

# EN EL SECADERO DE ALMAS

*poesía cubana de la generación cero*

# IN THE DRYING SHED OF SOULS

*poetry from cuba's generation zero*

*with selections from*

Luis Yuseff, Isaily Pérez González, Javier Marimón Miyares,  
Leymen Pérez García, Marcelo Morales Cintero, Óscar Cruz,  
Liuvan Herrera Carpio, Jamila Medina Ríos, Moisés Mayán  
Fernández, Legna Rodríguez Iglesias & Sergio García Zamora

*introduced, selected, and translated by*

Katherine M. Hedeem & Víctor Rodríguez Núñez

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**EN EL SECADERO DE ALMAS** : Poesía cubana de la Generación Cero  
**IN THE DRYING SHED OF SOULS**: Poetry from Cuba's Generation Zero

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## INTRODUCTION

In a recent interview, the renowned Polish poet, Adam Zagajewski, declared that in his country, “poetry killed communism.” We don’t bring this up to question his position and experience. We are more interested in calling attention to the fact that the situation of Cuban poets is actually quite different from that of those poets who lived through Europe’s “real socialism.” In other words, thinking in terms of dissident intellectual versus official intellectual doesn’t really work in the case of Cuba, where most poets want to escape such a reductive binary and, ultimately, be independent.

It’s not a cliché by any means to declare that few times in its history has Cuban poetry been more varied, innovative, critical, and attractive than it is right now. And an undeniable part of it is what has been written by the so-called Generation Zero (*Generación Cero*), poets born after 1970 and who begin publishing after 2000. It’s a numerous group, as the title of their most complete anthology illustrates, *La isla en versos: Cien poetas cubanos* [The Island in Verse: One Hundred Cuban poets] (2011 and 2013). In fact, our selection was compiled having read over sixty books, tens of anthologies, and numerous journals and magazines. Indeed, the only way to truly do justice to this poetry is to offer up book-length anthologies; our aim in these pages is to be the first to simply introduce it to English-speaking readers.

Elsewhere we’ve defended the notion that Cuban poetry was revolutionary before the Revolution. It continued to be in the midst of profound transformations that took place on the island beginning in 1959, despite revolutionary power’s paradoxical mistrust of it. It still is after the Revolution’s decline, which arose in the nineties. It’s revolutionary not because it’s neo-romantic, neo-realist (much less socialist-realist), colloquial, or neo-baroque; but because it renounces solipsism, the differentiation of the other, and it does so in diverse ways, with notable creative freedom.

Generation Zero is no exception. The work presented here reaffirms Cuba’s long, rich tradition of dialogic poetry, which finds its identity through the identification with the other, and is marked by tensions

between commitment and autonomy, dialogue and creativity, continuity and rupture. It is poetry with vast experience in the representations of subordinations (nation, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality) in order to subvert them, that has consciously participated in both social and cultural transformations, that has drawn closer to popular language and culture, and that has decolonized itself in content and in form.

This brilliance has shown through in the midst of the dismal social situation that has crisscrossed the island since the start of the nineties. The fall of European socialism meant Cuba lost 85 percent of its trade, sparking the deepest economic crisis in its history. Daily life became hell: lines, rationing, hunger, panhandling, prostitution, crime. The solution for many Cubans was summed up in two verbs: *resolver* and *inventar* (roughly translated as “getting by any way you can”), without necessarily respecting any ethical principle. Hundreds of thousands emigrated to the United States or wherever they could.

Generation Zero was forced to grow up under these kind of circumstances, with no opportunities or future. And its poetry embodies the crisis in countless ways, directly or indirectly. Like in Oscar Cruz’s work, it focuses on new social marginality with severity, but also tenderness. It offers us its poetic antihero, its difficult relationship with community, its acknowledgement of life and writing as a struggle. This critical view of reality is, as Isaily Pérez González, Leymen Pérez García, Moisés Mayán Fernández, and Liuvan Herrera Carpio reveal, sometimes hopeless, and yet always based on an identification with the other.

The themes here are also pensive, with notable intellectual depth. Like in the case of Marcelo Morales Cintero, poetic writing becomes fundamentally thought. Not philosophy, not ethics, not politics, but interaction between reason and feeling. In this interpellation of reality, at all its levels, edges blur, categories like objective and subjective, private and public, stop making sense. What binds the poetic subject to the other, to otherness, is love, transcending family or sex.

Another constant is the ambivalent positioning before both cultural and political tradition. On the one hand, Luis Yussef’s lyrical hero is positive, identifies politically, but in cultural terms. His understanding of geography and history goes far beyond national borders, but the universal can show up in a local coffeehouse, become part of bitter daily life. On the other, as in the case of Legna Rodríguez Iglesias, there’s a negative



discourse of difference, unafraid of being openly political.

A major standout of this poetry is the way it represents the feminine condition. In this regard, Jamila Medina Ríos' work offers a soaring level of poetic elaboration. There are no inhibitions here, moving beyond traditional feminism and timeworn lists of women's body parts, to give voice to sexualities that challenge the norm. With indisputable grace and personality, Rodríguez Iglesias' poetry takes all this on as well, reluctant to make one single concession, with pleasure and suffering to the very end. González Pérez's poetry challenges too, but in its own way, with a more subtle exploration of the difficulties of Cuban reality experienced through the lens of gender.

Themes intertwine, appear and later disappear, like in our own minds, our own lives. Ultimately, this poetry expresses a critical consciousness, growing from childhood roots, not forgetting to be self-critical or limited to the personal. In this way, it challenges every ideology, whether it be idealist or materialist, rightist or leftist. What comes to the fore is a rejection of solipsism and an affirmation of the invention of reality, a dialogue unwilling to sell out to populism or the market, and the need for a participative reader.

This thematic boldness, never seen before in Cuban poetry, is complemented by no less daring work with language. In what seems to be a generational trademark, Sergio García Zamora alternates between prose poems, –since they lend themselves well to reflection–, and neo-Avant-Garde verse poems, because of the intentional distribution of the text on the page, and the abandoning of upper-case letters and punctuation. Pérez García, Morales Cintero, Herrera Carpio, Medina Ríos and Rodríguez Iglesias do the same. There is a search for another mode of expression, just like with all self-respecting poetry.

Indeed, here there is a wide range of styles. While Yussef uses an expanding verse, capable of representing different planes of reality at once, Javier Marimón Miyares opts for a synthetic, neo-baroque verse where the hyperbaton rules. And while for Morales Cintero the poem stops being a unit of poetic writing, giving up that place to the book, and verse draws carefully, elegantly closer to prose, in Cruz what prevails is a poetry that moves toward the colloquial and song. In each case, language is refined, cultured and at the same time popular, and the rhythm that distinguishes it as poetry is preserved.

Still, these days, no one expects this kind of poetry from a Cuban, not in literary circles in the Spanish-speaking world, on the left or the right, not in North American academic and creative writing circles either. And perhaps that's why it hasn't received the attention it deserves.

For the former, it's because the poetry isn't communicative, and instead welcomes an active reader who participates in the creation of meaning. Cuban poetry has had to confront, above all in the seventies, neo-Stalinist aesthetic standards, which demanded, among other things, "reaching the people," being clear and direct. This is precisely one of the paradigms of the so-called "poetry of experience," which prevails in Spain today, with offshoots in Latin America, especially among the contemporaries of Generation Zero, the self-designated "poets of uncertainty." By contrast, the young poets selected here are very well aware, from historical experience, of the danger of making aesthetic concessions in the name of coherence and transparency, and, as such, they defend poetry's integrity.

For the latter, it's because the poetry isn't exotic enough, doesn't explicitly focus on the difficult material and spiritual situation Cuba has lived through ever since the fall of European socialism and the disintegration of the USSR. Contemporary Cuban poetry isn't subject to the market like narrative is, and so it's not forced to speak of opportunistic bureaucrats, prostitutes with college degrees, blackouts and endless lines, the splendor of the black market. Indeed, the crisis experienced on the island is well-represented in these pages, but without making any concessions to exoticism. There's a critical perspective, a profound uneasiness, but no absolute opposition, no automatic negation. Instead, the negation of the negation is what comes to the fore, the need for a social alternative, but not anticommunism, not a call for the return of capitalism.

The most notable exclusion of these poets appears in the anthology *El canon abierto: Última poesía en español* [The Open Canon: New Poetry in Spanish] edited by Remedios Sánchez García, selected by Anthony L. Geist, and published by Visor, the most prestigious poetry press in Spain, in 2015. The back cover reads, "nearly two hundred researchers from more than one hundred universities (Harvard, Oxford, Columbia, and Princeton, among them) have chosen the most relevant poets in the Spanish language born after 1970." Among the forty selected, not one is from Cuba; in fact, in the "Full List of Cited Poets," which includes one hundred twenty-two authors, just one Cuban is mentioned.

Yet, though they are relatively isolated, whether it be because of extremely limited access to the Internet or the difficulties of traveling off the island, these poets aren't behind the times at all, on the contrary, they are at the forefront of poetry being written anywhere in the world. Here there's no trace of superficiality, no fear of emotional complexity or intellectual density, of formal rigor or experimentation. It's poetry open to reality and the most diverse forms of representation. The authors know that intellectuals participate in society through their cultural production.

In short, the critique these poets make of present day Cuban society and culture not only transcends the Cuban government's version of the facts but also platitudes about anticommunism, making such a critique more profound. It's possible because it carries with it an understanding of poetry's essential function as a counter-ideology. If all ideologies base their discourse on making the artificial seem natural, poetry denaturalizes our perception of the world; it considers everything as if it were for the first time. This is where poetry derives its political force from, just as it does its explicit or implicit challenging of power, its ability to change life.



# LUIS YUSEFF

Luis Yuseff (Holguín 1975) is a poet and editor. He is the author of eleven books of prize-winning poetry, the latest being *Dolor de resurrección* (2014), which received the prestigious Gaceta de Cuba Poetry Prize. Two editions of his Selected Poems have appeared on the island. He has also selected and edited two anthologies, one of Cuban poets and another of Cuban prose writers. He lives in Holguín.

# Esquema de la impura rosa

a Joaquín Osorio

I

Contra las Montañas Rocosas de Colorado estaba el Viajero del Paleolítico, de perfil eternamente detenido, silbando *La vida en rosa*, apenas silbando/ rumiando *La vida en rosa* (¿O era la *Barcarola* de *Los cuentos de Hoffmann*?). Dios no había inventado aún las palabras con que 32 millones de años después habrían de nombrarlo Olofi, Jehová o Padre Zeus. Ni tampoco había creado al hombre, pero ya estaba el Viajero desde entonces contra las Montañas Rocosas de Colorado, silbando *La vida en rosa*. Deshojando la mítica centifolia sin saber que la rosa es un abismo que miente.

II

Que miente.

La rosa es un abismo que miente sobre la mesa de musicar tristezas. Y Violeta Parra, la indiecita andina de París, está interrogando a la rosa mapuche que, de espalda a la marcialidad de los veranos y doblándose despacio

*(tan despacio que mata  
palomito volador, me quieres?)*

le responde. Pero no hay que creerle.

La rosa es un abismo que miente. Y Violeta es frágil como un segundo. Fugaz, con las manos ásperas de sacarle música a la pobreza, dibuja sobre el barro dos cuerpos niños.

Después sopla, mientras en las noches de nunca acabar, con los dientes callándose el hambre, tiritando, teje y desteje a merced de la inspiración. Ángel e Isabel, como dos violincitos asustados, protestan en pizzicato, duermen en el estuche de la guitarra columpiándose desde lo más alto de la Carpa de la Reina.

“Mientras no se te venga encima Violeta mía -le ha dicho el viajero. Mientras te dure el espectáculo. Vamos, todavía le quedan 3 pétalos a tu rosa. Y deshojar una rosa es como preguntarle a Dios...”

*¿Palomito volador, me quieres?*

# Blueprint of an Impure Rose

to Joaquín Osorio

## I

Up against the Rocky Mountains in Colorado was the Paleolithic Traveler, in profile eternally prisoner, whistling “La Vie en Rose,” scarcely whistling/ humming “La Vie en Rose” (or was it the Barcarolle from *The Tales of Hoffman*?). God hadn’t even made up the words 32 million years later Olofi, Jehovah, or Father Zeus would use to name him. He hadn’t created man yet either, still the Traveler was there up against the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, whistling “La vie en rose.” Pulling the petals off the mythical centifolia not knowing the rose is a lying abyss.

## II

Lying.

The rose is a lying abyss on the table of sorrows set to music. And Violeta Parra, the Andean Indian from Paris, is questioning the Mapuche rose, back turned to the martiality of summers and slowly bending over

*(so slowly it kills  
sweet flying dove, do you love me?)*

it answers. But we don’t have to believe it.

The rose is a lying abyss. And Violeta is fragile like a second. Fleeting, hands rough from mining music out of poverty, she draws two children’s bodies on the clay.

Later she blows, while on never-ending nights, with teeth quieting hunger, trembling, she weaves and unweaves at inspiration’s mercy.

Ángel and Isabel, like two tiny frightened violins, protest in pizzicato, asleep in the guitar case, swinging from the highest point of the Carpa de la Reina LP.

“As long as it doesn’t all come crashing down on you my Violeta,” the traveler told her. “As long as the show lasts. Come on, your rose still has 3 petals. And pulling the petals off a rose is like asking God...”

*Sweet flying dove, do you love me?*

Y la rosa interrogada le responde.  
En la Candelaria.  
En un rinconcito húmedo de París.  
En la *rue* Monsieur le Prince No.3.

### III

Y en el 3 concurren otras 2 rosas: la solícita Cagí, y la no menos solícita Rosa la China, asegurando por puro instinto -como los grandes sabios- que aún antes de Cristo hubo rosas. Que del Asia le vienen todas las rosas a este mundo. Y que este mundo sin rosas no sería este mundo sino la tristeza de Sandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi Botticelli, sin un pétalo siquiera para acompañar el nacimiento de Venus. O la tristeza de Yukio Mishima, frente al San Sebastián de Guido Reni, con la rosa de la masturbación entre los puños ofreciendo sus fluidos seminales. El licor áspero y amargo del suicidio.

### IV

Qué sería de este mundo sin la rosa... Le preguntas a la rosa.  
Y la rosa te responde: Qué sería de la rosa sin la rosa...  
Qué hubiera sido del Adelantado Don Cristóbal, si una sola de las rosas de los cuatro vientos se hubiera ausentado en el instante en que Rodrigo de Triana, desde lo más alto de las tres carabelas y chillando como ave de palo, le anuncia al Nuevo Mundo la llegada del mismísimo Dios de Doña Isabel y Don Fernando.  
Qué sería de este mundo sin la rosa.  
Qué de Julieta o más bien qué de Romeo.  
Qué del Cisne de Avon y del ruiseñor. Y de la rosa.  
Qué sería de la rosa sin la rosa.

### V

Y qué de Nerón y sus 150 mil secretas noches de placer.  
Qué del Palacio Dorado y la Palatina, sino el deseo flotando bocarriba en las copas de vino como una rosa.  
Y ni pensar qué hubiera sido de la bella Cleopatra, pues al pecho enamorado de Marco Antonio se llega por un camino de rosas.  
Y qué de Hera, Afrodita y Atenea, frente a la sabia Eris, trocando rosas por manzanas.  
Dejando caer a los ojos de la divina vanidad la rosa de la discordia.



And the questioned rose answers.  
In the Candelaria.  
In a damp corner of Paris.  
On the rue Monsieur le Prince Number 3.

### III

And at Number 3 come together another 2 roses: the solicitous Rosa Cagí and the no less solicitous Rosa la China, promising out of pure instinct –like great wise men– that there were roses even before Christ. That all the roses in this world came from Asia. And this roseless world wouldn't be this world without the sadness of Sandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi Botticelli, without even one petal to keep the birth of Venus company. Or the sadness of Yukio Mishima, facing Guido Reni's "Saint Sebastian," with the rose of masturbation between fists, offering up seminal fluids. The suicide's rough, absinthian liquor.

### IV

What would this world be without the rose... You ask the rose.  
And the rose answers: What would the rose be without the rose...  
What would the Adelantado Don Christopher have been, if only one of the roses of the four winds had disappeared at the moment when Rodrigo de Triana, screeching like a wooden bird from the top of the three caravels, proclaimed to the New World the arrival of the very same God as Doña Isabella's and Don Ferdinand's.  
What would this world be without the rose.  
What of Juliet or what of Romeo rather.  
What of the Bard of Avon and the nightingale. And the rose.  
What would the rose be without the rose.

### V

And what of Nero and his 150 thousand secret nights of pleasure.  
What of the Golden Palace and the Palatine Chapel, but desire floating face-up in glasses of wine like a rose.  
And impossible to think what would have been of the beautiful Cleopatra, for a path of roses leads to Marc Antony's smitten heart.  
And what of Hera, Aphrodite and Athena, facing the wise Eris, trading roses for apples.  
Letting the rose of discord fall toward the eyes of divine vanity.

Qué sería del Olimpo sin la rosa.

## VI

Y si en el reino de Oz no existiera el rosal de Pitiminí.

Qué sería de Shirley Temple.

Y sin la musicalia de la rosa azafranada qué sería de Madrid sin una melodía para alegrar a los Reyes.

Tú sola, Shirley Temple, no podrías alegrar a uno solo de los reyes de este mundo. Tan vastos son en sus celebraciones que hasta para morir se visten bonitos a los caballos.

Tendríamos que buscar cien mil enanos como tú.

Y sembrar el cosmos (la distancia que media entre el infinito y tú, Shirley Temple) de estrellas pequeñitas.

Tan pequeñas como el rosal de Pitiminí.

Por cierto, ahora que ya no estás, dime, Shirley Temple, cómo se las arregla para pasar sin ti el rosal de Pitiminí.

## VII

Y la rosa de Bengala. Y la rosa de Pasión, que es una rosa que mata. Y la rosa de Jericó, que es una rosa que miente, crecida en los arenales, simulando muerte para ver el entierro que le hacen, solo para ver el entierro que le hacen, porque una vez que las lloronas palestinas comienzan con sus lamentos la rosita de Jericó abre un pétalo, y otro, y otro pétalo, y se vuelve una envidia de frescura. Lava su inocente picardía en las aguas bautismales del Jordán para ser, otra vez, la rosa de Jericó crecida entre las ruinas.

## VIII

Qué sería de los muertos sin la rosa. Le preguntas a la rosa.

Y la rosa te responde *Eternidad*.

Y la Eternidad detiene el último minuto de las Eras Imaginarias frente al Viajero que mira a la mítica centifolia silbando “La vida en rosa,” mascullando “La vida en rosa” (¿O era *La Barcarola de Los Cuentos de Hoffmann?*)

mientras se sacude los escombros mortales del pecho contra la ventolera arrasadora de la muerte.

What would Olympus be without the rose.

## VI

And what if the miniature rosebush didn't exist in the land of Oz.

What of Shirley Temple.

And without the musicalia of the saffron-scented rose, what of Madrid, no melody to please the King and Queen.

