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Oil
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OPENING

SERGIO MONDRAGÓN

This "anthology" does not pretend to be a complete panorama of Spanish American poetry. Its intent is to show several contemporary poets writing in the Spanish language in Latin America, whose works comprise the most vital stream of a poetry that explores and invents unknown realms of the modern sensibility (unknown because they are constantly reborn, and are in perpetual movement); a poetry that extends the search of certain poets and certain attitudes of the immediate past: I refer to the as yet unfinished adventure of romanticism and its natural child, surrealism.

If romanticism is the first step towards a modern consciousness of art, the work of Vicente Huidobro is the first magnificent immersion of the Spanish language into the bottomless abyss of the spiritual adventure: an immersion into the other realm of reality where language abandons all hope of naming the unnameable or of serving as a means of communication and begins to explore itself and to eliminate its own ego. Thus, while previous efforts of art intended to show us the way, modern poetry provokes in the reader the loss of a direction and the confrontation with himself. It does not nourish us like invalid children any longer. It leaves itself open to be completed and penetrated: modern art requires in order to exist the participation of the observer; it creates in the reader the birth of the poet. The second birth, as the psalm says.

The work of Spanish American poets is part of a universal movement that breaks with the habits of the past and follows a new direction. Huidobro published his first poems in 1911, during the years when Picasso begins the systematic destruction of the object and reality collapses between the fingers of Kandinsky. Cities fly and donkey's play the violin. All punctuation disappears from the poems of Apollinaire. A new pulse animates the poetic universe. A cock crows. It is also the time when 2000 years of occidental civilization crack in the barbarousness of the First World War and Dada responds to the barbarousness with a guffaw. And if the attempt of modern poetry to "abolish meaning" has not yet ended, neither has the barbarousness; it finds itself in full flower at a time when modern poetry is in full activity. We have here a dialectic relation between the reality of the world and the irreality of language: only in its encounter with the world does language acquire weight; or because of the irreality of what we call reality there is no other remedy for language, as the structural critics say, than
to unexpress the expressible, that is to say, to change the original content and to disfigure the errors in order to find the right word, the word of fire. Meaning? Look what meanings have done!

The spiritual climate of the language from which the works of these poets spring is passion, the desire to go nowhere, but "always be leaving," the golden aim of Kafka. Modern Spanish American poetry owes a great deal to French and German Romantic poetry, yet other paths converge with ours: Pound and Eliot, the doctrines of Yoga and Buddhism and in some of the younger poets the beat generation and John Coltrane. Also, the social contradictions and injustices that afflict Spanish American countries (hunger, ill health, military dictatorships, government corruption, reduction of economic systems to mere exportation of raw material, etc.) have led almost all the writers to participate in politics, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. Facts? Ernesto Cardenal, a Catholic priest from Nicaragua, continues to write against the dictator of his country; Nicolás Guillén, Cintio Vitier and Lezama Lima write from the Cuban revolution; Octavio Paz renounced his ambassadorship to India in protest against the massacre of students by the Mexican government during the Olympics of 1968—a political movement in which the Mexican writers fully participated, together with the students. Eros and Thanatos. Language and daily life. The drama develops on all fronts.

In this selection we did not include poets as well known as Borges, Neruda and Vallejo, since practically all the poems they have written have been translated into English. And other important poets are to a certain extent represented by and live in the works of those included here: Tablada and Pellicer in the works of Isabel Fraire and Gabriel Zaid; López Velarde, Villaurrutia and Gorostiza in Octavio Paz; Macedonio Fernández in Nicanor Parra. Furthermore, there is a new generation of poets under thirty years of age that do not appear in this selection. And of course there are other poets, not many, who were left out because of space limitation.

One more comment: to speak of Spanish American literature today is to speak of literature in general. In poetry there is no "underdevelopment." The adventure of art is unique, like the human experience. All the artists of the world are united in the universal battle against sickness, all illusory frontiers created by men break down, the roads end. It is impossible to go back. Neither history nor art know the word involution. It is a question of faith. In the words of Dr. Suzuki: "The only way to get saved is to throw oneself right down into the bottomless abyss. And this is, indeed, no easy task."
WHAT DOES POETRY MEAN?

OCTAVIO PAZ

tr. ELINOR RANDALL

Poetry has been compared with mysticism and eroticism. The resemblances are incontestable, the differences no less so. The first and most decisive is meaning or, rather, object: that which the poet designates. The mystical experience—not excluding that of atheist sects such as Buddhism and primitive Jainism—implies the notion of a transcendental good. Essentially, poetic activity has for an object language. Whatever his beliefs and convictions, the poet specifies words more often than the objects they designate. I do not say that the poetic universe lacks significance or lives on the edge of meaning; I do say that in poetry the meaning is inseparable from the word—is word, while in ordinary discourse or the discourse of the mystic, meaning is that which words denote and which is beyond language. The poet’s experience is above all a verbal one; or if you wish, all experience, in poetry, immediately acquires a verbal tonality. It is something common to every poet in every age, but since romanticism it has become what we call poetic consciousness, an attitude which tradition did not know. The ancient poets were no less sensitive to the value of words than are the moderns; on the other hand, they were indeed sensitive to their meaning. Góngora’s hermeticism does not imply a criticism of meaning; that of Mallarmé or Joyce is, first and foremost, a criticism and at times a nullification of meaning.
Modern poetry is inseparable from the criticism of language which, in turn, is the most radical and virulent form of the criticism of reality. The place of the gods or of any other external entity or reality is now occupied by the word. The poem has no exterior object or reference; the reference of a word is another word. Thus, the problem of poetry’s meaning becomes clear only when one observes that the meaning is not outside of the poem but within: not in what the words say, but in what is said between them.

You cannot read Góngora and Mallarmé, Donne and Rimbaud in the same way. Góngora’s difficulties are external: grammatical, linguistic, mythological. Góngora is not obscure, he is complicated. His syntax is unusual, his historical and mythological allusions are veiled, the meaning of every phrase and even of every word is ambivalent. Once these asperities and sinuosities have been overcome, the meaning is clear. The same thing happens with Donne, a poet no less difficult than Góngora and more compact. Donne’s difficulties are linguistic, and at the same time intellectual and theological. Once in possession of the key, the poem opens like a tabernacle. It is not a chance comparison; Donne’s best poems contain a carnal, intellectual and religious paradox. In both of these poets the references are found outside of the poem—in nature, society, art, mythology or theology. The poet is talking about something outside of the poem—the eye of Polyphemus, the whiteness of Galatea, the horror of death, the presence of a girl. Rimbaud’s attitude, in his central texts, is radically different. On the one hand his work is a criticism of the reality and the “values” which sustain or justify it: Christianity, morals, beauty. On the other it is an attempt to establish a new reality: a new fraternity, a new eroticism, a new man. All this will be the poetry’s work—“the alchemy of the word.” Mallarmé is no less rigorous but more so. His work, if one can apply the term “work” to a few signs on a few pages—vestiges of a voyage or an unparalleled shipwreck—is more than a criticism and more than a negation of reality: the reverse of being. The word is the reverse of reality: not nothingness but idea, the pure sign which no longer designates and which is neither being nor non-being. The “spiritual theater”—the Work or Word—is not only the duplicate of the universe, it is true reality. In both Rimbaud and Mallarmé the language is interiorized, ceases to designate, and is neither a symbol nor a question of the external realities, whether physical or supersensible objects. For Góngora a table is a “pine square” and for Donne the Christian Trinity is “bones to philosophy but milk to faith.” The modern poet does not speak to the world but to the Word on which the world rests:
Elle est retrouvée!
Quoi? L'éternité.
C'est la mer allée
Avec le soleil.

The difficulty with modern poetry does not come from its complexity—Rimbaud is much simpler than either Gongora or Donne—but it demands, as does mysticism and love, a total surrender (and a no less total vigilance). If the word were not equivocal, I would say that the difficulty is not intellectual but moral. It is a matter of an experience implying a negation—even if provisional, as in philosophical meditation—of the exterior world. To summarize, modern poetry is an attempt to abolish all meanings, because modern poetry foresees itself as the final meaning of life and of man. It is therefore at once the destruction and creation of language. The destruction of words and of meanings, the kingdom of silence; but it is equally “the word in search of the Word.” There is probably no lack of those who shrug their shoulders at this “madness.” Nevertheless, for more than a century a few solitary souls, among the greatest and richest talents ever seen by the eyes of man, have not hesitated in devoting their lives to this mad undertaking.

FORM AND MEANING

The true ideas of a poem are not those occurring to the poet before writing the poem; they are those that, voluntarily or not, are deduced naturally from the work later on. Essence springs from form, not the opposite. Or rather: each form secretes its own idea, its vision of the world. Form expresses; and furthermore, in art only the forms have meaning. Meaning is not what the poet wants to say but what the poem actually does say. What we think we are saying is one thing; what we are really saying is another.
INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY SPANISH-AMERICAN POETRY

RAMÓN XIRAU

In this short essay I will deal with contemporary Spanish American poetry: with poets who have written between 1920 and 1960. Yet, it seemed necessary to develop contemporary Spanish American poetry from its roots in Modernism and Post-Modernism.

Romantic poetry in Spanish America (and in Spain) was relatively unoriginal, because the majority of romantic writers in the Spanish language derived their inspiration mainly from French Romanticism and—with the exception of the great Spanish poet Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer—were unacquainted with German Romanticism: Novalis, Holderlin, the true origin of romanticism. Much more originality is found in Modernism, a poetic movement that is specifically Spanish American; its origins can be traced to the book of poems Ismaelillo by the Cuban poet José Martí. Thus, the birth of Modernism can be placed in the year 1882. What was Modernism? It was, first of all, an innovative movement not only in poetry, but also in the Spanish language; and secondly it was the first poetic movement that originated in Spanish America and later influenced Spain. It is known that the poetry of Eliot, Yeats, and even Joyce owes much to French Symbolism. The poets of Spanish America had discovered symbolism (as well as the formal perfection of the Parnassians) in the early 1880's. Strangely enough it was through French Symbolism—primarily through Nerval—that the modernists came in touch with German Romanticism. Pas-
toral and sensual poets like Manuel José Othon, poets of solitude and stylistic flexibility like Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, poets of tenderness and formal perfection like Salvador Díaz Mirón—these three Mexicans; poets of sensitive simplicity like Martí (Cuba), poets with a dark and rhythmic romantic vision like José Asunción Silva (Colombia): these poets prepared the ground for Modernism. This movement crystalized in the work of the extraordinary poet Rubén Darío (Nicaragua), in the delicate sensitivity of Luis G. Urbina (Mexico), in the Argentinian Laforgue, Leopoldo Lugones, in the brilliant and experimental Ricardo Jaimes Freyre (Bolivia), in the parnassian, simple, deeply religious Guillermo Valencia (Colombia), in the violent, difficult, baroque, irrational verse of Julio Herrera y Reissig (Uruguay), in the prolific José Santos Chocano (Peru), in the sensitive and sensual religious poet Amado Nervo (Mexico).

A continental movement, Modernism, like all poetic movements, was shaped by the original voices of many authentic poets. All of them had in common a constant preoccupation with revitalizing the language and the rhythm of verse—and prose—, an intention of formal clarity seldom achieved in the Spanish language since the great epoch of the baroque in the seventeenth century; a pronounced tendency to penetrate the pre-conscious and unconscious regions of the soul.

Eugenio Florit and Enrique Anderson-Imbert have very clearly characterized Modernism:

When the modernists—led by Rubén Darío—were successfully writing in Spanish, they came in contact with the achievements of contemporary French Symbolism, and thus added to their visionary Parnassian ways, the Symbolist musicality. They experimented both in verse and prose, and achieved an impressive rhythmic renovation of the language, the sensibility, and the thought.¹

In the words of Rubén Darío: “As each word has a soul, there is in each verse the verbal harmony and ideal melody. The music belongs only to the idea...” (Prosas profanas).²

The poetry written in Spanish America and in Spain immediately


²In his book Los raros (1905) Darío reflects in perceptive essays on the works of Poe, Leconte de Lisle, Verlaine, Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Bloy, Richepin, Moreas, Lautréamont, Ibsen, and Martí.
after Modernism does not always adhere to the modernist esthetic and at times is a reaction against it: this is the case with Enrique González Martínez (1871-1952), who, in a famous sonnet, “twists” the neck “of the swan of deceptive plumage;” and the case with the Spaniard Antonio Machado (1875-1939). However, Modernism, whether or not considered esthetic, opens the doors to contemporary poetry in the Spanish language. Thanks to the Modernists, poetry in the Spanish language reestablishes its roots and bears the fruits that have flourished during the past fifty years. This essay will emphasize the three main periods of contemporary Spanish American poetry: 1. the poets who begin to write and publish in the 1920’s; 2. those who begin writing in the 1930’s; 3. the younger generation.

The Generation of 1920

A few names of poets will suffice to show the vitality and importance of this generation: Federico García Lorca (1898-1936), Rafael Alberti (1902—), Jorge Guillén (1893—), Pedro Salinas (1892-1951), Luis Cernuda (1904-1963), Vicente Aleixandre (1900—)—all Spaniards—, César Vallejo (1892-1938), and César Moro (1904-1956) in Peru, Vicente Huidobro (1893-1948) and Pablo Neruda (1904—) in Chile, Jorge Luis Borges (1899—), Ricardo Molinari (1898—) in Argentina, Nicolás Guillén (1902—) in Cuba, Carlos Pellicer (1899—), José Gorostiza (1901—) and Xavier Villaurrutia (1903-1950) in Mexico, José Coronel Urtecho (1906—) in Nicaragua. Such a list is necessarily incomplete. I will have to limit myself to only certain poets of this generation—at the risk of injustice to other writers. Thus, I hope to give a general impression of what these poets represented and continue to represent.³

The generation of the 20’s is revolutionary—as always in the literary sense and sometimes socially. It is, in Italy, the period of Futurism, in Switzerland, the rise of Dadaism, and above all, the epoch of Surrealism.⁴ The Spanish American and Spanish poets share the same desire

³It is necessary to add other poets of the same generation to this list: Gerardo Diego, Miguel Hernández, Juan Larrea, Emilio Prados in Spain, Mariano Brull, Juan Marinello, Eugenio Florit, and Emilio Ballagas in Cuba; Salvador Novo, Jaime Torres Bodet, Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano, Gilberto Owen in Mexico, E. González Lanza in Argentina; Luis Cardoza y Aragón in Guatemala; Manuel del Cabral in Santo Domingo; Pablo de Rokha and Rosamel del Valle in Chile, E. A. Westphalen in Peru; Roberto Ibáñez in Uruguay; Jorge Carrera Andrade and Jorge Rojas in Colombia. We also must name three great poetesses: Juana de Ibarbourou and Sara de Ibáñez in Uruguay; Alfonisna Storni in Argentina.

⁴Juan Larrea and César Moro belong to the surrealist school. Both wrote a great part of their works in French as did Huidobro.
for an enthusiastic renovation that is going on in Europe. Some literary magazines serve as a platform for the various poetic movements: Ultra (Madrid), from which springs "Ultraism" in Spain and Argentina, Proa, Prisma, and Martin Fierro in Buenos Aires, Horizonte, the magazine of the "estridentistas" in Mexico, Algar in Uruguay. In addition, there is "Creationism" (whether an invention of Huidobro or Pierre Reverdy?) whose most distinctive manifestation can be found in the poetry of Huidobro.

It is not impossible to establish some of the general characteristics of the generation of the 1920's. Enrique Anderson-Imbert has listed the following: cosmopolitinism, "literary insurgency," "ingeniousness," "the cult of newness and surprise," "sentimentality," "dehumanization," "the ugly," and an attempt to find a way far removed from classical ideas of "beauty;" typographic experiments; free associations, and "destruction" of syntax, irony and violence. However, these peculiarities lie in the origins of each of the different "isms." Actually, the poets of the 1920's oscillate between pain and humor, pessimism and happiness, the instant of death and the instant of life—at times profoundly present in the work of Neruda and Villaurrutia. It must be noted that if García Lorca is the author of songs full of youthful exuberance, he is also the author of Yerma, The House of Bernarda Alba, and The Poet in New York; and if Huidobro seems to enjoy his initial flights with mechanical wings, he is also the poet of anguish and death in Altazor.

Heraclitus said that the character of a man is his destiny. The poets of the 1920's establish a dynamic compromise between destiny and character, between death, dream, and life. At this point, I intend to characterize briefly the principal developments of a generation that was and still is productive.

"Ultraism," "Creationism," "Stridentism," are all "isms," but there are great differences between them. The "Creationism" of Vicente Huidobro is a total poetic creation. Closer to Mallarmé's Un Coup de dés than might appear on first reading, Huidobro wants to be the absolute creator, to pass from man-poet to god-poet. In denying the Absolute, the poet becomes an absolute that cannot be. Therefore, he moves toward pessimism, a feeling of fall and impotence in the god-poet who can only be the man-poet. Altazor, the incarnation of Huidobro as Poet, is the long and beautiful poem of an imaginary ascension—a total

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desired creation. It is also the poem of “the anguish of the absolute” and of perfection; a poem of wings, but of “broken wings.”

“Ultraism,” practiced at first by a majority of Argentinian poets, is a game, irony, linguistic violence, spontaneity of invention. But the authentic poets who began as “ultraists” were able to transcend it. This is the case with Jorge Luis Borges, not in his fictions but in his poetry. His first poems seem to be only “labyrinths, word play, emblems;” more or less humorous games. In his poetry the circular world of his stories and essays as well as the slums of Buenos Aires are already present. Where Buenos Aires touches the fields, the poet stands as if on the frontiers of life. Essentially a poetry of tenderness, poetry of the real and tangible earth, poetry of “trees,” “wind,” “air,” poetry of the Pampa “always good like the Ave Maria.” A poetry of the heart.

Francisco Luis Bernárdez (1900) began also as an “ultraist” in Buenos Aires. Profoundly Catholic, Bernárdez developed slowly a poetry which is at the same time classic and contemplative, simple and religious. Also an ultraist in his early years was Leopoldo Marechal (1900), but, like Bernárdez, he became a religious poet of ample verse full of deep respirations and “praise to the day.” Ricardo Molinari, also an ultraist, is fundamentally the lyric poet of this Argentinian generation. In him the native land is transformed into a universal expression of all lands and of all souls. Molinari, poet of love and death, is perhaps the most complete—and also the most classic—of the Argentinian poets of the 1920’s.

In Mexico the avant-garde literature appears in two practically opposite groups: the “estridentistas” and the “contemporáneos.” Stridentism, whose chief exponent is Manuel Maples Arce, tries to be a rebellious poetry both in a social and literary sense. Even though the stridentists were writers on the left, their literary roots must be traced mainly to Italian “futurism.” More important is the group of “contemporáneos” who were named after the journal Contemporáneos. In years of revolution, the “contemporáneos” wanted to be and were poets of discipline. They were also—with the exception of Pellicer—skeptical poets of solitude and death. José Gorostiza, whose work began with the

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6Major works by Huidobro: Horizon carré (1917), Hallalli (1918), Poemas árticos (1918), Automne régulier (1925), Altazor (1931), El ciudadano del olvido (1941), Ver y palpar (1941).

7Major works published by Marechal: Sonetos a Sophia (1940), Adiós Buenos-ayres (1948).

8Molinari has published the following books among others: El imaginero (1927), El huésped y la melancolía (1949), Unida noche (1957).
melancholy and luminous *Canciones para cantar en las barcas* (1925), is above all the author of the beautiful poem of the word and the negation of the word, of life and negation of life, of "return to origins" entitled *Death Without End*. A brilliant and sonorous poem, *Death Without End* is comparable to *The Waste Land* or *Le cimetière marin*, even though it clearly follows the tradition of Spanish and Mexican baroque poetry of the golden centuries.⁹

Xavier Villaurrutia, influenced by André Gide, Proust, Giraudoux, and Eliot, is, I believe, the other great poet of the generation of "contemporáneos." A poet of death and emptiness, Xavier Villaurrutia sings to the nocturnal sea, the love-death, or, in his words, the reality that fascinates him is "that poetic reality that we can call presence of an absence." Few poets have been able to combine like Villaurrutia the presence of death, sensuality, the clarity of verse, the desire of immortality ("something tells me that to die is to wake up").¹⁰

I have already mentioned the presence of two Catholic poets within the generation I am presently concerned with: Bernárdez and Marechal. It is important to mention another Catholic poet, José Coronel Urtecho (1906) who is much less known than he should be. Ernesto Cardenal has written of him: "In his poetry he has tried all possible ways of expression without satisfaction. Burlesque, popular, hermetic, humorous, serious, surrealist, classical, his art has been everything with a variety of forms that suggest a comparison with Picasso."¹¹ Coronel Urtecho is extremely complex and unique, but always himself. From his satires directed to Rubén Darío to his "landscapes," from his classical "parks," to his ironic and vital "small songs," from his *Pequeña oda a tío Coyote*—brief, intense, popular vision of Nicaragua—to the ignored guilt of "this labyrinth,” this fall into “the same world same,” Coronel Urtecho maintains the unstable equilibrium of his life, of his poetry, thanks to a profound faith not always serene.

