

# Corresponding Voices

Volume 7



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Celia Caturelli  
John Colasacco  
Georgia Popoff  
Oana Avasilichioaei  
Colleen Kattau

Edited  
by  
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## Preface

*History is a mysterious approach to closeness.*

Martin Buber

The present volume faces us with one major question regarding the meaning of poetry today: where are its new limits? Should a new definition of poetry even include such question? Or is its negation at the very root of a possible answer?

We are more than aware of the extended liberties of verbal art since the beginning of the modern era, regarding not only its formal aspects, but also thematic. Absolutely everything, any topic, any object, any space and time, any form of life, including poetry itself can become a poetic subject. Absolutely any norm, from the use of verse to the letter itself can be transgressed. But our question goes beyond these aspects, it deals with the borders of tradition itself, tradition understood as a moment of condensation of culture, the accumulation of knowledge, a dialectical movement that eventually shapes our identity, mirrored some way or another in the poem. In this sense we wonder: how far the definition of poetry, as that of “tradition”, has stretched to our days?

The five poets brought together here represent at the same time the essence of our poetic era (our own form of *innovation*) and all poetic traditions at once. In fact, both things can be synthesized in

what Octavio Paz once predicted as the “synchronic vision of art”: “combination of all times, forms and spaces: conjunction, dispersion and reunion of languages”. This “art of conjugation” can be performed in a single poem through the inclusion of heterogeneous voices, styles and subject matters, as is the case of some of the poets here presented. But it can also occur when reading the larger text of tradition. This is the reason why editing, as literary criticism, is considered today a form of creation: by selecting and putting together a number of works it sets off a dialogue among distant voices creating what we may call, as Paz also said, *a literature*.

There is a visionary statement behind the art of conjugation performed in this volume of poetry: a vision of dissemination and expansion, a sense that the world in the eyes of the contemporary poet no longer reflects a single attitude, a unified method of apprehending reality or approaching the self and the others. There is not one prevailing tendency, no leading vision, except for the limitless possibilities that global exchange of ideas and perceptions has knitted together over the centuries, leaving us without a clear pattern, and pushing us towards an ocean of simultaneous voices where correspondences may or may not emerge.

This, in the end, is the reader’s territory, his freedom to figure out a meaningful itinerary through the poems, or to stay at the suggestive, revealing level of reception, where the pleasure of sounds, images and rhythm may conquer him with no other purpose than to make him experience another daydream, another *mirage* through which he may touch for a moment the fingertip of his fellow poet and continue his dialogue with the world, nature, the self, the other: the world as it presents to the eyes of another I.

Libertad Garzón





CELIA CATURELLI

*translation from Spanish  
by Libertad Garzón*



## ***Meditaciones / Meditations***

*Meditaciones entre grietas / Meditations between the cracks*

*Meditaciones bajo las piedras / Meditations under the stones*

*Meditaciones desde el día / Meditations during daytime*

## *Meditaciones entre grietas*

### *1*

El río fluye  
como la mano de un viejo  
bajo la luz blanca  
de la primavera.

Oscura y lenta  
el agua arrastra  
los cristales del invierno  
las sombras perdidas  
y de los los caracoles  
el pequeño ovillo verde de silencio.

Demasiado larga ya  
esta vida  
demasiada lluvia  
demasiada espera  
demasiado  
todo.



*Meditations between cracks*

*1*

The river flows  
like the hand of an old man  
under the clear light  
of Spring.

Dark and slow  
the water sweeps along  
winter crystals  
the lost shadows  
of snails  
the small mossy ball of silence.

Already too long  
a life  
too much rain  
too long the wait  
all too  
much.

Morir  
ya mismo  
por una hora  
un mes un siglo  
por medio año quizás  
por una tarde solamente  
hasta que el niño pesque la luna en la tinaja  
y la acune en sus brazos  
como a un helado  
o una ofrenda  
hasta que la noche caiga  
y podamos morir  
definitivamente.

2

To die  
just now  
for one hour  
a month a century  
for half a year perhaps  
for one evening only  
until the child gets to fish the moon in the clay jar  
and cradles it in his arms  
as if it was an ice cream  
or an offering  
until the night falls  
and we may die  
once and for all.