You alone, Shirley Temple, couldn't please even one of the kings of this world. So immense are they in their celebrations that when they die they even dress up horses.

We'd have to find one hundred thousand dwarfs like you.

And sow the cosmos (the distance measured between the infinite and you, Shirley Temple) with tiny little stars.

As tiny as the miniature rosebush.

By the way, now that you're not here, tell me Shirley Temple, how does the miniature rosebush figure out how to get by without you.

## VII

And the Bengal rose. And the rose of Passion, which is a murderous rose. And the rose of Jericho, which is a lying rose, grown in sandy spots, faking death to see what kind of a funeral it can get, just to see what kind of funeral it can get, because once the Palestinian mourners begin with their laments the tiny rose of Jericho unfurls a petal, and another, and then another petal, and it turns into the envy of freshness. Washes its innocent mischief in the baptismal waters of the Jordan to be, once more, the rose of Jericho grown in ruins.

## VIII

What would the dead be without the rose. You ask the rose.

And the rose answers *Eternity*.

And Eternity imprisons the last minute of the Imaginary Eras before the Traveler looking at the mythical centifolia

whistling "La vie en rose," mumbling "La vie en rose" (or was it the Barcarolle from *The Tales of Hoffman*?)

while he shakes off the mortal rubble from his chest against the raging gusts of death.

## Flores de hierro en el pecho de un hombre

Esta noche ha entrado un murciélago a la casa.

Su vuelo es leve, pero torpe.

Advierto: puede ser una maniobra espía.

Pero no oculto entre mis cosas nada que atente contra la seguridad de un pueblo.

Solo trato de escribir unas pocas líneas.

Dos o tres palabras. Versos para hacer música a los oídos de las personas que se invitan a la casa.

Palabras que si algún poder tienen no será el de libertarme.

Poder de libertad.

Así surgen de las sombras estos ojos como la evocación de un fantasma.

Nombres que olvidaré.

Aunque me niegue. Pronto comenzarán a borrarse de mi memoria con el vino ácido de los días.

Con urgencia.

Al frotar fuerte la cabeza contra las paredes.

Al escribir versos a las cambiantes estaciones.

Lejos del trópico. Cosas que han contado los amigos para quedar fuera.

Detrás del enrejado de las almas donde crecen rosas de papel.

Flores de hierro en el pecho de un hombre.

Detrás del enrejado. Trato de iniciar “una vuelta a mi cárcel”.

Casa donde los murciélagos se posan y liban sangre en las flores de hierro.

Una vuelta a su cárcel. Los deseos prohibidos de Margarita. El hijo hermoso reventando con su vigor penas sobre la almohada.

Juegos de muerte. Niños como animales disputándose el fruto de la soledad.

Afuera, lejos de los ojos de Ranel, bajo el peso de plomo de sus lunas vencidas, doran los Trípticos en alguna capilla de este mundo donde Dios no se acuerda de él. Ni de Juan, que ha querido ser en los amantes que se alejan. Detenido en los óleos. Con la muerte azul. Compartida. Escribiendo para escapar del cuerpo.

Armandito, levantándose de hielo en un país de sol. Aquí no se llora.

Se es de terracota a los rezos de la madre espartana.

Por sus venas se vuelve a la isla. Aquí se ama. Y se espera:

Aquí crecen las *flores de hierro: resonantes como el pecho de un hombre.*

## Iron Flowers on the Chest of a Man

Tonight a bat's fluttered into the house.  
Its flight is easy, but awkward.  
Warning: it might be a spy tactic.  
Still I hide nothing in my belongings to threaten national security.  
I'm just trying to write a few lines.  
Two or three words. Verses to make music in the ears of uninvited guests.  
Words that if they have any power it won't be to free me.

Power to free.

And so from the shadows come these eyes like evoking a ghost. Names  
I'll forget.  
Even if I refuse. Soon they'll come to be erased from my memory by the  
day's sour wine.  
Urgently.  
When I rub my head hard against the walls.  
When I write verses to the changing seasons.  
Far from the tropics. Things friends have told to stay out. Behind the bars  
of the soul where paper roses climb.

Iron flowers on the chest of a man.

Behind the bars. I attempt the start of "a return to my prison."  
House where bats perch and suck blood on iron flowers.  
A return to prison. Margarita's forbidden desires. The beautiful son  
vigorously bursting his sorrows on the pillow.  
Death games. Children disputing the fruit of solitude like animals.  
Outside, far from Ranel's eyes, beneath the lead weight of his expired  
moons, the Triptychs brown in some chapel of this world where God's  
forgotten him. And Juan too, who wanted to exist in distancing lovers.  
Prisoner in oil paintings. With blue death. Shared. Writing to escape the  
body.  
Armandito, rising like ice in a country of sun. Here nobody cries.  
We're made of terracotta in the Spartan mother's prayers.  
Through her veins a return to the island. Here everybody loves. And  
waits:  
Here grow *the iron flowers: resounding like the chest of a man.*

## Efecto café bulvar

*Y todo está dispuesto de este modo,  
para que no salgamos del mágico círculo.*  
Ossip Mandelstam

*Para Ghabriel, una isla propia*

Entro. Pido el último café. Elena Burke es un recuerdo.  
Todo es frío bajo los toldos.  
Por momentos la lluvia de tránsito nos obliga a adentrarnos.  
Descendemos a otros arcos protectores.  
Patio interior de piedra. Asfixiante.  
Aquí se vive arduamente. Se hace un espacio  
a cada provincia. Y otra se acerca mientras pides un café.  
A cambio de una moneda tendrás la joya blanca  
entre tus manos. Es amargo el trago para beberlo despacio.  
Ha de ser despacio para que el trago baje amargo.  
Y comienzas a conversar. Pues aquí se habla vivamente.  
Interrumpidos por la mano que pide con hedor e insistencia.  
(También mi mano es pobre y la guardo bajo la madera).

A veces soy interrogado como cualquier ciudadano  
que bebe su café. Su trago amargo. Y respondo.  
Me identifico con habilidad para no agotar el tiempo.  
Bajo la luz todo es minuto tras minuto  
un detenimiento innecesario. Una espiral que se verticaliza.  
Y asciende. Asciende el humo del café.  
Y justificas los desplomes. Demasiado recientes que somos.  
De ayer mismo. Amar es una isla.  
Y morir es adentrarse a la mar coagulada.  
Un aroma de azucenas. Un estar quieto bajo los toldos.  
“De transparencia en transparencia” obnubilados.  
Viejo Eliseo que bebes tu café. Tu trago amargo.

## Café Bulevar Effect

*And it's all arranged, we never  
break the magic circle  
Osip Mandelstam*

*For Ghabriel, an island unto himself*

I go in. Order the last coffee. Elena Burke is a memory.  
Everything's cold beneath the awnings.  
Occasionally the rain in transit forces us in.  
We descend toward other protective arches.  
Inner stone courtyard. Stifling.  
Living is hard work here. A space is made  
for every province. And another comes closer while you order a coffee.  
For small change you'll have the white jewel  
in your hands. The drink's bitter for swallowing it slow.  
It has to be slow so the drink goes down bitter.  
And you start to chat. Since talking is intense here.  
Interrupted by the begging hand rank and insistent.  
(My hand's poor too. I keep it beneath the wood).

Sometimes I'm interrogated like any other citizen  
having his coffee. His bitter pill. And I answer.  
I skillfully identify myself so as not to use up the time.  
Under the light everything's an unnecessary thoroughness  
minute after minute. A spiral going vertical.  
And up. The coffee steam floating up.  
And you justify the collapses. Too recent as we are.  
Only yesterday. To love is an island.  
And to die is to go deep into the clotted sea.  
A scent of lilies. A settle down beneath the awnings.  
"From one transparency to another transparency" clouded.  
Old Eliseo drinking your coffee. Your bitter pill.

Aquí vienen a morir los poetas.  
Y un ángel fatigado vuela bajo otro cielo. Y otro ángel  
comienza su discurso en el sopor de las fabulaciones.  
Otro revienta su cabeza contra el asfalto.  
Llora otro de rodillas. Y el “pez angelecido” se muere de tristeza.  
Alza su vuelo bajo el cielo empedrado  
de Madrid. Sin voz. Sin alas. “Hasta de espaldas se ve que está llorando”.  
Pero todavía hay tiempo.  
Bebamos el último café mientras María Teresa nos canta.  
Qué cante el Benny su página ruinosa.  
Qué Bola sea una flor negra sobre el piano.  
Qué Celeste rompa el adoquín con su paso.  
Que aquí cada poeta tiene su caballo blanco.  
Su leopardo. Su canario. Sus dos patrias.  
Que el cuerpo de una isla no se sostiene sin un buen verso.  
Pues sobrevivir bajo los toldos es una fiesta.  
Y cada fragmento de imán transmuta en oro.  
La Bella Cubana bebe en su Capilla de Cobre el trago de café.  
Su trago amargo. (Transformada la medialuna  
bajo sus mínimos pies el aroma de las mariposas  
se confunde perversamente con el vuelo del colibrí).  
Flota una tabla en la bahía. Es tiempo de pedir  
por nuestras vidas. Y pedimos confusamente.  
Casi sin darnos cuenta a cada paso.  
“Flor de isla, tú te ofreces aromática y gentil  
como una taza de café”. Tú despides a la mujer coronada  
con laureles –“ni libre es ni la prisión la encierra”–.  
Sus huesos se pudren donde la tierra es menos blanca.

Porque en verdad nunca fueron tan importantes los poetas  
como en este Café bajo los toldos. Decadentes. Y felices.  
Pero de improviso algo se transforma tras las rejas.  
Y te hace pensar que de nada sirvió la culpa  
de Juan Clemente Zenea. El destierro de Heredia.  
La muerte de Plácido. Las cartas de amor de Juana Borrero.  
Ni el pulmón asfixiado de Lezama.  
De nada sirvió que Julián del Casal se muriera de risa.  
De nada ha servido escribir un buen poema



The poets come here to die.  
And a weary angel flies beneath another sky. And another angel  
begins his speech in the sleepiness of fabrications.  
Another slams his head against the asphalt.  
Another cries on his knees. And the “angelized fish” dies of sadness.  
Takes his flight beneath the stony Madrid  
sky. Voiceless. Wingless. “Even from the back you can tell he’s crying”.  
But there’s still time.  
Let’s have the last coffee while María Teresa sings.  
Let Benny sing his ruinous page.  
Let Bola be a black flower atop the piano.  
Let Celeste crack the cobblestone with her step.  
For here each poet has their white horse.  
Their leopard. Their canary. Their two homelands.  
For the body of an island won’t hold without a good verse.  
Since surviving beneath the awnings is a celebration.  
And each magnet scrap turns to gold.  
In her Copper Chapel the Bella Cubana drinks her coffee.  
Her bitter pill. (The half-moon transformed  
beneath her tiny feet the scent of butterflies  
mixes perversely with the flight of the hummingbird).  
A board floats in the bay. It’s time to ask  
for our lives. And we confusedly ask.  
Almost not realizing with each step.  
“Island flower, you offer yourself up fragrant and gracious  
like a cup of coffee.” You bid farewell to the woman crowned  
in laurels –“not free not locked away”–.  
Her bones rot where the earth is not as white.

Because honestly the poets were never as important  
as in the Café beneath the awnings. Decadent. And happy.  
Yet something suddenly transforms behind the bars.  
And it makes you think that Juan Clemente Zenea’s  
guilt was meaningless. Heredia’s exile.  
Plácido’s death. Juana Borrero’s love letters.  
Not even Lezama’s stifled lung.  
Meaningless that Julián del Casal died laughing.  
Meaningless to have written a good poem

cuando Fina anuncia su “dulce nevada”. Y la nieve comienza a caer sobre los toldos.

Este Café no es el sitio de siempre.  
El sol sobre el mármol blanco se evapora.  
Y quiero marcharme. Escapar del frío. Esta no es mi sangre.  
Prometo no regresar. (Vuelve el agua inmarcable a la arena. El mar entre las tazas conforma un plano alucinante). Sobre la mesa roja ya estoy de vuelta.  
Ya entro a los círculos de hierro como un animal viciado.  
Nuevamente. Y pido el último café. Y otro. Y otro...

when Fina proclaims her “sweet snowfall”. And the snow  
begins to fall upon the awnings.

This Café isn't the same old place.  
The sun on the white marble vanishes.  
And I want to leave. Escape the cold. This isn't my blood.  
I promise not to return. (The unbiddable water returns  
to the sand. The sea among the cups shapes  
a beguiling plane). On the red table I've come back.  
Now I go into the iron circles like an animal hooked.  
Once more. I order the last coffee. And another. And another..



ISAILY  
PÉREZ  
GONZÁLEZ

Isaily Pérez González (Santa Clara, 1975) has published four books of poetry. Her work has appeared in influential anthologies of young Cuban poetry and has received numerous prizes, including Honorable Mention for the La Gaceta de Cuba Poetry Prize in 2014.

## Centro Comercial de la 54

Del familiar cardumen se desprenden los niños  
se sueltan a girar como derviches  
se lanzan a las cercas: mira mami no hay cola  
y los padres  
(más bien quise decir los hombres)  
las manos al bolsillo sacan algo:  
un menudo un tiquete que los lance hasta el cielo  
y cuando van cayendo a veces gritan  
de miedo saludando: adiós míranos mami  
cubiertos del helado bajarán de artefactos  
que imitan la experiencia que no tendremos nunca:  
un avión un caballo una casa de espejos.  
Las pesadas bocinas se comieron las lenguas de organillo  
y ahora lanzan su arenga: venga compre regrese  
luego cantan un rato.  
En mitad de las ferias  
ocasiones habrá que te encuentre una mano  
pues en la multitud difícil no rozar  
no equivocarse.  
Sin volverte a mirar tú querrás apretarla  
pues qué mano ha de ser  
sino la de tu madre que te estrecha en el tiempo  
pero es solo otro niño confundido.  
Entonces ves al perro  
entre la multitud que traga las rositas  
y hace fila por horas  
comprando unos segundos de ese *algo*  
de pronto has visto al perro sin correa  
mirando temeroso los espacios que abre y cierra el cardumen  
que pueden engullirlo como a sobras  
y tienes que aguantarte respirar como puedas  
pues nadie ha de saber  
que en mitad de la noche de girantes corceles  
de tacitas pintadas  
la tierra se ha salido de su eje.

## Mall on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

The children disentangled from the family shoal  
let loose to whirl like dervishes  
throw themselves to the fences: look mom no lines  
and the fathers  
(actually I mean the men)  
hands in pockets pull something out:  
a coin, a ticket to launch them to the heavens  
and when they fall they sometimes scream  
from fear, waving: bye-bye look at us mom  
covered in ice cream they'll get off the artifacts  
that simulate the experience we'll never have:  
a plane, a horse, a house of mirrors.  
The obnoxious loud speakers ate the hurdy-gurdy's tongues  
and now let out their harangue: come on out buy something  
come back soon  
then they sing a while.  
In the middle of the fair  
on occasion a hand might find you  
in the crowd it's hard not to touch  
not be mistaken.  
Without turning to see you'll want to grab hold  
whose hand could it be  
but your mother's reaching out over time  
it's just another kid confused.  
Then you see the dog  
in the crowd gulping down popcorn  
in line for hours  
buying a few seconds of that *something*  
suddenly you've seen the dog no leash  
fearfully watching the spaces opened closed by the shoal  
that might gobble him up like leftovers  
and you have to hold yourself back, breathe anyway you can  
no one needs to know  
that in the middle of night spinning steeds  
and tiny painted cups  
the earth's come unhinged.

## Prosperando en las ruinas

Amor inenarrable prosperando en las ruinas  
la casa que era antaño de los chinos  
ha visto pasar todo: *hermosura y espanto*  
el deseo es mercurio tú sabes muy bien eso  
el cielo de tu casa se ha izado noche a noche en lentejuelas.  
Que los trozos de vidrio lo reproduzcan todo  
como solo ellos saben  
los pedazos de todo lastiman como vidrio  
me miran con fijeza con sus ojos de pavos.  
Nadie me dijo nunca que pasaría esto  
el dolor me ha doblado con brutal elegancia  
el mundo es un pañuelo que ha plegado sus puntas  
conmigo allí en el centro  
si me tomo su vino quizás logre dormirme.  
Amor inenarrable  
encuentra una razón que te resguarde  
al regresar a casa —lo que entiendas por eso—  
que no lastime tanto salir hacia el balcón  
cuando ya es madrugada: tu momento en el mundo.  
Vuelve al loto y al muérdago  
en algún sitio hay uno donde bajo sus ramas  
todo el amor jurado se besa para siempre.  
He dicho las palabras que estaban prohibidas  
quien pesa el corazón lo ha hallado insuficiente  
y ya ascienden las aguas  
retoños de mandrágora en los muros del relojero  
alzan una pared que obliga a caminar más rápido.  
Ya mi casa me parece inalcanzable:  
cinco seis  
siete cuabras en el tiempo.



## Flourishing in Ruins

Indescribable love flourishing in ruins  
the house that in years gone by belonged to the Chinese  
has seen it all: *beauty and fear*  
desire is mercury you know that very well  
the sky in your house has risen up night after night in sequins.  
Let the shards of glass recreate everything  
like only they know how  
the pieces of everything wound like glass  
stare at me with their turkey eyes.  
No one ever told me this would happen  
the pain doubles me over with brutal elegance  
the world is a handkerchief with its corners folded  
with me there in the middle  
if I drink some of its wine perhaps I can sleep.  
Indescribable love  
find a reason to shield you  
when you get home –whatever that is for you–  
so it doesn't hurt so much to go out on the balcony  
when it's daybreak: your moment in the world.  
Return to the lotus and the mistletoe  
somewhere there's one where all sworn  
love kisses beneath its branches for always.  
I've said the forbidden words  
whoever weighs the heart finds it's not enough  
and now the waters rise  
mandrake shoots in the watchmaker's walls  
raise a barrier forcing us to walk faster.  
Now my house seems unreachable:  
five six  
seven blocks in time.

## La vida en otra parte

Mientras ando y llovizna  
pienso la vida que no viviré en este sitio  
ni en otro,  
la vida que guardada he perdido  
atesorada en balde como ciertas monedas en desuso.  
Siempre  
en algunas calles de La Habana y Santa Clara  
pienso lo mismo:  
un cuento de Borges  
que trata de un jardín y sus bifurcaciones  
y creo para mí  
mientras ando la calle donde evito comer  
decir mi nombre  
para que nada quede ni se vaya conmigo.  
Detrás de cualquier puerta  
otra yo está haciendo cosas  
que no puedo aceptar tranquilamente.

## Life Elsewhere

As I walk under drizzle  
I think about the life I won't live in this place  
or in any other,  
the life hung onto I've lost  
kept around in vain like a few coins no longer in use.  
Along certain streets in Havana and Santa Clara  
I always  
come back to the same:  
a Borges story  
about a garden and its forking  
that I think are mine  
as I walk the street where I won't eat  
or say my name  
so nothing will stay or go with me.  
Behind a stray door  
another I is doing things  
I just can't put up with.

