

Corresponding Voices

Volume 8

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Volume 8

Eduardo Lalo
Gloria Posada
Jessica Cuello
Jessica Ann Poli
Jaime García Maffla

Edited
by
Pedro Cuperman

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Preface

*When one is not sure about anything,
the best thing is to create projects as lifebuoys.*

Julio Cortázar

Corresponding Voices volume 8 comes out on the eve of the 40th Anniversary of Point of Contact. First a bi-annual journal, then a book series, the publication has continued expanding its activity and creating new projects, new spaces for dialogue around the contemporary arts across the World, such as the Point of Contact Art Gallery, and one of the youngest publications: the poetry series.

There's a personal vision behind all of these projects, a vision not only of the arts, but also of the contemporary world, and of how the editor should respond to them. The peculiar circumstances that surround the origins of the journal tell us (metaphorically) a lot about this vision. It was first an idea surrounded by water: the publication was conceived one day of 1975 by Pedro Cuperman, in the middle of the Caribbean sea, on a sailing ship. The experience of travel is indeed at the core of Cuperman's creation as much as it is at the core of the 20th century arts.

The modern spirit appears first as a feeling that beyond the local horizon there are other unknown horizons, the world becomes then a mental image in expansion motivated by new flows of information, but also by new forms of art, such as cinema, a visual art in movement... New means

of transport allow for the modern man to reach for those horizons. It is indeed an exciting experience, an adventure of the kind Ulysses undertook when he departed Ithaca, his homeland. However, once our modern hero reaches new coasts, he finds out that the old local vision of a static world, with its permanent truths and beliefs, is but one possible angle of vision; he realizes his position in the universe has always been eccentric. Consciousness of the absolute (truth, space, time) implies a certain virtual guarantee of order, stability, and safety. The disintegration of those certainties implies a new challenge for 20th century men: first the acceptance of multiplicity, difference and the adventure of chaos; then the creation of new possible orders, new possible representations of the world. However, the arts no longer aspire to offer the observer the old sensation of unity. Literature and the arts understand very quickly that perspective is not only an attribute of the observer (subjectivity), but also an inherent quality of the world: reality comes provided with multiple angles, it is not just a question of subjectivity... Twentieth century literature and the visual arts undertake the challenge, and they start to draw a more “real” world; impressionist, as it presents to the poetic eye; plural and simultaneous as modern life portrays it to him; true, because truth is now everywhere and it is always shaped by fiction, that is, by language.

However, we are not left completely alone in the middle of a sea of wreckages and of unrelated fictions. In the midst of doubt and confusion, in a moment when an image of the Universe has been erased, disappearing with it every sense of safety and familiarity, the modern man seeks a lifebuoy to hold on to: literature is one of those life-savers, for approaching a work of art (by reading it or creating it) is, as Julio Cortázar used to say, one of those duties that prevents us from falling into despair when nothing around us seems solid.

But beyond this immediate rescue, there's a way of restoring a more permanent coherence, a certain order of things that does no longer depend on the old western myths or traditional narratives. In a Universe that is perceived as a sea of infinite fragments that seem to float adrift,

other notions appear offering us an alternative: the belief in chance, the sudden emergence of “correspondences” among apparently unrelated authors; spontaneous analogies; the intertextual dialogue amongst distant voices; a net of meaning that becomes firmer and more reliable as its inner connections grow in number and resonance.

The role of editing, as Pedro Cuperman conceived it for the first time in the middle of the Caribbean sea, on a sailing boat, forty years ago, has to do with the belief that new spaces needed to be opened in order to reveal this intertextual framework. The poetry series, *Corresponding Voices*, evidences the continuity of Cuperman’s vision.

The present volume brings together five poets of different cultural origins, ages, and styles. We haven’t summoned them around a topic or formal feature that may serve to justify the character of the volume. There’s not a geographic criteria nor a time period or poetic school depicted here. However, if the reader should have the proper disposition, he will find among these apparent divergent voices some words, images and thoughts that may suddenly enter into dialogue with one another. If a revealing image of this kind should emerge in the mind of the reader, that means the book managed to become one successful project, or a good lifebuoy in the middle of restless waters.

Libertad Garzón

Paístexto

By

Eduardo Lalo

El aburrimiento dominical de la ciudad

Vasos de un licor blanco que no permite burbujas

Losas en las aceras con grietas hechas sin energía
hijas del peso y la indiferencia

Puertas que han recibido por décadas el sucio ornato del tiempo

Recorro una ciudad de polvos
de hollín sobre tiznes
de arenas varadas
de afilados cantos de piedra

Aquí hombres y mujeres acuden a escuchar al que viene de lejos

En la tarde del domingo se agrupan para decir palabras al viajero
para que quede claro que la ciudad es más que una trampa
en la que quedan con vida
en la que escriben textos

Súbitamente dan la espalda y se van extenuados por las dos frases que
dijeron

más que nunca cubiertos por el polvo de la ciudad
que es mitad coraje mitad castigo

Sunday's boredom in the city

Glasses of a white liquor that does not allow bubbles

Stones on the sidewalk with cracks made with no energy
by the pressure of of weight and indifference

Doors bestowed for decades with the ornate filth of time

I walk a city of dusts
of soot over smut
of stranded sands
of sharp chunks of stone

