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In order to evaluate the recent poetry of Venezuela, it is necessary, first of all, to outline some of the earlier movements and poets which have influenced the contemporary period.

In Venezuela the colonial period of Spanish domination did not produce an important poet as it did in Mexico with Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and in Chile with Alonso de Ercilla and Pedro de Oña. The first outstanding poet to emerge in Venezuelan letters was Andrés Bello (1781-1865), who lived the greater part of his life abroad while the brutal War of Independence (1810-1830) was being fought in Venezuela. Bello had traveled to London on a diplomatic mission and remained there, self-exiled from the dangers of the war at home. Later in his life Bello returned to Chile where a stable society and government took advantage of his humanistic training and commissioned him to establish the new university.

Between 1823 and 1826, in London, Bello perfected the form which established his reputation. During this time he composed almost exclusively in siluas, an original Latin strophe form used a great deal in classical Spanish poetry. Bello’s siluas possessed great vigor. He communicated an intense feeling of “americanism” through a celebration of the grandeur and virginity of the natural landscapes. His Silva a la agricultura de la Zona Tórrida (1826) must be seen as the first great lyric poem in Venezuelan literature. In nostalgic and sentimental tones, the poem expresses the rich variety of the fauna, the vitality of the climate, and the fertility of the tropical earth. Another recurring theme is the nobility of agrarian labor and the need to forsake the hostile city and return to the countryside. This bucolic message became very influential in the development of Venezuelan letters.
The poetry of Bello must be defined as neo-classical; he had an extensive knowledge of the modes and works of Horace and Virgil. However, by virtue of the numerous bucolic associations in his poetry, it is apparent that Bello anticipates the appearance of a romantic sensibility.

In subsequent years Venezuelan poetry divided into two well-defined currents: one group exhibited respect for the Spanish tradition and imitated poets from that country. The second group was characterized by a romantic effusiveness inspired both by the Spanish romantics (Espronceda, Zorilla, among others), and the late discovery of Heine elegantly translated into Spanish by the only great romantic poet Venezuela had, Juan Antonio Pérez Bonalde (1846-1892). Like Bello, Pérez Bonalde was an expatriate who traveled throughout Europe, Asia and Africa, and lived for an extended period in the United States. He read the English and German romantics in their original languages and translated Poe into Spanish. With Pérez Bonalde, the incipient Venezuelan romanticism was introduced to the world.

In addition to the influences from romanticism and post-romanticism, Venezuelan poetry was greatly affected by developments in French poetry during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The line of influence did not extend, however, from the Symbolists or the linguistic and metaphorical revolution inspired by Rimbaud. Rather, the Venezuelan poets followed the models of the Parnassians—Hugo, Baudelaire, Gautier, Sully Prudhomme.

When modernismo, led by Rubén Darío (1867-1916), shook the foundations of Spanish-language poetry and was recognized as the first significant movement in Latin American letters, Venezuela lacked a figure comparable to the leading modernismo poets—the Nicaraguan Darío, the Mexican Amado Nervo (1870-1919), the Peruvian José Santos Chocano (1875-1934), the Uruguayan Julio Herrera y Reissig (1875-1910), and the Argentine Leopoldo Lugones (1879-1939). Eventually, Latin American modernismo poetry degenerated into an intolerable rhetoric of mannerisms and clichés. However, Venezuelan poetry did not participate in the flowering of modernismo nor in its decadence. Venezuelan poets retained inflexible connections to the romantic and classical traditions, and in some cases, they refused to discard provincial, regional concerns. The latter was true of poetry by Andrés Mata (1870-1931), Rufino Blanco Fombona (1874-1944), and Francisco Lazo Martí (1869-1909).

The so-called generation of 1918 provoked decisive changes in Venezuelan poetry and esthetic theory. This group firmly renounced
the language of both romanticism and modernismo, and pledged itself to pursue loftier esthetic goals. In establishing what we now recognize as the new Venezuelan poetry, the generation of 1918 sought to internalize the landscapes, initiate an adjectival and metaphoric purification, and experiment with other forms and models of verbal creation. The most significant figures of this generation are Fernando Paz Castillo (1893-), José Antonio Ramos Sucre (1890-1930), Rodolfo Moleiro (1897-1970), Jacinto Fombona Pachano (1901-1951), and Luis Barrios Cruz (1898-1969).

The poets of the 1918 generation were still producing when the immediately succeeding generation timidly discovered the avant-garde—ultraism and "martinfielismo," late echoes of the futurist explosions, dadaism and creationism. The most important avant-garde poets are Antonio Arraiz (1903-1962), whose book Aspero (1924) broke with rigid metrical schemes, Pablo Rojas Guardia (1909-), and Luis Castro (1909-1933).

The publication of two literary journals, Válpula in January 1928, and more importantly Viernes ten years later, once again changed the course of modern Venezuelan poetry. The Viernes group succeeded in forming a coalition of established and very young poets dedicated to the single purpose of poetic transformation. The consolidation of Viernes poets, avant-garde representatives, and even certain figures from the 1918 generation synchronized Venezuelan poetry with developments in Europe and North America. The chief problem for this new association of poets was to project an authentic Venezuelan experience in the broader context of the universal-occidental.

The Viernes group discovered the metaphysical romantics of Germany (Hölderlin, Novalis), Rilke and Rimbaud, Blake, the English Lake poets (Coleridge, Wordsworth), the French and Chilean surrealists, Eliot and Lautréamont. Provincial concerns and subjects were suppressed. A new poetry comprised of hallucinations, metaphysics and dreams presented an alternative to the restrained and traditional Venezuelan lyrics. Once they became established, these new influences generated a poetry that, through its most qualified representatives—Rojas Guardia, José Ramón Heredia (1900-), Luis Fernando Alvarez (1902-1952), Pascual Venegas Filardo (1911-), Otto de Sola (1912-), and Vicente Gerbasi (1913-)—destroyed traditional positions and introduced irrational and existential elements derived from Anglo-Saxon poetry, the surrealist experience, and a new awareness of the destructive potential loose in the world. Comprehensibility was replaced by hermeticism. An almost foreign style of writing was created,
unrestrained by fixed rules of grammar, capable of transmitting barbarisms and obliterating all syntactical harmony and patterns. However, about 1943, Gerbasi and de Sola separated themselves from the experimentation and sought to revitalize the lyrical mode through an appeal to “nativism.” They sought to incorporate geography and landscape in a vigorous form that was not purely descriptive, but open to the impulses of the unconscious mind.

Concurrent with the Viernes poetry were numerous manifestations of another school of poetry characterized by an admiration for the work of the Spanish exile poets—Jiménez, Machado, Salinas, Prados, Albertí, and Cernuda. There were a number of poets unable to sever ties with Mother Spain. Furthermore, the “nativist” school persisted and even produced some outstanding works in this style by Lazo Martí (Silva criolla) and Arraiz (Aspero). It remained for a Viernes poet, Vicente Gerbasi, to produce a document of prime importance in the reconciliation of “nativism” and the new surrealist and existentialist techniques. He published two works (Poemas de la tierra y de la noche, 1943, and Mi padre el inmigrante, 1945) which proposed a new manner of seeing, feeling, interpreting and translating poetry, the tropical landscape, the multiform presence of nature and man’s relationship to these elements.

Initially, Venezuelan poetry was preoccupied with geography and natural scenes; later, it established relationships between man and the landscape. However, following the apocalyptic events of World War II, contemporary Venezuelan poetry became introspective, anthropocentric, skeptical, subversive, ambiguous and in general the singular reflection of the poet’s own sensibility. Venezuelan poetry has undergone a continuous evolution, from a neo-classicism imbued with romanticism to a full romantic expression which degenerated into an imitation of the Parnassians and modernistas. The sequence continued with the generation of 1918 poets who cultivated a more internal and purified language in combination with a more introverted and reflective view of the world. Then, the avant-garde movement released a verbal euphoria and intemperance which the Viernes group refined by the introduction of an introspective poetry, vigorously and richly metaphoric.

The post-Viernes poets did not break entirely with the Viernes group, but they clearly rejected any links with Spanish heritage and with the “nativist” line of poetry. The work of these more recent poets proceeds along two divergent lines: the one intensifying the interior distance and the purification of language, and the other characterized by a subversive and aggressive tone and surrealist and discursive tech-
niques. The esthetic sources of these two groups include St. John Perse, Pound, Eliot, Ungaretti, Quasimodo, Vallejo, Allen Ginsberg and the Beat generation, Henri Michaux, Dylcy Thomas and Rosamel del Valle.

Clearly, the distinctions between these two more recent groups are vague and insufficient. They share numerous influences and features, yet in many respects they are distinct and diverse. However, the important innovation established by both lines is not only their preoccupation with the reality of language and the structural principles of the work itself (earlier Venezuelan poetry did not concede any importance to the linguistic facts), but also their stance of existential non-conformity carried at times to extreme nihilism. In many cases, self-condemnation accentuated the feeling of imminent disaster, and increased awareness of the crisis of consumer civilization. In the face of these negative forces the poets focused on the individual, introspection, and the suggestive interior landscape. Humor, the unconscious, verbal and imaginative games were the subjects and techniques employed to express this new sense of man’s alienated and absurd condition.

Inevitably, these new attitudes and techniques provoked a negative judgment of the artistic past. During the early years of the 1960’s this judgment almost always culminated in the acceptance and glorification of political revolution. The revolution was not associated with Russia and its satellites, but rather with the emerging myth of Che Guevara, the concept of permanent revolution, and the erotic-Marxist changes detailed by Marcuse. El techo de la ballena, a late Venezuelan version of Dada and surrealism with an overlay of avant-garde political theory, typified between 1961 and 1965 a subversive position which claimed to be representative but which collapsed because of internal disputes. More significant was the journal Sardio (dissolved in 1960) whose founders conceded more importance to creative concerns and the existential position than to political activism.

Contemporary Venezuelan poetry is very diverse. Within the general context of tensions, new directions and expressions, actions and reactions in our time, each poet reflects a personal sensibility in what he writes. In a strict sense, the contemporary poets included in this anthology do not adhere to a group, school or movement. Their work is representative of the conflicts, transformations and energy which characterize Venezuelan poetry of the past fifteen years. As a result, I will briefly discuss each poet separately to establish his creative identity within the modulating patterns of the contemporary scene.

Juan Sánchez Peláez (1922-), in his first book, Elena y los elementos (1951), exhibits a language and sensibility which are very
similar to the positions of the Sardio, Tabla redonda and El techo de la ballena poets. Sánchez Peláez lived for a time in Chile where he had close contact with the surrealist poets of the Mandrágora group. In New York he was acquainted with and admired Rosamel del Valle. Following these two experiences his poetry underwent a significant change. He moved from an extremely subjective and discursive poetry to an internal poetic reality shaped by somnambulistic fortuity. Dreams, spontaneous discovery, surprises and the irrational become the new qualities of Sánchez Peláez’ poetry. Chiefly through the work of Sánchez Peláez, Venezuelan poetry was transformed from a reliance on rational criteria and lyrical logic to an acceptance of ambiguity, conceptual ambivalence, and the theme of man’s estrangement in the modern world. Sánchez Peláez is a precursor of poetic change begun in 1958, and at the same time he connects the great Viernes experiment, with its surrealist and existential aspects, to a poetic language which has begun to develop its own expressive possibilities.


Rafael José Muñoz (1928-) formed part of the Cantaclaro group (1950) whose chief distinction was a militant political involvement which resulted in harsh governmental persecution. The sixteen years which separate the publication of his first collection of poems and his most recent have been spent in frustrating, unproductive political struggle. The originality of Muñoz’ first book of poetry is refined and intensified in his last book, El círculo de los tres soles. This latest volume is an authentic creative explosion in which language undergoes a constant process of disintegration and reintegration. In this amazing book of 400 pages, unique in Spanish letters, there is a destructive intersection of idiomatic, psychological and intellectual elements created by the distinctive merging of styles, symbols, esoterica, magic, parody, science fiction, tellurism and verbal games.


Rafael Cadenas (1930-) was a member of the editorial staff of the journal Tabla redonda. Since 1958, a year in which Venezuela began a new historical, political and social process following the downfall of the military dictatorship, Cadenas has emerged as one of the most influential figures among the younger generations of Venezuelan poets.
Los cuadernos del destierro, published by Cadenas in 1960, proved to be a seminal book for his fellow-poets and the younger generations as well. The book is a lengthy prose poem reminiscent of Rimbaud's *Season in Hell* by virtue of certain stylistic similarities and a type of introspection communicated to the reader through a glitter of images and original metaphoric combinations. Cadenas is one of the rare Venezuelan intellectuals interested in problems of the spirit, mysticism and the esoteric. The conflict in his work is between the illusion-making power of literature and his search for ontological truth outside the literary expression. In general, his poetry reflects this fundamental struggle.


*Francisco Pérez Perdomo* (1930-) was a co-founder of both *Sardio* and *El techo de la ballena*. His poetry presents a swirling dream landscape of interior fantasies. His work constantly tests the flexibility and richness of language through a ceaseless construction, destruction and reconstruction of syntactical, grammatical and linguistic elements. Chronological time is suspended, and measurable, physical space is distorted. His poetry is a counterpoint of the ambivalent, the suggestive and the sensual. The title of his recently published collected works, *Huéspedes nocturnos* reveals the recurring night subjects of his poems—dream, insomnia, sleep and the vigil.


*Luis García Morales* (1930-) is the chief founder of the journal *Sardio*. A great admirer of T. S. Eliot, García Morales strives for precision and economy in communicating a series of basic themes—the incomprehensible human condition, and the celebration of sensuality in the face of nothingness. His poems pursue a linear, chronological time and retrace time past, torn between memory and a present reality. García Morales' poetic language is swelled by images which evoke a world of intense and diffuse sensations.

**Works:** *Lo real y la memoria* (1962).

*Alfredo Silva Estrada* (1933-) sought, in his first book, to preserve the structural integrity of language and the poetic act against the influence of sentimental, confessional and anecdotal excesses. With re-
Markable consistency, Silva Estrada has maintained this resolve and orientation in several books over a twenty-year period of creative achievement. He strives for a level of free poetic expression in his work which is extended to the experimental stage in Transverbales, where he offers variable readings by means of removable, interchangeable pages.


*Ramón Palomares* (1935-) was an original member of the *Sardio* group and his first book, published under the *Sardio* imprint, served as a manifesto of the new poetic language and theory. Nevertheless, he must be distinguished from other members of that group, including Guillermo Sucre, García Morales, Elisa Lerner, and Adriano González León. Palomares’ geographical themes, fresh lyrical spontaneity, and basic anti-intellectualism separated him from the esthetic ideals of the group. Despite some experimental digressions, he retains the initial lyrical impulse in his work.


*Luis Camilo Guevara* (1937-), in his only book published to date, revives the uniquely Venezuelan evocation of a telluric reality. Through a sumptuous language and the use of archaic accents, his poems recreate at times the intoxicating passion of an anacreontic song. Though personal recollections of early life in the Orinoco Delta nourish his poems, Camilo Guevara transforms the geographical reality and childhood memories, giving them a mythic dimension and a non-temporal fullness.


*Reynaldo Pérez Só* (1945-) works in the city of Valencia where he lives with several exceptional young poets. Pérez Só, like Cadenas, is interested in the disciplines and philosophies of the spirit, and is currently engrossed in Zen philosophy. His work testifies to his deep involvement with Zen. With each new volume Pérez Só adapts and simplifies his writing to convert it to a *mantra*, that is, a rhythmic formula of harmony with his essential self, his circumstance, and the objects that surround him.


The selection of Venezuelan poets and poems in this issue was made by Juan Liscano.
Emerio Dario Lunar, SALA MENDOZA, 1971, oil on canvas. Photo Vizam.
Juan Sánchez Peláez

EXPERIENCIAS MENOS OBJETIVAS

En todas las estaciones vomita mi cuerpo, la ansiedad de mi cuerpo y mis nubes. Máscara hechizada de mi albedrío, ¿quién lo sabía? Yo descendí a los bosques primitivos de mi nostalgia, yo regresaba triste y altivo como los conquistadores de la noche.

El crepúsculo adora la esclavitud de esta tierra desolada. Yo soy mi propio ángel y mi único demonio. Yo busco un párpado de inasible bruma. Y espero, espero el porvenir.

Pacientes trabajadores de un Wonderland embrionario: sois demasiado escrupulosos para comprenderme. En un arroyo vulcanizado, con la sandalia de oro de los desiertos, por la puerta de coral de los infiernos entrareís vosotros, con vuestro código matrimonial, con las leyes tiránicas, con las grullas del horizonte.

Un fantasma, muy amable por cierto, mece suavemente mis cabellos. Y su ternura de león estrangulado sobre la vía láctea no volverá jamás.

Juan Sánchez Peláez

RETRATO DE LA BELLA DESCONOCIDA

En todos los sitios, en todas las playas, estaré esperándote.
Vendrás eternamente altiva
Vendrás, lo sé, sin nostalgia, sin el feroz desencanto de los años
Vendrá el eclipse, la noche polar
Vendrás, te inclinas sobre mis cenizas, sobre las cenizas del tiempo perdido.

En todos los sitios, en todas las playas, eres la reina del universo.

¿Qué seré en el porvenir? Serás rico dice la noche irreal.
Bajo esa órbita de fuego caen las rosas manchadas del placer.
Sé que vendrás aunque no existas.
LESS OBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES

In all seasons my body vomits, the anxiety of my body and my clouds. Bewitched mask of my will, who knew about it? I descended to the primitive forests of nostalgia, I was returning sad and proud like the conquerors of the night.

Twilight adores the bondage of this desolate land. I am my own angel and my only demon. I look for an eyelid of unattainable mist. And I wait for, hope for the future.

Patient workers of an embryonic Wonderland: you are too exact to comprehend me. In a vulcanized stream, with the golden sandal of the deserts, through the coral gate of hell you will enter, with your matrimonial code, with tyrant laws, with cranes of horizon.

A kind phantom gently strokes my hair. His tenderness of a strangled lion on the Milky Way will never return again.

PORTRAIT OF THE UNKNOWN BEAUTY

In all places, on all beaches, I will be waiting for you.
You will come eternally proud
You will come, I know, without nostalgia, without the cruel disenchantment of the years.
The eclipse will come, the polar night
You will come, you bend down over my ashes, over the ashes of lost time
In all places, on all beaches, you are the queen of the universe.

Who will I be in the future? You will be rich says the night.
Under that fiery orbit fall the roses stained with pleasure.
I know you will come even though you do not exist.
El porvenir: LOBO HELADO CON SU CORPIÑO DE DONCELLA MARITIMA
Me empeño en descifrar este enigma de la infancia,
Mis amigos salen del oscuro firmamento
Mis amigos recluidos en una antigua prisión me hablan
Quiero en vano el corcel del mar, el girasol de tu risa
El demonio me visita en esta madriguera, mis amigos son puros e inermes.

Puedo detenerme como un fantasma, solicitar de mis antepasados que vengan en mi ayuda. Pregunto: ¿Qué será de ti?
Trabajaré bajo el látigo del oro.
Ocultaré la imagen de la noche polar.

¿Por qué no llegas, fábula insomne?

Juan Sánchez Peláez
DE “ELENA Y LOS ELEMENTOS”

Yo atravesaba las negras colinas de un desconocido país.
He aquí el espectáculo:
Yo era lúcido en la derrota. Mis antepasados me entregaban las armas del combate.
Yo rehuí el universo por una gran injusticia.
Tú que me escoltas hacia una distante eternidad:
Oh ruego en el alba, cimas de luto, puertas que franquean tajamares de niebla.
Salva mis huestes heridas, verifica un acto de gracia en mis declives.
Pero, ¿qué veo yo, extenso en una maleza de tilos imberbes? Un glaciar cae lánguido en el césped.
El mármol se despide del hombre porque éste es una estatua irreverente.
The future: FROZEN WOLF WITH SMALL SEA-MAIDEN BODY

I set my mind to deciphering this enigma of childhood,
My friends go out of the dark sky
My friends shut up in an ancient prison speak to me
In vain I love the sea coral, the sunflower of your laughter
The demon visits me in this den, my friends are pure and unarmed.

I can hold myself back like a phantom, to seek out my ancestors
who may come to my aid. I ask: What will become of you?

I will work under the golden whip.
I will hide the image of the polar night.

Why don’t you come, sleepless legend?

Juan Sánchez Peláez
FROM “ELENA AND THE ELEMENTS”

I was crossing the black hills of an unknown land.
Here is the spectacle:
I was lucid in the rout. My ancestors were
handing me the arms of combat.
I rejected the universe for a great injustice.
You who escort me toward a distant eternity:
Oh I plead in the dawn, summits of grief,
gates that open the dams of mist.
Save my wounded armies, confirm an act of
grace in my descending slopes.
Yet, what do I see, stretched out in a thicket of beardless
linden trees? A glacier falls languid on the sod.
Marble dismisses man because he is an irreverent statue.
Juan Sánchez Peláez

DE ANIMAL DE COSTUMBRE

Yo me identifico, a menudo, con otra persona que no me revela su nombre ni sus facciones. Entre dicha persona y yo, ambos extrañamente rencorosos, reina la beatitud y la crueldad. Nos amamos y nos degollamos. Somos dolientes y pequeños. En nuestros lechos hay una iguana, una rosa mustia (para los días de lluvia) y gatos sonámbulos que antaño pasaron sobre los tejados.

