holes threatening to destroy words, prayers, psalms. That night, at the end of the corridor, I was handed a pair of hands and a book with blank pages, to incarnate Testimony and Madness.
Mauricio Marquina

OBSCENIDADES PARA HACER EN CASA

hoy no me has vuelto a permitir que te ame siempre la misma
negativa silenciosa puedo adquirir el ronroneo místico
para situarme a tu espalda desnuda desdoblándome
no has permitido y el miedo vuela otra vez con el
camino atado en la garganta
y la manera más sutil de volverte a mirar día tras día
se soporta en medio de un pequeño murmullo de odio
y no debía ser así

hemos de amarrarnos mutuamente las cintas
de los zapatos aquel par que para comprarlo dimos vuelta y media
a la ciudad cansada y terminamos la velada simplemente besándonos
pienso entonces que tu amor se desmorona en celos
como un pálido paquete de úlceras derretidas
que me das entonces sino más bien un tibio regalo de frutos
agrios que me das sino la tristeza de carecer en absoluto
de amor de sensación despierta pero tu estás coronada
hiedidamente de prejuicios engastados en joyas milenarias
de ídolos tenaces y un camino oscuro desde tus ojos
senos diminutos memorias disfrazadas de coraje y deseo
pequeño pubis dame una solución para mi mundo
para nuestros mundos contrahechos seminales dame
pacienca y valor para hacer cosas ultrafisóficas para tomarle
la medida al hombre dame una medida que carezca de una
mancha de sangre pero estoy seguro estoy firme
que no hay que no sentimos el fétido olor a muerte
a excrementos a héroes encadenados y pudriéndose
a pedazos
quiero darte mi mundo interior quiero hacer
de nuestro acto sexual una especie de transplante una
lluvia de sudor lentamente caliente
una destrucción ejecutoria de tu cariño que escucho a la
distancia pon mi cabeza en tu pequeña guillotina
tú que cuentas líquenes y algas entre tu familia tú que
abrazas suavemente como una mordida de oreja
toca una sonata en esta cuerda sola que resiste la
violencia y la astucia del mundo y que los camaradas
sigan bailando su canción de amor entre las huelgas.
Mauricio Marquina

OBSCENITIES TO PERFORM AT HOME

once again today you haven’t let me love you always the same
silent negation I can acquire a mystical purr
to place myself at your naked back doubling myself
you haven’t allowed and fear flies once more with the
pathway knotted at the throat
and the subllest way to look on you again day after day
is upheld in the midst of a small murmur of hatred
and it shouldn’t be that way
we should mutually tie together the laces
of our shoes the pair that we bought having run around
the tired city and ended the watch simply kissing
it seems to me then that your love crumbles in jealousy
like a pale package of melted ulcers
you give me but rather a tepid gift of bitter
fruit you give me rather the sadness of totally lacking
love vivid sensation but you are crowned
obscenely with prejudice mounted on ancient jewels
of tenacious idols and a dark path from your eyes
minute breasts memories disguised in courage and desire
little pubis give me a solution for my world
for our worlds counterfeit seminal give me
patience and valor to do ultraphilosophical things to take
the measure of man give me a measure that lacks a
stain of blood but I’m certain I’m firm
that it doesn’t exist that we can’t sense the fetid odor of death
of excrement of heroes chained and rotting away
piece by piece
I want to give you my interior world I want to make
of our sexual act a kind of transplant a
rain of sweat slowly hot
a destructive last judgment of your love which I hear at a
distance put my head on your tiny guillotine
you who count lichen and algae among your family you who
softly embrace like a nip on the ear
play a sonata on this single chord which resists the
violence and the wiles of the world and let comrades
go on dancing to their song of love between strikes.
Alfonso Chase

MUSICA SOLAR

No hay más que los sentidos del hombre y que la tierra.
Nada hay que sobreviva al calor de las venas.
El espíritu no es más que la carne,
el alma no es más que los huesos.
Han inventado al alma para que se humille el cuerpo,
único sitio del sueño y la razón.

ANA DE NOAILLES

Un hombre. Una mujer. Dos tactos juntos.
Dos sombras sin memoria.
Atrás del cielo reconozco al mundo sin olvido,
al tiempo sin reloj, al aire encarnizado sobre el agua,
a la vida espejo de otro espejo
cruzando su navaja entre mis manos.

Un hombre. Una mujer. Son dos abismos.
Una ciudad en llamas que se incendia
en el oscuro infinito de tus manos,
formas que esperan o que surgen en las noches
que se adentran en el cuerpo:
osculos presagios buscando su alimento en el lenguaje
desprecian la imagen interna de las frases.

Un hombre. Una mujer. Dos mundos solos
en el girar monótono del aire.
Un árbol con las raíces hacia el cielo,
uma oruga luchando contra el aire
mientras nuevas sombras construyen en el tacto
la libertad que fluye,
las manos que se copian sobre sí mismas
en un eterno tiempo que renace entre los poros.
En el principio somos tú y yo
el aire, las calles, son las horas,
el ahogo de ser los otros, distantes de sí mismos,
habitados por sueños enloquecidos o veletas,
pidiendo la libertad del cuerpo, la palabra.

Tiempo que gira y no es tiempo.
Muerte que nace y nunca es vida.
Discursos. Hombres cortándose las manos
en un vano intento para escapar del cuerpo.
Alfonso Chase

SOLAR MUSIC

There is nothing but the earth and the senses of people.  
Nothing that will endure the pulsating veins.  
The spirit is only the flesh,  
the soul is only the bones.  
They invented the soul to shame the body,  
the only dwelling place for dream and reason.

Anna de Noailles

Two shadows without memory.  
Above the sky I recognize a world free of oblivion,  
seasons without time, the air stirring over the water,  
and life, the mirror of itself  
passing its knife back and forth in my hands.

A man. A woman. The abyss.  
A city in flames that glows  
in the unbounded darkness of your hands,  
forms that meditate or rise up in the nights  
to take refuge in the body:  
dark signs searching for the essence in words  
cast aside the wisdom of proverbs.

A man. A woman. Two worlds alone  
in the monotonous spinning of the air.  
A tree with its roots towards the sky,  
a caterpillar that struggles against the air  
as new shadows build into the touch  
the freedom that flows,  
the hands that invent themselves  
in the ageless time that is reborn in the pores.  
In the beginning you and I are  
the air, the streets: the hours,  
the anguish of being the others, so distant from ourselves,  
invaded by mad unstable dreams,  
asking for freedom of the body, the word.

Time that circles and is no longer time.  
Death that springs forth and is never life.  
Speeches. Men cutting off their hands  
in a vain attempt to escape the body.
Deseos. Sangre que fluye no es la sangre que alimenta al corazón o entibia el tacto.
Nazco en mi mismo. Bombardeos.
Naces de mí mismo, te prolongas sobre tu piel.
El ovillo del aire. La sombra de un árbol.

Nacer, no descansar. Fluir del tiempo hacia la vida.
Empieza derribando los cuatro puntos cardinales,
devastando la fuerza elemental del sexo,
escondiéndote en las esquinas: el niño en los juegos infantiles.
Tú creas la dimensión eterna del agua, de la muerte,
naces, te precipitas sobre la múltiple estructura del objeto mientras los niños danzan, la luna cae en las gargantas.
Esta ciudad huérfana estalla.

II

El vacío absoluto. Tanto viaje a tientas,
tanta risa encendida, tanta palabra podrida,
tanto puente extendido, tanto árbol seco.
En llamas la palabra. En llamas abril atravesando al tiempo.
Un sol que crece. Central Park, Londres, México,
Buenos Aires, Washington, tu cuerpo, San José.
Un sol solemne, una agonía,
la tímida hierba que se asoma
sobre papeles olvidados o recortes de periódicos viejos.
Una culpa compartida. Un oficio de esclavo.
Una guerra. Un zapato inmóvil
haciendo el equilibrio en todo el cuarto.
El exterminio de todo un orden natural: es el lenguaje.

Sólo existe el silencio, el cuerpo, la batalla con la palabra,
el fracaso de no poder encontrar
su huella sobre el aire.
El cuerpo es accesorio a este misterio:
una lámpara quieta luchando siempre con su fuego,
un intento distinto, largo, complaciente, propio,
por recoger una gota de sangre de todo el universo,
algó perdido entre los sueños de los árboles.
El tiempo, siempre el tiempo,
un perro alzando sus fauces hacia el cielo,
lamiendo la herida del aire pasajero.
Desire. The blood that flows is not the blood
that strengthens the heart or warms the touch.
I am born in myself. Bombardments.
You are born within me, your skin expands.
A thread of air. The shadow of a tree.

To be born, never resting. The racing of time toward life.
You destroy primordial desire,
displace the four cardinal points
and then hide yourself at the crossroads:
the child playing games.
You create the endless geometry of water, death,
you rise forth, throw yourself against the multidimensional object
while the children dance, the moon plunges into their throats.
The orphan city explodes.

II

The void. Always the blind voyage,
always the laughter on fire, always the decayed word,
always the bridge reaching out, always the dry tree.
The word in flames. April in flames passing over time.
A sun that shines brighter. Central Park, London, Mexico,
Buenos Aires, Washington, your body, San José.
A solemn sun, dying,
the timid grass that appears
on forgotten manuscripts or clippings of old newspapers.
Mutual guilt. Slave labor.
War. An immobile shoe
balances the room.
The extermination of natural order: language.

Only silence exists, only the body,
only the battle with the word,
and the defeat of not finding
its image in the air.
The body, accessory to this mystery:
a fixed light forever confronting its fire,
a new purpose, long, complacent, singular,
intent upon gathering one drop of the universe’s blood,
something lost among the dreams of trees.
Time, always time,
a dog lifts his jaws to the sky
and licks the wound of the fleeting air.
En el ocaso en que escondes la belleza,
la sombra primera, el transparente rostro solitario.
En el jadeo a oscuras, el cotidiano terror,
entre las lágrimas sin sentido,
oh, tú, la presencia huérfana de espejos
de pronto palpitando en el móvil silencio
que cae sobre los muebles de este cuarto.
Música, música, música, la misma música,
el mismo sonido construyendo voces
en la callada rebelión de las gargantas.
Hablán los días enloquecidos los unos de los otros,
todos vamos huyendo en los caminos,
la luz va creando pinos verdes, piedras, casas.
Envejecidas manos tocan la balanza. Todo se desploma
en borbotones, ruidos, orgasmos, melodías.

El espejo, ese mundo, esas voces.
Confusión de cuerpos que son soles.
Ordenes distantes, bendición sobre cañones,
gases que son ríos embravecidos que se adentran
en la sangre paciente de los niños, de las hojas,
de los pájaros del agua, del silencio.
Qué bien que bajo por tus párpados, por tus sueños,
por tu cuerpo, enjambre de mentiras y de brasas.
Hinchados de palabras se destrozan puentes,
decisiones que fingen ya no serlas.
La flor que se deshace, su cortedad azul,
las olas, las calles, el olvido,
el martillo frecuentando, derramando gritos,
ahogando al aire, salpicando al mundo,
renaciendo extraño entre mis manos.

La memoria. La piel. Los periódicos. La guerra.
Son los murmullos que humedece el mundo,
el exacto pretexto, la ciudad creciendo en ácidas palabras,
te quiero, te mancillo, te aborrezco, no me dejes,
a punto de quebrarse, que se agolpa,
primavera que crece en los espejos,
la conjurable verdad de esta música despierta
apuñaleando con sonidos todo el cuerpo.
Soy el río de sangre que taladra
la roca, el ala del pájaro, la noche.
At sunset you hide beauty,
the original shadow, the transparent lonely face.
There in the panting of the darkness, the daily terror,
the meaningless tears,
oh, you, orphan presence of mirrors
suddenly beating in the silence
that falls on the furniture of this room.
Music, music, music, the same music,
the same sound constructing voices
in the silenced rebellion of the throats.
Enraged days talk about each other,
everyone flees through the streets,
the light goes on creating green pines, stones, houses.
Older hands disrupt the balance. Everything crumbles
into foam, noises, orgasms, melodies.
The mirror, the world, the voices.
Confusion of bodies that are suns.
Distant orders, blessings over cannons,
gases that are angry rivers that flow into
the patient blood of children, leaves,
birds of water, silence.
How effortlessly I sink under your eyelids,
pass through your dreams, your body,
swarm of lies and hot coals.
The bridges collapse with empty words,
decisions pretend they are not decisions.
A flower loses its petals, magnesium flash,
waves, streets, oblivion,
the everpresent hammer, pounding out cries,
suffocating the air, splattering out the world,
curiously reborn between my hands.
The world breeds murmurs,
the precise excuse, a city that thrives on bitter words,
I love you, I deface you, I abhor you, don’t leave me,
the breaking point that encloses,
spring that flourishes in the mirror,
the summoned truth of this music now alive
drumming out sounds over the body.
I am the river of blood that bores
into the rock, the wing of a bird, the night.
IV

A la primera luz yo te recuerdo
en la infancia ya gastada
entre las calles sin fantasmas
que asediaba la niebla de mi pueblo.

Despunta el alba, es la ternura,
es la batalla del árbol que echa brazos,
que persigue, que acorrala, que no es nada,
que propaga, que se estalla,
que se pierde al perderme en la intrincada máscara del día.

Memorias. Sombras. Palabras.
Me uno a la mano universal, al sol,
a la multitud que exige poderosos cambios
que nacen de sí mismos, que son uno,
porque lo mucho ahoga, exprime, me destruye
como el golpe del hacha sobre el suelo.

Me miro agonizar y estoy viviendo
bajo la lluvia que habitas con tus voces.
La misma mano e idénticas las huellas:
el niño hundido entre la noche
con esa música bestia ciega
que crece solitaria entre sus dedos.

Oh, tú, mujer, amante, hermana, sombra.
Pequeña gota de alegría que silenciosa estalla sobre el suelo.
Incongruencia infantil, dibujo descompuesto,
hoja quemada, mazorca sin maíz,
mirándote me miro entre tu cuerpo:
presencia alrededor de bocas que se expanden
para poder hacerse de palabras.

Tendidos sobre el suelo son los cuerpos.
El grano de silencio compartido debajo de los árboles.
La lluvia cayendo siempre sobre el sexo,
porque es abril el carcomido,
el de las voces que estallan en la soledad diluida en los hoteles.
Tu boca carcomida, consagración de actos pequeños,

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IV

At dawn I remember you
in your childhood already spent
among the phantomless streets
that pursued the mist of my town.
The dawn unfolds, it is tenderness,
it is the battle of the tree that throws out its branches,
that pursues, corners, is nothing,
that propagates, explodes,
that loses itself upon losing me in the intricate mask of day.

Memories. Shadows. Words.
I fasten myself to the universal hand, to the sun,
to the multitude that demands meaningful changes
that are born within themselves, that are one,
because abundance suffocates, contracts, destroys me
like an ax against the earth.

I watch myself suffering and I live
under the rain inhabited by your voices.
The same hand with identical fingerprints:
The child drawn into the night
with this blind brutal music
that grows alone between his fingers.

Oh, you, woman, lover, sister, shadow.
Small drop of joy that explodes noiselessly on the floor.
Childish inconsistency, decayed portrait,
burned leaf, barren corn,
watching you I see myself within your body:
presence around mouths that expand
to form words.

The bodies are stretched out over the earth.
The grain of silence shared under the trees.
The rain forever falling over love,
because it is April eaten away,
the voices of April that explode in the thin solitude of hotels.
Your mouth eaten away, consecration of insignificant acts,
larvae that die of suffocation,
pañuelos sostenidos en alto, 
la primavera nacienodo en cicatrices, 
el ácido viento devastando brotes: 
delirios que sostengo en intimidades dioicas.

Granos de polen que el viento 
se lleva a gravitar sobre esta ciudad amordazada. 
Acoso de una lengua que me exige verdades, 
inmolaciones, esperanzas, cuerpos. 
Sollozos de árboles podados 
que se han quedado para siempre sin milagros. 
Oh, tú, la presentida y hallada, 
la palabra con hojas, hija del sol, del viento 
y la mañana. El deseo no sellado, la esperada noche 
que reina sobre el rostro del mundo. 
Ojos que afilan sus miradas. Sombras dulces 
quebradas por tus dedos. 
Cuerpos que alguna vez yo conocí 
tengo esta tarde junto al lecho. 
Dentro y fuera del cuerpo estás conmigo. 
La presentida. La inevitable. La que se quiebra 
en esta suprema consagración de todos los olvidos. 
Un pectoral de luna te regalo, 
tú me das un sol, un grito, una palabra, 
una estrangulada luz que se despliega 
sobre el mundo curvado de mi pecho. 
Me nombras. Yo te nombre 
y sin embargo solo existes de golpe sobre el poema, 
oh, tú, la presentida, la perpetua, la inmolada, 
la que desgarra primaveras y se escucha 
sobre sí misma como lluvia. 
El cuchillo que rebana los silencios, 
la que inaugura el ojo de la aguja 
y entra en el mundo prodigioso 
en que el árbol y el agua estaban juntos. 
La nueva. La armadura del sol. 
Oh, tú, equilibrio, murmullo, desmesura: 
derrámate sobre mi cuerpo.
handkerchiefs held high,
the spring is born in scars,
the bitter wind snaps off buds:
deliriums that I endure during intimate caresses.

Grains of pollen that the wind
scatters over the speechless city.
I am pursued by a language that demands the truth,
sacrifices, hopes, bodies.
The sobs of pruned trees
stripped forever of their miracles.
Oh, you, premonitioned and found,
word with green leaves, daughter of the sun, the wind
and the morning. The unleashed desire, the expectant night
that reigns over the face of the world.
Eyes that sharpen their glances. Brittle shadows
broken by your fingers.
Bodies I once knew
I hold this evening against the bed.
In and out of the body you are with me.
The premonitioned. The inevitable. The one who breaks away
in this supreme consecration of all that is forgotten.
I give you a pectoral moon,
you give me a sun, a cry, a word,
a strangled light that unfolds
over the curved world of my chest.
You name me. I name you
but yet suddenly you exist only in the poem,
oh, you, premonitioned, perpetual, sacrificed,
the one who tears apart the spring
and listens to herself like rain.
The knife that cuts through the silence,
that unveils the eye of the needle
and enters the vast world
where tree and water were once together.
The new. The armour of the sun.
Oh, you, balance, murmur, excess:
pour yourself out over my body.
Manuel O. Nieto

DIBUJO DE ALDEA

Hemos pintado todos los bisontes de la desesperación en las paredes:

Esta ciudad duele como un grito a cuello pelado en esta descompuesta ciudad desesperada hay algo atascado en las calles una minuciosa aglomeración de preguntas anónimas de grupos de frustración a las salidas de la impotencia aburridos solitarios y veteranos de la soledad al pie de sus mujeres que llevan años de no pronunciar una palabra algo que no permite respirar el aire urbano y que conspira en secreto del otro lado de la bahía algo abrumado y piadoso que precede a la destrucción como un ritual ante los últimos monumentos de la estirpe algo parecido al miedo al asombro de la tribu y a la mágica e inesperada presencia del enemigo

Esta ciudad es una aldea melancólica junto a las aguas trazada con la increíble precisión del olvido una cenicienta aldea con sus madrugadas de rutina con sus alborotados comentarios de oído en oído sus murmuraciones primitivas inexactas y sus tabuladas maldiciones con sus sabios en las partes altas de las azoteas como locos reconstruyendo una historia que otros escribieron y sus pequeños poetas bebiendo a borbotones una tristeza que de un tiempo a esta parte ha aumentado en las bodegas en las alcantarillas en los estadios con su muchedumbre tratando de vomitar por la boca y las narices un odio acumulado y viejo un rencor que ha alcanzado las dimensiones de la dulzura de la inocencia
Manuel O. Nieto

VILLAGE SKETCH

We have painted all the buffalo of despair
on the walls.