Qué fue eso

de escuchar

crecer el pasto

hermana,

a veces lo intento

con mi oído pegado

a la boca

de las lágrimas.

3

What was that thing  
about listening  
to the growing grass  
sister,  
I try sometimes  
with my ear stuck  
to the mouth  
of tears.

Si te pudiera  
arrancar  
de mi garganta  
lo haría  
-pero entonces  
solamente fuera yo-  
alaridos.

4

If I could only  
strip you off  
my throat  
I'd do it  
-but then  
would I only be-  
howls.

En el estómago crece una mano  
de cristal  
y las estrellas palpitan  
en la noche tibia  
mientras desde el recuerdo,  
la cascada cae  
una y otra vez  
como una mortaja blanca.



5

A crystal hand grows  
inside the stomach  
and the stars beat  
in the warm night  
while out of my memories  
the cascade falls  
once and again  
like a white shroud.

# 6

La luna,  
cuelga fría en el horizonte  
y nos hace creer que somos libres.

6

The moon  
dangles coldly in the horizon  
and makes us believe we are free.

No.

Tú no.

Que las hojas no pueden cubrir mi desnudez  
y tus besos desgarran  
como espinas.

No. Que la noche crece como las alas de un pájaro  
muerto.

7

No.

Not you.

For the leaves cannot conceal my nude body  
and your kisses tear me  
like thorns.

No. For the night expands like the wings  
of a dead bird.

## *Meditaciones bajo las piedras*

### *1*

Los pequeños insectos olvidados  
ellos,  
también gritan  
sus gritos mudos  
e infinitos.  
Tanto cubren la noche, las sillas, los desagües.  
Los bolsillos.

*Meditations under the stones*

*1*

The small forgotten insects  
they  
also shout  
their silent  
and infinite screams.  
So much they fill the night, the chairs, the pipes.  
The pockets.

2

En la mano queda  
la herramienta abandonada.  
En el suelo,  
los restos del escorpión  
herido.



2

In the hand  
the abandoned tool.  
On the floor,  
the scorpion remains  
wounded.

El fragor de las chicharras  
arde en los oídos  
como lluvia después de la sequía.  
Y las gargantas se abren como surcos:  
que ya brota el pasto  
que ya estalla la noche  
que ya se vuelca el río.

El ciego me mira sentado en la plaza  
de mi barrio  
y el fragor destruye las ventanas.

3

The clamor of the crickets  
burns in the ears  
like the rain after a drought.  
And the throats open up like furrows:  
now the grass sprouts  
now the night bursts  
now the river spills.

The blind man looks at me as he sits in the square  
of my neighborhood  
and the clamor destroys the windows.

El saltamontes brinca  
en la palma de la mano  
entre la línea de la vida  
y la de la muerte.

Y las chicharras,  
arden en la noche  
como un viento de fuego.

4

The grasshopper hops  
on the palm of the hand  
between the life line  
and the death line.

And the crickets  
burn in the night  
like a fiery wind.

Aunque quieres  
aunque no quieres  
que la noche llega sin apuro  
que los dientes ya no muerden la manzana  
y los párpados ya no protegen  
que la noche no es un ladrón  
ni tampoco un guerrero  
sino simplemente  
una mosca.

5

Even if you want  
even if you don't want  
for the night approaches without haste  
for the teeth no longer bite the apple  
and the eyelids no longer shield  
for the night is not a thief  
nor a warrior  
but simply  
a fly.

## 6

El vaso se vuelca sobre  
la mesa  
y en torno a los fragmentos de vidrio,  
los escarabajos  
dibujan un pequeño lago de silencio:

Boca sin dientes.



6

The glass spills over  
the table  
and around the pieces of glass,  
the beetles  
draw a small lake of silence:

Mouth without teeth.

En el sendero blanco  
las hormigas  
bordan  
un bordado de seda  
y el paisaje se convierte  
en una sábana  
manchada de sangre:  
con ella cubriré tus piernas  
tus manos  
tu boca tu corazón  
tus dedos.