Nosotros que no rebasamos las fronteras, nos quedamos en el umbral, en nuestras alcobas, siempre esperando un tiempo mejor. El ojo perspicaz descubre en este semejante mi propia ignorancia, mi ausencia de rasgos frente a cualquier espejo.

Ahora camino, desnudo en el desierto. Camino en el desierto con las manos.

Juan Sánchez Peláez

DE LO HUIDIZO Y LO PERMANENTE

Cuando regreso del viaje imaginario, me abandono a reir. Una jauría de lobos acoge con amor mi cervatillo insomne. Entre aquellos árboles altivos todo el rumor de mi sangre y mi desvelo.

No que la carga sea abrumadora, prorrumpo. Ni que forzara las puertas con el dedo meñique. Ni que me asustara volver aquí, a la penumbra.

Cuando regreso del viaje imaginario, vivo y yazgo en el puro desierto. En lugar de advenimientos y honores, la soledad tañe aún la campana en el bosque.
Often I become another person who does not show me his name nor his features. Between him and me, both strangely spiteful, kindness and cruelty reign. We love each other and we cut each others' throats. We are suffering and small. In our beds there is an iguana, a musty rose (for rainy days) and somnambulant cats that crossed over the rooftop long ago.

We who do not go beyond the borders, we stay on the threshold, in our bedrooms, always waiting for a better time. The penetrating eye discovers in this likeness my own ignorance, my absence of traits facing any mirror.

Now I walk, naked in the desert. I walk in the desert on my hands.

When I return from the imaginary journey, I abandon myself to laughter. A pack of wolves lovingly welcomes my sleepless newborn fawn. Among those lofty trees all the murmuring of my blood and my vigilance.

Not that the burden is oppressive, I cry out. Nor that I would force the gates with my little finger. Nor that it would frighten me to come back here, to the half-shadow.

When I return from the imaginary journey, I live and lie down in the pure desert. Instead of arrivals and honors, solitude rings even the bell in the forest.
Juan Sánchez Peláez

DE LO HUIDIZO Y LO PERMANENTE

Lo que no me tiene en cuenta
Lo huidizo y permanente
Se juntan dos cuerpos y el alba es el leopardo.
Mi quebranto
Salta a la faz del juglar;
Si entras o sales
Turba el eco
Una aureola densa;
Si piensas,
Llama en diversas direcciones la tempestad;
Si miras,
Tiembla el fósforo;
Si vivo,
Vivo en la memoria.
Mis piernas desembocan en el callejón sin luz.
Hablo al que fui, ya en mi regreso.
Sólo me toco al través
con el revés
del ramaje de fuego.
Por ti, mi ausente,
Oigo el mar a cinco pasos de mi corazón,
Y la carne es mi corazón a quien roza mi antaño.
Si entras o sales,
Vuelve al amor la confidencia del amor.
Dime
Si quiebro con los años un arco iris;
Dime
Si la edad madura es fruto vano;
La mujer agita un saco en el aire enrarecido
Baja a la arena y corre en el océano;
Juan Sánchez Peláez

FROM THE FLEEING AND THE PERMANENT

They ignore me
the fleeing and the permanent
Two bodies join and dawn is the leopard
My broken grief
Leaps to the face of the jester;
If you come in or go out
The echo disturbs
A dense halo;
If you think,
the storm calls out in several directions;
If you look,
The morning star trembles;
If I live,
I live in memory.
My legs empty into an alley without light
I speak to the one I was, already on my
way back.
I alone stroke myself
with the opposite side
of fiery branches.
Through you, my absent one,
I hear the sea at five
paces from my heart,
And the flesh is my heart
whom my long ago resembles.
If you come in or go out,
The trust of love returns to love.
Tell me
If I wrest a rainbow
from the years;
Tell me if maturity is vain fruit;
The woman shakes a sack in the rarefied air
Goes down to the sand and runs in the ocean;
Al amanecer,
Por ti,
mi ausente,
La crisálida en forma de rosa
Una rosa de agua pura es la tiniebla.

Juan Sánchez Peláez
UNO SE QUEDA AQUI

Uno se queda aquí, huérfano, en la ribera lejana o en la escollera. Entonces viene la mueca que es el pensamiento resignado, y una manera de considerar que nos hallamos por cierto tiempo en buena disposición física, y que luego también nos iremos de viaje. Pero no, siempre no, bosque perdido e inasible. Si nos fatiga la cicatriz bella del país, y la cáscara de los caminos, si nos divierten algunas arañas en la pieza diminuta que ocupamos, si no podemos desprendernos de los amigos que sollozan con nosotros, si no disponemos para la travesía con fajas de leche y pan, si no podemos escapar, aun en puerto seguro, a los brazos de la alta y la baja marea.
At daybreak,
For you,
my absent one,
The chrysalis in rose form
A rose of pure water is darkness.

Juan Sánchez Peláez

ONE STAYS HERE

One stays here, orphaned, on the far shore or on the cliff. The resigned thought shapes the face, and we consider that we are in good health for a certain time, and that soon we too will travel. But no, always no, lost and unattainable forest. What if we are wearied by the beautiful scar of the country, the rind of the roads, if we are amused by some spiders in the tiny room we live in, if we cannot avoid the friends who whimper with us, if we do not prepare for the voyage with parcels of milk and bread, if we cannot escape, still in safe harbor, from the arms of the high and low tide.
Rafael José Muñoz

PASTORAL SOBRE EL INVIERNO

El invierno ha llegado, resuenan galopes en mi pena,
espuelas de caballos que persiguen el trueno,
lamentaciones de las hojas y los animales.
Es decir, el invierno llega con plumas de gavilán,
con desfile de vacas muertas,
con algo moviéndose en la hojarasca, si es así.

Vamos a cerrar las puertas, para que llueva.
Rosalía, tráeme un lamento, un pedazo de pena,
dile a Miguel que se libra de su obra en el Purgatorio;
no vamos a volver, porque reventarían los maíces,
no vamos a espantar la mula ciega,
vamos a cerrar las ventanas para que la noche se duerma masticando.
Dejemos al gavilán que tienda sus lienzos en la tarde,
dejemos que altas flores se vistan de luto, como de violeta anochecida,
dejemos que alguien pase con una urna bajo la lluvia,
que los llaneros suenen sus vidas,
que aquella piedra también se abra como una loma.

La lluvia cae aquí, escucha Miguel, escucha el trueno,
la tempestad se aleja hacia una comarca de pastores
y abre puertas de chozas donde la gente se persigna;
escucha, Miguel, son los rayos que vienen de lejos,
con los cascos de los caballos que plujen en sordo vegetal.

Esta lluvia debe tener un eco
compartido por alguna pupila del abismo.
Winter: I ache with the echo of galloping hooves,  
horses’ spurs chasing the thunder,  
lamentation of animals and leaves; or say  
winter has come with a sparrowhawk’s feathers,  
a pageant of drowned cows,  
something that moves in the withering foliage, yes, that’s how it is.

Close the doors, it’s raining.  
Rosalia, bring me my sorrow, a splinter of pain.  
Tell Miguel all is forgiven in Purgatory;  
we’re not coming back, the corn would foam in the kernel.  
Let’s not scare off the blind mule,  
let’s close all the windows so night can drowse off, chewing its cud.  
Let the hawk do what it pleases, let it stretch out its nets in the dark.  
Let the tall flowers dress in their funeral finery like violets in the dusk.  
Anyone can pass with an urn in the rain, if he wants to,  
the plainsman can rattle his lives  
while stone opens up like a hillock.

Here comes the rain, Miguel listens, hearing thunder,  
the storm moves off toward the bounding line of the pasture,  
blows open the doors of the shanties, people sign themselves with the cross.

Listen, Miguel, those flashes come from far off,  
where the horse’s skeleton moans in the vegetal dark.

The rain should carry an echo  
that it shares with an eye in the void.
Rafael José Muñoz

CAMINO DE LA MUERTE

Por aquí va la muerte caminando
con su pesada carga de cabellos,
con húmedas arenas y paredes
sacudidas por ráfagas remotas.

Tiende color de ojo de sardina,
un sabor de piel triste y de libélula;
su pelambre es de potro de carrera
y su mirada, de nocturna máscara.

Aquí va junto a mí, como una luna
derramando su luz sobre regiones
de tigres solos y de lagartijas,
de lechuzas oscuras y fantasmas.

Por ella sé que visto eternidad,
que he sido un animal de espejismo,
que he tenido osamenta de coral
y cielos melancólicos, y nubes.

Por ella yo camino hacia adelante
presintiendo los signos de la noche.
Ella levanta muros en mi alma
y enciende huesos y pupilas.
Rafael José Muñoz

DEATH ON THE ROAD

Death is coming my way at a walk
under the dead weight of her hair
in the wet of the sand, the walls,
shaken by gusts from afar.

Death has the color of a sardine’s eye,
it tastes of the dragonfly, it tastes of sorrowing skin,
its hide is a racehorse’s foal,
its gaze is a mask in the dark.

It stays close, like the moon,
shedding its glare in a landscape
of lizards, with tigers prowling apart,
shadowy owls, illusions.

Looking toward death I know I have looked
at eternity, lived a bestial mirage,
taken a cloudy and saturnine sky
while my bones turned to coral.

Looking toward death, plodding on,
I foresee all the omens of night:
death raising its walls in my soul,
burning pupil and bone to the ground.
Rafael Cadenas

DERROTA

Yo que no he tenido nunca un oficio
que ante todo competidor me he sentido débil
que perdí los mejores títulos para la vida
que apenas llego a un sitio y ya quiero irme (creyendo que
mudarme es una solución)
que he sido negado anticipadamente y ayudado de manera
humillante y escarnecido por los más aptos

que me arrimo a las paredes para no caer del todo
que soy objeto de risa para mí mismo
que fui preterido en aras de personas más miserables que yo
que seguíré toda la vida así y que el año entrante seré mu-
chas veces más burlado en mi ridícula ambición
que estoy cansado de recibir consejos de otros más aletargados
que yo ("Usted es muy quedado, avísese, despierte")
que nunca podré viajar a la India
que he recibido favores sin dar nada en cambio
que ando por la ciudad de un lado a otro como una pluma
que me dejo llevar por los otros

que no tengo personalidad ni quiero tenerla
que todo el día tapo mi rebelión
que no me he ido a las guerrillas
que no he hecho nada por mi pueblo
que no soy de las FALN y me desespero por todas estas
cosas y por otras cuya enumeración sería interminable
que no puedo salir de mi prisión
que he sido dado de baja en todas partes por inútil
que en realidad no he podido casarme ni ir a París ni tener
un día sereno
que me niego a reconocer los hechos
que siempre babeo sobre mi historia

que soy imbécil y más que imbécil de nacimiento
Rafael Cadenas

DEFEAT

I who’ve never held a job
who’ve felt unsteady before all competitors
who lost the best qualifications for life
who barely arrived somewhere before wanting to leave (thinking
that a change of place was a solution)
who’ve been rejected in advance and aided by the cleverest people
in a most derisive and humiliating way

who lean against walls to keep from falling down completely
who am an object of laughter even to myself
who’ve been excluded at the altars of those more miserable than I
who’ll be the way I am all through my life and often suffer ridic-
cule this coming year for my absurd ambition
who tire of being advised by others more lethargic than I (“You’re
very apathetic, bestir yourself, wake up”)
who’ll never be able to travel in India
who’ve accepted favors while giving nothing in return
who drift from one end of the city to the other like a feather
and let myself be led by others

who have no personality nor want to have one
who all day long hide my rebellion
who’ve never gone to join the guerrillas
who’ve never done a thing for my nation
who don’t belong to the FALN, despairing of all those things and
others whose enumeration would be endless
who cannot leave my prison
who’ve been discarded everywhere for being useless
who could in fact not marry or go to Paris or have one peaceful day
who will not recognize the facts
who always drivel over my life history

who’ve been an imbecile and even worse since birth
que creí que mi padre era eterno
que he sido humillado por profesores de literatura
que un día pregunté en qué podía ayudar y la respuesta
fue una risotada
que no podrá nunca formar un hogar, ni ser brillante, ni
triunfar en la vida
que he sido abandonado por muchas personas porque casi no hablo
que tengo vergüenza por actos que no he cometido
que poco me ha faltado para echar a correr por la calle
que he perdido un centro que nunca tuve
que me he vuelto el hazmerreir de mucha gente por vivir
en el limbo
que no encontraré nunca quien me soporte

que fui preterido en aras de personas más miserables que yo
que seguiré toda la vida así y que el año entrante seré mu-
chas veces más burlado en mi ridícula ambición
que estoy cansado de recibir consejos de otros más aletargados
que yo ("Usted es muy quedado, avísese, despierte")
que nunca podré viajar a la India
que he recibido favores sin dar nada en cambio
que ando por la ciudad de un lado a otro como una pluma
que me dejo llevar por los otros

que no tengo personalidad ni quiero tenerla
que todo el día tapo mi rebelión
que no me he ido a las guerrillas
que no he hecho nada por mi pueblo
que no soy de las FALN y me desespero por todas estas
cosas y por otras cuya enumeración sería interminable
que no puedo salir de mi prisión
que he sido dado de baja en todas partes por inútil
que en realidad no he podido casarme ni ir a París ni tener
un día sereno
que me niego a reconocer los hechos
que siempre babeo sobre mi historia

que soy imbécil y más que imbécil de nacimiento
who thought my father was eternal
who’ve been humiliated by professors of literature and asked
one day how I could help and got a horselaugh for an answer
who’ll never be able to make a home, be a success in life, be brilliant
who’ve been cast off by many people because I rarely talk
who am ashamed of things I never did
who’ve reached the point of running down the street
who’ve lost the social circle I never had
who’ve come to be a general laughingstock because I live in limbo
who never could find a soul to tolerate me

who’ve been excluded at the altars of those more miserable than I
who’ll be the way I am all through my life and often suffer ridicule
this coming year for my absurd ambition
who tire of being advised by others more lethargic than I (“You’re very apathetic, bestir yourself, wake up”)
who’ll never be able to travel in India
who’ve accepted favors while giving nothing in return
who drift from one end of the city to the other like a feather
and let myself be led by others

who have no personality nor do I want to have one
who all day long hide my rebellion
who’ve never gone to join the guerrillas
who’ve never done a thing for my nation
who don’t belong to the FALN, despairing of all those things and others whose enumeration would be endless
who cannot leave my prison
who’ve been discarded everywhere for being useless
who could in fact not marry or go to Paris or have one peaceful day
who will not recognize the facts
who always drivel over my life history

who’ve been an imbecile and even worse since birth
que perdí el hilo del discurso que se ejecutaba en mí y no he podido encontrarlo
que no lloro cuando siento deseos de hacerlo
que llego tarde a todo
que he sido arruinado por tantas marchas y contramarchas
que ansío la inmovilidad perfecta y la prisa impecable
que no soy lo que soy ni lo que no soy
que a pesar de todo tengo un orgullo satánico aunque a ciertas horas haya sido humilde hasta igualarme a las piedras
que he vivido quince años en el mismo círculo
que me creí predestinado para algo fuera de lo común y nada he logrado
que nunca usaré corbata
que no encuentro mi cuerpo
que he percibido por relámpagos mi falsedad y no he podido derrirmeme, barrer todo y crear de mi indolencia, mi flotación, mi extravío una frescura nueva, y obstinadamente me suicido al alcance de la mano.
me levantaré del suelo más ridículo todavía para seguir burlándome de los otros y de mí hasta el día del juicio final

**Rafael Cadenas**

**COMBATE**

Estoy frente a mi adversario.
Lo miro, cuento la distancia entre él y yo, doy un salto. Con mi mano abierta en sable lo cruzo, lo corto, lo derribo, rápidamente. Veo su traje en el suelo, las manchas de sangre, la huella de las caídas: él no está por ninguna parte y yo me desespero.
who lost the thread of conversation I was making and could not find it
who don’t give way to tears when feeling the urge to do so and who am late for everything

who’ve been destroyed by so much progress and regression who long for perfect immobility and flawless haste who am neither what I am nor what I’m not who have a satanic pride in spite of everything although at certain times I’ve shown humility to the extent of likening myself to stones who’ve lived for fifteen years in the same circle who’ve felt predestined for something beyond the ordinary yet have accomplished nothing who’ll never wear a necktie and cannot find my body

who’ve sensed my perfidy in flashes yet could not topple myself, sweep everything aside, and from my aberration and my indolence and drifting create a new tranquility, but stubbornly commit the suicide within my reach.
I’ll get up from the floor still more ridiculous to keep on laughing at others and myself till Judgment Day

Rafael Cadenas

COMBAT

I face my adversary.
I watch him, measure the distance between us, leap. Using my open hand as a cutlass I make a pass, slash him, knock him down, all rapidly. I see his suit on the ground, the bloodstains, traces of his fall: he is nowhere and I lose hope.
Rafael Cadenas

BU NGALOW

Paisaje que me resguarda de un olvido necesario. 
Palmeras, acacias, sauces a pico. 
Sol que hace cantar los techos. 

Recuerdo que nunca estuve más unido: más próximo 
a mí. Rostro duro de mi amante. Dibujo guardado. 

Después, sólo admití situaciones; apenas he inven- 
tado trampas para huir. 

Rafael Cadenas

OLD KINGDOM

Entre sus memorias más preciadas, figura su paso 
por Boca de Serpiente. 
¡El ha conocido cielos salvajes! Su mirada sigue el 
vuelo de aves playeras. 

Reino de pantanos. 
Ventanales por donde entra la creación. 
Casa de madera donde dos mujeres se insultan por 
un hombre. 

Toda la inercia de la noche se reúne a sus pies, y 
nada le seduce ese amarillo del amanecer que 
escala por las paredes, hasta sus ojos.
Rafael Cadenas

BUNGALOW

A landscape that protects me from a necessary forgetfulness. Palm trees, acacias, flourishing willows. A sun that makes the rooftops sing.

I remember I was never more unified: never closer to myself. The stubborn face of my lover. A drawing kept.

Afterward, I only admitted circumstances; I’ve scarcely invented any tricks for running away.

Rafael Cadenas

OLD KINGDOM

Counted among its most valued memories is its passage through Boca de Serpiente. It has known savage skies! Its gaze follows the flight of the waterfowl.

A kingdom of marshland. Windows through which creation enters. A wooden house where two women are insulted by one man.

All the inertia of night gathers at its feet, and nothing can seduce that yellow of the dawn that scales the walls up to its eyes.
Rafael Cadenas

SATORI

Boguemos.
Hay trirremes, nubes de insectos, una playa con
un loro, cerca.
El tesoro nos aguarda.
Ha de ser en este instante.
Ya.
Relámpago.
Boguemos.
Bajo cualquier conjunción, doblados sobre la
borda o dormidos.
De repente un día ¡el día!
Un viraje, un golpe seco, un lamido de brillante
ola nos lanza a donde es.
Boguemos.

Rafael Cadenas

AMOR

En un ápice te invoco, entre ráfagas. Ven, trae tus vientos, derriba esta horrible construcción en que vivimos. Levanta una nueva, destruye y levanta, fuego sagrado. Tú, el que ha de gobernar. Trae tu seda, tu pincel, tu espejo. Trae tus gemas, tus granos, tus cascabeles. Trae el vino, las resinas, el resplandor. Trae tus arcas inagotables y no abiertas todavía. Trae tu ungüento, tu saliva, tu frialdad, tu demencia, tu miel, tu laúd, tu árbol, tu leche tu invierno, tu lamido, tu lenguidez, tu silbo, tu fogata, oh ternura animal. Trae tu penetrante mirada, tu locura de sirena, tu ala cortante. Trae la daga de tus ojos y el azabache olvido. Sacrificios aportamos. Escúchanos, asístenos, bébenos. Estamos vacíos de tí, hambrientos de tí, oscuridad vegetal. Oh estación lluviosa de gordas nubes que vuelven entre insectos. La humedad, el fulgor, la fragancia de tu cuerpo requerimos. Sol que dormitas en la fermentada vegetación. Lo que nos urge, lo que necesitamos es tu bebida. Abájanos, élévanos, úñenos.
Rafael Cadenas

SATORI

Let's row.
Nearby are clouds of insects, a parrot on a beach, triremes.
The treasure is waiting for us.
It has to be this instant.
Now.
A lightning flash.
Let's row.
Under whatever conjunction, bent over the gunwales, becalmed.
Suddenly one day—the day!
A change in course, an abrupt stroke, the lapping of a sparkling
wave hurls us to where it is.
Let's row.