Nicolás Guillén (Cuba) and Palés Matos (Puerto Rico) are close to the popular tradition of the Carib tribe. Discoverers of the vitality and musicality of the Afro-carib poetry—as Claudia Lars discovered the popular poetry of El Salvador—, they are also rebel poets. Nicolás

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⁹There is an English translation of *Muerte sin fin: Death without End*, Texas University Press.


Guillén is a better poet in his less political poems that are closer to the heart of his native land.\footnote{Major works: \textit{Songoro cosongo} (1931), \textit{La paloma de vuelo popular} (1958), both by Nicolás Guillén; \textit{Tuntún de pasa y grifería} (1937) by Luis Palés Matos; \textit{Romances de Norte y Sur} (1946) by Claudia Lars (her real name is Carmen Brannon). These three poets were strongly influenced by García Lorca’s \textit{Romancero gitano}. We should keep in mind that the real discoverer of afro-cuban poetry was the Cuban poet Emilio Ballagas.}

Vallejo and Neruda are perhaps the two greatest Spanish American poets of the twentieth century. César Vallejo was born in Peru in 1892 and died in Paris in 1938. Influenced in the beginning by the modernists—chiefly Rubén Dario and Leopoldo Lugones—Vallejo already manifested a highly personal style in \textit{Los heraldos negros} (1918). The work of Vallejo tends to be classified as social poetry, a poetry of rebellion and protest. Vallejo is indeed a social and revolutionary poet. A poet who wrote for Spain during wartime, Vallejo is a poet incarnate, (“man of flesh and bone,” as Unamuno would have said) in three ways: in his body, in his humanity, and in the land that gave birth to him. In \textit{Trilce}, he is at times a baroque poet, impregnated by surrealism, ultramodernism, and creationism. However, in the same book Vallejo talks to Aguedita, Nativa and Miguel, children who build real ships in an actual river in his Peruvian land. It would be misleading to label Vallejo as a regionalist poet. He was a poet of his land, and a poet of the Land; he was, despite his Marxist tendencies, a religious poet, a poet who has lost transcendence, but who, beyond any pain or death, looks for an absolute in the unanimity of all men. Vallejo’s poetry has been compared to a great scream. The comparison is not very exact. More correctly, Vallejo is a poet of pain and complaint, but he is never a desperate poet. He is, certainly, a poet of violence and anger (violence and anger that are always nostalgic for a lost paradise):

\begin{quote}
There are blows in life so strong . . . I do not know:
Blows like the hate of God; as if with them
the undercurrent of all suffering were thrown
down into the soul . . . I do not know!
\end{quote}

Vallejo is also a poet of death, of his death, that changes into our death. But in this feeling of death is already present a feeling of community, and a desire—not a belief—to survive. The religious images that Vallejo uses frequently—there is in him a mixture of charity and blasphemy—are focused in the image of “our daily bread,” image of Christ, a Christ who is much more love than justice. Vallejo, one of the great tragic poets of our time, lives the anguish of death, becomes
prophetic in a way that reflects ancient Biblical prophecies. Vallejo, the Christian, believed that the kingdom of man had arrived—the Spanish war was the flesh of his poetry—and sang to the Christ in Whom he both believed and disbelieved.

Vallejo, the great poet of the earth, flesh and the world knows that his eternity “has died” and “mourns” his eternal death.\footnote{During his lifetime Vallejo published the two aforementioned works \textit{Trilce} in 1922; \textit{Poemas humanos} was published in 1939 after his death.}

Pablo Neruda is very different from Vallejo (his true name: Neftali Ricardo Reyes). His first book, quite impersonal, was \textit{La canción y la fiesta} (1921). In 1924 he published his truly original book: \textit{Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada}. The poetic production of Neruda has been, since this book, continual, prolific and extremely influential. \textit{Residencia en la tierra} (1931) is perhaps even today his greatest book. Later he published \textit{El hondero entusiasta} (1933), \textit{Segunda residencia} (1935), \textit{Tercera residencia} (1947), \textit{Canto general} (where Alturas de Macchu Picchu was included; 1950), \textit{Odas elementales} (1954), \textit{Navegaciones y regresos} (1959), to cite only a few of the important volumes.

It is difficult to characterize the poetry of Neruda, not because it is so vast, but it is so varied. It is possible to describe four “modalities” in the work of Neruda: first, his poetry of a romantic style as in \textit{Veinte canciones}; secondly, what is found in the first \textit{Residencia} which was continued in \textit{Odas elementales}; thirdly, the technique in the epic \textit{Canto general}; and fourth, the style in his less important poems of obvious Marxist propaganda.

\textit{Residencia en la Tierra} was written when surrealism had already made an impact on the lyric poetry of the Spanish language. It would be oversimplified to see in this book a surrealist orientation. Neruda is close to surrealism in poems that seem to be examples of “automatic writing.” He is closer to the surrealists through his oneirocritic tendency. In the Neruda of \textit{Residencia en la tierra} it is difficult to distinguish between reality and dream, world and imagination. As Amado Alonso has noted, the symbols used by Neruda can be classified under the general category of “material concretion of the immaterial;” roses, bees, doves, swallows, grapes, the four elements, sex, humidity, rain. All these symbols are “forms of objectifying the subjective and subjectifying the objective.”\footnote{Amado Alonso: \textit{Poesía y estilo de Pablo Neruda} is a comprehensive study of \textit{Residencia en la tierra}.} In \textit{Residencia en la tierra} and \textit{Alturas de Macchu Picchu} Neruda reveals a monist, materialistic vision. Both César Valle-
jo and Neruda continue to be a great influence on the younger generations of Spanish American poets.

II

The Generation of 1930

The generation of 1930 is less homogeneous than the generation just discussed. It produced a great poet (comparable to Vallejo and Neruda in importance and influence), Octavio Paz (1914), and at least three other important poets, Cintio Vitier (1921), Roberto Juarroz (1917), and Nicanor Parra (1914). The poets of this generation are characterized by hermeticism: for example, in the work of Daniel Devoto (Buenos Aires, 1916), and the work by the delicate and difficult poet Ali Chumacero (Mexico, 1918). There is a tendency toward popular language and protest (Parra), the creation of religious worlds (Vitier), worlds mysteriously repetitive (Juarroz), and erotic-physical worlds that do not renounce a social preoccupation (Paz).

In Mexico the new generation formed around two journals: Taller poético (later called Taller) and some years later around the journal Tierra nueva, under the leadership of Chumacero and José Luis Martínez. There are significant differences between these two groups: the poets of Taller know that poetry is a matter of discipline; they also know that poetry is essentially shared, and that the poet, within his solitude, seeks communion. The poets of Tierra nueva, more intellectual and formal, demand discipline in their poetry.

To speak of Taller is to discuss Octavio Paz and Efrain Huerta. The work of Octavio Paz is already very large. As an essayist he has published the best criticism written in Spanish America since Alfonso Reyes, and the best essay since Borges. Few books like El laberinto de la soledad (1951) show at the same time an interpretation of the history and life of Mexico, the existence of contemporary man; and, in his interpretations, his own view becomes clear. What is this view? In his early writings Paz said: “The poet moves from solitude, moved by desire, towards communion.” Poet of solitude, Paz is and wants to be, immersed in his solitude, a poet of communion. Man can be conceived, mythically, but also in reality, like a “lost half.” The work of the poet is to recover the “other,” the half that our being is lacking to really become real. This search for unity is the search for reconciliation of opposites. For Octavio Paz, opposites merge in three

15Major works by Chumacero: Práramo de sueños (1944) and Imágenes desterradas (1948); by Daniel Devoto: Canciones de verano (1950) and Hexasílabos de los tres reinos (1959).
essential poetic experiences: the image, love, and the sacred that Paz calls frequently “the other shore.” I do not mean to suggest that Paz’ poetry is mono-thematic, but rather the varied expression of what Paz himself has called “tradition of rupture.” Octavio Paz’ first books of poems were influenced by Gorostiza’s and Villaurrutia’s poetry of solitude; they are also based on concrete facts: the Spanish War, in which Paz participated, and World War II. The first great synthesis of Paz’ work is found in Libertad bajo palabra where the poet, with a depth and brilliance of unexpected images, struggles against isolation in search of community (woman, image, the sacred, transfiguration, through eroticism, love and poem, of men and the world). In his more recent works, written in India where Paz was ambassador from 1960 to 1968, new forms have evolved. Paz never ceases staring “West” with severe, harsh, critical eyes. He finds, beyond the common meanings of words, beyond “yes and no,” the true meaning of life. Influenced by Hinduism and particularly by Tantrism, Paz sees the unity of opposites in the “white”—the white unity of all colors, the target of the well-directed arrow—of the extraordinary poem entitled precisely White: “Transparency is all that remains.” The poet of cyclical time, Paz writes:

The irreality of the vision
Gives reality to the glance. 

The poetry of Efraín Huerta (1914) can be more fully evaluated after the recent publication of his poems: Poesia 1935-1968. The violent, political poetry of Huerta is close at times to César Vallejo, because like Vallejo, Huerta traces love in a world of pain. Poet of emptiness and discomfort, poet of cursing and long verse of complaint, Huerta is mainly the poet of sadness who seeks the peace of the world which is only possible when inner peace is achieved.

In Cuba, the generation of the 1930’s also presents a vital homogeneous group, which formed around the journal Orígenes. Lezama Lima (1912), mainly a novelist and prose writer, Cintio Vitier, Eliseo Diego (1920), Fina García Marruz (1923). These writers, all liberal Catholics, were at first influenced by the work of Juan Ramón Jiménez. Cintio Vitier stands out clearly in this group.


17Lezama Lima has recently published one of the best novels written in Spanish: Paradiso. We should mention Las miradas perdidas (1957), by Fina García Marruz.
Much of the poetic work of Cintio Vitier, who is also an important critic, has been published in Havana under the title *Testimonios* (Editorial Contemporáneos, 1968). The Christian poet is actually a witness and his work is a testimony. According to Vitier, to poeticize is to learn to die and is, above all, to learn to redeem through the word in order to reach the Word. Vitier writes of his book: “this book is not so much poetry as consciousness.” A clear consciousness that the spirit, incarnate in history, is able and ought to surpass history. All men are guilty; all men are also redeemable. In a poetry mixed with anguish, Vitier inspires us with hope. Love—*agape* and *caritas*—a difficult, almost heroic love, saves men where ideologies can not save them. Every man has to follow the same law: “Hope! Live! Serve!” Harsh at times, capable of incarnating dreams with formal exactness, Vitier is one of the most original poetic voices of his generation and of modern Hispanic poetry.

The work of Roberto Juarroz, the Argentinian poet, is very unique. Julio Cortázar has said of him: “I have always loved poetry that proceeds from inversion of symbols; the use of absence in Mallarmé, some ‘anti-essences’ in Macedonio, the silences in the music of Webern. But you carry these inversions to an incredible point which in other writers ends up in a word play.” The “vertical poetry” of Juarroz, almost excessively precise, at times like aphorisms, at times reminiscent of pre-socratic thought, is always attempting to reach “a level that appears to be the center of things.” His poetry is also “like a nocturnal thought/ suddenly released/ from the space of night/ to the night of thought.” Juarroz does not believe in the brilliance of ideas or verse; he firmly believes in light.

It would be unfair to ignore some of the poets of the generation of the 1930’s. Nicanor Parra receives his inspiration from the popular poetry of his land, and sometimes can be placed among the poets of protest. Juan Liscano, born in Venezuela in 1915, is an authentic transformer of realities, poet of love and eroticism, but also of the Golden Age, of the nostalgia of lost paradise, of exaltation, and in a great number of verses, of the world of dreams. Alberto Girri (Argentina,

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18 *Testimonios* contains: *Canto llano, Escrito y cantado, Mas, El día siguiente, Epitalamios, Entrando en materia.*

19 Julio Cortázar: Introduction to *Tercera poesía vertical*. Juarroz has published: *Poesía vertical, Segunda poesía vertical, (1963), Poema vertical (1964) and Tercera poesía vertical (1965).*
1918), is a poet of hard style and surrealist background. Manuel Calvillo (Mexico, 1918) is transparent, especially refined and sensitive.20

III

The New Generations

All the poets in this section (born between 1924 and 1940) are post-World War II poets. Practically all of them have been marked by the anxiety that our present world suffers.

It is, naturally, much more difficult to be just and selective with the most recent poets. Only their work, sometimes just recently begun, at times in full process of development, will be able to show us its value and place. It seems to me though that some of the new poets stand out clearly, and, at the risk of being unjust to others, I am going to discuss their work more extensively.

It is clear that among the poets of the new generation there is a profound social preoccupation with the destiny of contemporary man, and a protest against a mechanized world in which there are problems that, if not new, are more noticeable than before. Differences of wealth from one country to another, differences of wealth within countries themselves, military societies, disillusionment with ideologies, fall of the utopia that the men of the 1930’s still had in mind: all of these are a motivation for a new consciousness, the negation of many of the values of our world, and an affirmation of freedom, sometimes ambiguous, because it does not hide what Fromm has called “escape from freedom.” Of course, poets like Neruda, Vallejo, Paz, show their social preoccupations just as Spender, Auden, Eluard, or Alberti did. However, the poets of that generation were somehow ideologists and in many cases strong believers in a utopia of human redemption within history. This is not the case with the majority of the young writers for whom unrest is stronger than their belief in ideologies or utopias.

Among the poets I will, for simplification, call poets of protest, the more important ones are Ernesto Cardenal (1925), Enrique Lihn (1929), and Alejandro Romualdo (1926).21

20Nicanor Parra’s best book is *La cuenca larga* (1958). The work of Juan Liscano appears in all its brilliance in *Cármenes* (1966). The best Girri poems are in *Escándalos y soledades* (1952). The following poets should be mentioned in addition to the ones discussed in this section: Gastón Baquero (1916) and Virgilio Piñera (1914) from Cuba; Yvonne Bedregal (1916) from Bolivia; Braulio Arenas (1913) from Chile; Margarita Michélena (1917) and Concha Urquiza (1910-1945) from Mexico; César Fernández Moreno (1919) and Eduardo Jonquières (1918) from Argentina; A. Cardona Peña (1917) from Costa Rica.

21In this context Juan Băñuelos (Mexico), Jaime Augusto Shelley (Mexico) and Fernández Retamar (Cuba) should be mentioned.
guan Catholic poet (today a Catholic priest), began as a lyric-epic poet and was influenced by Neruda and the atmosphere of the tropics. Under the influence of North American poetry of the 1930's, especially Thomas Merton, Cardenal has become a profound, contemplative and active poet. Extraordinarily gifted in his capacity to create images, Cardenal talks to the galaxies, mourns the death of Marilyn Monroe, writes against the dictator of his country, and prays in simple prayers for the liberty of the world. Enrique Lihn, Chilean, has traveled to Cuba where he seeks a hope for modern man. In poems of violent intonation, Lihn talks about human suffering. Perhaps his clearest antecedent is Vallejo. Lihn's work, filled with dialogues, conversations, quotations, is nevertheless more spoken than sung, on the threshold of nihilism, and it has a certain tempestuous and aggressive cordiality.

To illustrate a second tendency of the most recent poetry, we could cite those poets who, without divorcing themselves from the social world, and even sometimes writing social poems themselves, show mainly a clear lyric tendency. The most prominent among them are: Blanca Varela (1926), Rosario Castellanos (1925), Rubén Bonifaz Nuño (1924), Jaime Sabines (1926), Tomás Segovia (1927), Marco Antonio Montes de Oca (1931),Alejandra Pizarnik (1934), Gabriel Zaid (1934), Sergio Mondragón (1935), Homero Aridjis (1940), and José Emilio Pacheco (1939).

Blanca Varela (Peruvain), proceeds from surrealism and begins as a poet of the image, at the same time precise and magical. Lately, she tends to write vast poems—like the series of “waltzes”—where she mixes narration and lyric explosion, news, and “eternally,” song of “sweetness,” “remorse,” “caress.” Rosario Castellanos, Mexican, is a poet of “memorable matter,” a world changed in conscience and spirit. Bonifaz Nuño, Mexican, is a Latinist and translator of Catullus. He is a poet of form and, behind it, a romantic poet. Jaime Sabines, the most original of the Mexican poets of his generation, is violent, tender, ironic.


23Enrique Lihn’s most important book is *Escrito en Cuba* (1969).

24There are two reasons for my quoting mainly Mexican poets: 1. I am very familiar with them. 2. Mexican poetry of today is going through quite an exceptional period. The following poets should be added to the list: J. M. García Ascot, Jaime García Terres, Miguel Guardia, Eduardo Lizalde, Manuel Durán, José Carlos Becerra (all from Mexico); Manuel Mejía Sánchez (Nicaragua), María Elena Walsh and Juan José Hernández (Argentina), E. Barquero (Chile), Juan Calzadilla, Ida Gramcko, Guillermo Sucre (all three from Venezuela).
Sabines very often begins from an anecdote or story; other times he restricts himself to the short, exclamatory poems. The theme of love of the flesh predominates in his work, as do the themes of discovery of the world through sensibility and sensuality, the fear of death, balanced by a certain love for life. A poet of controlled emotion at times reminiscent of López Velarde, Sabines is the man who says: “Reality is superior to dreams.” Tomás Segovia (born in Spain, but Mexican since infancy) began to write under the obvious influence of Juan Ramón Jiménez. His work has progressed in depth, remaining always in the realm of spirit until reaching the long and truly great poem of “encounter” and “recognition” called *Anagnórisis* (1967). Marco Antonio Montes de Oca, Mexican, proceeds also from surrealism, and in his beginnings he is influenced by Octavio Paz. He is perhaps the young poet of Spanish America with the greatest metaphoric and verbal agility. Poet of constantly variable imagery and associated metaphors, Montes de Oca attempts to reveal the “incandescence” of the world. Alejandra Pizarnik (Argentina) writes small prose poems. Her sharp, intelligent and sensitive work has been accurately described by Pieyre de Mandiargues when he says: “They are beautiful animals, a little cruel, a little neurasthenic and tender; it is necessary to feed them and caress them; they are beautiful beasts covered with skin.” Gabriel Zaid (Mexican) writes an epigrammatic, ironic, fundamentally intellectual poetry, programmed like a “singing machine,” at the same time perfect and harsh poetry. Sergio Mondragón (Mexican) oscillates—as Octavio Paz has noted—between the magical and the spirit. His recent book of poems shows him to be above all a magic poet and a poet in search of natural goodness. Homero Aridjis (Mexican) is already one of the best poets of his generation. Aridjis, precise as the game of chess he plays, and passionate with eroticism that appears in all his work, also displays Biblical and Helenic roots. His poetic world mixes dream and vigil, so that dream becomes real and flesh becomes the reality of the dream. Few young poets possess like Aridjis—with an already extensive body of work—the verbal, sensual, warm and transparent emotion that is demonstrated in his work. José Emilio Pacheco (Mexican), author of three books of verse, was born in “hard times” and feels that he is living at the end of the world. His complaints become lamentations: “Let’s praise Patmos and the boiling mountain of lamentations.” Where are we in this “fugitive era?” Pacheco answers: “beings between waters, outsiders of yesterday and tomorrow.” The poet? Little can be said of the poet: “Don’t come to me with stories because the facts surpass us,
while we record our doubts in verse.” The future is unpredictable: light or shadow, inferno or paradise. Like Beckett, Pacheco affirms “les bêtes savent.” The animals know, in fact, but the fabulous animals of Pacheco are ourselves: the crabs “nomads in the mud or inhabitants in two exiles;” the bats that will make “the cavern burn to ashes.” Modest, ironic, exact, transparent: Pacheco believes that beyond the visible things, “it is necessary to seek the invisible.” There is in Pacheco’s work the maturity of a man who is already an authentic mature poet before thirty years of age.25

Open Conclusion

The lyric in Spanish America—and in general poetry in the Spanish language—is one of the masterpieces of Occidental literature in the twentieth century. From the modernists to the younger poets we can follow a continuity in the poetry that could only be compared, within the coordinates of our literature, with the literature of Spain and Spanish America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, our Golden Centuries. That is why this conclusion must be open in two senses: because the poetic movement in Spanish America is, as the title of a Mexican anthology suggests,26 poesía en movimiento, and because it must be known in other languages and be open to them so that readers and poets of other countries and tongues may perceive and see clearly this creative movement.