Here men and women flock to hear the one who comes from afar

On Sunday afternoon they gather to say words to the traveler
to make clear that the city is more than a trap
in which they remain alive
in which they write down texts

Suddenly they turn their back and leave exhausted by the two phrases
they said
more than ever covered by the dust of a city
that is half courage half punishment

Escribo en un cuaderno grueso
que no podré llenar con las palabras justas

Ante mí habrá invariablemente un derroche:
tinta y papel desperdiciados

Repitiendo un gesto una acción indefinidamente
no llegaré nunca a las páginas de mi libreta

Pero heme aquí
con tinta y papel

para sacar la vida de la mente

I write in a thick notebook
that I will not fill with the precise words

Facing me, invariably a waste:
ink and paper squandered

Repeating a gesture an act indefinitely
I shall never reach the pages of my notebook

But here I am
with ink and paper

to make life come out of the mind

La extraordinaria trayectoria de mis medias
que ciegas van hacia adelante
recorriendo el mundo
con pies que desconocen el suelo que pisan

Aromáticas aprietan
tobillos hinchados por horas de marcha

Con ellas he estado en las ciudades que me han tocado
en ruinas
en charcos
en huecos

Han sido generosas y tontas como botellas vacías
y en la memoria se difuminan
como conversaciones y cosas

No fueron más que la envoltura del tamaño y número de mis pasos

Sin embargo contuvieron todo lo que hubo
Fueron la forma vacía del instrumento

The extraordinary trajectory of my socks
that blindly go forth
traversing the world
with feet that know not the ground they step on

Aromatic they squeeze
swollen ankles from hours of marching

With them I have been in cities that awaited me
in ruins
in puddles
in holes

They were generous and foolish like empty bottles
and in memory they fade
like conversations and things

They were naught more than the wrapped size and number of my steps

Nonetheless they contained all there was
They were the hollow shape of the instrument

La lección del lugar del que quisimos irnos
es su incomprensible atracción

Quedo aquí
porque el tiempo muerto requiere estudio y testimonio
bondad

No hay lección

Entonces surgen las palabras incondicionales y desnudas

The lesson of the place we wanted to flee
is its inexplicable lure

I stay
because dead time requires study and testimony
kindness

There is no lesson

Now the unconditional and naked words surface

Mi vida es el paso nocturno por la avenida de Diego

Ocurre casi ininterrumpidamente por las décadas de mi tiempo

La avenida de Diego en la noche es lo que no pude llegar a escribir

Este es el fracaso al que he dedicado mi escritura

La noche elemental en una calzada elemental

Esto fue el mundo

Quedo sobrecogido hecho parte de la avenida de Diego

unido a lo indecible

My life is the nocturnal path down De Diego Avenue
It occurs almost uninterruptedly for the decades of my time
De Diego Avenue at night is what I never managed to write
This is the failure to which I dedicate my writing
The elemental night in an elemental road
This was the world
I am left startled one with De Diego Avenue
one with the unspeakable

En el calor
en la pobreza
en la escritura

Todo

In the heat
in poverty
in writing

Everything

Hambre
que
nombra
y
con
residuos
país
texto

Hunger
that
names
and
with
residues
country
text

Peste

El colonizado
nada
en agua de
colonia
y
nada

Plague

The colonized
swims
in au de
cologne
and
nothing

Un insecto puede vivir sin cabeza nueve horas

Hay gente que lo puede hacer por toda la vida

Hay pueblos que lo hacen por toda su historia

Hay individuos que se quedan en sus pueblos y no son acéfalos

An insect can live headless for nine hours

There are people who can do this all their lives

There are countries that do it through their entire history

There are those who stay in their countries and are not headless

Academiadelalengua
Academiadelayeguamuerta:
lacaballa

Academyofletters
Academyofthedeadmare:
theshehorse

En la noche
la noche no tiene día ni comienzo

Es residuo
detrito de horas y décadas
formulación que mide el reloj
y no es tiempo

La noche es una oportunidad
una condición de lo humano
una escritura
una manera de marcar el papel con tinta
una espera lúcida
un mundo por fin abierto

La noche no sale de la noche

Es vida en el mundo más mundo
fuera del mundo

At night
night has no day nor beginning

It is residue
detritus of hours and decades
a formulation measured by the clock
that is not time

Night is an opportunity
a condition of that which is human
a script
a manner of branding the paper with ink
a lucid wait
a world open at last

Night does not come out of the night

It is life in the worldest world
out of the world

¿Cuántas veces mis plumas se han abierto y cerrado?
¿Cuántos cientos miles de veces les he sacado el capuchón
desnudándolas dejándolas en la piel de la punta húmeda?

Desde que tengo memoria la pluma ha sido el propósito y el gozo del
mundo

Mi mano tiene cinco dedos y una pluma
El centro de mi cuerpo es la pluma
con la que dejo las huellas de los pies

Trazo una línea de palabras
y en mi pluma todo vive
Soy lo que ella ha marcado
Soy lo que la pluma no acaba de agotar ni conocer

Soy el proyecto de un objeto de un líquido de una lengua

How many times have my pens opened and closed?
How many hundreds thousands of times have I uncapped them?
undressing them leaving them on the skin of the wet tip?