Rafael Cadenas

LOVE

I implore you from a mountaintop, among the gusts. Come, bring us
your winds, knock down this horrible structure on which we live.
Build us a new one, sacred fire; destroy and build. You who must
govern. Bring us your silk, your artist's brush, your mirror. Bring us
your gems, your grain, your little bells. Bring us wine and resins and
splendor. Bring us your inexhaustible coffers not yet opened. Bring
us your balm and your saliva, your unconcern and your insanity,
your honey, your lute, your tree, your milk, your whistling, your
bonfire, oh gentle animal. Bring us your penetrating glance, your
siren's madness, your sharpened wing. Bring us the dagger of your
eyes and jet oblivion. We contribute the sacrifices. Hear us, take care
of us and drink us. We are deprived of you and hungry for you, vegetal
obscurity. Oh rainy season of heavy clouds that move among the in-
sects. We need the moisture and the brilliance and the fragrance of
your body. A sun that dozes in fermented vegetation. What we so
urgently require is a draft of your potion. Come down to us, anoint us,
lift us up.
Francisco Pérez Perdomo

PERDIDA IDENTIDAD

Blanco y con la cabeza caída en el grimorio, cuyas páginas agitaba el viento de la noche entre fahenas espectrales, lo hallé, y su semejante ronroneaba con furor y escarbaba atormentado por los rincones de la estancia. Rostro abolido en el espejo, eso soy dijo el semejante, y mi destino es errar para siempre y buscarte en todas partes, perdida identidad.

Francisco Pérez Perdomo

PARA ESCAPAR

Para escapar al pánico de las noches y la incriminación de los vocablos me acuesto me levanto mis pasos resuenan como una fiebre minuciosamente ordenada en el laberinto de las calles me extravío en los barrios apartados

Pero el acoso de las voces me sigue como una balada fatal

De nada han servido mis arrodillamientos mis silbidos y mis brazos en jarras y estos ojos tan tristes y escamados deslizándose bajo la luna y las bombillas eléctricas hasta una hora tan impropriamente avanzada

Sobresale en particular una voz enconada
Francisco Pérez Perdomo

LOST IDENTITY

White and with his head fallen in the book of black magic, whose pages fluttered in the night wind, I found him among ghostly moths. And his likeness purred with rage and tormented he dug through the corners of the house. A face banished to the mirror, that’s what I am, said the likeness, and it is my fate to wander forever, to search for you everywhere, lost identity.

Francisco Pérez Perdomo

ESCAPE

To flee panic of night and damnation of words I lie down I get up my steps echo in the labyrinth of streets like fever perfectly predestined I lose myself in distant slums

But harassments of voices pursue me like a deadly ballad

My pleas my whispers my outstretched arms were useless and these sad suspicious eyes forlorn under the moon and electric lights until late into the night

One inflamed voice stands out
voz anonadante
una voz estridente que repta como un cáncer
por las capas cerebrales

En las aceras
y sobre las basuras que levanta el viento
me rindo a mis fantasmas

Francisco Pérez Perdomo

DE LA DEPRAVACION DE LOS ASTROS

Te miras en el espejo. En el globo de vidrio. Te acicalas. Te compones el cuello, la corbata. Te retocas el peinado. Observas tu propia imagen desde todos los ángulos. De frente, de lado; desde el agua, desde el fuego y el aire. Con curiosidad. Miras el tiempo. Consultas a los abismos. Te adelantas mil años. Vives. Regresas. Te miras en el espejo. En el globo de vidrio. Te acicalas. Te compones el cuello, la corbata. Te retocas el peinado. Observas tu propia imagen desde todos los ángulos. De frente, de lado; desde el agua, desde el fuego y el aire. Con curiosidad. Miras el tiempo. Consultas a los abismos. Te adelantas mil años. Vives. Regresas. Te miras en el espejo...
annihilating
strident voice that crawls like cancer
through layers of the brain

On the sidewalks
amid refuse brushed by the breeze
I surrender to my ghosts

Francisco Pérez Perdomo
FROM THE DEPRAVITY OF THE STARS

You view yourself in the mirror. In the crystal ball. You dress up. Straighten your collar, your tie. You touch up your hairdo. Observe your reflection from all angles. From the front, the side; from the water, the fire and the air. With curiosity. You check the time. Consult the abysses. You move ahead one thousand years. Live. Return. You view yourself in the mirror. In the crystal ball. You dress up. Straighten your collar, your tie. You touch up your hairdo. Observe your reflection from all angles. From the front, the side; from the water, the fire and the air. With curiosity. You check the time. Consult the abysses. You move ahead one thousand years. Live. Return. You view yourself in the mirror...
Francisco Pérez Perdomo

SOLO EL SUEÑO REVELA

Atados a tenebrosas cláusulas
habitamos las esferas del sueño.
La vida se desborda.

Unos seres sin tiempo,
conocidos y a la vez desconocidos,
trasponen los umbrales,
asigan la superficie de la piedra
con afiebrados gestos
y en sus viscosos brazos nos arrullan.

Son seres que abandonan sus moradas enjutas,
sacuden la conciencia,
arrastran sus sombríos oficios
y con su aliento nos anegan y queman.

Bajo el ceremonial de sombras
comienza a tambalearse la realidad presunta.
Su identidad recobran.

—Somos sombras—confiesan.

Sus quiméricos rasgos
ahora se delinean, revocan apariencias
y parsimoniosamente se establecen
en la plenitud oscura.

Sus legiones escapan
de los tratos solares y entran en la noche.

Solo el sueño revela.
Francisco Pérez Perdomo

ONLY THE DREAM REVEALS

Chained in gloom
we live in dream worlds.
Life overflows.

Timeless beings
known and unknown at the time
step over the thresholds
rip open the surface of rocks
with feverish gestures
and lull us to sleep in their grasping arms.

They are beings that abandon their meagre abodes
shock the consciousness
tear down its dismal laws
drown and scorch us with their breath.

Reality begins to reel
beneath the ceremony of shadows.
They recover their identity.

We are shadows—they admit.

Their chimerical features
become visible now, they abolish appearances
and slowly settle
in the dark fullness.

Their legions escape
the sun’s orbit and enter the night.

Only the dream reveals.
Francisco Pérez Perdomo

NO TODO ES SUEÑO

No me dice nada
Entra en mi cuarto y no obstante mi fuerza
me derriba
se apodera de mí
se viste con mi piel
Yo siento cuando en ella va entrando
frío en silencio
su cuerpo de animal despellejado
cuando allí se refugia de la noche
y va cayendo hacia el reposo del sueño
como vencido por extraño cansancio
Su nariz delirante me conmueve
Su aliento me anega como ola extraviada
Sus manos entran a mis manos
se hospedan en mis guantes
Me penetra
Estría mi memoria
Se aleja al fin cojeando como relámpago
Mi potestad fratricida
Francisco Pérez Perdomo

ALL IS NOT A DREAM

It says nothing to me
It enters my room against my will
demolishes me
overpowers me
clothes itself in my skin
I feel its entrance
cold and silent
its skinless brutal body
as it takes refuge there from the night
and drifts through the stillness of dream
as if conquered by strange fatigue
Its fevered nose excites me
like a fugitive wave its breath drowns me
Its hands enter my hands
settling in my gloves
It pierces me
Carves my memory
And disappears consumed and fixed like lightning
My fratricidal power
Luis García Morales

LOS RETORNOS

Y de nuevo al comienzo
El día semejante a la noche
Igual es la primavera y el estío
El hijo y el padre
El olvido y la anunciaciación

Y de nuevo en el tiempo
soplo de humo de las edades
nuestro soplo girando en círculo sobre los mares
nuestros brazos haciendo señales en el desierto
y es el mes de septiembre
que desata moribundo todas sus aves.

Este es el día y ésta es la noche
nuestra casa levantada en el viento
el agua y el árbol
el fuego y el cielo
y la hora peregrina de la enfermedad crepuscular.

Este es el día y ésta es la noche
entre flores quemadas y la fría perturbación de los astros.
El día y la noche hallándose y destruyéndose
en una extraña guerra sin armas.
Observad los fulgores. Observad las ruinas del mundo.
Aqui hubo lilas, follajes.
Aqui silbaba y reía cada mañana el vagabundo.
Un tiempo de perezas, un tiempo de alegrías
y el oscuro placer de la vida en medio del desastre
renovando su canto, sus licores.

(Es necesario encontrarnos besarnos es necesaria
tu piedad entre nosotros el hechizo del amor entre nosotros
por última vez
como una ráfaga de dulzura
como una palabra de fuego
el estigma único y para siempre en el día frágil
y en la noche)
RETURN

Once again back to the beginning
The day resembles the night
Spring and summer
Father and son
Oblivion and remembrance are the same

Once again in the stream of time
winds blowing from past centuries
our breath circling over oceans
our arms drawing signs in the desert
and dying September
unleashes all its birds.

Thus the day and the night
our house buoyed by the wind
water and tree
fire and sky
and the lingering twilight hour of affliction

Thus the day and the night
between burnt flowers and the cold shiver of stars.
Day and night invent and destroy each other
in a strange war without arms.
Behold the splendor. Behold the ruins of the world.
Here were lilacs, leaves.
Here the vagabond whistled and laughed every morning.
A time to laugh and a time to mourn
and the dark will of life in the middle of disaster
renewing its song and its tides

(we must meet we must kiss
we need your devotion and the bliss of love between us
for the last time
like a breeze of softness
like a word of fire
the unique sign forever in the fragile day and night)
Observad la carne, el oscuro rumor de la carne, sus voces para siempre perdidas, sus horas de aflicción y el sueño el último refugio: semejante viaje en busca de fuego a lo largo de nevadas praderas y nevados vientos. Los sueños, el encanto único de la carne en su tiempo irreal. Semejante engaño del tiempo, semejante llama en la nieve.


Donde guardas los bellos imanes —la dádiva más apetecible desde siempre— levantaré mi noche, mi soplo perdurable, igual al principio.

Donde brilla el pequeño bosque, donde guardas la piedra secreta de las continuaciones, levantaré mi casa, el único refugio donde renaceremos antes y después, ahora y mañana, en el punto único del recuerdo y el porvenir. Un tejido mágico: mayo y abril al mismo tiempo, las estaciones simultáneas, el canto del pájaro muerto y el rumor del viento en el próximo vendaval. Una extraña alianza como antes del principio como ahora y después.
Behold the flesh, the dark murmur of the flesh, its voices
lost forever, its hours of affliction and the dream as
a last repose: a similar journey in search of fire
in the snow of wide meadows and winds
Dreams, the only enchantment of the flesh in its unreal movement
Thus time deceives, thus the flame burns in the snow.

And we speak of childhood. Where? In what place?
Many questions surround us.
Someone speaks of flowers, songs and rainbows.
For many years someone laughed in the mist.
Who is that someone? When? And they sold birds and glass beads.
And they talked about stars, animals and countries.
And nobody knew for sure why they cried,
laughed and mourned.
"Excuse me, Sir, I have never seen you and we will never see each other.
We are blind. We are blind, Sir."
And once again back to the beginning
the first day like the last one
and we are in May, in the rainy season.

Wherever you keep the precious stones
—always the most desirable gifts—
I will erect my night, my everlasting breath
as in the beginning.

Where the small forest blossoms
where you keep the secret stone of continuation,
I will build my house, the only refuge where we will be reborn
before and after, now and tomorrow,
in the unique moment of past and future.
A magic tissue: May and April at the same time,
simultaneous seasons, the song of the dead bird
and the noise of the wind in the next sea storm.
A strange pact
that precedes the beginning
both now and after.
Luis García Morales

ESTA MELODIA

Esta melodía desolada navega desde hace mucho tiempo
No propiamente a través del tiempo
Sino de los espacios que se mueven
    en su flor perpetua
    en infinita resurrección

¿Cadáver de qué olvido
    es esta evocación repentina
    este círculo de agua
    que se evapora y dura
    y me acompaña cerrando un vuelo
    de pájaro
    en cuyo centro
    el pasado y el porvenir se deshojan?

Luis García Morales

AHORA

Sueno la piedra de moler el vino
Sueno lo rojo lo blanco lo hueso
La uva color de sangre
En la pupila del hambre y el amor.
Luis García Morales

THIS MELODY

The lingering voyage of this desolate melody
does not move through time
but through spaces that quiver
in perpetual blossom
in endless resurrection

What forgotten corpse
is this bursting evocation
this circle of water
that evaporates and lasts
and follows me embracing a flight
of birds
in whose center
the past and the future are transparent?

Luis García Morales

NOW

I celebrate the rock that crushes grapes
I celebrate redness whiteness bone
The grape color of blood
In the eye of hunger and love.
Tal vez adiós —murmuro
Rozando el fulgor triste de la cayena
A medio cruce entre la sangre y el vino
Muerta en los ojos del desdichado
Y aterrada aún por el sacrificio
Los lamentos del jazz
Y la piedra de la ciudad manchada
Por la tenacidad y la dulzura
A toda prisa destruyendo los signos
De una estación amarga
A toda hora comenzar
Sonar siempre la imaginación.

La razón entregada al delirio

---

**Luis García Morales**

**SIEMPRE**

Y escúchame zarpazo
vieja fisonomía del tigre
en cuatro lenguas afiladas
soy tuyo y de tu pasión
indefenso
látigo sobre látigo
y el quejido abriendose paso
entre sílabas inciertas
sílabas madres
y la espuma que se forma en los labios
de un idioma servil donde caigo
en busca de fuego
alimento útil estafalarío alimento
del delirio y la duda
y no hallo sino la huella temblorosa
de un animal sin forma
interrumpido por tu zarpazo
y una divagación que no envejece
Perhaps goodbye — I whisper
Breathing the sad brilliance of the cayena
At the intersection of blood and wine
Dead in the eyes of the dispossessed
And yet consumed by sacrifices
The laments of jazz
And the stone of the city poisoned
By fury and gentleness
With great speed destroying the signs
Of painful moments
Beginning with each new hour
To celebrate the imagination forever.

Reason possessed by frenzy

Luis García Morales

ALWAYS

Hear the violent blow
perpetual qualities of the tiger
in four sharp-edged idioms
I am yours within your passion
defenseless
a sequence of blows
and the moans reveal spaces
between unknown syllables
mother syllables
and the foam that grows on the lips
of a subdued language where I
search for fire
useful food spoiled food
of delirium and fear
and I find only the vanishing trace
of an animal without shape
severed by your blows
and the timeless echo of your wandering
Luis García Morales

PRUEBA DE FUEGO

Regresar a la esquina de la torpeza y el miedo
Sin medir los años de viudez
—con mujeres de luto
trasgando sus cantos bajo el parral—
Ni oír la flauta de la tierra
Desde hace tanto detenida en su sola melodía

Nos volveremos esa melodía
Pues nuestra línea dice que sólo permanecen
El adiós y el reencuentro
—canje cuyo fin es un pequeño funeral
en un cine de barrio—
Y quizás el afán no sea sino volverse
Para encontrar entre las imágenes desvaidas
El propio rostro cambiado
Y cada vez más lejana toda maravilla
Y ya la suerte echada en dos o tres lances
—al menudo como siempre—
Y sin nada virgen bajo la palabra
Salvo el desasosiego y la aventura

Cancelar el futuro

Esa es la prueba de fuego
TRIAL BY FIRE

Returning to the edge of weariness and fear
Not measuring the years of widowhood
— with women in mourning
sharing their laments under the vine—
Not hearing the flute of earth
So confined in its lonely melody

We will restore that melody
Since our ancestors tell us that only farewells
And reunions survive
—a ceremony like a small funeral
in a barrio cinema—
And yet the restlessness is only a return
To encounter among the colorless images
The transformed face
Each time mystery is more removed
And fate scattered in two or three directions
— unrelenting as always—
And with nothing pure beyond the word
Except anxiety and adventure

To cancel the future
That is the trial by fire

Luis García Morales
Víctor Valera, NONONO, "Te especializas en crear ídolos para sufrir en torno a ellos." 1967, bronce.
Alfredo Silva Estrada

SOBRE EL LIMITE

Habrá que ver por que amamos el límite
Habráse visto
la pregunta encajada como estaca en el límite
la flaca sombra

estamos viendo la flaca sombra inhóspita
la sombra de la estaca
la sombra de la estaca sobre el límite

la sombra de la estaca se proyecta
junto a la proyección de nuestra sombra
nuestro sombrío habitar inhóspito
nuestro errar en el límite

Amamos también algo que pasa
algo detenido brevemente en la sombra
nuestro apego a la oscuridad de un terrón
la oscuridad de nuestra tierra
los muertos en nosotros
y todas las memorias enlazadas
hundidas
en un deslizamiento de tierra

* * *

Nuestras pisadas de tierra sobre la tierra
nuestro errar en el límite
los muertos en nosotros errando sobre el límite

el entierro de dios en nuestras vísceras
el entierro de dios cada primera vez
el entierro de dios detenido en el límite
dios errabundo con nosotros
errando sobre el límite
con pisadas de tierra sobre la tierra

* * *

Se desliza la tierra

64
Alfredo Silva Estrada

OVER THE LIMIT

We’ll have to see why we love the limit
The question
must be seen stuck like a spike through the limit

the skinny shadow

we are seeing the skinny homeless shadow
the shadow of the spike
the shadow of the spike beyond the limit

the shadow of the spike is cast
next to the projection of our shadow
our shadowy homeless quarters
our wandering through the limit

And we love something passing by
something stopping briefly in the shadow
we are fond of the darkness of a lump of earth
the darkness of our earth
the dead in us
and every memory tied up
and sunk
in a landslide

* * *

Our footprints of earth over earth
our wandering through the limit
the dead in us wandering over the limit

the burial of god in our viscera
the burial of god each first time
the burial of god stopping at the limit
god wandering in us
wandering beyond the limit
with footprints of earth over earth

* * *

The earth slips
algo traspasa el límite
algo calla en el límite
el fuego tácito en su infierno de polvo
en su múltiple límite estallado
en un deslizamiento de tierra
donde ya no resuenan las pisadas

* * *
Vamos sobre una ausencia de ecos
nos estamos ausentes
y percibimos la estaca de ir
en la onda arrollada
vamos en el vértigo de la carne
vamos en el destierro de la carne
donde ya no resuenan las pisadas
en algo que pasa brevemente
en algo que suena puramente
el mirar se desborda

* * *
Algo que se hace límite
el deshecho destello se rehace en un frote:
la inmersión en el límite
la compartida construcción

* * *
Nos debimos al abandono solo
a los rostros difuntos que bloqueaban
todo el zumbido de los astros
Sobre aquel límite anulado por los eclipses
una hambre inesperada nos devora las arterias

* * *
No ser aquí
en este aire que se abisma
hasta ser la ponzoña negadora
Arrastrados por la deposición a tumbos
recobrand la tierra con nuestro cuerpo
desembocamos a la deposición inmóvil
o intentamos de nuevo la promesa en el límite
something pierces the limit
something silences the limit
the tacit fire in its dusty hell
in its multiple limit exploded
in a landslide
where the footsteps no longer echo

* * *

We travel over an absence of echoes
we are remote
and perceive the spike of leaving
in the turning wave
we move in the dizziness of flesh
we move in the exile of flesh
where footsteps no longer echo
in something that happens quickly
in something that echoes purely
a gazing floods over

* * *

Something that becomes a limit
a violent glittering becomes a rubbing:
immersion in the limit
a shared construction

* * *

We are born by the lone abandonment
of dead faces that blot out
all the buzzing clatter of the stars
A surprising hunger eats up our arteries
beyond that limit the eclipses revoke

* * *

Not to be here
in this wind that caves in
to the negating poison
Torn out fitfully by depossession
recovering the earth with our body
we come out into an unmoving depossession
or again we shoot for the promise of the limit
Alfredo Silva Estrada

DE APENAS

Algo que diga este transcurrir envolvente
(un niño nombra el objeto que nace entre sus manos)
viento tachado en su emerger lo posible
la cercanía de tu mano
a la altura de vallas descerrejadas
crea estaciones
donde el instante sabe como a fruto de infancia

Alfredo Silva Estrada

DE ENUNCIOS

Facilidad de nivel de río.
Facilidad cuando cavas.
Facilidad cuando tu cuerpo dice
al sol
o hace un pasmo de tiniebla
y se hace un silencio animal,

un animal sigiloso
 masticando su alimento de siempre.

Facilidad de nivel de río
cuando tu mirada desemboca.
Alfredo Silva Estrada

FROM HARDLY

Something that says this circling lapse of time
(a child names the object born in his hands)
stained wind and possibility in its emergence
the hand's closeness
at the height of unlocked fences
creates seasons
that the instant savoringly knows like the fruit of childhood

Alfredo Silva Estrada

FROM ENUNCIATIONS

Easiness of a river level.
Easiness when you dig in
Easiness when your body talks
to the sun
or becomes a dumb wonder of shadow
and a silent animal,
a sneaky quiet animal
chewing his usual food.

Easiness of a river level
when your gaze flows out.
Ramon Palomares

ELEGIA EN LA MUERTE DE MI PADRE

Esto dijéronme:
Tu padre ha muerto, más nunca habrás de verlo.
Abrele los ojos por última vez
y huélelo y tócalo por última vez.
Con la terrible mano tuya recórrelo
y huélelo como siguiendo el rastro de su muerte
y entreábrelle los ojos por si pudieras
mirar adonde ahora se encuentra.