## Bajo el poderío del miriñaque

La banda sonora ahoga toda respiración.  
Te has dormido en mitad de la trama  
cuando atentos los ojos persiguen en la pantalla  
al flotante miriñaque.  
Alguien enciende un cigarro y lo pasa al de su lado  
luego otro.  
El humo ayudaría al animal a esconder su predominio  
tras las finas columnillas grisáceas.  
Minúscula es tu mano medida contra mi mano  
dormida aún retienes tu poder como una reina muerta.  
El imperio del miriñaque  
trasciende el cuadrado de vidrio  
debajo de la franela acaricio mis músculos  
todo posible sonido  
es disonancia al compás de tu respiración  
que acaso nadie escucha excepto yo.  
Si no me vigilo estiraré una mano a esa silente densidad  
al expuesto nacimiento de tu espalda  
que admiro de soslayo.  
Deberás abrir los ojos  
para que junto al filoso acantilado  
el animal se duerma y yo exhale libremente.  
Me vuelvo a la trama  
pero el deseo antepone figuras más extrañas  
que el humo.  
El deseo es un collar incandescente  
que oprime mi garganta.  
Toda la noche podría mirarte  
y al amanecer indescriptible seguirías.  
Así mismo te vi entrando  
en la antigua fonda de los chinos  
los faroles de pergamino se encendieron de súbito  
con una luz distinta  
y oí gritos que ordenaban sopas y otros platos  
pero ya la violenta actualidad

## Under the Power of the Crinoline

The soundtrack drowns out all the breathing.  
You've fallen asleep in the middle of the plot  
when attentive eyes follow the floating crinoline  
on the screen.  
Someone lights a cigarette and passes it to the one next to him  
then another.  
The smoke could help the animal to hide its predominance  
behind the fine grayish columns.  
Your hand is tiny up against my hand  
even sleeping you hold your power like a dead queen.  
The crinoline's empire  
transcends the glass square  
beneath the flannel I rub my muscles  
every possible sound  
is dissonance to the rhythm of your breathing  
perhaps no one hears but me.  
If I don't watch myself I'll stretch out a hand toward that silent density  
the bare beginning of your back  
I admire sideways.  
You ought to open your eyes  
so the animal might sleep and I can exhale freely  
alongside the sharp cliff.  
I return to the plot  
but desire prefers stranger shapes  
than smoke.  
Desire is a luminous necklace  
crushing my throat.  
I could watch you all night  
and in the morning you'd still be beyond words.  
That's exactly how I saw you going into  
the old Chinese dive  
paper lanterns suddenly shining  
with a different light  
and I heard cries of orders for soups and other dishes  
still the violent present

explotaba como un fuego de artificio sobre nosotros.  
Vi tu salida y era imposible la idea de perderte  
en la ordinaria multitud de Chinatown.  
Toda la noche te estuve mirando  
sin la esperanza de esta noche.  
Al otro día las cosas hermosas me asumieron  
florecía lo adventicio como si fuese la ciudad su estación  
y el barrio de los chinos  
giraba sus esquinas para encontrarnos.  
Asomarse a la baranda  
era verte pasar con los crípticos papeles bajo el brazo  
yo buscaba la tramoya tras estos accidentes  
y bajo la certeza de predestinación.  
Las arañas de tu sala se encendieron  
bajaste los peldaños de dos en dos hasta la calle  
y ya era la segunda noche.  
La trama se volvía imprevisible  
mi sustancia estaba en vilo como ahora.  
Sé que sabes el final  
mientras cruzan por tu sueño flashazos de la ficción  
aun en su mudez  
temible es el poder de un miriñaque  
que escapa de la pantalla  
y cuelga sobre nosotros como una emplomada lámpara.  
Despiertas cuando apagan sus cúpulas los cigarros  
y sales a la noche de Chinatown.  
Del torso del animal asciende la marea de los créditos.

went off like fireworks above us.  
I saw you leave and the idea was impossible  
losing you in the ordinary crowd of Chinatown.  
All night I watched you  
without tonight's hope.  
The next day beautiful things took me over  
the adventitious flowered as if the city were its season  
and Chinatown  
spun its corners to find us.  
To lean over the railing  
was to see you pass by with cryptic papers underarm  
I looked for stage lifts behind these accidents  
and beneath the sureness of fate.  
The spiders in your living room caught fire  
you went down the stairs two by two to the street  
and it was the second night.  
The plot turned unpredictable  
my substance on tenterhooks like now.  
I know you know the ending  
while in your sleep crisscross bright fiction flashes,  
still in its dumbness  
the power of the crinoline is frightening  
escaping the screen  
hanging before us like a leaden lamp.  
You wake up when cigarettes put out their domes  
and leave for the Chinatown night.  
From the animal's torso soars the tide of credits.





# JAVIER MARIMÓN MIYARES

Javier Marimón Miyares (Matanzas, 1975) is a poet and playwright. He has published four books of poetry. A collection of short prose pieces and a play appeared in 2017. His work has been translated into English, German, and Italian. He currently lives in Puerto Rico.

## Escritura de letra alfa (fragmentos)

4

Separante doctor de siamesas  
Solo gracias recibe de una  
Eso y nunca compartieron garganta  
Y ambas querían andar separadas  
¿Tendrá la boca de jugo llena?  
Cuchillas entre ideas y motivos disecan.

11

Candidatos de supermercado sonrían nerviosos  
A público posible. Con qué soltura, sin embargo  
Conversan cajeros contratados de antes  
Con clientes espontáneos, suspiran candidatos  
Destruyen momento que dura poco y ya no brilla.

15

Algo da vueltas al 8, de 7 o atrás  
Borroso como día que aprendiste  
Los números; seguro llegas  
Maestra manca te tocó  
Es lo que da vueltas.

## Letter Alpha Writing (excerpts)

4

Separating doctor of Siamese  
Only thanks received from one  
That and a throat never shared  
And each wanted to be separated  
Might the mouth with juice be full?  
Knives among ideas and motives dissect.

11

Supermarket candidates nervously smile  
To possible public. Still, how skillful  
Cashiers hired from before converse with  
Spontaneous customers, candidates breathe  
Destroy moment not lasting long no longer shining.

15

Something goes round and round 8, from 7 or behind  
Blurry like day you learned  
The numbers; confident you arrive  
One-handed teacher you ended up with  
It's what goes round.

22

Frituras engañan: sin mucho adentro  
De lo que tampoco te encantaba  
¿Y si lo fuera?, placer sentido montones de veces  
¿Por qué no dejarla caer simplemente?

32

Hacer, piel de vaca, monedero  
¿Se activa ser de vaca al abrir zíper  
A través de recuerdo del ano respirante  
Cuando mordía yerba?  
¿Retojará en ella sacando pedazos  
De mierda de su monedero?

34

Baja pie de sofá, tienes cuidado  
Con perrito invisible que ahí descansa  
Mas al bajar pie ausente, destrozado  
Por fiero perro de vecino  
Ya no rozas perrito tendido.

38

¿A quién darle las gracias debería:  
A uréter, que el orine demora  
Tiempo que en calentarse tarda el agua  
O a ente eléctrico del calentador  
Rayo capturado, antes del baño?

22

Fritters are misleading: not much inside  
Of what you didn't love anyway  
And if it were? Pleasure felt tons of times  
Why not let it simply fall?

32

To make, cowhide, coin purse  
Is being made from cow activated when opening zipper  
From memory of breathing anus  
When it bit grass?  
To frolic in the cow pulling out pieces  
Of shit from its coin purse?

34

Lowers foot from sofa, you're careful  
With little invisible dog resting there  
But when lowering absent foot, destroyed  
By fierce neighbor dog  
You no longer graze dog stretched out.

38

To whom give thanks should I?  
To ureter, the urine taking  
Time it takes the water to warm up  
Or to electric entity of heater  
Lightning rod captured, before the bath?

Ilusiones de analfabetismo:  
 Alfabetizadores demoraban en río  
 Risas lejos de casa  
 Pensando en el papel pasé la tarde  
 Miré la noche sin una referencia  
 Vibraba toda circunstancia.

¿Es la nata fatiga de leche?  
 ¿A qué vieja le gusta y agradece  
 Lo que no podemos divisar:  
 Empuja hacia afuera la curva  
 Que causa a la vieja el gustarle  
 Como, de nata, movimiento?

El de casco saluda el vacío gritando  
 Sin respuesta: no hay obra de construcción  
 Falta parte de la vía delante  
 De otra obra terminada consecuencia:  
 Lejana figura contesta.

Qué específico lugar donde arreglan mofles  
 Qué sabroso comen almuerzo, manos negras de mofle  
 Se miran, casi no creen: son tan específicos  
 Sus mecánicos cuerpos, ríen, irradian  
 Fantásticos oros de mofle.

40

Illiteracy illusions:  
Literacy tutors lingered in river  
Laughing far from home  
Thinking about the paper I spent the evening  
I watched the night without a reference  
All circumstance quivering.

41

Is cream the weariness of milk?  
What old woman likes and is thankful for  
What we can't make out:  
Pushes outward the curve  
That causes the old woman's liking it  
As, of cream, movement?

42

The one in the helmet greets the void shouting  
Unanswered: there is no construction work  
There's a part of the road missing up ahead  
From another work finished consequence:  
Distant figure answers.

43

What a specific place where they fix mufflers  
How tastily they eat lunch, hands black from muffler  
They look at each other, almost don't believe: they're so specific  
Their mechanical bodies, laugh, give off  
Fantastic muffler golds.

47

Por fuera, una hoja dejada volar  
Cae en ojo trabajando materias  
Lucha idea en ramos tajados  
Abre luz en el ojo, por dentro.

48

Cae helado en pulóver de helado dibujado  
Se derrite en tela que lo representa  
“Mamá”, llama el helado su esencia  
Lengua en cuchara de lengua dibujada  
Define fuerte núcleo de la tarde.



47

Outside, a leaf left to fly  
Falls in eye working matters  
Struggle idea in cut bouquets  
Opens light in the eye, inside.

48

Ice cream falls on t-shirt with drawing of ice cream  
Melts on fabric that represents it  
“Mamá,” calls the ice cream its essence  
Tongue on spoon with drawing of tongue  
Defines evening’s powerful core.



# LEYMAN PÉREZ GARCÍA

Leyman Pérez García (Matanzas, 1976) is a poet and editor. He holds a degree in Library Sciences, Socio-Cultural Studies and Cuban Culture. He is managing editor of *Matanzas*, a journal of literature and the arts. He has published eleven books of poetry and his work has received numerous prizes. He lives in Matanzas.

# En el secadero de almas

Gotea gotea gotea  
gotea  
gotea  
gotea  
el suero citostático  
el rompe venas que va  
que  
    brán  
        do  
            te  
lentamente  
l e n t a m e n t e  
mientras a tu lado  
alguien comenta  
del deterioro  
del tiempo  
de la crisis perpetua  
en que se encuentra  
la nación  
y detrás  
del nervioso cristal  
llueve  
pero el agua  
no limpia  
ni cura  
la expresión  
de vida  
o muerte  
en los rostros  
y unos jóvenes  
parecen felices  
bajo la llovizna  
sin pensar  
cuánto dolor hay

a solo unos metros  
de ellos  
a solo unos metros

# In the Drying Shed of Souls

Drips drips drips  
drips  
drips  
drips  
the cytostatic IV  
the veinburster  
cr  
    ush  
        ing  
          you  
slowly  
s l o w l y  
while next to you  
someone talks  
about decline  
about time  
about the endless crisis  
the nation  
finds itself in  
and behind  
the nervous pane  
it's raining  
still the water  
doesn't cleanse  
or cure  
the expression  
of life  
or death  
in faces  
and some kids  
seem happy  
beneath the drizzle  
not thinking  
how much pain there is  
  
just a few meters away  
from them  
just a few meters away

ya nadie llora  
se han secado  
los ojos  
en el secadero  
de almas  
gotea  
gotea  
gotea  
el suero citostático  
hacia las extremidades  
que abandonan  
la horizontalidad  
que corroe  
a la carne  
y al espíritu  
gotea  
hacia el espíritu  
y el tronco  
de la sombra  
retoña  
como un jagüey  
madura sus raíces  
en la roja intemperie  
gotea  
hacia el cuello  
donde tu dolor  
y el mío  
están dibujados  
gotea  
gotea  
gotea  
y después no tienes  
más angustia  
no tienes más  
sustancias  
que recordar.

everyone's stopped crying  
eyes  
have dried  
in the drying shed  
of souls  
drips  
drips  
drips  
the cytostatic IV  
toward the limbs  
that desert  
horizontality  
eating away  
at flesh  
and spirit  
drips  
toward the spirit  
and shadow's  
trunk  
sprouts once more  
like a jagüey tree  
ripens its roots  
out in the red open  
drips  
toward the neck  
where your pain  
and mine  
are drawn  
drips  
drips  
drips  
and later you have  
no more anguish  
you have no more  
substances  
to recall.

## Los escogedores

leen en el arroz  
lo mismo que la sangre lee en el cuerpo que nada puede escoger.  
Cuentan los restos duros (coágulos, cielo desgarrado, astillas)  
que entran a la boca con la misma intensidad  
con que una raíz rompe el suelo huyendo de la naturaleza  
que se deja pinchar con la sucia aguja de la nación.  
Un cuerpo sin cabeza y sin extremidades. Un tronco enfermo.  
Tierra abriendo la tierra donde crece Oscar Matzerath.  
El humano con menos cenizas en Auschwitz y en el Morro-Cabaña.  
Los escogedores de arroz a veces no leen nada. Entran y salen  
como autistas que se buscan a sí mismos y se encuentran  
en el hacha de talar la libertad, en la tierra abriendo la tierra  
que hay en mí. Cerrándose, cerrándome.  
Lo mismo que la sangre lee.



## The Sorters

read in the rice  
the same as what blood reads in the body that can't sort a thing.  
They count the hard remains (clots, torn sky, splinters)  
that pierce the mouth with the same intensity  
as a root breaking through the soil fleeing the nature  
that lets itself be pricked by the nation's dirty needle.  
A body headless, limbless. A trunk diseased.  
Earth opening the earth where Oskar Matzerath grows.  
The human with the fewest ashes in Auschwitz and in the Morro-Cabaña.  
The rice sorters sometimes don't read a thing. They come and go  
like autistics in search of themselves and are found  
in the axe to chop down freedom, in the earth opening the earth  
in me. Closing themselves up, closing me up.  
The same as what blood reads.

# Antillas

*Lo que aprendí es que existía un lugar llamado Antillas un lugar dentro de la geometría euclidiana donde el largo ancho y alto del cuerpo no tienen la misma serenidad Antillas crea una imagen de sí misma en cada uno de nosotros un objeto fractal contra otro “Ácida lluvia” dices mientras el propio signo lingüístico piensa en la función que debe ocupar Antillas del negro que conquista al blanco Antillas en el brocal donde todo comienza a ser un paisaje interminable como el de Gilles Deleuze que necesita del espacio para respirar el espacio o mejor el tiempo para respirar el tiempo que no está en Cuba ni en las menores y mayores contracorrientes que tragamos con dificultad Antillas imaginarias agujerándose sobre el olvidado Renacimiento sobre los viejos manuscritos de la imprenta aún con olor a continente Lo que aprendí es que existía un lugar llamado Antillas donde la tierra era pobre y exótica como la que algún día caerá sobre mí sin tocarme*

## West Indies

*What I learned was that there was a place called the West Indies a place within Euclidian geometry where the length width and height of the body don't have the same serenity West Indies forms an image of itself in each of us a fractal object against another "Rain acid" you say while the linguistic sign itself thinks about the function it ought to take up West Indies of the black man who conquers the white man West Indies in the parapet where it all begins to be an unending landscape like Gilles Deleuze's needing space to breathe space or rather time to breathe time that is not in Cuba or in the lesser or greater countercurrents we struggle to swallow Imaginary West Indies spurring itself on over the forgotten Renaissance over the old manuscripts in the printing house still smelling of continent What I learned was that there was a place called the West Indies where the soil was poor and exotic just like the one that will fall over me someday without touching*

# La muerte de los objetos

Los objetos contienen la posibilidad  
de todos los estados de cosas.

*Ludwig Wittgenstein*

En el boulevard de Obispo  
pobres almas  
hombres-hilos  
que no entran  
por el hueco de la aguja  
costuras descosidas  
remiendos  
mentes descosidas  
almas muertas  
que se cosen la boca  
para que no salga  
oscuridad —diría Dostoievski  
mientras se arrastra por el subsuelo  
mordiéndose la lengua  
caminando en círculos  
mordiéndose las ausencias

en la primera está el tirano padre  
hacha en la frente  
hormiga en la boca  
antes de llover y  
después que la sequía llegó  
a la casa  
que no tiene por qué  
parecerse al sol  
materia que falta  
como en un trapecio mudo  
para el hombre sin piernas  
que luchó en las guerras de otros

# The Death of Objects

Objects contain the possibilities  
of all states of affairs.

*Ludwig Wittgenstein*

On Obispo Boulevard  
poor souls  
men-threads  
who don't go  
through the eye of the needle  
unstitched seams  
patches  
unstitched minds  
dead souls  
who've sewn their mouths  
so darkness  
doesn't come out –Dostoyevsky would say  
while he drags himself along the subsoil  
biting his tongue  
walking in circles  
biting his absences

in the first is the father tyrant  
ax on his forehead  
ant in his mouth  
before raining and  
after the drought got  
to the house  
that has no reason  
to look like the sun  
missing matter  
like in a mute trapeze  
for the legless man  
who fought in someone else's wars

y ahora es un fragmento de metralla  
olvidado  
enterrado en sí mismo  
almas muertas que piden  
permiso para respirar  
luz  
falta luz en todo  
en la última ausencia  
era un invidente  
y ponía los dedos  
sobre el dolor  
bajo la tierra  
que da frutos podridos  
robados con miedo  
tragados con miedo  
en el boulevard de Obispo  
almas muertas  
gusanos de seda  
lana de ovejas  
plantas de algodón  
¿qué he dicho  
que no tenga ausencias?  
objetos sin vida —diría Dostoievski

and is now a fragment of forgotten  
shrapnel  
buried in himself  
dead souls ask  
for permission to breath  
light  
no light anywhere  
in the last absence  
was a blind man  
and he placed his fingers  
on the pain  
beneath the earth  
bearing rotten fruit  
stolen with fear  
swallowed with fear  
on Obispo Boulevard  
dead souls  
silk worms  
sheep's wool  
cotton plants  
what have I said  
                    that doesn't have absences?  
lifeless objects –Dostoyevsky would say





MARCELO  
MORALES  
CINTERO

Marcelo Morales Cintero (Havana, 1977) is a poet and prose writer. He received a degree in History from the University of Havana and graduated from the Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Italia with a degree in Italian Language and Culture. He has published three books of poetry—all prize-winning—and a novella. A collection of his work, *The World as Presence*, recently appeared in English. He lives in Havana.