ALTAZOR o

EL VIAJE EN PARACAIDAS

I

Altazor morirás. Se secará tu voz y serás invisible
La Tierra seguirá girando sobre su órbita precisa
Temerosa de un trapiés como el equilibrista sobre el alambre
Que ata las miradas del pavor
En vano buscas ojo enloquecido
No hay puerta de salida y el viento desplaza los planetas
Piensas que no importa caer eternamente si se logra escapar
¿No ves que vas cayendo ya?
Limpia tu cabeza de prejuicio y moral
Y si queriendo alzarte nada has alcanzado
Déjate caer sin parar tu caída sin miedo al fondo de la sombra
Sin miedo al enigma de ti mismo
Acaso encuentres una luz sin noche
Perdida en las grietas de los precipicios

Cae

Cae eternamente
Cae al fondo del infinito
Cae al fondo del tiempo
Cae al fondo de ti mismo
Cae lo más bajo que se pueda caer
Cae sin vértigo
A través de todos los espacios y todas las edades
A través de todas las almas de todos los anhelos y de todos
los naufragios
Cae y quema al pasar los astros y los mares
Quema los ojos que te miran y los corazones que te aguardan
Quema el viento con tu voz
El viento que se enreda en tu voz
Y la noche que tiene frío en su gruta de huesos
Vicente Huidobro

tr. Richard Lebovitz

ALTAZOR or

JOURNEY BY PARACHUTE

(fragments)

I

Altazor you will die. Your voice will evaporate and you’ll be invisible
The Earth will continue whirling along its precise orbit
Afraid of slipping like the tight-rope walker upon the wire
Which binds glances of terror
Eye maddened you seek in vain
There is no way out and the wind displaces the planets
You think it doesn’t matter to fall forever if one manages to escape
Don’t you see you’re falling already
Free your head of prejudice and morals
And if wishing to rise up you grasp nothing
Let yourself fall without stopping your fall without fear into the
toward the shadow’s depth

Without fear into the enigma of yourself
Perhaps you will find a light without darkness
Lost in the fissures of the precipices

Fall

Fall forever
Fall into the depth of infinity
Fall into the depth of time
Fall into the depth of yourself
Fall into the deepest depth you are able to fall
Fall without dizziness
Through all voids and all ages
Through all souls all longings and all ruins
Fall and kindle the stars and seas as you pass
Kindle the eyes that watch you and hearts that await you
Kindle the wind with your voice
The wind that gets entwined in your voice
And the night that is cold in its cavern of bones
Cae en infancia
Cae en vejez
Cae en lágrimas
Cae en risas
Cae en música sobre el universo
Cae de tu cabeza a tus pies
Cae de tus pies a tu cabeza
Cae del mar a la fuente
Cae al último abismo de silencio
Como el barco que se hunde apagando sus luces

Todo se acabó
El mar antropófago golpea la puerta de las rocas despiadadas
Los perros ladran a las horas que se mueren
Y el cielo escucha el paso de las estrellas que se alejan

II

Yo estoy aquí de pie ante vosotros
En nombre de una idiota ley proclamadora
De la conservación de las especies
Inmundas ley
Villana ley arraigada a los sexos ingenuos
Por esa ley primera trampa de la inconciencia
El hombre se desgarra
Y se rompe en aullidos mortales por todos los poros
de su tierra.
Yo estoy aquí de pie entre vosotros
Se me caen las ansias al vacío
Se me caen los gritos a la nada
Se me caen al caos las blasfemias
Perro del infinito trotando entre astros muertos
Perro lamiendo estrellas y recuerdos de estrella
Perro lamiendo tumbas
Quiero la eternidad como una paloma en mis manos.

Todo ha de alejarse en la muerte esconderse en la muerte
Yo tú él nosotros vosotros ellos
Ayer hoy mañana
Fall into childhood
Fall into old age
Fall into tears
Fall into laughter
Fall into music above the universe
Fall from your head into your feet
Fall from your feet into your head
Fall from the sea into the fountain
Fall into the ultimate abyss of silence
Like the ship that sinks extinguishing its lights

All has come to an end
The cannibal sea strikes the door of the merciless rocks
The dogs bark at the fading hours
And the sky listens to the footfall of the receding stars

II

I am here before you
In the name of an idiotic law proclaimed
For the preservation of the species
Foul law
Vile law ingrained in the ingenuous sexes
For this basic law pitfall of the ignorant
Man is torn apart
And broken into mortal howls through all the pores
of his earth.
I am here among you
My anxieties fall from me into the void
My shrieks fall from me into nothingness
My damnations fall from me into chaos
Dog of the infinite trotting among dead stars
Doglicking stars and memories of stars
Dog licking tombs
I want eternity as a dove in my hands.

Everything must recede into death hide in death
I you he we you they
Yesterday today tomorrow
Pasto en las fauces del insaciable olvido
Pasto para la rumia eterna del caos incansable
Justicia ¿qué has hecho de mí Vicente Huidobro?
Se me cae el dolor de la lengua y las alas marchitas
Se me caen los dedos muertos uno a uno
¿Qué has hecho de mi voz cargada de pájaros en el atardecer
La voz que me dolía como sangre?
Dadme el infinito como una flor para mis manos

IV

Soy todo el hombre
El hombre herido por quién sabe quién
Por una flecha perdida del caos
Humano terreno desmesurado
Sí desmesurado y lo proclamo sin miedo
Desmesurado proque no soy burgués ni raza fatigada
Soy bárbaro tal vez
Desmesurado enfermo
Bárbaro limpio de rutinas y caminos marcados
No acepto vuestras sillas de seguridades cómodas
Soy el ángel salvaje que cayó una mañana
En vuestras plantaciones de preceptos
Poeta
Anti poeta
Culto
Anti culto
Animal metafísico cargado de congojas
Animal espontáneo directo sangrando sus problemas
Solitario como una paradoja
Paradoja fatal
Flor de contradicciones bailando un fox-trot

Sobre el sepulcro de Dios
Sobre el bien y el mal
Soy un pecho que grita y un cerebro que sangra
Soy un temblor de tierra
Los sismógrafos señalan mi paso por el mundo
Feed in the jaws of insatiable oblivion
Feed for the eternal rumination of tireless chaos
Justice, what have you done to me Vicente Huidobro?
The grief falls from my tongue and my faded wings
Fall and my dead fingers one by one
What have you done to my voice laden with birds in the evening
The voice that's been paining me like blood
Give me infinity as a flower for my hands

IV

I am every man
Man wounded by nobody knows what
By a stray arrow from chaos
Measureless human clay
Indeed measureless and I proclaim it fearlessly
Measureless because I am neither bourgeois nor tired breed
Perhaps I am a barbarian
Barbarian free of routines and marked highways
I do not accept your seats of comfortable safety
I am the rebellious angel who fell one morning
Into your plantations of precepts
Poet
Anti-poet
Intellectual
Anti-intellectual
Metaphysical animal laden with anguish
Spontaneous forthright animal bleeding its problems
Solitary like a paradox
Deadly paradox
Flower of contradictions dancing a fox-trot

Upon the sepulchre of God
Upon good and evil
I am a breast that cries out and brain that bleeds
I am an earthquake
The seismographs signal my footsteps through the world
Crujen las ruedas de la tierra
y voy andando a caballo en mi muerte
Voy pegado a mi muerte como un pájaro al cielo
Como una flecha en el árbol que crece
Como el nombre en la carta que envío
Voy pegado a mi muerte
Voy por la vida pegado a mi muerte
Apoyado en el bastón de mi esqueleto

V

El sol nace en mi ojo derecho y se pone en mi ojo izquierdo
En mi infancia una infancia ardiente como un alcohol
Me sentaba en los caminos de la noche
A escuchar la elocuencia de las estrellas
Y la oratoria del árbol
Ahora la indiferencia nieva en la tarde de mi alma
Rómpanse en espigas las estrellas
Pártase la luna en mil espejos
Vuelva el árbol al nido de su almendra
Sólo quiero saber por qué
Por qué
Por qué
Soy protesta y arano el infinito con mis garras
Y grito y gimo con miserables gritos oceánicos
El eco de mi voz hace tronar el caos

Soy desmesurado, cósmico
Las piedras las plantas las montañas
Me saludan Las abejas las ratas
Los leones y las águilas
Los astros los crepúsculos las albas
Los ríos y las selvas me preguntan
¿Qué tal cómo está Ud.?
Y mientras los astros y las olas tengan algo que decir
Será por mi boca que hablarán a los hombres
Traedme una hora que vivir
Traedme un amor pescado por la oreja
Y echadlo aquí a morir ante mis ojos
The wheels of the earth creak
and I am riding horseback into my death
I go fixed to my death like a bird to the sky
Like an arrow in the growing tree
Like the name on the letter I send
I go fixed to my death
I go through life fixed to my death
Supported upon the walking-stick of my bones

The sun rises in my right eye and sets in my left
In my childhood a childhood fervid as an alcohol
I sat in the roads of the night
Listening to the eloquence of the stars
And the oration of the tree
Now indifference snows in the afternoon of my soul
May the stars burst open into tiny fragments
May the moon split into a thousand mirrors
May the tree return to the nest of its seed
I alone wish to know why
Why
Why
I am rage and I scratch infinity with my claws
I howl and moan with miserable oceanic cries
The echo of my voice makes chaos rumble

I am measureless, cosmic
The stones plants mountains
Greet me The bees rats
Lions eagles
Stars twilights dawns
Rivers and forests ask me
Hello, how are you?
And while the stars and waves may have something to tell
It will be through my mouth that they speak to men
Fetch me an hour to live
Fetch me a love hooked by the ear
And throw it before my eyes to die
Que yo caiga por el mundo a toda máquina
Que yo corra por el universo a toda estrella
Que me hunda o me eleve
Lanzado sin piedad entre planetas y catástrofes
Señor Dios si tú existes es a mí a quien lo debes

Matad la horrible duda
Y la espantosa lucidez
Hombre con los ojos abiertos en la noche
Hasta el fin de los siglos
Enigma asco de los instintos contagiosos
Como las campanas de la exaltación
Pajarero de luces muertas que andan con pies de espectro
Con los pies indulgentes del arroyo
Que se llevan las nubes y cambia de país

En el tapiz del cielo se juega nuestra suerte
Allí donde mueren las horas
El pesado cortejo de las horas que golpean el mundo
Se juega nuestra alma
Y la suerte que se vuela todas las mañanas
Sobre las nubes con los ojos llenos de lágrimas.
Sangra la herida de las últimas creencias
Cuando el fusil desconsolado del humano refugio
Descuelga los pájaros del cielo
Mírate allí animal fraterno desnudo de nombre
Junto al abrevadero de tus límites propios
Bajo el alba benigna
Que zurce el tejido de las mareas

Mira a lo lejos viene la cadena de hombres
Saliendo de la usina de ansias iguales
Mordidos por la misma eternidad
Por el mismo huracán de vagabundas fascinaciones
Cada uno trae su palabra informe
Y los pies atados a su estrella propia
Las máquinas avanzan en la noche del diamante fatal
Avanza el desierto con sus olas sin vida
Pasan las montañas pasan los camellos
Como la historia de las guerras antiguas
Allá va la cadena de hombres entre fuegos ilusos
Hacia el párpado tumbal
May I fall through the world at full speed
May I run through the universe at the speed of light
May I sink or rise up
Hurled without pity among planets and catastrophes
My Lord if you exist it's to me you owe your existence

Kill horrible doubt
And frightful lucidity
Man with eyes open in the night
To the end of time
Repulsive enigma of contagious instincts
Like the bells of exaltation
Bird-catcher of dead lights which move upon ghostly feet
With the indulgent feet of the brook
That the clouds carry off to another country

On the tapestry of the sky is played our destiny
There where the hours die
The ponderous procession of hours striking the world
There is played our soul
And the destiny that escapes every morning
Above the clouds with tearful eyes
The wound of ultimate beliefs bleeds
When the disconsolate rifle of human refuge
Takes down the birds from the sky
Look at yourself there fraternal animal naked of name
Near the watering place of your own limits
Below the kind dawn
That mends the fabric of the tides

Watch in the distance the chain of men approaching
Coming out the factory of similar longings
Eaten away by the same eternity
By the same hurricane of vagabond fascinations
Each one brings his shapeless speech
And timid feet to his own star
The machines advance in the night of the deadly diamond
The desert advances with its lifeless waves
The mountains pass the camels pass
Like the history of the ancient wars
There goes the chain of men among illusory fires
Toward the sepulchral eyelid
La tarde abandonada
gime deshecha en lluvia.
Del cielo caen recuerdos
y entran por la ventana.
Duros respiros rotos,
quimeras calcinadas.
Lentamente va viniendo tu cuerpo.
Llegan tus manos en su órbita
de aguardiente de caña;
tus pies inagotables quemados por la danza,
y tus muslos, tenazas del espasmo,
y tu boca, sustancia
comestible, y tu cintura
de abierto caramelo.

Llegan tus brazos de oro, tus dientes sanguinarios;
de pronto entran tus ojos traicionados,
tu piel tendida, preparada
para la siesta;
tu olor a selva repentina; tu garganta
gritando (no sé, me lo imagino), gimiendo
(no sé, me lo figuro), quejándose (no sé, supongo, creo);
tu garganta profunda
retorciendo palabras prohibidas.

Un río de promesas
baja de tus cabellos,
se demora en tus senos,
cuaja al fin en un charco de maleza en tu vientre,
viola tu carne firme de nocturno secreto.
Carbón ardiendo y piedra de horno
en esta tarde fría de lluvia y de silencio.
Abandoned evening
Whirls destroyed in the rain.
Memories fall from the clouds
Through the windows.
Long exhausted sighs,
Burnt chimeras.
Your body emerges slowly.
Your hands arrive in their orbit.
Of sugar cane liquor;
Your willing feet sore from dancing,
Your thighs tautened by spasms,
Your mouth an edible
Substance, your open
Caramel waist.

Your golden arms lift with your cruel teeth,
Your eyes betrayed quickly attack,
Your skin laid out ready
For sleep.
Your sudden forest odor, your throat
Screaming (I imagine), dancing
(I guess), moaning (I suppose, I believe);
Your deepened throat
Echoing forbidden words.

A river of promises
falls from your hair
Lingers in your breasts
And finally coils in a sweet pool in your belly
And rapes your flesh filled with nocturnal secrets.
Glowing coal and kiln-stone
In a cool evening of rain and silence.
Nicolás Guillén

LLEGADA

¡Aquí estamos!
La palabra nos viene húmeda de los bosques,
y un sol enérgico nos amanece entre las venas.
El puño es fuerte
y tiene el remo.
En el ojo profundo duermen palmeras exhorbitantes.
El grito se nos sale como una gota de oro virgen.
Nuestro pie,
duro y ancho,
aplasta el polvo en los caminos abandonados
y estrechos para nuestras filas.
Sabemos donde nacen las aguas,
y las amamos porque empujaron nuestras canoas bajos los cielos rojos.

Nuestro canto
es como un músculo bajo la piel del alma,
nuestro sencillo canto.
Traemos el humo en la mañana,
y el fuego sobre la noche,
y el cuchillo, como un duro pedazo de luna,
aptó para las pieles bárbaras;
traemos los caimanes en el fango,
y el arco que dispara nuestras ansias,
y el cinturón del trópico,
y el espíritu limpio.
¡Eh, compañeros, aquí estamos!
La ciudad nos espera con sus palacios, tenues
como panales de abejas silvestres;
sus calles están secas como los ríos cuando no llueve en la montaña,
y las casas nos miran con los ojos pávidos de las ventanas.
Los hombres antiguos nos darán leche y miel
y nos coronarán de hojas verdes.
¡Eh, compañeros, aquí estamos!
Bajo el sol
nuestra piel sudorosa reflejará los rostros húmedos de los vencidos,
y en la noche, mientras los astros ardan en la punta de nuestras llamas,
nuestra risa madrugará sobre los ríos y los pajares.
Nicolás Guillén

ARRIVAL

Here we are!
The word comes to us damp from the forests,
An energetic sun rises in our veins.
The fist is strong
and holds the oar.
In a darkened eye the highest palms sleep.
Our cry escapes like a drop of virgin gold.
Our feet,
Broad and tough,
Harden the dust of the abandoned roads
For the passage of our ranks.
We know where the waters are born,
And we love them pushing canoes beneath the red heavens.

Our song
Is like a muscle beneath the soul's skin,
Our simple song.
We bring our smoke to morning,
And fire to the night,
And a knife like a hard lunar stone,
Useful for barbarous flesh;
We bring crocodiles out of the mud,
And the tropical belt,
And the purified spirit.
So friends, here we are!
The city waits with her palaces, delicate
As the combs of a wild hive;
Streets dry as rivers when no rain reaches the mountains,
The houses watch with their locked-eye windows.
The ancients left us milk and honey
And a crown of laurel leaves.
So friends, here we are!
Beneath the sun
Our sweating skins reflect the moist faces of the captured,
And past night, while stars walk in the points of flames,
Our laugh rises over the rivers and birds.
Enrique Molina

MEMORIA

Extinguidas aquellas frenéticas caricias
Pasada la luna del ceremonial de los besos
Se abre una jaula de demencia
Los bellos gatos de espasmo que aullan enterrados vivos
Y un foco de imágenes extintas se instala en tu médula
Como una peste real, En la sombra
La mujer se desviste y penetra a su lecho
Y emprende su vuelo nupcial hasta las últimas hogueras
del cielo
Y él madura a su lado para la muerte
En el cálido invernáculo de sus sonrisas junto a su
rostro que desaparece
Jamás despertarán sobre sus besos
A lo largo de gomosas colinas en ondulantes dormitorios
Donde brota una hierba indeleble
Caminos llenos de anzuelos
Un vestido que late sin nadie
Un retrato con dientes de fuego
Sonriente a través de los muros

¿Y quién no reverencia esas gracias en pena
Abrazos vacíos dichas de fracaso y de vértigo
Que me adulan como el demonio para despellejarme
Para homenajearme con países quemados sobre el corazón . . . ?

Entonces
De esas enormes lunas que fermentan
En un calor de maleza tropical
Lleno de piernas de mujer
La luz de una lengua se expande
Enrique Molina

tr. Thomas Hoeksema

MEMORY

Those violent caresses vanished
No more moons of ceremonial kisses
A cage of madness opens
Spasms of beautiful cats that howl buried alive
And a center of dead images grows in your marrow
Like a true plague. In the shadow
The woman undresses and gets into bed
Her nuptial flight reaches to remotest fires of the sky
He ripens to death by her side
In the warm greenhouse of her smiles near his face that disappears
Never will they revive on their kisses
Along viscid hills in undulating dormitories
Where indelible weeds sprout
Paths full of fishhooks
Clothes pulsate without a body
A portrait with teeth of fire
Smiling through the walls

Who does not respect the wandering of these souls?
Empty embraces joys of failure and of vertigo
That beguile to flay me like the devil
To venerate me with burned countries on my heart...?

Then
From those huge moons that ferment
In the heat of tropical thickets
Full of women’s legs
The light from tongues expands
Y de nuevo estamos perdidos
De nuevo imploramos a ídolos de orgullo y desamparo
De sexos despiadados
Con irrecuperables sonrisas eternas
Trozos de paisaje
Bocas de sacrilegio que no piden socorro

Que no tienen socorro.

Enrique Molina

DESCENSO AL OLVIDO

¡Oh!, he aquí los muertos, sentados,
inmóviles alrededor del Tiempo;
adorando su pálida, eterna hoguera,
extrañamente sombríos en su reunión solitaria.

Ahí están, invadidos por marañas mentidas;
poblados por húmedas músicas, por tenaces cigarras.
Sobre ellos el cierzo ha pesado, y sus gestos de antaño,
sus cuerpos de vapor,
se condensan de pronto en alargadas lluvias.

No; no hables un idioma olvidado.
No pronuncies tu nombre.
Que no giren con letal lentitud la borrada, tormentosa cabeza.
Que no te reconozcan sus huecos corazones comidos por los pájaros.
Once more we are lost
Once more we implore idols of pride and desolation
Of brutal sexes
With smiles lost forever
Fragments of landscape
Lips of sacrilege that do not seek help

That do not have help

**Enrique Molina**

**DESCENT INTO OBLIVION**

Oh! Behold the dead, seated
motionless around Time;
worshiping their pale, eternal fire,
uncanny, solitary their reunion.

There they sit, invaded by false jungles,
inhabited by damp music, tenacious cicadas.
The north wind heavy upon them, their forgotten faces,
    hazy bodies,
rain suddenly and long.