Ya los gavilanes han dejado su garra en la cumbre
y en el aire dejaron pedazos de sus alas,
con una sombra triste y dura se perdieron
como amenazando la noche con sus picos rojos.
Las potentes mandíbulas del jaguar se han abandonado
a la noche se han abandonado como corderos
o como mansos puercos pintados de arroyo;
vélos abrirse paso en el fondo del bosque
junto a los ríos que buscan su lecho subterráneo.

Y de esos mirtos y de esas rosas blancas
toma el perfume entre las manos y échalo lejos,
lejos, donde haya un hacha y un árbol derribado.

Ya entró la terrible oscuridad
y con sus inexorables potencias cubre las bahías
y hunde las aldeas en su vientre peludo.
Toma ahora el jarro de dulce leche
y tiralo al viento para que al regarse
salpique de estrellas la tiniebla.

Pero aquel cuerpo que como una piedra descansa
húndelo en la tierra y cúbrelo
y profundízalo hasta hacerlo de fuego
y que el pavor se hunda con sus exánimes miembros
y que su fuerza descoyuntada desaparezca
como en el mes de mayo desaparecen algunas aves
que se van, errantes, y nadie las distinguirá jamás.
La joven vestida de primavera,
la habitante en colinas más verdes,
They told me this:
Your father has died, you will never see him again.
Open his eyes for the last time
and smell him and touch him for the last time.
Run your rude hand over him
and smell him as if tracking the scent of his death
and peel open his eyes as if you might
see where he now is.

Already the hawks have left his cap on the summit
and in the air they left pieces of its brim,
with a harsh, sad shadow they disappeared
threatening the night with their red beaks.
The powerful jaws of the jaguar have surrendered
to the night they have surrendered like lambs
or like tame spotted pigs at brookside;
see them clear the way in the depth of the forest
next to the rivers seeking their subterranean bed.

And from those myrtles and from those white roses
take the perfume between your hands and throw it far,
far off, where there is an axe and a felled tree.

Already the terrible darkness has come
and with its relentless powers covers the harbors
and submerges the villages in its hairy abdomen.
Take now the jug of sweet milk
and throw it to the wind so that its spray
splatters the gloom with stars.
But that body which like a rock lies resting
sink it in the soil and cover it
and lower it deep until it is made fire
and the dread submerges with its lifeless limbs
and its disjointed strength disappears
as in the month of May, errant, some passing birds
disappear and no one perceives them again.
The young girl dressed as spring,
the inhabitant of greener hills,
la del jardín más bello de la comarca,
la del amante de las lluvias;
la joven vestida de primavera se ha marchado,
inconstante, como los aires, como las palomas,
como el fuego triste que ilumina las noches.

Así pues:
Que tus manos no muevan más esos cabellos,
que tus ojos no escudriñen más esos ojos,
pues se cansa el caminante que en la cumbre se detuvo
y que al camino no pudo determinar su fin.
Pon sobre los lechos tela limpia,
arrójate como el vencido por el sueño
y como si fueras sobre los campos, sobre los mares,
sobre los cielos, y más, más, y más aun:
Duérmete, como se duerme todo,
pues el limpio sueño nos levanta las manos y nos independiza
de esta intemperie, de esta soledad,
de esta enorme superficie sin salida.

Dijeronme:
Tu padre ha muerto, más nunca habrás de verlo.
Abrele por última vez los ojos
y huélelo y tócalo por última vez:
como se toca la flor para la amada, así tócalo;
como se miran los extraños mundos de un crepúsculo, así miralo;
como se huelen las casas que habitáramos un tiempo, así huélelo.

Ya los zamuros se retiraron a las viejas montañas
y también los lobos, las serpientes,
y no saldrán hacia los claros bellos de la luna
y no escucharán el canto de las estrellas silvestres
y no detendrán el suave viento que mueve las hojas.
Voltearon y se fueron y ya no quieren más las claridades,
las claridades que bailan serenamente en las copas.
mistress of the fairest garden in the region,
mistress of the lover of the rains;
the young girl dressed as spring has gone,
fi
c
cile, like the breeze, like the doves,
like the sad fire which illumines the nights.

So, then:
Never again move those strands of hair with your hands,
ever again scrutinize those eyes with your eyes,
for the traveler rests who stopped at the summit
unable to determine the end of the road.
On the beds, lay clean linen,
throw yourself down as one overcome by sleep
as if you were stretched over the fields, over the seas,
over the skies, and more, more and more still:
Sleep, as everything sleeps,
for clean sleep raises our hands and liberates us
from this bad weather, from this solitude,
from this enormous surface without exit.

They told me this:
Your father has died, you will never see him again.
For the last time open his eyes
and smell him and touch him for the last time:
as the flower for a loved woman is touched: so touch him;
as the strange worlds of twilight gaze at one another, so gaze
at him;
as the houses that we shall one time inhabit scent one another,
so smell him.

Already the vultures have withdrawn to the old mountains
and also the wolves, the snakes,
and they will not come out to the fair clear patches of
moonlight
and they will not hear the singing of wild stars
and they will not arrest the soft wind that moves the leaves.
They turned and went and no longer want the clarities,
the clarities which dance serenely on the treetops.
Ya las flores nacidas anoche,
como el lirio, como la amapola, como la orquídea blanca;
las flores nacidas anoche han desaparecido
y sólo cuelgan con olores tristes de los gajos.

No mires más a los arroyos que se llevaron las aguas,
las de ayer, las de hoy, las de ahora mismo,
y por la lejanía no dejes vagar tu mirada
aucuada por el dolor de los pájaros presos,
por el dolor de quienes dejaron partir a la amada,
por el dolor de quien no puede marchar más nunca a su país.

Hace poco tiempo han pasado ante tus ojos
sobre la tarde tan gris, por el cielo inhóspito,
ciertas aves migratorias llenas de tristeza.

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Ramón Palomares

DE EL VIENTECITO SUAVE DEL AMANECER
CON LOS PRIMEROS AROMAS

Busco un ser del cielo Una gota del cielo
Un ramo del cielo que sea tu semejanza
    Ah te asemejé con un pájaro Mírate Mírate sobre el lecho
Tiendes el vuelo Los veneros de la noche se duermen
Vuelve Vuelve
—Otra vez soy la carne entre las flores Otra vez el plumaje que se
   incendia en las flores Otra vez
   Amor

Y tu sonrisa más poderosa que la bondad Y más inaccesible
Mata
    y levanta de la muerte

Al entrar en tus bosques Al despertar y conocerte

Había allí un antiguo camino Las flores amarillas eran sus viajeros
Arbustos con la hija muy fina Todos
con buen aceite Subían sobre la yerba de hojas violentas
Already the flowers born last night,
like the lily, like the poppy, like the white orchid,
the flowers born last night have disappeared
and merely dangle with the sad smells of plucked fruit.

Look no longer at the streams that have carried off the waters,
yesterday's, today's, those of this very moment,
and let not your gaze wander in the distance
urged by the grief of imprisoned birds,
by the grief of those who let the loved woman leave,
by the grief of one who can never again go off
to his country.

A short time ago there passed before your eyes
over the so-gray afternoon, through the inhospitable sky,
certain migratory birds full of sorrow.

Ramón Palomares

FROM THE SOFT BREEZE OF DAYBREAK
WITH ITS FIRST FRAGRANCE

I seek a substance from the sky A drop from the sky
A branch of the sky that might be your semblance
        Ah I likened you to a bird Look Look across the bed
You extend your wing The wellsprings of night are sleeping
Come back Come again
—Once again I am flesh among flowers Once again the plumage
that inflames in the flowers Once again

        Love

And your smile more powerful than kindness And more inaccessible
        Kills
        and rises from death

Upon entering your forests Upon waking and knowing you

There was there an ancient highway The yellow flowers were its
travelers
Shrubs with their delicate daughter All of them
ripe with oils They rose up over the grasses with violent leaves
Entonces sonaron densas oquedades Lianas y caídas de tierra y copas rojas
Y muchos árboles peleándose
El color se bañaba Las aguas jamás
tuvieron más nobleza

Ramón Palomares

DE EL VIENECITO SUAVE DEL AMANECER
CON LOS PRIMEROS AROMAS

Pero tu brillo y mi esplendor se alejan
Qué haremos para olvidar el olvido Dónde mataremos la muerte?

Cuando la noche nos ataque
Subiremos la tierra
Nos quemaremos Nos reviviremos
Volcaremos agua en el agua Sueño en los que sueñan

Has oído la aurora?
—Sí Y viene
Pues apresúrate Alejémonos Y en tanto más lejos Acerquemos nuestros besos.

He tendido el techo Alargado Alargado Muy Alto y muy sereno
en eso vi el vuelo de los gavilanes
Es tu casa
En sus aleros siempre brilla el amanecer
En cuanto a la noche es de ver
todos sus fuegos
—Quién habita aquí si no
El enemigo de la Amenaza y el rival del acecho!

—Sí Amor
Sí
Pero déjame tu pequeña oscuridad con la sombra del sueño
Then dense hollows chimed Lianas and tumblings of earth and red bowers
And many trees quarreling

Color bathed in itself
The waters never were more splendid.

Ramón Palomares

FROM THE SOFT BREEZE OF DAYBREAK
WITH ITS FIRST FRAGRANCE

But your lustre and my splendor grow distant
What can we do to forget forgetfulness Where shall we put death to death?

When night attacks
We will raise up the earth
We will burn We will revive
We shall capsize water in water Sleep in those who sleep

Have you heard the dawn?
"Yes And it comes"
Hurry, then Let's go away As far as possible Let's make our kisses closer.

I have laid the roof Long Long High and very serene
from it I saw the flight of the hawks
It is your house
In its eaves daybreak always glistens
As for the night
who knows
all its fires
"Who lives here if not
The enemy of the Menace and the rival of the ambush!"

"Yes Love
Yes
But leave me your small darkness with the shadow of sleep"
Luis Camilo Guevara

EL SOL

Parajes donde bebi todo lo amado  
Empiezo a rememorar  
Como si hubiese sucedido el fin

Mi casa apertainchada de sucesos  
Un pájaro insistente  
De tarde en tarde más propicio

El Río cuya magnitud  
Deviene  
A pesar del largo olvido

Ese color de sol  
Untado a mi cuerpo para siempre  
Estos huesos afincados a su errante dispersión  
Por lugares nunca desertados

Heme lavando  
Estas hondas afrentas del tiempo

Heme dócil  
Esquivando rituales agoreros  
Como para no ausentarme  
Definitivamente  
De la tierra  
Oh Sol  
Nos hemos tocado un poco  
Y nada nos permite cambiar  
Los únicos modales que tenemos

Soy  
El Sobreviviente El Unico

A salvo  
Mientras dura este brillo
Luis Camilo Guevara

THE SUN

Places where I drank all I loved
I begin to recall
As if it finally happened

Home heavy with events
Insisting bird
Each day more imminent

River whose expanse
Becomes
In spite of long oblivion

That color of the sun
Forever anointing my body
These bones receiving its errant dispersion
Through never deserted spaces

Here I am cleansing
This deep abuse of time

Here I am gentle
Evading augural rituals
So as not to be absent
Conclusively
From earth
Oh sun
Hardly have we touched
And nothing allows us to change
The only patterns we have

I am
The survivor the only one

Safe
While this brilliance lasts
Luis Camilo Guevara

DE MIRAR ARRIBA

Entré al bosque y arriba de canto
los aviones acometían
el ejercicio del suicida
trazaban ásperos círculos retenidos en la memoria
luego veloces diestros y tronantes
desaparecían como hojas de helechos
tumbadas por el invierno

La tierra

Seres magníficos me invitan
Se anuncian como grillos
y raíces
cuya profundidad condena al desamparo

Miro hacia el río
El agua es antesala de otra audacia
recuerdo muchos rostros idénticos

Me entrego en cuerpo y alma
al desenfreno de los sueños
únicos pergaminos que provienen del asombro

Así resbalas por mis sienes
como estrenada por el voraz derrumbe
donde soy diestro e imbatible como el mal

Cuento la historia
y acciono la trampa en pleno juicio
LOOKING UP

I entered the woods and overhead
vertical airplanes tried
the suicide pattern
tracing jagged circles etched in the brain
later to vanish falling in thunder
like fern leaves
heaved down by winter

Earth

Magnificent beings invite me
Their annunciation like crickets
and roots
where depth condemns to solitude

I look to the river
Water is antechamber to another boldness
remembrance of identical faces

Flesh and soul I give myself
to the wantonness of dreams
Unique parchments born of fear

So you glide down my temples
as if new to this savage abyss
where I am triumphant and sly like evil

I am the author
and set the trap in total judgment
Luis Camilo Guevara

EL HALLAZGO RAUDO Y LA ETERNIDAD

Crecíamos sin detenernos ni un segundo siquiera bajo la sombra que prestan esos árboles tupidos como labor de arañas gigantes

No teníamos prisa en bajar la mirada ni entendíamos cuál nacimiento podría quitar al pájaro moriche su encanto su avasallante melodía aguda matinal suelta a través del monte del río y de la vida

Estábamos en edad de cumbres Sin darnos cuenta dimos tolerancia a los calores que venían de un ángel extraordinariamente funesto y errante por no decir prisionero de la muralla china

Para ella y por ella detuve la azarosa correría y nada fue más liviano que la clave del suplicio de amor que aún sufrí no obstante haber tenido ensayos ejemplares
Luis Camilo Guevara

SUDDEN ENCOUNTER AND ETERNITY

We grew without stopping for a second
under the shadow of those trees
dense as the labor of giant spiders

In no rush to look down
knowing no creation
could cancel the devastating melody
of the morning bird, clean and enchanting,
sharp like dawn across mountains, rivers and life

We were in the age of heights
Unaware we tolerated warmth
emanating from an angel
sinister and errant
almost a prisoner of China’s wall

For this and because of this I ceased to wander
and nothing more ready than the key
to love’s torment which I still suffer
a lesson never learned
Reynaldo Pérez Só

DE PARA MORIRNOS DE OTRO SUEÑO

¿Piensas en los meses de lluvia?

¿es que habrá algún tiempo
donde pueda sonreírse
sin arrepentimiento?

amé
¿y acaso qué he guardado?

* * *

sé que soy la causa
    de algún mal

nada encuentran
sino este ser que calla
y que nada sabe
    como el viento.

* * *

no me importo
porque yo no soy
un hecho de importancia

como mi padre
    o
como mi madre
ellos eran diferentes
    o el pedazo de tierra
tras la casa

eso era más importante.

* * *
Reynaldo Pérez Só

FROM TO DIE OF ANOTHER DREAM

Do you think of the months of rain?

will there be a time
when one can laugh
with no remorse?

I loved
and what's left?

* * *

I know I'm the cause
of some trouble

they find nothing
but this being that keeps quiet
and knows nothing
    like the wind.

* * *

I don't care about myself
because I'm not
an important fact

like my father
or
like my mother
they were different
or the piece of land
behind the house

that was more important

* * *
yo debo creer
en dios
por eso me da miedo
correr por este lado del río
escucho a veces el rumor
de su voz gruesa
y el fuego silbando
por amanecer
otras
me siento pequeño
y camino
está frente a mí
mirándome
* * *
esta es una silla
sólo una silla
en ella
se sentó mi padre
mis hermanos
todos
mis mejores amigos
ahora
está sola
sin nadie
una silla
* * *
los que soñamos
sentimos el sueño más hermoso
nos morimos temprano
porque no somos sueños
ni pájaros
y el aire no pesa
86
I ought to believe
in god
that's why I'm scared
of racing on this side of the river

at times I hear the whisper
of his coarse voice
and the fire whistling
for the dawn

or
I feel small
and walk

he is in front of me
looking at me

* * *

this is a chair
only a chair
in it
my father sat
my brothers
all
my best friends

now
it's alone
with nobody

a chair

* * *

we who dream
feel the handsomest dream

we die early
because we are not dreams
or birds
and air weighs nothing
sin embargo con todo
volvemos cada noche
para morirnos de otro sueño.

* * *

una imagen de la lluvia
cae
y de pronto los pájaros
se levantan
de la hierba
no hace ningún viento
oigo música.

(los pájaros vuelan)
en el campo
abierto
veo

solo

y la propia imagen
de la lluvia
me lleva.

Reynaldo Pérez Só

DE TANMANTRA

crece una planta
en el fondo del mar o
del río
yet with all that
we come back each night

to die of another dream.

*   *   *

an image of rain
falls
and suddenly the birds
soar

from the grass
they cause no wind
I hear music.

(the birds fly)

in the open
field
I look

alone

and the very image
of the rain
carries me off.


Reynaldo Pérez Só

FROM TANMANTRA

a plant grows
at the bottom of the sea or
   of the river
nunca la he visto pero
puede ser un cerezo
un rojo cerezo
de agua un pobre cerezo
a lo hondo del sueño
donde nunca despierta al alba.

* * *

una cama no sorprende
sino
cuando se está solo
es la mesa extendida al infinito
ella tiembla
tiembla
nosotros entramos más vacíos
abrimos la puerta
y la cama se muestra.

* * *

me escondo de mí
me asusto
he llegado tarde ya
cambiaron mis campos
trabaja la muerte noche y
día como mi padre
tengo que esconderme no importa
dónde
debo esconderme.

* * *
I have never seen it but
it might be a cherry tree

a red cherry tree
of water a poor cherry tree

in the depth of a dream
where the dawn never wakes up.

* * *

a bed is not amazing
except
when it's alone

it is a table stretched into the infinite

it shivers
shivers

we enter emptier
we open the door
and the bed is present

* * *

I hide from myself
I am frightened

I've come late
my fields changed

dead works night and
day like my father

I must hide I don't care
where
I ought to hide.

* * *
Frente a la puerta
no hay sino la puerta
sólo ella
impenetrable
un vacío se me cubre
a la vista
camino hacia ella
ausente
No me atormenta el retorno
me sobrevive el agua me importa ella eterna
no vuelvo y vuelvo
no quiero y soy
amar es solo un destino
amargo
he de soñar soñar vigilando cada paso
mientras afuera no existo
y el ser lo tengo lejos.

* * *
me ocupa el sueño
que no tuve
no abro puertas ya
no hace falta ir de
un lado a otro
ciérrrenlas de una vez
estoy en mi alma
solo.
In front of the door
there is only a door

only she

impenetrable
an emptiness covers me
from sight

I walk toward her

absent

Going back does not torment me
water survives me I care about her undying

I don’t return and return
I don’t want to and I am
to love is the only end

bitter

I will dream dream watching for each step
while outside I don’t exist

and I keep that being remote.

* * *

the dream I did not have
troubles me

now I don’t open doors
no need to go from
one side to the others

let them slam them once and for all

I am in my soul
alone.
Alirio Rodriguez, Tricefalo, 1967, oil on canvas. Photo José Diaz Comas.
Alirio Rodriguez, ALEGORIAS, oil on canvas. Photo José Diaz Comas.
NEW ROMANTICISM:
AN EMERGING AESTHETIC
FOR ELECTRONIC MUSIC
Part Two*

LARRY AUSTIN

NEW CONTEXTS

New contexts are always being developed for the presentation of various musics, but most especially for the relatively new medium of electronic music. Conventional concert halls are often unsatisfactory for the proper presentation—the proper sounding—of much electronic music. This is particularly true when such music involves movement of sound sources as part of the composition, or when environmental factors such as lighting or seating arrangements play an important part in the total effect of the composition. Consequently, a great deal of experimentation has gone on during the past decade to find better contexts for the presentation of electronic music. One outgrowth of this activity is the increasing number of “sound exhibitions” being presented in galleries about the country, the most notable one having been the exhibit called “Sound” at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York in the fall of 1969. The movement “out of the concert hall” and into the gallery, private soiree, or other space, plus the general disaffection among artists with the socio-economic situation around the concert-giving business, is converging with an increased interest in and use of film, experimental television, and radio, presented in all sorts of theatrical and environmental contexts. Electronic music, because of its newness, is inexorably mixed up in all this experimentation. From its beginning twenty years ago electronic music has been confronted with the problem of reconciling the conventional music audiences simply to listening to two or more speakers on a stage, without the pleasant di-

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version of watching performers realize the piece. Most composers—intensely concerned with controlling the presentation of their works and the perception of them—realize that they have now become responsible for the visual as well as the aural. Out of this need for control over the visual and the theatrical contexts of presentation, then, has come “mixed media” or “multi-media” or, lately, “intermedia.” “Intermedia,” a term coined by avant-garde critic-composer Dick Higgins, suggests the special interaction and mutual complementation of the sonic, graphic, spatial, cinematic, poetic, choreographic, and theatrical. Whatever one terms this development, it is clear that electronic music is, indeed, becoming more refined and consistent in its contexts of presentation and, consequently, audiences are becoming more appreciative of the significance of the medium.