## Materia (fragmentos)

Cuando veo el polvo en mi cuarto flotando, pienso en la sentencia,  
hundo mi cara en él.

✧

Nosotros, los humanos, hemos construido lo real,  
lo hemos idealizado. En el bar, en la barra, mi percepción del tiempo,  
mi vida, la búsqueda del amor sin cese.

De eso se trata, me digo, de un fracaso tras otro,  
de estar de nuevo en el vacío que produce.

En la calle, en el carro, el viento y las luces en la cara,  
luces que pasan, vida que pasa, movimiento.

✧

Al mundo uno lo siente. Estás adentro, me digo, en un fragmento las  
cosas se definen, entrar en el círculo tiene ese significado, el polvo flota,  
luz. En la taza de café no veo la taza sino el hueco.

✧

Yo vivo con dolor. Atravieso las calles con dolor. El pasado dura lo que  
de él puedes recordar. El pasado son minutos.

✧

El mundo y la gente te imprimen su energía.

Energía en el recuerdo y en los sentimientos. Energía en las sensaciones.

El mundo se siente, contaminación, eso es lo humano, charcos en la  
calle, barrio chino. Tus ojos recorren lo real, se van de un segundo a otro,  
tu cuerpo, de un segundo a otro, tu mente, eso es estar vivo, un lugar y  
luego otro.

✧

Me levanto y veo, en el espejo, algunas manchas. Naturaleza del retorno.

El amor en su punto último es el vacío, apréndete eso, me digo. Me  
levanto en el desierto, cambio las sábanas.

✧

Tengo miedo de la luz en el cristal, aire que entra en la ventana, polvo  
cubriendo los objetos, la sensación, la búsqueda de la sensación sin cese.

Una cuchara metálica en el borde de la mesa, una silla rota, hay una  
presencia aquí. Lo poético provee de una conciencia en medio de los  
días. Bajo las escaleras, subo las escaleras, mis ojos tienen la apertura.

No hay significado pero hay símbolo, tiempo corriendo en lo real,  
conciencia.

## Matter (excerpts)

When I see the dust in my room floating, I think of the maxim, sink my face into it.

✧

We humans have built what's real, we've idealized it. In the bar, at the bar, my perception of time, my life, the ceaseless search for love. That's what it's about, I tell myself, from one failure to the next, once more in the void it produces. On the street, in the car, wind and lights on my face, passing lights, passing life, movement.

✧

One feels the world. You're inside, I tell myself, in a fragment things are defined, to set foot in the circle has that meaning, dust floats, light. In the coffee cup I don't see the cup I see the hollow.

✧

I live in pain. Cross the streets in pain. The past lasts as long as what you can remember of it. The past is minutes.

✧

The world and the people stamp their energy on you. Energy in memory and feelings. Energy in sensations. The world feels, contamination, that is what's human, puddles in the street, Chinatown. Your eyes look over what's real, flutter from one second to the next, your body, from one second to the next, your mind, that's being alive, one place and then another.

✧

A void can act over another void. The universe is its production.

✧

I get up and see some spots in the mirror. Nature of the return. Love at its ending point is the void, keep that in mind, I tell myself. I get up in the desert; I change the sheets.

✧

I'm afraid of the light in the glass, air coming in through the window, dust covering objects, the sensation, the ceaseless search for sensation. A metallic spoon on the edge of the table, a broken chair, there's a presence here. What's poetic supplies a consciousness amid the days. I go downstairs, I go upstairs, my eyes have the opening. There's no meaning but there's a symbol, time running in what's real, consciousness.

✧

Yo no sé dónde se van los que se mueren, los que te amaron, yo no sé.  
La memoria de ti será eliminada. El susurro de su saya cuando cerraba  
la puerta.

✧

Subo los peldaños palpando la baranda, toco el metal del picaporte,  
hago la llave girar. No existe nada entre lo vivo y lo muerto. En el patio  
la luz cae medio roja, peldaños amarillos. La vida se comporta sin  
conciencia. Esto es el mundo, materia, materia, y nada más.

✧

Corren todos en la misma dirección, por más que se alejen, todos van  
allá de nuevo. Llueve. En el cristal, los discursos del agua se hacen  
complicados, una luz, todo gira en torno al cero, el centro del mundo en  
el que siempre has pensado.

✧

El río y no el mar, tiene destino. El mundo, un fragmento de mis  
ojos. Columnas sucias, tubos de escape, humo, el cielo, un cerebro  
corrompido. Materia gris.

✧

Lo poético tiende a lo sobrenatural, paso del tiempo. Dios como un  
tubo de luz fría. Caminas en la noche y piensas: el aire está cargado  
de bacterias, la vida está para ser superada. La araña teje un problema  
circular, *Al menos por un momento, el insecto será un guerrero seguro de  
su victoria*. Las cosas que están en el tiempo son cosas que están en el  
espacio.

✧

La materia solo existe en el presente, las personas. Me esperaba siempre  
en el café cuando caía la tarde. Yo salía de las clases, atravesaba las calles  
por verla. Nos separaba el espacio y no el miedo. El amor no está aquí  
para ser olvidado. A veces me acuerdo de ella, a veces me olvido.

✧

Cosas que entran y salen de la vida, otro lado del cual cruzar a este,  
una mariposa fea, quedó inmóvil. Eres testigo de las muertes ajenas. La  
clave de esta obra está en su concepción. Toda esta materia, que piensa y  
siente la materia.

✧

En la vida el dolor y el placer son instantáneos. Mi especie llegó al  
conocimiento atómico. La Habana -calor- agosto. Nuestro miedo más  
grande no es la muerte, la muerte es nuestra fantasía. Papeles sucios en  
las calles. Gente, mar que choca contra el muro, vivir para llegar a ese  
destino.

✧

I don't know where those who die go, those who loved you, I don't know. The memory of you will be erased. The soft sighing of her skirt when she'd close the door.

✧

I climb the steps, feeling the handrail, touch the metal of the door latch, make the key turn. Nothing exists between the living and the dead. On the patio light falls half red, yellow steps. Life behaves unconsciously. This is the world, matter, matter and nothing more.

✧

They all run in the same direction, the more they wander off, they all go there once more. It's raining. On the glass the water's discourses grow complicated, a light, everything spins around zero, the center of the world where you've always thought.

✧

The river, not the sea, has a destination. The world, a fragment of my eyes. Dirty columns, exhaust pipes, smoke, sky, a corroded brain. Gray matter.

✧

What's poetic tends toward the supernatural, time's passing. God like a florescent light bulb. You walk in the night and think: the air is heavy with bacteria, life is to be exceeded. The spider weaves a circular problem, *At least for a moment the insect will be a warrior assured of its victory.* Things in time are things in space.

✧

Matter only exists in the present, persons. She always waited for me in the café when evening fell. I'd get out of class, cross streets to see her. Space separated us, not fear. Love isn't here to be forgotten. Sometimes I remember her, sometimes I forget.

✧

Things coming and going in life, another side to cross toward this one, an ugly butterfly, lingered motionless. You are witness to other deaths. The key to this work is in its conception. All this matter that matter thinks and feels.

✧

In life, pain and pleasure are instantaneous. My species came to atomic knowledge. Havana –heat– August. Our greatest fear isn't death, death is our fantasy. Dirty papers on the streets. People, sea crashing against the wall, living to reach that destiny.

✧

Las masas desembocan en un río. No conozco la nada y la nada me preocupa. Temo lo que todos temen. Cuando un gran cuerpo se hunde. El remolino lo sigue como si fuese su objetivo.

✧

Hay cosas que crecen del dolor. El tiempo para ti es la vida. Cosas en el espacio, eso es el mundo.

✧

Al mundo no le es difícil destruirte, la bomba está dentro, un reloj que se programa. Conexiones invisibles. Estás expuesto, el humano está siempre expuesto. La novia más larga, la más fría, llega siempre, se anuncia, siempre.

✧

Densidad mental, cuando la tormenta en el cielo, algo negro con nubes, psicológico, nubes psicológicas, una materia mental, vapor. No tengo conciencia de mi vida, tengo conciencia de mi angustia. Sobre la sábana pasa la noche, el universo frío, las estrellas. Uno siempre se pregunta a dónde fue a parar lo que vivió. Uno siempre se pregunta. Pensar que lo bello se destruye, pensar que lo bello se destruye. Materia desechable. Hay una profunda relación entre lo que hemos hecho y lo que haremos. Para que se cumpla un destino, todo debe estar en un tiempo exacto en un lugar exacto. En el futuro mi pensamiento no tendrá cuerpo donde enterrarse. Cuando meo creo que son piedras preciosas lo que tengo. Hay una carne ahí, hay una carne.

✧

A veces las estatuas necesitan cubrirse de una pátina, colores que solo el tiempo enciende, respuestas que son cosas de futuro. Hay cosas que solo dios entiende, hay un lenguaje de dios, hay un lenguaje. La vida tiene, para cada uno, sus respuestas.

✧

También el miedo salva. Estaba buscando algo que nunca pude tocar. No volvemos más que en el espacio, en el tiempo uno nunca vuelve.

✧

El tiempo tiene su lenguaje, la nostalgia siempre es cosa del presente. Cuando miras al horizonte, estás más cerca de ti, estás más cerca.

✧

Un rayo que entraba por la ventana alumbró mi mano. En la palma, al centro, sentí el peso de la luz. Permanecer oscuro es muy fácil, me digo. Lo contrario es lo difícil.

✧

Cuando dejes de tenerle miedo a la oscuridad vas a estar iluminado.

✧

The masses flow into a river. I don't know nothingness and nothingness worries me. I'm scared of what everyone is scared of. When a great body sinks. The whirlpool follows it as if it were its goal.

✧

There are things that swell from pain. Time for you is life. Things in space, that is the world.

✧

It's not hard for the world to destroy you, the bomb's on the inside, a timer set. Invisible connections. You're exposed, humans are always exposed. The longest, the coldest bride always arrives, gives notice, always.

✧

Mental density, when the storm in the sky, something black with clouds, psychological, psychological clouds, a mental matter, steam. I'm not conscious of my life, I am conscious of my anguish. Night, cold universe, stars cross over the sheet. One always wonders where what was lived ended up. One always wonders. To think the beautiful is destroyed, to think the beautiful is destroyed. Disposable matter. There's a deep relationship between what we've done and what we'll do. So a destiny can be reached, everything ought to be at an exact time in an exact place. In the future my thought won't have a body to be buried in. When I piss I think it's precious stones I have. There's a flesh there, there's a flesh.

✧

Sometimes statues need to be covered with a patina, colors only ignited by time, answers that are things from the future. There are things only god understands, there's a language of god, there's a language. Life has, for each of us, its answers.

✧

Fear also saves. I was searching for something I could never touch. We don't go back again except in space, in time one never goes back.

✧

Time has its language, nostalgia is always something from the present. When you watch the horizon you're closer to you, you're closer.

✧

A ray coming in through the window lit up my hand. In my palm, in the middle, I felt the weight of light. To stay dark is very easy, I tell myself. The opposite is what's hard.

✧

When you stop being afraid of the dark you'll be enlightened.

✧

✧

Uno no es solo lo que es, uno también es lo que ama. En la calle observo el mundo. Cada una de las cosas tiene más sentido que cualquiera de mis pensamientos.

✧

Uno tiene la responsabilidad para con uno mismo y con el mundo, de embellecer.

El amor es cosa de gente fuerte, la gente débil, se defiende con cinismo.

Uno tiene la responsabilidad para con uno de iluminarse, para con el mundo.

Pongo flores en un vaso, colocar ahí la función, la categoría del objeto.

✧

Cuando veo el polvo en mi cuarto flotando, pienso en la sentencia, hundo mi cara en él.



✧

One isn't only what he is, one is also what he loves. On the street I observe the world. Each of the things makes more sense than any of my thoughts.

✧

One has the responsibility, to himself and the world, to beautify.

Love is for the strong, the weak defend themselves with cynicism.

One has the responsibility to himself to be enlightened, to the world.

I place the flowers in a vase, put the function there, the category of object.

✧

When I see the dust in my room floating, I think of the maxim, sink my face into it.

## De *El mundo como objeto*

Cuando la planta murió la sacaron del jarrón  
y el lugar quedó vacío.

Nosotros, como antes sus raíces,  
atrapados en la oscuridad  
sentimos la presión.

✧

Lanzo una piedra.  
Su recorrido es lo que hay entre yo y la realidad.  
Nada más.  
Este muro que deseo.  
Cerrar los ojos  
quedarme quieto.

✧

A veces temo a esos momentos en que sé  
podría voltearme y caminar sobre mis pasos.  
Yo bailarías desnudo en aquel cuarto  
y ella riendo ordenaría la cama.

La radio de la cabecera continúa en mí sonando,  
hubiese podido ser de otra manera,  
fabricarme otro destino.  
Lo que amamos no decide cuando acaba,  
no querré ya recordar.

A veces temo esos momentos,  
yo bailarías desnudo en aquel cuarto,  
y ella riendo  
ordenaría la cama.

✧

## From *The World as Object*

When the plant died they pulled it out of the pot  
and the space was left empty.

We, like its roots before,  
trapped in darkness,  
feel the pressure.

✧

I throw a stone.  
Its journey is what there is between me and reality.  
Nothing more.  
This wall I desire.  
To close my eyes  
sit still.

✧

Sometimes I'm scared of those moments when I know  
I could turn around and go back over my steps.  
I'd dance naked in that room  
and laughing she'd tidy the bed.

The radio on the headboard still plays in me,  
I could've been a different way,  
built another destiny.  
What we love doesn't decide when it ends,  
Soon I won't want to remember.

Sometimes I'm scared of those moments,  
I'd dance naked in that room  
and laughing  
                                  she'd tidy the bed.

✧

A veces hay esos momentos en que  
bajas de noche una escalera  
y no sabes si es un sueño,  
o caminas por una calle vacía  
cuando la luz de un bombillo cae sobre una planta marchita.  
O duermes  
y en la noche oyes,  
el sonido de un ventilador que gira solo,  
una tos seca que se sale de tu cuerpo,  
o piensas en la ventanilla trasera de un tren  
mientras el aire llega en bloque hasta tu rostro.  
Afuera la ciudad,  
las cosas que parecen siempre ajenas.

A veces hay esos momentos  
en que entiendes  
que la vida es un detalle.  
Una mancha en la pared.  
O ese hueco del lavamanos por donde se escurre el agua  
y que miras espantado.

✧

Tengo que desechar el lenguaje,  
la búsqueda de una “poética”.  
Penetro en sentido para encontrar la fuente.  
Las palomas vuelan, se posan en los aleros.  
Ellas también son parte del sistema.  
Para mí todo es posible.  
Todo,  
con excepción de la muerte.  
Estar solo es propio de la escritura.  
Se necesita mucho dolor para entenderlo.

Sometimes there are moments when  
you go down a staircase at night  
and you don't know if it's a dream  
or you walk down an empty street  
when the light from a bulb falls on a withering plant.  
Or you're asleep  
and in the night you hear  
the sound of a fan oscillating by itself,  
a dry cough emerging from your body,  
or you think about the back window of a train  
while the air rushes in toward your face.  
Outside the city  
things that always seem strange.

Sometimes there are those moments  
when you understand  
life is a detail.  
A stain on the wall.  
Or the hole in the sink where the water goes down  
that you gaze at terrified.

»«

I have to get rid of language,  
the search for a "poetics."  
I pierce sense to find the source.  
Doves fly, perch on eaves.  
They too are part of the system.  
For me everything's possible.  
Everything,  
except death.  
Being alone is unique to writing.  
You need so much sorrow to understand that.



# ÓSCAR CRUZ

Óscar Cruz (Santiago de Cuba, 1979) has published five books of poetry, the latest being *La Maestranza* (2014). He holds a degree in History from the Universidad de Oriente. He is the co-editor of the prestigious literary journal, *La noria*. He lives in Santiago de Cuba.

## Los años de aprendizaje

cuando mi madre  
me daba por la espalda  
un cintarazo, yo solía  
maldecirla en mis

adentros. “guárdate  
esas lágrimas, pendejo,  
para el día que te hagan  
falta. esto es para que

aprendas a portarte  
como un hombre”. tenía  
la violencia fácil. ganas  
de enseñarme, como

recta Makarenko.  
el lenguaje de los golpes  
era hermoso. mi madre  
a media voz, con un cinto

entre las manos, diciendo  
grandes cosas. mi madre  
(azotes que penetran  
con más precisión que

un taladro en la madera.)  
mi madre —planos fijos—,  
imágenes cortas y largas,  
cuerpo parado frente a mí

diciendo: “respétame,  
carajo”. veamos: escucho,  
pero nunca entiendo. me  
sobrevienen unas ganas



## The Years of Learning

when my mother  
would beat my back  
with her belt, i'd often  
curse her on the

inside. "hold back  
those tears, asshole,  
for when you'll need  
them. this is so

you'll learn to act  
like a man." she had  
an easy violence. eager  
to teach me, like

strict Makarenko.  
the language of the blows  
was beautiful. my mother  
in a whisper, with a belt

in her hand, saying  
great things, my mother  
(lashes penetrating  
more precisely than

a drill into wood.)  
my mother –static shots–,  
close up and long images,  
body standing in front of me

saying, "respect me  
damn it." let's see: i listen  
but never understand. what  
suddenly comes to me are great

enormes de matar que me  
ponen siempre en entredicho.  
mi madre, con el cinto  
entre las manos,

tuvo la razón. el montón  
de estiércol soy yo. la voz  
del excremento soy yo. el  
rostro del que orina soy yo.

soy el santo y el gachón.  
madre, quiero que me cantes  
la canción aquella del payaso.  
sin perder la paciencia  
ni el orgullo, cántame.  
si no te la sabes, búscate una.  
sé que no servías para el canto,  
sin embargo, el cinto,

lo recuerdas. otros  
para mí cantaron. guardo  
nítidos detalles. para el uso,  
restos del amor. tenías

el pelo cano, y el talle  
esbelto. casi yo te amaba.  
pero [...], ahora estoy  
tranquilo. como un buey

que duerme bajo la lluvia,  
duermo y sueño al lado de  
mi madre. su presencia, sin  
embargo, no es presencia

del mal. no conozco infancia  
más amena... que aquella que  
erigí bajo los golpes. digo  
esto alegremente: palabras

desires to kill always  
calling me into question.  
my mother, with the belt  
in her hand,

was right. the pile  
of manure i am. the voice  
of excrement i am. the  
face of a man urinating i am.

i am saintly and spoiled.  
mother, i want you to sing me  
that song about the clown.  
no losing patience  
or pride, sing to me.  
if you don't know it, find another.  
i know you weren't good at singing  
but the belt

you remember. others  
sang for me. i recall  
details so clearly. for my use,  
remains of love. you had

gray hair and a slender  
waist. i almost loved you.  
but [...], now i'm  
still. like an ox

asleep beneath the rain,  
i sleep and dream alongside  
my mother. her presence  
though, isn't the presence

of evil. i don't know a more pleasant  
childhood... than the one  
i built beneath the blows. I say  
this happily: words

que no ahogan,  
que no admiten otro reino  
de palabras. prosiguen sin  
dolor, de manera que el dolor

se torna deseable. este  
que soy, cobarde aceptación  
de lo que fui, como un buey que  
duerme bajo la lluvia,

contempla una pequeña flor  
crecida en el estanque. tú  
lo sabes, perdida flor, perdida  
madre. como a un niño

que no entiende otro  
lenguaje. a todo el que  
me da su amor, le suelo  
propinar su cintarazo.

that don't drown,  
that don't accept another realm  
of words. they persist  
painlessly and so pain

becomes desirable. the one  
i am, cowardly acceptance  
of what i was, like an ox  
asleep beneath the rain,

contemplates a small flower  
growing in the pond. you  
know, lost flower, lost  
mother. like a boy

who doesn't understand another  
language. everything  
that loves me i tend  
to beat with her belt.