Ever since I can remember the pen has been the purpose and joy of the
world

My hand has five fingers and a pen
The center of my body is the pen
with which I leave footprints

I trace a line of words
and in my pen it all lives
I am what it has marked
I am what the pen cannot come to exhaust or know

I am the project of an object of a liquid of a language

El calor en los recintos del aire grueso
los años agotados en el hogar sin nombre

Respiro el aire inmóvil
manoseando los libros de la especie

El insomnio es una plaga de insectos
y amanezco ante una libreta
en la que iré poniendo nombres y verbos
entre largas frases tachadas

En el calor de los recintos del aire grueso
en los años agotados en el hogar sin nombre
escribo las palabras del consuelo

The heat on the precincts of thick air
the years exhausted in the home with no name

I breathe the still air
fondling the books of the species

Insomnia is a plague of insects
and morning finds me facing a notebook
in which I will put down names and verbs
between long scratched out phrases

In the heat of the precincts of the thick air
in the years exhausted in the home with no name
I write the consoling words

¿Qué biografía es la de quien escribe palabras que no regresarán a él?

Escribir es extraviarse en una ciudad desconocida
El lector encuentra las palabras de un desaparecido
A veces esto es enorme pero no basta

La biografía será lo que une a las piedras a los árboles a las mujeres a
los hombres

Lo que no termina de decirse

What biography belongs to he who writes words that will not return to him?

To write is to go astray in an unknown city
The reader finds the words of a man disappeared
Sometimes this is enormous but not enough

The biography will be what unites the rocks the trees the women the men

What does not end being said

Todo está aquí hoy

Todo estará aquí aun después de la ausencia

Nada se ha perdido
ni nada será nuevo
porque ésta es la naturaleza de la nada
en la que está la potencia de todo

No se puede escribir
Solamente se puede manchar
heroica y hermosamente la página

All is here today

All will be here even after death

Nothing has been lost
Nothing will be new
for this is the nature of nothingness
in which lies the potential of everything

One cannot write
Can only stain
heroicbeautifully the page

Las huellas del mundo
son manchas de tinta

Lo que cabe en una servilleta
o en una pequeña libreta

Una isla cabe aquí igual que el mundo

Todos los poetas son judíos

Todos los poetas son isleños

The traces of the world
are stains of ink

What fits in a napkin
or in a little notebook

An island fits here same as the world

All poets are Jews

All poets are Islanders

El sabor del mundo
está en el líquido del vaso
que no agota la noche

Y volveré al vaso al vaso al vaso
No podré agotar el líquido
ni el mundo

Estaré aquí ante el vaso de mis labios
porque el fin es una apariencia

No colmaré nunca:

y y y y y

The flavor of the world
is in the liquid of the glass
that night does not exhaust

And I will return to the glass the glass the glass
I will not exhaust the liquid
or the world

I will be here facing the glass on my lips
because the end is an appearance

I will never reach the end:

and and and and and

Deberé ponerle nombres a mis plumas
que quedan por semanas abandonadas en mi escritorio

Cada una es una posibilidad que no sé si honro
si descubro su altura
si llego a ella

Mis plumas son un sustituto del lector

Aquí te encuentras desconocido
por el objeto que tengo en la mano

Escribamos nuestros nombres al final de la página

Repitamos el intento de encontrarnos

I should name the pens
they stay abandoned on my desk for weeks

Each one is a possibility that I don't know if I honor
if I discover its heights
if I reach them

My pens are a substitute of the reader

Here you find yourself unknown
by the object I hold in my hand

Lets write our names at the bottom of the page

Lets repeat the attempt to meet

Soy un roto
Lo supe frente a la bahía de San Juan
No huí
El mar fue mío un instante
en el que conocí la historia de Puerto Rico
no separada de las islas
ni los continentes
Fui
lo que estaba ante la bahía sucia
de una ciudad perdida

Lo que estaba frente a mí
era yo y un país

Descubrí por qué sufrí tantos años
lo que sufriré por días sin término
Lo que será indecible
isla
y vida

I am broken
I knew it while facing the Bay of San Juan
I did not flee
The sea was mine for an instant
in which I knew the history of Puerto Rico
not detached from the islands
or the continents
I was
what was facing the dirty bay
in a lost city

What was in front of me
was myself and a country

I discovered why I suffered so many years
what I shall suffer for days on end
What will be unsayable
island
and life

Gloria Posada

Ropaje

Residimos
en sombra y luz
bajo techo
o bosque

En el cuerpo
agua resbala
fuego se adhiere

Buscamos protección
en el lenguaje
en el silencio

Robes

We reside
between light and shade
under a roof
or forest

Down the body
water flows
fire clings

We seek protection
in language
in silence

Extravío

Busca
su nombre
entre miles
Su casa
en una ciudad
de la que perdió
el mapa

Astray

In search
for his own name
among thousands
His house
in a city
whose map
he's lost