Audiences today want to know about who makes electronic music, how they do it and what value systems these practitioners have developed for judging its worth. Instances of growing popular acceptance of electronic music are proved by the great number of records sold of a purely electronic music composition like Morton Subotnick’s *Silver Apples on the Moon*. Evidence of growing critical acceptance of the medium is found, on the other hand, in the fact that three recent Pulitzer prizes in music were awarded to composers of electronic music: the first, Leon Kirchner’s *String Quartet No. 3* with taped electronic music, the second, Charles Wuorinen’s electronic music composition, *Time’s Encomium*, created on the Columbia-Princeton RCA Mark III Synthesizer. Wuorinen’s work was, in fact, the first exclusively electronic composition to receive the Pulitzer prize. The most recent prize went to Mario Davidovski, for his *Synchronism For Piano and Tape* (1972). Future contexts for electronic music, particularly those associated with the visual arts, will no doubt include productions on cable television for special audiences as well as the possibility of intermedia productions made for the new cassette television viewing.

**CONVERGENCES**

At the same time that electronic music is finding more appropriate contexts for presentation, and its sister medium—intermedia—is achieving new levels of excellence, other related movements also seem to be converging. One, text-sound compositions, involves poets who are working not only with written poetry but also with electronic realizations and modifications of its aural and oral materials—with its sound. In so doing they are developing impressive acuity for sonic materials and are taking good advantage of modern electronic technology, in a way
bringing back to life the ancient art of spoken poetry, but with modern transformations. The most important text-sound poetry is being created by a Swedish group in Stockholm, calling themselves Fylkingen, literally “flying wedge.” In a recording from their 1969 festival is a fine example of their work: Lars-Gunnar Bodin’s From any point to any other point, a text-sound composition. In notes written for the work, Bodin says: “From any point to any other point is the last piece of a trilogy. The two other compositions are Cybo I and Cybo II. The text material in these pieces refers entirely to discussions and reflections about scientological and technological views of the world. The texts form a range from ‘pure’ objective descriptions to my more personal reactions or experiences from this field. From any point is the most abstract piece in this trilogy. The text has been modified and transformed electronically, sometimes to a degree where the semantic meaning is lost, and only the rhythmic structure remains. In the last section of the piece, the speech element is reduced to a certain ‘oral behavior.’ I have called this section ‘electronic menagerie.’”

Painters and sculptors, too, are becoming increasingly involved in temporal and sonic considerations indicating yet another convergence of the time and space arts. Conversely, as I mentioned before, composers are exploring visual, graphic, spatial, environmental and theatrical concepts for inclusion in their works, producing theater pieces, sound sculptures, films, environments, even plays. Indeed, we might say that, eventually, the classical distinctions between the fine arts—music, painting, sculpture, dance, theater, poetry, prose—could once and for all blur, finally resolving to the really basic distinctions: the time arts and the space arts, perhaps with the kinetic and visual joining the two.

STYLE CONSCIOUSNESS

Proof that the medium of electronic music is reaching maturity is revealed in the fact that, through the past two decades, an international movement for the medium has developed and is gaining momentum. As higher standards of excellence in techniques and materials are achieved, schools of electronic music composition are delineating themselves. For instance, we can certainly identify a California school of electronic music composition, centered mainly among composers and practitioners in the San Francisco Bay area and extending to work going on in San Diego and Los Angeles. Or we can point to the pioneer American schools of electronic music composition at the Columbia-Princeton Center or the Experimental Music Studio at the University of Illinois. Each has its unique approach to the techniques and materials of electronic music. Or
we can distinguish those practitioners who adhere to one or the other type of synthesizer, such as the Moog composers, the Buchla owners, the Arp enthusiasts, the few who use the Italian synthesizer, the Synket, the new EMS Synthi 100, or the Finnish digital machine, the Dimi. We can name the numbers of electronic music composers who employ digital computers to generate their compositions at institutions like Stanford University, the University of Florence, Utrecht, in Paris or Oberlin or at Buffalo or Stony Brook. And, of course, there is the continuing tradition and improvement of the pioneer electronic studios in Europe and Japan. Finally, and certainly not the least important, are the individual composers who have distinguished themselves in the medium and who are greatly influencing others to follow their lead, forming constellations of influence in this or that “style” of electronic music. All these schools are not only intent on finding their own characteristic basis for expression—their style—but also on healthily influencing one another through the wide circulation of tapes, scores, writings, films, mutual performances, broadcasts and commercial recordings.

Along with and as a result of all these convergences a “style consciousness” is more and more evident. In my view, the currently more mature awareness of the nature of electronic music and its instruments is manifesting itself less in the sort of formalized, classic humanism, which flourished in the recent past, than in a freely associative, informal, highly fantasized expression, what I have earlier referred to as a “new romanticism.” Early in the search for viable techniques of composition, much electronic music became highly systematized, of necessity de-emphasizing the knotty problems of expressiveness inherent in the medium. As techniques for producing electronic music became better understood, and a basic electronic music language began to achieve assimilation, fluency in the medium quickly developed. As composers became fluent, they began to acquire the requisite technique to think about style and expressiveness and, of course, became much more sensitive to musical content and its subsequent perception, appreciation, and analysis. The electronic music medium has in some ways gone through a whole history of music in a comparatively short time: after the initial amazement of discovery and experimentation in the medium led to improved systems and instruments and the subsequent introduction of associated visual media, there came the most important events—the widespread use of solid state synthesizers, available to virtually any composer-practitioner and, happening today, the development of valid systems of judgement of the music through informed critical analysis.
Proof of a mature and flourishing electronic music style can be illustrated easily by the effect it has had on conventional instrumental music. Certainly, Stockhausen's Kontakte, composed in 1958 for piano, percussion, and taped electronic music, is the first and one of the best examples of the possibilities of the interchangeability and interinfluence of electronic music with instrumental music. An example of the inter-influence of electronic and orchestral music is Gyorgy Ligeti's Atmospheres for orchestra, which has not one electronically produced sound but which has often been mistaken for idiomatic electronic music by many uninitiated movie-goers when they heard this music used as a film score for 2001: A Space Odyssey. The long, sustained, non-diatonic masses of micro-tonal sound produced by the orchestra are easily mistaken for electronic music. It happens, in fact, that Ligeti had, just before the composition of Atmospheres in 1961, completed three electronic music compositions in the Cologne Studios and had, most probably, heard a performance of Stockhausen's Kontakte there. It is indeed instructive to make a comparison between Ligeti's orchestral and electronic music. First, listen to Atmospheres and its electronic-like masses of sound and, then, listen to Artikulation, with its gestures and flourishes of "notes" so typical of instrumental music of the post-Webern school of the late fifties. (The practice of exchanging techniques among media is time honored, of course. It happened in the 17th century, for instance, when composers assigned fancy, ornamental passage work to voices, passages that were normally typical of instrumental music of the period. Recently, incidentally, young electronic music practitioners have been rediscovering the unique qualities of conventional instrumental sounds and are turning to this "new area" with great excitement and enthusiasm.)

THE PROCESS OF INSTRUCTION

How have younger composers acquired new fluency and expressiveness in electronic music? Through the sixties two otherwise opposite approaches began to converge: one, the systematic, the formalistic, the analytical, the Stochastic approach, where value is placed primarily on refining precise control over tested compositional techniques and materials; the other, an almost compulsive denial of conventional technique in favor of intense experimentation with materials, creating new contexts for the discovery of yet newer techniques and materials. Younger composers, today dissatisfied with both such exclusive approaches, choose instead to seek more expressive, less empirical approaches for creating their works, working for convergence of approaches, a more pluralistic
attitude. Their music seems less and less prone to adopt either anti- or hyper-technical approaches to material and thus seems to me to be on much firmer aesthetic ground. The important accomplishment today is that a tolerance for different approaches is being nurtured, more dialectical, less empirical. Certainly, with continued progress made in approaches to the medium, a better chance is offered than ever before for building a discriminating and thoughtful audience for electronic music.

However, if we don’t continue to instruct our audience about the significant electronic music that can be made with our ever-improving machines, there is the danger that the medium will become inexorably associated with the banal and cheap through commercial exploitation in the mass broadcast and recording media. The temptation is there, certainly, since electronic music involves much lower costs of production than conventional acoustical instrumental music. However, if our potential audiences have sets of values for perception and appreciation of electronic music to refer to and to rely on, they can easily distinguish the banal from the truly innovative, the ugly from the beautiful. Before that wonderful day arrives, in the process of acceptance of electronic music, however, there will have to be full acceptance into the musical halls of learning, where future musicians and arbiters of musical taste are trained. As it improves in excellence, electronic music will be made a legitimate part of the musical world and function in what I call the classic “syndrome of art”—composition: performance: appreciation: analysis: composition . . . (A piece of music is created through our understanding of and fluency in a particular musical medium; the work is then realized through performance; if it is well-made and well-performed, its audience perceives and appreciates the relative significance—even the beauty—of its concept and realization; beyond this point, a smaller, specialized group seeks to understand the techniques involved in its production through style analysis; and the smallest number—sometimes only the composer himself—profoundly understands its value through informed critical analysis, suggesting new insights and uses for the initiation of another concept for a better art work, thus recycling the syndrome of composition: performance: appreciation: analysis: composition: . . . ) Since the audience is such an important part of the syndrome of art, their education about electronic music is extremely important. That responsibility belongs more to our educational institutions, where long-range programs of instruction in electronic music are being developed. It is lamentable that, as yet, only isolated programs of instruction in electronic music are being carried out today in our educational institutions. The institutions devoted pri-
marily and traditionally to training professional performers and com-
posers of music—the conservatories, the schools and departments of
music—are still for the most part ignoring the existence of this im-
portant music medium and are, I feel, shirking their responsibilities to
provide competent personnel, modern equipment and rigorous courses
of instruction in electronic music, even though there is a steadily grow-
ing demand for persons with such specialized competence and talent.
Without a comprehensive and highly specialized education, future
practitioners of electronic music will be ill-equipped to handle the ma-
terials and future instruments of electronic music. I expect though,
that, in time, such problems will be solved and the new kind of artist-
musician will emerge: the new music practitioner, the new music ex-
pert, the new music artist-scientist.

Finally, one of the most hopeful signs for electronic music is that
a great many more people have developed appreciation for and even
critical acuity in the medium. Discriminate tastes and higher stand-
ards are being developed, because electronic music has taken on value.
Music lovers hear and appreciate beauty in this music. It's here to stay.
Horst Antes, *Figur Mit 2 Mündern*, 1970-1972, acrylic on canvas, 130 x 100 cm.
Horst Antes, Figur - Ocker, Die Schwarzen Kopf Hält, 1971-1972, acrylic on canvas, 130 x 100 cm.
Horst Antes, *Figur Hioa*, 1970, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 120 cm.
Horst Antes, GROSSES OCKERBILD, 1970, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 160 cm.
Horst Antes, **GROSSES PAAR**, 1971, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 160 cm.
W. S. MERWIN: A PORTRAIT
INTRODUCTION AND POEMS

Merwin stands in a long line of modern international poets. He belongs to a tradition that was started with the French poet Baudelaire over a hundred years ago. When Baudelaire wrote at the end of his long poem “The Voyage,” “to plunge into the unknown to find something new,” he is very close to Merwin’s words “An hour comes/ to close a door behind me/ the whole of night opens before me.” It is not the obvious that Merwin searches for in his poetry, not the object that can be reproduced with a photographic camera lens, not the landscape that is fixed in time and space. His mind opens up at the moment between light and darkness beyond the realm of logical comprehensibility, to portray an inscape that lives on silence and paradox.

Merwin achieves Rilke’s lucidity, Stevens’ philosophical perspective and Paz’ rhythmic and conceptual intensity. His poems begin on the page and end on the page without having a definite point of beginning or a definite point of arrival. He needs no punctuation in the flow of the mind that detects the life-generating power behind each object: the eternal paradox born in moments of silence.

Merwin does not want to punctuate his poems; even though he breaks words into lines and lines into poems on the page, each poem carries beyond itself into the next. Once the reader has been taken into the flow of one poem, he resents his arrival at the last line; he wants
more, and there is the first line of the next poem that began long before it started on the page. Merwin’s poems never stop, they create energy for both the reader and the poet himself, an energy that finds release and form in the next poem. Today Merwin is only in his mid-forties, and yet it seems that his creative energy increases daily, judging by the rapid publication of several books of poems during the last few years.

No poet can start from a vacuum. He has to orient himself within the tradition he inherited from the past. Fortunately, Merwin has been exposed not only to the American literary tradition, but to the contemporary international literary scene. He has translated a book of poems by the French poet Jean Follain, he has transposed poems by Pablo Neruda, Nicanor Parra, Guillaume Apollinaire, Garcia Lorca, Gottfried Benn and others. That he translates is not amazing; many other poets have done translations. But it is revealing which poets he has chosen to translate. Almost all of them share with his own poetry a conceptual intensity that reaches far beyond the instability of poetic fashion and makes them, in the true sense of the word, international in scope and meaning.

There is a vast silence in Merwin’s poetry, and words lie only on the topmost surface. Voices from below beckon their submergence and the poet’s ear is bent toward these voices. Still, this silence cannot remain silent; it has to find expression and form through words and the new meaning they create in the unique juxtaposition the poet has invented for them. Each time the poet touches a word, he must rely not on its fixed meaning but on the threads of its magnetic field that make new meaning possible. It must be a language comfortable in the realm of paradox, removed from the restricting barriers of visual representation and reproduction. Merwin speaks of “eyeless rocks,” “unchopping a tree,” “a cross is a door of the dead,” “the blind voices are bleeding,” and “April sinks through the sand of names.” These are moments when his mind has captured fragments of silence, when the silence of his voices speaks in an attempt to populate the silence with the meaning of words. And then there are those moments when he desperately and nervously pushes us deeper and deeper into the zone of silent intensity: “dream after dream after dream walking away through it/ Invisible invisible invisible.” Like isolated notes, simple and insistent, the words fall on the reader’s mind, force him into the rhythm of his inner landscape where his words create new colors on the horizon. Once the rhythmic ritual has happened, he must fill the distances of the mind both in time and space. Natural to his vision, time and space lose their linear existence and become multiple in their simultaneous existence.
Merwin's inner landscape recreates the distant coldness of Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, isolated screams that change pitch but not key. They are always in a minor key, harsh in their tone and yet pleading in their movement toward an unknown distance ahead of the poet's eye, impenetrable kneeling at the gate of darkness: "the cold slope is standing in darkness," "before dark I would stop by the stream falling through black ice," "when the forests have been destroyed their darkness remains." The poet pushes forward into the darkness, where the roads are unlighted and words fall like feeble lights on the path that comes from nowhere and leads nowhere. But there is always a distance that must be conquered, the distance extending into space which is also the distance from the poet's mind to himself, from one man to another: "and once more celebrate our distance from men." And it is also the distance into silence, the silence between two notes that explodes with paradox and energy, the only certainty the poet has left in his life: "and the silence will set out/ tireless traveller/ like the beam of a lightless star." The poet yields to his dilemma. He must think on a level that excludes the possibility for beginning and end, and views his existence almost in Rilkean terms when he speaks about "Divinities": "There is no freedom such as theirs/ that have no beginning."

Then, after all, Merwin is not concerned with the beginning or the end, but with the inner time before it becomes either one: the life force, the intensity of the moment whose future is unpredictable and yet always there as the challenge to the present. "We are the echo of the future/on the door it says what to do to survive/ but we were not born to survive/ only to live." His poetry represents the fierce attempt at recreating or perhaps even at inventing the moment in the present that makes us not aware of what was there before and what might come thereafter, but involves us in the life of the present. To populate the inner distance with the energy of life through the invention of words is the poet's commitment and goal. The distance never ceases to exist since it always goes beyond itself into some other distance. "Beyond" is the key word that embraces Merwin's poetic vision. The paradox of words carries us beyond the meaning of words, the paradox invents new meaning between the words, and it is this sense of the paradox put into a rhythm of words that always flows without punctuation from one poem to the next. The struggle and the illumination of the inner distance celebrated through the color of words generate Merwin's poetic energy and make his poems universal, not just as an American poet but as an international poet. When he speaks, he speaks with the intensity of a blind man who sees deeper into himself, since light does not disturb his eyes.
W. S. Merwin

THE ARRIVAL

From many boats
ferries and borrowed canoes
white steamers and resurrected hulls
in which we were young together
to a shore older than waiting
and our feet bare on the wet shadowed sand
early in the evening of every verb
both of us at the foot of the mountain laughing

now will you lead me with the smell of almonds
up over the leafless mountain
in the blood red evening
now we pull up the keel through the rushes
on the beach
my feet miss the broken bottle
half buried in the sand
you did not notice it at last

now will you lead with your small hand
your child up the leafless mountain
past the green wooden doors thrown away
and abandoned shelters
into the meadows of loose horses
that I will ride in the dark to come
The tree of the heirs rises into a cloud
from which a few leaves fall
turning white

the whole sky is hiding in the cloud

slender elephant gray trunk
disappearing
all of its branches out of sight

the leaves lie where they fall
like white flames
you can see through

near the ground the huge roots spread out in folds
like the bones of a foot of a mountain
the gray wrinkled bark of the instep is worn and scuffed
the cloud is rustling
echoing
leaves rest on the wounds of the bark
like light reflected on water

there each of the heirs
comes and waits
for the other

each thinks that the other was coming
and wonders why the other
wanted to come here
can’t understand agreeing
to come to the tree
thinks back to age after age of his life
and now sees the tree there
where it belonged
but forgets what anyone looked like
and the sounds of the birds
and goes on waiting alone
in the cool tender air
after the stroke of a bell in the autumn
W. S. Merwin

THE NEXT MOON

A month to the hour
since the last ear on earth
heard your voice

even then on the phone

I know the words about rest
and how you would say them
as though I myself had heard them
not long ago
but for a month I have heard nothing

and in the evening after the moon of deafness
I set foot in the proud waters
of iron and misfortune
it is a month to the hour
since you died
and it was only dusk
to the east in the garden

now it is a night street with another moon
seen for the first time but no longer new
and faces from the backs of mirrors
You with no fear of dying
how you dreaded winter
the cataract forming on the green wheated hill
ice on sundial and steps and calendar
it is snowing
after you were unborn it was my turn
to carry you in a world before me
trying to imagine you
I am your parent at the beginning of winter
you are my child
we are one body
one blood
one red line melting the snow
unbroken line in falling snow
W. S. Merwin

THE DRIVE HOME

I was always afraid
of the time when I would arrive home
and be met by a special car
but this wasn’t like that
they were so nice the young couple
and I was relieved not to be driving
so I could see the autumn leaves on the farms

I sat in the front to see better
they sat in the back
having a good time
and they laughed with their collars up
they said we could take turns driving
but when I looked
none of us was driving

then we all laughed
we wondered if anyone would notice
we talked of getting an inflatable
driver
to drive us for nothing through the autumn leaves
W. S. Merwin

MIGRATION

Prayers of many summers come
to roost on a moment
until it sinks under them
and they resume their journey
flying by night
with the sound
of blood rushing in an ear
They say I am spitting blood and shall die soon. No, no! They are butterflies, red butterflies. You’ll see.

I used to see my burro chewing daisies and it struck me that such placidity of life, such serenity of spirit, pooled in its eyes, was the effect of the daisies. One day I wanted like him to eat a daisy. I reached out and just at that moment a butterfly as white as the flower itself settled on my hand. Why not that too? I thought and put it into my mouth. It is preferable, I can tell you, to see them in the air. They taste as much of oil as of chomped weeds. Such, at least, was the flavor of that butterfly.

The second one left only a tasteless tickle in my throat, since it got in by itself—in, I presumed, a suicidal flight in search of the remains of its love, the one I had swallowed. The third, like the second (him I should say, I believe), took advantage of my open mouth, no longer opened from the siesta on the grass but from my rather stupid way of watching the work of the ants which, fortunately, do not fly; and those which do, fly low.

The third, I am convinced, must also have had suicidal intent, as is proper to the supposedly romantic character of a butterfly. Its love for the second you can imagine—also its powers of seduction, capable as they were of making the first butterfly forgotten, the only submerged one (dead besides) for which I am directly to blame. I also admit that the compulsory intimacy in my interior must have facilitated the purposes of the second of my residents.

I cannot understand, on the other hand, why the pair, so new and so disposed to mad actions, as has certainly been shown, decided to re-
main inside without my hindering their exit, with my mouth open—at times involuntarily, at others deliberately. But in the deterioration of the poor sour stomach which nature gave me, I must declare they did not want to live long. They moved to my heart, smaller perhaps but with the comforts of a modern home since it is divided into four apartments—or rooms, should one prefer to call them that. This, of course, ironed out difficulties when the couple began to surround themselves with little ones. There they have lived without, in their situation as free renters, being able to complain of the landlord, since by doing so they would sin severely from ingratitude.

There they remained until their daughters grew and, as you’ll understand, wished, in that inexperience which gives even butterflies wings, to fly beyond. Beyond was out of my heart and out of my body. That is how these butterflies stained in the depths of my heart have begun to appear, butterflies which you mistakenly call globs of blood. As you see, they are not, but simply butterflies made red by my red blood. If instead of flying—as they must, being butterflies—they fall heavily to the ground like the globs you say they are, it is only because they were born and grew up in darkness and so are blind, poor things.