No; do not speak a forgotten language.
Do not pronounce your name.
May their marred, stormy head not spin with deadly slowness.
May their empty hearts devoured by birds not recognize you.
Jose Lezama Lima

LLAMADO DEL DESEOSO

Deseoso aquel que huye de su madre,
Despedirse es cultivar un rocío para unirlo con la secularidad de la saliva.
La hondura del deseo no va por el secuestro del fruto.
Deseoso es dejar de ver a su madre.
Es la ausencia del sucedido de un día que se prolonga
y es a la noche que esa ausencia se va ahondando como un cuchillo.
En esa ausencia se abre una torre, en esa torre baila un fuego hueco.
Y así se ensancha y la ausencia de la madre es un mar en calma.
Pero el huidizo no ve el cuchillo que le pregunta,
es de la madre, de los postigos asegurados, de quien se huye.
Lo descendido en vieja sangre suena vacío.
La sangre es fría cuando desciende y cuando se esparce circulizada.
La madre es fría y está cumplida.
Si es por la muerte, su peso es doble y ya no nos suelta.
No es por las puertas donde se asoma nuestro abandono.
Es por un claro donde la madre sigue marchando, pero ya no nos sigue.
Es por un claro, allí se ciega y bien nos deja.
Ay del que no marcha esa marcha donde la madre ya no le sigue, ay.
No es desconocerse, el conocerse sigue furioso como en sus días,
pero el seguirlo sería quemarse dos en un árbol,
y ella apetece mirar el árbol como una piedra,
como una piedra con la inscripción de ancianos juegos.
Nuestro deseo no es alcanzar o incorporar un fruto ácido.
El deseo es el huidizo
y de los cabezazos con nuestras madres cae el planeta centro de mesa
y ¿de dónde huimos, si no es de nuestras madres de quien huimos
que nunca quieren recomenzar el mismo naipe, la misma noche de igual
ijada descomunal?
Full of desire is the man who flees from his mother.
To take leave is to raise a dew for civil marriage with the saliva.
The depth of desire is not measured by the expropriation of the fruit.
Desire is to cease from seeing one’s mother.
It is the uneventfulness of a day which prolongs itself
and it is night that such absence goes driving down into like a knife.
In this absence a tower opens, in that tower a hollow fire dances.
And thus it widens out and the absence of the mother is a sea at rest.
But the fugitive fails to see the questioning knife:
it is from the mother, the shuttered windows, that he is escaping.
What has gone down into old blood sounds empty.
The blood is cold when it goes down and is far flung in circulation.
The mother is cold and has served her time.
If death is responsible, the weight is doubled and we are not set free.
It is not through the doors where our own loss looks out.
It’s in a clearing, through which the mother keeps on walking
but no longer follows us now.
It’s through a clearing: there she blinds herself and leaves us well.
Alas for him who walks that path no longer where the mother
no longer follows him, alas.

It is not self-ignorance, self-knowledge continues to rage as in her time,
but to follow it would be to burn à deux in a tree,
and she hungers to clap eyes on the tree like a stone,
a stone inscribed with the rules of ancient games.
Our desire is not to overtake or incorporate a bitter fruition.
Full of desire is the fugitive
and from our head-on collisions with our mothers falls the centrepiece planet
and from where do we flee, if it is not from our mothers that we flee,
that never wish to play these cards again, go through the night again,
the night of such unearthly suffering in the sides?
José Lezama Lima

UNA OSCURA PRADERA ME CONVIDA

Una oscura pradera me convida,
sus manteles estables y ceñidos,
giran en mío, en mi balcón se aduermen.
Dominan su extensión, su indefinida
cúpula de alabastro se recrea.
Sobre las aguas del espejo,
breve la voz en mitad de cien caminos,
mi memoria prepara su sorpresa:
gamo en el cielo, rocío, llamarada.
Sin sentir que me llaman
penetro en la pradera despacioso,
ufano en nuevo laberinto derretido.
Allí se ven, ilustres restos,
cien cabezas, cornetas, mil funciones
abren su cielo, su girasol callando.
Extraña la sorpresa en este cielo,
donde sin querer vuelven pisadas
y suenan las voces en su centro henchido.
Una oscura pradera va pasando.
Entre los dos, viento o fino papel,
el viento, herido viento de esta muerte
mágica, una y despedida.
Un pájaro y otro ya no tiemblan.
AN OBSCURE MEADOW LURES ME

An obscure meadow lures me,
her fast, close-fitting lawns
revolve in me, sleep on my balcony.
They rule her reaches, her indefinite
alabaster dome recreates itself.
On the waters of a mirror,
the voice cut short crossing a hundred paths,
my memory prepares surprise:
fallow deer in the sky, dew, sudden flash.
Without hearing I'm called:
I slowly enter the meadow,
proudly consumed in a new labyrinth.
Illustrious remains:
a hundred heads, bulges, a thousand shows
barring their sky, their silent sunflower.
Strange the surprise in that sky
where unwillingly footfalls turn
and voices swell in its pregnant centre.
An obscure meadow goes by.
Between the two, wind or thin paper,
the wind, the wounded wind of this death
this magic death, one and dismissed.
A bird, another bird, no longer tremble.
Octavio Paz

VIENTO ENTERO

El presente es perpetuo
Los montes son de hueso y son de nieve
Están aquí desde el principio
El viento acaba de nacer
    Sin edad
Como la luz y como el polvo
    Molino de sonidos
El bazar tornasolea
    Timbres motores radios
El trote pétreo de los asnos opacos
Cantos y quejas enredados
Entre las barbas de los comerciantes
Alto fulgor a martillazos esculpido
En los claros de silencio
    Estallan
Los gritos de los niños
    Príncipes en harapos
A la orilla del río atormentado
Rezan orinan meditan
    El presente es perpetuo
Se abren las compuertas del año
    El día salta
Ágata
    El pájaro caído
Entre la calle Montalambert y la de Bac
Es una muchacha
    Detenida
Sobre un precipicio de miradas
Si el agua es fuego
    Llama
En el centro de la hora redonda
    Encandilada
Potranca alazana
Octavio Paz

tr. Paul Blackburn

WIND FROM ALL COMPASS POINTS

The present is motionless
The mountains are of bone and of snow
They have been here since the beginning
The wind has just been born

Ageless

As the light and the dust

A windmill of sounds

The bazaar spins its colors

Bells motors radios

The stony trot of dark donkeys

Songs and complaints entangled

Among the beards of the merchants

The tall light chiseled with hammer-strokes

In the clearings of silence

Boys’ cries

Explode

Princes in tattered clothes

On the banks of the tortured river

Pray pee meditate

The present is motionless

The flood-gates of the year open

Day flashes out

Agate

The fallen bird

Between rue Montalambert and rue de Bac

Is a girl

Held back

At the edge of a precipice of looks

If water is fire

Flame

Dazzled

In the center of the spherical hour

A sorrel filly
Un haz de chispas
    Una muchacha real
Entre las casas y las gentes espectrales
Presencia chorro de evidencias
Yo vi a través de mis actos irreales
La tomé de la mano
    Juntos atravesamos
Los cuatro espacios los tres tiempos
Pueblos errantes de reflejos
Y volvimos al día del comienzo
El presente es perpetuo
    21 de junio
Hoy comienza el verano
    Dos o tres pájaros
Inventan un jardín
    Tú lees y comes un durazno
Sobre la colcha roja
    Desnuda
Como el vino en el cántaro de vidrio
    Un gran vuelo de cuervos
En Santo Domingo mueren nuestros hermanos
Si hubiera parque no estarían ustedes aquí
    Nosotros nos roemos los codos
En los jardines de su alcázar de ésto
Tipú Sultán plantó el árbol de los jacobinos
Luego distribuyó pedazos de vidrio
Entre los oficiales ingleses prisioneros
Y ordenó que se cortasen el prepucio
Y se lo comiesen
    El siglo
Se ha encendido en nuestras tierras
Con su lumbre
    Las manos abrasadas
Los constructores de catedrales y pirámides
Levantarán sus casas transparentes
    El presente es perpetuo
El sol se ha dormido entre tus pechos
La colcha roja es negra y palpita

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A marching battalion of sparks
Among wraithlike houses and people
Presence a fountain of reality
I looked out through my own unrealities
I took her hand
Together we crossed
The four quadrants the three times
Floating tribes of reflections
And we returned to the day of beginning
The present is motionless

June 21st
Today is the beginning of summer
Two or three birds
invent a garden
You read and eat a peach
On the red couch
Naked
Like the wine in the glass pitcher
A great flock of crows
Our brothers are dying in Santo Domingo
If we had the munitions
You people would not be here
We chew our nails down to the elbow
In the gardens of his summer fortress
Tipu Sultan planted the Jacobin tree
Then distributed glass shards among
The imprisoned English officials
And ordered them to cut off their foreskins
And eat them
The century
Has caught fire in our lands
With scorched hands
The cathedral and pyramid builders
Will raise their transparent houses
The present is motionless
The sun has fallen asleep between your breasts
The red covering is black and heaves
Ni astro ni alhaja
  Fruta
Tú te llamas dátil
  Dátia
Castillo de sal si puedes
  Mancha escarlata
Sobre la piedra empedernida
Galerías terrazas escaleras
Desmanteladas salas nupciales
Del escorpión
  Ecos repeticiones
Relojería erótica
  Deshora
  Tú recorres
Los patios taciturnos bajo la tarde impia
Manto de agujas en tus hombros indemnes
Si el fuego es agua
  Eres una gota diáfana
La muchacha real
  Transparencia del mundo
El presente es perpetuo
  Los montes
Soles destazados
Petrificada tempestad ocre
  El viento rasga
Ver duele
El cielo es otro abismo más alto
Garganta de Salang
La nube negra sobre la roca negra
El puño de la sangre golpea
  Puertas de piedra
Sólo el agua es humana
En estas soledades despeñadas
Sólo tus ojos de agua humana
  Abajo
En el espacio hendido
El deseo te cubre con sus dos alas negras
Tus ojos se abren y se cierran
  Animales fosforescentes
Abajo
Not planet and not jewel
   Fruit
You are named Date Datia
Castle of Leave-If-You-Can
   Scarlet stain
Upon the obdurate stone
Corridors
   Terraces
   Stairways
Dismantled nuptial chambers
Of the scorpion
   Echoes repetitions
The intricate and erotic guts of a watch
   Beyond time
   You cross
Taciturn patios under the pitiless afternoon
A cloak of needles on your untouched shoulders
If fire is water
   You are a diaphanous drop
The real girl
   Transparency of the world
The present is motionless
   The mountains
   Quartered suns
   Petrified storm earth-yellow
The wind whips
It hurts to see
The sky is another deeper abyss
   Gorge of the Salang Pass
   Black cloud over black rock
   Fist of blood strikes
   Gates of stone
Only the water is human
In these precipitous solitudes
Only your eyes of human water
   Down there
In the cleft place
Desire covers you with both its black wings
Your eyes flash open and close
   Phosphorescent animals
   Down there
El desfiladero caliente
La ola que se dilata y se rompe
Tus piernas abiertas
El salto blanco
La espuma de nuestros cuerpos abandonados
El presente es perpetuo
El morabito regaba la tumba del santo
Sus barbas eran más blancas que las nubes
Frente al moral
Al flanco del torrente
Repetiste mi nombre
Dispersión de sílabas
Un adolescente de ojos verdes
Te regaló una granada
Al otro lado del Amu-Darya
Humeaban las casitas rusas
El son de la flauta usbek
Era otro río invisible y más puro
En la barcaza el batelero estrangulaba pollos
El país es una mano abierta
Sus líneas
Signos de un alfabeto roto
Osamentas de vacas en el llano
Bactriana
Estatua pulverizada
Yo recogí del polvo unos cuantos nombres
Por esas sílabas caídas
Granos de una granada cenicienta
Juro ser tierra y viento
Remolino
Sobre tus huesos
El presente es perpetuo
La noche entra con todos sus árboles
Noche de insectos eléctricos y fieras de seda
Noche de yerbas que andan sobre los muertos
Conjunción de aguas que vienen de lejos
Murmurillos
Los universos se desgranan
Un mundo cae
Se enciende una semilla
Cada palabra palpita
The hot canyon
The wave that lengthens and breaks
Your legs apart
The plunging whiteness
The foam of our bodies abandoned
The present is motionless
The hermit watered the saint's tomb
His beard was whiter than clouds
Facing the mulberry
On the flank of the rushing stream
You repeat my name
Dispersion of syllables
A kid with green eyes presented you
With a pomegranate
On the other bank of the Amu-Darya
Smoke rose from Russian cottages
The sound of an Usbek flute
Was another river, invisible, clearer
The boatman
On the barge was strangling chickens
The countryside is an open hand
Its lines
Marks of a broken alphabet
Cow skeletons on the prairie
Báctria
A smashed-up statue
I scraped a few names out of the dust
By these fallen syllables
Seeds of a charred pomegranate
I swear to be earth and wind
Whirling
Over your bones
The present is motionless
Night comes down with its trees
Night of electric insects and silken animals
Night of grasses that cover the dead
Confluence of waters which come from far off
Rustlings
Universes are strewn about
A world falls
A seed flares up
Each word beats, I
Oigo tu latir en la sombra
Enigma en forma de reloj de arena
Mujer dormida
Espacio espacios animados
Anima mundi
Materia maternal
Perpetua desterrada de sí misma
Y caída perpetua en su entraña vacía
Anima mundi
Madre de las razas errantes
De soles y de hombres
Emigran los espacios
El presente es perpetuo
En el pico del mundo se acarician
Shiva y Parvati
Cada caricia dura un siglo
Para el dios y para el hombre
Un mismo tiempo
Un mismo despeñarse
Lahor
Río rojo barcas negras
Entre dos tamarindos una niña descalza
Y su mirar sin tiempo
Un latido idéntico
Muerte y nacimiento
Entre el cielo y la tierra suspendidos
Unos cuantos álamos
Vibrar de luz más que vaiven de hojas
¿Suben o bajan?
El presente es perpetuo
Llueve sobre mi infancia
Llueve sobre el jardín de la fiebre
Flores de sílex árboles de humo
En una hoja de higuera tú navegas
Por mi frente
La lluvia no te moja
Eres la llama de agua
La gota diáfana de fuego
Hear you throb in the shadow
A riddle shaped like an hour-glass
Woman asleep

Space living spaces
Anima mundi
Maternal substance
Always torn from itself
Always falling into your empty womb
Anima mundi
Mother of the nomadic tribes
Of suns and of men

The spaces turn
The present is motionless

At the top of the world
Shiva and Parati caress
Each caress lasts a century
For the god and for the man
An identical time

An equivalent hurling headlong
Lahore
Red river black boats

A barefoot girl
Between two tamarinds
And her timeless gaze
An identical throb

Death and birth
A grove of poplars
Suspended between sky and earth
They are a quiver of light more than a tremble of leaves
Do they rise
Or fall?

The present is motionless
It rains on my childhood
It rains on the feverish garden
Flint flowers trees of smoke
In a figleaf you sail on my brow
The rain does not touch you

You are a flame of water
The diaphanous drop of fire
Derramada sobre mis párpados
Yo veo a través de mis actos irreales
El mismo día que comienza
Gira el espacio
Arranca sus raíces el mundo
No pesan más que el alba nuestros cuerpos

“Continuidad”
Bronze
*Beatriz Caso de Solorzano*
Spilling upon my eyelids
I look out through my own unrealities
The same day is beginning

The world wrenches up its roots
Our bodies
    Stretched out
    Weigh no more than dawn

“Clan”
Bronze

Beatriz Caso de Solorzano
“Configuration”

Oil on canvas
17 11/16 inches by 13 3/4 inches

Miguel Caride

Reproduced with permission of *Hispanic Arts*
Galería Rubbers, Buenos Aires
“Victims of War” (1945)

Synthetic lacquer on Composition Board
12 feet 3/4 inches by 8 feet 1 1/4 inches

David Alfaro Siqueiros

Reproduced with permission of Hispanic Arts
Nicanor Parra

SARANGUACO

Es de noche, no piensa ser de noche
Es de día, no piensa ser de día.

Cómo va a ser de noche si es de día
Cómo va a ser de día si es de noche
¿Creen que están hablando con un loco?

Ojalá fuera realmente de día.

Hace frío pero yo tengo calor
Hace calor pero yo me muero de frío.

Dije que hacía frío pero miento
Hace un calor que derrite las piedras
Eso lo veo con mis propios ojos:
¡Falso! ¡No veo nada!
¡Tengo los ojos herméticamente cerrados!

Lo que sucede es que me siento mal
Ese dolor de estómago de siempre
La sensación de vértigo no cesa.

Cómo que mal: ¡me siento perfectamente!
¡En mi vida me he sentido mejor!
¡Ojalá me sintiera desdichado!

Observen bien y verán
Que estoy riéndome a carcajadas.
It is night, it does not expect to be night
It is day, it does not expect to be day.

How is it going to be night if it is day
How is it going to be day if it is night
Do they think they are talking to a madman?

I wish it were really day.

It's cold but I am warm
It's hot but I am dying of cold.

I said it was cold but I'm lying
It's hot enough to melt rocks
I see that with my own eyes:
Fraud! I don't see a thing!
My eyes are hermetically sealed.

What's happening is that I feel bad
That nagging stomachache
The dizziness never stops.

Sick, my eye: I feel perfectly OK!
Never felt better in my life!
I wish I felt miserable!

Take a good look and you will see
that I am laughing my head off.
Nicanor Parra

LA FORTUNA
La fortuna no ama a quien la ama:
Esta pequeña hoja de laurel
Ha llegado con años de retraso.
Cuando yo la quería
Para hacerme querer
Por una dama de labios morados
Me fue negada una y otra vez
Y me la dan ahora que estoy viejo.
Ahora que no me sirve de nada.
Ahora que no me sirve de nada
Me la arrojan al rostro
Casi
como
una
palada
de
tierra . .

Nicanor Parra

ADVERTENCIA
Yo no permito que nadie me diga
Que no comprende los antipoemas
Todos deben reír a carcajadas.
Para eso me rompo la cabeza
Para llegar al alma del lector.
Déjense de preguntas.
En el lecho de muerte
Cada uno se rasca con sus uñas.
Además una cosa:
Yo no tengo ningún inconveniente
En meterme en camisa de once varas.
FAME
Fame does not care for one who wants it.
This small laurel leaf
Came years late.
When I desired it
So I could be loved
By a woman with violet lips
It eluded me again and again
And comes to me now that I am old,
Now that it does me no good.
Now that it does me no good
They throw it in my face
Almost
like
a
shovelful
of
dirt. . .

NOTICE
I don’t allow anyone to say to me
They can’t understand the antipoems.
Everyone should be dying of laughter.
That is why I break my neck
To get to a reader’s soul.
Let’s have no more questions.
In the death bed
Everyone scratches himself with his nails.
And one thing more:
I don’t have the least objection
To wearing a shirt eleven yards long.
Algun día encontrare una palabra
que penetre en tu vientre y lo fecunde,
que se pare en tu seno
como una mano abierta y cerrada al mismo tiempo.

Hallaré una palabra
que detenga tu cuerpo y lo dé vuelta,
que contenga tu cuerpo
y abra tus ojos como un dios sin nubes
y te use tu saliva
y te doble las piernas.
Tú tal vez no la escuches
o tal vez no la comprendas.
No será necesario.
Irá por tu interior como una rueda
recorriéndote al fin de punta a punta,
mujer mía y no mía,
y no se detendrá ni cuando mueras.

El hombre,
maniquí de la noche,
apuñala vacíos.

Pero un día,
un vacío le devuelve feroz la puñalada.

Y sólo queda entonces
un puñal en la nada.
Roberto Juarroz

tr. Sergio Mondragón and Rainer Schulte

One day I will find a word
to pierce your stomach with pregnancy,
to grow in your womb
like a hand, both open and closed.

I will find a word
to hold and turn your body
to embrace your body
to open your eyes like a god without clouds
to eat your saliva
to bend your knees.
Perhaps you will not hear it
or even understand it.
It will not be necessary.
It will roll through your insides like a wheel,
at last, from head to foot
woman mine and not mine,
and it will not stop even when you die.

Roberto Juarroz

Man,
the puppet of the night,
stabs the void with a dagger.

But one day,
the void returns the savage blow.

Then, only one thing remains:
a dagger in the void.
Roberto Juarroz

La muerte ya no enfrenta a los espejos.
Tiene miedo de borrarlos o romperlos.
Y más, mucho más miedo tiene
de borrarse o de romperse.

Sin embargo,
siempre queda un espejo que se mira en la muerte,
como si ella fuera simplemente
un espejo de espejos,
un espejo que se enfrenta con otro,
y en sin nada en el medio.

Roberto Juarroz

Pienso que en este momento
tal vez nadie en el universo piensa en mí,
que sólo yo me pienso,
y si ahora muriese,
nadie, ni yo, me pensaría.

Y aquí empieza el abismo,
como cuando me duermo.
Soy mi propio sostén y me lo quito.
Contribute a tapizar de ausencia todo.

Tal vez sea por esto
que pensar en un hombre
se parece a salvarlo.
Death no longer faces mirrors.  
He fears to destroy or shatter them.  
And he is even more afraid  
of destroying or shattering himself.