This city aches like the scream of a neck plucked bare
in this decomposed, desperate city
there is something oozing through the streets
a trifling mass of anonymous questions
groups of frustration at the flights of impotence
weary hermits
and veterans of solitude at the feet of their women
who carry years of wordless silence

something does not allow the breathing of urban air
and secretly conspires from the other side of the bay
something overwhelming and pious preceding destruction
like a ritual before the final monuments of the race

something similar to fear to tribal dread
the magical, unexpected presence of the enemy

this city is a melancholy village by the water
traced by the incredible precision of neglect
an ashen village with habitual dawns
turbulent rumors
primitive, inaccurate slanders
and recorded curses

with its sages high on scaffolds
like madmen reconstructing a history written by others
and trivial poets lapping up a sadness
that within an age has grown in the warehouses
the sewers
and the arenas where the crowds are trying to vomit
through mouth and nose
an old, accumulated hate
a malice that has assumed the shape of pleasure
of innocence
y de un estado de prisión indiferente
desarmado y moribundo

esta ciudad aldea sin artesanos ni palafreneros
en plena catequización y descubrimiento del fuego
es una barricada de rostros esperando que algo suceda
que una inesperada maniobra un gesto inexpresivo
dé otra tintura de horror a las esquinas
un ruido distinto a los derrumbes a las resignaciones
a las caídas corpulentas de las tardes sobre el mar

esta ciudad aldea huele irremediablemente a tiempo perdido
a edificios públicos llovidos por dentro
a conjuros a humo a alcanfor
tal vez por eso todo desemboca en las playas
en los arenales
en las perturbaciones de las mareas
cuando esta ciudad triste insalvable confundida
hace sonar sus cuernos de caza
como una profunda expropiación del corazón.
a state of indifferent captivity
defenseless and dying

this city-village without artesans or grooms
in full catechism and discovery of fire
is a barricade of faces hoping
that an unexpected gesture an ambiguous sign
will give the streets another shade of horror
a noise unlike landslides submissions
or the swollen descent of evening over the sea

this city-village has the lethal odor of lost time
public buildings raining within
incantation smoke camphor
perhaps that is why everything drains onto the beaches
the sand pits
into the confusion of tides
when this city sad doomed confused
sounds its hunting horns
in a profound dispossesision of the spirit.
Ricardo Lindo

HORMIGAS SINIESTRAS

El mar llegaba a comer a tu mano en los caños de la memoria oscuras goteras verdosas de sangre de reptiles de sangre de rosales la noche está llena de maquinitas luminosas se abrió un prostíbulo para hormigas en los jardines del palacio todas las rosas murieron al amanecer al amanecer lloraron los reyes ordenaron funerales sin límites para los fantasmas de las rosas los espiritistas los convocaron con barajas y ensalmos los reyes asistieron.

Los fantasmas de las rosas culparon a las hormigas dijeron que habían muerto de pudor por la desvergüenza de las hormigas el rey mandó decapitar a todas las hormigas del reino la guerra estaba declarada los generales amanecían con ronchas en la cocina del palacio se habían comido toda la azúcar fue inútil enviar a la guillotina siete millones siete hormigas fue inútil fue inútil los reyes colgaron sábanas blancas en los salones del palacio se rindieron se rindieron el prostíbulo para hormigas era un negocio floreciente los reyes debieron soportarlo ante sus narices nunca más crecieron rosas en los desolados jardines del reino.

LA CIUDAD Y UN FOSFORO

En un punto del desierto hay una ciudad de espejos. Los espejos son tan pequeños y están distribuidos de tal modo, que basta encender un fósforo para que la ciudad resulte profusamente iluminada. La noche más oscura desaparece bajo el poder de un fósforo.

Hay caravanas enteras ennegrecidas al encontrar la ciudad a pleno sol. Caminaron al azar, tanto más tenebrosas por dentro cuanto mayor era la claridad a su alrededor, hasta ser devoradas por las mudas extensiones de arena.

Esta ciudad es un cuento.

LA DAMA DEL RELOJ

La dama del reloj se había quedado sola en el castillo.

Vio a lo lejos el mar, va, vuelve, va, vuelve, y pensó en su esposo. Recordó la época en que murmuraba tiernamente a su oído: “Tic... tac...”, o movía el péndulo con gravedad. Ahora, había muerto. Sólo seguían pasando las cosas que pasaban por minuciosa fuerza de costumbre, pero nunca más ocurriría nada nuevo.

En todo el mundo, los cadáveres de su esposo enmohecían lentamente.
Ricardo Lindo

SINISTER ANTS

The sea came to eat from your hand in the tunnel of memory dismal greenish drops of reptile blood of rosebush blood the night full of tiny bright gadgets opened a brothel for the ants in the rosebeds of the palace all the roses died at dawn at dawn the kings crying ordered boundless funerals for the ghosts of the roses the sorcerers summoned them with signs and spells the kings attended.

The ghosts of the roses blamed the ants they said they had died of shame for the audacity of the ants in the kingdom war was declared the generals appeared with hives in the kitchen of the palace they had eaten all the sugar it was useless to send seven million and seven ants to the guillotine it was useless and useless the kings hung white sheets in the ballrooms of the palace they surrendered themselves surrendered the brothel for the ants it was a flourishing business the kings should support in front of their very noses never again did roses grow in the desolate gardens of the kingdom.

THE CITY AND THE STRIKING OF A MATCH

At one point of the desert there stands a city of mirrors. The mirrors are so small and are scattered in such a way, that by striking a single match, the entire city swells with light. The blackest night disappears from the power of a solitary match.

Entire caravans are blinded when coming upon the city in broad daylight. They walk without direction; the darker the inside, the more brilliant the expanse until devoured by the silent drift of sand.

This city is a story.

OUR LADY OF THE CLOCK

Our lady of the clock was left all alone in the castle.

She watched the distant sea coming and going, coming and going and thought of her husband. She remembered the time when he tenderly murmured in her ear: “Tick . . . tock . . .”, or when he carefully set the pendulum in motion. Now he had died. Only action ruled by the meticulous power of habit continued to happen, and nothing new would ever happen again.

In the whole world, the corpses of her husband slowly moulded.
Charpan

LLAMADA

Un compás de sombra atraviesa la luz
y dibuja un círculo en torno a la garganta
y en los ojos vidriosos por la sílaba abstracta
situada en el viento y que no comprendimos
huida inconcebible hacia el páramo de sí mismo

(Presientes el patíbulo
la paloma que deja escapar
la gota de sangre
que llenó de latidos su garganta)

El gato ronda la sombra y al fin lanza el zarpazo
girar de penumbra que termina siempre en el umbral
el hombre habita su soledad y teme presentarse
ante su imagen tranfigurada en una máscara.

Charpan

ENCUENTRO

I

Páramo del vértigo
una ciudad de ruinas amenaza al tiempo
perspectiva de asombro para la pupila
verticalidad del ser bajo la noche

(tú)

hoyuelo donde se afilan las estrellas
para el abismal silencio de los labios
una calle de piedras proyecta imágenes
bajo la cima del silencio
mientras el atardecer húmedo
ensaya una espiral sobre las cosas
Charpan

SUMMONS

A compass of shadow passes through the light
and draws a circle around the throat
and in the eyes made glassy from the abstract syllable
placed in the wind and what we didn’t understand
the unthinkable flight toward the desert of the self

(You foresee the scaffold, the
dove that lets out the
drop of blood that
filled its throat with throbs)

The cat prowls the shadows and finally lashes out with a claw
penumbral circling that ends always on the threshold
man lives in his solitude afraid to present himself
before his image transfigured in a mask.

Charpan

ENCOUNTER

I

High barren plain of vertigo
City of ruins a threat to time
Clear spectrum of wonder for the pupil
perpendicular being beneath the night

(you)

a cavity wherein the stars taper
towards the abysmal silence of lips
a street of stone projects images
under the summit of silence
while the humid late afternoon
attempts a pirouette above all things
II

amante de mirada desnuda hasta la piel
(vaguedad del encuentro entre dos cuerpos)
imagen desvanecida en el trasluz de una ventana

tú

(un payaso baila su pantomima
en el centro redondo de la noche)

Charpan

ARIES

Es tu frente
la grieta que cubre todo el rostro:
hay tu ayer y tu mañana y tu silencio
y el haberte visto agua lúcida que canta
tu muerte y el dibujo de tus ojos a la noche
el viento el grito que huye hacia el fondo
no hay nada

sólo tu recuerdo
si el recuerdo son tus labios que se abren
y tus palabras repetidas y su eco.

Llegas

es tu cuerpo penetrando la quietud
de un cuarto solo
toda tu carne contra el paso de la noche:
profundidad de pozo que se abre explícito
y entregas tu cuerpo roto entre la arena
tus pechos como dos planetas nuevos
te rompes dentro del agua

( en ti misma)
estatua de piedra sobre el parque

(parte de roca que no sufre)

que no habla

que no calla

44
II

lover with a look stripped to the skin
(uncertainty of encounter between two bodies)
image diffused in the light through the window

you

(a clown dances his pantomime
in the spherical center of the night)

Charpan

ARIES

It is your forehead
the furrow that covers your whole face:
there is your yesterday and your today and your silence
and the having seen you lucid water that sings
your death and the sketch of your eyes at night
the wind and the scream that flees to the bottom
there is nothing
only your memory
if memory is your lips that open
and your words repeated and their echo.

You come
it is your body penetrating the stillness
of a lonely room
all your flesh against the footstep of the night:
depth of a well that yawns clearly
and you surrender your broken body in the sand
your breasts like two new planets
you break open within the water

statue of stone above the park
(point of rock that does not suffer)
that does not keep silent.

(within yourself)
(the rain falls)
that does not speak
José Roberto Cea

Los árboles se equivocan de pájaros.
El día cae todo en el parque.
Tú ahí,
sorprendido, sin poder pronunciar una palabra.

(Yo gritaba tu nombre en el silencio.
Yo decía tu nombre en el bullicio.)

El día empieza aquí, como una alondra.
Nada lo dificulta, nada lo asiste.
Tú sigues igual, lleno de asombro, abandonado.
Tienes el ángel bueno, tienes el ángel malo.
Tú no escuchas. Tú sí escuchas . . .

José Roberto Cea

APARICION DEL HOMBRE

Si el mar se arremolina en una gota de aire,
se dicen los exordios;
se unta de brebajes azules la mañana
y se deja caer sobre la playa.

El mar para su danza.
Los tambores del agua se derriten.

Amanecen los cantos y suben—primaveras—por los cerros . .
Uno camina caracol por las veredas
y se lava la cara con el tiempo.

En la ceniza de las arenas y el humo del rocío,
vaga—alondra sin sentido—
la luna.
Ya se han fundado el amor y la grandeza de los ríos.
Ríos que nunca he dicho.
Ríos que ellos se dicen entre peces de vidrio . .
The trees are mistaken with birds.
The day descends completely upon the park.
You there,
surprised, incapable of uttering a word.

(I shouted your name in the silence.
I spoke your name in the noise.)

The day begins here, like a lark.
Nothing interferes with it, nothing assists it.
You continue the same, full of amazement, forlorn.
You have the good angel, you have the bad angel.
You do not listen. You do listen. . .

APPEARANCE OF MAN

If the sea eddies in a drop of air,
the origins are said;
morning is anointed with blue beverages
and falls upon the shore.

The sea for its dance.
The drums of water dissolve.

Through the hills—like Springs—songs waken and arise. . .
One walks winding through the ways
and washes his face with time.

In the ash of the sands and the smoke of the dew
wanders—meaningless lark—
the moon.
Already are founded the love and grandeur of rivers.
Rivers I have never told.
Rivers that express themselves among fishes of glass. . .
Hay un rumor pleno de silencio,
mas rumoroso cada vez . .
El espacio desata sus cosechas.
Nadie da la respuesta.
Sólo un mínimo hallazgo de verdad.
Nada damos.
Nada está hecho.
Y nada hay y todo fue concluido.

Hay que decir nuestra palabra
antes que nos sepulte.

Y porque no conozco el color del cielo,
tengo la autoridad de descifrar los signos . .

Aquí hay árboles, flores, pájaros y rostros sin nombre.
Basta con mirarlos y crecen. Crecen.
Hay un silencio que tiembla. Es el caos en pleno ordenamiento.
Aquí los dioses tienen rumor de río en la memoria.
Sueñan lumbre, arroyos y veredas.
Las piedras del presagio son lanzadas.
El hombre es el que viene. Apareció.
Hecho de nada para hallarse.

Hecho de nada para hallarse y encontrar el vacío.
Hecho de nada para hallarse rodeado de leyendas.
Hecho de nada para ser todo.

Antes que la esmeralda echase plumas, fue.
Antes.
Mucho antes que los dioses bebiesen agua
en los frutos de las aves.
Era cuando el miedo se inventaba con pocitos de estrellas,
y los fantasmas se cogían como piedras preciosas
para encender la noche. . .
There is a murmur filled with silence,
more murmurous every time. . .
Space sets free its harvests.
No one makes reply.
Only a tiny discovery of truth.
We deliver nothing.
Nothing is done.
And there is nothing and all was at an end.

Before it bury us
our word must be said.

And because I know not the color of the sky,
I have the right to decipher the signs. . .

Here are trees, flowers, birds and nameless faces.
It is enough to watch them and they grow. They grow.
There’s a silence that trembles. It is the chaos in the midst of order
being made.
Here the gods hold a river’s murmur in their memory.
They dream fire, streams and paths.
The stones of omen are launched.
Man is the one who comes. He appeared.
Made of nothing for finding himself.

Made of nothing to search and encounter the emptiness.
Made of nothing to locate himself ringed by legends.
Made of nothing for being all.

Before the emerald sprouted wings, he was.
Before.
Long before the gods would drink water
from the fruits of flying things.
He was when fear was invented from small wells of stars,
and ghosts could be gathered like precious stones
to kindle the night. . .
Julio Augusto Zachrisson, BRUJO EN EL CIRCO, etching, Photo J. E. Lamarca.
Julio Augusto Zachrisson, AUTOBRETRATO, drawing.
Roberto Sosa

ARTE ESPACIAL

Llevo conmigo un abatido búho.

En los escombros levanté mi casa.
Dije
mi pensamiento a hombres de imágenes impúdicas.

En la extensión me inclino hecho paisaje, y siento,
vuelta música, la sombra de una amante sepultada.

Dentro de mi se abre el espacio
de un mundo para todos dividido.

Estos versos devuelven lo que ya he recibido:
un mar de fondo,
las curvas del anzuelo,
el coletazo de un pez ahogado en sangre,
osferosos silbidos enterrados, la forma
que adoptó la cuchillada, el terror congelado entre mis dedos.

Comprendo que la rosa no cabe en la escritura.

En una cuerda bailo hasta el amanecer
temiendo—cada instante—la breve melodía de un tropiezo.

Roberto Sosa

LOS CLAUSTROS

Nuestros cazadores
—casi nuestros amigos—
nos han enseñado, sin equivocarse jamás,
los diferentes ritmos
que conducen al miedo.

Nos han amaestrado con sutileza.
Hablamos,
leemos y escribimos sobre la claridad.
Admiramos sus sombras
que aparecen de pronto.
Roberto Sosa

SPATIAL ART

I carry a dejected owl with me. 
I have raised my house in rubbish. 
I spoke
my mind to men with impudent images.

In the expanse I slope the perfect landscape, and sense,
music whirling, the shadow of a buried lover.

The space opens within me
for a divided world.

These lines restore what I've already accepted:
a swelling sea,
the curves of a fishhook,
the whipping tail of a fish smothered in blood,
fierce sunken whispers, the form
the slash adopted, terror congealed between my fingers.

I understand the rose doesn't fit in the writing.

I dance on a string until dawn
dreading—each instant—the brief melody of a mistake.

Roberto Sosa

THE CLOISTERS

Our hunters
—nearly our friends—
have taught us, without ever making a mistake,
the different rhythms
that lead to fear.

They have trained us with subtlety.
We talk,
we read and write around clarity.
We admire their shadows
which appear suddenly.
Oímos
los sonidos de los cuernos
mezclados
con los ruidos suplicantes del océano.

Sin embargo
sabemos que somos los animales
con guirnaldas de horror en el cuerpo;
los cercenados a sangre fría; los que se han dormido
en un museo de cera
vigilado
por maniquíes de metal violento.

**Roberto Sosa**

**LA BATALLA OSCURA**

He vuelto.
El caserío se desploma y flota su nombre
solamente.

Beso la tarde como quien besa una mujer dormida.

Los amigos
se acercan con un rumor de infancia en cada frase.
Las muchachas
pronuncian mi nombre y yo admiro sus bocas con animal ternura.

Levanto una piedra como quien alza un ramo
sin otro afán que la amistad segura.

La realidad sonrie
tal vez
porque
algo
he inventado en esta historia. He vuelto, es cierto,
pero nadie me mira ni me habla, y si lo hacen,
escucho una batalla de palabras oscuras entre dientes.

(Las brasas del hogar amplían los rincones
y doran las tijeras del día que se cierra.)

Un esfuerzo violáceo
contiene mi garganta.
We listen
to the sounds of horns
mixed
with the supplicating noises of the ocean.

However
we know we are animals
with garlands of horror on the body;
those cut down in cold blood; those who have been asleep
in a wax museum
watched over
by puppets of violent metal.

**Roberto Sosa**

**THE DARK BATTLE**

I've returned.
The village sags and floats in name
only.

I kiss the afternoon the way one kisses a sleeping woman.

Friends
draw near with a hint of infancy in every sentence.
Girls
pronounce my name and I admire their mouths with brute tenderness.

I lift a rock the way one lifts a branch
with no other purpose than an honest friendship.

Reality grins
perhaps
because of
something
I’ve invented in this history. I’ve returned, that’s for sure,
but no one looks at me or talks to me, and if they do,
I hear a battle of dark words between teeth.

(The hot coals of the hearth amplify the corners
and gild the scissors of closing day.)

A violent effort
restrains my throat.
Alfonso Quijada Urias

de LOS ESTADOS SOBRENATURALES

Las paredes están dentro de mí que estoy creciendo contra el suelo. Una sola palabra me pasea en el agua hasta tocar el fuego. Infierno del amor de grandes fauces. Conoce la dimensión de estas puertas el sacerdote del mal. Se necesita la idiotez, estados de locura que permitan viajar a lo más simple. El resto será magia. Llave de los misterios ocultos en la claridad primitiva.

Estoy fuera de todo pensamiento, de todo círculo. Mis únicos dominios son los silencios de este anillo de fuego.

país de las fiebres que me devoran, mi risa es la máxima celebración de mi nueva cabeza, te siento sobre mis piernas de mujer hombre masticando las flores de tu espalda y mi piel podrida me conduce al encuentro del ombligo, muero las bellas plantas del mito poniéndome intendible, huyendo de tus pantanos medicinales, durmiendo con mis piojos en ese estado de vagancia, donde mi vicio echa raíces, flores que mastico después de cada misa.

cumplo la historia de un hombre alegre de su cara tristísima, los años de un animal de monstruosidades infinitas, su cerebro ya no es el campanario donde se reúnen dos locos a comer murciélagos, la pequeña habitación del hombre mezquino rodeado de relojes y satisfacciones religiosas, majestuoso sueño de comedor de hormigas, son las palabras abriendo enormes hoyos en la piedra de su locura.

Poseído de lo que no ve ni oye cualquiera, silencioso hijo de padres monstruosamente bellos en la tristeza que los habita, aquí está la hierba, el pucho de vieja saliva, la noche y sus orejas de miedo, soy lo que viene después de algún suceso que nadie ve, Oh ignorante poseedor de la moneda que enterraron todos, no va mi traje con hombres agraciados, apenas con los piojos del gran sol de los locos, el que hierve su cabeza en xilocibina y compuestos que reaniman la enfermedad de pensar, de que linaje vengo sino de aquél.
The walls are inside me so I am growing against the floor. A single word walks me in the water up to the touch of fire. Inferno of the large-throated love. The priest of evil knows the dimension of these doors. Idiocy is needed, states of lunacy that may allow traveling to the simplest. The rest will be magic. Key to the occult mysteries in the primitive light.
I am outside all thought, of every circle. My only dominions are the silences of this ring of fire.

Country of fevers that devour me, my laugh is the chief celebration of my novel head, I feel you beneath my man woman legs masticating the flowers of your back and my rotted skin conveys me to the nook of the navel, I bite the beautiful plants of myth making me inattentive, escaping your medicinal swamps, sleeping with my lice in that state of vagrancy, where my vice takes root, flowers that I chew after every mass.

I complete the story of a happy man with his saddest face, the years of an animal of infinite monstrosities, his brain is now no belfry where two fools congregate to feed on bats, the small home of the miserable surrounded by clocks and religious satisfactions, majestic dream of a dining room of ants, are the words opening enormous holes in the stone of his manic state.

Possessed by what not anyone sees or hears, silent son of parents monstrously beautiful in the sorrow that resides in them, here is the herb, the driblet of old saliva, the night and its ears of fear, I am that which comes after some event which no one sees, Oh ignorant owner of the coin that all interred, my garb does not go with genteel men, hardly the lice of the grand sun of the insane, he who boils his head in herbage and compounds that stir up the sickness of thinking, of which lineage I come but of that.
la locura es el nacimiento de los sentidos, de mis ojos viendo para siempre la ternura del fuego, mis oídos mordiendo el infinito, mi nariz en la fragancia, en las plumas de lo desconocido, mi cuerpo en la botella donde Dios sopla su magia eterna, la locura no quiere la parte más alta (donde un reloj pone sus huevos de vejez submarina), solamente el rincón donde la salamandra toca su trombón de fuego y la humildad de las constelaciones.

Guillermo Ros Zanet

ORIGEN

Huyen los pájaros profundos.
Mar y rocas y vértebras de peces subyacen tras la imagen primitiva de este sueño que yo sueño.

Noble junco y ciega flor de siempreviva lo circundan.
(Ya retornan sus huesos a mis huesos).
Arcángeles de sal y clorofila edifican su luz aborigen, liberada.