BUT ONE COULD—
ANTONIO DI BENEDETTO

We learned this from the oral tradition which comes from our ancestors, since it took place ten years ago or more.

We must also note that if in expressing ourselves we disregard all forms of the first person, it’s not because we assume a position of dignity but because everything ours is plural. At least, we feel that way. This is a difference from men because, without our ceasing to believe that it’s possible, individuality seems too difficult to us. Repeating actions and thoughts, finding there was someone who already did it or elsewhere someone who does it or can do it identically is so depressing that only vanity can prevent suicide. We certainly don’t deny that in this way we constitute what men can call a stationary or retrogressive society; but the fact is we are tired of blindly following their example.
—that leads periodically to collective death, to the constant anguish of the enlightened, and to the grief of the conquered and less endowed. We only want to live, to live in peace.

You’ll say, perhaps, that our peace comes to resemble that of the petrified auracaria tree. Maybe. After all, we are animals. We don’t even know our name—not only because of the abolition of the personal, each one’s name, but of the species’. They call us, at times, plant lice; this can’t be the scientific name or even the one given us in other countries. But that doesn’t worry us either. Not even if they called us elephants or wise monkeys would they get a thing from us, not even a quiver of pride. Joy and harm, good and evil, are mortal and invincible. Distributed in equal parts they cause less suffering and more enjoyment.

The only thing we want is life, not death. That’s why we are so different from human beings—of course not from all, since we’re possibly different only from certain daring ones.

What happened long ago indicates precisely something of this:

Our grandparents trembled because the owner of the house announced day after day the insecticide of the plants. Oh, she didn’t do it, but to her husband and all her visitors she said she was going to. A migrating wave with some experience of other places made us aware that, insecticide to a woman being synonymous with cleaning, we needn’t be afraid of that woman because she was far from clean. Since we might answer that there are women who are not themselves clean but who nonetheless live obsessed with cleaning the home, the migrating wave—which in no time will be assimilated into the generic we—made us observe that the woman not only didn’t wash, but never cleaned the floors, and her daughter’s diapers were filthy.

Perhaps these very facts were what decided her husband. We often heard his threats, blunt or muffled, but never did we dare count them among our treasure of hopes—until the husband, on a day memorable to his family, undertook the insecticide of his marriage.

After, with his consequent move to a house uninhabitable to us—because it is stone and has no plants—there came to our house, if not a total abandonment, a long neglect at the hands of relatives. Such was the way the era of prosperity came to us.

But he has come back and his daughter, who now of course no longer wears diapers, is here too, back from religious school.

He came back days ago and is busy with reparations, arrangements, with his conception so at variance with ours—dauntlessly, cruelly, egotistically looking after himself—as if he’d forgotten that you can’t, and should have learned that when he sought a wife for himself.
He's back—and there he is now, with some blue stones deceptive in their apparent transparency. He places them in the pots, sprinkles them with water, and so goes from plant to plant, spreading death among us and chatting casually with the girl.

"I'm doing what I love, dear. I heal these plants the way I healed my life and yours—"

Feeling the poison coming, death coming, like a rush of ascending lava, we shout, shout to him, terrified, confronting him with this crime and his past crime: "Killer!"

But, absorbed and beaming at the same time, he goes on in his wrong, without—luckily, for the glory of our faith—generalizing by saying that all like him can do it:

"My dear, I make of life beauty, of our lives beauty."

And we, accusing, screaming:

"Killer! Killer! Killer!"

But our voices perhaps make less sound than a breath of wind in a cloud.

NEST IN MY BONES

ANTONIO DI BENEDETTO

I am not the monkey. I have different ideas, although they have put me, at least in principle, in the same situation.

My father brought him home as he did the palm tree. He has plenty of land and plenty of money. He set out the little palm and it seemed fine while it was young and beautiful. But when it went on stretching and stretching, he tired of it because it was graceless and hairy, unadaptable, he says—but because he lost sight of it, I believe, because he wasn’t in the habit of raising his eyes to the sky, at least toward the side where the palm raised its head. He looks toward the river mouth, where the storms begin, since on the storms depend, for good or ill, the harvest.

Nor did it occur to him that the baby monkey would not adapt, not only because of questions of climate, but because it would be impossible to adjust to the family, and my father wanted it to be like a member of the family. Perhaps he wasn’t completely wrong as, favored
by certain considerations in which my father occasionally proved him-
self intuitive, the little simian did something to earn the place promised
him. But his place, definitely, was the palm. My father did not always
use play, food, and affection—above all, he deprived the monkey of
food and did little to educate him properly. The monkey fled, taking
refuge in the palm, as the son returns to his mother. He descended only
to steal or eat whatever anyone’s compassion had left at the foot of his
home. He lived alone, just as alone as the rickety crown at the height of
the palm. He turned unsocial and meditative, torpid in everything that
did not have to do with getting food. Perhaps from bad humor—because
the announced hothouse was never built—my father had the plants
cleared from the entire sector where slowly, like a nostalgic sigh, the
palm extended. Palm and monkey fell, and the monkey hid among
some boxes and chests until the dogs, excited by the blood of a beheaded
chicken which flopped about in agony, hurled themselves on him with-
out anyone’s opposing them.

I am not the monkey but, ordered by my father because of slight
infractions, in childhood I too was often prohibited from the table. I
don’t have a palm, but I made a palm of my house—rather, of the
rooms and of the dirt plots which could be my palm, or of some walk,
some book, and some friend. My palm had, in fact, many branches;
and therefore, perhaps, I had the possibility of thinking that I must
not be like the monkey. Perhaps everything depended, as in the case of
the simian and the palm, on birthplace and on final inadequate destiny.
I don’t know. Perhaps I should have been born in another country and
perhaps it wouldn’t be like this. It’s possible that I shouldn’t have been
born in this period. But I don’t mean by that to say that my birth had
to have been in the Middle Ages or in the same years as Dostoievsky’s.
No. Perhaps I should have been born in the twenty-first or twenty-
second century. Nor do I believe that it will be easier to live then,
although it’s possible that it will be. To make it possible, since it’s im-
possible to be born a century ago, I have wished, as far as my strength
permits, to be of some use.

When I learned the uselessness of the monkey, I could attempt
what seemed to become a useful destiny, at least for others. His empty
skull suggested the exploitation of my own. I wanted to make of it—it
was simple to do—a bird’s nest. My head filled with birds—voluntarily
and happily on my part and theirs. I rejoiced indeed in the felicity of
the firm nest, secure and protected, which I could give them; and I re-
joiced in many other ways. For example, when I made an appearance
(with a scheme of disguised calculation and anxiety), apparently
somber, at my mother’s somewhat joyful canasta tea, insulted and losing
her self-possession, she asked how I could do such a thing as begin to
whistle in the midst of that gathering of women? And I said, my lips
scarcely parted in a pitying smile at her ignorance, that it was not I
who whistled; and in that woman I stirred the candid surprise of one
who witnesses the passage of a tangible, perishable musical god.

It has not always been so, only several years, perhaps several
months. With the change I have come to doubt somewhat that making
one bird happy I shall make happy all the families of future centuries.
If we all put our heads to the service of general happiness, perhaps it
would happen—but our heads, not merely our hearts.

I applied mine, and it had happy swallows, canaries and quail. The
vultures which have nested in my head are also happy. But I can no
longer be happy. They are unceasingly voracious and have sharpened
their beaks to eat up even the last bit of my brain. Now on bare bone
still they peck—I don’t say with rage, but as if fulfilling an obligation.
And even if their pecks were affectionate and playful, they could
never be tender. They hurt fiercely, they make the bone ache, and they
extend my pain and torture in a hysteric, rending, and endless cry. I
can do nothing against them—no one can—since no one can see them,
since no one ever saw birds who whistled. And here I am, my nest over­
flowing with vultures which—diligent, insidious, and perennial—crack
with every peck of each one of their thousand pecks every bone in every
part of my whole skeleton. Here I am, hidden among the trunks, in wait
for one of those who once fed the monkey to take pity on this trapped
creature and excite the dogs.

But, please, let no one who knows my history give way to horror,
but overcome it and not leave off if he forms some good plan to people
his head with birds.
Fernando Botero, *Girl Eating Ice Cream*, 236 x 181 cm, charcoal on canvas, Galerie Buchholz, Munich.
Dennis Scott

THE COMPLEAT ANGLERS

Trolling for love
without deceit was difficult.
The starfish of our hearts
become dry and sharp
when we take off our bodies, sometimes,
going into the sea.
The sun is unforgiving.

We were at first so
afraid, careful, away from
the safety of flesh; I remember
your questions carved fish
in the nightwall, the sunken gallery
was alive on a sudden with hiding,
finny, hard to catch;
I drew a line
along your mouth, your hand,
and caught doubt.

Now when tides ebb
out to the whisper of deep water
we say true things
or drift in silence, trusting that
away from the incontinent shore
we may come suddenly on
shoals of kindness.
Dennis Scott

SOLUTION

Small fish throttle
home at low tide; above, the gull is falling
intently. Falls a long time. Cataracts
down the eye. The claw scars
white into the retina. The feet
are stiff, its head hurls out, the hectic air chills, freezes,
cracks. Flensed,
the eye spills.

Night.

But at the moment of its arrival, when
the slashed eye is widest
the fish swing under, slung deep by the tide,
the clashed air closes safely behind them.
Nothing. The bird shrugs up
out of the sea. Then over

the tide my hand across
the wheeling air across
time and salt and the dunes of sorrow, look—I stretch, I am
reaching
out, I
wrench its wings into stillness
I blunt that mouth
the hard feet break like straw.
Slowly the eye heals. Weary of watching murder, it dissolves,
it invents

dream
Dennis Scott

BIRD OF PASSAGE

The poet is speaking.
The window reflects his face.
A bird crawls out of the sun. Summoned.
Its wings are like tar.
That is because it is very hot.
The poet sweats too.
There is a beak at the back of his throat—
the poem is difficult,
his tongue bleeds.
That is because the bird is not really
dead. Yet.
Clap a little.
Susan Musgrave

FACILITATING CHILDBIRTH IN STRAWBERRIES

His mother is beaten and annually slain. Even being born becomes difficult.

He opens his eyes for the first time and breathes. This could be any year—he sees her body being carried out.

He is becoming. Everywhere the green vine grips a slow foot, injurer to the owner’s name. They tie him with rags and make him drink rain. A handful of straw is his holiday meal.

Will she remember him?
He forgets who she was.
Something went missing without her, something that joined him to the dark.

He is waiting.

He pecks at a tired worm, muttering cruel prayers.

He is waiting.

A kind of innocence severs the brain, the earth turns a deep red.
Susan Musgrave

BRAVE NEW STRAWBERRY

Saying goodbye
to his sand-box and his
red bucket

feeling sick
and tired
and dejected

saying goodbye
to the old bone he buried
a week or so earlier,
to the frog face
in the knotted tree

feeling lost
and sad
and generally deserted

he unbuttons his coat,
in the old tradition,
and enters his destiny
as bombs begin to fall.
Susan Musgrave

THE STRAWBERRY GOES WEST

Smoke stains the dark villages—the strawberry rolls past.

The signs tell him this is border country. It is a long way from the strawberry patch.

He breathes deeply turning towards the west. It is like entering a seafood restaurant.

A tear falls from his cold eye—he wishes he had never come.

Following the river, following the road, the strawberry is putting his queer shoulder to the wheel.
STRAWBERRIES OF WRATH

The strawberry is shaken. He has found iron in the strawberry patch.

He remembers he is lost and victory is impossible. Was it only a memory or was there always a war?

He stumbles—he coughs and spits out blood. In pits where his body had rotted for rats, the gun is awkward in his silenced hand.

The stillness frightens him, it is too much like a death. Sometimes he thinks he is hearing someone laugh.

He does not feel like happiness now. He blinks as the sun rises and no one appears hurt.

There are no survivors. He is very alone.

Moving toward light, he opens his compass.

There is blood in all directions.
His eyes were the first eyes to see anything. He saw a fat orange ball and a piece of string he saw a black and white bird rise like steam from the mist and fall back turning into snow.

He saw straw instinctively, superior with a vengeance.

He saw shadows and mice and knew the difference.

His eyes were sore from being the first to see anything. His eyes opened like umbrellas, closed like fists.

For a long time he didn't see any more.

Metaphor frightened him.
James P. White

NEW YORK’S A HELL OF A TOWN

The primeval city
exists for us—
a cannibal temple
of wild ceremonious
design.

A Harlem with a
Fifth Avenue.

A flashy token
of Broadway technology.

Its great cemented
towers finger
heaven for us.
We love its
labyrinthine guts
where electric
flashes show
our progress in descent.

We live here, proud
of ten-dollar bills
and odd
sacrifices that
we make to
make this city
go places.

(Primordial desires
cannot be met
without consent)
Let the city take us
and give us what we’re worth.
In a bowl  
one feels himself  
confined.

The smooth roundness  
colly presses, and  
curves inward  
from above.

If he speaks,  
there is resounding, a  
slipping of syllables  
off polished walls.

His edge is a  
continuous lip  
open to sky.

If he moves,  
there is the binding  
curvature and marble  
hardness when he falls.

So in his bowl  
he contemplates,  
and chooses waiting  
over cracking out  
alive.
Robert Fox

JOURNEY TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE

The eye
a great lake
with an unseen
pupil.

In the sun
the iris submerges.

Mirrors here
are of tree bark
and grass,
or textured stone.

Robert Fox

SPRING POEM

it’s spring and
time to air out
our resurrections

sparrows
stagger into the sun
like derelicts from doorways

deer
dressed in the shade
of birds shop
for last year’s fruit

birds
peck among the peddlers
of straw and worms

the gods
let out the souls
of the dead
who hold hands
in a giant chain of light

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Gerald Costanzo

THE MEETING

Somewhere along the road you meet up with yourself. Recognition is immediate. If it happens at the proper time and place, you propose a toast:

_May you remain as my shadow when I lie down._
_May I live on as your ghost._

Then you pass, knowing you’ll never see yourself that way again: the fires which burn before you are your penance, the ashes you leave behind are your name.

Gerald Costanzo

REPORT FROM THE PAST

For Ted Hammett

This is the past, an intimate diamond, reappearing.

This is a flame dark as birth.

This is pleasure stranger than water or pain.

This is the voice of history saying _I keep repeating myself, please forgive me._
MULTIPLE VALUES IN NEW MUSIC

STUART J. PETOCK

When John Cage said that a sound should simply be, that its value need not depend upon an organic context, he was more prophetic perhaps then even he thought. At first blush he had to be wrong. Cage celebrates novelty and surprise in his thinking about musical value. But without a context there can be no expectation. And without expectation there can be neither novelty nor surprise. Nevertheless, Cage insightfully recognized that aural qualities need not be subordinate to structure. In fact, many young composers have shown that even the reverse is possible, that where novelty and surprise or musical texture are the values to be cultivated, then it can be for their sake that the sounds are chosen and arranged. In music of this kind surprises and textures do not exist to highlight a movement. Rather, they exist as immediate values.

When a listener thinks that all music is like Beethoven's his imagination is misinformed. He may hear contemporary sounds. But to what purpose? The best part of musical experience involves understanding them, but a misinformed imagination is useless for feeling the significance of sounds. A listener with inappropriate beliefs about musical value will fail to divine meaning. What he hears will appear meaningless, and therefore valueless. And the listener will be much the poorer for it.

In my view there are at least three kinds of objective bases of musical meaning, namely, organic structure, musical texture, and novelty and surprise. Hence my view presents three kinds of musical
value and three kinds of creative operations a listener can engage in. I believe there are three fundamentally different ways to enjoy sound. Often more than one way to listen will do for a given work. No matter whether a listener uses one technique or all three, his choice should be founded upon the felt needs of the music. The test of a listening technique consists in its payoff in musical experience.

A listener who attends chiefly to the tones of the instruments in a Haydn quartet, while ignoring thematic development, will find the piece used up in a moment. In fact, if the textures are really what a listener cares about, then he will do much better to listen to sustained tones or arpeggios. Haydn's themes and rhythms are almost sure to be a distraction from texture rather than a value added. Stringed instruments can indeed produce nice sounds. But not nice enough to absorb very much attention. The value of their sound depends chiefly upon its service to something else, in this case coherent organization.

But a listener who tries to relate the sounds that make up Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* the way he properly relates the sounds of the Haydn quartet will feel very much at sea. For the layers of sound, blending and contrasting, have little to do with what makes Haydn's music good. The sounds that envelop any one sound in the Ligeti have nothing to do with thematic development. Rather, they function to contrast and complement the sound enveloped. Listening to Ligeti's music one determines meaning according to the service each sound provides for the others, quite irrespective of its place in the whole.

Stockhausen's *Momente* illustrates the need for still another listening technique. Here, the sounds are surprising and novel; they are not especially interesting as textures, although they might have been so without hurting the work. The meaning in Stockhausen's sounds does not consist either in enhancing textures or in developing themes. We take in Stockhausen's sounds and enjoy them precisely because they contrast abruptly with the traces of experiences that make up our musical memories. If the sequences of singing, clapping, and laughing that Stockhausen uses so effectively were ever to become as commonplace as sequences that follow according to the rules of harmony, *Momente* would be banal beyond toleration. But since the sounds are not that commonplace, we can still listen carefully and enjoy the strange combinations; the work of understanding is not excessively easy.

My view holds that different works embody different kinds of values, and consequently different kinds of operations are called for from listeners. For some works what matters most is structure, for
others it is texture, and for still others it is surprise and novelty. This has implications for the way composers think about their colleagues’ work. For composers who subscribe to one set of values may not recognize the application of another set. A composer who values textures and organization, for example, Xenakis, is likely to think that the work of a composer who values novelty and surprise, e.g., Stockhausen, is slick and tawdry. Similarly, Xenakis and Stockhausen might both think that the music of a formalist, such as Lutoslawski, is academic and dull. Composers are often narrow-minded critics because many of them apply to other composers’ work criteria that are relevant for the values they cherish themselves, but not for the values the others cherish. Happily, in dealing with parochial criticism we find that bringing out the irrelevance of a set of standards will nullify an improper verdict and raise questions that will suggest ways to correct it.

There are other important differences between the various kinds of musical values. Music that is organically structured usually requires multiple hearings to disclose its worth. Music that affects novelty and surprise may have a strong immediate appeal, but unless there are other values accompanying the surprises its appeal is likely to be short-lived. Composers such as John Cage know that the appeal of their work will not last. And so they design their compositions so that successive performances will be very different from one another. Texturalists seem to enjoy the best of both worlds. But in fact after a few hearings their work too is often exhausted by an astute listener. This is no more a disadvantage for them than for the noveltists, however, since texturalists’ styles of composition assure a large output of fresh material.

Not surprisingly, there are dangers in mixing values. A work that is highly organized will demand multiple hearings. But if the work contains important elements that are novel, then when the novelty wears off the work may be marred by banality. Even worse, the organic values may never surface because listeners will either be distracted by the novelty, or believing the work to be exhausted, they will be discouraged from learning it sufficiently. I suspect that much that is good in Ives’ music is lost to most listeners because of the musical quotations.

Still, dangers can be met. Berio’s well known Sinfonia interestingly combines novelty with texture. But his use of surprise seems clearly subordinate to the textures so that one keeps finding new things in it even after he learns to expect the quotations.

Although presently less well known than Berio’s Sinfonia, Larry
Austin's *Quadrants* equally effectively combines textural values with structural values. Austin exploits qualities of space and sound only recently opened up to composers by developments in electronic instruments and multiple-track recording tapes. *Quadrants'* spatial and aural textures derive some of their impact from the contextual modifications of what precedes and follows each sound. But much of the value of the textures grows out of their relationship with the whole; *Quadrants* is a coherent process in which the first moments are important for the last precisely because the work develops around the growth of one sound. By using fairly obvious modulations, Austin deftly surmounts the very real hazard that a listener will be distracted from the music's coherence by the qualities of its textures, thereby missing some of the worth of the piece. *Quadrants'* organic merits emerge with its textural ones.

The significance of the feeling of the sounds' locations in *Quadrants* and in some other new music differs from the significance of ordinary stereo spatiality. Stereo, and even quadraphonic equipment add something to reproduced symphonic music, but for *Quadrants* quadraphonic reproduction is essential. The fact that the violins are on the right, the basses on the left, the orchestra in front, and the reverberations in the rear, was not important to Beethoven. The *Fifth Symphony* is the same music whether the sounds come from everywhere or from a single point, so long as it is faithfully performed. However, *Quadrants* cannot be faithfully performed monaurally or even stereophonically; the strength of this work depends upon relationships between location and sound, between spatial textures and aural textures. For half-way into this eight-minute work Austin generates a climax in the development of the low frequency square wave that begins it, at the precise moment in which the sound reaches the apex of the spiral that it has traced. Then Austin extends the scope of his unifying idea by exploding this climax into cascades of sounds that fall into a variety of places in the room at a variety of speeds.