But  
the mirror is still reflected by death,  
as if he were simply  
a mirror of mirrors,  
one mirror faced by another,  
with nothing in between.

I think that in this moment  
perhaps no one in the universe thinks about me,  
that only I think of myself,  
and if I died now,  
nobody, not even I, would think about me.

And here rises the abyss,  
as when I fall asleep.  
I am my own support and I remove it.  
I help to wallpaper everything with absence.

Perhaps for that reason  
to think about a person  
means to save him.
Cintio Vitier

LA PALABRA

Entonces afluían las palabras del hechizo de las cosas, o saltaban en un oscuro borbotón como de sangre, o sus hogueras ávidas mordían las manos que querían atraparlas, o cruzaban como aves o venados en el fulgor del sol, entre los bosques.

Ahora, cuando llega una palabra —sola, inmensa, única, perdida, mensajera que ha logrado atravesar las más vastas y desnudas extensiones— es preciso recibirla regiamente, abrir las puertas, encender las lámparas, y quedar en silencio hasta que ella, incapaz de mentirnos, se ha dormido, y otra vez se confunde con las rosas.

Cintio Vitier

CADA VEZ QUE VUELVO A TI

Cada vez que vuelvo a ti, rincón oscuro, poesía, pienso que debes ser una pradera donde los verdes son como animales. Allí se reconoce vastamente la soledad feroz hasta la playa retumbando en el recio acantilado, y más lejos aún, la montaña temblando como un astro

72
Then the words flowed
with the magic of things, or were spilt
in a dark jet like blood,
or like those hungry bonfires that bit
the hands that tried to trap them,
or crossed like birds or deer
in bright sunlight, between woods.

Now, when a word comes
—alone, enormous, unique, lost,
a messenger that has managed to cross
vast and naked distances—
it’s important to receive it splendidly,
opening the doors, lighting the lamps,
waiting in silence until
unable to lie to us it has slept
and again merges with the things.
donde debí morir hace mil siglos
defendiendo una causa indescriptible.

Pero no eres eso tú,
ni tampoco el rincón en que soñaba,
sino la calle viva donde estoy,
el cuerpo envejeciendo en el azar,
este pobre minuto que no vuelve,
listado de congojas y trabajos.
Y en verdad, poesía, ese otro rostro,
el de mayor misterio que un hombre puede conocer,
el de la trivialidad y la costumbre,
el del vulgar cansancio de los huesos,
el del mundo.

Cintio Vitier

DICHO EN EL ALMA

Querido pesador de caña,
querido filósofo,
hielo del cazador de venados,
del carpintero que hizo la mesa donde escribo,
del lector de la Biblia
que una tarde, en un sendero de Las Villas,
vio todos los animales de la creación;
hielo de Luz, de Varela, de Varona,
querido niño estudioso,
querido orador,
amado anciano y maestro,
poesa, padre mío, suave estoico,
espíritu radiante,
no me abandones.
where I ought to have died a thousand years ago
defending some indescribable cause.

But that's not you,
nor the corner where I was dreaming;
you are only the living street where I stand,
my body ageing with the throw of the dice,
this poor minute that'll never return,
streaked with anxiety and work.
And indeed, poetry, that other face,
the deepest mystery a man can know,
triviality and custom,
plain weariness of the bones
and of the world.

Cintio Vitier

SPOKEN IN THE SOUL

Dear measurer of cane,
dear philosopher,
son of the deerhunter,
of the carpenter who made the table on which I write,
reader of the Bible
who one afternoon, on a path at Las Villas,
saw all the animals of creation;
son of Luz, Varela and Varona,
dear studious child,
dear orator,
beloved old man and teacher,
poet, my father, gentle stoic,
radiant spirit,
don't leave me.
Ernesto Cardenal

2 AM. Es la hora del Oficio Nocturno, y la iglesia en penumbra parece que está llena de demonios. Esta es la hora de las tinieblas y de las fiestas. La hora de mis parrandas. Y regresa mi pasado.

"Y mi pecado está siempre delante de mí".

Y mientras recitamos los salmos, mis recuerdos interfieren el rezo como radios y como roconolas. Vuelven viejas escenas de cine, pesadillas, horas solas en hoteles, bailes, viajes, besos, bares. Y surgen rostros olvidados. Cosas siniestras. Somoza asesinado sale de su mausoleo. (Con Sehon, rey de los amorreos, y Og, rey de Basán). Las luces del "Copacabana" rielando en el agua negra del malecón, que mana de las cloacas de Managua. Conversaciones absurdas de noches de borrachera que se repiten y se repiten como un disco rayado. Y los gritos de las ruletas, y las roconolas.

"Y mi pecado está siempre delante de mí".

Es la hora en que brillan las luces de los burdeles y las cantinas. La casa de Caifás está llena de gente. Las luces del palacio de Somoza están prendidas. Es la hora en que se reúnen los Consejos de Guerra y los técnicos en torturas bajan a las prisiones. La hora de los policías secretos y de los espías, cuando los ladrones y los adulteros rondan las casas y se ocultan los cadáveres. Un bulto cae al agua. Es la hora en que los moribundos entran en agonía. La hora del sudor en el huerto, y de las tentaciones. Afuera los primeros pájaros cantan tristes, llamando al sol. Es la hora de las tinieblas. Y la iglesia está helada, como llena de demonios, mientras seguimos en la noche recitando los salmos.
Ernesto Cardenal

tr. Eduardo González

2 A.M. It is the hour of the Dawn Service and the church in shadows seems filled with devils. This is the hour of darkness and of parties. The hour of my roamings. And my past hits me.

“And my sin is always before me”

And while we sing the psalms my memories interrupt my prayer like radios and juke boxes. Old movie scenes, nightmares, lonely hours in hotels, dances, trips, kisses, bars return to me. And forgotten faces emerge. Sinister things. The assassinated Somoza steps out of his tomb.

(with Schon, king of the Amorees and Og, king of Basan).

The lights from the “Copacabana” shimmering over the bay’s dark water which flows from the sewers of Managua. The absurd talk of drunken nights which is repeated and repeated like a broken record. And the cries of roulette wheels and juke boxes.

“And my sin is always before me”

It is the hour in which the lights of the brothels and the barrooms shine. The house of Caiphas is full of people. The lights in Somoza’s palace are lit. It is the hour in which the Council of War meets and the experts on torture go down into the dungeons. The hour of secret police and of spies, when thieves and adulterers stalk the houses and corpses are hidden. A body is thrown into the water. It is the hour when dying men enter into their last agony. The hour of temptations and the sweat in the Garden. Outside the first birds sing sadly calling the sun. It is the hour of darkness. And the church is cold as if filled with devils, while in the darkness we keep on singing the psalms.
De pronto suena en la noche una sirena
de alarma, larga, larga,
el aullido lugubre de la sirena
de incendio o de la ambulancia blanca de la muerte,
como el grito de la yegua en la noche,
que se acerca y se acerca sobre las calles
y las casas y sube, sube, y baja
y crece, crece, baja y se aleja
creciendo y bajando. No es incendio ni muerte:
   Es Somoza que pasa.

Me contaron que estabas enamorada de otro
y entonces me fui a mi cuarto
y escribí ese artículo contra el Gobierno
por el que estoy preso.
Ernesto Cardenal

tr. Quincy Troupe & Sergio Mondragón

suddenly at night, as upon demonic wings
a long long siren urgently sounds like
the horrible scream of the fire engine rings
like the voice of the white ambulance of death
or like the scream of a mare
reverberating shrilly against
the cold sweated flight of the night
coming closer and closer upon the streets
and the houses climbing
climbing the shadows of silences
and descending and growing
growing descending and receding
growing and descending descending
comes the sounds, comes the screams
but there’s no fire. Nor do these screams
come from ambulances of death;
it is only the dictator Somoza passing.

Someone told me you were in love
with another, another man
and so I went to my room
and wrote that article
against the government
for which they then
put me into jail
EN LOS OJOS ABIERTOS DE LOS MUERTOS

En los ojos abiertos de los muertos
¡qué fulgor extraño, qué humedad ligera!
Tapiz de aire en la pupila inmóvil,
velo de sombra, luz tierna.
En los ojos de los amantes muertos
el amor vela.
Los ojos son como una puerta
infranqueable, codiciada, entreabierta.
¿Por qué la muerte prolonga a los amantes,
los encierra en un mutismo como de tierra?
¿Qué es el misterio de esa luz que llora
en el agua del ojo, en esa enferma
superficie de vidrio que tiembla?
Ángeles custodios les recogen la cabeza.
Murieron en su mirada,
murieron de sus propias venas.
Los ojos parecen piedras
dejadas en el rostro por una mano ciega.
El misterio los lleva.
¡Qué magia, qué dulzura
en el sarcófago de aire que los encierra!
In the open eyes of the dead
what strange brilliance, what delicate moisture!
A tapestry of air on the motionless pupils,
a veil of shadow, of tender light.
Over the eyes of dead lovers
love keeps watch.
Eyes are like doors
impassable, sought after, ajar.
Why does death prolong lovers,
enclose them in a silence as of the earth?
What is the mystery of this light that cries
in the water of the eye, in the sickly
surface of glass which trembles?
Custodian angels gather up their heads.
They died lost in each other’s gaze.
They died by their own veins.
Their eyes seem to be stones
placed in their faces by a blind hand.
Mystery takes them away.
What magic, what sweetness
in the sarcophagus of air which encloses them.
RODEADO DE MARIPOSAS

Rodeado de mariposas negras como almas
y de agudos puñales que practican los muertos,
condescendiendo a ser buen hombre y buen soldado,
pater et filius admirabilis,
me canonizo en el espléndido amanecer del mundo.

Soy el conocedor de los misterios,
el doloroso sonriente,
el que guarda las llaves de las estrellas.
Oficio en el zoológico
ante leones urbanos y monos posgraduados en psicología.
Soy el Rey de la Selva Civilizada,
receptáculo de la luna,
vaso de la alegría.

(Vienen vientos del norte con húmedos imanes
arrastrando y creciendo.
Pájaros perdidos como sueños.)

Abandonado estoy, sarna de Job,
paciencia mía.
Jaime Sabines

SURROUNDED BY BUTTERFLIES

Surrounded by butterflies black as souls
and by sharp daggers used by the dead,
condescending to be a good man and a good soldier,
an admirable son and father,
I canonize myself in the splendid dawn of the world.

I am the connoisseur of mysteries,
the clown smiling through his tears,
the custodian of keys to open the stars.
I officiate in the zoo
before urban lions and monkeys who are postgraduates in psychology.
I am the King of the Civilized Jungle,
a receptacle of the moon,
a vessel of joyfulness.

(Suddenly winds come from the north with their wet magnets,
eroding and swelling up, birds are dispersed like dreams.)

Where is my patience? I am an outcast,
I itch like Job.
IGUAL QUE LOS CANGREJOS

Igual que los cangrejos heridos
que dejan sus propias tenazas sobre la arena,
asi me desprendo de mis deseos,
muerdo y corto mis brazos,
podo mis dias,
derribo mi esperanza,
me arruino.
Estoy a punto de llorar.

¿En donde me perdí, en qué momento
vine a habitar mi casa,
tan parecido a mí que hasta mis hijos me toman por
su padre
y mi mujer me dice las palabras acostumbradas?

Me recojo a pedazos,
a trechos en el basurero de la memoria,
y trato de reconstruirme,
de hacerme como mi imagen.
¡Ay, nada queda!
Se me caen de la mano los platos rotos,
las patas de las sillas, los calzones usados,
los huesos que desenterré
y los retratos en que se ven amores y fantasmas.

¡Apiádate de mí!
Quiero pedir piedad a alguien.
Voy a pedir perdón al primero que encuentre.

Soy una piedra que rueda
porque la noche está inclinada y no se le ve el fin.

Me duele el estómago y el alma
y todo mi cuerpo está esperando con miedo
que una mano bondadosa me eche una sábana encima.
Jaime Sabines

AS THE WOUNDED CRAB

As the wounded crab
who leaves his own pincers on the sand,
so I cast off my desires,
I devour and cut off my arms,
prune my days,
level my hope,
destroy myself.
I am about to cry.

Where did I lose myself, at what moment
did I come to live in my house,
so similar to myself that even my sons
think that I am their father
and my wife repeats to me familiar words?

I gather myself up piece by piece
in the garbage pail of memory,
and try to reconstruct myself,
to make myself like my image.
But nothing remains.
They fall from my hands those broken plates,
the legs of chairs, old undershorts,
the bones that I dug up
and the portraits of old loves and ghosts.

Take pity on me!
I want to beg pity from someone.
I want to beg pity from the first person I meet.

I am a stone that rolls
because night slopes and we never see its end.

My stomach and my soul hurt me,
and all my body awaits with fear
the kind hand that will cover me with a sheet.
LAS COSAS QUE DIGO SON CIERTAS

Un astro estalla en una pequeña plaza y un pájaro pierde los ojos y cae. Alrededor de él los hombres lloran y ven llegar la nueva estación. El río corre y arrastra entre sus fríos y confusos brazos la oscura materia acumulada por años y años detrás de las ventanas.

Un caballo muere y su alma vuela al cielo sonriendo con sus grandes dientes de madera manchada por el rocío. Más tarde, entre los ángeles, le crecerán negras y sedosas alas con qué espantar a las moscas.

Todo es perfecto. Estar encerrado en un pequeño cuarto de hotel, estar herido, tirado e impotente, mientras afuera cae la lluvia dulce, inesperada.

¿Qué es lo que llega, lo que se precipita desde arriba y llena de sangre las hojas y de dorados escombros las calles?

Sé que estoy enfermo de un pesado mal, lleno de un agua amarga, de una inclemente fiebre que silba y espanta a quien la escucha. Mis amigos me dejaron, mi loro ha muerto ya, y no puedo evitar que las gentes y los animales huyan al mirar el terrible y negro resplandor que deja mi paso en las calles. He de almorzar solo siempre. Es terrible.
A star crashes in a small plaza and a bird loses its eyes and falls. Gathered around it, men weep and see the new season arrive. The river flows and sweeps along in its cold, confused arms the dark material accumulated by years and years behind the windows.

A horse dies and his soul flies to heaven smiling with its big wooden teeth stained by the dew. Later, amidst the angels, he will sprout black, silky wings for scaring flies.

All is perfect. Being shut up in a small hotel room, being injured, cast aside and impotent, while outside the rain falls softly, unexpectedly.

What is it that is coming, that leaps from above and bathes the leaves with blood and fills the streets with gilded rubbish?

I know I am sick with a heavy illness, filled with a bitter water, with an inclement fever that whistles and frightens all who hear it. My friends have left me, my parrot now is dead, and I cannot prevent people or animals from fleeing the terrible black radiance my steps leave in the streets. I must have lunch alone forever. Terrible.
Blanca Varela

FUENTE

Junto al pozo llegué,
mi ojo pequeño y triste
se hizo hondo, interior.

Estuve junto a mí,
llena de mí, ascendente y profunda,
mi alma contra mí,
golpeando mi piel,
hundiéndola en el aire,
hasta el fin.

La oscura charca abierta por la luz.

Eramos una sola criatura,
perfecta, ilimitada,
sin extremos para que el amor pudiera asirse.
Sin nidos y sin tierra para el mando.

LA CIUDAD

La ciudad oprimida por los pájaros,
por su corazón de campana ardiente,
por su corazón agitado como peces sobre espejos de oro,
respira como un árbol frente a la tempestad,
como un niño que arroja piedras para detener al viento,
con su boca de isla abandonada,
con su boca de doncella enardecida por el sol.

La ciudad enorme se agita como un bosque incendiado,
inclinada donde el día se desvanece,
donde el rayo penetra tiernamente en las flores
y consagra sus manos sonoras al amor;
fluye como el cielo en las ramas huecas
y tiembla en los ojos que recogen la pura bebida del otoño.
Blanca Varela

tr. DONALD A. YATES

FOUNTAIN

I came to the well,
my small, sad eye
turned deep within.

I was beside myself,
full of myself, rising and profound,
my soul against myself,
beating at my skin,
sinking it in the air,
until the end.

The dark pool pierced by the light.

We were a single creature,
perfect, limitless,
without extremes so that love could take hold.
Without nests and without lands to be ruled.

THE CITY

The city oppressed by birds,
by its burning-bell heart,
by its heart as fleeting as fish over golden mirrors,
breathes like a tree before the storm,
like a child who throws stones to stop the wind,
with its mouth of deserted island,
with its mouth of maidens excited by the sun.

The enormous city shimmers like a forest fire,
leaning toward the dying day,
where the sunbeam tenderly penetrates the flowers
and consecrates its sonorous hands to love;
it flows like the sky in the hollow branches
and trembles in the eyes that gather in the pure
draught of autumn.
Blanca Varela

EN EL ESPEJO
Exploro la llama y no la extingo porque amo su calor doloroso,
sus angustiadas lenguas sin sonido,
su piel redonda que traspaso con mis dedos
para llegar al agua solitaria de tan livianos párpados.

Y siento el ala en los espejos que me devuelven siempre,
como si cosechara las violentas cenizas que he arrojado a los peces,
como si un ave muerta pesara entre mi sangre
y la estancara allí,
cercana al fuego vivo de los propios insectos,
a sus pequeños cuerpos,
hermosos bajo oscuros y podridos licores,
intimos y nerviosos en los goces profundos.

Raíces de pesadas columnas de sueño entre la frente,
áridas gotas en los frutos caídos
que rebosan aceites agudos, insondables.

Blanca Varela

EL OBSERVADOR
Este es el hombre,
el nobilísimo verdugo,
lo veo inclinarse,
veo las cuatro paredes de su reino,
la línea débil de sus brazos.

Hoy vivo con el desconocido
y desde afuera le digo
que olvide al tiempo,
que no lo guarde doblado
en su pequeño cajón de escolar,
que vea su vuelo,
su salud profunda de viajero,
que lo siga de lejos.
IN THE MIRROR

I explore the flame and do not extinguish it because
I love its sorrowful heat,
its anguished, soundless tongues,
its plump skin that I pierce with my fingers
to reach the solitary water of such fragile eyelids.

And I sense the wing in the mirrors that return me ever,
as if I were reaping the violent ashes I have thrown
   to the fish,
as if a dead bird weighed inside my blood and blocked
   it there,
close to the blazing fire of insects themselves,
to their little bodies,
beautiful beneath liquors dark and rancid,
intimate and nervous in profound pleasures.

Roots of heavy columns of sleep sunk in the forehead,
acrid drops of fallen fruits
that spill out sharp, unfathomable oils.

THE OBSERVER

This is the man,
the most noble executor,
I see him bending over,
I see the four walls of his realm,
the weak line of his arms.

Today I live with the stranger
and from without I tell him
to forget time,
not to keep it folded up
in his little school desk drawer,
to watch its flight,
its profound voyager’s health,
to follow it from a distance.
"Amantes"
Bronze resin and glass
Beatriz Caso de Solorzano
Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City
"Zompantle"
Charcoal and Crayon
José Reyers Meza
Plastica de México, Mexico City
ESTAR

Vigilas desde este cuarto
donde la sombra temible es la tuya.

No hay silencio aquí
sino frases que evitas oír.

Signos en los muros
narran la bella lejanía.

(Haz que no muera
sin volver a verte.)

ALEJANDRA PIZARNIK

VÉRTIGOS O CONTEMPLACIÓN
DE ALGO QUE TERMINA

Esta lila se deshoja.
Desde sí misma cae
y oculta su antigua sombra.
He de morir de cosas así.

ALEJANDRA PIZARNIK

CONTEMPLACIÓN

Murieron las formas despavoridas y no hubo más un afuera y un adentro. Nadie estaba escuchando el lugar porque el lugar no existía.

Con el propósito de escuchar están escuchando el lugar. Adentro de tu máscara relampaguea la noche. Te atraviesan con graznidos. Te martillean con pájaros negros. Colores enemigos se unen en la tragedia.
Alejandra Pizarnik

tr. GEORGE McWHIRTER

A CONDITION (OF BEING)

You keep watch from this room
Where the awful shadow is your own.

There is no silence here
Only phrases you avoid hearing.

Signs on the walls
Narrate the beauty of distance.

(Be sure I don’t die
Without seeing you again.)

Alejandra Pizarnik

VERTIGO OR THE CONTEMPLATION
OF SOMETHING THAT ENDS

This lilac sheds its blossoms.
From itself, it falls
And hides its old shadow.
I have to die of things
Like that.

Alejandra Pizarnik

CONTEMPLATION

The terrifying forms died, and no longer was there an inside or
an out. No one was listening to the place because the place didn’t exist.

*Only to listen, they’re listening to the place.* Night flashes inside
your mask. With fierce caws they pierce you. They hammer you with
jet black birds. Enemy colours merge in the tragedy.
Alejandra Pizarnik

UN SUEÑO DONDE EL SILENCIO ES DE ORO

El perro del invierno dentellea mi sonrisa. Fue en el puente. Yo estaba desnuda y llevaba un sombrero con flores y arrastraba mi cadáver también desnudo y con un sombrero de hojas secas.