Viva forma reintegrada a mi voz, marina, vegetal y exacta.
Madness is the birth of the senses, of my eyes seeing forever the tenderness of fire, my ears biting the infinite, my nose in the fragrance, in the feathers of the unknown, my body in the bottle where God bellows his eternal spell, madness wishes not the highest part (where a watch lays its eggs of submarine age), only the corner where the salamander plays his burning trombone and the humility of the constellations.

Translator NICOMEDES SUAREZ

Guillermo Ros Zanet

ORIGIN

The deep birds escape.
Sea and rocks, fish vertebrae
lie beneath the primitive image
of this dream I dream.

It is surrounded by
noble rushes and blind perennial flowers.
(Already its bones return to my bones).
Archangels of salt and chlorophyll
build its free aboriginal light.

Living form, restored to my voice,
marine, vegetal and exact.
**Bertalicia Peralta**

**EL SILENCIO**

El silencio es la masa de una gota de agua que no cae
se produce o no se produce
el silencio puede también permanecer en el tiempo sin permanecer
el silencio es finalmente objeto de sutilezas
como la luz / auténtico
como el agua / rígido
como la certeza / inencontrado

la flaqueza de la mente
el estruendo de la noche el vaho de un ojo luminoso
el silencio como la muerte como el amor es todo
o no es

**Bertalicia Peralta**

**COMO UN CARACOL VACIO**

Un hombre aquí suena como un caracol vacío
sin casa / sin vino / sin sangre
sin vínculo amoroso
sucede
de la revelación y el sueño
se alimenta / está solo canta solo y suena
como un caracol vacío
Bertalicia Peralta

SILENCE

Silence is the substance of a drop
of water that does not fall
it creates or it does not create

silence also can endure
    in time without enduring
silence is in the end
object of subtleties
like light / authentic
like water / rigid
like certainty / undiscovered

weakness of the mind
clamor of night
    the vapor of a glowing eye

silence like death
    like love
    is everything
or is not

Bertalicia Peralta

LIKE A HOLLOW SNAIL

Here a man echoes
like a hollow snail

without house / wine / or blood
in the absence of loving union
it happens

from revelation and dream
he is nourished / he is alone
he sings alone
    and echoes
like a hollow snail
Bertalicia Peralta

CRECIMIENTO

Metidos en el hueco
semanas enteras
comiéndonos las palabras
inventadas por otros
(decimos si señor
como si no supiéramos
si no quisiéramos)
creciendo poco a poco con todos
los defectos de que somos capaces
para acabar
completamente muertos

Fernando Corel Dueñas, (?)
Bertalicia Peralta

GROWTH

Lectures in the void
entire weeks
words devouring us
invented by others
(we say yes sir
as if we did not know
as if we did not want to)
gradually swelling with all
of our flaws
to end up
completely dead
Oscar Acosta

EL LIBRO DE POEMAS

Estas páginas llevan el mismo rumbo. 
Todas ellas forman una alameda de norte a sur; árboles solos en la noche.
No hay descanso para ellas. Las interroga el hombre cuando necesita un espejo, 
cuando la lágrima busca un ojo redondo, 
cuando una caricia requiere constructor; 
se buscan, hacen falta, se abren solas como una enorme y misteriosa flor de plumas.
Leamos, en voz baja, el libro de poemas.

Oscar Acosta

EL OLVIDO

El olvido es un túnel que se abre lento hasta el propio pecho del universo.
Entre la noche lo buscamos hasta oír sus incesantes llamadas amorosas que nos invitan a explorar sus entrañas secretas, sus paredes llenas de nombres, de seres y acontecimientos, su atractivo de jardín vertical que nos acerca rápido a un desconocido país del que ya no se vuelve.
Oscar Acosta

THE BOOK OF POEMS

These pages arrive at the same place.
They form a grove from north
to south; trees alone in the night.
These pages never rest. Man interrogates
them when he needs a mirror,
when a tear searches for a circular eye,
when a caress requires a body;
they look for themselves, they are needed,
they unfold alone like an enormous and
mysterious flower of feathers.
Let us read, in a low voice, the book of poems.

Oscar Acosta

OBLIVION

Oblivion is a tunnel that slowly opens
to the very heart of the universe.
After dusk we search for it until
we hear its ceaseless loving cries
that invite us to explore its nocturnal
insides, its walls full of names,
beings, events, its attractive
vertical garden that quickly brings us closer
to an unknown country from which we can never return.
Oscar Acosta

LOS RECUERDOS

Cómo llegar hasta los recuerdos, si ellos quieren que venga y me denuncie. Si quieren verme el rostro y las debilidades que guardo. Quieren envolverme poco a poco en sus túnicas, levantarse del polvo, del frío, del aire, mostrarme visiones que no quisiera recordar, besos que navegan como barcos sin rumbo, caricias que unas manos desconocidas hicieron, sollozos que tenían su raíz en la zozobra, frases que el tiempo hace crecer en el oído. Los recuerdos son niños que insisten en rodearnos, en que hablemos y narremos olvidadas historias, en que extraigamos de nuestro pecho el corazón como una manzana roja que compartimos en la mesa y que ellos distribuyen y devoran pacientemente.
Oscar Acosta

MEMORIES

How to return to memories; if they want
me to come and accuse myself. If they want
to see my face and the weaknesses I hide.
They want to wrap me up slowly in their tunics,
raise themselves from the dust, the cold, the air,
show me visions I would like to forget,
kisses that navigate like drunken boats,
caresses made by unknown hands,
cries that have their roots in a shipwreck,
sentences that grow louder in the ear with time.
Memories are children that insist on surrounding us,
insist we speak and narrate lost histories,
insist we extract the heart from our chest
like a red apple that we divide on the table
which they share and devour patiently.
Mario Picado

LLUVIA

Oyendo ese destino de trinchera y reposo.
De ver una mujer y cuatrocientas nubes
y la voz de alguien que reconoce la derrota de un hombre.

Y las estrellas sudando luz congelada de tiempo.
Y los motores oxidados de horario.
Y dar las buenas noches.

Y esta lluvia con sus clavos de luna
atardeciendo débil mi cerebro.

Mario Picado

SILUETA

Esperanza del puente
mirando sobre el agua pasar altos olvidos.
Amantes sorprendidos desvelando la ausencia.
Humedeciendo atrasos de una muerte imposible
en noctámbula manera de palabras.

Horizontales lluvias por lejanos caminos
acercaban, doblándose, su angustia.

Era el amor un sueño.
Un fruto con su miedo de soledad
y causa.

Silueta en arenas desplomada
con su secreto intacto
y un adiós sucediéndose en el agua.
Mario Picado

RAIN

Hearing the destiny of trenches and rest.
Of seeing a woman and four hundred clouds
and a voice that recognizes the defeat of a man.

Stars sweating light frozen in time.
Motors rusted in timetables.
Saying good night.

And this rain with nails of moon
weakens and darkens my brain.

Mario Picado

SILHOUETTE

Hope of the bridge
watching long oblivions pass on the water.
Astonished lovers keep the absence alert.
Moistening hesitations of an impossible death
in the atmosphere of sleepwalking words.

Horizontal rains on distant roads
coming closer, doubling themselves, the anguish.

Love was a dream.
A fruit of its lonely
origin.

Silhouette collapsed on sand
with its secret intact
and a good-bye materialized in the water.
Mario Picado

BORDE INICIAL

Me anuncio reventado, anuente, conmovido, pudiera ser peldaño de nubes en caída.
Alegre me convengo por ser lo que sería y acepto los caprichos, lo angosto, lo vacío.
Recuerdo lo distinto, lo absurdo, lo perenne.
Trabajo en las esquinas de espumas ordinarias tirando unos centavos de luna a lo imposible y en álamos finales persisto antigua savia.
Bautizo los declives—el agua a media asta—.
Decido andar salivas y escupo soledades.
Escribo sobre un labio caminos inasibles, me ahuyento convidado doblando la sangre.
No busco. Me detengo. Y cuento los olores que da mística larva de ardientes suavidades.
Distingo los conceptos en números de carne y juego con el naipe de risas amorales.
En otros certifico arenas y ventanas y dejo de mi pecho sudar una corbata.
Y soy entonces uno de tantos desiguales que dejan un suceso colgando por la calle.
Recibo lo que tengo al ser contra la hierba.
Comparo lo que hay libre con todo lo que ha muerto.
Recados son los sueños enviados por la prisa de andar siempre estrenando lugares y tamaños.
Celajes cabalgados, roperos aplaudidos.
En marcha de cuchillos nacidos sin edades.
Durmiente luz cortada de dinamo aborigen resuelvo mis injertos de horarios inefables.
Mario Picado

INITIAL BORDER

I announce that I am tired, complying, disturbed,
I could be a staircase of falling clouds.
Happily, I agree to be what I should be
I accept the whims, the constraint, the emptiness.
I remember the distinct, the absurd, the perennial.
I work in the corners of stale seafoam
tossing moon-pennies at the impossible
and I persist as ancient sap in the last trees.
I baptize slopes—water at half mast—.
I decide to walk in saliva and I spit solitude.
I write inaccessible roads on lips
allured I frighten myself away and thicken my blood.
I do not search. I restrain myself. I count the odors
which emit mystical larva of burning tenderness.
I discern ideas in numbers of flesh
I gamble with cards of amoral laughter.
In others I perceive sand and windows
and I release a tie of sweat from my chest.
I am then one of many outcasts
who leave a deed unfinished in the street.
I receive what I have by being against the grass.
I compare what is free with all that has died.
Dreams are messages sent in the rush
of always sampling places and sizes.
Spurred clouds, approved wardrobe
in the rhythm of knives born without age.
Sleeping light cut from the original dynamo
I resolve my alterations of unspeakable schedules.
**Ana Antillón**

**GRAZNANDO SOBRE FIBRAS ESTANCADAS**

Dormido el cuerpo, con la boca fría,
me entrego a un deambular de paso y paso.
Ritmo de mi sentir, quedo y quebrado

salta por montes de la carne mía:
es un ciervo albo, desangrado y graso,
con la vena blanca y el sudor cansado

que atraviesa caminos sin sentido.
Me acecha el ave, rígida y despierta,
las alas tenebrosas desplegadas:

ciervo, garra y ave, el cuerpo está herido.
El alma triunfal con la garra abierta
graznando sobre fibras estancadas.

**Ana Antillón**

**GOTEANDO AL GOLPE SUAVE**

Gota la lluvia, cuenta fina cae
goteando al golpe suave;
largo el hilado hilo de llovizna
emblanquece su curva contra el suelo.

La eterna inmensidad que se conmueve
en el tierno conjuro,
se despedaza en aguas mansas, gruesas.
Ana Antillón

CAWING OVER QUIESCENT FIBERS

The body is asleep, the mouth cold,
as I surrender to a gradual drifting.
Pulse of my feeling, quiet and broken,
jumps through the hills of my flesh:
a dazed, white deer, drained and glistening,
with empty veins and weary sweat
wanders the paths.
The bird in ambush, awake and rigid,
with gloomy, unfolded wings:

deer, claw and bird, the body is wounded.
The triumphant soul with open claw
cawing over quiescent fibers.

Ana Antillón

DRIPPING WITH A SOFT BLOW

A drop holds the rain, a fine bead falls
dripping with a soft blow;
the long, woven filament of mist
softens its curve against the ground.

The eternal immensity aroused
in tender conjuration,
breaks into gentle, dense waters.
Agustín del Rosario

Reencontrarte
cada día
como si la distancia fuese agua
y agua fuese el instante
de reencontrarte
en la misma ciudad
bajo la misma lluvia
tu paso
en cada uno de mis pasos

Va la mañana
adherida a la piel
durante cada cosa
que haga
o piense
porque la soledad es sólo una
y sólo una la condición del sueño

En
donde el agua
es cosa quieta
—memoria como niebla
diluida—
apenas roza
—hoja
de una mañana sola de gaviotas—
aquí
o allá
lo blanco del papel
—sonido que es espacio entre dos puntos
cometa que no se ve en el cielo si en las manos
pesada mariposa en la mirada—
todo insomnio
todo quietud
Agustín del Rosario

To reencounter you each day as if the distance were water and water were the instant of reencountering you in the same city beneath the same rain your step in each one of my steps

Tomorrow moves fused with the skin during every thing you could do or think because solitude is only one and solitary the condition of dream

Where water is a silent thing —memory like diluted fog— barely touches —leaf of a solitary morning of gulls— here or there the whiteness of paper —sound that is a space between two points comet not seen in the sky but in the hands vision of a massive butterfly—
total sleeplessness total tranquility
Ronald Bonilla

LOS NINOS SOLOS

Caían atenazando
lo profundo.
Las voces buscaron en la muerte un eco vivo.
Recorrieron intestinos oscuros,
aprisionaron sus dedos al vacío,
se aferraron a sus raíces
sin encontrar respuesta.

Los niños crecían como pájaros
en las mañanas.
Las voces oscurecieron sus absurdos juegos eternos.
Eran gritos girando en el espacio.

Los adultos, los hombres
seguían cayendo, infinitos.
Rodaban y el vacío aprisionaba sus dedos.
Las mujeres también caían sin poder asirse.

Los niños se quedaron sordos,
llenos de voces,
recorrían las ciudades muertas.
Regresaron a las flores
y recogieron los aromas.
Regresaron a la noche
y alzaron las estrellas,
prendidas al vacío como ojos.

Uno quiso llamar a su madre
y le llenaron los ojos de mar.
Uno quiso rezar
y todos le amarraron la boca con amor.

Uno a uno fueron uniendo sus manos,
finalmente uniendo todos los poros, encendiéndolos.
El universo fue entonces
una larga cadena de pequeños dedos,
indestructible.
Ronald Bonilla

THE LONE CHILDREN

They fell, tearing strips
off the deep.
The voices hunted a live echo in death.
They mulled over dark entrails.
Locked their fingers into the void,
grafted their selves to their roots
without finding a response.

In the mornings
the children grew like birds.
The voices blurred their absurd eternal games.
Cries they were, spiraling in space.

The adults, the men
went on falling, limitless.
They rolled and the void locked about their fingers.
The women too fell, unable to catch hold.

The children remained unhearing,
full of voices.
In and out the dead cities they ran.
They returned to the flowers
and caught their scent.
Returned to the night
and raised up the stars,
pinned like eyes to the void.

One wanted to call his mother
and they filled his eyes with sea.
One wanted to pray and with love they sealed his mouth.

One by one they were joining hands,
joining every pore, igniting them.
The universe was then
a long chain of small fingers,
indestructible.
Ronald Bonilla

NOCTURNO

Detrás de la sangre yo uní tus huesos con cuidado.

Habías muerto,
a pesar de mi esfuerzo
por ponerte los ojos en la sangre.

Intenté beberme al mar
y el límite roto del horizonte
cañ sobre la playa.

Intenté beberme al mar
y el límite roto del horizonte
cañ sobre la espalda infinita de las manos.

Ronald Bonilla

LLAGA

Mis manos huyen del vacío.
La sombra inacabable de mi cuerpo
que no termina de pasar.

La muerte empieza a ser mi grito.
La sepultura del hueso . . .

El absurdo increíble de tener los dedos
unidos a la carne
por primera vez.

Las calles son un celaje vivo de mi sangre.

Mis huesos se encienden en la noche.
Abro mis ojos en la llaga perenne.
Ronald Bonilla

NOCTURNE

Behind the blood I joined your bones, carefully.

You had died
in spite of my pains
to set the eyes into the blood for you.

I meant to drink from the sea,
and the broken rim of the horizon
was falling on the beach.

I meant to drink from the sea,
and the broken rim of the horizon
was falling on the infinite back of the hands.

Ronald Bonilla

SORE

My hands flee the emptiness.
Endless shadow of my body
whose passing does not stop.

Death begins to be my cry.
The bone’s sepulchre.

The incredible absurd—having fingers
joined to flesh
for the first time.

The streets are a light-scaped delta of my blood.
Alive.

My bones flare in the night.
In the everbearing sore I open my eyes.
Ronald Bonilla

SOMBRAS

Hay que levantar los ojos del silencio.

El hueso lastima
entre tanto cadáver fresco.

Comprendo la longitud sin límite
cavando en lo inesperado de la herida.

Hay que arraigarnos de nuevo como sombras.

Ronald Bonilla

SHADOWS

We must hoist the eyes of silence.

The bone grieves
amid so much fresh corpse.

Digging through the unforeseen of the wound
I understand rimless longitude.

Again we must root ourselves like shadows.

Rafael Coronel, La Ficcion, 1970, acrylic on canvas.
Roberto Fernández Iglesias

En algún sitio lejano
como sucede
en toda historia
que
se
   respete
han erigido
un monumento
   a la memoria
y lo construyen
con piedra frágil
para poder destruirlo
cada
día

Roberto Fernández Iglesias

La flor de muchos pétalos
en el aire duerme
y se mueve
Nosotros muchos pétalos
al movernos
cuando
   el
      aire
         cambia
             caemos
Roberto Fernández Iglesias

In some far-off place
as happens
in every story
worthy
of
the telling
they have erected
a monument
to memory
and they build it
with fragile stone
to be able to destroy it
each
day

Roberto Fernández Iglesias

The many-petaled flower
sleeps on the air
and stirs
We many petals
as we stir
when
the
air
changes
we fall
Roberto Fernández Iglesias

Se sintió fuerte
extenuadamente sólido
hasta que pudo ocurrir
ese
   largo
   instante
del desprendimiento
de la primera hoja
   que
   cae
todavía

Roberto Fernández Iglesias

La viste crecer
y siempre lo hacía
Parece que cuando
cesó su crecimiento
dejaste de ver

Roberto Fernández Iglesias

Hay tardes
pasadas tomando café
pensando
   y en alguna
se escribe un poema
   y en otra
se habla
   y hay más tardes
Roberto Fernández Iglesias

He felt strong
emaciatedly solid
until it happened:
that
long
instant
of the breaking off
of the first leaf
that
is still
falling

Roberto Fernández Iglesias

You saw her growing
and she was always growing
It seems that when
her growing stopped
you stopped seeing

Roberto Fernández Iglesias

There are afternoons
spent drinking coffee
thinking
and on one of them
you write a poem
and on another
you talk
and there are more afternoons
Carmen Naranjo

OYE

Oye:
dicen que fue primero un punto claro
que creció como un relámpago,
violador de precipicios.
Corrió iluminando oscuridades,
y empezó a caer despaciously
como el plumaje tupido
de una flor que se muere.
Dicen que un pescador
tendió una red de nudos luminosos
y en el vacío de un mar de embudos
nacieron alas para volar el vértigo.
Dicen que cantaban los caminos
con la armonía del ronroneo de las olas
y había puñales de fuego
en cada tope de alas.
Dicen que llovía, llovía siempre
madrugadas de frío,
resquebrajamientos de paredes que guardan rosas,
semillas y estrellas.
Y dicen que llegó la tierra,
y con la tierra el mar.
Yo traigo siglos a mi espalda,
cantos sin voz que aún se oyen en la montaña,
audacias que mi pudor esconde,
miedos que escandalizan
mis civilizados gestos.
Yo vengo de un ayer de siglos
como la tierra y el mar,
canosos y viejos tengo los apetitos,
y ante todo el misterio de donde vengo,
no hago sino caminar
con pasos rígidos y sonámbulos.
Oye:
ante ti hay algo nuevo,
algo que renace,
algo que me llena de ternura,
como la tierra y el mar anocheciendo.
LISTEN

Listen:
they say it began as a clear point
that grew into lightning,
raping space.
It flashed through the darkness
and slowly began to collapse
like a withering flower’s
tangled plumage.
They say that a fisherman
cast a net of luminous knots
and in the hollow funnels of the sea
wings were born to fly above the vertigo.
They say that the roads sang
with the harmony of purring waves
and knives of fire
were in every stroke of the wings.
They say that it rained, always rained
cold mornings, cracked walls concealing roses,
seeds, stars.
And they say that the earth arrived,
and with the earth, the sea.
I bring centuries on my back,
voiceless songs still heard in the mountains,
impulses my modesty conceals,
fears that scandalize
my civilized gestures.
I come from a yesterday of centuries
like the earth and the sea,
my appetites are white-haired and withered,
and before the entire mystery of my beginnings,
I can only sleepwalk
with rigid steps.
Listen:
something takes place before you,
a new birth,
that fills me with tenderness
like dusk growing in the earth and the sea.
WAYS TO AMUSE
THE BORED PRESIDENT

SERGIO RAMIREZ

One day when some friends in the civil and military services were celebrating the President’s birthday on one of his innumerable cattle ranches facing the sea, after the food was served and the toasts and speeches finished, they sought the best means to dispel his boredom, regaling and entertaining him with humorous songs and dances, stunts, imitations and recitations, all of which failed.

When his escort was ready, and S.E. had called for his coach to leave, the Minister of Culture had the brilliant idea of starting a game which, with great enthusiasm, he called William Tell.