## Lo que cuenta

lo que cuenta es estar parado ahí,  
en el borde de las gradas.  
los perros frente a ti ladrando.  
perros entrenados en el arte de matar.  
perros welters con más de treinta libras.  
(me gustaba estar ahí). la gente que viene  
a estos lugares resulta interesante.  
gente desahuciada con un rostro sin vida.  
gente que viene por amor: amor a los zapatos,  
amor a la ropa, amor al desastre;  
y el desastre con su fuerza comenzaba  
a interesarme.

los perros en su esencia eran bellos.  
más bellos que mis padres,  
más bellos que Dios. tenían rojas lenguas  
y una forma masculina de babear.  
sentí que mi vida estaba ligada a aquella baba,  
a aquella forma envilecida de mirarse.  
entonces saqué doscientos pesos  
y se los puse al perro-nadie, un perro que nunca  
había peleado y que lo haría contra uno  
que sumaba dieciséis.  
un perro invicto y secular como un gobierno.  
comenzaron a matarse,  
las bocas producían hechos de sangre.  
instantes de duro placer.  
perros que peleaban por lo posible  
y lo imposible del hombre.  
miraba las gradas y veía rostros brutales  
de gente enajenada, feliz.  
gente apostando a un cachorro sin vida.  
al cabo de varios minutos  
el perro al que había apostado ganó.  
subido encima del otro ladraba una y otra vez.

## What Counts

what counts is being there,  
on the edge of the stands.  
the dogs barking in front of you.  
dogs trained in the art of killing.  
welterweight dogs more than thirty pounds.  
(i liked being there). the folks who come  
to these places are interesting.  
folks terminally ill with lifeless faces.  
folks who come out of love: love of shoes  
love of clothes, love of disaster;  
and disaster with its force began  
to appeal to me.

the dogs were in their essence beautiful.  
more beautiful than my parents,  
more beautiful than God. they had red tongues  
and a masculine way of drooling.  
i felt like my life was bound to that drool,  
to that depraved way of looking.  
so i pulled out two hundred pesos  
and put them on the nobody dog, a dog that had never  
fought against another  
who'd been in sixteen.  
a dog unbeaten and secular like a government.  
they began to kill each other,  
their mouths making violent crime.  
instants of hard pleasure.  
dogs fighting for what's possible  
and impossible for man.  
i looked at the stands and saw brutal faces  
of deranged, happy folks.  
folks betting on a lifeless pup.  
after a few minutes  
the dog i'd bet on won.  
on top of the other it wouldn't stop barking.

lo cargaron como a un héroe y volvimos  
en turba hacia la casa. íbamos callados.  
escuchando cómo ríen, cómo hablan  
los que ganan.  
esa tarde supe lo que era un perdedor.  
vi al perro derrotado en una jaba  
sobre el borde del camino.  
qué importa que hubiera ganado dieciséis.  
la gloria en estos sitios dura poco.  
y eso es lo que cuenta.  
poco amor o poca vida no es tan malo.  
lo que cuenta es saber que has apostado.  
que has venido como ellos hasta aquí,  
que has venido en la turba a darle diente  
a la carne envejecida del amor.



it was carried off like a hero and the mob  
headed back home. we were silent.  
listening to how the winners  
laugh, how they speak.  
that evening i knew what a loser was.  
i saw the defeated dog in a plastic bag  
on the side of the road.  
it didn't matter that he'd been in sixteen.  
the glory in these places doesn't last long.  
and that's what counts.  
not much love or not much life isn't so bad.  
what counts is knowing you've bet.  
that you've come here like them,  
that you've come here with the mob to sink your teeth  
into the aged flesh of love.

# El Mal y la Montaña

## (Apuntes para una Teoría de la Invasión)

la Montaña  
y todo lo que ella  
representa.

la Montaña  
tal y como fue: sin vacas  
sin Reginos ni rebeldes.

la Montaña  
que yo sigo y que me sigue  
y que extiende tras de mí  
al caminar.

miro en dirección del Basurero  
y sé que por allí se extiende  
la Montaña.

es un privilegio haber nacido  
y vivir en un lugar tan cercano  
a la Montaña.

nada como un sitio  
que cada día asciende un escalón  
en el camino de su propia decadencia;  
una región cada vez más provinciana,  
gobernada por equipos sucesivos  
de incapaces.

hace varios años subí a la Montaña.  
vagando en sus praderas  
conocí a tres o cuatro montañeses  
que de tanto creer en la Montaña  
perdieron el juicio y la vergüenza.

no hacían otra cosa que cagarse.  
otros venían y enlataban y hacían

# Evil and Mountain

## (Notes on a Theory of Invasion)

Mountain  
and all it  
represents.

Mountain  
just as it was: no cows  
no Reginos or rebels.

Mountain  
i follow and that follows me  
and that i spread out behind me  
as i walk.

i look in the direction of Garbage Dump  
and i know that there spreads out  
Mountain.

it's a privilege to have been born  
and live in a place so close  
to Mountain.

nothing like a place  
that each day takes one more step  
on the path of its own decadence,  
a region more and more provincial,  
governed by successive teams  
of incompetents.

years ago I climbed Mountain.  
wandering through its prairies  
i met two or three highlanders  
who after so much believing in Mountain  
lost their wits and their shame.

they did nothing but shit themselves.  
others came and canned it and turned

plusvalía aquella mierda.  
hombres decididos a morir o prosperar.  
juntos escribimos un poema  
que describe el modus operandi  
de ciertos cagadores encargados  
del verdor en la Montaña.

el poema llegó hasta el despacho  
de Magníficos Decentes  
que pronto la tomaron con sus tropas.  
el hecho trascendió como “La Toma  
de la Montaña por los Decentes”,  
un hecho que hace las delicias  
de los críticos de hoy.  
no se sabe qué pasó  
con aquellos cagadores. lo cierto  
es que cambió la concepción,  
de pronto se veían en las calles  
gordas vacas y tres o cuatro neorrebelde  
con los cuales compartí  
aquel poema.

ahora sí da gusto ascender a la Montaña,  
contemplarla como es, aunque sepas  
que no es más  
que una extensa mentira verde,  
demolida y puesta a funcionar en el poema  
una y otra vez.

pero  
como el tiempo ha consagrado a la Montaña,  
como el pueblo no podría  
vivir sin la Montaña,  
sería peligroso suprimirla de una vez.  
dejemos de momento intacta a la Montaña,  
solo con pequeñas correcciones.

no sea que por culpa de un poema  
los Decentes nos ataquen  
otra vez.

that shit into surplus value.  
men determined to die or prosper.  
together we wrote a poem  
describing the modus operandi  
of certain shit-takers in charge  
of the greenness of Mountain.

the poem made it to the office  
of the Magnificently Decent  
who took Mountain over with their troops.  
the incident became known as “The Taking  
of Mountain by the Decent,”  
an incident that delights  
today’s critics.  
no one knows what happened  
to those shit-takers. yet the truth  
is that it changed the conception,  
suddenly on the streets you’d see  
fat cows and three or four neo-rebels  
with whom i shared  
that poem.

now it really is quite pleasant to go up Mountain,  
contemplate it as it is, even though you know  
it’s nothing more  
than a huge green lie,  
demolished and put to work in the poem  
over and over.

yet  
since time has enshrined Mountain,  
since the people couldn’t  
live without Mountain,  
it would be dangerous to abolish it once and for all.  
for the moment let’s leave Mountain intact,  
just with some small modifications.

god forbid a poem be the reason  
the Decent attack us  
one more time.



# LIUVAN HERRERA CARPIO

Liuvan Herrera Carpio (Fomento, 1981) is a poet, literary scholar and critic, and editor. He received a degree in Literature from the Central University in Las Villas and in Latin American Culture from the University for the Arts. He is currently a professor at the National University of Chimboraz. He has published four books of poetry and two books of essays. He lives in Riobamba, Ecuador.

## Codorniz

Un aguacero de codornices decapitadas lapida el hambre a los que cruzan el desierto. Una lluvia de pájaros sin cabeza es una lluvia sin cabeza. ¿Qué bosque quedó sin trino, qué bosque sin primavera?

Mientras el peregrino despluma las gotas, la arena se contenta como un perro al recibir los pétalos del ave que lentamente se deshojan.

El peregrino es el marinero del desierto. Tras la tormenta de codornices naufragó: no ha podido soportar tanta arena en pleno vuelo.



## Quail

A downpour of decapitated quail stone the hunger of those crossing the desert. A rain of headless birds is a headless rain. What forest was left with no song, what forest with no spring?

While the pilgrim defeathers the drops, the sand is as happy as a dog taking in the bird petals slowly plucked.

The pilgrim is the desert sailor. After the quail storm he shipwrecked: he hasn't been able to stand so much sand midflight.

# Tigre

*para Virgilio, antes de ser devorado*

La piel del tigre es una trampa. Cuando mi hijo abre los ojos, como un grito frente al animal, no se da cuenta que tras un doble enrejado la piel del tigre está sin pintar. Los tigres desayunan carne de poeta: el domador castiga a las legumbres ofreciéndolas como armadura para este exquisito brazo de Blake que ahora mismo vemos engullir.

La digestión del tigre es paciente como los ojos de mi hijo, como los huérfanos ojos de mi hijo.

# Tiger

*for Virgilio, before being devoured*

The tiger skin is a trap. When my son opens his eyes, like a shriek before the animal, he doesn't realize that behind the double trellis the tiger skin isn't painted. Tigers eat poet flesh for breakfast: the tamer punishes the legumes offering them up like a garnish for this exquisite Blake arm we now see being wolfed down.

The tiger's digestion is patient like my son's eyes, like my son's orphan eyes.

# Camello

*para Teresa, ahogada en el mar del camello*

Este bisoño ejemplar ha nacido en la hora de su madre traspasar la aguja. Situación lacerante pues el embarazo no está relacionado en los anaqueles para la prueba. Nacer durante el ojo de la aguja ha dado al animal un peculiar carisma: cuando algún jinete lo castiga tras morder el espejismo de la hierba, acto seguido en la garganta del jinete se atraviesa una aguja que no precisamente es un espejismo. El agua viaja montañosa en la espalda del camello, éste, nos lanza ahora una carcajada de sal: es feliz y lo sabe: es el único animal que lleva un mar adentro.

# Camel

*for Teresa, drowned in the camel sea*

This exemplary beginner was born when its mother went through the needle. A painful experience since pregnancy isn't mentioned on the trial shelves. To be born in the eye of the needle has given the animal a certain charisma: when a rider punishes him for biting the grass mirage, straightaway in the rider's throat pierces a needle that isn't exactly a mirage. Water travels mountain-like on the camel's back, this one lets out a salty guffaw: he's happy and he knows it: he's the only animal who carries a sea within.

## Mortaja de sábado

Al tender las sábanas  
como cuerpos recién ahogados,  
una camisa contigua  
encoge los hombros.  
La ungida, sin nombre digno que recordar;  
ofrece al sol el cadáver del tálamo  
donde su hijo, cada noche,  
se deja extraer por Dios  
una costilla irrecuperable.  
Dios exprime  
la muerte en la sábana,  
pero el cansancio de mi madre  
le impide atisbar el milagro.  
No la culpes, hombre de la cruz,  
cuando reta al sol con humedad formidable.  
Tú pendiste las horas como un ahorcado  
y Dios exprimió tu sangre  
desde su altura.  
Tiende la sábana como gesto de rendición.  
¿Ante quién flaquea mi madre cada semana?  
¿Qué enemigo le obliga a retirarse  
sin victorias que alimentar?  
Dispongo a cerrar los ojos:  
ya siento en mi vientre el cisma de Dios.  
El almidón, justo padre,  
maquilla silencioso una mortaja.

## Saturday Shroud

When hanging out the sheets  
like newly drowned bodies  
an adjacent shirt  
shrugs its shoulders.  
The anointed one, no name worth remembering,  
offers up to the sun a cadaver from the marriage bed  
where her son, each night,  
lets God extract  
an irretrievable rib.  
God wrings out  
death over the sheet,  
but my mother's tiredness  
won't let her make out the miracle.  
Don't blame her, man of the cross,  
when she challenges the sun with a formidable dampness.  
You strung the hours up like a hanged man  
and God wrung out your blood  
from on high.  
She hangs the sheet out as a gesture of surrendering.  
Who does my mother lose heart to each week?  
What enemy forces her to retreat  
no victories to nourish?  
I'm ready to close my eyes:  
now I feel the schism of God in my belly.  
The starch, just father,  
silently covers up a shroud.

## Hierros de carnaval

Fraguados en herrerías clandestinas  
viajan sobre *trailers* ominosos  
por la cicatriz nacional,  
artefactos para la diversión,  
que en carnavales de barrio  
se erigen en solo una hora.  
Piezas de antiguos centrales  
adobadas por años en el alcohol  
de almíbar,  
ahora toman sitio  
en sillas voladoras y en  
botes suspendidos en el arco  
de su viaje.  
Quien no asistió al esplendor  
de los parques eléctricos,  
podrá encontrar aquí  
una desleal imitación.  
Di adiós a tu hijo mientras  
resiste su vértigo  
en las pequeñas jaulas  
de “El Exterminador”.  
Subamos a “El Dragón”  
cuando su mal trazado ojo  
ve derramar la cerveza sin nombre,  
detenida en odres de extraño níquel  
y disputada por caballeros de sed medieval.  
Sobre las esteras de montaña rusa  
oyendo crujir los frenos de la noria,  
te dije: qué triste el país.  
—Diviértete, fue la respuesta  
mientras me alcanzabas un  
algodón de azúcar,  
traída del gran Brasil  
en oscuras bodegas  
de lujosos trasatlánticos.



## Carnival Irons

Forged in clandestine smithies  
they travel on ominous trailers  
through the national scar,  
artifacts for amusement,  
in neighborhood carnivals  
assembled in just an hour.  
Pieces of old sugar mills  
marinated for years in syrup  
alcohol,  
now they take their seats  
in flying chairs and on  
boats suspended in the arc  
of their journey.  
Those who never witnessed the splendor  
of electric parks  
will find here  
an unfaithful imitation.  
Say goodbye to your child while  
he fights back his vertigo  
in the small cages  
of “The Exterminator.”  
Let’s ride “The Dragon”  
when its badly drawn eye  
sees nameless beer spilled,  
lingering in wineskins made of a strange nickel  
and argued over by knights with a medieval thirst.  
Standing on the roller coaster’s carpet  
hearing the brakes of the Ferris wheel grind  
I told you: this country is so sad.  
“Have fun,” was the answer  
while you got me some  
cotton candy  
brought from grand Brazil  
in the dark holds  
of luxury ocean liners.

## Avenida del Puerto

Solo un tendón de grúa  
pudo arrancar de un tajo  
al framboyán sorprendido.  
Por la Avenida del Puerto  
es trasladado sobre la  
espalda de un camión  
—hijo del palimpsesto y la inventiva—  
hacia su parterre de cemento,  
sitio donde brindará sombra  
cubana, al viajante de los cruceros.  
Bien se sabe que uno de  
diez logra resucitar al  
prender sus venas  
en la roca de petróleo.  
Pero el Puerto de La Habana  
merece ramilletes de púrpura  
que hinchen más tarde  
la postal y el obturador.  
Si volviera de la muerte  
el pintor Jay Matamoros  
no hallaría en el repatriado  
motivo para la estampa.  
Su ojo naif solía detenerse  
en la copa silvestre que amparaba  
al guajiro en la tregua del mediodía,  
lejos del salitre que ahora  
empaña la flor de sangre.

# Avenida del Puerto

Only the tendon of a crane  
with just one slash could remove  
the astonished flamboyant tree.  
Down Avenida del Puerto  
it's transported on  
the back of a truck  
—child of palimpsest and inventiveness—  
toward its cement flower garden,  
site where it will offer Cuban  
shade to the cruise line traveler.  
It's well known that one out of  
ten manages to revive when  
their veins take root  
in the oil rock.  
But Havana's Port  
deserves bouquets of purple  
later on swelling  
postcard and shutter.  
If the painter Jay Matamoros  
were to come back from the dead  
he'd find in his country  
no motive for vignettes.  
His primitivist eye would often linger  
on the wild treetop sheltering  
the peasant at the truce of midday,  
far from the saltpeter that now  
tarnishes the blood flower.



# JAMILA MEDINA RÍOS

Jamila Medina Ríos (Holguin, 1981) is a poet, prose writer, essayist and editor. She won the coveted David Prize in 2009 with her first book of poetry and a collection of her essays received the prestigious Alejo Carpentier Prize in 2012. A book of short stories as well as another of poetry have appeared in Mexico. She was the Poetry Editor for Unión Publishers. She lives in Havana.