He tenido muchos amores —dije— pero el más hermoso fue mi amor por los espejos.

Alejandra Pizarnik

a Octavio Paz
RESCATE

Y es siempre el jardín de lilas del otro lado del río. Si el alma pregunta si queda lejos se le responderá: del otro lado del río, no éste sino aquél.

Alejandra Pizarnik

COMO AGUA SOBRE UNA PIEDRA

a quien retorna en busca de su antiguo buscar
la noche se le cierra como agua sobre una piedra
como aire sobre un pájaro
como se cierran dos cuerpos al amarse

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A DREAM WHERE SILENCE IS MADE OF GOLD

The dog of winter bares its teeth in my smile. It happened on the bridge. I was nude and wearing a hat with flowers on it and I was dragging my corpse which was also nude and wearing a hat of dry leaves.

I have had many loves, I said, but the most beautiful was my love for mirrors.

For Octavio Paz

RESCUE

Always it’s the lilac garden on the other side of the river. And if the soul asks if it remains far off, the reply will be: on the other side of the river, not this one, but that one.

AS WATER OVER A STONE

for whoever returns in search of his ancient search
the night shuts over him as water over a stone
as air over a bird
as two bodies close making love.
Gabriel Zaid

MIL Y UNA NOCHES

DESPUÉS de media noche,
del cine, con una extraña ebriedad,
ausculto el corazón de mi coche
de miedo de auscultar mi soledad.

Música, música inebriante.
Sierpes a los veneros de la noche.
Quieren volar las eses del volante.
Dios no dio alas a los coches.

Árboles, ríos,
extrañas frutas de ámbar,
de jade, de rubí,

en el jardín prohibido de la noche
dicen que no,
dicen que sí.

Gabriel Zaid

VENTANA AL MAR

LOS BESOS pueden ser interminables
pero los coitos no, Susana.

Lentamente, alejándose,
las nubes
colman su eternidad
mientras remecen
las olas su chasquido
Gabriel Zaid

tr. SERGIO MONDRAGÓN AND SANDRA SMITH

THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

After the movie theatre
past midnight, in a state of strange drunkenness,
I listened to the heartbeats of my car
to avoid listening to my loneliness.

Music, inebriating sounds of music.
Serpents at the heart of night.
The demons of the steering wheel want to fly
but God did not give wings to cars.

In the forbidden garden of night
trees and rivers
strange fruits of amber,
jade and ruby
they all say no,
say yes.

Gabriel Zaid

WINDOW TO THE SEA

Kisses can be endless
but not lovemaking, Suzanna.

Clouds
slowly disappear in the distance
taste eternity’s fullness
while waves hiss between rocks.
Gabriel Zaid

EL REVERENDO MALTHUS EN LA PLAYA

Digamos que una vez por semana
y que en tres mil millones de habitantes del globo
hay un tercio en edad.

Digamos tres centímetros cúbicos.

Tres millones de litros por semana
riegan el paraíso terrenal.

La vida lleva el agua a su molino.
Se cosechan tres mil toneladas de humanidad.
Y todo es otra vez para semilla.
¡Si al menos se comiese esta especie carnal!

Gabriel Zaid

ACCIDENTE

Dormimos juntos, pero nada más.
No había otra cama.
Conversamos por cortesía.
Después de consultarnos,
apagamos la luz.
Despertamos de un abrazo tan fuerte
que nos despertó.
¿No sería posible?
No era posible.
Empezamos a besarnos.
Más, no era posible.
Me puse arriba por comodidad.
Se besaba mejor.
Llegó un momento en que deseé a mamá.
No por razones mitológicas.
Necesitaba otros pañales.
Gabriel Zaid

REVEREND MALTHUS ON THE BEACH

Let's assume that it happens once a week
and that out of three billion people on earth
one third is of age.

In each case three cc's.

Three million liters weekly
irrigate the Garden of Eden.

Life carries its water to the mill.
Humanity harvested in three thousand tons.
And all this turns into seeds again.
If this carnal species were only edible!

Gabriel Zaid

ACCIDENT

There was only one bed.
We just spent the night together.
Politeness made us talk.
Upon mutual agreement
we turned off the light.
We woke up: a violent embrace
had wakened us.
It couldn’t be possible?
It was not possible.
We began to kiss each other.
Still, it was not possible.
Comfort made me move on top.
Kissing is easier that way.
At one moment I desired mother.
For no mythological reasons.
I needed new diapers.
"Rumblings of Earth" (1950)

Oil on Canvas
59 3/4 inches by 112 inches

Wilfredo Lam

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
THE PERSISTENCE OF HUMANISM IN LATIN AMERICAN ART

JACQUELINE BARNITZ

Since the independence of Latin American nations, there has been considerable artistic interchange between South America and Europe. Many European artists came to South America in the nineteenth century to record local landscapes and indigenous scenes in the manner of the Hudson River painters in the United States. The prolific Bavarian, Johann Moritz Rubendas, a friend of the German explorer, Baron Alexander Von Humboldt, traveled extensively throughout Latin America and recorded his travels in a prodigious number of works. The twentieth century has seen a reversal of this trend with dozens of Latin American artists deserting their own countries for Paris and New York where they feel they are closer to artistic mainstreams. But some have returned to their native lands and made impressive contributions to modern art in South America. Joachim Torres-Garcia and Wilfredo Lam are famous examples.

The meeting of modern European trends with existing local traditions has produced a great diversity of styles in Latin America covering the most rigid formalism to the freest figurativism. Geometric art took root in Venezuela where a strong optical and kinetic group emerged. In Argentina a concrete movement existed in the forties as well as other experimental groups, and today several young artists are working in a variety of optical and kinetic styles. But it is in Cubism, Surrealism and Figurativism that Latin American artists have found the greatest outlet for their expressive needs. These forms permitted them to deal with subjects related to life and mankind on all levels. In Chile, a country of poets, artists express their humanism on a predominantly cosmic level. In Argentina, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia, they express it on a more physical and spiritual one. All are concerned with humanism in at least one of its many aspects. Surrealism and Figurativism lend themselves especially well to a great number of interpretations. But Cubism also became a vehicle for a diversity of evocative styles many of which have become distilled into individual types of Abstract Expressionism. The subjects in these paintings sometimes exist by inference rather than by direct reference.

Five of the most important artists in this group are Armando Morales, Maria Luisa Pacheco, Fernando de Szyszlo, Ricardo Yrarraza-
val and Alejandro Obregon. Of the five, Armando Morales, a Nicaragu­
ian, is the most abstract. He is also the most concerned with painterly
texture as an integral part of his message. His subjects are landscapes
although his canvasses of the mid-sixties appear to be totally abstract.
The shapes in these works consist of curves, diagonals and triangles
organized into a coherent unit. Black areas polished mirror-smooth
juxtaposed with collaged layers of rough natural canvas produce rich
surface variations which function as structural solutions. Morales used
little color outside of black, white and very low key earth tones in these
works. An occasional delineation unifies contrasting areas. In more
recent work, he resolves pictorial problems by means of intensified
color rather than texture. In some cases he reverted to an earlier de
Chirico-like figuration involving faceless mannequins in metaphysical
interior spaces.

María Luisa Pacheco, a Bolivian, and Fernando de Szyszlo, a
Peruvian, are closer to their cultural roots than Morales. They have
chosen their pre-Colombian heritage as subject which they each inter­
pret from a different point of view. Miss Pacheco emphasizes tangible
elements recreating the textures of the art of ancient civilizations while
de Szyszlo focuses on intangible elements through spiritual evocations
of the past. Although María Pacheco’s forms are totally abstract, they
suggest steep Andean slopes. In the Tiahuanaco series of the mid-sixties
she glued thin layers of wood and cardboard onto a smooth canvas to
form a dynamic composition, then painted over the whole surface with
one or two glowing colors. Her triumph of this period is a radiant all
white painting in which the texture played an essential role in creating
the illusion of tonal vibrations. Unlike Morales, color is important in
Miss Pacheco’s work. Even in the monochrome canvasses, her choice of
color is sensitively attuned to the shapes and textures. Her works of the
late sixties are more literal. Jagged peaks shaped from collaged wood
are butted against an immobile blue background. There is a lofty sense
of timelessness in these works.

De Szyszlo relies entirely on pigment for texture. Thickly painted
circular or rectangular shapes emerge like black shadows from the
mysterious depths of the canvasses. The Macchu Picchu series of the
past decade deal with sculptural abstract forms in dark brooding colors.
His palette has lightened in the last two years without appreciably
altering the spiritual force of his expression. As is the case with Miss
Pacheco, de Szyszlo’s ability to raise indigenous subject matter to a
universal level makes him rank as one of Latin America’s best ab­
stractionists.
The Chilean Ricardo Yrarrazaval’s type of subject relates him to both Maria Luisa Pacheco and Fernando de Szyszlo. He conjures up totemic figures in deep earth colors that generally refer to ancestral images. Block forms sometimes separated into wide bands of heavily painted analogous shades are rigidly anchored into place. The structure is taut, vibrant, unyielding. In contrast to Yrarrazaval’s severe and somber resonances, Alejandro Obregon’s work is voluptuous, often opulent. His sources derive from the sensuous shapes and rich lyric color of local Caribbean flora near his home town of Baranquilla, Colombia; he translates them into handsome abstract symbols. The sea, volcanoes and condors have also served him as themes in the past. His paintings have a windswept romantic brilliance that invites immediate response (see my article, “The Emergent Decade Revisited,” Arts Magazine, Summer, 1969). He composes them into cross-shaped masses with a central body of forms pushing upwards in the canvas counterbalanced by a lateral movement. Obregon’s work follows a truly Mediterranean tradition with its visually pleasing harmonies of form and color.

Cubism was unquestionably an important factor in the development of twentieth century painting in Latin America. But nothing fired the Latin American imagination as much as Surrealism did. The innate Latin love of paradox found an appropriate outlet in Surrealism, especially in Chile and Argentina. Chilean Surrealism treated the subject of humanism in dematerialized ways largely dealing with mind and spirit. The principal exponent of this form was—and is—Roberto Matta whose art involves an unparalleled number of humanist facets: physical, mental and spiritual. Matta studied architecture at the Catholic University in Santiago. In 1934, when he went to Paris to work with Le Corbusier, he met the Surrealists, Joan Miró, Max Ernst and André Breton, and he began to paint. Three years later, he renounced architecture entirely in order to devote full time to painting.

In his work of the mid-forties, unidentifiable objects appeared to waft in orbit as if propelled by some mysterious cosmic force. The lyricism and poetry in Matta’s color increased in the work of the fifties culminating in the radiant Birth of America (1957). His architectural background manifested itself in fastidious delineations in some of his work of the forties and fifties. In the last decade he reverted to a freer interpretation of forms. Surrealism was part of Matta’s work from the beginning although an element of the accidental in his early work related it to the expressionist movement as well. He puns the “Surrealist”
label by calling himself a "realista del Sur" (a realist of the South).¹ In 1938, he came to New York where he stayed for ten years and gained a firm footing as a major force in the forming of the New York School of the forties. His influence strongly affected Gorky's work and left its mark on Rothko's and Gottlieb's painting of the period as well. Aldo Pellegrini notes that Matta frequently saw Jackson Pollock and "provided a stimulus for reflecting on problems of creation and impetus to experimentation."² Matta’s “obsession with the act of generation,” to use Leopoldo Castedo's words,³ led him to paint erotically suggestive symbols. But these symbols have many different levels of meaning. Organic shapes fuse with mechanical ones as if the latter were a natural and desirable extension of the former. Matta’s eroticism refers to creation of the universe as well as it does to human procreation. He is very much a painter of this world but he also painted a kind of anti-world with anti-matter. He searches for unity and order in the infinite. Leopoldo Castedo observes that Matta paints “the absence of dimension . . . all dimensions raised to their infinite power.”⁴ Matta deals indeed largely with the intangible forces of the universe with man as its center.

The diversity of elements in his work has made it a particularly fertile source for other Chilean artists to draw on. Juan Downey, Juan Gomez and Enrique Castro-Cid were attracted to Matta’s intricate, if not scientifically justifiable, mechanical symbols while Nemesio Antúnez and Enrique Zañartu chose the poetic and mystical qualities for emulation. In Juan Gomez’ paintings of the early sixties, he grouped minuscule shapes in tight clusters and set into three or four separate compartments with backgrounds of solid color. Gomez found enormous pleasure in the execution of these drawings, pictorial considerations aside. He admitted during an interview in 1966 that early in his career, he used to go into boiler rooms to sketch the twists and turns of pipes, nuts, bolts and complex mechanisms simply because he liked them. Later, he incorporated these shapes as well as organic ones into plexiglass constructions. Through the transparency of the plastic he could achieve a feeling of undefined space similar to Matta’s. But Gomez did not intentionally seek the infinite. He was more concerned with the problems of imagery and form as direct experiences. His work has undergone several changes. In the last three years, he has transferred his graphic ideas onto three and four-panel wooden screens that

¹Leopoldo Castedo, A History of Latin American Art and Architecture, p. 244.
²Aldo Pellegrini, New Tendencies in Art, p. 113.
³& ⁴Castedo, A History of Latin American Art and Architecture, p. 244.
adapt to formal variations. Gomez is experimental if less profound than some of his compatriots. But he remains true to a Chilean iconography. Conversely, Enrique Zañartu never strayed far from his lyric Surrealist roots. He remained partial to biological forms rather than mechanistic ones which he organizes into a solid unit in a typical watery environment. The paintings are bathed in patches of diffused light. By Chilean standards, his work seems the most conventional, but it is also the most poetic as is the work of Nemesio Antúnez.

Antúnez is more diversified than Zañartu and has dealt with humanism on almost as many levels as Matta. Antúnez and Enrique Castro-Cid can be said to represent two sides of the same coin. Antúnez leans to an emotional expression while Castro-Cid, to a purely mental one. Both artists depict ideas in abstract rather than material terms. Antúnez's paintings are always the sum of his sensory responses to everyday experiences brought to a new level of consciousness. He lived in New York from 1943 to 1950 and his work of this period was deeply affected by his environment. He painted a series entitled “City Dwellers” which represented crowds of people amid proportionately gigantic and forbidding buildings. Color was subdued and the treatment was very linear. Antúnez had worked with Stanley William Hayter in his graphic workshop for several years and often treated paint as if it were printers’ ink. When Antúnez returned to Chile in 1953, he painted a series of fluid landscapes with elusive curves, organic forms and pebble-shaped suns and moons. The work of this period showed the strongest affinity with Matta’s. Even in his more original stages, Antúnez never completely abandoned the landscape. His next phase was the result of another sensory experience. A red and white checkered tablecloth had caught his eye in a French restaurant and he decided to adapt it to his next paintings. First he painted almost literal versions of checkered cloths. But soon the surfaces began to undulate and raise just like the ground does during an earthquake. Gradually Andean curves were discernable beneath. One of his most successful paintings in this group is a yellow Composition which was exhibited at Yale in the 1966 exhibit “Art of Latin America Since Independence.” This portion of Antúnez’s production includes some of his most colorful and vibrant work. In later paintings, the checkers lift off the ground completely and move in violent orbital motion like Matta’s floating rectangles. Naturalistic hills progressively reappear besides checkered ones and sometimes other elements are included. There is one canvas in which an abandoned bicycle emerges from behind a hill. Despite the slightly ominous quality this intrusion creates, the painting has a spiritual air rather than a
“Drive in N.Y.C., N.Y.” (1968)
40 inches by 50 inches

Nemescō Antuñez

Photography by Ferdinand Boesch
“Grand Central NYC, N.Y.,” (1968)
40 inches by 50 inches

Nemesco Antuñez

Photography by Ferdinand Boesch
somber one. In 1963, Antúnez returned to New York where he began a new group of works depicting mysterious ball games played in a penumbral gray and black world of thin paint. The idea came to Antúnez one night when he went to a ball game at Yankee Stadium. He returned to his studio with a mental image of the illuminated green field. His eye had also been caught by a pin ball machine in a Times Square penny arcade and a cone-shaped lamp over a billiard table. He fused all these elements in the ball game paintings. These works are composed of rigid structures sometimes resembling denuded windowless buildings, shown in perspective. Like Matta, Antúnez had studied architecture and his painting reflected a similar interest in linearity. The ball fields set at various levels in the picture, recede sharply into space. Sometimes a ball field is duplicated on an upright plane as if projected on a movie screen so it appears in two positions at once. The background invariably offers a paradox of oppressive interior and infinite exterior space. Thin white outlines perform the double function of defining enclosures and field lines as well as acting as a foil to the vanishing perspective. Minuscule crowds like those in the “City Dwellers” populate the ball fields. A single spotlight from a conical green lamp or a round light like a sun or a moon illuminate these metaphysical night games. Antúnez’s work is as intimate and warm as Enrique Castro-Cid’s is cool and intellectual.

Castro-Cid’s treatment of space is more philosophical than cosmic. His humanism deals with man’s power to reason. He seeks to prove theories of dimension through graphic experiments. *Blossoming Mesomevia* (1963), a watercolor representing three insect-like forms, shows a preoccupation with dimensions of time and motion by means of outlines that expand indefinitely into space. The problem Castro-Cid has posed in pictures of this period is further elaborated in 1967 in a series of drawings consisting of female figures in sets of two. One is drawn on a straight graph; the second, a duplicate of the first, is drawn on a broken or undulating graph so that the original figure reappears monstrously distorted while the outline of the figure corresponds to the distorted graph exactly as it did in the straight one. By means of linear treatment of space, Castro-Cid seeks to resolve mathematical and philosophical problems through Cartesian principles, and like Descartes, he begins by tearing down accepted theories in order to try to reconstruct them. In these works, Castro-Cid addresses himself to the viewer’s sense of logical deduction (see my article, “The Emergent Decade Revisited,” *Arts Magazine*, Summer, 1969). His linear definitions have the sensitivity of a seismograph. In *Blossoming Mesomevia*, he inte-
grates letters and numbers as well as minuscule hand written notes which give it an official diagrammatic appearance. But it is the diagram of a poet, not a scientist.

In Argentina, Humanism is less poetic than it is in Chile, and certainly less scientific than Castro-Cid’s work. It has taken many distinctive forms in which materials contribute considerably to the expression. Surrealist tendencies in Argentina are parapsychological rather than psychological. They are also less cosmic than in Chile although not lacking in spirituality. Marcelo Bonevardi’s Surrealism leans more to the metaphysical. He works by intuition rather than cool deliberation. He creates works of sensuous beauty as well as architectural sobriety by inserting carved wooden forms neatly into a depression in the canvas so sculpture and painting become a single unit. The canvas is painted in putty shades such as blue, gray or brick. The sculptured wood evokes complex machinery of the modern world and the stucco-like painted canvas suggests architectural symbols of pyramids and ancient temples. Bonevardi seeks a universal quality in his work that transcends the specifics of time and place. He attempts to bridge the gap between the ancient world and the present one by uniting them into a single theme. His interest in the occult is confirmed by his titles which frequently refer to divination and astrology.

Humanist art reached the realm of the fantastic in the work of the four Argentine expressionists, Ernesto Deira, Romulo Macció, Jorge de la Vega and Luis Felipe Noe. Their art of the early sixties had more affinity with the COBRA styles of Asger Jorn, Karel Appel and Pierre Alechinsky than with any other. In 1962, they formed a group known as La Nueva Figuración. They wanted to launch a new aesthetic approach to human values. The work of the four artists proved instrumental in breaking away from “the tenets of good taste” which had persisted in Latin America since the nineteenth century. What the four Argentine Expressionists painted did not follow conventional aesthetic standards, but their imaginative use of absurd ideas and the total abandon with which they depicted them brought new vigor to Argentine art of the sixties. They believed in total freedom of expression and refused to adhere to rules of any sort. Whatever appeared in the development of a canvas became part of its configuration. The objective of the Nueva Figuración was to return to human values in art as well as in life. The four artists opposed the formal impersonal styles of geometric art as well as the alienation of contemporary society. They set an example in group spirit by working together in one studio, ex-

*Aldo Pelligrini, New Tendencies in Art, p. 208.*
"Anamorphic Conflict No. 1, The Measurement" (1964)

Oil on Collage on Canvas
63 7/8 inches by 76 3/4 inches

Jorge de la Vega

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
hibiting together and attempting to engage public response through the sheer animation of their paintings. Their approaches were diversified ranging from esoteric intellectuality to garish realism.