He explained that the President, using a gun for lack of a crossbow, would fire at fruit conveniently ready on the heads of the guests who would take turns in the place of honor.

S.E. agreed and that same Minister of Culture, ruddy and happy, volunteered to take the first turn, placing on his head a mango which his wife solicitously handed him. The chief of the military aides, standing at full attention before him, presented the President with a case of weapons from which he chose a forty-five caliber Smith and Wesson revolver with a mother of pearl handle.

As one might have expected, the shot was fatal and blew the Minister’s brains out. The mango fell intact on the floor.

The funeral rites were solemn.
THE STENCH OF CORPSES

SERGIO RAMIREZ

The music of funeral marches played at sunrise throughout the city, and the murmur of people crossing through dark streets and praying in unison on their way to the churches tolling their bells, announced that S.E.’s mother had died at the palace.

The republic sank into mourning and a sea of flags rippled at half-mast all the days that the body, laid out and dressed in angel garments, was paraded from one part of the city to the other without any date definitely set for burial. Until S.E. announced that she would never be buried, but would remain at his side as always, accompanying him every minute at ceremonies, audiences, military parades or any other kind of state function.

At first it seemed simple for the servants to dress the corpse for each occasion and seat it propped up appropriately at S.E.’s right hand; but after a short time the stench was horrendous since embalming procedures in the republic were extremely unreliable.

At formal banquets ladies gulped back their vomit for fear of offending their leader who impassively followed with his head the beats of the chamber music which brightened the meals, and the gentlemen, as was customary at the palace, offered the old lady the choicest morsels from their plates. Ambassadors were still obliged to do their hand-kissing although when they grasped her bejewelled fingers particles of greenish flesh were left between their own.

With a veil over her face, the matron serenely presided over her own putrefaction, oblivious to the poisoning of the air, listening with her rigid ear to the ecclesiastical conversation of His Holiness’ Apostolic Nuncio and the gallantries of the French Ambassador, leaning back in her golden chair.

The day came when the maids rubbed rouge directly on the bones of her fleshless cheeks and covered her dried, discolored hair with a gilded wig, leaving her stiff arms in a gesture of perpetual greeting.

By the time the death knell sounded once again in all the churches announcing the death of the First Lady of the Republic, the Ministers, Ambassadors and other dignitaries had grown perfectly accustomed to the smell of putrid, decaying flesh and the worms which quietly crawled through their plates and climbed up their goblets.
THE PROSECUTION OF THE LION

SERGIO RAMIREZ

After a trial which lasted fourteen months the lion was condemned to death but, at the last minute, the wild beast was saved by a presidential decree of amnesty which covered defendants of common crimes.

The lion was a political prisoner.

In the gardens of the presidential home was a cage with silver plated bars in which the lion had lived ever since, as a cub, a group of friends gave him to S.E. as a birthday present. Confined there, the lion grew up, developed his mane and his huge appetite, and consumed as much as a whole steer per day.

One day the head of the security police, a very shrewd man, discovered that the lion could be a magnificent instrument for obtaining confessions and he ordered a narrow cage built adjoining the one occupied by the beast; there they began to put political prisoners sent to confess and, alongside, they left the lion who had not been fed. The prisoners had to stay on guard day and night, pressed back against the bars, in order to avoid the terrible clawing.

One night, one of the prisoners fell asleep and was devoured by the lion, and this reached the ears of international humanitarian organizations like the OEA, the SIP, et cetera, whose boards demanded that S.E. investigate and he, much amazed by deeds so repugnant to the concept of civilization, showed his indignation by calling for the lion to be brought to trial.

The outlook in the council of war was extremely complicated, and the lion relied on an expert defense since certain unnamed people got the best criminal lawyers in the republic for him; in spite of all this he was sentenced to death but, in a magnanimous gesture, S.E. spared his life, so it is said, and made the garden his prison for as long as he lived.

Time passed and the lion was allowed to leave his prison to wander among the people, lick their hands and feet, and if they gave him anything he was happy. And, on one of his walks, he met the witness for the prosecution from his trial and devoured him, which provoked a new council of war, and so on, and so on.
Gerardo Chavez, pastel on canvas, Galeria Aele, S.A., Madrid.
CAST: Woman I, Woman II

(Woman I talks calmly all the time; she never raises her voice. Her voice should be mechanical. The voice of Woman II, on the other hand, abounds in shadings of tone.)

WOMAN I: Don’t stick your fingers in the cake. The cake is for my daughters.

WOMAN II: My fingers crave, my fingers scintillate, their skin is taut, oh, where are you, my beloved?

WOMAN I: It’s an escape into sickness. You don’t want to be responsible for anything.

WOMAN II: Yes, yes, you’re right. An escape into sickness, into scorched meadows, into ashen ones. (Laughs.) The topping is exquisite. It’s a shame your daughters won’t taste it.

WOMAN I: They will taste the cake.

WOMAN II: No, they won’t because they won’t come. They couldn’t care less that today’s your birthday, sis.

WOMAN I: Don’t call me “sis.” It’s ridiculous to address that way a fifty-seven year old, like myself.

WOMAN II: I’m entitled to it. I’m six years older than you. . . (Laughs.) They won’t come, won’t come. I’ll be the one to eat the cake.

WOMAN I: I’ll have to rearrange the furniture.

WOMAN II: Again?

WOMAN I: The cabinet should stand here.

WOMAN II: He put his hand on my breast and said: “Oh, God, how marvellous,” but in fact nightmares descend from the mountains.

WOMAN I: The cabinet should stand here. No doubt about it.

WOMAN II: The nightmares descend with a thud . . . Or, in the great silence not a pebble will budge. . . Did I ever cry at night? No sir, I never did. That’s vile calumny. When nightmares descend from the mountains, I smile. . . Yes, of course, they descend upon me, they
weigh heavy upon me. No, I'm not bowed down. Rocks which weigh as much as blow-balls.

WOMAN I: Will you help me move this cabinet?

WOMAN II: You are somewhat brutal, sir.

WOMAN I: Well, if you won't help me, I'll do it myself.

WOMAN II: I know you called me. I wouldn't come and you kept calling me. Without words, of course. Oh, Constantin, how could you suspect me of . . . (The sound of furniture being moved.)

WOMAN I: It looks much better here. The cabinet should stand in a corner.

WOMAN II: Alleluia. (Sings.) Alleluia.

WOMAN I: I can't really blame myself. I brought my daughters up according to all rules. I taught them punctuality, responsibility; I gave them everything that's best in me. They knew their mother loved them. I gave them warmth.

WOMAN II: Why should I protest? I'd better make you some coffee. Don't resist it, Stanley. Coffee will do you a lot of good. Look, Stanley, what flares up . . . Yes, chocolate soufflé for dessert.

WOMAN I: Leave this cake alone, won't you. It's a cake, not a chocolate soufflé. . . . They'll come. Jadwiga and Maryla. Maryla and Jadwiga. My daughters. They should be proud of me. At forty-three I got my Ph.D. I'm one of the best legal counsels. I never hit my children. I taught them self-reliance.

WOMAN II: And you hated them when they were self-reliant. (Coughs, giggles.) Actually, you were contemptuous of them. If the horsie wouldn't slip, then . . . You despised them when they were what you made them to be.

WOMAN I: They wouldn't choose men, nor people, but males. How can one give in to biology like that? Well, I suppose one can. It's all programmed that way. They were determined by biology.

WOMAN II: Then I told him: hold me tight, hold me tight this instant. And he would light a cigarette, would look at me . . .

WOMAN I: One of them is a sociologist, the other one is into math. A mathematician, I should say. That sounds better. When they were in high school, all their girlfriends knew that one could come to me and tell me everything. I gave them advice. I helped them. I wasn't even shocked by abortion for a 17 year old.

WOMAN II: Can anyone dance the tango these days? Oh, my God who art dead, who hath been drowned in the sea, my God, can anyone really quote the Ten Commandments and dance the tango these days?

WOMAN I: Jadwiga imagines that I, who am getting along in years,
I, who am past my climacteric, that I am envious of her way of life and her love affairs. Me, envious... It’s ridiculous. The blind moth. Are moths blind? I don’t know. They do drive towards destruction though. It must have been a major period of insect extermination when people used resinous chips, candles, kerosene lamps, or gas. Electric bulbs aren’t quite the same thing.


WOMAN I: Maryla. She moved out to become independent. She rented a room. A servant’s quarters, nine foot by six. “You taught me that, mother.” Yes, I taught her. She wouldn’t understand one thing though: to be independent one has to be weak. One has to escape the world. And she, young and strong in her stupidity, was fortified by her belief in success to boot. And she succeeded. She isn’t even aware of the fact that she lost.

WOMAN II: Gungadin fell in love with a monkey, and the monkey fell in love with him. A chivalric fantasy...

WOMAN I: Don’t you lick that cream off the cake.

WOMAN II: Why not?

WOMAN I: My daughters will eat this cake.

WOMAN II: Oh, they won’t mind if their aunt has some too. Their auntie couldn’t resist temptation, that’s all. My God, is this sweet...

WOMAN I: They must have some important things to take care of. That’s why they’re late.

WOMAN II: They would’ve called you.

WOMAN I: What did you say?

WOMAN II: They don’t want to see you. They know what they’re doing. Clever girls, clever.

WOMAN I: They always knew good manners. If they don’t come, it’ll be a demonstration. An unequivocal demonstration. But why?

WOMAN II: You oppressed them. You sucked them. A fat vampire by the spring. You’re gaining weight, sis. Your daughters’ blood is turning into fat.

WOMAN I: You’ve always had tendencies to talk nonsense.

WOMAN II: Look at yourself in the mirror. The corset’s split, (Sings.) the armor of convention has cracked asunder, the fat is overflowing, the suffering is overflowing.

WOMAN I: I think you’re just about ready to go back to the institution.

WOMAN II: The cream has made me sick. I’m innocent, I look at my reflection in the lake, I’m young, so young... I won’t do it anymore.

WOMAN II: The mysticism of blood. Not bad...
WOMAN I: Beg your pardon?
WOMAN II: The mysticism of blood. I feel closer and closer to you, Frank.
WOMAN I: This table has got to be moved. It should stand against the wall.
WOMAN II: Clean the house, burn incense, get it ready for the wedding. You need some green twigs too...
WOMAN I: Yes, the table will look much better there. *(The sound of furniture being moved.)*
WOMAN II: My dear little sis, always so correct, so beautiful, with a ribbon in your hair, with a rosy little face, in white stockings, my sis, mummy's and daddy's little darling.
WOMAN I: That's true. I was a beautiful child.
WOMAN II: "How much do you charge?" A bunch of violets... He put his hand on my breast and he said: "how marvellous."
WOMAN I: If I put the table here, the armchair will have to be moved closer to it.
WOMAN II: In the yoke of hypertension. Good morning, I'm in the yoke of hypertension. My hair is aflame.
WOMAN I: I could understand them. Nothing would surprise me.
WOMAN II: *(Sings.)* Amen.
WOMAN I: My daughters trusted me. I was like their older friend.
WOMAN II: The armchair has to be moved too. It won't take you too much time. And then what? Then comes the thump of time.
WOMAN I: Yes. The armchair should be moved. *(The sound of furniture being moved.)*
WOMAN I: I took part in their lives. Their problems were my problems.
WOMAN II: I wouldn't mind having some tea.
WOMAN I: Let's wait for Jadwiga and Maryla. I'll make some excellent tea when they come.
WOMAN II: I'd rather have it now.
WOMAN I: Don't bore me... I participated in their lives. Their worries were my worries. I used to solve their problems.
WOMAN II: They want to be independent at last. They've had enough of your meddling.
WOMAN I: We used to understand each other practically without words.
WOMAN II: They came less and less often, they had no time; they had all those urgent matters to attend to. What do they need an op-
pressive mother for, who knows everything best and who is always right? They saw you ruin their father. They remembered it.

**WOMAN I:** Don't mention him.

**WOMAN II:** He came to me once; he was a little drunk. He was crying. He said I smelled of jasmine. He was so tender, so gentle. He told me you were covered with chitin. I almost laughed my head off. Can you hear me, my darling cockroach?

**WOMAN I:** He visited you quite often. I know it. He was disgusting.

**WOMAN II:** He was marvellous. Handsome and deft.

**WOMAN I:** Did you hear it?

**WOMAN II:** What? (*A moment of silence.*)

**WOMAN I:** Oh, nothing. I thought I heard the bell ring.

**WOMAN II:** They rise on their bat wings, slender, their bodies basking in moonlight; they fall under your feet so gently and, oh, the ponds covered with rushes, the shores grown with alders. I lost my umbrella then.

**WOMAN I:** You're escaping into irresponsibility again.

**WOMAN II:** No one rang the bell. You imagined it.

**WOMAN I:** I know no one did.

**WOMAN II:** Our dead float on bats' wings, they fall under the feet so softly.

**WOMAN I:** I'm concerned with those who are alive.

**WOMAN II:** Stefan died at home, his head drowning in the pillow. George died under the tumbling walls. Leszek gasping for air like a fish, Tonio smiling at something he alone could see, Gregory remembering... . .

**WOMAN I:** We're alive.

**WOMAN II:** Are you sure about that, sis? (*Laughs.*) Perhaps it only seems so to us.

**WOMAN I:** I'll be appearing in court tomorrow. I'm alive.

**WOMAN II:** My sister, the legal counsel. (*Sings.*) Civil court, civil court over one's own self.

**WOMAN I:** I'm active. I'm not a vegetable.

**WOMAN II:** Active, awaiting your daughters, what a happy birthday.

**WOMAN I:** There's nothing I can blame myself for. If my daughters have rejected me, that means we use different languages. I simply don't know their language.

**WOMAN II:** Perhaps they will come after all. They'll congratulate their mother. They'll wish her many happy returns. They'll kiss her. . . They'll have some cake, some tea. . . Ships wandering in the ocean, a little clearing in the sun, the smell of warm earth. . . What can you hear? Angelic choirs.
WOMAN I: No. I do use the same language as my daughters. I breathe the same air they do. I keep up with the times.
WOMAN II: What is the reason then?
WOMAN I: Perhaps they’ve decided to test me. Perhaps they’ve been talked into testing me by their men... They’re blinded.
WOMAN II: This vase could be placed somewhere else.
WOMAN I: Do you think it’ll be better that way?
WOMAN II: Of course.
WOMAN I: I’ll put it here.
WOMAN II: Let’s see. (A moment of silence.)
WOMAN I: Yes, against this wall the green of the leaves seems much deeper.
WOMAN II: My active sister. (Sings.) I’m a vegetable, a parasite, nobody loves me, only my dead ones (Talks again.) sometimes talk to me... Sometimes their hands reaching out of the walls will stroke me.
WOMAN I: I wanted their happiness. When I saw them get involved in senseless relationships, I warned them. But whenever they met worthy people, I favored them.
WOMAN II: I don’t want to go to the institution. I won’t go back. You wouldn’t put me back there, would you?
WOMAN I: What!
WOMAN II: You won’t put me back in the institution, right?
WOMAN I: Don’t worry.
WOMAN II: What would you do without me? (Laughs.) A family evening. Two girls clinging to each other. You need me, I need you... Your daughters may come, then again they may not come... (After some thought, slowly.) Yes. You probably were an ideal mother. It’s enough that you believe it. Who cares what they think... Do you really need them? You’ve got your work. A lot of activities. You’re everywhere. You’ve got me... You’re just crucified by waiting.
WOMAN I: You hate me.
WOMAN II: My poor darling, you’re the one who hates everybody... Life escapes you... Flows out the way water does. You’re tossing yourself about in vain... All the saints go to heaven. Some village... a cat sitting on the window sill... A song by the well... All this was so long ago. Did it happen at all? Oh, this cream is sweet. It’s too sweet.
WOMAN I: Don’t eat the cream off the cake. Your behavior is disgusting. Take your fingers out of the cream.
WOMAN II: A birthday party... All the best, sis.
WOMAN I: Thank you.
WOMAN II: It’s the twelfth time I’ve wished you all the best. (Laughs.) Just tell me, have I got my senses?
WOMAN I: I'll move this desk.
WOMAN II: I won't help you.
WOMAN I: You don't have to. *(The sound of furniture being moved.)*
WOMAN I: No, this isn't the right place. . . Let's see over there. . . *(Again the sound of moving.)* Yes, it can stay here all right.
WOMAN II: "And in that aquarium, where the liquid is so opaque as if it were the vinegar of the town's fermentation, examples of noble Darwin's theory are afloat. . ." How does it go? Oh, yes. "A pink oval before, an octopus today which has passed through the stages of flatfish and crab, its organ of caress turned into an eye, clapping with its lid as with a flabby lip; from time to time a jet of hatred shoots off it and like a sepia darkens the opaque areola. . ." There, I recited you a poem for your birthday.
WOMAN I: Don't wipe your hands on your dress.
WOMAN II: He rowed and I sat on the bench and looked at his muscles. And now the meadows are ashen.
WOMAN I: They ought to come. Today is my birthday. They can't let me down. Jadwiga and Maryla. Maryla and Jadwiga.
WOMAN II: What shall we have for supper?
WOMAN I: For supper? Tossed salad.
WOMAN II: I'll go hungry again.
WOMAN I: Don't forget your hypertension.
WOMAN II: I don't forget. My hair is aflame.
WOMAN I: Besides, you'll have some cake.
WOMAN II: Why don't you give Jadwiga a call?
WOMAN I: No.
WOMAN II: Why not?
WOMAN I: I won't humiliate myself.
WOMAN II: If you call her, we won't have to wait.
WOMAN I: I said I wouldn't call her.
WOMAN II: Sis. . .
WOMAN I: Stop it.
WOMAN II: My poor little sis. . .
WOMAN I: Don't you try to pity me. I don't need your pity. If they don't come, it's my own business.
WOMAN II: He put his hand on my breast and said: "how marvelous."
WOMAN I: Do you know where my briefcase is? The one with the files?
WOMAN II: It's in the kitchen.
WOMAN I: Oh, that's right. I'll have to look at them.
WOMAN II: What time do you have to be in court tomorrow?
WOMAN I: Nine o'clock.
WOMAN II: I could play remi-bridge with you, if you wish.
WOMAN I: I don't feel like remi-bridge.
WOMAN II: Remember how I could once walk on my hands? It's a shame I can't do it anymore. I would walk on my hands, then I'd deliberately fall and you'd have some fun.
WOMAN I: I have a different notion of fun.
WOMAN II: (Sings.) Alleluiah. Alleluiah.
WOMAN I: Switch on the side lamp, won't you.
WOMAN II: The room is filled with them again. They're smiling at me.
WOMAN I: These are shadows. These are only shadows.
WOMAN II: Shadows? Perhaps.
WOMAN I: You look nice in this light.
WOMAN II: They say so too. Oh, Constantin, you're exaggerating. I dance so lightly.
WOMAN I: Do you feel like going for a walk?
WOMAN II: Oh, I walk too much.
WOMAN I: Sitting all day long in an armchair?
WOMAN II: Sitting all day in an armchair. Besides, the girls may come. They'd be despondent, if we wouldn't be at home.
WOMAN I: I don't know if they'll come. I'm not so sure.
WOMAN II: It's their beloved mummy's birthday.
WOMAN I: I wish I were capable of sitting in one place the way you do. I wish I could be idle.
WOMAN II: I'm among crowds and noises.
WOMAN I: You are?
WOMAN II: Yes, I am. Among crowds and noises. All those conversations and faces, all those touches.
WOMAN I: This china closet has got to be moved.
WOMAN II: Certainly. All the furniture can be moved.
WOMAN I: The room looks different then, as if one moved to a new apartment.
WOMAN II: You're so active. A lark of breath, a fluttering lark, you're so active.
WOMAN I: My daughters won't come. They don't need me. (The sound of furniture being moved. A thud. The noise of breaking glass and dishes.)
WOMAN II: Don't cry. Don't be sorry about those dishes. I need you, sis.
The war came with snow instead of blood
it met the sun adorned with all the nuptial
plumage and stars that cursed
as we trampled them.
The field spreads out obediently before us
is this a wedding or war?
A spring war
when none are fighting
a betrayal
am I the only warrior to die?
The field goes over me.

II
The shrubs attack from all points
but who knows where anyone is
among the pieces.
A hundred throats laugh like animals
the earth shaped by three hundred skulls
is driven wild as a barren woman
so seeded with warmth
that she will conceive the sun
we fight for his throne
but what if she conceives a hostile dog?
Along with my devils I shall abandon them
the apocalyptic bull
will break into our homes
and carry us away on his bloodied horns.

III
We had a double dream
one of it is us
the other our relics
thrown up by the earth
the objects we could feel
are expelled like whores
our shadows go round us
like open traps.
IV
The deserts whistle
the drums are trampled down
wedding-guests or warriors have marched across
the bag-pipes hardly breathe
one by one the whistling die
the fairest one left
is silence.