# Langustia

Textos textos textos  
tejeduras  
lanzaderas  
te (a)saltan sus gritos sobre la cabeza  
te brotan de ella como pétalos  
y de pronto: tienes toda la testa coronada  
espinada de palabras

no es saludable (pare)ser un girasol  
–dios no amanece  
y húrtante el sitio de mirar  
camino  
desolado–  
no es saludable la cabeza laureada  
se deshoja después  
como rama segada desde el invernadero  
y los cristales que habían crecido en ella  
quíébranse callados  
apáganse: de velas  
chisporrotean hacia dentro oh llama  
demasiado arrimada al ventanal  
abrupto  
abierto

dejarse crecer la cabeza hacia dentro  
–anahidrópica–  
cierra todas las bocas que te hablan al oído  
las venas muerdan(te)  
huye de las compuertas los poros el encaje  
cuida retrato de ti

si continuas dejando que te bailen  
esos textos textos sobre la cabeza  
que no te acabas de cortar  
de hacer una sangría para extraer lo otro  
si dejas se te prendan  
ataduras al cuello

# Ananguish

Texts texts texts  
textures  
shuttles  
their cries (at)tack your skull  
they spring from it like petals  
and pronto: your entire head crowned  
prickled with words

it's not healthy to (see)m a sunflower  
-god doesn't dawn  
and they swipe from you the looking spot  
desolated  
path-  
it's not healthy a laureate head  
later loses its leaves  
like a cut branch from the greenhouse  
and the crystals growing on it  
silently break in two  
snuffed: from candles  
they spark toward the inside oh flame  
too close to the picture window  
abrupt  
agape

to let your head grow toward the inside  
-anahydropical-  
closes all the mouths that speak in your ear  
the veins bite(you)  
flees the floodgates the pores the lace  
cares for portrait of you

if you keep letting those texts texts  
dance on your head  
that you should cut off already  
bloodletting to extract the other  
if you let them tethers  
take root in your neck

hilos que te indican pasadizos afuera (out of out of)  
carne *haciafuera* de ti  
si dejas que se aten cada uno a tu mano al pie  
la mejilla (ofrecida):  
repicarás en cien pedazos disgregado  
–carnero  
partícipe–  
ojos colgando *carafuera*

es *lasfixia* lo que debes construir  
hacia ti has de inclinar tu frente tuya  
desdoblarte hacia ese espejo que has dejado empañar  
enlutado (harto de barro)  
la boca abierta la mirada  
como lapa al cristal  
–observante del otro–  
ta(r)jas ta(r)jas ta(r)jas

taxidermia de ti  
sembrarse un sitio y zambúlete en tu boca :  
*gargantabajo* para siempre.

no quiero ver(te) burbujas  
barbotear borbotear desde tu labio  
desesperado hálito  
nostálgico del otro  
palabras sueltas que pretendan (II)amar  
–aludan–  
referente  
reflejo

*respiradentro*  
tala tala tala  
ten el pulcro civismo de presentar al aire:  
una cabeza (por fin) descoronada.



threads pointing out passages out (afuera afuera)  
flesh *towardtheoutsideof* you  
if you let them tie each one to your hand foot  
cheek (offered)  
you'll toll in a hundred pieces scattered  
–bellwether  
participant–  
eyes hanging *faceout*

it's *anasphyxiation* you should build  
toward you you must bend your forehead your  
unfold toward that mirror you've let fog up  
mournful (stuffed with clay)  
mouth open look  
like a leech on the glass  
–observer of the other–  
(s)cores (s)cores (s)cores

taxidermy of you  
sow a spot and plunge into your mouth :  
*throatdown* for always.

i don't want to see(your) bubbles  
murble burble from your lip  
desperate breath  
nostalgic for the other  
words unleashed hoping to c(all)  
–allude–  
referent  
reflex

*breathinside*  
felling felling felling  
have the meticulous civility to present to the air:  
a head (at last) decrowned.

## Palpo/ antena/ tentaculario

Callada escruto en mí la música tranquila  
que sobreviene al caos  
al pataleo de los dedos succionados  
por el rosa sediento.

En la humedad qué paz hallar  
en lo sombrío en la tardanza en la víspera  
del ciempiés de palpos  
que abandona temblando el baptisterio  
qué sequedad a que agarrarse qué oquedades  
en que embutir la ventosa:  
un (a)brazo que afinque para hociquear arriba  
cuerpo por hombros apenas  
mano callosa en columnata  
y los muñones de las piernas  
arribabajo  
y atrás y alante columpiados sin brida.

Si no doy pie si no hallo a tientas el interruptor  
el asidero: cuenco o co(r)no abierto a la lamida  
si no amordazo las cabañas de la noche  
o entierro dedos en el pelo...  
no suelto prenda  
no regurgito el salto.

Raspando con cuchara  
el dienteperro  
las yemas metidas en un agua de rosas  
manos entrando al manadero  
duro siglos

mas  
cuando se recogen  
los aperos del día  
no quedo quieta en mí:

temiendo al daño  
la lengua repta en las paredes del cerebro  
buscando un dardo y una cerrazón

## Palp/ Antenna/ Tentaculary

Silently I pour over the soothing music in me  
that follows the chaos  
the kicking of fingers suctioned  
by the thirsty pink.

In dampness what peace can be found  
in the dismal in the delay on the eve  
of the centipede of palps  
deserting the baptistry in trembles  
what dryness to hold onto what hollows  
to stuff the sucker in:  
an em(brace) settling to root around above  
body for shoulders scarcely  
hand calloused in colonnade  
and stumps for legs  
updown  
and backforth swung bridleless.

If I can't touch bottom if feeling my way I can't find the switch  
the handle: bowl or cone(horn) open to licking  
if I don't muzzle night's cabins  
or bury fingers in hair  
I don't let go  
I don't regurgitate the leap.

Scraping the dogtooth  
spar with a spoon  
fingertips sunken in rosewater  
hands entering the spring  
I last centuries

yet  
when the day's tools  
are gathered  
I don't stay still in me:

fearing the damage  
tongue slithering on brain walls  
searching for dart and closure

la escarbadura  
el escondite en el otro  
que agrieta el pecho  
del que explora.

En esta gruta estuve ya  
saqué los dedos encendidos  
de la avispa del agua  
y rosa flameaba el centro  
y rosa flameaban las yemas  
que se escondían de cabeza  
en el manadero de tales.

Hay una lengua de deseo  
que me trago cuando vienen los golpes  
de la espuma  
y el cuerpo cripta se levanta  
como una araña una culebra  
emasculada con un palo  
un avispero de tierra.

Para verme callar para verme caer  
han bajado los puentes giratorios.

Palpo-ícaro-antena  
me estiro otra noche  
buscándome las puntas de los pies  
el centro de la espalda sin lavar  
la ye(r)ma blanda del cráneo.

¿Se calmará el anemonario  
atizado  
por la aurora de casquivanos dedos  
o habrá que sombrear las puntas  
y estirar la palma  
como Lady Lazarus  
cortándolos caer?

Yo solo digo  
por cada palpo  
un tentáculo.

the unearthing  
the hideout in the other  
cracking the chest  
of the explorer.

I was already in that grotto  
pulled burning fingers  
from the water wasp  
and the center flamed pink  
and the tips flamed pink  
hiding headlong  
in the spring of such things.

There is a tongue of desire  
I swallow when blows  
of foam come  
and my body crypt rises  
like a spider like a serpent  
emasculated with a stick  
an earth hornet's nest.

To see me fall silent to see me fall  
the swing bridges lower.

Palp-icarus-antenna  
I stretch out one more night  
searching for the tips of my toes  
the middle of my unwashed back  
the soft waistland of my cranium.

Will the anemonarium settle down  
stirred up  
by the dawn of wanton fingers  
or must I darken the tips  
and stretch out the palm  
like Lady Lazarus  
cutting them to fall?

I just say  
for each palp  
a tentacle.

## Fur(n)ia

El ejercicio de la escritura apostado fuera de la escritura y escindiéndola con el rabo del ojo. Una cisura practicada en una escritura que se insiste furnia.

Huecos de araña, huecos de nariz, boca, cuencas de ojos, oídos, vulva, vagina, bahía de bolsa, ombligo, ano. E incluso el descubrimiento de intersticios bajo la lengua, entre los dientes y la encía, debajo de la rodilla, encima del codo, en la jabonera de las clavículas, en los 16 arcos entre dedo y dedo de los pies, en las axilas, en el vacío de las manos juntas y de las manos echadas hacia atrás, en las comisuras, en las arrugas de la frente, en los labios agrietados, en el hedor de las patas de gallina, en la hendidura de la entrepierna, bajo el peso de las trenzas y los senos, en la nuca rendida, en la blandura del tobillo, en los valles y altozanos del vientre, en la morada debajo de las uñas, en los pliegues ilegibles de las palmas de las manos, en las furnias rajadas del nudillo. Mujer agujereada, mujer (alfombra) arrollada, mujer (paracaídas) plegadura.

Mujer ubre y odre y útero. Mujer embocadura de río. Máter. Materia. Madreperla sobre madrépora. Madre-del-verbo. Ave María. Damajuana. Un cuerpo que desea a otro que soba y orada. Lecho de arena y concha, para ser (des)h/ollado. Playa, puerto, embarcadero, varadero, abrevadero, aliviadero, bebedero de yeguas y de patos.

Huevo. Ovario. Canasto.

Mujer de mimbre, caña flexible, cáñamo, flauta dulce, espiga, lirio desmadejado. Mujer de estambre. Punta bordada de mujer.

El ejercicio de la escritura como un latigazo en la carne para abrir zanjas y liberar fluidos. Mujer orines, mujer sangre, mujer fécula, mujer leche. Avalancha riada. Arrollo murmullo. Espumarajo arcada. Balanceo de columpio mujer. Nanadora. Acunadora. Sanadora. Vaina.

El ejercicio no como la erección de un panóptico sino como una obturación, ensanchamiento de la dilatación del ser habitada, explorada, cavada, perforada, aserrada, rajada, acribillada, trepanada, traspasada, desabrochada, desvirgada, defenestrada, abierta. La mujer la porosa. La leporina, la li(e)bre, la leprada. Y el ejercicio como una amputación de lo que no tiene y sobra. Matadura del padre al excavar la raja. Matadura de la madre al ejercitar el equilibrio con las manos extendidas sobre el cordón umbilical, y saltar la cuerda, hacer pulsos, tobilleras y argollas de narigón, y jugar al ahorcado. Clava y clavadura. Encaje: con un ejercicio haciadentro y haciafuera de inserción y deserción. Furia y furnia.

## F(u)or(y)amen

The exercise of writing posted outside writing split by the corner of your eye. An incision practiced in a writing insisting on foramen.

Spider holes, nostrils, mouth, eye sockets, ears, vulva, vagina, pocket bay, navel, anus. And even the discovery of interstices under tongue, between teeth and gum, under knee, over elbow, in collarbone's soap dish, in the 16 arches between each toe, in armpits, in the hollow of hands together and hands behind, in corners of the mouth, on forehead's wrinkles, on chapped lips, in the stench of crow's feet, in groin's fissure, under the weight of braids and breasts, in surrendered nape, in ankle's softness, in womb's valleys and hillocks, in the purple between nails, in the illegible folds of palms, in the cracked foramens of knuckle. Woman pit, woman (carpet) thrown, woman (parachute) folded.

Woman udder and bota and uterus. Woman river opening. Mater. Matter. Mother of pearl over madrepora. Mother-of-the-word. Ave Maria. Demijohn.

A body desiring another that fondles and bores through. Bed of sand and shell, to be (de)h/o/allowed. Seashore, seaport, boatyard, drydock, wateringhole, spillway, birdbath for bears and geese.

Egg. Ovary. Basket.

Wicker woman, flexible reed, hemp, sweet flute, spike, weakened lily.

Stamen woman. Embroidered edge of woman.

The exercise of writing like a whip on flesh to open ditches and free fluids.

Woman urine, woman blood, woman starch, woman milk. Avalanche flood. Coil murmur. Froth arcade. Swing swaying woman. Lullabyer.

Rocker. Healer. Sheath.

The exercise not like the erection of a panoptic but like a shutter, widening of the dilation of being inhabited, explored, dug, drilled, sawed, sliced, riddled, trepanned, run through, unfastened, deflowered, defenestrated, opened. Woman porous. Leporine, leveret, leprous. And the exercise as an amputation of what she doesn't have and is more than enough. Father sore as the gash is excavated. Mother sore as equilibrium is practiced with hands open wide on the umbilical cord, and jumping rope, making bracelets, anklets, and nose rings, and playing hangman. Nail and nailing. Lace: with an exercise inwards and outwards of insertion and desertion. Fury and foramen.

Una escritura que se insiste enseñada tiene una rabia una península confesa, oracular. El armadillo que se encueva, que se acoquina, que se aova, que se empolla, puede empezar a vomitar garras lenguas tentáculos pezuñas. Extremidades. Palpos, pulpos. Vecindades. Mano en la oscuridad. Arañazos hilos. Lengua anhelante. Imán. Hambrunas. La escritura vaso constrictor, la escritura contenida, la escritura conteniendo ser la escritura abrazo. La voz de sirena corporizada perfume, pañuelito al viento, valla de publicidad. Mujer brazo gitano. Mujer brazo, duro, de la ley. Magnolia de acero. Magdalena desleída en el té, que atrae poderosamente... recuerdos. Lágrimas de cocodrilo. Estalactitas. Casimbas ojo del invierno. Mujer tijera, cuchillada, estaca, pica hielos, dientes de peineta, de sierra y de león. Mujer pasamontañas. Armadillo en chino: como el animal engalanado para cruzar la cordillera. Mujer muralla. Mujer fusta de cobra. Aviborada. Mujer pócima. Una escritura que mata a la mujer alargando su veneno, si se deja crecer la lengua y se autosacia o penetra, como un ouroboros infernal. Hermafroditismo en el tacto. Una sensibilidad que se empoza y se amordaza con su propia tentación.

Saca tu lengua, mujer, de la carnada. Cierra la boca. Los negros no se rien alto, las mujeres no se abren tanto para comer o bostezar. Tápate eso, cochina. Una escritura que se mira y cuyo clítoris crece de excitación verbal es de temer. La furia en furnia. Silenciada. No la furnia en furia. Llamamiento. Lllamarada. Esa mujer anémona. Hágase una p/hiel líquida que apague a la ninfómana. Ábrase mujer linfa. Apurar el trago amargo, probar con la lengua una escritura sin muerte ni grito ni dolor. Sin hincar las rodillas... sobre granos de trigo. La letra con sangre entra. Déjate hacer. Dejarse hacer. Dejarse ser...



A writing insisting it's cove has a rage a confessed, oracular peninsula. The armadillo that hides in a cave, takes fright, becomes egg, broods, can start to vomit claws tongues tentacles hooves. Extremities. Palps, Octopuses. Neighborhoods. Hand in darkness. Scratches threads. Eager tongue. Magnet. Famines. Writing vessel constrictor, writing contained, writing containing to be writing embrace. Siren voice corporalized perfume, handkerchief in the wind, billboard. Woman jelly roll. Woman long arm of the law. Iron magnolia. Madeleine dissolved in tea, powerfully attracting...memories. Crocodile tears. Stalactites. beachwells winter eye. Woman scissor, slash, stake, icepick, teeth of comb, blade, and lion. Woman balaclava. Armadillo in Chinese: like animal adorned to cross the mountain range. Woman wall. Woman cobra whip. Vipered. Woman potion. A writing that kills woman lengthening her venom, if she lets her tongue grow and self-quenches or penetrates, like an infernal ouroboros. Hermaphroditism in the touch. A sensibility that forms pools and is muzzled with its own temptation. Remove your tongue, woman, from the bait. Shut your mouth. Blacks don't laugh out loud, Women don't open their mouths wide to eat or yawn. Cover it, dirty girl. A writing that looks at itself and whose clitoris grows with verbal excitation is frightening. Fury in foramen. Silenced. Not foramen in fury. Call. Flash. That woman anemone. Turn to liquid skin/spleen to put out the nymphomaniac. Open woman lymph. To hurry bitter pill, taste with tongue a writing deathless cryless painless. Not kneeling down upon the grains of wheat. Spare the rod spoil the child. Let yourself go. To let oneself go. To let oneself be.



# MOISÉS MAYÁN FERNÁNDEZ

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## El hombre estacionario

Los pájaros pierden rápidamente el miedo  
y aprenden a posarse junto a los gatos de cemento.

Pájaros que no han visto nunca un bosque real  
con abedules, cipreses y álamos.

Frágiles seres de ciudad. La noche los sorprende  
en aleros de altos edificios,  
bajo las chimeneas de las fábricas  
o en esos árboles que crecen  
próximos a transitadas autopistas.

Pero con los gatos de cemento  
han comenzado a aparecer en algunos techos,  
pájaros inmóviles, que soportan la lluvia y el invierno  
en un gesto de canto demorado.  
Y seguramente pronto veremos  
cómo surgen en nuestros jardines los árboles de hierro.  
Con ramas a prueba de huracanes.  
(No podrán los enamorados  
raspar sus nombres en la corteza).  
¿Y los tristes pájaros que nunca han visto un bosque  
con abedules, cipreses y álamos?  
¿Los pájaros que crecieron  
en nidos de filamentos metálicos?  
¿Sus sueños de amanecer  
en la rama olorosa de una acacia,  
un árbol auténtico, un bosque que cerrándose en torno  
proteja a sus polluelos?

Veo los pájaros posándose junto a los gatos de cemento  
mientras emplazan frente a mí la estatua de un hombre.  
El Hombre.  
Sufro las ansias de rozar sus miembros de mármol.  
Yo tampoco he visto nunca un bosque real,  
los abedules, cipreses y álamos han sido desterrados  
de mi mente.

Me estoy convirtiendo en un hombre estacionario.

# The Stationary Man

Birds quickly lose their fear  
and learn to perch alongside concrete cats.

Birds that have never seen a real forest  
with firs, cypresses, or poplars.

Fragile city beings. Night surprises them  
on the eaves of tall buildings,  
beneath factory smokestacks,  
or on those trees that grow  
next to busy freeways.

Still along with the concrete cats  
on some rooftops have begun to appear  
motionless birds, putting up with rain and winter  
a sign of lingering birdsong.  
And soon we'll surely see  
how iron trees show up in our yards.  
With hurricane-proof branches.  
(Couples no longer  
to carve their names in the bark).  
What of the sad birds that have never seen a forest  
with firs, cypresses, or poplars?  
The birds that grew up  
in metallic filament nests?  
Their dreams of waking  
on the fragrant branch of an acacia,  
an actual tree, a forest surrounding  
to protect their chicks?

I see the birds perching alongside concrete cats  
while the statue of a man is placed in front of me.  
The Man.  
I suffer from the longing to touch his marble members.  
I too have never seen a real forest,  
the firs, the cypresses, and the poplars have been banished  
from my mind.

I'm turning into a stationary man.

## Extraño animal, inocencia

*Los niños, si pueden, crecen.*

José Saramago

Llega el tiempo en que descubres tras el enrejado de tu pecho la muerte del antiguo animal de la inocencia. Y quedas inmerso en la desesperante blancura del día. Sin fuerzas. Viendo alzarse los manicomios. Como algas en un océano de luz. Y eres isla dentro de isla. Privado de la gravedad de los navíos. De las hermosas criaturas que en sus bodegas cruzan el Atlántico. Caballos árabes. Galgos. Monos. Quetzales. Y aquel extraño animal apresado en los confines de Bikaner. La inocencia.

No por anunciada la muerte sorprende menos. Perturba. Violenta con sus derrumbes interiores la jaula/corazón. Te asomas al enrejado y ves al animal inmóvil. Palideces. Algo de ti parte con él. Se astilla contra los muñones de la cárcel donde apresaste la inocencia. Es el riesgo de volverse adulto. De crecer. Desprendimientos. Quebraduras. El ciclo humano. Estaciones que el brazo de Dios va segando en el peligroso paisaje de la vida. Perder la inocencia es adentrarse en los manicomios. Asumir gota a gota el bebedizo del *delírium*.