Dimensiones

Quedarse o seguir
repetir imágenes y actos
construir entre ruinas
un camino

Fulgores sobreviven
desaparición
Recuerdos rehacen
cada ciclo del cielo

Velocidad
más allá de luz
sin cuerpo para sentir
ni ojos para ver

Herida se cierra
árbol cortado
busca renacer

Conoceremos
escrituras en arena
o piedra

Dimensions

To stay or to move on
to repeat images and actions
to build a road
among ruins

Bright moments survive
disappearance
Memories remake
every cycle of the sky

Speed
beyond light
without a body to feel
nor eyes to see

A wound scars over
the hacked tree
seeks to be reborn

We'll see
writings on the sand
or stone

Etéreo

Metamorfosis del cuerpo en vuelo
tiempo transfigurado
donde muere o nace día
leve como aire en luz

Alas son verbo
destellos de color
ecos en instantes
sin horas
Estrellas fugaces

Misterio
es quietud de flor
polen y néctar
roce de pétalos
búsqueda en amanecer
extinción en ocaso

Colibrí
corazón de fuego
latido entre árboles y cielo

Ethereal

Metamorphosis of the body in flight
time is transfigured
where a day dies or rises
soft like the air under the light

Wings become verb
glints of color
instant echoes
without hours
Shooting stars

Mystery
is a flower's stillness
pollen and nectar
the touch of petals
quest at sunrise
extinction at sunset

Hummingbird
heart of fire
beats between trees and sky

Jornada

Todos los días
otro
Sucesión o ruptura
avatares entre sueño
y despertar

¿Qué luz señalará
camino del encuentro
Qué sombra indicará
separación?

Journey

Every day
another
Succession or rupture
avatars half way between somnolence
and wakefulness

What light will mark
the path of encounter?
What shadow will signal
distance?

Ansia

La sed vuelve
cuando se evaporan suelos
se consume la sangre
y se alejan lluvias

Cuando el trabajo agota
sudor cubre la piel
y sol nos acompaña
en largos trayectos
de bosque a ciudad
río a morada

Cada paso
busca un manantial
o una gota de rocío

Preguntas
llevan a un nuevo país
a otros cielos y fuentes

Longing

Thirst returns
when the lands dry out
blood is consumed
and the rains move away

When labor exhaust us
sweat covers the skin
and sun walks with us
along the journeys
from forest to city
river to dwelling

Each step
seeks a water spring
or a dew drop

Questions
take you to a new country
to other skies and fountains

Geografía

Montañas
rodean ciudad
fortalezas protegen vida

Subir por laderas
como agua que se evapora
descender como lluvia a tierra

Geography

Mountains
surround the city
fortresses preserve life

Walk up the mountainsides
like water vapor
descend like the rain to the ground

Continuidad

Cada calle conduce
a otra calle
a una casa
cama o mesa

Salida del sol
anuncia un nuevo día
Transparencia o penumbra
se entrecruzan
A palabra
precede silencio

Sucesión de horas
es sueño
despertar
muerte
o construcción de la memoria

Lenguaje nombra
lo que no existe
Ausencia
continúa rumor
de las cosas

Continuity

Each street leads
to another street
to a house
bed or table

Sunrise
announces a new day
clearness or penumbra
intertwine
into a word
silence precedes

Succession of hours
is sleepiness
awakening
death
or memory construction

Language names
the nonexistent
Absence
extends the rumor
of things

Alimento

Buitre
en cielo
tierra
en nubes y cadáveres

Penetración de dos abismos

Sustenance

Vulture
across the sky
the land
through clouds and carcasses

Penetration of two abysses

Claroscuro

Reflejos en cristales
y agua
Agitación de aire
en los pasos
Claroscuro
adentro
afuera

Cercas
Drenajes de lluvia
Paredes de cemento
Rendijas para respirar

Llegar y salir del día

Nomadismo
anhela sombra
reposo
intervalo del sueño
y despertar

Otra luz funda la noche

Multitud cruza sendas
de asfalto y barro
Cada ser vuelve
a una casa vacía

Chiaroscuro

Reflections on glass
and water
Agitation of the air
in the steps
Chiaroscuro
inside
outside

Fences
Rain drains
Cement walls
Breathing cracks

Arrival and departure of the day

Nomadism
yearns for some shade
rest
sleeping recess
and awakening

Another light founds the night

Multitudes crossing paths
made of asphalt and clay
Every being returns
to an empty house

Exilio

Partir
sumergirse en nuevas aguas
recibir otras heridas

Cuerpo se cubre
o desnuda

Desterrados del sol
trópico será evocación
en noches largas

Se cambia de suelo
como se muda de piel

Frío no es más severo
que ausencia

Exile

Departure
submersion into new waters
acceptance of other wounds

Body covers up
or undresses

Exiled from the sun
tropic will become evocation
in the long nights

Moving to a new land
is like changing the skin

Cold is not more severe
than absence

Quimera

Brillo de sol en arena
ilusión y espejo
Reflejos del rostro
son partículas de desierto

Chimera

Sunshine on the sand
delusion and mirror
Face reflections
are particles of the desert

¿Por dónde seguir?

Sendas en hierba y agua
rastros en aire de otros cielos
humo de fábricas
Lluvia no limpia
ni quita sed

¿Por dónde seguir?
Asfalto quema
pero impide al lodo ensuciar pies
Edificios dan sombra
son sitio para algunos
No sé
qué hay tras muros y ventanas
qué ocultan cemento
o transparencia

¿Hay lugar para mí?
No vendo ni compro
deambulo por calles
cada paso después de otro
Tengo espacio aquí
en estos centímetros
y más tarde allá

Antes de cruzar miro los lados
autos no cesan
como función
me dejarán atrás

Creo permanecer sin ser otra todavía
sin saber qué encontrar
Todo mapa
espero me conduzca a ti

Where to continue?