Ernesto Deira is primarily mental. *Around Thought 'A' (No. 3)* (1964) which he exhibited in New York in 1966, is more linear than the works of the other three artists. This painting shows some conflict between the world of matter and the world of ideas (see my article “The Emergent Decade Revisited,” *Arts Magazine*, Summer, 1969). Transparent beings that are abstract rather than concrete physical symbols appear to rotate compulsively upon themselves. These creatures are drawn in obsessively nervous lines over loosely painted vivid backgrounds with drips and semaphoric suggestions. Romulo Macció’s figures are abstract in quite another way. They are indeed physical presences but they are by no means concrete beings. Rather they appear to be man’s alter ego—a symbolic personage trapped within his own consciousness. Like Deira, Macció used brilliant primary colors in these paintings with scribbles and graffiti. To *Live with a Pure Heart, 2* (1963) has some of the emblematic quality Macció develops further in his later paintings. Pictorial and symbolic elements function as a unit. Throughout Macció’s work of the early sixties, the human image is incorporated into a composition of simple forms suggesting a loose geometry. The idea has been solidified in the work of the last three years in which heads have become stylized into large flat silhouettes with inverted features; the mouth appears where the eyes should be. This touch of absurdity produces a hypnotic enigma that is distantly related to Macció’s more surrealist beginnings. He appropriately names this series “Fictions.” Both image and space are purely imaginary.

Conversely, Jorge de la Vega’s creatures belong to the world of matter. But they are also figments of a wild and diabolical vision, made all the more convincing because of emphasis on material elements. De la Vega assembles ordinary objects such as buttons, strips of crumpled cloth, bits of mirror and bicycle tail lights into mosaic-like patterns which he sometimes repeats in another medium in the same picture. In *Anamorphic Conflict No. 1, The Measurement* (1964), an oil and collage, two garish phantoms that combine macabre with playfully sensual elements, move in an ectoplasmic environment. Although unpredicated in de la Vega’s work, this duality was often represented in pre-Colombian cultures as a symbol of life and death. Like de la Vega, Luis Felipe Noe deals with concrete images. He is the most whimsical of the four. He was also the only member of the group who worked in a truly

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“Charissma”
Collage on Canvas
103 3/4 inches by 76 3/4 inches

*Luis Felipe Noe*

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
unpremeditated manner assembling canvas backs or door frames with painting, collage and objects as the spirit moved him. He refused any kind of pictorial order in favor of chaotic disarray and total absurdity. In Charisma (1963), a collage on canvas, an animated mass of caricatures almost covers the canvas. He frequently included self-portraits as part of the object of his mockery. His work gradually increased in size till it became more environmental than pictorial.

The inventiveness of the Nueva Figuración artists had some relationship to the Argentine counterpart of Pop art to which Rafael Squirru appropriately refers as “The Art of Things.” It was not the same Pop art that existed in North America. In Argentina popular imagery was borrowed rather than originated. Argentine Pop art more often consisted of absurd constructions sometimes with surrealist leanings and with elements of the fantastic. These characteristics are also evident in Happenings and Events which in South America exhibited an animation North American Happenings never had. In Argentina, the main objective was to integrate art into society much as the four Expressionists had sought to do. Art was no longer an unattainable and separate object to be seen from a given distance, but part of life. In some cases the viewer could become part of the art.

For most of the sixties, Marta Minujin headed the Argentine Pop movement. Her early work consisted of found objects assembled into socially symbolic constructions. In 1962 she constructed a large work with guns, military caps, boots and old sacks. A recorded military march accompanied the structure (see my article “A Latin Answer to Pop,” Arts Magazine, June 1966). This audio-visual blast was intended to denounce the revolutions that took place that year in Argentina. When Marta Minujin outgrew social commentary, she began making far more ambitious constructions which depended on human participation for completion. Her first and most ambitious construction, La Menesunda (The Challenge), was a half-block long structure which she set up in Buenos Aires in 1964 with the financial backing of the Instituto Torcuato di Tella. La Menesunda contained a number of soft-walled compartments in which visitors encountered unfamiliar and paradoxical situations as they advanced through it. This idea related to the theater of the absurd as well as to Noe’s philosophical opinions on chaos and absurdity in life. Participants were alternately confronted with repulsive and appealing experiences. In one small cubicle the walls were lined with giant vinyl intestines. But a small window on the side pro-

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1Rafael Squirru, “Pop Art or the Art of Things,” Americas, July, 1963.
vided relief. Visitors could look through and see slides of cool Andean lakes. All the senses were engaged: smell and hearing as well as vision and touch. Fried food odors wafted through the narrow passages and diverse electronic and honky-tonk sounds could be heard.

Shortly after Marta Minujin had moved to New York in the mid-sixties, she installed a smaller scale labyrinth, *El Batacazo* (The Long Shot) at the Bianchini Gallery (1966). Miss Minujin sought to capture the essence of Times Square animation. Neon lights blinked on and off on the construction's exterior walls and penny arcade music played. Shoeless guests entered at one end, climbed up steep soft vinyl steps where they encountered a cage full of live rabbits. A little further, lifesized stuffed rugby players stood ready for action to the recorded sounds of cheering crowds. A narrow passage led to a chute from which participants tobogganed onto a seventeen-foot long recumbent effigy of Virna Lisi who moaned erotically as they landed on her. On the way to the exit they walked through a narrow tunnel lined with a double plastic encasement filled with live flies and passed a pair of astronaut dummies one of which was motorized into sporadic jerks (see my article, “A Latin Answer to Pop,” *Arts Magazine*, June 1966). Like *La Menesunda*, this work appears to qualify as entertainment rather than as art. But Marta Minujin had set out to demonstrate in fact the point the neo-Figurativists had sought to make through paint, and she was successful. The element of frivolity in her work may have some relation to her cultural background. Latin Americans of the East coast lowlands seem to have a special love for ritual and festivity. Appropriately Minujin’s work is bombastic, exuberant, assaulting like a Brazilian carnival, whereas artists of Chile and Colombia are quieter in their expression. Their work depends on innuendoes rather than direct statement.

Colombia’s highlands have produced a sober but very expressive humanism whose chief exponent is Fernando Botero. Botero’s work is neither mental, exuberant nor Surrealistic. Nonetheless it contains absurdity in both subject and treatment. The heads of state, religious figures and bourgeois families of his native country are his favorite targets. He works in a neo-Baroque style that blends Colonial traditions with those of the Italian Renaissance. But Botero treats these characteristics with wit and disrespect. Botero uses clear color rather than conventional effects of light and shade in order to obtain maximum volume and intensity. Figures and still-lifes are blown out to exaggerated proportions creating strange relationships. A family dog might be larger than the father of the family in a picnic scene or a small girl might be attacked by a giant French poodle. He depicts unlikely human
situations such as bishops bathing fully clothed in a river or a community bathtub under a decorative drapery. A pair of sleeping members of the clergy look irresistibly comical and ridiculous piled one over the other in a rubbery mass. There is something slightly sinful about both Botero’s people and still-lifes. The still-lifes look human while people wear the blank expression of an apple. His work is full of symbolic imagery. Lit cigarettes lie menacingly on the ground and snakes wind up trees. Although they are intended merely as solutions to pictorial needs, they always add an element of suspense.

Regardless of style and method all these artists address their work to mankind with a combination of gentle reprimand and affection. Their spirit and humor create a common bond between the most diversified practitioners of humanism. But above all they are united in a desire to retain their own identities as members of the human race.

“Siesta De Los Clerigos”
Fernanda Botero
Photography by Charles Uht
RAQUEL JODOROWSKY

LA MASCARA DEL ORADOR EN EL ORÁCULO

Cuando la poesía no sirve para cambiar este mundo
entonces hay que cambiar lo que se llama poesía.
Yo misma reviso mis poemas
y no encuentro un solo verso que pueda ser citado
una frase capaz de transformar la vida.
Sólo un puñado de palabras inciertas
que no pueden convertirse en lo que dicen.
Nuestra lengua ha olvidado el idioma sagrado
de las aves de Dios.
Ya no se modifica en el silencio.
Se ha domesticado en la costumbre de nombrar los héroes
que engordan nuestra historia
(esos ídolos que atraen la pérdida de infinitos).
Y hemos llenado nuestras bocas de peces ahumados
de frutas de papel
que repiten la comedia de los días
en escenarios de plástico donde actuamos aullando
pareciendo mendigos de la felicidad.
No era así. No éramos así.
Ahora quién de nosotros puede deshacer
las minuciosas máscaras olor a nada?
Ex-dioses, ex-profetas, ex-amarés, ex-creadores
ex-perfectos animales.
Por estos motivos es que ahora figuramos
en documentales, etiquetas, retratos oficiales
y la expresión ex se torna universal.
Donde están los hombres encendidos
que producían las sirenas antiguas?
Hoy que todo se mide con singular precisión
distancias, pesos, temperaturas, pulsos.
When poetry no longer serves to change this world
then it is time to change what is called poetry.
I myself go over my own poems
and find no line worth quoting
no phrase that could change life.
Only a few uncertain words
that cannot become what they mean.
Our tongue has forgotten the sacred idiom
of the birds and god.
No one grows in silence any longer.
Now it is tradition to imitate the heroes
who nourish our history
(those idols that attract the death of the universe).
And we have filled our mouths with smoked fishes
with paper fruits
that repeat the comedy of every day
on plastic stages where we howl
acting beggars of happiness.
It was not like this. We were not like this.
Who among us can break now
the precious masks with their smell of nothingness?
Former gods and prophets, ex-lovers and creators,
one perfect animals.
For all this we now appear
in documents, labels, official portraits,
and the expression *ex* becomes universal.
Where are the burning men
who created the ancient mermaids?
Today when everything is measured with precision
distances, weights, temperatures, pulsations,
que son identificados los elementos que componen
la materia de las estrellas
y se determina la figura del planeta
sujetándolo a leyes que ponen en orden su desorden,
nadie, nadie nos dice, quién, la relación exacta
de nuestra patria en el Cosmos.
Porque el hombre no viene de la tierra
sino del alma.
Y en esta casa del mundo pasamos unos años prestados
pasajeros como somos de la heredad terrestre.
Como la reminiscencia de una especie potente desaparecida
la Humanidad, antigua vampiresa de mil rostros, pasa
revestida con la piel de sus enemigos.
Una familia más, destinada a la infinita variedad de la existencia.
Henos aquí formados en línea alrededor del sol
viviendo de su vida después de miles de años.
Nosotros que no nos ajustamos del todo a una sola realidad
metidos en la combustión general, cansados de ser mordidos
después que hemos trabajado la vida
henos aquí sentados cómodamente en viaje hacia la Luna
tranquilos, exprimidos, con el cerebro hecho arena
por todo y todos los maravillosos y grandes adelantos de la Industria
con los mejores órganos donados de antemano
en paz, sin dedos, con un número en el cuello
clasificados para siempre.
He aquí en un bello día el espectáculo de mi época
en el Gran Museo del Mundo
cuya sangre es agua.
today when all the elements of stars are classified
and the shapes of planets outlined
submitting them to laws that order their disorder,
Nobody, no one can place
our home exactly in the Cosmos.
For man does not come from the earth
but the soul.
And in this house of the world we spend some borrowed years
travellers in our earthly inheritance.
Like the memory of a strong and extinct race
Humanity, the ancient whore of a thousand faces, passes by
dressed in the skin of its enemies.
One more family, its destiny the infinite variety of existence.
Here we are all in a line around the sun
sucking its life through the years.
Unable to live with reality
packed in a general combustion tired of being bitten
after having worked all life
here we are comfortably seated tripping to the moon
tranquil, empty, the brain dried into sand
thanks to the wonders of technology.
The best organs designed for us
in peace, without fingers, with a number in our neck
classified forever.
Here, on a beautiful day the spectacle of my epoch
In the Great Museum of the World
Whose blood is water.
Isabel Fraire

REENCUENTRO CON LO QUE SE CREÍA PERDIDO

amor
si en las entrañas de la muerte
renacemos
como alucinadas cristalinas arañas
del fondo de una cueva
si en medio del oleaje de lodo
ácido llanto
escupitajos y golpes
se salva venida desde qué recóndito inocente pasado
esa mirada de cristal de roca
y esa mano
cuyos huesos
atravesaron
como puente
los milenios
déjame ser
la mirada que mira tu mirada
y se funde con ella
iluminando este momento
en que se recobra
lo que se creía para siempre perdido

—8½—

no es cuestión de hacer un esfuerzo y de ir en contra de la corriente...
con lo cual NO SÉ lo que quiero decir
con lo cual no sé
con lo cual...
no es cuestión
de hacer más
no es cuestión
tampoco
de dejar brillar la luna y contemplarla
Isabel Fraire

A RE-ENCOUNTER WITH WHAT WAS BELIEVED LOST

tr. Anthony Edkins

love

if in the middle of wallows of filth
    bitter tears
gobs of spit and thrashing about
if in the bowels of death
we are reborn
like deluded crystalline spiders
at the back of a cave
there is saved that look of rock crystal
come from who knows what recondite innocent past
and that hand
    the bones of which
crossed
    the millenia
    like a bridge

let me be
the gaze that gazes at your gaze
    and merges with it
lighting up this moment
in which one recovers
what was believed forever lost

---8½---

tr. Tim Reynolds

not a matter of by
making an effort moving
upstream . . .
    by which I DON'T KNOW
    what I mean to say by
    which I mean to say
    I don't know what I . . .

not a matter of
doing more
    nor
letting the moon spend and watching it
a solas
a secas

no es cuestión

no
de danzar una ronda interminable de caretas y gestos dirigidos
ni de inventar el pétalo en que tiemble
de nuevo
la primera gota de rocío

sí

no

sí

abrirse ¡pero cómo! como una flor tocada por la luz
desentrañar gritar buscar abrir cerrar
buscar
unos labios y en los labios
lo que ya sabemos
y se pierde

no es cuestión de
esperar

la aparición de un dios
en el lugar insólito
en Gomorra incendiada
en Sodoma
en el centro mismo de un corazón que ignora
en el nuevo relámpago
de luces mercuriales
o de ojos que brillan
que buscan
que prometen
ojos que son tal vez quién sabe
el reflejo de una nada que se busca
se excede
y se proyecta
en una sombra inmensa
en su contrario absurdo
en un total
un todo
alone by
yourself

not a matter
not
of dancing an interminable round with
masks and calculated gestures nor of
inventing that petal on which trembles
always the original
dew
drop

yes
not
yes
to
open yourself but how like a lightbrushed
flower
to
burrow screech hunt open close
hunt
what lips and in which lips what
we knew before
and lost
not a matter of hanging
around awaiting the
god’s appearance in
an unexpected location in
incendiary Sodom or
Gomorrah
in dead center of the ignorant heart
in lightning lightning renewed mercurial lights
of what eyes which burn which
hunts which
promise
eyes which are might be why not
throwback of some nothing hunting
itself going beyond
itself projecting itself
into
this immense shadow
its irrational opposite a
totality an
all an
un Todo
tan inalcanzable e incomprendible
como la nada misma
el Absoluto
reverso de sí mismo

y un andar y un andar
de hormigas cacareando
de huestes siempre infieles
de torturas y goces incompletos

y un andar
y un andar

ya veo
qué veo
me veo

y veo lo mismo
y
nada

no era
después de todo

lo que yo quería decir

sino
“la marquesa salió a las cinco”
sólo que para poder salir a las cinco

la marquesa
tuvo que regresar al vientre de su madre

y volver a salir

pero sin esfuerzo

si

sin esfuerzo

porque yo y tú

somos la luna

y por eso brillamos

sin esfuerzo

y si no lo crees mírate brillando sin saberlo
All
unattainable incomprehensible
as nothing itself
Absolute
reverse of itself

and a coming and going
of cackling ants of
forever unreliable armies
tortures pleasures forever unfinished

and a coming a
going coming going

now I see
see what
me I see
and see the same
thing same nothing

and after all
it wasn't this I
wanted to say

but
"the marquesa went out at five"
but to be able to go out at five
the marquesa
had to return to her mother's belly and
start again from the beginning but

effortlessly
always
effortlessly
because you and I
are that moon
spending moonlike
effortlessly (and
if you don't believe me look love
spending
ignorant of the process
spending us
José Emilio Pacheco

DE ALGÚN TIEMPO A ESTA PARTE

What can I hold you with?

I
Aqui está el sol con su único ojo, la boca escupefuege que no se hastía de calcinar la eternidad. Aquí está como un rey derrotado que mira desde el trono la dispersión de sus vasallos.

Algunas veces, el pobre sol, el herald del día que te afrenta y vulnera, se posaba en tu cuerpo, decorando de luz todo lo que fue amado.

Hoy, se limita a entrar por la ventana y te avisa que ya han dado las siete y tienes por delante la expiación de tu condena: los papeles que sobrenadan en la oficina, las sonrisas que los otros te escupen, la esperanza, el recuerdo... y la palabra: tu enemiga, tu muerte, tus raíces.

II
El día que cumpliste nueve años, levantaste en la playa un castillo de arena. Sus fosos comunicaban con el mar; sus patios hospedaron la reverberación del sol; sus almenas eran incrustaciones de coral y reflejos.

Una legión de extraños se congregó para admirar tu obra. Veías sus panzas comidas por el vello, las piernas de las mujeres, mordidas por cruentas noches y deseos.

Saciado de escuchar que tu castillo era perfecto, volviste a casa, lleno de vanidad. Han pasado doce años desde entonces, y a menudo regresas a la playa, intentas encontrar restos de aquel castillo.

Acusan al flujo y reflujo de su demolición. Pero no son culpables las mareas: tú sabes que alguien lo abolió a patadas—y que algún día el mar volverá a edificarle.

III
En el último día del mundo—cuando ya no haya infierno, tiempo ni mañana—dirás su nombre incontaminado de cenizas, de perdones y miedo. Su nombre alto y purísimo, como ese roto instante que la trajo a tu lado.
José Emilio Pacheco

tr. Elinor Randall

FOR SOME TIME NOW

What can I hold you with?

I

Here is the sun with its one lone eye, its spitfire mouth not bored by burning up eternity. Here it is, like a defeated king watching from his throne his vassals' scattering.

Sometimes, the poor sun, herald of the day that injures and offends you, perched on your body, embellishing with light all that was loved.

Today, it does no more than enter through your window and inform you that it's seven o'clock and the expiation of your sentence lies ahead of you: papers floating around the office, smiles the others spit at you, hope, remembering . . . and the word: your enemy, your death, your origins.

II

On your ninth birthday you built a sand castle on the beach. Its moats conversed with the sea; its courtyards sheltered the sun's reverberations; its battlements were incrustations of coral and reflections.

A legion of strangers gathered to admire your work. You saw their paunches eaten by hair, the women's legs nibbled by bloody nights and by desires.

Tired of hearing how perfect your castle was, you went back home, filled with conceit. Twelve years have passed since then and you return to the beach often, trying to find the remains of that castle.

They blame the ebb and flow of water for its destruction. But the tides are not at fault: you know that someone kicked it down—and that the sea will build it up again some time.

III

On the world's last day—when there's no longer any hell or time or tomorrow—you'll speak her uncontaminated name, a name untouched by ashes, pardons, fear. Her noble name of utmost purity, like the broken instant that brought her to your side.
IV

Suena el mar. La antigua lámpara del alba incendia el pecho de las oscuras islas. El gran buque zozobra, anegado de soledad. Y en la escollera herida por las horas, de pie, como un minuto abierto, se demora la noche.

Los seres de la playa tejieron laberintos en el ojo del naufrago, próximo a ser oleaje, fiel rebaño del tiempo, alga, litoral, verde, muchacha destruida que danza y brilla cuando el sol la visita.

V

De algún tiempo a esta parte, las cosas tienen para ti el sabor acre de lo que muere y de lo que comienza. Áspero triunfo de tu misma derrota, viviste cada día con la coraza de la irrealidad. El año enfermo te dejó en rehenes algunas fechas que te cercan y humillan, algunas horas que no volverán pero que viven su confusión en la memoria.

Comenzaste a morir y a darte cuenta de que el misterio no va a extenuarse nunca. El despertar es un bosque de hallazgos, un milagro que recupera lo perdido y que destruye lo ganado. Y el día futuro, una miseria que te encuentra solo, inventando y puliendo tus palabras.

Caminas y prosigues y atraviesas tu historia. Mírate extraño y solo, de algún tiempo a esta parte.

José Emilio Pacheco

LÍMITES

Todo lo que has perdido, me dijeron, es tuyo.
Y ninguna memoria recordaba que es cierto.
Estuve vivo, amé, dije palabras,
que las horas borraron.
Sentí una honda piedad
por los años que faltan.
IV
The sea is sounding. The ancient lamp of dawn is setting fire to the
dark islands’ breasts. The great ship founders engulfed by solitude.
And on the breakwater wounded by time—standing, like an open
minute—the night is lingering.

Beings of the beach wove labyrinths in the shipwreck’s eye, soon
to be surging waves, a faithful flock of time, some seaweed, a green
shore, a girl destroyed who shines and dances when the sun pays her
a visit.