7

On the white path  
the ants  
weave  
a silk embroidery  
and the landscape becomes  
a bed sheet  
stained with blood:  
I'll cover your legs with it  
your hands  
your mouth your heart  
your fingers.

Hiere la luz del mediodía  
como un cuchillo verde  
y ellas, las lagartijas,  
me miran  
desde el principio  
así como el polvo de las estrellas  
brilla  
en la rugosa piel  
y en la ternura de tus besos.

Midday light hurts  
like a green knife  
and them, the lizards,  
look at me  
from the beginning  
just like the stars' dust  
shines  
on the rough skin  
and the tenderness of your kisses.

Hay en el aire und zumbido  
salvaje  
como si el mundo fuese  
esta nube frágil  
de mosquitos  
que atosiga las plantas  
y los cabellos.

9

In the air there's a wild  
buzz  
as if the world had become  
this fragile cloud  
of mosquitoes  
that overwhelms the plants  
and the locks of hair.

## *Meditaciones desde el día*

### *1*

Si fueras solo manos que besan  
y para ocultarte  
solamente párpados,  
podríamos quizás descansar  
como naranjas  
en la fronda oscura y fresca de una  
canasta.



*Meditations during daytime*

*1*

If you were just hands that kiss  
and to hide  
only eyelids,  
perhaps we could rest  
like oranges  
in the dark and fresh foliage of a  
basket.

Bajo la sombra del árbol  
una mujer vieja  
se inclina  
sobre una rosa maltrecha.  
y la cabeza húmeda de un niño.

Y en una nube de talco y cenizas  
se deshace el mundo.

2

Under the shade of the tree  
an old woman leans  
over a withered rose  
and the wet head of a child.

And in a cloud of ashes and talk powder  
the world falls apart.

La casa mía no tiene techo  
así la noche se derrama  
como una  
fuente invertida  
cuando duermes,  
niña mía.

3

This house of mine doesn't have a roof  
so the night spills over  
like an  
inverted fountain  
while you sleep,  
my child.

De mi corazón brota una línea roja  
con ella te coseré un chaleco encendido  
como las granadas del verano  
para que nada ni nadie puedan lastimarte  
ni siquiera en el caso de que quieras  
-por tu propia cuenta descender  
al abismo.

4

A red line sprouts from my heart  
with it I'll sew you a blazing vest  
as blazing as the summer pomegranates  
so that nothing and no one can hurt you  
not even if you want to  
-on your own account-  
descend  
to the abyss.

Los dedos se abren  
en la membrana pálida  
del día  
como un abanico chino:

deja que el aire se convierta en viento  
y borre cada línea  
cada minuto.



5

The fingers extend  
in the pale membrane  
of the day  
like a Chinese fan:

let the air turn into wind  
and erase every line  
every minute.

Detrás de las pupilas  
crecen  
los paisajes:  
alguna vez  
me encontrarás  
en el cuerpo frágil  
de una araña  
en el palpitante de las libélulas  
y los cansados quejidos  
de la abeja.

6

Behind the pupils  
the landscapes  
arise:  
some day  
you'll find me  
in the fragile body  
of a spider  
in the heart beat of dragonflies  
and in the weary cry  
of a bee.

Es ser casi noche  
o relámpago  
o esta luvia torrencial  
que deshoja mis geranios.  
Es ser casi el temblor del  
gato pequeño bebiendo  
bajo el árbol  
en la calcinante luz  
del mediodía.

7

To be almost the night  
or the lightening  
or this heavy rain  
that plucks my geraniums.  
To be almost the trembling  
of a little cat  
drinking  
below the tree  
under the sizzling light  
of midday.

a Paul

El agua te lleva  
hundido en el fondo de la barca  
sin brújula ni remos  
sin haber acariciado jamás un gato  
ni haber encendido las velas  
sin haber vaciado las esquinas ni los cerros

repetiendo las palabras  
como cuentas de plástico en la lengua.

Yo te miro  
sin poder decirte adiós  
mientras el agua te aleja

- que no había puertas  
decías,  
ni tampoco chimeneas  
ni siquiera un pañuelo en donde esconder las lágrimas  
cuando la madre te ofrecía la corteza seca  
y afuera

salpicaba el agua las veredas.