If *Quadrants* were sufficiently complex to retain its interest apart from spatial textures, then I suspect its coherence would become too obscure; the work would require so many hearings to make sense that by the time its organicity became apparent most listeners would have lost interest. In this respect *Quadrants* is like many traditional works that can suffer because of presentations that create an imbalance by demanding more of an element than it was designed to provide. For example, think of the nineteenth-century ballets by Delebes and Tchaikovsky which provide delightful accompaniment to dancers, but
which are excessively simple when required to stand alone as concert pieces. Contrariwise, think of works such as Daphnis and Chloe and the Rite of Spring, which are themselves so rich in meaning that despite their composers' intentions, when used as ballet music the dancers become annoying distractions rather than focuses of attention.

Carried to its logical extreme, my liberalism would aver that each piece of music be perfect, since each work alone perfectly conforms to the values to which its composer subscribed at that particular time. However, we avoid this difficulty precisely because the validity of verdict is independent of what the composer believed was good; it depends rather upon what actually works for qualified listeners.

The notion of the qualified listener is bound up with the purpose of criticism. Most of us read criticism in order to decide whether to buy a record or go to a performance. Occasionally, too, we want insights into something to which we are already committed, in order to get as much out of our musical experience as we can, for example, as when we already own the record or have already bought tickets for a repeat performance. The reliability of criticism depends upon the critic's ability to respond creatively to music in ways that are either like ours or are different in ways we can take constructively into account.

For example, the critic's responses may be different in ways we would like to develop ourselves. If a critic believes that some recent recording of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony is the greatest thing ever to hit Schwann, I know that I can safely ignore his judgment about a piece by a composer whose work I do not know. On the other hand, if a critic with the credentials of an Eric Salzman or a Robert Marsh thinks differently from me about a piece of music, then I take note. It is not that I feel obliged to acquire his opinion. But if there is any sense in which taste can be improved—and I am convinced that there is—then I can learn from someone whose qualifications I take to be respectable, thereby sharpening my own ability to discriminate worth and enjoy music. This is not to deny the propriety of idiosyncratic factors that determine what set of values a composer will find meaningful for him or what preferences a listener will ultimately exercise. But a rational verdict itself refers to the music as a ground of meaning and value, and it reflects the qualifications of the critic. Ideally it contains nothing idiosyncratic but rests solely upon objective grounds in a way that can be confirmed by any other qualified listener who can think beyond his own special preferences.
"The sea is stirred by the winds; if it be not stirred, it is the quietest of all things."

Solon

An elegy is a poet’s way of giving a voice to grief. But to say that every elegy is merely a revelation of a poet’s grief is to misrepresent and devalue what the most enduring elegies in the world have done. They have revealed grief, to be sure—grief in the face of the death of friends, of strangers, of heroes, of husbands or wives, of children as well as that grief or melancholy that comes from a consideration of death itself. But what they also—and perhaps primarily—reveal is the poet’s vision of life in the face of and from the point of view of death. It is this vision that constitutes the strength of elegies, and it is this strength that ironically gives to poems about death their ability to live.

Grief itself remains one of the most honest of human conditions. It strips a human being of his vanities, his false consolations, his sense of permanence, his imperviousness to suffering. It forces him to become aware of those resources which only the experience of something as spiritually eviscerating as death can release and bring into being. Perhaps it was to this awareness that Tolstoy’s Vronsky was alluding when he said in Anna Karenina, “When one thinks of death, there is less charm in life, but there is more peace.” It is this peace, this naked calm, this absolute clarity with which the elegist must come to terms, and it is out of this confrontation that elegies somehow come to exist.

The motive and essence of almost all elegies is the poet’s need to express why he mourns. Indeed, the earliest elegies of Greece began as little more than dirges or laments in which the poet concerned himself with expressing the sheer pain of loss—no more. The purpose seems to have been nothing but cathartic in the same sense in which the relief of tears in such circumstances is cathartic. Thus, the epigrammatic epitaphs of Archias, Anakreon, Solon, Antiphanes and Plato are often quick stabs of grief in which complete testaments of desolation are contained, suggesting in their reverberating brevity a helplessness, an awe, a sense of pity, a loneliness.

Look on this tomb of a dead boy,
Kleoites the son of Menesaichmos
And pity him, stranger, who was beautiful, and who died.

(Anonymous epitaph paraphrased by Dudley Fitts)

This is the dust of Timas, who died before she was married
And whom Persephone's dark chamber accepted instead.
After her death the maidens who were her friends with sharp iron Cutting their lovely hair, laid it upon her tomb.

(Epitaph by Sappho translated by Richmond Lattimore)

In the work of subsequent Greek elegists, as well as their Latin successors, the basic elegiac ingredient of grief yielded in part to accommodate themes of love, war, friendship and even references to politics. The elegiac poems of Ovid, not to mention those of Tibullus and Propertius, are typical examples of poems written in this tradition. What these elegies reveal is not merely or only the mood of the occasions of grief but other moods and values as well. Such an expansion can even be detected in the previously quoted epitaph of Sappho. Prompted by the natural inability of the elegist to be restricted to mourning only, Sappho alludes to Persephone, which in turn suggests the underworld of which Persephone was the queen, and this in turn conjured up the entire Greek conception of the afterlife. Mourning is, therefore, transcended or at least neutralized by the consideration of something which, in the vision of Sappho, existed beyond the end of life. Many of Sappho's contemporaries, as well as almost all subsequent elegists in the Western world, have followed a like impulse. The poet is simply unable to stop with lamentation. The theme of death is so interwoven with considerations of life and the affairs of life that the resultant poem not infrequently emerges as a totem or ikon of its time. Indeed, a careful reading of the elegies of many of the Greek and Latin poets cannot help but reveal the dominant values of those two races and civilizations. It is as if the poets were the very consciences of the societies in which they lived, and, prompted by the occasion of death, they were inspired to say what their contemporaries privately felt but could or would not say.

The following poem is a case in point. It is Parmenion's "On the Dead at Thermopylae." The poet not only mourns the killed soldier, but he also permits his grief to be counterbalanced by his respect for a particular quality of citizenship for which the soldier had to pay with his life.
Him who, altering the ways of earth and sea,
Sailed on the land and made his march on the water,
Him the valor of three hundred Spartan spears hurled back.

Be ashamed O mountains and sea.

(Translated by Dudley Fitts)

To call this poem purely a lament is to ignore the fact that it is partly a paean to a hero and reveals, as do a majority of the Greek and Roman epitaphs, a virtue that Greeks and Romans held in no small admiration.

As the tradition of the elegy passed into the literatures of France, Spain, Russia, Portugal and England, elegies retained their fundamental dirge-like tone. Granted, the influence of Theocritus fused the mood of lamentation with that of the bucolic or pastoral lyric in English poetic literature, as evidenced by Milton's "Lycidas," Shelley's "Adonais" and Arnold's "Thyrsis," but this was an ornamental rather than essential change. Tennyson dispensed with it in "In Memoriam," and Hopkins' "The Wreck of the Deutschland" has no pastoral echoes. Both poems, of course, do not suffer poetically because of the omission.

What most forcibly impresses itself upon anyone who reads those elegies that have endured is that each elegist, even when speaking of a dead person or persons forever strange and unknowable to us, somehow taps those hidden springs of empathy that immediately involve all men. What may have been written in another time and place as a merely private testament of a poet in the act of coming to terms with grief often manages to emerge as the testament of every man, anywhere, always. Perhaps the reason for this is that there is in each man and woman the incessant impulse to know the why of existence, and the experience of death often intensifies this impulse to such a degree that the need to ask why becomes an obsession. By lot, by chance or by choice the elegist is often the self-appointed witness to this need, and his elegy embodies those questions and doubts and probings into mystery that are the questions and doubts and probings of all men confronting the unknown. It is the story of Job repeated to infinity. If the answers are not given—as they were not given to Job—it is because the question is the answer for men in such circumstances.

Against and out of this background, the lot of the American elegist has evolved. He has responded to the same needs, and he has known the same desolation. Like elegists of all other times he has felt the ineluctable urge to say something permanently meaningful in the face of
impermanence—some staying word against the flux. In our early history the rhetoric of elegies often exceeded and blurred the poetry of the occasion, as in Anne Bradstreet’s “To the Memory of My Dear and Ever Honored Father, Thomas Dudley, Esquire,” Philip Freneau’s “To the Memory of the Brave Americans,” Fitz-Greene Halleck’s “On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake” and even Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Concord Hymn.” Here are a few stanzas from Freneau’s “To the Memory of the Brave Americans” that illustrate the point:

At Eutaw Springs the valiant died;
    Their limbs with dust are covered o’er—
Weep on, ye springs, your tearful tide;
    How many heroes are no more!

If in this wreck of ruin, they
    Can yet be thought to claim a tear,
O smite your gentle breast, and say
    The friends of freedom slumber here!

Thou, who shalt trace this bloody plain,
    If goodness rules thy generous breast,
Sigh for the wasted rural reign;
    Sigh for the shepherds, sunk to rest!

Stranger, their humble graves adorn;
    You too may fall, and ask a tear;
Tis not the beauty of the morn
    That proves the evening shall be clear.—

They saw their injured country’s woe;
    The flaming town, the wasted field;
Then rushed to meet the insulting foe;
    They took the spear—but left the shield.


During the mid-century decades, when multiple deaths from war
and other violent causes all but blunted the sensibilities of many other Americans toward death into numbness, not a few American poets managed to retain their sensitivity to the reality of death. Considering that there have been three wars in which the United States has been directly involved from the forties to the present and considering also that statistical accounting of military and other deaths through violence (traffic, etc.) has tended to pluralize personal loss into impersonal aggregates, it is no small achievement that American poets have adhered to a personal response to death, which, in fact, is the only response possible for a human being. Multiples do not and cannot conceal the fact that each man or woman dies alone, and each man’s response to the death of another is ultimately an individual response. John Donne’s “No man is an island” expresses this as eloquently as anyone has ever expressed it, but the same insistence occurs in one section of A. R. Ammons’ long poem entitled “Tape for the Turn of the Year.”

last night a plane
over Delaware struck the
storm
& 80 lives descended in
flames: it’s
the nature of flame to
rise, celebrant, spirit
to whirl upward:

80

I suspect that Ammons is here trying to obliterate the usual human insensitivity to a total figure (80) by breaking it into individual units or victims, one by one, since, after all, they are what the total actually is.

There is still another aspect of American living which militates against the natural human capacity to feel a sense of grief in circumstances of death. This derives from the fact that grief is not easily accommodated in our society. It is regarded as a distraction or interruption since our way of life functions primarily on synonyms for energy, industriousness, initiative, know-how and so forth. Grief constitutes a hiatus from the practice of these activist virtues. For this reason (and also because we have inherited the Anglo-Saxon propensity to hide
grief in public no matter how we may be suffering privately) moments of sorrow are more like disruptions than organic parts of the life that most Americans live. They are occasions to get through, to weather, to outlive. Anyone who has listened to the cliches that are usually expressed to the friends of the deceased can easily realize how bankrupt our vocabulary of sorrow actually is in such disrupting circumstances.

But for the true poet, death is death. It is not a hiatus nor an interruption. It is an end to life as we know it, and thus it is as proper and common to a complete vision of life as birth is. If this is true of the best elegies of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century America, it is equally true of those elegies that have been written since 1940, and which have not only expanded our vocabulary of sorrow but have deepened and enriched the tradition of the elegy in America. In many cases this deepening has a Biblical and classical simplicity. Robert Lowell’s “The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket,” despite its overt allusions to Melville and a particular period of American maritime history, has a sweep from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Anne Sexton’s “Somewhere in Africa” forces me back to the final words of Antigone to find an appropriate literary parallel.

Let there be this God who is a woman who will place you upon her shallow boat, who is a woman naked to the waist, moist with palm oil and sweat, a woman of some virtue and wild breasts, her limbs excellent, unbruised and chaste

Let her take you. She will put twelve strong men at the oars for you are stronger than mahogany and your bones fill the boat high as with fruit and bark from the interior. She will have you now, you whom the funeral cannot kill.

John Holmes, cut from a single tree, lie heavy in her hold and go down that river with the ivory, the copra and the gold.

And Randall Jarrell’s “Death of the Ball Turret Gunner” is no less a cryptic epitaph than those of Aeschylus or Solon, even though there is in Jarrell an acerbic overtone that only a poet of this century could summon. (For that matter pseudo-patriotic American poetry is almost entirely absent when the subject of the poem is war; in a choice between Cicero’s “old lie” and Wilfred Owen’s attitude toward war, most modern poets would immediately side with Owen.) And, of course, there are the harrowing final epitaphs of Sylvia Plath, which sound like the lyrics of a Sappho or Cassandra whose address is hell.

All of the previously mentioned poems and many others have
come into existence amidst paradox. Among people who are constantly bombarded with insistences to stay young, the elegist in America has spoken of the inevitability of man's last ends. Nor has the absence of visible grief in the public lives of most Americans blinded the elegist to the unplumbed sorrows of suffering people; they are visible for those who have eyes to see. In the poems of some of these poets, the meaning of death is seen as part of the translation from life to life. In the poems of others, the dead survive only in the memories of the living. And in the poems of a few, there is only doubt, and, after doubt, there may be nothing at all. And yet who can affirm any one vision while gainsaying the vision of others? It is the human heart in anguish and sympathy that is revealed, and, forced back upon its final resources by misfortunes or tragedies that batter down all artificial barriers, it has only its threads of faith or dismay or nothing at all to show to the world. Thus, each elegy transcends orthodoxies and confessions by being ultimately true to nothing but man himself in the grip of grief's denuding honesty.

If American elegists are seen as the consciences of their time and place, it may be that their elegies may emerge as the epitaphs of their time and place, revealing not only how and when many men and women died but also how others contemplated their passing . . . and how such a passing redefined life for the living. It has been said that one of the marks of the uniqueness of man emerges from the way he treats the dead, i.e., his burial rites, his manner of remembrance. Elegies are, in a sense, imaginative burials. Perhaps the poignancy of the best elegies of this age derives from each poet's burying something of himself in the ritualistic commemoration of his poem. There, at the center of grief itself, is still the echo of the affirmation in "The Seafarer" that death, coming as it inevitably must from either age or illness or violence, is the lot of all flesh and stirs the same anticipations:

But there isn't a man on earth so proud,
So born to greatness, so bold with his youth,
Grown so brave, or so graced by God,
That he feels no fear as the sails unfurl,
Wondering what Fate has willed and will do.
(Translated by Burton Raffel)

Seeing each man's death or fate as a presentiment of his own, the elegist sacrifices in his poem something of himself to the memory of the dead while simultaneously creating something in words that is both an epitaph and, by existing and lasting, a plea for the continuity of life.
Jose Luis Cuevas, MAD PEOPLE WORKING ON A BIG CHRIST PORTRAIT, 1969, wash drawing. Grace Borgenicht Gallery, N.Y.
José Luis Cuevas, Message for the Cardinal Du Rohan, 1966, watercolor and ink. Grace Borgenicht Gallery, N.Y.
Photo Rosenblum.
Alí Chumacero

MONOLOGO DEL VIUDO

Abro la puerta, vuelvo a la misericordia
de mi casa donde el rumor defiende
la penumbra y el hijo que no fue
sabe a naufragio, a ola o fervoroso lienzo
que en ácidos estíos
el rostro desvanece. Arcaico reposar
de dioses muertos llena las estancias,
y bajo el aire aspira la conciencia
la ráfaga que ayer mi frente aún buscaba
en el descenso turbio.

No podría nombrar sábanas, cirios, humo
ni la humildad y compasión y calma
a orillas de la tarde, no podría
decir ‘sus manos,’ ‘mi tristeza,’ ‘nuestra tierra’
porque todo en su nombre
de heridas se ilumina. Como señal de espuma
o epitafio, cortinas, lecho, alfombras
y destrucción hacia el desden transcurren,
mientras vence la cal que a su desnudo niega
la sombra del espacio.

Ahora empieza el tiempo, al agrio sonreír
del huésped que en insomnio, al desvelar
su ira, canta en la ciudad impura
el calcinado son y al labio purifican
fuegos de incertidumbre
que fluyen sin respuesta. Astro o delfín, allá
bajo la onda el pie desaparece
y túnicas tornadas en emblemas
hunden su ardiente procesión y con ceniza
la frente me señalan.
**Ali Chumacero**

**THE WIDOWER'S MONOLOGUE**

I open the door, I return to the clemency of my house where the rumor defends the shadow and the son who never was tastes like calamity, wave, or fervent linen which in sour summers the face makes melt away. Archaic repose of dead gods stuffs the rooms and beneath the air conscience aspires the gust of wind which my forehead still searched for yesterday in the dark descent.

He couldn't name sheets, candles, smoke nor humility and compassion and calm on the shores of the afternoon, nor could he say 'his hands,' 'my sadness,' 'our land' because all lights up in his name of wounds. As signal of foam or epitaph, curtains, bed, carpets and destruction go off toward disdain, while lime conquers, which by its denuding denies the shadow of space.

Now time begins, the bitter smile of the sleepless guests, keeping his anger awake, sings in the impure city the charred sound and fires of incertitude which flow without answer purify the lip. Star or dolphin, there under the wave the foot disappears and tunics changed into emblems immerse their ardent procession and mark my forehead with ashes.
Alí Chumacero

EL HIJO NATURAL

A su pregunta, yo sobre la piel
veía los silencios cruzar el transparente
origen del pecado.
Quizá fue por la tarde
o cierta madrugada, cuando el insomnio era
escándalo antes y después, y el alma
en sordo interrogar de prisionero
urdía entre la sombra la varonil espera
de la perduración.

De su mirar volaban
retratos, somnolencias, un rostro femenino
en lucha contra el tiempo: ala o peste
que deja la ciudad e incendia calles
y alcobas sin historia, propicias luego al súbito
nacer de la amargura.
Noches de perversión
derrámanse en sus ojos, materia luminosa
de una mujer que en ellos no perdura.
Alí Chumacero

THE BASTARD SON

At his question, upon the skin
I saw the silences cross the transparent
origin of sin.
Maybe it was in the afternoon
or surely at dawn, when sleeplessness
was tumult before and after, and the soul
in deaf interrogation of the prisoner
contrived between the shadow the manly hope
of eternity.

From his looking flew
portraits, drowsiness, a woman’s face
struggling against time: wing or plague
which leaves the city and sets fire to streets
and unstoried rooms, auspicious then
to the sudden birth of bitterness.
Nights of perversion
spill from his eyes, luminous matter
of a woman who does not abide in them.
György Rába

EPOS

Saga in daylight wilderness
I said to them, Come
carry off my thirty beings
Dawn is blank
Standing in water to my sash
for years we adored houseposts
now let’s stick the miles
into our boots like knives

The stones on my way the stones are sleeping
our world’s ballast ready to take off
they’re skipping stones on wild water
they huddle because it’s getting cold colder
They crumble they molder
and the wind carving new faces
Only death’s funny
and real
its saltshaker ribs

And legs swinging ahead starting out
ankles like the whirling necks of bottles
bare feet drumming the ice
scaly heels the stony foundation
ships stranded in mudshoals
so beautiful the sadness of desire
Like voyages in a docked liner
males silent utterly in naked female stones

And fleeter than whistling
the road rushing below me
tree-lined a caress smiling
at arm’s length there
at the tip of the branch
you green life you must never go
Homeward the tang of earth on our palate
and banners
Each day booty
But the off-limits coming too late each night
all the lamps going dark
only rain on my stony face
writing nothing on it anymore

György Rába

MY FACES

Pebbles
at ebttide numberless
you my faces

I picked one up
Its ... crayon gloss
a balloon
bobbing all day
against billboard specturars
not a crack not a scratch on it
Who says
he knows how time's passing

Another
as its dream rolled
down the pool table of a vacant barroom
its name lost in a fogged ravine
and because it was grooved by a gun butt
cracks clotting its epidermis
The whole form's needed though
the world entire

Then a third a fourth
a hail of stones stone faces
which one to be mine
Swollen in the brutal light
they appear suddenly against the sun’s disk
occluding it briefly
a pair of fossils
from disparate eras
horizons sealed in them
sublime solar eclipse
Who recalls lamenting strata

As long as the sun shines we’re human

**György Rába**

**NIGHT MEETING**

A hand
to the light
the body a stalk
Flesh
over the furrowed flesh summer leans
turning itself to loam
And the voice
travelling home
over lost roads
hope of the dragons of March
the immemorial smashes at the dams
flooding out a steppe an insane firmament
what was written smeared away a desert
what was granite atoms freed forever
nothingness absolute inscribed on the clod
chronicles of sweet water parched to salt
vanished navies splintered
golden ages nameless
etched fountains drowned in the flood
a one and only anthem drowning the world’s body
and the sawteeth ruling over all
Stammering confronts the record of what is
And again the murmuring harbor-wavelets
... hully-lulling hully-lulling
at every moment the cradle beaching
A NOSE EXTRAORDINAIRE

A. M. INGRAM

At exactly 9:47 last Sunday morning (that would be one week ago today) I picked up my razor in order to shave and discovered, to my dismay, I'd lost my nose.