Bogomil Gjuzel
CREATION

My head burnt by the sun
(that Parent of the Year)
I dive into the sea and from its floor
bring up in my mouth some earth
I call mine

Men were born from drops of sweat
the furies from drops of water
Satan had washed himself in

The sky and earth struck each other like flints
a spark was born, The Slayer of Furies
a devil rode away in the woods to cook toads
and removed his footprints with a broom

He plucked out the sun’s eye
shall the Morning Star save us?

That started the months
and the historic sand in the hourglass
the rainbow of freedom not only drinks water
but also drains the slaves

Let me purge myself with a sword
or by seizing the white hot iron.
Bogomil Gjuzel

THE SECOND COMING

I

This morning I stood upon a dead man
and the whole earth groaned
the dead and the earth are one
(Earth, enrich yourself with our death)

Through its breathing
I recognize the vapours of the man
I stood upon

(Before you destroy the world
listen to your heaves
and that will save you)

II

When the dead rise
struggling for breath
shall the earth be emptied?

Shall I then see my father
the-only-one-without-a-navel?

III

That is not the rustling of leaves
but the dead spreading rumours
and those are not furrows
but fresh wounds on their bodies
decay quickened by lime

When we sit down we eat the dead
and what sticks in our throats are not bones
but bullets they were awarded
or a bit of knife rusted by blood
Not buds but nipples blossom in spring
nipples of women who cried
and died during their orgasms

IV

The crypts will yawn like empty warehouses
the tombs will open like large calyxes
of flowers no longer carnivorous

The icons will verily become saints and apostles
the churches will crumble
and in their dust the barefooted Christ will joyfully splash

(Who says I am for chaos?
So long as the laws are broken)

Not roots but rough arteries
burst through rock
transforming it into another force

V

The dead will come off the foundations
the immured structures collapse

VI

When spiders lower themselves from the sky
I, the little doubter, will recognize that man
and he will recognize me
by the original icon I have carried around
It is in his last books of poems, Los Nuevos Dias (The New Days), that Liscano has reached the most conceptual level in the development of his poetic expression. In this short volume he affirms a tendency of modern international poetry: absolute reliance on the power of the word. To understand these poems we do not need any knowledge of social, geographical or historical background. The lines live by themselves, and through the power of their unpredictable associations the poet crystalizes himself and his language in the electric space between words. He makes himself transparent in a modern world which draws energy from its contradictions. Liscano sees the world through the perspective of his inner eye: “I mean the inner eyes/ with which I move against time.” Like so many modern poets, Liscano recognizes that life depends on a continuous process of destruction. He is often close to José Gorostiza’s vision of Death without End, and affirms Mallarmé’s belief that things are closer to life when they have not yet been forced into a fixed constellation of logical connotations. Liscano says, “I name the wave without name,” or, “the triumphant presence of that which has not yet been named.” The New Days stands at the end of an intense poetic development in Juan Liscano’s life. His very early poems interpret the world around him in the context of South American geography and history; a social consciousness speaks in those poems, often closely related to the poet’s own political life. With the publication of his book Nuevo Mundo Orinoco (1959), Liscano found new material in the contemplation of things around him. In the enumeration of objects he hoped to achieve a new poetic and existential synthesis. From this point, he moved toward a deep involvement in the erotic side of life which is best represented in Carmenes (1966). The relationships of woman and earth, woman and moon, woman and man are explored in their various interactions. These poems were written under the strong influence of D. H. Lawrence. From an exuberance of language as seen in his earlier volumes of poetry, Liscano has progressed toward a purification of language and a conceptual internalization of his vision which make The New Days a unique and strong example of modern poetry. The following poems are new unpublished poems by Juan Liscano.
Juan Liscano

EL SILENCIO

El silencio henchido
habla de alguna clarividencia
de un estar en blanco entre cristales
de mármoles de dunas que se deslizan
de nevadas que esfuman las aristas
de cabeceras de río
y nos ahonda
borra huellas de perseguidos y de perseguidores
sopla y dispersa las palabras
aviva la brasa
de una elocuencia que es todo oído.

——

Efímera estación.
Sorprendimos la alegría
tarde ya
y nos dimos de beber
al abrigo del tiempo.

La sed era fuente

——

Desde algún umbral
apenas pisado
alza el brazo contra el viento
aquíeta su cabellera
sonríe
está distante y sonríe
parece nombrada por el sol
imaginada por los navegantes
traída por los últimos días del verano.
Ofrece salidas ignoradas
apartes
posibles más allá
y da respuestas
da respuestas.
Juan Liscano

SILENCE

The full silence
speaks of some transparency
of clarity amid crystals
of marble dunes which crumble
of snowfalls that blend in the aristas
of river sources
it fills us
erases the tracks of the persecuted and the persecutors
it billows and disperses the words
enlivening the ember
of an eloquence that is nothing but sound.

Ephemeral season.
We embrace the joy
already overdue
and we gave in to drinking
in the shelter of time.

Thirst was the fountain.

From some threshold
barely crossed
she flings her arm against the wind
quiets her hair
smiles
she is detached and she smiles
as if appointed by the sun
concocted by sailors
brought by the last days of summer.
She offers backdoors apart
possibilities beyond
and gives answers
gives answers.
Juan Liscano

De perfil saliste entre las piedras.
Una serpiente anida en tus rasgos.
Cara de sol.
Temblé ante tus movimientos.
Las sombras abrieron sus plumajes.
Me eché a dormir fuera del tiempo.

Juan Liscano

No sospechaba
la energía
la curvatura de rayo espacial
y más abajo
la cristalización en materia
de la memoria
tiempo sin duración
ocupado por un dejo de sonrisa
invulnerada
    antigua
por un acento en labio vivo
por formas del cuerpo
— así las venas azules
en un mapa de colinas
las umbrias los pozos carnals
las extrañas frutas de zumo adherente
un ahogo de siesta
la red de los olores magnéticos—

Vuelvo a saber intensamente
cuánto pertenezco a la tierra y al mar
a esta necesidad planetaria
de buceos y de vuelos
de vencimiento contrario o favorable.
Juan Liscano

Your profile emerged from between the stones.
A snake nests in your figure.
Sun face
I tremble before your movements.
Shadows open their feathers.
I go to sleep outside of time.

Translator Christine Cotton

Juan Liscano

I did not suspect
the energy,
the curve of the expanding ray
and, below,
crystallization of memory
in matter;
time without duration
filled with the suggestion of a smile
invulnerable
ancient
an accent on a lively lip
corporeal forms
like the blue veins
in a chart of hills
shadows and carnal wells
strange fruits of viscous juice
suffocation of the siesta
network of magnetic fragrances

Again I realize intensely
how much I belong to earth and sea,
this planetary necessity
of plunges and soaring flight,
of positive or negative fulfillment.
Juan Liscano

Claridad de escarcha
frío soleado de una vaga
de una nostalgiosa voluntad de renuncia.
Acuden los aliados del desencuentro.

Desconocidos son los fines.
No se aprendió aun la fatalidad.

Ahora todo refluye:
el soñado mar se dobla hacia atrás
quedan al descubierto bestias frías
el deseo se enmaraña
entre las olvidadas huellas
se regresa al exilio.

Ya no se busca pasar más allá
en un vasto impulso de silencio
de danzante alegría sensual
ni el poniente se enciende en la mirada
ni el pensamiento recoje
en la limpia noche del campo
las estrellas por fin visibles.

La imaginación propicia
el espectro de la soledad
arrojando una red
repartiendo tallos de sangrantes raízillas.

El amor está en otra parte
allí donde no haya posesión
ni fasto de espejos.
Juan Liscano

Clarity of frost
sunny chill of a shadowy
willed desire for renunciation.  
Allies of non-coincidence appear.

The ends are unknown.  
Fate is not yet found out.  

Now everything ebbs:  
the dream sea bends backward,  
exposes frigid beasts,  
entangles desire  
among forgotten traces  
and exiles it again.

We no longer seek to pass beyond  
in a vast impulse of silence,  
sensual dancing joy;  
the west wind does not kindle in a glance  
nor do ideas assemble  
in the transparent pastoral night  
the stars are visible at last.

Imagination favors  
the spectre of solitude  
casting out a net  
spreading shoots from bloody roots.

Love is somewhere else  
where there is neither possession  
nor the fixity of mirrors.
Luis A. Solari, Good Looking and Aged Gentleman, etching and aquatint.
Luis A. Solari, VA YA CONVERSACION, etching.
One night when I was at Lugones' home, the rain so increased in intensity that we rose to look at it from the windows. The wild pampa wind whistled through the wires and whipped the rain in convulsive gusts that distorted the reddish light from the street lamps. This afternoon, after six days of rain, the heavens had cleared to the south leaving a limpid cold blue sky. And then, behold, the rain returned to promise us another week of bad weather.

Lugones had a stove, which was extremely comforting to my winter debility. We sat down once again and continued our pleasant chat concerning the insane. Several days before, Lugones had visited an insane asylum, and the bizarre behavior of the inmates, added to behavior I myself had once observed, afforded more than enough material for a comfortable vis-à-vis between two sane men.

Given the circumstance of the weather, then, we were rather surprised when the bell at the street door rang. Moments later Lucas Diaz Velez entered.

This individual has had quite an ominous influence over a period of my life, and that was the night I met him. As is customary, Lugones introduced us by our last names only, so that for some time I didn't know his given name.

Diaz was much slimmer then than he is now. His black clothes—the color of dark mate tea—his sharp face and large black eyes gave him a none too common appearance. The eyes especially, of surprising steadiness and extreme brilliance, demanded one's attention. In those days he parted his straight hair in the middle, and perfectly smoothed down it looked like a shining helmet.

Velez spoke very little at first. He crossed his legs, responding only when strictly necessary. At a moment when I had turned towards Lugones, I happened to see that Velez was observing me. Doubtless in another I would have found this examination following an introduc-
tion very natural, but his unwavering attention shocked me.

Soon our conversation came to a standstill. Our situation was not very pleasant, especially for Vélez, since he must have assumed that we were not practicing this terrible muteness before he arrived. He himself broke the silence. He spoke to Lugones of some honey cakes a friend had sent him from Salta, a sample of which he should have brought that night. They seemed to be of a particularly pleasing variety, and as Lugones showed sufficient interest in tasting them, Díaz Vélez promised to send him the means to do so.

Once the ice was broken, after about ten minutes we returned to our subject of madmen. Although seeming not to lose a single word of what he heard, Díaz held himself apart from the lively subject; perhaps it was not his predilection. As a result, when Lugones left the room for a moment, I was astonished by his unexpected interest. In one minute he told me a number of anecdotes—his expression animated and his mouth precise with conviction. He certainly had much more love for these things than I had supposed, and his last story, related with great vivacity, made me see that he understood the mad with a subtlety not common in this world.

The story was about a boy from the provinces who after emerging from the debilitating weakness of typhoid found the streets peopled with enemies. He underwent two months of persecution, committing as a result all kinds of foolish acts. As he was a boy of certain intelligence, he commented on his own case so cleverly that listening to him it was impossible to know what to think. It sounded exactly like a farce, and this was the general impression of those who heard him discuss his own case so roguishly—always with the vanity characteristic of the mad.

In this fashion he spent three months displaying his psychological astuteness until one day his mind was cleansed in the clear water of sanity and his ideas became more temperate.

"He is well now," Vélez concluded, "but several rather symptomatic acts have remained with him. A week ago, for example, I ran into him in a pharmacy; he was leaning against the counter, waiting for what I don't know. We started chatting. Suddenly an individual came in without seeing him, and as there was no clerk he rapped with his fingers on the counter. My friend abruptly turned on the intruder with truly animal quickness, staring into his eyes. Anyone would have turned like that, but not with that rapidity of a man who is always on his guard. Although he is no longer pursued, he must have kept, unawares, an underlying fear that explodes at the least hint of sudden surprise. After staring for a moment, not moving a muscle,
he blinked and averted his disinterested eyes. It is as though he had guarded a dark memory of something terrible that happened to him in another time, something he wants never again to catch him unprepared. Imagine then the effect on him of someone's grabbing his arm on the street. I think it would never leave him.

"Undoubtedly the symptom is typical," I confirmed. "And did the psychological talk come to an end also?"

A strange thing: Díaz became very serious and gave me a cold, hostile look.

"May I know why you ask me that?"

"Because we were speaking precisely of that!" I replied, surprised. But obviously the man had seen how ridiculous he had been, because immediately he apologized profusely.

"Forgive me. I don't know what happened to me. I've felt this way at times . . . unexpectedly lost my head. Crazy things," he added, laughing, and playing with a ruler.

"Completely crazy," I joked.

"And so crazy! It's only by chance that I have an ounce of sense left. And now I remember, although I asked your pardon—and I ask it again—that I haven't answered your question. My friend does not talk about psychology any more. And now that he is eminently sane, he does not feel perverse in denouncing his own madness as he did before, forcing that terrible two-edged sword one calls reason, you see? It's very clear."

"Not very," I allowed myself to doubt.

"Possibly," he laughed, conclusively. "Another really crazy thing." He winked at me and moved away from the table, smiling and shaking his head like someone who is withholding many things he could tell.

Lugones returned and we dropped the subject—already exhausted. During the remainder of the visit Díaz spoke very little, although it was clear that his own lack of sociability was making him very nervous. Finally, he left. Perhaps he tried to overcome any bad impression he may have made by his extremely friendly farewell, offering his name and the hospitality of his house along with the prolonged clasp of affectionate hands. Lugones went down with him, since the now dark stairway was so precipitous that no one was ever tempted to try it alone.

"What the devil kind of person is he?" I asked when Lugones returned. He shrugged his shoulders.

"A terrible individual. I don't know how he came to speak ten words to you tonight. He often sits a whole hour without speaking a word, and you can imagine how pleased I am when he's like that."
On the other hand, he comes very seldom. And he’s very intelligent in his good moments. You must have noticed that, since I heard you talking."

"Yes, he was telling me about a strange case."

"What case?"

"About a friend who is pursued. He knows as much about madness as the devil himself."

"I guess so since he himself is pursued."

Scarcely had I heard what he said than a flash of explanatory logic illuminated the darkness I had felt in the other. Undoubtedly. . . ! I remembered above all his irritable air when I asked him if he didn’t discuss psychology any more. . . The good madman had thought I had guessed his secret and was insinuating myself into his consciousness. . . .

"Of course!" I laughed. "Now I understand! But your Díaz Vélez is fiendishly subtle!" And I told him about the snare he had thrown out to me to amuse himself at my expense: the fiction of a pursued friend, and his comments. But I had scarcely begun when Lugones interrupted.

"There is no friend; that actually happened. Except that his friend is he himself. He told you the complete truth; he had typhoid, was very ill, and is cured to this degree, and now you see that his very sanity is questionable. It’s also very possible that the business of the store encounter is true, but that it happened to him. He’s an interesting individual, eh?"

"And then some!" I responded, as I toyed with the ashtray.

It was late when I left. The weather had finally settled, and although one could not see the sky above, one sensed the ceiling had lifted. It was no longer raining. A strong, dry wind rippled the water on the sidewalks and forced one to lean into it at street corners. I reached Santa Fe Street and waited a while for the streetcar, shaking the water from my feet. Bored, I decided to walk; I quickened my pace, dug my hands into my pockets, and then thought in some detail about Díaz Vélez.

The thing I remembered best about him was the look with which he had first observed me. It couldn’t be called intelligent, reserving intelligence to be included among those qualities—habitual in persons of certain stature—to be exchanged to a greater or lesser degree among persons of similar culture. In such looks there is always an interchange of souls: one delves into the depths of the person he has just met, and at the same time yields part of his own soul to the stranger.

Díaz didn’t look at me that way; he looked only at me. He wasn’t
thinking what I was or what I might be, nor was there in his look the least spark of psychological curiosity. He was simply observing me, as one would unblinkingly observe the equivocal attitude of some feline.

After what Lugones had told me, I was no longer astonished by the objectivity of the madman's stare. After his examination, satisfied surely, he had made fun of me, shaking the scarecrow of his own madness in my face. But his desire to denounce himself, without revealing himself, had less the object of making fun of me than of entertaining himself. I was simply a pretext for his argument, and above all a point of confrontation; the more I admired the devilish perversity of the madman he was describing to me, the more he must have been furtively rubbing his hands. The only thing that kept him from being completely happy was that I didn't say: "But isn't your friend afraid they'll find him out when he denounces himself that way?" It hadn't occurred to me, because the friend didn't interest me especially. But now that I knew who the pursued one was, I promised myself to provide him with the wild happiness he desired. This is what I was thinking as I walked along.

Nevertheless, two weeks passed without my seeing him. I knew through Lugones that he had been at Lugones' house to bring him the confections, a good gift for him.

"He also brought some for you. Since he didn't know where you live—I don't think you gave him your address—he left them at my house. You must come by and get them."

"Some day. Is he still at the same address?"

"Diaz Vélez?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I suppose so; he didn't say a word about leaving."

The next rainy night I went to Lugones' house, sure of finding Diaz Vélez. Even though I realized, better than anyone, that the logic of thinking I would meet him precisely on a rainy night was worthy only of a dog or a madman, the probability of absurd coincidence always rules in such cases where reason no longer operates.

Lugones laughed at my insistence on seeing Diaz Vélez.

"Be careful! The pursued always begin by adoring their future victims. He remembered you very well."

"That doesn't matter. When I see him it's going to be my turn to amuse myself."

I left very late that night.

But I didn't find Diaz Vélez. Not until one noon, just as I was starting to cross the street, I saw him on Artes Street. He was walking north, looking into all the shop windows, not missing a one, like a
person preoccupied. When I caught a glimpse of him I had one foot off the sidewalk. I tried to stop, but I couldn't and I stepped into the street, almost stumbling. I turned around and looked at the curb, although I was quite sure there was nothing there. One of the Plaza carriages driven by a Negro in a shiny jacket passed so close to me that the hub of the rear wheel left grease on my trousers. I stood still, staring at the horse's hooves, until an automobile forced me to jump out of the way.

All this lasted about ten seconds, as Diaz continued moving away, and I was forced to hurry. When I felt sure of overtaking him, all my hesitation left and was replaced by a great feeling of self-satisfaction. I felt myself in perfect equilibrium. All my nerves were tingling and resilient. I opened and closed my hands, flexing my fingers, happy. Four or five times a minute I put my hand to my watch, forgetting that it was broken.

Diaz Velez continued walking and soon I was two steps behind him. One step more and I could touch him. But seeing him this way, not even remotely aware of my presence in spite of his delirium about persecution and psychology, I adjusted my step exactly to his. Pursued! Very well...! I noted in detail his head, his elbows, his clenched hands—held a little away from his body—the tranverse wrinkles of his trousers at the back of the knee, the heels of his shoes, appearing and disappearing. I had the dizzying sensation that once before, millions of years before, I had done this: met Diaz Velez in the street, followed up with him, and having done so, continued to follow behind him—behind him. I glowed with the satisfaction of a dozen lifetimes. Why touch him? Suddenly it occurred to me that he might turn around, and instantly anguish clutched at my throat. I thought that with my larynx throttled like this I wouldn't be able to cry out, and my only fear, my terrifyingly unique fear, was that I would not be able to cry out if he turned around; as if the goal of my existence were suddenly to throw myself upon him, to pry open his jaws and shout unrestrainedly into his open mouth—counting every molar as I yelled.

I had such a moment of anguish that I forgot that it was he I was seeing: Diaz Velez's arms, Diaz Velez's legs, Diaz Velez's hair, Diaz Velez's hatband, the woof of Diaz Velez's hatband, the warp of the warp of Diaz Velez, Diaz Velez, Diaz Velez.

The realization that in spite of my terror I hadn't missed one moment of him, Diaz Velez, assured me completely.

A moment later I was possessed by the mad temptation to touch him without his noticing it, and immediately, filled with the greatest
happiness one’s own original creative act can hold, softly, exquisitely, I touched his jacket, just on the lower edge—no more, no less. I touched it and plunged my closed fist into my pocket.

I am sure that more than ten people saw me. I was aware of three: one of them, walking in the opposite direction along the sidewalk across the street, kept turning around with amused surprise. He was carrying a valise in his hand that pointed towards me every time he turned.

Another was a streetcar inspector who was standing on the curb, his legs spread wide apart. From his expression I understood that he had been watching us even before I did it. He did not manifest the least surprise or change his stance or move his head, but he certainly did follow us with his eyes. I assumed he was an elderly employee who had learned to see only what suited him.

The third person was a heavy individual with magnificent bearing, a Catalan-style beard, and eyeglasses with gold frames. He must have been a businessman in Spain. He was just passing us, and he saw me do it. I was sure he had stopped. Sure enough, when we reached the corner, I turned around and I saw him, standing still, staring at me with a rich honorable bourgeois look, frowning, with his head thrown back slightly. This individual enchanted me. Two steps later, I turned my head and laughed in his face. I saw that he frowned even more and drew himself up with dignity as if he doubted whether he could be the one intended. I made a vague, nonsensical gesture that disorganized him completely.