Buscas señales de agresión. Dentelladas. Saetas. El pozo de sangre fluyendo en la garganta. Y no adviertes la rojez homicida de quien mata. La marca de unos dedos entre el pelaje. O un coágulo de dolor en los ojos. Muy abiertos. Es natural la muerte de la inocencia. (*Natural & muerte* son términos de compleja asociación —lo reconozco). Ah, pobreza del idioma. Incapaz de precisar el martirio. Agónicas noches del espécimen que se sabe definido por la fatalidad. No antílope. Perro de aguas. Pájaro de fuego. Sino un extraño animal apresado en los confines de Bikanir. La inocencia.

# Strange Animal, Innocence

*Children, if they can, grow.*

José Saramago

The time comes when you discover behind the latticework of your chest  
the death of the old animal innocence.  
And you linger immersed in day's exasperating whiteness.  
Limp. Watching the insane asylums go up.  
Like seaweed in an ocean of light. And you're the island within the island.  
Deprived of vessel gravity. Of the beautiful creatures  
who cross the Atlantic in their holds. Arabian horses.  
Greyhounds. Monkeys. Quetzals. And that strange animal  
captured in the confines of Bikaner. Innocence.

Though heralded death still surprises. Disrupts.  
It forces open the cage/heart with its inner cave-ins.  
You come to the latticework and see the motionless animal. You grow pale.  
Something of you parts with it. It splinters against the stumps  
of the prison where you captured innocence.  
It's the hazard of becoming an adult. Of growing up.  
Landslides. Fissures.  
The human cycle. Seasons the arm of God  
reaps in life's dangerous landscape.  
To lose innocence is to go deep into asylums.  
To take on *delirium's* potion drop by drop.

You search for signs of aggression. Tooth marks. Arrows.  
The blood well flowing in the throat.  
And you don't warn the murder redness of who's killing.  
The mark of some fingers on fur.  
Or a clot of pain in the eyes. Wide open.  
The death of innocence is natural. (*Natural & death*  
are terms with a complex association –I know).  
Oh, poverty of language. Incapable of making martyrdom precise.  
Agonal nights of the specimen that knows  
it's defined by its fatality. Not antelope. Water dog.  
Fire bird. But a strange animal  
captured in the confines of Bikaner. Innocence.

Hay que aprender a despedirse.  
De la metálica ligereza del velocípedo en los pasillos.  
De la casa donde crecimos. Del miedo a la noche.  
(Inmensa tras los pórticos). Del Día de Reyes.  
Del abuelo y sus historias. De la abuela y sus dulces.  
De las tardes de domingo. Despedirse.  
Soltar amarras. Con la gravedad de los navíos.  
Con la resignación de las hermosas criaturas  
que en sus bodegas cruzan el Atlántico. Caballos árabes.  
Galgos. Monos. Quetzales. *Aves del sol y de la sombra.*

Llega el tiempo en que descubres tras el enrejado de tu pecho  
la muerte del antiguo animal de la inocencia.  
Y quieres volver a las fotografías.  
Al álbum de las primeras veces. Cuando la manzana  
de casas era el mundo. Y te despertaba la música  
de la lluvia en los techos de zinc. Y eras feliz.  
Y el animal —apenas una cría. Como tú.  
Jugueteaba en la planicie de un pecho sin barrotes.

Quieres volver. Pero es imposible.  
*No hay otros paraísos que los paraísos perdidos.*



We must learn to say good-bye.  
To the velocipede metallic lightness in hallways.  
To the house where we grew up. To being scared of the dark.  
(Immense behind the arcades). To Three Kings Day.  
To Grandpa and his stories. To Grandma and her sweets.  
To Sunday afternoons. Say good-bye.  
Cut loose the moorings. With the gravity of vessels.  
With the resignation of beautiful creatures  
who cross the Atlantic in their holds. Arabian horses.  
Greyhounds. Monkey. Quetzals. *Birds of sun and shadow.*

The time comes when you discover behind the latticework of your chest  
the death of the old animal innocence.  
And you want to go back to the pictures.  
To the album of first times. When the houses  
on the block were the world. And you woke up to the music  
of the rain on zinc rooftops. And you were happy.  
And the animal –just a baby. Like you.  
Playing around in the flatlands of an unbarred chest.

You want to go back. But it's impossible.  
*There are no paradises other than lost paradises.*

# Prehistoria

*hagamos el poema a imagen del hombre,  
pero eterno.*

Bajo la sombra irregular de los helechos el último hombre de Cro-Magnon se contempla. El espejo de un charco helado le devuelve su rostro, donde coinciden el animal y el humano incipiente. Rostro sin embargo poseedor de la belleza de una estirpe perdida. Rara belleza de los únicos.

El hombre de Cro-Magnon desea tener una hermosa voz para cantarle a la ausencia, pero solo consigue gemidos monocordes. La evolución lo ha privado del don del habla. No puede siquiera imaginar, que allí, frente aquel espejo de hielo, esté por surgir la poesía. El último hombre de Cro-Magnon contempla su desapacible imagen y piensa: “Ahora solo quedamos tú y yo”.

## Prehistory

*let us make the poem in the image of man,  
but eternal.*

Beneath the uneven shadow of ferns the last Cro-Magnon man gazes at himself. The frozen puddle mirror throws back his face where animal and emerging human overlap. A face nevertheless possessing the beauty of a lost breed. Rare beauty of ones of a kind.

The Cro-Magnon man wants to have a pretty voice to sing to absence, but it only amounts to monochord groans. Evolution has deprived him of the gift of speech. There, facing the icy mirror, he can't even imagine that poetry will soon surface. The last Cro-Magnon man gazes at his unpleasant image and thinks: "Now it's just you and me."

## Efecto Spielberg

Soy uno de esos cuerpos apilados por buldóceres después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Un joven párroco que murió de tifus en el campo de concentración de Dachau. Un médico rumano. Un profesor eslavo que estudiaba el discriminante de los polinomios cuadráticos. Una niña con un absurdo vestido rojo.

## Spielberg Effect

I'm one of those bodies piled up by bulldozers after World War II. A young parish priest who died from typhus in Dachau's concentration camp. A Romanian doctor. A Slavic professor who studied the discriminant of quadratic polynomials. A young girl in an absurd red dress.



# LEGNA RODRÍGUEZ IGLESIAS

Legna Rodríguez Iglesias (Camagüey, 1984) is a poet, prose writer, and playwright. She has four books of poetry, the latest being *Hilo+Hilo* (2015). She has received the Julio Cortázar Ibero-American Short Story Prize in 2011 and the Casa de Las Américas Prize in Theater in 2016. She lives in Miami.

no te voy a leer un poema de Ezra Pound me advierte mamá por teléfono  
te voy a leer la última ley que salió este año que también es poesía y te  
gustará

saber que solo con el seguro social se pueden casar las personas y no hay  
que esperar a ser residente solo hay que ser persona y querer casarse  
para leerse uno al otro cuantos poemas de Ezra Pound tú quieras a la hora  
que quieras y en la postura que elijas me advierte mamá por teléfono  
solo con el seguro social se pueden casar las personas y no hay que esperar  
a ser residente solo hay que ser persona y querer casarse para leerse uno  
al otro cuantos poemas de Ezra Pound tú quieras a la hora que quieras  
y en la postura que elijas me quedo repitiendo yo cotorra sujeta a cambios  
no es para leer poemas y menos de Ezra Pound que me casaré contigo  
es para

que entres en mí a la hora que quieras y en el lugar que quieras y en la  
forma

que consideres y lo rompas todo y lo desacralices todo si quieres o si no  
quieres



i'm not going to read you a poem by Ezra Pound mom informs me on  
 the phone  
 i'm going to read you the latest law to come out this year which is also  
 poetry and you'll be happy  
 to know people can get married with just social security numbers now  
 and not  
 have to wait to be a resident just be a person and want to get married  
 to read as many poems by Ezra Pound as you want to each other whenever  
 you want and in the position you choose mom informs me on the phone  
 people can get married with just social security numbers and not have  
 to wait  
 to be a resident just a person and want to get married to read as many  
 poems by Ezra Pound as you want to each other whenever you want  
 and in the position you choose i keep repeating a chatterbox subject to  
 changes  
 it's not to read poems much less by Ezra Pound that i'll get married to  
 you it's so  
 you'll enter me whenever you want and wherever you want and the way  
 you like and tear everything and make everything unholy if you want to  
 or not

las pajas que me hago esperando a Godot huelen a jurel en salsa de tomate  
sin tomate y sin aceite y sin albahaca y sin fuego lento y sin fuego alto  
emocionalmente peores que las pajas a las dos de la mañana  
con deseos de tocar el timbre de todas las puertas de mi edificio  
y en cada puerta pedir un fósforo para encender la cocina  
cada uno de los días de este año en que se conmemora mi treinta  
aniversario

mentiría si afirmara que las pajas de la espera son capaces de alegrarme  
volverme una mujer con tomate y con aceite y con albahaca  
y sin dudas con jureles en todas partes del cuerpo de la mente y del  
espíritu

mentiría si afirmara que al mover un dedo despacio rápido despacio  
se me olvida lo que tengo que hacer en lo adelante  
mentiría si mi espíritu supone que algún día  
de este año sorprendente en que se conmemora algo ya dicho en otras  
líneas

Godot regresará siendo el mismo y siendo todo lo que yo necesitaba

the getting off i do waiting for Godot smells like mackerel in tomato  
sauce

without tomato or oil or basil or low flame or high flame  
emotionally worse than getting off at two in the morning  
wanting to ring the doorbells of all the doors in my building  
and at each door to ask for a match to light the stove  
each day of this year when my thirtieth birthday is observed  
i'd lie if it would prove getting off while waiting can make me happy  
turn me back into a woman with tomato and with oil and with basil  
and certainly with mackerels everywhere in my body and mind and spirit  
i'd lie if it would prove that by moving a finger slow fast slow  
i'd forget what i have to do from now on  
i'd lie if my spirit imagined one day  
in this surprising year when something already said in other lines is  
observed  
Godot returned being himself and being everything i needed

Dios mío me regalaste una lengua de puerco viva que se movía en la olla  
de cocción  
eléctrica y me sacaba la lengua y me instaba a ladrarle y morderla y  
metérmela en la vagina  
una lengua de puerco gorda y rosada como mi lengua que se movía igual  
que mi lengua  
yo conozco el movimiento yo sé moverla igual y causar esa misma  
provocación la misma  
felicidad Dios mío ese regalo me cayó del cielo me volvió loca me  
desquició lo peor  
fue cuando se ablandó abandonando movilidad abandonándome yo la  
conduje ahí  
a ese tiempo y a ese espacio de modorra su muerte duró media hora Dios  
mío  
por qué es hermosa la muerte y por qué uno se deleita en ella si en  
realidad lo que quiere  
es quedarse coleando viviendo para siempre sobre la faz de la tierra la faz  
de cualquier  
país incluso los Estados Unidos de América un país que ya sabemos que  
es sinónimo  
de olla pues ya saqué mi cuchillo y saqué mi tenedor y ya me comí la  
lengua y ahora voy  
a acostarme y a dormir profundamente y voy a soñar contigo moviéndote  
en la olla

my God you gave me a live pig's tongue that quivered in the electric  
 cooker and it stuck its tongue out at me spurred me to bark at it and  
 bite it and stick it up my vagina  
 a pig's tongue plump and pink like my tongue quivering just like my  
 tongue i know that quiver i know how to move it just like that and  
 cause the same  
 provocation the same happiness my God that gift fell straight out of  
 heaven drove me crazy made me go off the deep end the worst  
 was when it softened leaving mobility behind leaving me behind i led it  
 there  
 at that time and space of drowsiness its death lasted half an hour my God  
 why is death beautiful and why do we delight in it if all it actually  
 wants  
 is to keep on wagging its tail living for always on the face of the earth the  
 face of any country even the United States of America a country we  
 already know is a synonym  
 for cooker so i got out my knife and i got out my fork and i ate the tongue  
 and now i'm  
 going to go to bed to sleep hard and i'll dream of you quivering in the  
 cooker

mi alma está llena de metáforas adquiridas de generación en generación  
mi alma está llena de símiles más o menos fascinantes que dan fe del  
agrado que hay en mí  
mi alma posee un gran hipérbaton enquistado a la derecha que mide  
varios milímetros  
y a su izquierda igualmente enquistada una onomatopeya palpable  
excedida  
mi alma tiene una hipérbole relacionada con la necesidad de afecto  
femenino y masculino  
esta mañana decidí hacer una obra de caridad a mi alma y recogí un saco  
de la basura  
lleno de hermosos libros usados sobre ciencias agrónomas veterinarias y  
matemáticas  
el oxímoron y la paradoja figuras lógicas de mi alma aumentaron sus  
latencias  
nada se compara a esta felicidad que para no cansarlos experimento  
ver mi alma desde afuera llena de esos síntomas que me mantienen joven  
figuras de diálogo y patéticas figuras dialécticas y de ficción  
todo en uno como esos paquetes de pequeños jabones de olor  
que tanto agradan a las familias de más de seis integrantes

my soul's full of metaphors acquired from generation after generation  
 my soul's full of more or less fascinating similes that witness the kindness  
 in me  
 my soul possesses a great hyperbaton encysted on the right side measuring  
 various millimeters  
 and on the left likewise encysted a palpable excessive onomatopoeia  
 my soul has a hyperbole related to the need for feminine and masculine  
 affect  
 this morning i decided to do charity work for my soul and i took  
 out a garbage bag full of beautiful used books on the agronomic  
 veterinarian and mathematical sciences  
 the oxymoron and the paradox logical figures in my soul increased their  
 throbbing  
 nothing compares to this happiness that to not bore you i experience  
 when i see my soul from the outside full of these symptoms that keep  
 me young  
 figures of dialogue and pathetic dialectical fictional figures  
 all-in-one like those packages of small bars of scented soap  
 that so please families with six members or more

haitiano varón durmiendo solo afuera frente a un frente frío es solo un  
tipo de asfixia  
haitiano que ladra y muerde durmiendo solo afuera de cansancio de dolor  
de mordeduras  
hombre que no interesa por haitiano por desnudo por hermoso por  
extraño y pobre  
hombre mío para mí no me ladres no me muerdas que yo te voy a coser  
te voy a matar  
el miedo añadiéndole mi miedo haitiano trabajador durmiendo solo  
afuera de su centro  
de trabajo un edificio importante menos alto que un baobab menos  
maravilloso dónde  
tu vives haitiano yo vivo aquí dónde tu naciste haitiano yo nací aquí  
dónde tú orinas  
haitiano yo orino aquí yo como aquí yo amo aquí es solo un tipo de asfixia  
no intentes  
quitarle el miedo porque yo no tengo miedo yo tengo un tesoro que no  
le he mostrado  
a nadie y a ti tampoco te lo mostraré lo tengo por todo el cuerpo incluidos  
mis testículos  
mi glande y mi prepucio es un tesoro que Dios me dio un tesoro haitiano  
llamado odio



haitian man sleeping alone outside facing a cold front is just one kind of  
 suffocation  
 haitian who barks and bites sleeping alone outside from exhaustion from  
 pain from bites  
 man of no interest because haitian because naked because beautiful  
 because strange and poor  
 man mine for me don't bark at me don't bite me because i will sew you i  
 will kill you  
 fear adding my fear haitian worker sleeping alone outside his place  
 of work an important building not as tall as a baobab not as marvelous  
 where  
 do you live haitian i live here where were you born haitian i was born here  
 where do you piss  
 haitian i piss here i eat here i love here it's just one kind of suffocation  
 don't try  
 to take away my fear because i'm not afraid i have a treasure i haven't  
 shown  
 to anyone you either i'll show you it's all over my body even my testicles  
 my glans and my foreskin it's a treasure God gave me a treasure haitian  
 called hate

derecho al fondo más al fondo está eso que late y duele sin detenerse dios  
me libre  
eso que ladra y muerde como un animal salvaje o como un pajarraco  
indígena en cautiverio  
es el corazón en su concepto de alma lo más imbécil que uno tiene por  
delante  
aquello que hace trizas lo que le rodea como el pensamiento y el  
discernimiento  
convertidos en jugos biliares y echados hacia fuera a través de un órgano  
con muela  
un órgano encargado de transmitir aquello que le dicta la conciencia o  
el alma  
el párrafo anterior me lo ha dictado la conciencia o el alma a esta hora  
no sabría cuál  
me he despertado y he venido derecho al fondo y he tecleado esto  
avergonzada  
soñé con la palabra *ébola* y con la palabra *dengue* las vi en sueños las  
acaricié  
el hombre que sueña con palabras ha llegado sin dudas a una edad en la  
que no hay tiempo  
que perder y la mujer que sueña con palabras debe interpretar sus palabras  
de la manera  
correcta o perderá su tiempo y sus palabras derecho al fondo está eso que  
te hace  
perder el tiempo o ganarlo yo no perderé mis palabras aunque las  
interprete mal

straight back more toward the back is this beating and hurting non-stop  
 god forbid  
 this beating and biting like a wild animal or like a big native bird captive  
 it's the heart in its concept of soul the most imbecilic we have ahead of us  
 what shatters what surrounds us like thought and discernment  
 changed to bile and tossed outside through an organ with molar  
 an organ entrusted with broadcasting what conscience or soul dictates  
 the previous paragraph has been dictated to me by conscience or soul  
 right now i wouldn't know which  
 i've woken up and headed straight back and embarrassingly i've typed  
 this  
 i dreamt of the word *ebola* of the word *dengue* i saw them in dreams i  
 caressed them  
 the man who dreams of words has gotten no doubt to an age where  
 there's no time  
 to waste and the woman who dreams of words must interpret her words  
 in the right way  
 or waste her time and her words straight back is this making you  
 waste time or save it i won't waste my words even though i misunderstand  
 them



# SERGIO GARCÍA ZAMORA

Sergio García Zamora (Esperanza, 1986) is a poet, literary critic, and editor. He graduated from the Central University of Las Villas in Philology. He has published eleven books of prize-winning poetry. Most recently, the Fundación Loewe awarded him their prestigious Young Poet's Prize (2016).

## La madre

mi madre se enternece oyendo un xilófono. según el diccionario: instrumento musical de percusión, hecho de tablillas de madera. el xilófono, no mi madre. pero si mi madre quiere se vuelve un instrumento, se vuelve musical, se vuelve de percusión, se arranca una tablilla y me da una zurra que me enternece. todo está en proponérselo como el padre de Beethoven, que no debió ser tan malo cuando el hijo fue tan bueno. lo de Beethoven era el piano; lo de su padre, la educación musical. un xilófono parece un piano. el xilófono, no mi madre. pero si mi madre quiere se vuelve toda piano y me deja caer sobre los dedos la tapa del teclado para que ande piano, para que nunca me recupere del enterneamiento, como lo haría el padre de Beethoven. o acaso mejor: como lo hace la madre del poeta.

## Mother

my mother goes soft listening to a xylophone. according to the dictionary: musical instrument in the percussion family, made of wooden bars. the xylophone, not my mother. but if my mother wants to she turns into an instrument, she turns musical, she turns percussive, she pulls off a bar and gives me a beating that makes me go soft. it's all about suggesting it like Beethoven's father, who couldn't have been that bad when the son was so good. Beethoven's thing was the piano; his father's, musical education. a xylophone looks like a piano. the xylophone, not my mother. but if my mother wants to she turns into a piano and she lets the lid fall on my fingers so i'm piano, so i'll never be able to come back from going soft, like Beethoven's father would do it. or even better. like the poet's mother does.