Paths on the grass and on the water
tracks in other skies' air
factories' smoke
Rain doesn't wash
nor removes thirst

Where to continue?
The pavement burns
but it stops the mud from dirtying your feet
Buildings provide shade
some people's place
I guess
what is behind walls and windows
do they hide cement
or transparency

Is there room for me?
I don't sell nor buy
I wander though the streets
one step after the other
There's room here
in these centimeters
and later over there

Before crossing I look both sides
cars never stop
their function
is to pass me by

I believe I remain without becoming another yet
without knowing what to expect
Every map
I hope will lead me to you

Jessica Cuello

Jeanne D'Arc Thinks of Her Virginity

The calf won't get born.
The cow moans and Father

unbends the leg
stuck in her flesh.

I pretend not to know
that he told my brothers

to drown me
if I left.

A child is heavy on the feet,
clinging with

an open mouth. A virgin
can prophesy for God, but once

a mother,
nothing else.

Isabelle D'Arc: To My Daughter Jeanne

When you broke the marriage contract
you were my lanky girl.
I dressed your torso by the fire,
picked grasses off your hair.
I hear your humming while I work
as if you left it in the timbers of our home.
The shifting of the heat and cold
coax it out and you are here.
I had to hold your father back.
He dreamed you left with soldiers
for the war. I put my hands on him,
held in our loss: You were not ours.
We all knew what you'd seen.
We'd seen it too: village burnt, cattle gone.

The Bishops Turn on Jeanne D'Arc

It was not vanity—
the certainty in my voice.

The sword, the horse—
three of us moving

without a seam. Two years,
the sweetness of a path

always sure. God
in my ear.

*The English out,
the English out.*

Jeanne D'Arc's Triolet

I do not know A from B.
More than the sword,
the lilies sown on ivory.
I can't tell A or B.
Fringed with silk, a field
where our Lord holds the world.
I can't read A or B.
I loved my banner more.

Jeanne D'Arc: In My Cell

A French clerk
writes down my words—not all.

Miles away
my mother spins new wool for spring.

They bleed my side. I'm sick
with fish the warden sent.

I would not tell
if my saints no longer comfort me

and shackled to the wall at night
I dream in silence of Lorraine.

The fields are wide. I hold
my left hand in

my right and kiss
my fingers like a mother.

Midwife

The afterbirth was red and worn.
Then I sewed her
and she was empty.
Nearby the baby was curled
and breathing—with nothing—
severed. Eyes not seeing
and light is much more
than we want. Much more
abrasive than we knew.
All of us began in a room.
From water. From the silk and iron.
What room is she?
Walls that go
when they hold no one.

Girl at the Midwife's Door

She ran to say we're ready—the men
have left the house. I uncrossed my arms
from my sleeping chest. The stars were low.
A sheepdog scratched beneath the door—
to be where we were. As if our panting
for winter's end was here, condensed
into a single hour, hungry for the violent
spikes that push through earth and shake hard dirt.
I breathed with the mother, with the dog's pushing paw.
Like touch against a pod of seeds: the silk gives way inside.

Limbo: Witch Trial, 1580

I wait with unsaved babies. Threads lit,
unlit. Thieves. Faltering.
Whispered pronouns beneath the door.
Everyone else rises.
Everyone else is already there
through the blackhole,
in the sweet frame.
I said His name
but at arm's length.
I sinned.
They found the marks.
How familiar: I won't belong
to the face that made me.
I won't belong by living.

Glass Eye at the Witch Trial: 1580

The torturer's glass eye
wanders as I speak,

twice the wrongs
to find.

The circle of a childhood burn
is pale with age below my wrist:

A Mark. The twisting of griefs
is a snapping rag.

The eye is off-kilter,
knows no humeur,

to forgive it is to forgive
a thing—a rock

that opened your knee, the table edge
that put a hole in your head.

Witch Trial 1580: The Cat

A delay each time they speak
my given name:
Marguerite, Marguerite.

I'm called The Cat,
I say. Law in the blood,
stopped by a thread.

Law in the breasts before
they break with watermilk,
the silver food.

God's law twisted,
God's law of small gums.
They asked

about the little tooth,
tiny grey that broke and dropped
into the dirt. Why did I have it in a tin?

For seventeen years she slept
against my thighs, purred on my chest
when a child died.

The Castaway: Moby Dick Chapter 93

The sea keeps his body up
and his mind
spills a liquid way
into the dark
and his face with the blue
where the earth falls off
where God is not—only faceless
angels slither, gilled.

Worth less than the whale lost

but born. To a mother, casket-dark.
He woke to who was there.
No one. Who was ripped
from him. A boy. Or who the sea.
Why must he invisible
his feet turned white
too white. Like sugar
in water, receding

Worth less than the whale lost

but born and took up space.
A hand, pinprick.
Next, I.

The Right Whale's Head Speaks

O Captor, my captor,
I'm fastened to the boat

and hands dive in my satin mouth.
The cutting-in. I am two parts.