I followed Diaz Velez, once again attentive only to him. Now we had crossed Cuyo, Corrientes, Lavalle, Tucuman and Viamonte (the affair of the jacket and the three looks had occurred between the latter two). Three minutes later we had reached Charcas and there Diaz stopped. He looked towards Suipacha, detected a silhouette behind him and suddenly turned around. I remember this detail perfectly: for a half second he gazed at one of the buttons on my jacket, a rapid glance, preoccupied and vague at the same time, like someone who suddenly focuses on one object, just at the point of remembering something else. Almost immediately he looked into my eyes.

“Oh, how are you!” he clasped my hand, shaking it rapidly. “I haven’t had the pleasure of seeing you since that night at Lugones’. Were you coming down Artes?”

“Yes. I turned in at Viamonte and was hurrying to catch up with you. I’ve been hoping to see you.”

“And I, you. Haven’t you been back by Lugones’?”

“Yes, and thank you for the honey cakes, delicious.”
We stood silent, looking at each other.

"How are you getting along?" I burst out, smiling, expressing in the question more affection than real desire to know how he was.

"Very well," he replied in a similar tone. And we smiled at each other again.

As soon as we had begun to talk I had lost the disturbing flashes of gaiety of a few moments before. I was calm again; and, certainly, filled with tenderness for Díaz Vélez. I think I had never looked at anyone with more affection than I did at him on that occasion.

"Were you waiting for the streetcar?"

"Yes," he nodded, looking at the time. As he lowered his head to look at his watch, I saw fleetingly that the tip of his nose touched the edge of his upper lip. Warm affection for Díaz swelled from my heart.

"Wouldn’t you like to have some coffee? There’s a marvelous sun... That is, if you’ve already eaten and are in no hurry..."

"Yes, no, no hurry," he answered distractedly, looking down the tracks into the distance.

We turned back. He didn’t seem entirely delighted at the prospect of accompanying me. I wished he were happier and more subtle—especially more subtle. Nevertheless, my effusive tenderness for him so animated my voice that after three blocks Díaz began to change. Until then he had done nothing but pull at his right moustache with his left hand, nothing but not looking at me. From then on he began to gesticulate with both hands. By the time we reached Corrientes Street—I don’t know what damned thing I had said to him—he smiled almost imperceptibly, focusing alternately on the moving toes of my shoes, and gave me a fleeting glance from the corner of his eye.

"Hum... now it begins," I thought. And my ideas, in perfect order until that moment, began to shift and crash into each other dizzily. I made an effort to pull myself together, and I suddenly remembered a lead cat sitting on a chair that I had seen when I was five years old. Why that cat? I whistled, and quickly stopped. Then I blew my nose and laughed secretly behind my handkerchief. As I had lowered my head, and the handkerchief was large, only my eyes could be seen. And then I peeked at Díaz Vélez, so sure he wouldn’t see me that I had the overwhelming temptation to spit hastily into my hand three times and laugh out loud, just to do something crazy.

By now we were in La Brasileña. We sat down across from one another at a tiny little table, our knees almost touching. In the half-dark, the Nile-green color of the cafe gave such a strong impression of damp and sparkling freshness that one felt obliged to examine the walls to see if they were wet.
Diaz shifted in his chair towards the waiter, who was leaning against the counter with his towel over his crossed arms, and settled into a comfortable position.

We sat for a while without speaking, but the flies of excitement were constantly buzzing through my brain. Although I felt serious, a convulsive smile kept rising to my lips. When we had sat down I had bitten my lips trying to adopt a normal expression but this overwhelming tic kept breaking through. My ideas rushed headlong in an unending procession, piling onto one another with undreamed-of velocity; each idea represented an uncontrollable impulse to create ridiculous and, especially, unexpected situations; I had a mad desire to undertake each one, then stop suddenly and begin another; to poke my forked fingers in Diaz Velez's eyes; to pull my hair and yell just for the hell of it; and all just to do something absurd—especially to Diaz Velez. Two or three times I glanced at him and then dropped my eyes. My face must have been crimson because I could feel it burning.

All this occurred during the time it took the waiter to come with his little machine, serve the coffee and go away, first glancing absentmindedly into the street. Diaz was still out of sorts, which made me think that when I had stopped him on Charcas Street he had been thinking about something quite different from accompanying a madman like me...

That was it! I had just stumbled onto the reason for my uneasiness. Diaz Velez, a damned and pursued madman, knew perfectly well that he was responsible for my recent behavior. "I'm sure that my friend," he must have said to himself, "will have the puerile notion of wanting to frighten me when next we see each other. If he happens to find me, he'll pretend to have sudden impulses, psychological manifestations, a persecution complex; he'll follow me down the street making faces, he will then take me somewhere to buy me a cup of coffee . . ."

"You are com-plete-ly wrong," I told him, putting my elbows on the table and resting my chin in my hands. I looked at him, smiling no doubt, but never taking my eyes off him.

Diaz seemed to be surprised that I had come out with this unexpected remark.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing. Just this: you are com-plete-ly wrong!"

"But what the devil do you mean? It's possible that I'm wrong, I guess. . . Undoubtedly, it's very probable that I'm wrong!"

"It's not a question of whether you guess, or whether there's any doubt: what I'm saying is this—and I'm going to repeat it carefully so you'll be sure to understand—You-are-com-plete-ly-wrong!"
This time Diaz, jovially attentive, looked at me and then burst out laughing and glanced away.

“All right, let’s agree on it!”

“You do well to agree, because that’s the way it is,” I persisted, my chin still in my hands.

“I think so, too,” he laughed again.

But I was very sure the damned fellow knew exactly what I meant. The more I stared at him, the more dizzyingly the ideas were careening about in my head.

“Díaz Vélez,” I articulated slowly, not for an instant removing my eyes from his. Diaz, understanding that I wasn’t addressing him, continued to look straight ahead.

“Díaz Vélez,” I repeated with the same incurious vagueness, as if a third, invisible, person sitting with us had intervened.

Diaz, pensive, seemed not to have heard. And suddenly he turned with a look of frankness; his hands were trembling slightly.

“Look,” he said with a decided smile. “It would be good if we terminated this interview for today. You’re acting badly and I’ll end up doing the same. But first it would be helpful if we spoke to each other frankly, because if we don’t we will never understand each other. To be brief: you and Lugones and everyone think I’m pursued, is that right or not?”

He continued to stare at me, still with the smile of a sincere friend who wants to eliminate forever any misunderstandings. I had expected many things, anything but this boldness. With these words Diaz placed all his cards on the table, and we sat face to face, observing each other’s every gesture. He knew that I knew he wanted to play with me again, as he had the first night at Lugones’, but nevertheless, he dared incite me.

Suddenly I became calm; it was no longer a matter of letting the flies of excitement race surreptitiously through my own brain and wait to see what would happen, but to still the swarm in my own mind in order to listen attentively to the buzzing in another’s.

“Perhaps,” I responded vaguely when he had completed his question.

“You thought I was pursued, didn’t you?”

“I thought so.”

“And that a certain story I told you at Lugones’ about a mad friend of mine was to amuse myself at your expense?”

“Yes.”

“Forgive me for continuing. Lugones told you something about me?”
"He did."
"That I was pursued?"
"Yes."
"And you believe, more than you did before, that I am, don't you?"
"Exactly."
Both of us burst out laughing, each looking away at the same instant. Diaz lifted his cup to his lips, but in the middle of the gesture noticed that it was empty, and set it down. His eyes were even more brilliant than usual, with dark circles beneath them—not like those of a man, but large and purplish like a woman's.

"All right, all right," he shook his head cordially. "It's difficult not to believe it, it's possible, just as possible as what I'm going to tell you. Listen carefully: I may or I may not be pursued; but what is certain is that your eagerness that I see that you are too will have this result: in your desire to study me, you will make me truly pursued, and then I will occupy myself in making faces at you when you're not looking, as you did to me for six blocks only a half hour ago . . . which certainly is true. And there is another possible consequence: we understand each other very well; you know that I—an intelligent and truly pursued person—am capable of feigning a miraculous normality; and I know that you—in the larval stage of persecution—are capable of simulating perfect fear. Do you agree?"
"Yes, it's possible there's something in that."
"Something? No, everything!"
We laughed again, each immediately looking away. I put my elbows on the table and my chin in my hands, as I had a while before.
"And if I truly believe that you are following me?"
I saw those two brilliant eyes fixed on mine.
In the exchange of our glances there was nothing but the perverse question that had betrayed him, the brief suspension of his shrewdness. Did he mean to ask me that? No; but his madness was so far advanced that he could not resist the temptation. He smiled as he asked his subtle question, but the madman, the real madman, had escaped and was peering at me from behind his eyes.

I shrugged my shoulders carelessly, and like someone who casually places his hand on the table when he is going to shift his position, I surreptitiously picked up the sugar bowl. But the moment I did it, I felt ashamed and put it down. Diaz watched it all without flickering an eyelid.

"Just the same, you were afraid," he smiled.
"No," I replied happily, drawing my chair a little closer. "It was
an act, one that any good friend might put on—any friend with whom one has an understanding."

I knew that he wasn’t putting on an act, and that behind the intelligent eyes directing the subtle games still crouched the mad assassin, like a dark beast seeking shelter that sends out decoy cubs on reconnaissance. Little by little the beast was withdrawing, and sanity began to shine in his eyes. Once again he became master of himself, he ran his hand over his shining hair, and laughing for the last time he stood up.

It was already two o’clock. We walked towards Charcas talking about various things, in mutual tacit agreement to limit the conversation to ordinary things—the sort of brief, casual dialogue a married couple maintains on the streetcar.

As is always true in these circumstances, once we stopped neither of us spoke for a moment, and, also as always, the first thing we said had nothing to do with our farewell.

"This asphalt is in bad shape," I ventured, pointing with my chin. "Yes, it never is any good," he replied in a similar tone. "When shall we see each other again?"

"Soon. Won’t you be going by Lugones?"

"Who knows... Tell me, where the devil do you live? I don’t remember."

I gave him the address.

"Do you want to come by?"

"Some day..."

As we shook hands, we couldn’t help exchanging a look, and we burst out laughing together for the hundredth time in two hours.

"Goodbye, be seeing you."

After a few feet, I walked very deliberately for a few paces and looked over my shoulder. Díaz had turned around, too. We exchanged a last salute, he with his left hand and I with my right, and then we both walked a little faster.

The madman, the damned madman! I could still see his look in the cafe. I’d seen it clearly. I’d seen the brutish and suspicious madman behind the actor who was arguing with me! So he’d seen me following him in the glass of the shop-windows! Once again I felt a deep need to provoke him, to make him see clearly that he was beginning now, he was losing confidence in me, that any day he was going to want to do to me what I was doing to him...

I was alone in my room. It was late and the house was sleeping; in the entire house there was not a sound to be heard. My sensation of isolation was so strong that unconsciously I raised my eyes and looked
around. The incandescent gaslight coldly and peacefully illuminated the walls. I looked at the cone and ascertained that it was not burning with the usual small popping. Everything was deathly still.

It is well known that one has only to repeat a word aloud six or seven times for it to lose all meaning and for it to be converted into a new and absolutely incomprehensible utterance. That is what happened to me. I was alone, alone, alone. . . What does alone mean? And as I looked up I saw a man standing in the doorway looking at me.

I stopped breathing for an instant. I was familiar with the sensation and I knew that immediately the hair would rise at the back of my neck. I lowered my eyes, continuing my letter, but out of the corner of my eye I saw that the man had appeared again. I knew very well that it was nothing. But I couldn’t help myself, and suddenly, I looked. That I looked meant I was lost.

And all of this was Díaz’s work; he had got me overexcited about his stupid persecutions and now I was paying for it.

I pretended not to notice and continued writing, but the man was still there. From that instant, the lighted silence and the empty space behind me surged with the annihilating anguish of a man who is alone in an empty house, but doesn’t feel alone. And it wasn’t only this, things were standing behind me. I continued my letter, but the eyes were still in the doorway and the things were almost touching me. Gradually the profound terror I was trying to contain made my hair stand on end, and rising to my feet as naturally as one is capable in such circumstances I went to the door and opened it wide. But I know what it cost me to do it slowly.

I didn’t pretend to return to my writing. Díaz Vélez! There was no other reason why my nerves should be like this. But I was completely certain, too, that an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, he was going to pay for all this evening’s pleasures.

The door to the street was still open and I listened to the bustle of people leaving the theatre. “He could have attended one of them,” I thought. “And since he has to take the Charcas streetcar, it’s possible he passed by here. . . And if it’s his idea to annoy me with his ridiculous games, pretending he already feels himself pursued and knowing that I’m beginning to believe he is. . .”

Someone knocked at the door.

He! I leaped back into my room and extinguished the lamp in a flash. I stood very still, holding my breath. My skin tingled painfully as I awaited a second knock.

He knocked again. And then after a while I heard his steps advancing across the patio. They stopped at my door and the intruder
stood motionless before its darkness. Of course there was no one there. Then suddenly he called me. Damn him! He knew that I had heard him, that I had turned out the light when I heard, and that I was standing, not moving, by the table! He knew precisely what I was thinking, and that I was waiting, waiting, as in a nightmare, to hear my name called once again!

He called me a second time. Then, after a long pause:

"Horatio!"

Damnation! What did my name have to do with all this? What right did he have to call me Horatio, he who in spite of his tormenting wickedness would not come in because he was afraid! "He knows that this is what I am thinking at this instant, he is convinced of it, but the madness is upon him, and he won't come in!"

And he didn't. He stood an instant more before he moved away from the threshold and returned to the entrance hall. Rapidly, I left the table, tiptoed to the door and stuck out my head. "He knows I'm going to do this." Nevertheless, he continued at a tranquil pace and disappeared.

Considering what had just happened, I appreciated the superhuman effort the pursued one made in not turning around, knowing that behind his back I was devouring him with my eyes.

One week later I received this letter:

My dear X.

Because of a bad cold, I haven't been out for four days. If you are not afraid of the contagion, you would give me great pleasure by coming to chat with me for a while.

Yours very truly.

Lucas Díaz Vélez

P.S. If you see Lugones, tell him I have been sent something that will interest him very much.

I received the letter at two o'clock in the afternoon. As it was cold and I was planning to go for a walk, I hurried over to Lugones'. "What are you doing here at this time of day?" he asked me. I didn't see him very frequently in the afternoon in those days.

"Nothing. Díaz Vélez sends you his regards."

"So it's still you and Díaz Vélez," he laughed.

"Yes, still. I just received a letter from him. It seems he hasn't been out of the house for four days."

It was evident to both of us that this was the beginning of the end, and in five minutes' speculation on the matter we had invented a million absurd things that could have happened to Díaz. But since I
hadn’t told Lugones about my hectic day with Díaz, his interest was
soon exhausted and I left.

For the same reason, Lugones understood very little about my
visit. It was unthinkable that I had gone to his house expressly to tell
him that Díaz was offering him more honey cakes; and since I had
left almost immediately, the man must have been thinking every­
thing except what was really at the heart of the matter.

At eight o’clock I knocked at Vélez’s door. I gave my name to the
servant, and a few moments later an elderly lady obviously from the
provinces appeared; her hair was smooth and she was wearing a black
dressing gown with an interminable row of covered buttons.

“Do you want to see Lucas?” she asked, looking at me suspiciously.

“Yes, Ma’am.”

“He is somewhat ill; I don’t know whether he will be able to re­
ceive you.”

I objected that nonetheless I had received a note from him. The
old lady looked at me again.

“Please be good enough to wait a moment.”

She returned and led me to my friend. Díaz was sitting up in
bed with a jacket over his nightshirt. He introduced us to each other.

“My aunt...”

When she withdrew, I said, “I thought you lived alone.”

“I used to, but she’s been living here with me for the last two
months. Bring up a chair.”

The moment I saw him I was sure that what Lugones and I had
conjectured was true: he absolutely did not have a cold.

“Bronchitis...?”

“Yes, something like that...”

I took a quick look around. The room was like any other room
with whitewashed walls. He too had incandescent gas. I looked with
curiosity at the cone, but his whistled, whereas mine popped. As for
the rest, a beautiful silence throughout the house.

When I looked back at him, he was watching me. It must have
been at least five seconds that he had been watching me. Our glances
locked, and a shiver sent its tentacles to the marrow of my bones. But
he was completely mad now! The pursued one was living just behind
Díaz’s eyes. The only thing, absolutely the only thing in his eyes,
was a murderous fixation.

“He’s going to attack me,” I agonized to myself. But the obstinacy
suddenly disappeared and after a quick glance at the ceiling Díaz re­
covered his habitual expression. He looked at me, smiling, and then
dropped his eyes.
“Why didn’t you answer me the other evening in your room?”
“I don’t know.”
“Do you think I didn’t come in because I was afraid?”
“Something like that.”
“But do you think I’m not really ill?”
“No... Why?”
He raised his arm and let it fall lazily on the quilt.
“I was looking at you a little bit ago...”
“Let’s forget it, shall we!”
“The madman had escaped from me, hadn’t he?”
“Forget it, Diaz, forget it!”
I had a knot in my throat. His every word had the effect on me of
one more push towards an imminent abyss.
If he continues, he’ll explode! He won’t be able to hold it back!
And then I clearly realized that Lugones and I had been right. Diaz
had taken to his bed because he was afraid! I looked at him and shud­
dered violently. There it was again! The assassin was once more staring
through eyes now fixed on me. But as before, after a glance at the
ceiling, the light of normalcy returned to them.
“One thing is certain, it’s fiendishly quiet here,” I said to myself.
A moment passed.
“Do you like the silence?”
“Absolutely.”
“It’s funereal. Suddenly you get the sensation that there are things
concentrating too much on you. Let me give you an example.”
“What do you mean?”
His eyes were shining with perverse intelligence as they had at
other times.
“Well, suppose that you, like me, have been alone, in bed, for four
days, and that you—I mean, I—haven’t thought about you. Suppose
you hear a voice clearly, not yours, not mine, a clear voice, anywhere
behind the wardrobe, in the ceiling—here in this ceiling, for example
—calling you, insult...”
He stopped: he was staring at the ceiling, his face completely
altered by hatred, and then he shouted: “There are! There are!”
Shaken to my soul I instantly recalled his former glances; he heard
the voice that insulted him from the ceiling, but I was the one who
pursued him. No doubt he still possessed discernment enough not to
link the two things together.
His face had been suffused with color. Now, by contrast, Diaz
had become frightfully pale. Finally, with an effort, he turned away
from the ceiling and lay quietly for a moment, his expression vague
and his breathing agitated. I could not remain there any longer. I glanced at the night table and saw the half-open drawer.

“As soon as I stand up,” I thought with anguish, “he’s going to shoot me dead.” But in spite of everything, I rose and approached him to say goodbye. Díaz, with a sudden start, turned towards me. In the time it took me to reach his side, his breathing stopped and his fascinated eyes took on the expression of a cornered animal watching the sights of a shotgun drawing near.

“I hope you feel better, Díaz...”

I did not dare hold out my hand; but reason is as violent as madness and it is extremely painful to lose it. Díaz came to his senses and extended his hand.

“Come tomorrow, I’m not well today.”

“I’m afraid I...”

“No, no, come. Come!” he concluded with imperious anguish.

I left without seeing anyone, feeling, as I found myself free and remembering with horror that extremely intelligent man battling with the ceiling, that I was cured forever of psychological games.

The following day, at eight o’clock in the evening, a boy delivered this note to me:

Sir:

Lucas insists on seeing you. If it wouldn’t be a bother I would appreciate your stopping by here today.

Hoping to hear from you,

Desolinda S. de Roldán

I had had a disturbing day. I couldn’t think about Díaz that I didn’t see him shouting again during that horrible loss of conscious reason. His nerves were strung so tight that a sudden blast from a train whistle would have shattered them.

I went, nevertheless, but as I walked along I found I was painfully shaken by the least noise. So when I turned the corner and saw a group in front of Díaz Vélez’s door, my legs grew weak—not from any concrete fear, but from coincidences, from things foreseen, from cataclysms of logic.

I heard a murmur of fear.

“He’s coming, he’s coming!” And everyone scattered into the middle of the street. “There it is, he’s mad,” I said to myself, grieved by what might have happened. I ran, and in a moment I stood before the door.

Díaz lived on Arenales Street between Bulnes and Vidt. The
house had an extensive interior patio overflowing with plants. As there was no light in the patio, as contrasted with the entryway, the patio beyond lay in deep shadow.

“What’s going on?” I asked. Several persons replied.

“The boy who lives here is crazy.”

“He’s wandering around the patio . . .”

“He’s naked . . .”

“He keeps running out . . .”

I was anxious to know about his aunt.

“There she is.”

I turned, and there against the window was the poor lady, sobbing. When she saw me she redoubled her weeping.

“Lucas . . . ! He’s gone mad!”

“When?”

“Just a while ago. . . . He came running out of his room . . . shortly after I had sent you . . .”