# Una casa sin ático

## I

Amor mío, piensa en las ventajas de vivir en una casa sin ático: jamás vas a caerte al subir la escalerilla; ni van a caerse los niños que gustan de jugar allí; ni tendrás que limpiarlo, aunque sea apenas una vez al año. Imagina el horror de descubrir algunas ratas. No creo que logres soportarlo. Además, de ningún modo las familias se deshacen de las cosas inútiles, solo las dejan en el ático. Un ático nunca sirve para nada, salvo para guardar cadáveres: juguetes rotos, santos de madera, el árbol con los adornos navideños. Cadáveres de la infancia perdida, de la fe perdida, de la felicidad perdida. Y fotos, cientos de fotos en cajas de zapatos.

## II

Me encierro en el ático de una casa sin ático. Me encierro a escribir de la vida escondido de la vida. Si preguntan, dirás que salí a caminar un rato. Una excusa verosímil que los amigos perdonan. Una excusa verdadera. Prefiero pasear en invierno para no encontrar a más de dos o tres conocidos. Nada personal. Lo mejor de los misántropos es que nunca celebrarán un congreso. Lo mejor de los misántropos es que saben reconocerse como un asesino reconoce a otro asesino en esas mesas de un café cualquiera. Si preguntan, dirás que salí a caminar conmigo. Me encierro a escribir. Me encierro a escribir. Me encierro. Qué frío hace en el ático de una casa sin ático.

## III

Peor que una casa sin ático es un país sin ático. ¿Dónde queda el ático de un país? ¿En su montaña más alta? ¿En su mente más lúcida? ¿En su mejor líder, en su mejor héroe, en su mejor poeta? ¿O en su hijo más inocente? Desempolvar el ático del país. Atisbar por su ojo de buey la tormenta que se avecina. Peor que una casa sin ático es un país sin ático: un país hecho de sótanos.



## A House with No Attic

I

My love, think of the advantages of living in a house with no attic: you'll never fall from the ladder, the children who like to play there won't either, you won't have to clean it, even if it's just once a year. Think of the horror of discovering rats. I don't think you could handle it. Besides, there's no way families get rid of useless things, they just leave them in the attic. An attic is useless, except for hanging on to cadavers: broken toys, wooden saints, the tree with Christmas decorations. Cadavers from lost childhood, lost faith, lost happiness. And photos, hundreds of photos in shoe boxes.

II

I lock myself away in the attic of a house with no attic. I lock myself away to write of life hidden from life. If they ask, tell them I've gone on a little walk. A verisimilar excuse friends will forgive. A real excuse. I prefer to stroll in winter so I only meet up with two or three people I know. Nothing personal. The best thing about misanthropes is that they'll never hold a conference. The best thing about misanthropes is that they recognize one another like a murderer recognizes another murderer at those tables in some café. If they ask, tell them I've gone on a little walk with myself. I lock myself away to write. I lock myself away to write. I lock myself away. It's so cold in the attic of a house with no attic.

III

Worse than a house with no attic is a country with no attic. Where's a country's attic? On the highest mountain? In its most lucid mind? In its best leader, its best hero, its best poet? Or its most innocent child? To dust off the country's attic. To keep an eye on the approaching storm through its porthole. Worse than a house with no attic is a country with no attic: a country of basements.

## El camionero y yo

la primera vez que escuché un poema, un poema de Charles Bukowski, fue en la cabina de un camión. era un programa radial y el camionero subió el volumen. en cualquier momento, pensé, apaga la radio esta bestia. pero el camionero siguió escuchando. lo de Bukowski no tenía nombre: hablaba con cierto orgullo sobre las borracheras de su padre y sobre las golpizas de su padre. parecía decir que a él, Charles Bukowski, ni borracheras ni golpizas lo habían logrado arruinar. después pusieron música y el camionero se colocó sus gafas. estos programas de radio, gruñó, nunca sirven para nada. la primera vez que escuché un poema, un poema de Charles Bukowski, fue mientras viajaba a casa. un camionero nos puede engañar.

## The Truck Driver and Me

the first time i heard a poem, a poem by Charles Bukowski, was in the cab of a truck. it was a radio program and the truck driver turned up the volume. i thought, this jerk is going to turn off the radio any second. but the truck driver kept listening. the Bukowski thing was incredible: he spoke somewhat proudly about his father getting drunk and beating him. it seemed like what he was saying was that drunken bouts and beatings hadn't been able to ruin him, Charles Bukowski. later on they played music and the truck driver put on his sunglasses. these radio programs, he growled, are pointless. the first time i heard a poem, a poem by Charles Bukowski, was when i was going home. sometimes a truck driver can fool us.

## Poemas con neblina

poemas con neblina, horrendos poemas con neblina donde nunca se logra conducir, si no es a riesgo de estrellarse. los nuevos poetas neblinosos gustan de nombrar a Londres sin haber ido a Londres, como si la neblina fuese privativa de esa ciudad, como si no hubiese neblina en otros países, en otras ciudades que conquistó Inglaterra. poemas con neblina, horrendos poemas con neblina donde las luces del auto descubren tu doble fantasmal. los nuevos poetas neblinosos gustan de tenderse sobre la hierba como un cuerpo más bajo la neblina, a riesgo de agarrar el Gran Resfrío y morir sin ver Londres, sin ver otra ciudad ni otro país espléndido como Inglaterra. poemas con neblina, horrendos poemas con neblina que me hacen recordar a mi abuelo: hoy habrá un sol tremendo.

## Poems with Fog

poems with fog, horrendous poems with fog where you can't drive unless you risk crashing into something. the new foggy poets like to name London without having gone to London, as if fog were exclusive to that city, as if there wasn't fog in other countries, in other cities conquered by England. poems with fog, horrendous poems with fog where car lights uncover your ghostly double. the new foggy poets like to stretch out on the grass like just another body beneath the fog, risking the Great Cold and dying without seeing London, without seeing another city or splendid country like England. poems with fog, horrendous poems with fog that make me think of my grandfather: today will be bright and sunny.

## Balada para colgarse

a François Villón, el maldito, lo suben y lo bajan de la horca un poeta después de otro. no fui a la universidad, dice Villón, para ser un pelele; no gané el favor del rey, para ser un muñeco de paja. un poeta después de otro lo piden para sus bandas; todos quieren a ese francés en sus cochinas bandas, a ese diablo criado por un monje. el maldito de François se ríe: piensa deshacerse del cabecilla y tomar el mando. entre poetas también se está entre putas y ladrones. a François Villón, el maldito, lo suben y lo bajan de la horca un poeta después de otro. no escribí para esto, dice Villón, no robé ni maté para esto. si quieren entonar mi balada, pónganse la sogá al cuello.

## Ballad for Hanging Oneself

François Villón, that devil, one poet after another sends him to and lowers him from the gallows. i didn't go to college, Villón says, to be a pushover; didn't win the king's favor to be a straw man. one poet after another wants him for their gang; they all want that Frenchman in their stinking gangs, that rogue raised by a priest. that devil François laughs: thinks about getting rid of the ringleader and taking over. even among poets you're among whores and thieves. François Villón, that devil, one poet after another sends him to and lowers him from the gallows. this isn't why i wrote, Villón says, this isn't why i stole and killed. if you want to sing my ballad, put the rope round your own neck.





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The epigraph from “Café Bulevar Effect” comes from *Complete Poetry of Osip Emilevich Mandelstam*. Translation by Burton Raffel and Alla Burago. Albany: SUNY Press, 1973. 119.

The epigraph from “The Death of Objects” is taken from *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translation by C.K. Ogden. New York: Routledge, 1990. 35.

## Editors / Translators:



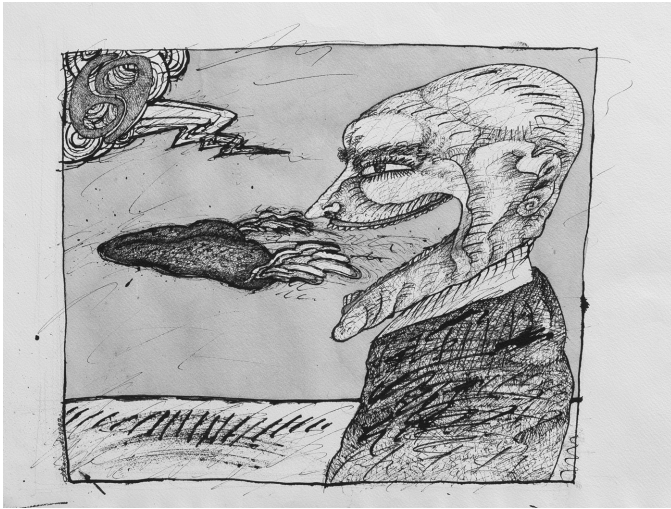
**KATHERINE M. HEDEEN** is a specialist in Latin American poetry and has both written extensively on and translated contemporary authors from the region. Her translations include collections by Rodolfo Alonso, Juan Bañuelos, Juan Calzadilla, Juan Gelman, Fayad Jamís, Hugo Mujica, José Emilio Pacheco, Víctor Rodríguez Núñez, and Ida Vitale, among many others. She is the Poetry Translation Editor for the *Kenyon Review*

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**VÍCTOR RODRÍGUEZ NÚÑEZ** (Havana, 1955) is one of Cuba's most outstanding and celebrated contemporary writers. Over 40 collections of his poetry appear throughout Latin America and Europe, and he has been the recipient of major awards all over the Spanish-speaking world, including, in 2015, the coveted Loewe Prize, the highest honor an

unpublished book of poetry can receive in the region. He has compiled three anthologies that define his poetic generation, as well as another of 20th century Cuban poetry, *La poesía del siglo XX en Cuba* (2011). He has brought out various critical editions, introductions, and essays on Spanish American poets. He divides his time between Gambier, Ohio, where he is currently Professor of Spanish at Kenyon College, and Havana, Cuba.



*El vuelo (Estudio para una ilustración publicada en El Caimán Barbudo), / The Flight (Study for an Illustration Published in El Caimán Barbudo), 1982*

The original art used for the cover design of this volume, seen above in its original version, was generously provided by Tonel. (Cover design and typography is by Elae / Lynne DeSilva-Johnson)

**TONEL** (Antonio Eligio Fernández, Havana, 1958) is an artist, critic, curator and educator. A graduate of University of Havana in Art History (1982), he has exhibited extensively, including at the Havana, Sao Paulo, Berlin, and Venice biennials. He has most recently shown his work at a solo exhibition *Ajústate al tema*, which opened in December 2018 at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba. Since 2006 he has taught as an adjunct professor and a sessional lecturer at the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. He is currently a visiting artist and scholar at the Latin American Studies Center at Stanford University.

**RECENT & FORTHCOMING FULL LENGTH  
OS PRINT::DOCUMENTS and PROJECTS,  
2018-19**

**2019**

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Ark Hive-Marthe Reed

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A Year of Misreading the Wildcats - Orchid Tierney

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Of Color: Poets' Ways of Making | An Anthology of Essays on Transformative

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DeSilva-Johnson] and Amanda Glassman, Editors

**KIN(D)\* TEXTS AND PROJECTS**

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Opera on TV-James Brunton

Hall of Waters-Berry Grass

Transitional Object-Adrian Silbernagel

**GLOSSARIUM: UNSILENCED TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS**

Śnienie / Dreaming - Marta Zelwan, (Poland, trans. Victoria Miluch)

Alparegho: Pareil-À-Rien / Alparegho, Like Nothing Else - Héléne Sanguinetti

(France, trans. Ann Cefola)

High Tide Of The Eyes - Bijan Elahi (Farsi-English/dual-language)

trans. Rebecca Ruth Gould and Kayvan Tahmasebian

In the Drying Shed of Souls: Poetry from Cuba's Generation Zero

Katherine Hedeem and Víctor Rodríguez Núñez, translators/editors

Street Gloss - Brent Armendinger with translations for Alejandro Méndez, Mercedes

Roffé, Fabián Casas, Diana Bellessi, and Néstor Perlongher (Argentina)

Operation on a Malignant Body - Sergio Loo (Mexico, trans. Will Stockton)

Are There Copper Pipes in Heaven - Katrin Ottarsdóttir

(Faroe Islands, trans. Matthew Landrum)

2018

An Absence So Great and Spontaneous It Is Evidence of Light - Anne Gorrick  
The Book of Everyday Instruction - Chloë Bass  
Executive Orders Vol. II - a collaboration with the Organism for Poetic Research  
One More Revolution - Andrea Mazzariello  
Chlorosis - Michael Flatt and Derrick Mund  
Sussuros a Mi Padre - Erick Sáenz  
Abandoners - Lesley Ann Wheeler  
Jazzercise is a Language - Gabriel Ojeda-Sague  
Born Again - Ivy Johnson  
Attendance - Rocío Carlos and Rachel McLeod Kaminer  
Singing for Nothing - Wally Swist  
Walking Away From Explosions in Slow Motion - Gregory Crosby  
Field Guide to Autobiography - Melissa Eleftherion

#### **KIN(D)\* TEXTS AND PROJECTS**

Sharing Plastic - Blake Neme  
The Ways of the Monster - Jay Besemer

#### **GLOSSARIUM: UNSILENCED TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS**

The Book of Sounds - Mehdi Navid (Farsi dual language, trans. Tina Rahimi  
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Return Trip / Viaje Al Regreso - Israel Dominguez; (Cuba, trans. Margaret Randall)

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# GLOSSARIUM : UNSILENCED TEXTS

The Operating System's GLOSSARIUM: UNSILENCED TEXTS series was established in early 2016 in an effort to recover silenced voices outside and beyond the canon, seeking out and publishing both contemporary translations and little or un-known out of print texts, in particular those under siege by restrictive regimes and silencing practices in their home (or adoptive) countries. We are committed to producing dual-language versions whenever possible.

Few, even avid readers, are aware of the startling statistic reporting that less than three percent of all books published in the United States, per UNESCO, are works in translation. Less than one percent of these (closer to 0.7%) are works of poetry and fiction. You can imagine that even less of these are experimental or radical works, in particular those from countries in conflict with the US or where funding is hard to come by.

Other countries are far, far ahead of us in reading and promoting international literature, a trend we should be both aware of and concerned about—how does it come to pass that our attentions become so myopic, and as a result, so under-informed? We see the publication of translations, especially in volume, to be a vital and necessary act for all publishers to require of themselves in the service of a more humane, globally aware, world. By publishing 7 titles in 2019, we stand to raise the number of translated books of literature published in the US this year *by a full percent*. We plan to continue this growth as much as possible.

The dual-language titles either in active circulation or forthcoming in this series include Arabic-English, Farsi-English, Polish-English, French-English, Faroese-English, Yaqui Indigenous American translations, and Spanish-English translations from Cuba, Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Puerto Rico.

The term 'Glossarium' derives from latin/greek and is defined as 'a collection of glosses or explanations of words, especially of words not in general use, as those of a dialect, locality or an art or science, or of particular words used by an old or a foreign author.' The series is curated by OS Founder and Managing Editor Elæ [Lynne DeSilva-Johnson,] with the help of global collaborators and friends.

## WHY PRINT / DOCUMENT?

*The Operating System uses the language “print document” to differentiate from the book-object as part of our mission to distinguish the act of documentation-in-book-FORM from the act of publishing as a backwards-facing replication of the book’s agentive \*role\* as it may have appeared the last several centuries of its history. Ultimately, I approach the book as TECHNOLOGY: one of a variety of printed documents (in this case, bound) that humans have invented and in turn used to archive and disseminate ideas, beliefs, stories, and other evidence of production.*

*Ownership and use of printing presses and access to (or restriction of) printed materials has long been a site of struggle, related in many ways to revolutionary activity and the fight for civil rights and free speech all over the world. While (in many countries) the contemporary quotidian landscape has indeed drastically shifted in its access to platforms for sharing information and in the widespread ability to “publish” digitally, even with extremely limited resources, the importance of publication on physical media has not diminished. In fact, this may be the most critical time in recent history for activist groups, artists, and others to insist upon learning, establishing, and encouraging personal and community documentation practices. Hear me out.*

*With The OS’s print endeavors I wanted to open up a conversation about this: the ultimately radical, transgressive act of creating PRINT/DOCUMENTATION in the digital age. It’s a question of the archive, and of history: who gets to tell the story, and what evidence of our life, our behaviors, our experiences are we leaving behind? We can know little to nothing about the future into which we’re leaving an unprecedentedly digital document trail — but we can be assured that publications, government agencies, museums, schools, and other institutional powers that be will continue to leave BOTH a digital and print version of their production for the official record. Will we?*

*As a (rogue) anthropologist and long time academic, I can easily pull up many accounts about how lives, behaviors, experiences — how THE STORY of a time or place — was pieced together using the deep study of correspondence, notebooks, and other physical documents which are no longer the norm in many lives and practices. As we move our creative behaviors towards digital note taking, and even audio and video, what can we predict about future technology that is in any way assuring that our stories will be accurately told — or told at all? How will we leave these things for the record?*

*In these documents we say:*

**WE WERE HERE, WE EXISTED, WE HAVE A DIFFERENT STORY**

*- Elæ [Lynne DeSilva-Johnson], Founder/Creative Director  
THE OPERATING SYSTEM, Brooklyn NY 2018*

# DOCUMENT

/däkyəmənt/

First meant “instruction” or “evidence,” whether written or not.

*noun* - a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record  
*verb* - record (something) in written, photographic, or other form  
*synonyms* - paper - deed - record - writing - act - instrument

[Middle English, precept, from Old French, from Latin *documentum*, example, proof, from *docere*, to teach; see *dek-* in Indo-European roots.]

## Who is responsible for the manufacture of value?

Based on what supercilious ontology have we landed in a space where we vie against other creative people in vain pursuit of the fleeting credibilities of the scarcity economy, rather than freely collaborating and sharing openly with each other in ecstatic celebration of MAKING?

While we understand and acknowledge the economic pressures and fear-mongering that threatens to dominate and crush the creative impulse, we also believe that *now more than ever* we have the tools to relinquish agency via cooperative means, fueled by the fires of the Open Source Movement.

Looking out across the invisible vistas of that rhizomatic parallel country we can begin to see our community beyond constraints, in the place where intention meets resilient, proactive, collaborative organization.

Here is a document born of that belief, sown purely of imagination and will.  
When we document we assert.  
We print to make real, to reify our being there.

When we do so with mindful intention to address our process, to open our work to others, to create beauty in words in space, to respect and acknowledge the strength of the page we now hold physical, a thing in our hand, we remind ourselves that, like Dorothy:  
*we had the power all along, my dears.*

## THE PRINT! DOCUMENT SERIES

*is a project of*  
the trouble with bartleby  
*in collaboration with*  
the operating system