My body over there.
My head a sulking sphinx,

a shoe-shape, an obedient.
Pour me out

to light, to burn,
to flicker in a human

eye. Animal blink,
the quiet code. I give

the riddled answer
of a thing. The wind

vibrates the blinds
that line my mouth: a hundred

bones with fringe
and useless now.

Jessica Ann Poli

FIGURE STUDY: A BARN IN FLAMES

she three. and One, the blood, at two, the dirt. One, wet bloody step, was hot: One leapt from wood. outward holds two, three a door. One, but wet scream—her circled caw—three, of metallic two, in she wet clink of wooden boots, was woman's room. she holds—was She rising—you, don't and three, the stone and lamp, mouth. One (you) screams. and the barn, the iron shape (One, you, (something had was hay, circled figure drip) inside in her scream figure two, three). and slid She, clink of silken hay, iron silk, was iron a figure (One): a room. hearing wood. muttering (One, when One—her, and hay, muttering). She mouth, mouths: bloody sound, stop at three, stepped red. blood, the caw, the barn made drip. all the while quiet up in beams— something stepped and struck a match.

DEAD FOREST

There's a forest and it's dead. The trees are dead. The fallow field is dead. The lamp that used to light the small house's porch is shattered and, in a sense, dead. The girl who lived here was accidentally ruled dead once; she was nine and jumped into a shallow quarry. Now the house is full of mice, dusty milkglass, faint smell of corn and smoke. The silos, half-full, are caving in on themselves in a slow death. Summer is dead. The stars in the black sky might very well be dead. Night still comes, history book of the dead. The words you spoke when your mother was living are dead— there's no way to recall them now, twenty years later. The city you moved to is dead. Dead people who pretend they're living walk the streets, talking about death. The bird making its nest in the house's gutters goes about its business like nothing is wrong, like the world isn't dead. When it's time for her babies to hatch, maybe—

SHOW

All of the candles turn on.
Natalie, are you coming to see the show?
Of course she doesn't answer.
The candles make balloon-popping sounds.
Or do they snap? Yes, candles snap, that's
what they do. These ones do it especially well.
That's really all they do, though.
And actually, good thing Natalie didn't come,
because we can't find our way out of here.
Come to think of it,
we don't even know who we are.

APPROACH

I don't think there was a house in your dream
but I came to it,
the morning was sound,
clouds shifting light here and there,
the sky was a wound,
the river was there
and the children too and yet
your hand didn't move, you didn't say
anything.
How could I not wonder what it meant
to be you
standing on that porch?
How could I look at your shadow on the lawn
and not ask it to forgive?

8 POEMS FROM SUMMER OF LOVE

Dry woodsmoke
in the gutted room.

Your mouth is forest-heavy
and knotted with summer.

Soon I hear trainsong
coming up the valley,

an echo of the first time
I heard you talk about God.

My eyes are pinholes of fire.
I drink wind / carry handfuls of trees.

I don't know what to say.

Here is a warped record
and two hands grasping at the dark.

Behind this sheet of rain
is the moon and its tinny voice
calling out to the river

and you.

Last night I dreamt of a planet made of mirror glass and another made of human hair. You stood on one, I on the other, while we stared in each other's direction waiting for something to happen.

I won't hold you afraid.
I'll go by a different name.
Consider distance, cliffs.
Consider that this is how it's always been—
flood-smell in the attic, dirt teeth,
summer spent clawing the ground.
Eventually there will be a place
where we can stop, build fences.
Where this kind of unknowing
is a story we tell our children.

how gotten is today

forgotten
under the footbridge

does your heart tune itself
to the corn

is your body a wicked thing

The buildings blink predictably
in the city where you sleep.

I'd like to get out of this valley
but the trees have built walls
to keep me in.

The night is a vibrating leaf.
The night is a rapidly-heating test tube
charging the air with a glowing noise.

Why do the crows look worried?
When will the moths
crawl out from under their dust hills?

Out of the dark come blue boats
drifting onto every shore but mine.

there's a place
after all this sound
a place
set slowly on fire

don't worry about the river
or whether you're alive
I can see
the lightning in Georgia
and the water like religion
in your hands

look North—
see me kneeling in the dirt
I'm not made for this
but my body keeps moving
like it knows what happens next

I watched you frog-kick
and dive underwater.

There was a sound like planets
ripping in half.
The clouds were stained and wrong.

Before I followed you under,
I looked at the matchstick trees
and swore to them
this time would be different.

Jaime García Maffla

ORILLA

Sentido

Del sentirse...

Párpado que se cierra

Y otro cielo más vasto o azul

Se abre

Por el cual sola una paloma pasa

Vista por el contemplador

Contemplado por ella desde lo alto

SHORE

Sense
Of sensibility...
The eyelid closes
And a vaster or bluer sky
Opens up
Across which a lonely dove passes
Contemplated by the viewer
Viewed by her from above

GUANTELETE

Saberse

De un Sentido

Al silencioso moverse de las manos

El Guantelete

Adarga ya dejada en vencimiento o duelo

A orillas de un manantial

Entre la transparencia de su lecho

Así visible mas no entregado.

Sí en su encargo

¡Ay! Mas no tanto...Sí ¿Quizás?

Sí, acaso más, en la forja a fuego de ese juego.