I felt someone was speaking to me.

“Listen, listen!”

From the black depths of the patio we heard a pitiful cry.

“He yells like that every few minutes . . .”

“Here he comes, here he comes!” everyone shouted, fleeing. I didn’t have time or strength to run away. I felt a muffled, precipitous rush, and Diaz Vélez, livid, completely nude, his eyes bulging out of his head, rushed into the entrance hall, carried me along in front of him, made a ridiculous grimace in the doorway, and ran back into the patio.

“Get out of there, he’ll kill you,” they yelled at me. “He shot at a chair today.”

Everyone had clustered around the door again, peering into the shadows.

“Listen. . . again.”

Now it was a cry of agony that emerged from the depths.

“Water . . . ! Water . . . !”

“He’s asked for water two times.”

The two officers who had just arrived had decided to post themselves on either side of the entrance hall at the rear, and seize Diaz the next time he rushed into the hall. The wait was even more agonizing this time. But soon the cry was repeated, and following it, the scattering of the crowd.

“Here he comes!”

Diaz rushed out, violently hurled an empty vase into the street, and an instant later was subdued. He defended himself fiercely, but
when he saw it was hopeless to resist, he stopped struggling, astonished
and panting, and looked from person to person with surprise. He did
not recognize me, nor did I delay there any longer.

The following morning I went to have lunch with Lugones and
told him the whole story. This time we were very serious.
“What a shame; he was very intelligent.”
“Too intelligent,” I confirmed, remembering.
All this was June, 1903.
“Let’s do something,” Lugones said to me. “Why don’t we go to
Misiones? That will give us something to do.”
We went and four months later we returned, Lugones with a full
beard and I with a ruined stomach.

Díaz was in an Institution. Since the crisis, which had lasted
two days, there had been no further incidents. When I went to visit
him he received me effusively.
“I thought I’d never see you again. Have you been away?”
“Yes, for a while. Getting along all right?”
“Just fine. I hope to be completely well before the end of the year.”
I couldn’t help looking at him.
“Yes,” he smiled. “Although I feel fine, I think it’s prudent to
wait a few months. But deep down, since that night, nothing has hap­
pened.”
“Do you remember...?”
“No, but they told me about it. I must have been quite a sight,
naked.”

We entertained ourselves a while longer.
“Look,” he said seriously, “I’m going to ask you a favor: come
see me often. You don’t know how these gentlemen bore me with their
innocent questions and their snares. All they succeed in doing is mak­
ing me bitter, eliciting ideas from me that I don’t like to remember.
I’m sure that in the company of someone a little more intelligent I
will be wholly cured.”

I solemnly promised him to do it, and for two months I returned
frequently, never denouncing the least fault, sometimes even touching
on our old relationship.

One day I found an intern with him. Díaz winked lightly and
gravely introduced me to his guardian. The three of us chatted like
judicious friends. Nevertheless, I noted in Díaz Vélez—with some
pleasure, I admit—a certain fiendish irony in everything he was say­ing
to his doctor. He adroitly directed the conversation to the patients,
and soon placed his own case before us.

“But you are different,” objected the doctor. “You’re cured.”
“Not really, if you consider that I still have to be here.”
“A simple precaution . . . you understand that yourself.”
“But what’s the reason for it? Don’t you think it will be impossible, absolutely impossible, ever to know when I’m sane—with no need for ‘precaution,’ as you say. I can’t be, I believe, more sane than I am now.”
“Not as far as I can see,” the doctor laughed happily.
Diaz gave me another imperceptible wink.
“It seems to me that one cannot have any greater conscious sanity than this—permit me: You both know, as I do, that I have been pursued, that one night I had a crisis, that I have been here six months, and that any amount of time is short for an absolute guarantee that the thing won’t return. Fine. This ‘precaution’ would be sensible if I didn’t see all this clearly and discuss it intelligently. . . . I know that at this moment you are recalling cases of lucid madness and are comparing me to that madman in La Plata. The one who in bad moments quite naturally made fun of a broom he thought was his wife, but when completely himself, and laughing, still kept his eyes on the broom, so that no one would touch it. . . . I know, too, that this objective perspicacity in following the doctor’s opinion while recounting a similar case to one’s own is itself madness . . . and the very astuteness of the analysis only confirms it. . . . But . . . even so—in what manner, in what other way, may a sane man defend himself?”
“There is no other way, absolutely none,” the intern who was being interrogated burst out laughing. Diaz glanced at me out of the corner of his eye and shrugged his shoulders, smiling.
I had a strong desire to know what the doctor thought about this super-lucidity. At a different time I would have valued such lucidity even at the cost of disordering my own nerves. I glanced at the doctor, but the man didn’t seem to have felt its influence. A moment later we left.
“Do you think. . . .” I asked him.
“Hum! I think so . . .” he replied, looking sideways at the patio. Abruptly, he turned his head.
“Look, look!” he told me, pressing my arm.
Diaz, pale, his eyes dilated with terror and hatred, was cautiously approaching the door, as he had surely done every time I came—looking at me!
“Ah! You hoodlum!” he yelled at me, raising his fist. “I’ve been watching you come for two months now!”
Ron Welburn
THE SKIN OF MANY DRUMS

love is like
a triplet of mountains
rhythmblessed of bosom full
with sunshine and soft

brown enough to warm up
an ocean’s tonguing
her flanks

love is like cubano bop
a rhumba walking
through these newyorkstatestreets
and spanish gesticulations

love is an island
naive in the sun and
naive in the churning flesh
like the skins of many drums.
Ron Welburn

DALI-ING

I might be a softer voice
now but hard
hammer eyes scrape your silent repose
fire eyes narrow
myself into the dali world

"soft construction
with boiled beans"

a motif within premonition
here with you now
head and calf-piece
mixed with peppers in a bean pie
europa's cauldrons here can adapt

though what I see
hides in the fires of its own mouth
deceit again
is suckling child to madness
come round our way bopping
in the sunrise rhythm of summer

so I am here
muting the tenored terror's heart
am eater of slow flame and
can temper the quick of these winters
long autumn song dances along deadened streets
newsprint in grass reading
the signs of illness in the skies
where my echo
leaps arms akimbo to ellipsis
to prayer
walking in distress
to another outer world.
Bartolo Cattafi

TELA

Un colore si stinge
se ne va
ne viene un altro
il vecchio si ritinge
ritorna
i corsi e i ricorsi
andirivieni
la spola del ripieno
dell’ordito
la tela che t’avvolge
poi piove
ti si stringe addosso.

Bartolo Cattafi

CENERE

Qualcuno volle stampare
un giornale locale.
L’inchiostro era debole
la carta pepe e sale.
Era già cenere
prima di bruciare.

Bartolo Cattafi

IL MONDO BOIA

Il mondo boia
anche questa doveva farci vedere:
il culo d’un nano in fuga
e per cibo
olive in salamoia.
**Bartolo Cattafi**

**CLOTH**

A color fades  
and goes  
another comes  
the old comes back  
re-dyed  
the flowings and returns  
comings and goings  
the shuttle of weft  
of warp  
the cloth that wraps you round  
then it rains  
it shrinks on you.

**Bartolo Cattafi**

**ASH**

Somebody wanted to print  
a local paper.  
The ink was pale  
the paper pepper and salt.  
It was already ash  
before being burnt.

**Bartolo Cattafi**

**THE HANGMAN WORLD**

The hangman world  
this too it had to show us:  
the backside of a fleeing dwarf  
and to eat  
pickled olives.
Bartolo Cattafi

IL TEMPO DEL GHIRO

Questo è il tempo del ghiro
più grasso d'un budda boschivo
saluta ghiande e castagne
scende sontuoso nel sonno.
Questo è tempo di essere saggi
come il ghiro e il leone
che il mondo spaccano in due
carne buona-non buona
azione-inazione
non imbelli con l'occhio di capriolo
colti a volo dai flashes
nelle sale del trono
in cessi e dispense
rampe di scale
saltabeccanti tra vampe
che precedono il tuono.

Bartolo Cattafi

COME UNA LAMA

Come una lama di fredda chiarezza
entri nelle pagine d'un libro
folto di fatti e di giorni
eventi assesti e parole
strumento che fermi la fuga la febbre
il galoppo la nuvola di polvere
occhi scorrevoli a te riconduci
fiume fermo specchio inflessibile.
Bartolo Cattafi

THE TIME OF THE DORMOUSE

This is the time of the dormouse
fatter than a woodland Buddha
he welcomes acorns and chestnuts
descends sumptuous into sleep.
This is the time to be wise
like dormouse and lion
who split the world in two
good flesh—not good
action—inaction
not timid with the roe-deer’s eye
caught in flight by flashes
in throne rooms
in latrines and larders
flights of stairs
hopping between the flashes
that precede thunder.

Bartolo Cattafi

LIKE A BLADE

Like a blade of cold clarity
you enter the pages of a book
thick with deeds and days
you order events and words
implement that stops the flight the fever
the gallop the dust-cloud
eyes restless you lead back to yourself
still river inflexible mirror.
Mark Rudman

A NEW SLANT ON THE SENTENCE

His needs surpass
the boundaries of his mask.

Death, breath,
tenderly he squeezes

his favorite bones.
(He can't see what covers them.)

Mark Rudman

THE SENTENCE

Locked
in the sentence
of my body

a cell

for the liberation
of my senses

whatever I say
will unsay me

whittle me down
to a link
in a broken chain

crawling headless
over my body

that cell
from which

I receive the world
Mark Rudman

SOMETHING ELSE THE SENTENCE CAN'T ACCOUNT FOR

And then the storm
whipped the air

leaving stragglers
fallen lines

to electrocute
the distance

the sentence is losing
losing control

he bites his tongue
into countless tongues

and the seams
of his suit

split apart
like icy lips

and he is forced to retreat
into a transparent forest

where he won't be
alone anymore
Triandafillos Pittas

CLOSED ROOM

The evening drowsed on the naked surfaces
dark folds on discolored garments
whispers from the winding paths
puffs of wind with the silence of cypress trees.

A naked leaf before the mirror
a silent word before itself

The closed room kneels in a friendly way
the temperature of the shadows goes up
the lamp light diminishes.

Triandafillos Pittas

MARGINAL PEOPLE

Subcutaneous insects guide us
into these cities whose backs are bent
by the will of the unclean.

Our lips are prisoners of vertigo
bloodstained daggers against our breath
subterranean pulses in profane blood

Alone in the dressingrooms of remorse
Alone in the gloomy hopeless margin

No space no landscape around us
swaddled into a cocoon of scorn
we gather our body's dried sand
with no complaint, no tear, and no hope.
Triandafillos Pittas

THE EPIGRAPH

He went hiding into the garden of night flowers
behind the dark statues
into the cistern with the bats
he became a coalminer of the night.

(... he was looking for a new wine
for the delirium they had never heard)

Nothing
Nothing still
Nothing any longer

A rock only looming upright
an epigraph only, in chalk:
"Naked feet, crush him
dusty sandals, trample him
trample him . . . "

Triandafillos Pittas

NOWHERE

I heard your pulse traveling in the storm
I kissed your petal-plucking dream
I wrapped your cheek into the velvet of quiet

I asked the wind I invoked the sun
I awaited the echo of your shadows
I felt anguish facing the door of your escape

No finger sprinkled his down
no rain revealed its oracle
I found you nowhere, naked ones, in your immaterial garments.
THE HAUNTED QUARRY

TRIANDAFILLOS PITTAS

There is no explaining this eerie feeling I had of being pursued by a horde of phantoms. Lashed on by a dread I cannot explain, I raced through the narrow streets of this dead city trying to find some secret exit to escape. But my search was in vain and I finally cut through a road that led into a smooth and infinite plain, stopping short now and then to clutch at my heart which was fluttering like a bird wrenching to be free. I kept running, and collapsing, dragging myself, half paralyzed, along the cold stones, begging for nothing more in those moments than for the end to come, for the running to cease, for the pursuit to be over!

The night was suffocating. Darkness kept thickening. My mind was plunged in gloom, and phantoms with strange-looking faces were leaping about me, growing ever more dense. I kept running and panting and falling, exhausted, and leaping bolt upright whenever that hair-raising murmur tore through the air as the horde of phantoms approached in the night that kept thickening and filling with mystery and dread—and I kept falling and running on the smooth and infinite plain...

And as I was running, flailing my arms in the air and clutching at my heart with despair, I distinguished from afar, at about the center of the plain and the night, a strange phosphorescence. In my imagination then, in my fear and excitement, a myth emerged: that supposedly everything ends there at that distant point. Joints loosen, bodies fall in a heap, the hunted die. And it is the skeletons of the dead that leave that strange ghostly iridescence. A feeling of infinite joy and grief engulfed me. As though the unutterable experience of death were entering through all the pores of my body at the hour when my spirit, strained to the limit, was condensing all the experiences of my life into a few seconds. And at once something like a damp veil
spread before my eyes, something like the evaporation of tears; I felt myself renounced by every dominion of my senses while losing myself like an electrified dart in the dense phosphorescence that hovered strangely in the center of the plain and the night.

* * *

I held out my arms, terrified, and tried to steady myself, clawing at the walls inside a huge bucket that had swept me up and was rolling about in the endless depths of a dark well. But how curious! Another feeling began to pour over me conquering me from within, as though I had suddenly wakened from a long period of unconsciousness. I did not quite understand how I found myself there, nor did I remember the agony that had preceded. I was experiencing the characteristic feeling of recuperation that one feels as his strength returns from moment to moment and breathes new life into his unconscious and forgotten limbs.

"Help! help!" I felt the blood leaving my head, and in the midst of the turbulence and din, like the uncoiling of chains, I let out that despairing shriek (without understanding whom I was calling to help me). My ears flooded with the echo of my doleful cry and the sound of the chains when, suddenly, I felt a mysterious torch light up beside me. At the same moment, with almost crystal clarity, I was conscious of an image of myself rolling about in an old, perhaps abandoned, quarry. Simultaneously, overcoming for a moment the fear that the unknown and the vague breeds in our soul, and generating a hope in me and an inclination to rejoice, this discovery was accompanied by an abrupt and frightening jolt. The huge bucket had settled, and the echo from the chains was ebbing when I realized that I had been hurled into a pile of coal dust and rusty tools at the gate of an arcade. I was in sorry straits. And as I raised my hands to wipe my eyes I noticed a naked body at my feet, submerged in blood. I jumped, the hair on my head standing on end, and my choked breath forced the despairing cry ("help!") to faint away in my mouth . . . (again without my knowing whom I was calling to help me) . . .

* * *

I saw the naked body swimming in blood, and I shuddered, not because it appeared dead (death like everything else in our life has long ago ceased to be a dread for me) but because for the first time the dark but indisputable suspicion sprang up inside me that behind the familiar reality of the apparent is hidden another, unknown reality that emerges from the mystery in order to dissolve perhaps in the chaotic and the unexplored. Who could this bloody corpse be? Whose adolescent body with the perforating wound in the pubic region could
this possibly be? To whom did this burnt-out head belong, whose lips still quivered as blood formed a thin trickle at the corners? I was so agitated, so impatient, that I could not at that moment explain why I insisted on discovering the identity of the wounded adolescent first, instead of running to give aid.

“You will not guess who I am. I will show you . . . later. Just come closer . . . I cannot speak louder.”

Tremblingly the words flowed with bubbles of blood from the mouth of the naked prostrate youth. I fell upon his cheeks with the golden down and fervently kissed his half-closed eyes, anxiously squeezing his hands that were turning blue, letting my tears fall on his jet black hair; but my voice had become totally consumed inside me; in vain I struggled to utter a sound . . .

Again I heard his words, damp, distant and hollow, as though they were coming from the ripple of an underground swamp.

“You will proceed deep to the right. You will arrive before a door. You will stop . . . and wait. The door will open by itself. Be careful! Do not knock on the door. It will open by itself. Be careful not to feel compassion for anything. You will see everything, but touch nothing—and leave without a word. Later you will pass through the second arcade in the same manner. And then the third. Then you will run to me. I will be completely cured and will show you the road, that we may leave together from this haunted quarry, free at last, and invalids no longer . . .”

I turned, filled with joy and renewed strength, toward the first arcade. My senses were overflowing with the anticipation of encountering the mystery of another reality, and with the hope of freedom from this haunted quarry. But as soon as I moved my eyes away from the wounded boy and tried to recall his features, I noticed that in a peculiar way it was impossible for me to remember not only the color of his eyes or the shape of his nose, but, in general, the form of his body. It seemed if I were to see his body again I would not recognize the prostrate adolescent with the piercing wound in the pubic region . . .

* * *

Nervous and impatient, focusing my soul in the corner of my eyes, I approached the door of the first arcade. I stood and waited. And lo, without a sound of footsteps from within, without the slightest echo, slowly and silently the double-paneled door began to open. Heavy velvet curtains were waving, playing suspiciously with a wind filled with shivers. With an impatient movement, I pushed aside the heavy curtains and rushed into the center of the room, determined to face the weirdest things without touching them and without uttering a word.
The long narrow room was empty. Cactus hung from the ceiling and swayed back and forth mockingly. A door in the depths was opening and closing by itself and a light murmur in the air made me suspect that a throng of aerial beings was bustling all around me. Shadows in various pointed shapes, like species of hieroglyphics, waved about in successions of endless lines on the white walls.

At the start, the idea that I might be the first to recognize in these white shadows the writing of an unknown people, produced an agreeable feeling in me. Perhaps, I told myself with satisfaction, this unknown people might be communicating with an optical “language,” and maybe the aerial beings (that I felt with a shudder crowding around me whenever the door in the depths would silently open and close) did not possess a sense of hearing; maybe their communication was achieved through a certain special gleam in their eyes. But when the shadows disappeared as though an invisible hand had erased them, and a faint, insignificant but nevertheless eerie murmur cut across the room from end to end, that resembled the sound of worms crawling in their holes under the bark of half-broken trees, then I felt a sudden sinking under my feet and my soul plunge into unbearable anguish.

What meaning did this oppressive and vague apparition of the walls have, then, that no word, idea or image of the human language could correctly define its sense, its significance and its role in the transformation of my spiritual state? It was as though I were seized by mixed feelings coming from the creative force of thousands of men in the process of building a colossal tower, and the despair when they all come crashing down with their scaffolding and trowels, as their tower collapses in ruins just before its completion. And why, I wondered, should I have remembered exactly at this moment that precious game of my childhood, which I always started without ever finishing, because that wicked woman who was a guest in our house always interfered and would scatter and spoil the games.

Suddenly a crippled old woman emerged from the door in the depths. She was dragging her limping old body on two crutches, her face horribly distorted with fear and anguish. She was weeping unconsolably and the instant her eyes caught sight of me she let out a cry, “My child!” and made ready to fall on me, but at that very moment a mournful barking black wolf-dog bounded into the room and knocked her reeling to the floor.

Stunned, and without giving much thought to what I was doing, I drew back between the velvet curtains that were moving suspiciously with an air filled with shivers. When I found myself outside, my ears
still reverberated with the inconsolable cry of the human creature, and
the mournful, despairing barking of the animal. . .

* * *

I was impatient before the door of the second arcade and felt my
heart sputtering from the screams of the old woman who was being
torn to pieces under the fangs of the dog. I was angry with my coward­
ice but consoled myself with the words of the youth: "Do not become
frightened . . . do not have compassion . . . leave without a word!"
And, after repeating the prudent reasoning not to be swayed by my
feelings two or three times, I proceeded, certain that behind these
curtains an even more treacherous danger was lying in ambush.

But surprisingly, I came upon an unusually peaceful and idyllic
landscape. In the center was a well like the well in the Scriptures,
with a reel, a rope and a pail tied to its rim. All around and into its
depths was a dense forest of small trees, that seemed made of paper,
but were nevertheless hardy. And in the midst of the strange and un­
usual shapes of the leaves stood out the brilliance of the fruit. Flowers
at my feet were crackling and winding their petals in the stalks as
though they wanted to hide the unceasing interchanging of their
colors. . .

I felt giddy. Heavy scents were bearing down on the atmosphere.
I noticed a red fluid that dripped from the flower petals; it dried and
spilled over everything, like dust mingled with the fruit fuzz. I felt
giddy, knelt on the flowers with the languorous scent and did not
know if I wanted to leave or lie there on my stomach and go to sleep.

At that moment a phosphorescent brilliance attracted my eyes. It
spilled over from the thick foliage of the tree that was rising, gloomy
and impenetrable, directly above the well. I was thrown into con­
fusion by what I saw and rose to my feet again, lowering my eyes in
embarrassment.