V
For some time now, things for you have had the sour taste of what
is dying and of what begins. A bitter triumph of your own defeat, you
lived each day under the protective covering of unreality. The sick
year left you as pledges some days that wall you in, subdue you,
some hours that won’t return but live their confusion in memory.

You started to die, to realize that mystery is never going to weaken.
Awakening is a forest of discovery, a miracle regaining what is lost,
destroying what is won. And the future day a wretchedness that finds
you alone, inventing and polishing your words.

You keep on walking and traveling across your history. You’ve
been a stranger and alone, for some time now.

José Emilio Pacheco

BOUNDS
Everything you’ve lost, they told me, is yours.
And not one memory remembered that it’s a fact.
I was alive, I loved, I said some words
that the hours erased.
I felt a deep pity
for the years to come.
Todo lo que destruyes, me dijeron, te hiere.
Traza una cicatriz que no lava el olvido;
renace cada día dentro de ti,
desborda
esos muros de sal que no pueden cubrirte.

Todo lo que has amado, me dijeron, ha muerto.
Y no sé definirlo,
pero hay algo en el tiempo
que zarpó para siempre.
Hay rostros que ya nunca
volveré a recordar;
y hay acaso un espejo, una calle, un verano
que ya ha cubierto el eco de otra sombra baldía.

Todo lo que creiste, repitieron, es falso.
Ningún dios te protege,
sólo te ampara el viento.
Y el viento es, ya lo sabes,
una oquedad sin límite,
el ruido que hace el mundo
cuando muere un instante.

Todo lo que has perdido, concluyeron, es tuyo.
Es tu sola heredad, tu recuerdo, tu nombre.
Ya no tendrás el día
que rechazaste.
El tiempo
te ha dejado en la orilla
de esta noche
y acaso
una luz fugitiva
anegará el silencio.
Everything you destroy, they told me, hurts you.
It traces a scare that forgetting does not wash away;
it is reborn daily within you,
it overflows
those walls of salt that can’t conceal you.

Everything you’ve loved, they told me, has died.
And I’m not able to define it,
but something there is in time
that hoisted a sail forever.
There are faces I will never
again remember;
and there’s perhaps a mirror, a street, a summer
that has obscured the echo of another useless shadow.

Everything you’ve believed in, they repeated, is false.
No god protects you,
only the wind gives you shelter.
And the wind, you surely realize,
is an unbounded hollowness,
the noise the world makes
when an instant dies.

Everything you’ve lost, they concluded, is yours.
It is your only property, your memory, your name.
You’ll never have the day
that you rejected.
Time
has left you on the edge
of tonight
and maybe
a fugitive light
will annihilate the silence.
Homero Aridjis

Sobre este puente donde el tiempo avanza inmóvil
como la podredumbre o la alegría de ser
adentro de las cuerdas
que lo atraviesan de un extremo a otro
he visto al pájaro de la inocencia detenerse
un momento en su vuelo para decírmelo adiós
he visto en sus ojos el encendido de luz
que arde sobre las aguas como un tapete
o una lengua siempre más larga y estriada
he visto en su pico el canto y la maravilla
que nunca se levantan un punto más alto
de la tristeza que los encierra como un nicho
he visto la oscura y húmeda cabellera del canto
siempre más radiante y más muda
más color de viento que de amor o vocal
curvarse en sus umbrales como una ola

Sobre este puente que ha mirado con mirada fría
(asi como mira el rostro amado y muerto
siempre más distante a la palabra y más imposible)
pasar miles de espectros y de autos
miles de cosas y seres que van al infinito
como etapa final
he visto al pájaro de la inocencia
descansar un momento de su eternidad
para decírmelo adiós
en un hasta nunca apenas perceptible dicho casi
con un rumor de alas sonando en el silencio
On this bridge where time moves immobile
like the rot or joy of being
within the cables
that traverse it end to end
I have seen the bird of innocence pause
a moment from its flight to say goodbye
I have seen in its eyes the fire of light
that burns over the waters like a carpet
or a tongue always larger and more grooved
I have seen in its beak the song and the marvel
that never rise any higher
from the sadness that encloses them like a nook
I have seen the dark and humid mane of the song
always more radiant and more mute
more the color of wind than of love or voice
curving in its beginnings like a wave

On this bridge that has gazed with frozen gaze
(as a loved and dead face gazes
always farther from the word and more elusive)
pass thousands of specters and autos
thousands of things and beings that move toward infinity
like the final station
I have seen the bird of innocence
rest a moment from its eternity
to say goodbye
in a goodbye barely audible said almost
with a murmur of wings sounding in the silence
Homero Aridjis

El canto bajo la bruma
alumbra en su vuelo
un camino

el alba
abre en el nido de un ave
la luz

el sol
mira el poema
ya vivo

mirado
el fruto
tiene peso

mueve su sombra
en el árbol

Homero Aridjis

Ten señora los cuerpos
los colores
las imágenes abiertas del tiempo
donde la nacida en agosto
se perpetúa en silencio
Ten a aquellos que subiendo
por una misma voz
viven en una palabra
como una cosa en su nombre
Ten el ser
la hora
el sitio
adonde convergen
irresistiblemente
a la unidad deseada

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Homero Aridjis

The chant beneath the mist
lights up in its flying
a road
dawn
opens in a bird’s nest
the light
the sun
watches the poem
alive now
watched
the fruit
is heavy
moving its shadow
in the tree

Homero Aridjis

Possess lady the bodies
the colors
the open images of time
where those born at harvest
perpetuate in silence
Possess those who rising
with the same voice
live on in a word
like an object in its name
Possess the being
  the hour
  the place
where they gather
irresistibly
to the unity they awaited
Homero Aridjis

El mediodía parte el arroyo
en delgadas mitades de sonido
saca del lomo de la bestia
crepitación y humo
todo lo que es húmedo
la hora lo ha bebido
todo lo que respira
en mi interior descansa

las casas y el árbol
tienen la oscuridad abajo
ojos de tierra roja
beben en el azul abierto

la luz y tu mirada
se hablan
sobre este río elevado
de palabras sin sombra

Homero Aridjis

Que su ser permanezca
que sus ojos no mueran

lo digo ante su cuerpo
lo digo en mi corazón

yo descanso en ella
yo vivo en su día

enorme frutero de seres es la tierra
donde mi amada es una

que su ser permanezca
que sus ojos no mueran

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Homero Aridjis

Noon splits the riverbank
in thin halves of sound
pulls from the loin of the beast
crackling and smoke

all that is wet
the hour has drunk
all that breathes
rests within me

the houses and trees
are dark below
eyes of red earth
drink in the open blue

the light and your gaze
speak
across this rising river
of words without shade

Homero Aridjis

May her presence last
may her eyes never die

I say it before her body
I say it in my heart

I rest in her
I live in her day

a great fruit basket of beings is the earth
where my love is one

may her presence last
may her eyes never die
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

HOMERO ARIDJIS is a Mexican poet born in 1940. As a very young poet, Aridjis' work appeared in numerous literary publications in Mexico, South America, and the United States: Cuadernos del Viento, Pájaro Cascabel, El Corno Emplumado, Siempre (Mexico), Taller Poético (Peru), Eco Contemporáneo (Argentina), and Atlantic Monthly (USA). Aridjis has published eight volumes of poetry: La musa roja (1958), Los ojos desdoblados (1960), La difícil ceremonia (1963), Antes del reino (1963), Mirándola dormir (1964), Perséfone (1967), Los espacios azules (1968), and Navegaciones-Ajedrez (1969). He is currently teaching Spanish Literature at the City College of New York.

JACQUELINE BARNITZ is Professor of Art at the University of New York, Stony Brook. She has published numerous articles in periodicals on modern Latin American art. She has also written several essays for Hispanic Arts.

WILLIS BARNSTONE is a poet and critic who is currently professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at the University of California at Riverside. He has edited and introduced an anthology titled Modern European Poetry. He is currently working with the Greek poet George Seferis in Athens.

PAUL BLACKBURN is a poet and translator whose recent publications include: The Cities (Grove Press), NYC: In, On, Or About the Premises (Cape Goliard) and a translation of Julio Cortazar’s book, Cronopios and Famas (Pantheon). Mr. Blackburn currently is teaching at Mannes College of Music and The New School, both in New York.

ERNESTO CARDENAL was born in 1925 and is the youngest of the three Nicaraguan poets of the 1940 generation. Cardenal has said of his own work, “I have tried principally to write poetry that can be understood.” His earlier works include Carmen y otros poemas and La ciudad deshabitada. Later he developed an epigrammatic style with themes of religious love and social and political concerns. Some distinctive features of his later work include references to prehistoric literary materials, chronicles of the conquest, and colonial documents. Some of his books include: Epigramas (1961), Oración por Marilyn Monroe (1966), Gethsemani, Ky., (1965) and Hora O (1960).

MANUEL DURÁN was born in Spain in 1925, left Spain in 1939, and has lived for many years in Mexico. He is now Professor of Spanish at Yale University. His new book on Luis de León will appear soon in English. Mr. Duran has published five books of poetry and numerous articles and anthologies. He is currently at work on a new book of poems and a collection of critical essays on contemporary Spanish literature.
ANTHONY EDKINS is a British poet and translator whose work has been published in both England and America. He is presently working on a new translation of Jorge Manrique’s classic *Coplas*.

ISABEL FRAIRE is a young Mexican poet who was born in Mexico City in 1936. Her first book of poems titled *Sólo esta luz* was recently published by Era Ediciones in Mexico City. Miss Fraire studied philosophy at the University of Mexico. She has published several translations of Eliot, Pound, Spender, and Stevens in major literary periodicals. In addition, she has written several essays on poetry. She currently resides in Mexico City.

NICOLÁS GUILLEN is a Cuban poet, born in Camagüey in 1902. He has been a typographer, journalist and diplomat, and lived for several years in Paris. He cultivated the Afro-carib tradition and started with Negro dance rhythms in his earlier poetry: *Motivos de són* (1930). In *Sóngoro cosongo* (1931) he combines the Negro folklore with the hispanic tradition. Other important collections of poems are *El són entero* (1947), and *La paloma de vuelo popular* (1958), which appeared after several years of silence. Guillén now serves as the director of the “Unión de escritores y artistas de Cuba.”

ENA HOLLIS was born in 1934 in England and currently resides in Peru. She has published one book of poems, *The Lemon Tree and Other Poems* (1961). Recent poems have appeared in *Outposts* and *Twentieth Century*. She is working on some translations of contemporary Peruvian poetry.

VICENTE HUIDOBRO was born in Santiago de Chile in 1893. The principles of the movement “creationism” which he founded were set forth in a poetic manifesto in 1914, *Non serviam*. Beginning in 1916 he collaborated with Apollinaire, Réverdy and Tristan Tzara in the review *Nord-Sud*. His works include: *El espejo de agua* (1916), *Horizon carré* (1917), *Tour Eiffel* (1917), *Hallalli* (1918), *Poemas árticos* (1918), *Ecuatorial* (1918), *Saisons choisies* (1921), *Automne régulier* (1925), *Tout a coup* (1925), *Altazor* (1931), *Ver y palpar* (1941), *El ciudadano del olvido* (1941), and *Ultimos poemas* (posthumous, 1948). His most influential work is *Altazor* which is related by design to Eliot’s *The Wasteland*, Narcisse by Valéry, and *Muerte sin fin* by Gorostiza. Huidobro felt that poetry is absolute creation. As poet-creator Huidobro affirms the possibility of a poet-god who is able “to tell us of those times and all time and all space because he alone possesses the vertiginous mirrors that capture the movement of the metamorphosis.”

RAQUEL JODOROWSKY is a Chilean poet who was born in 1935. Later on she became a Peruvian citizen. Her major works include *En sentido inverso* (1960), *Ay Toien* (1964), *Alnico y Kemita* (1964), *La ciudad inclemente* (1965) and *En la pared de los sueños alguien llama* (1967).
ROBERTO JUARROZ is an Argentinian poet born in 1917. His poetry is of a highly conceptual nature and, at times, comes close to an aphoristic view of the world. His major books of poems are *Poesia vertical* (1958), *Segunda poesia vertical* (1963), *Poema vertical* (1964) and *Tercera poesia vertical* (1965).

RICHARD LEOVITZ is an Instructor in English at Idaho State University and co-editor of *The Dragonfly*, a new magazine of poetry and poetry in translation. His translation of Machado and Lorca have appeared in *Choice, Southern Poetry Review*, and *The Greensboro Review*.

JOSE LEZAMA LIMA is a Cuban poet who was born in Colombia in 1912. In 1944 he founded the influential Cuban literary journal, *Origenes*. One year later Lima began working in the Dirección de Cultura in Havana and established himself as the leader of a rebirth of cultural awareness in Cuba. His first poem, "Muerte de Narciso," was published while Lima was still a student at the University. Four years later in 1941 his first book appeared, *Enemigo rumor*. What Cuban critic Armando Alvarez Bravo called a "constant in Lima's work," was evident already in this volume; an ironic tone that "is not violent, but sad. The irony is calm and full of hope, although a restless torment moves beneath the surface." Subsequent publications by Lima are: *Aventuras sigilosas* (1945), *La Fijeza* (1949), *Aristides Fernández* (1951), *Analecta del reloj* (1953), *La expresión americana* (1957), *Tratados en la Habana* (1958), *Dador* (1960), *Orbita* (1966). Lima also edited the three volume edition of *Antología de la poesia cubana*, published by the Consejo Nacional de Cultura in Cuba in 1965. He has published an important novel, *Paradiso*.

GEORGE Mc WHIRTER is a graduate student in the creative writing department at the University of British Columbia. He has published poetry and prose in *Prism International, The Fiddlehead, Trace, Canadian Forum, The Far Point, Talon*, and others. His recent interview with John Logan was presented on "Critics on Air" over the CBC. He is currently working on a translation of Marco Denevi's *Falsificaciones*.

ENRIQUE MOLINA is an Argentine poet who was born in Buenos Aires. In 1954, with A. Pellegrini, he founded and directed the review, *A partir de cero*. His first book of poetry, *Las cosas y el delirio*, appeared in 1941 and was awarded the Martin Fierro prize. Other works include: *Pasiones terrestres* (1946), *Costumbres errantes o la redondez de la tierra* (1951), *Amantes antipodas* (1961), *Fuego libre* (1962), and *Las bellas furias* (1966) for which he received the Premio Fondo Nacional de las Artes y Letras award. Several of his later poems have been translated into French in *Lettres Nouvelles* and *Cahiers du Sud*.

SERGIO MONDRAGON is a Mexican poet and editor who has published two volumes of poetry, *Yo soy el otro* (1965) and *El aprendiz de brujo* (1969). He has edited an anthology of Mexican poetry which will be pub-
lished soon by Unicorn Press. He is editor and founder of the Mexican literary journal, *el corno emplumado*. During the past several years he has held teaching positions at the Universities of Indiana, Illinois and Universidad Ibero-Americana in Mexico. He is currently Visiting Lecturer in Spanish and Comparative Literature at Ohio University.

**JOSÉ EMILIO PACHECO** was born in Mexico City in 1939. He studied for several years at the National University of Mexico. He has translated both French and American poets and contributed to Mexican journals including *Universidad de México, Estaciones*, and the supplement "México en la Cultura," in *Novedades*. He is currently an editor with the supplement to *Siempre, "La Cultura en México."* A large selection of Pacheco's work appeared in the 1960 Aguilar anthology, *Antología de la poesía mexicana*. He has published six volumes including two volumes of short stories (*La sangre de Medusa* and *El viento distante*), a novel (*Morirás lejos*), and three volumes of poetry, *Los elementos de la noche* (1963), *Reposo del fuego* (1966), and *No me preguntes como pasa el tiempo* (1969). The last volume received the 1969 Premio Nacional de Poesía award. Pacheco has also edited several anthologies of Mexican writing.

**NICANOR PARRA** is a Chilean poet, born in 1914. He was strongly influenced by the folkloric tradition of his country and published his first major book in 1937: *Cancionero sin nombre*. He became particularly known for his anti-poems, the first edition of which appeared in 1954: *Poemas y Antipoemas*. Parra emphasizes the basic absurdity of daily life, a concept that finds particularly violent and sarcastic expression in *La cuenca larga* (1958), perhaps his best book. In collaboration with Pablo Neruda he published *Discursos*. Other works: *Manifesto* (1963), *Antología de la Poesía de la Unión Soviética* (1966), and his latest collection of poems *Obra gruesa* (1969).


ALEJANDRA PIZARNIK belongs to the younger generation of Argentinian poets. She was born in 1934. Her major collections of poems are *Pequeños poemas en prosa* (1968) and *Extracciones de la piedra de locura* (1968). She has particularly cultivated the form of the small prose poem.

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.

JAIME SABINES is a Mexican poet who was born in Tuxtla Gutiérrez in 1925. He studied literature in Mexico City for several years and then returned to his native state. He lives now in Mexico City where he heads a commercial firm. He has published five books of poetry, *Horal* (1950), *La señal* (1951), *Tarumba* (1956), *Diario semanal y poemas en prosa* (1961), and *Recuento de poemas* (1962). This last volume combines all the poems in the previous four volumes and includes some new unpublished material. Most of Sabines’ books are out of print including *Recuento de poemas*.

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ is a young poet and translator in San Francisco. He has done extensive translations of Cuban poets for book and journal publications in the United States.

QUINCY TROUPE is a twenty-six year old black poet from St. Louis, Missouri who is currently the poet in residence of the Black Institute at Ohio University. He has been a member of the Watts Writers’ Workshop. His poems have been widely published in the best black magazines of the United States.

BLANCA VARELA is a Peruvian poet, born in 1926. She is a surrealist poet in the sense that Lorca, Cernuda and Aleixandre were surrealist poets. Her best known collection of poems is *Ese puerto existe* (1959). Lately she has written long poems mixing narration and lyric intensity.

CINTIO VITIER is a Cuban poet and essayist who was born in Key West, Florida in 1921. A Catholic writer, he demonstrated that poetry and religion could be united without contradiction in a work that is both poetic and religious experience. With Lezama Lima, Eliseo Diego, and his own wife,
Fina García Marruz, Vitier founded the journal Orígenes. He lives now in Havana with his wife; they have recently published a book of essays together, Temas martianos. Vitier's poetry publications include: Poemas-luz ya sueño (1938), Sedienta cita (1943), Extrañeza de estar (1945), De mi provincia (1945), Capricho y homenaje (1947), El hogar y el olvido pródigo (1953), Vísperas (1953), and Testimonios (poems from 1953 to 1968). Vitier's books of essays and criticism are: Experiencia de la poesía (1944), Diez poetas cubanos (1948), Cincuenta años de poesía cubana (1952), Una tesis sobre el lenguaje poético (1956), La voz de Gabriel Mistral (1957), Lo Cubano en la poesía (1958), Las mejores poesía cubanas (1959), Poética (1961), Los poetas romanticos cubanos (1962), and Temas martianos (1969).

ELIOT WEINBERGER has translated Octavio Paz' Eagle or Sun? (October House), and several of his translations will be included in a forthcoming anthology, New Poetry from Mexico (Dutton). He is currently preparing a book of the first English translations of a large body of Paz' work. Mr. Weinberger resides in New York City.

RAMÓN XIRAU is a poet, editor, critic and essayist who was born in Barcelona in 1924. He is currently editor of the Mexican journal, Diálogos, and he teaches contemporary Spanish American literature at El Colegio de Mexico and other universities in Mexico City. Xirau has directed several Mexican journals (Nivel, Universidad de México, Cuadernos Americanos, La Palabra y el Hombre and others) and collaborated on many important foreign reviews: Texas Quarterly, Evergreen Review, Insula (Madrid), Europa (Paris), Revista Nacional de Cultura (Caracas), and many others. Xirau has published his own poetry, written in Catalan, and prose, written in Spanish. His most important critical works are Tres poetas de la soledad (1955), Poesía hispanoamericana y española (1961), Poetas de México y España (1962), and Palabra y silencio.

DONALD A. YATES is professor of Spanish American Literature at Michigan State University. He has lived for three years in Buenos Aires, Argentina where he has studied that country's literature of fantasy and imagination. He is preparing a critical biography of Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges.

GABRIEL ZAID is a Mexican poet and essayist who was born in Monterrey in 1934. Zaid has written poetry and prose, essays dealing with social concerns of poetry, and brief reviews and commentaries of young Mexican poets. His work appears in major Mexican literary journals and supplements. His books of poetry are: Fábula de Narciso y Ariadna (1958), Seguimiento (1964), Campo nudista (1969), and a book-length essay, La máquina de cantar (1968).
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and honored to have inspired, and in which you have penetrated so deeply into
my mind. You have enriched and enlarged it; I have no words with which to
thank you for the time and for the just and telling observations you have
dedicated to me."
—Jorge Luis Borges, in a letter to Carter Wheelock

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