GAUNTLET

To be aware
Of one's Purpose
In the silent movement of the hands
The Gauntlet
A shield already left to expire or to mourn
On the shores of a water spring
In the transparency of its riverbed
Thus visible but not surrendered.
It sure serves its mission
Oh! Though not so sure...Yes. Maybe?
Yes, perhaps even more than that, in the forge by fire of such framework.

ENTRE REJAS

-¡Por qué has
Venido a visitarme hasta Alcatraz?
-¡ Y por qué hasta Alcatraz te han traído?
Sucedió que arranqué la pluma de un pájaro
Cuando al golpear contra el cristal cayó a mis pies
Por un momento se desvaneció
Lo hice, sí, mas luego
Despertó y le ayudé a alzar más ligero su vuelo otra vez...

BEHIND BARS

- Why have you
Come to visit me to Alcatraz!?
- And why to Alcatraz they've brought you!?
It so happened that I plucked a bird's feather
Then I hit the glass and it fell to my feet
It fainted for a moment
Yes, I did it, but later
It woke up and I helped it to take swift flight again...

INOCUO

Oscuridad que
Clara ronda el baldío
Lar de las ensoñaciones por oficio.
Oficio en ocio
Del lar oscuro de una claridad
Y ese sendero con huellas de corcel
Si por débiles lentas
Que por lentas más fuertes en lo inocuo.

INNOCUOUS

Obscurity

A clearing around the barren land

Home of daydreams by profession.

Profession in leisure

By the dark side of a clearing

And that path full of horse tracks

Slow because they are weak

Weak because they are stronger among the innocuous.

OLA

Limo

En ondas

Dibujo en la arena

Que la próxima ola dibujará

Otra vez ya en el pensamiento

Desde en el duelo ¿vendría desde lo próximo?

WAVE

Slime

In waves

A drawing on the sand

Which the next wave will draw

Once again in the mind

Mourning, did it come from what's next?

VIAJE AL NORTE

¡Qué lance así!

Una lágrima cae sobre la página

Pautada no

Para hacerse eterna con la pluma

Dibujo de las letras y señale exactas del Destino.

Por sí

O para sí

O aún así desde sí

La goleta ya anclada que viajó a los hielos

Del ártico del alma.

Sólo ya la madera de las jarcias

Fue al rescate de una otra goleta presa entre su Iceberg.

TRIP TO THE NORTH

Let him launch it!
A tear falls upon the page
Untraced
To become eternal with the quill
Letter drawings and exact signs of Destiny.
By itself
Or for itself
Or even to itself from itself
The vessel, now anchored, traveled to the ice
Of the arctic of the soul.
Only the wood of the riggings
Went to the rescue of another vessel trapped within its Iceberg.

TAMBIÉN

Bosques

Que se confunden

Los de los árboles y los de las horas

Movidos por el viento y por el tiempo

Quietos en la imaginación

En el cerco del iris

Este se mueve al unísono con ellos

En el espacio abierto

Desierto

Camino cerrado del vivir en cifras de ramajes

Con el viento del Ser por las horas y hojas interiores

Arnés de la conciencia si también hay campanas

Lejanas dentro nuestro en el enigma de nuestro afuera

AS WELL

Forests
That blend
Those made of trees and those made of hours
Shaked by wind and time
Still in the imagination
On the edge of the iris
That moves in unison with them
In the open space
Desert
Closed road of living among numbers made of foliage
With the wind of Being through the hours and the interior leaves
The harness of consciousness if there's also bells
Distant inside us within the enigma of our outside

QUIETUD

En posición

Tal vez de loto

Una razón busca sus razones

O en actitud

Tal vez de Buda

Otras razones olvidan su razón

Pétalo y nube y mano y aire y pensamiento y luz

QUIETUDE

In position

Maybe lotus'

One reason looks for its reasons

Or adopt an attitude

Perhaps Buda's

Other reasons forget their reason

Petal and cloud and hand and air and thought and light

JUSTA

Una voz hay
Que el yelmo confunde
Con sus rejas
Dicha abajada
Sobre el arnés de la ausencia de Norte
Ya por sus rejas esa voz confundida
Se hace resonancia
De signos opacados en una eternidad
Efímera entre ese instante o luz aquí o allí de ella así
Bajo el firmamento
Cubierto por banderas de unas Cortes lejanas olvidadas
En justo olvido si en justo recuerdo de ausencias y presencias.

FAIR

There's a voice
The helmet muddles up
With its bars
Such cut
Upon the harness of North's absence
The voice now bewildered by its bars
Becomes resonance
Of signs overshadowed by an eternity
Ephemeral between that instant or light here and there of her thus
Under the firmament
Covered by flags of some distant and forgotten Courts
In fair oblivion as they lie in fair memories of absences and presences.

ALCÁZAR

Transmutación

De lo que queda como antes era

De cuanto había cuando nada había

Transformación de lo mismo en lo mismo

Por su igual en lo otro que eso mismo es por otros

Senda y Zahara alcázar de una vida que nunca fue vivida...

ALCAZAR

Transmutation

Of that which remains as it was before

Of everything that existed when nothing existed

Transformation of the same into the same

For its equal into another which is the same thing for the others

Path and Zahara alcazar of a life that was never lived...

¿SI?