From out of the dense foliage, the stark-naked body of a girl was
emerging. She was shaking her head sadly and digging the lily-like
points of her fingers through her long ebony hair. Her eyes, grown
large from grief and waiting, were smiling, emitting phosphorescent
reflections. I began to tremble. I could not define what was happening
inside me. I thought I was sinking in the cloud of a magnetic fluid
and that control of my behaviour was in the will of someone else. A
strange feeling that I was only now beginning to know for the first
time, something like becoming dissolved and being assimilated through
another being. I again remembered the words of the youth and sighed
at my weakness to resist before the mute attraction of the eyes that
had grown large from grief and waiting.
As though hypnotized, affixing in my vision the naked body of the girl, I slowly approached the tree that towered, gloomy and impene­trable, above the well of the Scriptures. I slowly approached the tree, timidly reaching out my arms and gazing at the girl with the phos­phorescent glow. And when I embraced the trunk with passion, and mounted it with fervor and nimbleness, I felt the heart of the tree sigh, the flowers writhe with shame and the fruits weep, spilling their nectar in the form of tears.

Uncontrollable, like someone beside himself with enchantment, like someone struck by a sudden madness, I approached with greedy lips to kiss the rosy toes of her naked foot. And the girl sorrowfully shook her head and dug her lily-like nails into her long ebony hair.

And suddenly the wounded boy flashed before me like an apparition, and without thinking, without understanding, as though a new invincible force were entering inside me, deranged with terror, I jumped and ran to the exit, covering my eyes with my hands. I ran and lost myself in the exit, and yet I could feel the eyes of the girl with the phosphorescent glow watching me with anguish.

* * *

In a state of utter confusion and as though projected from a demonic fury, I lunged toward the door of the third arcade, forcing apart the heavy velvet curtains. Jostling one another in my cranium were the anguished lacerations of the old woman, the barking of the dog and the seductive enchantment of the girl's eyes. My own eyes were burning, and my nerves were simmering incandescently as though they had touched the core of the earth for a second. I did not know who I was or what I wanted; I knew nevertheless that a curse weighed heavily upon me and that I was the plaything of a subterranean mythical cosmos.

I now found myself before an infant about eight months old, hanging upside down from the ceiling, its little legs bound with rope slightly above the ankles, sputtering in agony, transmitting epileptic spasms through its entire body. Its little head was like a sack of blood—the swollen eyes a brilliant red—and it was crying in a screeching tone: "whaaa, ouah, ouah . . ."

I felt a searing pain as though pitch had spilled into my eyes. My humane instincts erupted, I began uttering blasphemies at the varied spectres that torment and blacken our lives. Riveting my eyes on the bloody droplets that had stained the floor when the rope tore the tender skin, without remembering any more the command of the adolescent, blind with loathing and fury, I fell upon the screeching infant, embraced the tiny body and cut the rope with my teeth.

Then something occurred which my imagination would never have
been able to suspect and which my narrative capability remains unequal to the task of relating. Because such phenomena never occur on the face of the earth and in the midst of the world of men. General bedlam broke out, as though an earthquake and storm had struck, and as though frenzy and insanity had seized this improbable habitat of the quarry dwellers. Every object writhed and groaned with the air of epilepsy and was transformed nightmarishly and repeatedly, without, however, crystallizing into a personality with any defined or permanent identity.

Caught in the gears of that nightmarish world I cannot find today, in the language of men, the means to give even a simple sketch of what my senses and spirit experienced then. In the split-second glow of successive lightning streaks tearing through the quarry, like blinding searchlights from the bowels of the earth, I saw that I no longer held the infant in my arms, but the wounded boy in his final agony. And I saw, with an astonishment that tried my sanity, that it was I, myself, who was that very adolescent, as I had been twenty years ago. There were the secret body marks that I could not doubt, but, stronger yet, was the sensation that I was holding my own body in my hands, exactly as it had been twenty years ago in the first bloom of youth.

Its hand was resting on its wound, and its eyes, half-closed, were abandoned without resistance to the ineffable weakness of puberty.

How loathsome I was. A feeling of intellectual curiosity began to dominate me, holding any despairing revulsion in check. I knew all had been hopelessly lost, but at that moment I was incapable of imagining my present despair, when I would re-envision those eyes in their last glimmer of mute anguish, or when I would recall the sigh escaping the youth’s angelic lips . . . I was loathsome. I forcefully pushed aside the hand that was covering the wound and practically burrowed my face, with cool detachment, inside the hole. Without fear, without compassion, without disgust, I passionately bit into a bloodied worm that was swimming in the pus of the wound and then, like a useless piece of furniture, I pushed away the dying body of the youth, or my own being exactly as it must have been twenty years ago...
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Central American Poets

OSCAR ACOSTA was born in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in 1933. He has held high government and diplomatic posts. He has been the editor of the literary review *Honduras Literaria* published by the University of Honduras. He is currently editor of the newspaper *El Dia* of Tegucigalpa. In 1960 he was awarded the Rubén Darío prize. His books of poems include *Respuesto al Cuerpo Presente de José Trinidad Reyes* (1955); *Poesia Menor* (1967); *Tiempo Detenido* (1962); *Poesia* (1965). In 1967 he co-edited *Antologia de la Nueva Poesia Hondureña* with Roberto Sosa. His collection of short stories is entitled *El Arca* (1965) and he co-edited the *Antologia del Cuento Hondureño* (1968). The poems appearing in this issue come from *Poesia*, Tegucigalpa, D.C., Honduras.

LAUREANO ALBAN was born in Santa Cruz de Turrialba, Costa Rica, in 1942. He is a member of the “Comunidad Latinoamericana de Escritores.” His books of poetry include *Poemas en Cruz* (1961); *Este Hombre* (1966); *Las Voces* (1970); *Solamérica* (1972). Together with the poets Julieta Dobles Yzaguirre, Ronald Bonilla and Carlos Francisco Monge he has developed a manifesto describing their own poetry as “transcendental.” This manifesto, and a selection of poems by these poets, will be published in 1975 under the title of *Hacia una Poesia Transcendental*. The poems in this issue come from *Las Voces*, published by Editorial Costa Rica.

ANA ANTILLÓN was born in San José, Costa Rica in 1934. She has published two volumes of poetry: *Antro Fuego* (1955) and *Demonio en Caos* (1972). The poems in this selection are from *Demonio en Caos*, published by Editorial Costa Rica.

RONALD BONILLA was born in San José, Costa Rica in 1951. He is currently pursuing a degree in philology and linguistics at the Universidad de Costa Rica. He belongs to the newly founded group of *Poetas Transcendentales* led by Laureano Albán. A precocious writer, he began publishing when he was eleven years old, and by 1969 he published a major collection of poems, *Viento Dentro*. His second book is *Las Manos de Amar* (Editorial Costa Rica, 1971), from which the poems in this selection were taken.

JOSE ROBERTO CEA was born in 1939 in Izalco, El Salvador. He is a poet, playwright, fiction writer and essayist. His poetry publications include *Los Dias Enemigos* (1965); *Casi el Encuentro* (1966); *De Aquí en Adelante* (1967); *Todo el Códice* (1968); *Código Liberado* (1968); *Código de Amor* (1968); *Náufrago Genuino* (1969); and *El Potrero* (1969). The poems in this selection come from *Náufrago Genuino* and *Código Liberado*, Ministerio de Educación, San Salvador.

CHARPAN is a pseudonym for Luis Fernando Charpentier. He was born in Costa Rica in 1947 and studied at the University of Costa Rica. In 1966 he assisted the Primer Congreso de Escritores Centroamericanos in Guatemala. The poems in this issue of *Mundus Artium* come from *Breves Eternas Permanencias*, Editorial Costa Rica, 1969.
ALFONSO CHASE was born in Cartago, Costa Rica in 1945. He has been publications editor of the Ministerio de Cultura Juventud y Deportes. He is a poet, fiction writer and journalist. Among many other literary prizes, he won the Premio Nacional de Poesía in 1966. He also won the Premio Nacional de Novela in 1968 for his novel Los Juegos Furtivos. Other volumes of poetry include Arbol del Tiempo (1966); Para Escribir Sobre el Agua (1970); and Cuerpos (1972). The poems in this selection come from Cuerpos, Editorial Costa Rica.

JOSÉ MEJÍA GONZÁLEZ, poet and essayist, was born in Guatemala in 1939. He has been director of the Departamento de Letras de la Dirección General de Cultura y Bellas Artes. He is the representative in Guatemala of the Comunidad de Escritores Latinoamericanos, the most influential association of Latin American writers. His first two volumes of poetry are Huesped del Mundo (1963) and Memoria de la Tierra. He has also published a series of critical essays about Latin American writers under the title Piedra de Sacrificios. The poems appearing in this issue come from Huesped del Mundo, Centro Editorial, Guatemala.

ROBERTO FERNÁNDEZ IGLESIAS was born in Panama in 1941. He has been the editor of two literary magazines: tunAstral and Participación. His publications include Los Recién Llegados (1969); Cartas (1969); Recits (1969). His latest volume of poetry, Canciones Rotorcidas (Incede, Panama, 1973) won the Premio Ricardo Miró, the most prestigious literary award in Panama. Our selection is taken from this book.

RICARDO LINDO, poet and short story writer, was born in El Salvador in 1947. He is the son of the renowned poet, short-story writer, and novelist, Hugo Lindo. His first poems appeared in the journal Cultura, and his stories and poems have been widely published in Central and South America.

MAURICIO MARQUINA was born in Chinameca, El Salvador, in 1946. His first and only book, Obscenidades para Hacer en Casa y Otros Poemas was published in 1969 by the Editorial Universitaria. Our selection is taken from this book.

CARMEN NARANJO was born in Cartago, Costa Rica in 1931. She has primarily written fiction, but her publications of poetry are numerous. Her first volume was a long poem, América (1961). Others are Canción de la Ternura (1964), Hacia tu Isla (1966), Idioma del Invierno (1971). Forthcoming is En el Circulo de los Pronombres. She has twice won the Premio Nacional de Novela (1966 and 1971). At present she is the Secretary of Culture of Costa Rica. The poem “Oye” is included in the anthology Poesía Contemporánea de Costa Rica, Editorial Costa Rica, 1973.

MANUEL O. NIETO was born in Panama in 1951. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy and literature. He is a member of the History Department in the Universidad Santa María la Antigua. He was editor of Prisma, a cultural magazine. His publications include three volumes of poetry, Poemas al Hombre de la Calle (1970); Adentro Reconozco que me Duele Todo (1973); Reconstrucción de los Hechos (1972), from which our selection is taken.
BERTALICIA PERALTA was born in Panama in 1939. Her publications include a volume of poetry, *Crecimiento*. She was included in the anthology, *Poesía Joven de Panamá* (Siglo XXI Editores, Mexico, 1971) from which the present selection was chosen.

MARIO PICADO was born in San José, Costa Rica, in 1928. He studied in the “Liceo de Costa Rica.” In 1967 he won the *Premio Nacional de Poesía* with his book *Homenaje Poético*. His other publications include *Noche, En tus raíces un puerto están haciendo* (1953); *Hondo Gris* (1955); *Viento-Barro* (1957); *Humedad del Silencio* (1962); *Tierra del Hombre* (1964); *Yerbamar* (1965); *Serena Longitud* (1967); *Poemas Imparces* (1970) and *Poemas de Piedra y Polvo* (1972). The poems “Lluvia” and “Silueta” are taken from *Serena Longitud*. “Borde Inicial” is included in the anthology *Poesía Contemporánea de Costa Rica*, Editorial Costa Rica, 1973.

SERGIO RAMIREZ was born in Masatepe, Nicaragua in 1942. He earned his law degree in 1964, and since then has lived in San José, Costa Rica where he has worked for the Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano (an organization of Central American universities). He is the editor of the magazine *Repertorio*. Among his short story collections are *Cuentos* (1963), *Nuevos Cuentos* (1969), and *Tropeles y Tropicías* (Editorial Universitaria de El Salvador, 1972), from which our present selection was made.

AGUSTÍN DEL ROSARIO was born in Panama in 1945. The selection in this issue of *Mundus Artium* was taken from the anthology *Poesía Joven de Panamá* which was published by Siglo XXI Editores in 1971.


ALFONSO QUIJADA URÍAS was born in Quezaltepeque, El Salvador, in 1940. His publications include *Poemas* (1967) and *Los Estados Sobrenaturales y Otros Poemas* (Editorial Universitaria de El Salvador, 1970) from which the current selection was taken. He is also included in the short Salvadorian anthology of poetry, *Aparece en De Aquí en Adelante* (1967).

GUILLERMO ROS ZANET was born in Panama in 1930. While still a high school student he won the *Premio Miro*, which he won twice again in 1956 and 1964. His first volume of poems was *Poemas Fundamentales*. It was followed by *Ceremonial del Recuerdo* (1956) and *Sin el Color del Cielo* (1964). A few poems of his have been translated into English and included in *Young Poetry of the Americas, Vol. I*. The poem in this issue was taken from *Poemas Fundamentales*, 1951.
RODOLFO ABULARACH was born in Guatemala, 1933. His first individual exhibition was in 1947 and since then he has exhibited regularly at the Biennales in São Paulo, Paris, Mexico, Santiago de Chile, Darmstadt, Caracas, Venezuela, Ljubljana, Cali, Medellin, and most recently at the International Graphic Biennale, Frechen, Germany and Florence, Italy. Abularach resides in New York.

BARTOLO CATTAFI was born in Barcellona, Sicily in 1922. He has published six books of poetry, the latest of which is L’Aria secca del fuoco (1972).

GERARDO CHAVEZ was born in 1937 in Trujillo, Peru. He studied at the School of Fine Arts in Lima, Peru and in 1960 left for Europe where he now lives in Paris. His works have been exhibited in Florence, Rome and Verona, Italy, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Córdoba, Argentina, Lima, Peru, and most recently in Madrid at Galeria Aele’s El Surrealismo En El Nuevo Mundo exhibition.

RAFAEL CORONEL was born in Zacatecas, Mexico, 1932. He has exhibited regularly in individual exhibitions at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano since 1956 and represented Mexico at the International Biennale in São Paulo, Brazil where he was awarded the “Premio Córdoba.” Since then, he has given a major exhibition in 1973 at the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, Mexico.

CHRISTINE COTTON is a translator of prose and poetry from the French and Spanish and a regular contributor to Mundus Artium.

FERNANDO CORAL DUENAS was born in Quito, Ecuador, 1949. (Alumnus of the Faculdad de Artes of the Universidad Central de Ecuador.) His first exhibition was held at the Galeria y Museo de Arte, Quito, and later he was awarded “Honorable Mention” in the Salón Nacional de Pintura. Since then he has participated in the Bienal Americana de Artes Gráficas, Cali, Colombia; and San Juan, Puerto Rico. For this year, he is preparing a selection of sixty works of various techniques to be exhibited at the Museo del Banco Central del Ecuador.

GEORGE EVANS has translated a book-length selection of poems by Jorge Carrera Andrade. He lives in Baltimore where he attends Johns Hopkins.

RUTH FELDMAN resides in Cambridge, Mass. Her poetry has been published in several journals. She co-edited and translated The Collected Poems of Lucio Piccolo (Princeton University Press).

CHRISTINE FREEMAN studies Comparative Literature at Ohio University.

REGINALD GIBBONS has just finished a book-length translation of Luis Cernuda.

REGINA GROL-PROKOPCZYK has translated several Polish poets and dramatists. She teaches Comparative Literature at Empire State College, State University of New York at Buffalo.

BOGOMIL GJUZEL, poet, essayist, dramatist and translator, was born in 1939 in Cacak, Serbia. Recent work includes two books of poems, Alhemiska Ruza (Alchemical Rose, 1963) and Mironosnici (The Libation-Bearers, 1965), and two plays, Job (1970) and Adam and Eve (1970). Among his many translations into his native language are selections from William Blake, W.B. Yeats, Rimbaud, Baude-
laire and Sylvia Plath. A number of his poems are included in Penguin's recent *New Yugoslav Writing* (1970). He is currently the director of the Struga Poetry Evenings in Macedonia.

HARRY HASKELL is a poet and translator who lives in Mexico City. He is presently translating a play by Octavio Paz.

JULIE HUNT studies Spanish and Comparative Literature at New Mexico State University. She has published several translations of contemporary Latin American poetry.

IRENEUSZ IREDYNSKI is a fiction writer, poet and dramatist born in Stanisławów in 1939. In 1961 his first stage play, *A Fitting for Martyrdom*, was produced at the Ateneum Theatre in Warsaw. His latest plays are *The Benefactor* and *Pure Sweetness*.

CAROL KYLE is a poet and translator who teaches in the English Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana.

ROBERT LIMA is professor of Comparative Literature at Pennsylvania State University. He has translated Nicanor Parra and Borges.

JUAN LISCANO was born in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1915. Today he is one of Venezuela's leading poets and critics. His books of poems include *Humano Destino* (1950); *Tierra Muerta de Sed* (1953); *Nuevo Mundo Orinoco* (1959); *Rito de Sombra* (1960); *Carmenes* (1966); *Edad Oscura* (1969); *Los Nuevos Dias* (1970). In 1973 he published the most comprehensive literary history of Venezuela under the title of *Panorama de la Literatura Venezolana Actual*. He is also the editor of the literary and cultural review *Zona Franca* published in Caracas and writes regularly for major newspapers in Venezuela and Argentina.

ROMULO MACCIO was born in Buenos Aires, 1931. Self taught as a painter, he had his first exhibition in 1956. Since then he has exhibited regularly in Buenos Aires, Paris, New York, Havana, Cuba, and Milan. His works have been included in shows of contemporary Argentine painting at the Paris Biennale, Pan American Union, Washington, D.C., Institute of Contemporary Art, London, Rio de Janeiro, Córdoba, and Santiago, Chile. His most recent exhibition was at the Galeria Bonino, Buenos Aires, 1973 and at the Lefebre Gallery, New York in 1974.

GEORGE McWHIRTER is a poet and translator who teaches creative writing at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

ARVIND KRISHNA MEHROTRA is a poet and translator. Some of his own poetry has recently appeared in *The Nation*, while more is forthcoming in *Modern Occasions*, *TriQuarterly* and *The New American Review*. He has been an Honorary Writing Fellow in the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. He teaches English at the University of Allahabad, India.

DAVE OLIPHANT has edited and translated an anthology of Chilean poetry for *Road Apple Review*, 1972. He currently teaches at Voorhees College in Denmark, South Carolina.

MARGARET S. PEDEN teaches Spanish at the University of Missouri, Columbia. She has published two volumes of translations of plays by the Mexican Emilio Carballido: *The Norther*, 1968, and *Golden Thread & Other Plays*, 1970, both
from the University of Texas Press. She is currently translating a number of stories by Carlos Fuentes.

TRIANDAFILLOS PITTAS is a Greek poet and short story writer. In 1969 he published *The Monsters Are Coming* in Athens, Greece.

HORACIO QUIROGA, poet and short story writer, was born in 1887, in Salto, Uruguay. His first collection of prose poems, *Los Arrecifes De Coral*, was published in 1901. Most of his short fiction, which appeared originally in magazines and newspapers, was eventually collected in *El Crimen Del Otro* (1904), *Cuentos De Amor, De Locura y De Muerte* (1917), *Cuentos De La Selva Para Niños* (1918), *El Salvaje* (1919), *Anaconda* (1921), *El Desierto* (1924), and *Los Desterrados* (1926). Quiroga died in Buenos Aires in 1937.

M. BYRON RAIZIS has published reviews, essays and translations in many major journals. He has also translated the poetry of George Seferis into English.

JOYCE ANN RODEIRO has translated a book of poems by Carlos Bousoño. She teaches in Tampa, Florida.

MARK RUDMAN'S poetry has appeared in numerous magazines. He is presently working in the Poets in the Schools Program teaching children to write poetry. He recently finished his second book, *The Sentence*.

LUIS ALBERTO SOLARI was born in Fray, Bentos, Uruguay, 1918. He studied in Montevideo, Paris, and New York and has received numerous prizes and awards in international exhibitions, most recently at the Third International Biennale, Buenos Aires, 1973; Primera Biennale, Segovia, 1974; and Fourth Biennale of Graphic Arts, Florence, 1974. He has also exhibited in numerous one-man exhibitions in Cali, Colombia; Nicosia, Cyprus; San Juan, Puerto Rico; New York, Bogotá, Buenos Aires, and Santiago, Chile.

BRIAN SWANN has translated from several languages, including Italian, Spanish and Rumanian. He co-edited and translated *The Collected Poems of Lucio Piccolo* (Princeton University Press). He teaches at the Cooper Union in New York City.

THEODORA VASILIS, an American of Greek origin, is a journalist and translator.

DONALD WALSH'S translations from the Spanish include Pablo Neruda's *The Captain's Verses* and *Residence on Earth*.


JULIO AUGUSTO ZACHRISSON was born in Panama, 1930. He studied at the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico, and in 1959 traveled to Europe where he worked in the studios at the Academia Pietro Vannuci, Italy and the Academia de San Fernando, Madrid. Since 1958, he participated in Biennales and collective exhibitions of contemporary art in Mexico, Rome, Madrid, Barcelona, São Paulo, New York, Havana, Chile, Caracas, Puerto Rico, Buenos Aires, Panama, Montevideo, and Washington.
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