Now you will note I did not say that at exactly 9:47 I lost my nose for I do not know exactly when I lost it. I only know the exact moment I discovered its absence from my nasofrontal area and if my watch was accurate (and I do not know a time when it has not been) then 9:47 was the exact time of the incident of which I speak for I am in the habit of taking note of the time when anything unforeseen occurs during the course of a day and this episode being of a somewhat curious nature I was even more careful than usual about mentally recording the time which is why I am able to say fairly definitively that last Sunday morning (a week ago today) at 9:47 by my electric Bulova given to me by Virginia my fiancee whom I have courted assiduously for the past three years and five months—I discovered the loss of my nose.

Now we vonWondermans all have somewhat unusual noses. They are patrician by any standard. Aristocratic. And I might even go so far as to say my nose is a nose extraordinaire and few would refute the statement. And since my forebears have not been sexually profligate there are not many of our noses in existence so you will readily understand, I am sure, the anxiety created by my dilemma.

However, I did not panic.

We in our family do not lose our heads easily.

No, I am nothing if not cool in the face of adversity so, as is my
custom when faced with a problem of serious nature, I sat on the stool. Took the bull by the horns and mapped out a course of action to retrieve my nose.

First, I decided after a ten minute reflection, I would search my apartment carefully. I would then go through the garments I'd worn the night before in company of Virginia and I would next retrace my steps to her quarters—a distance of six blocks for I'd walked home the night before and was expected to brunch with her at eleven—and I would finally inspect her apartment surreptitiously as she prepared the waffles she makes so beautifully.

(With chocolate chips.)

My itinerary complete, I got up and again looked in the mirror to make absolutely certain I'd not been mistaken about the entire affair and thinking that perhaps my non-existent nose might be only an optical illusion attributable to a defect in the medicine chest mirror replaced the day before by the caretaker who possesses a truly remarkable proboscis (hideous beyond description) but now my worst suspicions were indubitably confirmed.

I was indeed minus my nose.
I even felt of the spot to make certain.
It was smooth and unblemished as marble.
Well, then tallyho and get on with it I said to myself because there was no time to lose were I to find my nose and get it stitched in place before it atrophied.
And I went directly to my bed and shook out the sheets.
Nothing.
Except a few salted peanuts.
I looked beneath the pillow.
Under the bed where it might have rolled.
And in the nightstand drawer where it could have fallen.
No luck.
I have always felt the measure of a man was in his persistence.
I therefore looked in the pockets of my nightshirt and through all the garments I'd worn the night before in company of Virginia and I wound up my search with a careful inspection of the rug which is nylon because of my allergy to wool.
At that moment the phone rang.
T'was Virginia reminding me not to be late, to stop at the deli for cream, and crowing, babbling, exulting over the fact that she'd got me to commit myself on a date for our wedding the night before.
She was jubilant, triumphant and vainglorious in her victory.
I was shaken to my shins for how could I stand at the altar minus my nose.
I was not concerned with facing Virginia unnosed over brunch for the girl was quite mad about me and would not, in all probability, even notice it and if she did, would not care.
But as we spoke our vows in the church of her choice I would not be able to smell the flowers in her bouquet and I do so love the scent of orange blossom or any other flower for that matter.
(I adore perfume and supply Virginia with it liberally.)
More than a little distressed over this latest development, I got dressed quickly and started to leave the apartment but returned and opened the refrigerator for it just then occurred to me that after returning from Virginia’s the previous evening (and I was a bit unclear about my actions), I may have snapped off my nose in the refrigerator door while putting away the cherry cheese cake Virginia sent along and my nose would then be lying cold and blue from exposure and might even be damaged beyond repair.
But it was not there.
Nor was it on the carpeted steps of the apartment building I descended cautiously to make sure I would not step on it by mistake.
I became a bit perturbed when I did not find my lovely nose on the ground between my place and Virginia’s though I’d looked ever so carefully along the way behind bushes and fire hydrants and in gutters where it could have been kicked and indeed at one point I thought I’d found it but this proved to be only a length of sun-dried dog excrement and then I began to think in long-range terms: What if I could not find my nose at Virginia’s?
What then?
What course of action would I follow?
I would certainly not call the police for they are notoriously disagreeable fellows who would put me through a crass, lengthy interrogation for which I’d have no stomach and might even take me down to the station if I aroused their suspicions that I’d committed the nefarious act myself for some perverse reason.
When I reached Virginia’s I could barely manage to climb her steps and I greeted her with little ebullience.
She, in turn (so skimpily dressed I was shamed), kissed me with such ardor I do not know what might have happened had not she held a blue bowl of waffle batter between us. I could not believe that, over-night, my modest gentle Virginia had become this rapacious demand-
ing creature who almost devoured me right there beside the Danish modern dinette table set for two.

She was a Valkyrie in bikini and I was saved from God only knew what by the hiss of the percolator as it threatened to boil over.

I thanked God for his timely intervention and glanced quickly around the living room for my nose.

It was not in the ash tray.
Nor on the coffee table.
Not even on the mantle.
I would have to dig deeper.

I then reached down into the umbrella stand for Virginia has always been a practical joker fully capable of hiding my nose to retaliate for my having dallied months on end over the matter of setting a date for our wedding.

My search proved fruitless.

While poking behind the davenbed cushions I realized with crystal clarity I had no recollection whatsoever of having given in to Virginia on the nuptial date but on the coffee table lay a calendar with a Saturday three weeks hence marked boldly in red felt-tip pen.

Beside the calendar stood an emptied bottle of vodka.

Evidently she had whittled away at my defenses with a screwdriver until I'd made a commitment which is to say while slightly in the clouds I'd been seduced.

At that moment I felt as though I were careening madly on a roller-coaster that had no end and I knew I had to escape from Virginia's clutches or I would surely go mad.

I made one last attempt to find my nose before leaving and I jabbed my hand down deep into the crevices of the couch where one is apt to find all manner of things but I came up with only a lipstick, a pretzel and a thumb tack upon which I pricked my forefinger making it bleed profusely and even though I sucked it hard it would not stop its flow.

My entire life was a bloody mess.

Already blood poisoning began to manifest itself.

Then Virginia called me to come to her side and open a can.

The sound of her voice acted as an impetus.

I shouted to her I was going after the cream and I ran out the door, down the steps and into the street at a gallop to escape tentacles that threatened to enslave me.

Once on the run I felt delightfully liberated and free to go out into the world and find myself a new nose.
I reached my apartment with lungs bursting but did not stop to rest. I grabbed a bag from the shelf and threw things in helter-skelter and left without a forwarding address to take up residence in this new apartment building where nobody knows my name because I may change it as often as I like.

Here I am my own master.
Free as the day I was born.
My finger is healing nicely and, miracle upon miracles, today when the apartment manager came to shave me I discovered my nose had returned and was more extraordinary than ever.
Unblemished.
Functioning.
And right where it belongs on my face.
You would never guess it had taken a brief hiatus.
I am glad I decided to move.
All the residents in this wing of the building wear white uniforms and they come regularly to see me and to touch my nose but I make them wash their hands first. To guard against infection.
The little fellow has gained quite a reputation for himself as a result of his naughty escapade which I've had to relate dozens of times and over and over again to sightseers, well-wishers and the just plain damn nosey.
(To say nothing of the jealous.)
Reporters have come clear from Toledo to gain access to the story and doctors of note promise me that medical journals will soon carry an account of the affair of my nose with color pictures.
(And footnotes.)
My life has taken on new meaning and I have come to believe with Aristotle that you never miss the water 'til the well runs upstream and that the loss of my nose was actually a blessing in disguise.
N'est-ce pas?
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

HORST ANTES (1936) was born in Heppenheim, Germany. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe until 1959, when he won the prize for Young Artists in Hannover and in Baden-Baden. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions of younger artists, starting in 1959 with the First Biennale of Young Artists, Paris, the Guggenheim International and the Biennale of Young Painters, Tokyo in 1964, L'Art Vivant, Foundation Maeght and the Documenta, Kassel in 1968. Recently, Antes has been working both as painter and sculptor in addition to working on several graphic editions with the Edition Volker Huber. He has also exhibited in one-man gallery shows throughout Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United States. His works are in public and private collections in all these countries.

LARRY AUSTIN is an American composer born in 1930. He studied composition with Darius Milhaud. In 1963, while at the University of California, Davis, he helped form the New Music Ensemble, a group of composers seeking to evolve new concepts of group improvisation. In 1967, he founded and became editor of Source: Music of the Avant Garde. His latest composition is Quadrants: Event Complex, Nos. 3-7 (1973). Mr. Austin recently returned from a European tour. In Stockholm his new work with film and tape was performed in coordination with the multi-media group Fylkingen. He is currently chairman of the Department of Music at the University of South Florida.


BEN BELITT is an American poet and translator who teaches in the Department of Literature and Language at Bennington College. He is the author of School of a Soldier, a prose work, and four volumes of poetry. He has translated Rimbaud, Lorca, Alberti, Machado, and Guillén. Grove Press recently presented a new volume of Belitt's translations of Pablo Neruda selected from three of his most recent books—New Poems: 1968-1970.
ANTONIO DI BENEDETTO was born in Mendoza, Argentina in 1922 where he is presently the editor of the newspaper *Los Andes*. His fiction includes *Mundo animal* (1953), *El pentagono* (1955), *Zama* (1956), *Declinacion y angel* (1958), *El silenciero* (1964), and *Two Stories* (1965). Both *Zama* and *El silenciero* have been translated into German.

FERNANDO BOTERO (1932) was born in Medellín, Colombia. In 1948, he participated in his first group show and in 1951, after moving to Bogotá, he had his first one-man show at the Galeria Matiz. For the next five years, Botero traveled through Europe, studying in Madrid at the San Fernando Academy and at the University of Florence. Until 1960, he worked and exhibited in Colombia, until he came to New York and won the Guggenheim prize for Colombia. In 1966, he had his first one-man exhibition in Europe at the Kunsthalle in Baden-Baden and in Munich, and in 1970, a traveling retrospective of 80 paintings was shown throughout Europe. In addition, Botero has exhibited in numerous galleries; the two most recent have been at the Galerie Buchholz, Munich, 1971, where the works reproduced in this issue were first shown, and at the Marlborough Gallery, Rome, 1973.

RAFAEL CADENAS (1930) is a member of the group *Tabla Redonda* and has published three collections of poems: *Cantos Iniciales* (1946), *Los Cuadernos del Destierro* (1960), and *Falsas Maniobras*, published by the University of Carabobo, Valencia, in 1966.

ALI CHUMACERO is a Mexican poet and editor who was born in Nayarit in 1918. With José Luis Martínez, Leopoldo Zea and others, he founded and directed the influential journal *Tierra Nueva* (1940-1942). In the decade of the 1940's Chumacero established himself as one of the first important modern Mexican poets. In several other journals (*México en la cultura, El hijo pródigo*), Chumacero contributed reviews, articles and original work. His books of poetry are: *Paramo de sueños* (1944), *Imágenes desterradas* (1947), and *Palabras en reposo* (1956).

GERALD COSTANZO is the editor of *Three Rivers Poetry Journal*. He has two books of poems forthcoming: *South Moccasin* from Peacewood Press, Orangeburg, South Carolina, and *Badlands* from Absynthe House, Denver. Mr. Costanzo is currently teaching creative writing at Carnegie-Mellon University.

JOSE LUIS CUEVAS (1933) was born in Mexico City. Self-taught from the age of fourteen, he worked as an illustrator for magazines and newspapers in Mexico. His works have been shown in numerous one-man and group exhibitions since 1953; the latest was at the Borgenicht Gallery, New York, 1971, where the works reproduced in this issue were first shown. His works are included in the collection at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Museum of Fine Art, Caracas, the National Gallery of Painting, La Paz, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Lima. His works have also been exhibited at the Pan American Union in Washington, D. C.
HERM DOEZEMA received his PhD from Ohio University in 1972. In 1968-1969 he was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study Dutch literature in Amsterdam. He is the author of a study of Carlos Fuentes' works, and he recently published an interview with him in Modern Fiction Studies.

ALFREDO SILVA ESTRADA (1933) has studied literature and philosophy and has translated several French authors into Spanish. He has written the following books of poems, published in one volume by Monte Avila Editores in 1969: De la Casa Arraigada (1953), Cercos (1954), Del Traspaso (1962), Literales (1964), and Acercamientos (1969).

ROBERT FOX has published poems and stories in many journals. His stories have been reprinted in Three Stances of Modern Fiction, Concerns and Composition, and Short Stories From the Literary Magazines. His novel Confessions of a Dead Politician is being translated for original publication in Latin America. He has just completed a new novel, Tuscarora Tunnel's Touchdown, and is presently editing an anthology of fantastical fiction.

H. E. FRANCIS is a short story writer and translator. He is the winner of the 1973 Iowa School of Letters Award for Short Fiction for his collection of nineteen stories, The Itinerary of Beggars. He is founding editor of Poem and poetry editor of This Issue. Mr. Francis teaches English at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

LUIS CAMILO GUEVARA (1937) has published one book of poems to date: Festejos y ceremonias, Monte Avila Editores, 1971.


ALYCE INGRAM has published stories in many journals in the United States. A volume of her short stories titled Blue Horses will be published by Action Press in Chicago.

JASCHA KESSLER teaches English at UCLA. In addition to his translations, he has published a volume of stories, An Egyptian Bondage & Other Stories (Harper & Row, 1967), and two books of poems: Whatever Love Declares (1969) and After The Armies Have Passed (NYU Press, 1970). A number of his plays have been performed in Los Angeles and at the American Place Theater in New York City.

JUAN LISCANO is a South American poet, essayist, and editor who lives in Caracas, Venezuela. He has published several volumes of poetry, Nuevo Mundo Orinoco, Tierra Muerta de Sed, Carmenes, and most recently, Los nuevos días (1971). In 1972 Liscano published Panorama de la literatura venezolana actual, a critical study of modern and contemporary Venezuelan fiction, poetry and criticism. Liscano is the editor of the literary journal Zona Franca: Revista de Literatura e Ideas.
EMERIO DARIO LUNAR was born in Cabimas, 1940. Although he did not study art at the academy, Lunar has been recognized as one of the most important “interior” painters in Latin America and his works have been compared to those of De Chirico. He had his first one-man exhibition at the Ateneo de Caracas, 1969 and his works have since been presented in Art News Annual’s special selection of “The Grand Eccentrics” of Art. The works reproduced in this issue were shown in his most recent exhibition at the Foundation Eugenio Mendoza, 1971.

ANN McBRIDE and MARY McBRIDE are members of the translation workshop at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where they are completing their studies in Comparative Literature. They have lived and studied in Mexico, and are both active in the Experiment in International Living in Western Europe.

W. S. MERWIN, poet and translator, was born in New York City in 1927. From 1949 to 1951 he worked as a tutor in France, Portugal and Majorca. In 1961 he was the poetry editor of The Nation. His translation publications include The Poem of the Cid (1959), Spanish Ballads (1960), and The Song of Roland (1963). In addition, he has translated a selection of poetry by Jean Follain (Transparence of the World, 1969), and another volume, Selected Translations: 1948-1968 (1968), for which he received the P.E.N. Club Translation prize. Mr. Merwin’s books of poetry are A Mask for Janus (1952), The Dancing Bears (1954), Green with Beasts (1956), The Drunk in the Furnace (1960), The Moving Target (1963), The Lice (1967), and The Carrier of Ladders (1971), the last of which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1971. In the Spring of 1973 Atheneum Press published two new volumes of work by W. S. Merwin. Writings to an Unfinished Accompaniment is a new book of poetry and Asian Figures is a unique collection of proverbs, short poems, and riddles taken from many Asian cultures. Both new volumes are available in paperback.

LUIS GARCIA MORALES (1930) is the founder of the journal Sardio. He has published one book of poems: Lo Real y la Memoria (1962), published by Editorial Arte, Caracas.

RAFAEL JOSE MUÑOZ (1928) is currently the managing editor of Zona Franca, a literary and cultural journal published in Caracas. In 1953 he published Los Pasos de la Muerte, and his latest book, El Círculo de los Tres Soles, appeared in 1969.

SUSAN MUSGRAVE has published two books of poems: Songs of the Sea-Witch and Entrance of the Celebrant. She just finished a book of verse for children called Gullband Thought Measles was a Happy Ending, and a volume of poetry, New Poems and Selected Strawberries from which the poems in this issue were selected.

RAMON PALOMARES (1935) was a member of the group Sardio. He has also been editor of the political and literary pamphlet Rocinante. His poetry includes: El Reino (1958), Paisano (1964), Honras Fúnebres (1966), Santiago León de Caracas (1967), and El Vientecito suave del amanecer con los primeros aromas (1969).
JUAN SANCHEZ PELAEZ (1922) has published the following books of poems: *Elena y los Elementos* (1951), *Animal de Costumbre* (1959), *Filicación Oscura* (1966), and *Lo Huidizo y lo Permanente*. In 1969 all previous volumes of his poetry appeared in one book under the title *Un Dia Sea*, published by Monte Avila Editores, Caracas.


STUART PETOCK has published numerous articles on aesthetics and art criticism. The essay which appears in this issue will be included in *The Aesthetic Dialection: Readings in the Philosophy and Criticism of Culture and the Arts* (Dickinson Press, 1974). Mr. Petock teaches in the Philosophy Department at the University of Nevada at Reno.

HECTOR POLEO was born in Caracas, 1918. After completing his studies he received a grant to study in Mexico and later in New York where he lived for two years until he won a Guggenheim Fellowship enabling him to work in Paris. He has participated in the Sao Paulo, Córdoba and Venice Bienals and has exhibited in numerous one-man exhibitions in Caracas and New York.

GYÖRGY RÁBA is a poet and drama critic from Hungary. At present he is teaching at Budapest University.

ELINOR RANDALL has translated the novels of Ramón Sender and the books of the Catalan poet Agustí Bartra. She has been a regular contributor to *el corno emplumado* and published translations in numerous journals of Latin America.

ALIRIO RODRIGUEZ was born in El Callao, Estado Bolivar, 1934. He studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Aplicadas and has traveled and worked in Mexico and France and later in Italy where he lived for several years. He has exhibited in numerous one-man gallery and collective exhibitions, the latest at the São Paulo Bienal, 1969, and has received several prizes, the latest the National Prize for Painting at the XXX Salón Oficial Anual de Arte Venezolano, 1969. Rodriguez is one of the most important Venezuelan painters of the “New Realist” movement. His works are in both private and public collections in Venezuela and Italy.

MEREDYTH SAVAGE is a writer and translator who currently lives in Vancouver, Canada. She has been widely published in numerous journals.

DENNIS SCOTT was born in Jamaica in 1939. He is the Assistant Editor of *Caribbean Quarterly*, a journal of the University of the West Indies. He is also a radio and television contributor to Arts programs, an actor-director, and a member of the National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica. His poetry has earned him distinguished national prizes. Recently, Dennis Scott’s volume of poetry, *Uncle Time* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), was the Jamaican selection of the International Poetry Forum.
M.A. SERNA-MAYTORENA is a Mexican poet and professor of Spanish-American literature at Ohio University. He is the author of a book of poetry, *Silencio desnudo*, which was published by the University of Guadalajara in 1968. He has also edited and introduced *La multiple*, a play by Castillo Jiménez.

REYNALDO PEREZ SO (1945) has written two books of poems: *Para Morirnos de Otro Sueño* (1971) and *Tanmantra* (1972).

JESUS RAFAEL SOTO was born in Ciudad Bolivar, 1923. He studied at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas y Artes Aplicadas, Caracas, and in 1947 was named the Director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Maracaibo. He had his first one-man show at the Taller Libre de Arte, Caracas in 1949 and has exhibited regularly since 1960 in galleries in Caracas, New York, Paris, Munich, and Milan. He is represented in the permanent collection at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Museo de Arte Moderna, Sao Paulo, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and the Museo de Turin. Soto works in Paris where he has lived since 1950.

BRIAN SWANN’S poems, translations and essays have appeared in numerous journals. He has taught at Princeton University, and is now teaching at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art.

VICTOR VALERA was born in Maracaibo, 1927. He studied at the Escuelas de Artes Plásticas in Maracaibo and Caracas and in 1954 traveled to Europe and studied at the workshops of Dewasne, Vasarely and Fernand Léger in Paris. His works have been included in numerous collective exhibitions of younger Latin American sculptors at the Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, the Pan American Union, Washington, D. C., and the International Exhibition, Brussels.

JAMES P. WHITE teaches creative writing at the new branch of The University of Texas at Permian Basin. He has recently had work accepted or published in the *Texas Quarterly*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *Centennial Review*, and others.

ROBERT WICK was born in Niles, Ohio, 1935. He is a graduate of Kent State University and the Cranbrook Academy of Art where he received the Carl Milles scholarship for study in sculpture. In 1969, his works were included in the International Sculpture Show at the Blossom Music Center. Since then, he has received various purchase awards from both public and private collections in the State of Ohio. Wick has recently been exhibiting in one-man shows in Michigan, Wisconsin, New York and in Ohio at the Akron Art Institute and Ohio University, 1973. Wick teaches at the State University of New York at Fredonia.
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