Si

Necesario es, se escribe,
Y por tal lo hago, ecos
Para mí son de quien seré. Me devela
Desvelo entre palabras aún en duermevela,
Si por sólo pensadas habitan ya en ciernes lo eterno...

Si

No, no ha de hacerlo ni serlo; de nadie a nadie
Río del tiempo que a fuerza fuera a dar al lar
Ya cantado de nadie
¡Ay de mi otro Yo! Aquel que en mí,

Si

Sabría de lo escrito
Y con razones todo lo ignoraba,
En la alta mar del aire vuelto viento,
Aulaga ¡Ay de sí!
Círculo que en sí guarda vanas señales por verdades
Y edades
¡Un Azahar -Axajar-, desdecirse o párpados, que todo son, sí: Azar!

YES?

If
Necessary, I'll write it,
Thus I do it, echoes
I believe they belong to whom I belong. It reveals to me
It unveils among words still concealed,
But as soon as they are thought of, they begin to inhabit the eternal...

If
Not, it shouldn't be done nor born; from no one to no one
River of time that is forced to flow into shelter
Now sang by no one
Oh my other I! Who's with me,

If
He'd known the words
And for good reasons he ignored all,
In the open sea of the air which became wind,
Gorse oh gorse!
Circle that keeps hollow signs for truths
And ages
An Azahar – Axajar-, backtrack or eyelids, because it's all about, yes:
Chance!

Contributors

Eduardo Lalo

Eduardo Lalo is an internationally renowned Puerto Rican novelist and poet, visual artist and educator. Lalo completed his studies at Columbia University (New York) and Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris), and is currently a Professor in the Humanities at the University of Puerto Rico. His books combine hybrids of essay and fiction, which he integrates with visual arts (drawing and photography), essays and fiction in his published work. Lalo became an internationally acclaimed literary figure in 2013 upon receiving the most prestigious award in the Hispanic-American literary world, the Rómulo Gallegos Award, for his novel *Simone*. A habitual columnist and literary critic in the San Juan-based *80 Grados*, he is also a video artist of films including *donde* (2005) and *La ciudad perdida* (2006). Featured in dozens of exhibitions nationally and abroad, his photography and video work presents an esoteric look at urban spaces through black and white images, sounds and narrative that capture the isolation of the post industrialization era.

Gloria Posada

Gloria Posada holds a degree in Anthropology from the University of Antioquia, a professorship in Plastic Arts from the National University of Colombia, a master's degree in Aesthetics from the National University of Colombia and an advanced studies degree in Historical and Natural Heritage from the University of Huelva, Spain. Posada has devoted herself to an enquiry into nature and the world, which manifests itself sometimes in words and sometimes in images or shapes. In her quest, poetry and plastic arts have had a parallel development, which occasionally involves installations, sound art or interventions of public space. In Posada's collections, there is reflection on the sacred and mortality, on history and the collective imagery about the feminine and its archetypes, and an exploration of the past and present of personal history. Posada has won several award for her work including the National Young Poetry Award

of the Colombian Institute of Culture for her book *Oficio divino (Divine Office)*, second prize in the Carlos Castro Saavedra National Poetry Award, the Individual Creation Scholarship of the Colombian Ministry of Culture for her *Lugares (Places)* project, and was granted the Colombia-Mexico artistic residence and the FONCA/CONALCULTA award of Mexico among others.

Jessica Cuello

Jessica Cuello is the author of the chapbooks *My Father's Bargain* (Finishing Line Press, 2015), *By Fire* (Hyacinth Girl Press, 2013), and *Curie* (Kattywompus Press, 2011). She was the winner of the 2013 New Letters Poetry Prize and the recipient of The Decker Award for outstanding secondary teaching from Hollins University. Her first full-length manuscript, *Pricking*, is forthcoming from Tiger Bark Press in 2016.

Jessica Poli

Jessica Poli is the author of three chapbooks: *Alexia* (Sixth Finch, forthcoming), *Glassland* (JMWW, 2014) and *The Egg Mistress* (Gold Line Press, 2013). She is currently finishing an MFA at Syracuse University, where she is Editor-in-Chief of *Salt Hill Journal*. She is also the Founder and Editor of *Birdfeast*, an online literary journal, and a Founding Editor of *Midnight City Books*, a small press based in Syracuse, NY.

Jaime García Maffla

Jaime García Maffla is a poet and essayist from Cali, Colombia. He studied philosophy and Letters at Universidad de los Andes and holds master's degree in literature from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. His work contains strong influences from the Hispanic tradition and existentialism. Head of Humanities at the Universidad de Los Andes and Director of the Department of Literature at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, he co-founded the poetry magazine *Hit Dice*, which appeared in 1972. A collaborator in the *Diccionario de Construcción y Régimen de la Lengua Castellana*, of the Instituto Caro y Cuervo, he is also listed in the group of poets known as *Generación sin Nombre* (Unnamed Generation). In 1997 he received the National Prize for Poetry from University of Antioquia.

He has also served as Coordinator of Poetry Workshops for Casa Silva and conducted research with Rubén Sierra Mejía, about poetry translation in Colombia. An independent author, he currently runs a private seminar Life and Poetry. Maffla is actively involved in the Art is Colombia Foundation and publishes the blog vocesdelvigia.blogspot.com.