8

to Paul

The water takes you  
sunk in the depth of your boat  
without compass nor oars  
without ever having stroked a cat  
nor lightened the candles  
without having emptied the corners nor the hills

repeating the words  
like plastic beads in the tongue.

I look at you  
without being able to say good bye  
while the water takes you away

-there were no doors  
you said,  
nor fireplaces  
not even a handkerchief to conceal the tears  
when the mother offered you the dry crust  
and outside

the water splashed on the sidewalks.





JOHN COLASACCO



## *Nice of Winter*

1.

we live here. at least it feels like it.

health class penis

dads die

mechanical hollow lion filled with arms and legs bit off  
people who weren't brave enough

brave of the dark but scared of the light

>>

what are your favorite shoes

air-proof  
wall-proof

nice of winter  
nice of the light

2.

grow up and be beautiful human beings  
that reminds me I used to get these terrible headaches  
a dead mind

god is here when you speak

I don't think I want to write cursive anymore  
we're not friends

i need to ask you something  
is it always more fun to break than play?

i was raised to think i was supposed to have 11 toes

it's ok to kiss me

bright sides  
weird grins

you are not anything

>>

calendars had pictures  
of snow in december

it was awful being her

>>

she don't know how to ice skate

my vocabulary

do you love her?

>>

he's a sad man

I like strangers

>>

people are evolving larger eyes

I would do a "however" there

why do you always sound like a little girl?

come sit here if you don't have anything to do

i'm running a carnival;

i'm saying everything backwards.

>>

how come kids have to take history class?

they'll figure it out from all the non-blues.

basket of dead staplers and spent tape dispensers.

their mothers look just alike.

>>

where is he today?

(the cat died in his arms)

you're a boy

I have to tell you a story.

>>

the girls make each other

laugh without talking

don't push too hard  
you rode on a plane

what's her name?

>>

Did you draw this?

No.

(laughter)

I don't take credit for no drawings in this place.

>>

Did you fight her?

Yeah.

Why did you do that?

Because I do.

>>

well, anyways . . .

(a long stare.)

I'm

in the middle of the moon.

>>

He spends the night

inside a shoelace

He spends the night

inside a sandbox

and eats sand all night long

>>

I know you're lying.

(how?)

Cause you're a grown man.

>>

what do you call a baby without a diaper?

what are you doing to get everything you want in life?

what do you worry about, miss Nicole?

>>

I take it back.

I thought you'd just keep quiet.

I can't keep them from being killed in a car crash.

I like night.

>>

what is the opposite of snow?

a poem for a teenager.

her whole family agreed: white meat was best.

>>

a cold room  
and a fire room  
and a lying-down room

>>

I could go days without hearing a song

>>

who are they looking for?

I want to take a picture of myself

>>

(he he)  
she's gone

you make me mad  
don't leave me

>>

shut it off slowly

I have a perfect poem

>>

something was just touching my hair  
don't look at me

>>

paint one for cancer  
could you write a million "I am nots"?

>>

Mister he took all the lipstick off my lips!

>>

you talk too much  
I'm about to cry

>>



am I sexy?

she about to kill you

>>

I got accused

>>

what if I forget where I live?

>>

when I grow up

I need some water

that's a lady move

>>

she's the only woman in the whole wide world

>>

I'm scared to go to the bathroom

>>

fire

cuddle pictures

that should have been me

he was embarrassed to do that with you

petroleum jelly

>>

a little bit churchy

(don't write your church self)

>>

is it something i really want  
or something the world is enticing me to do?

>>

I hate water  
I have a coach

>>

childlike

that's why it's so big

(it is from God)

>>

I wonder if he may be apologizing to all of us because of me.

>>

no we aren't here to be condemned

>>

what if I waste my money?

>>

do you see my fear?

>>

grab onto your father

you are

exchanging your life

>>

why do we have love?

>>

lost taste

lost

how to talk

this downstairs

is all about fear

>>

it's not genetic

the first cell to divide is a nerve cell

busy comes under the sickness yoke

>>

it's better

stepping into dream

>>

“defend me against my dream”

“god is not that kind of god”

“whatever I decide . . . it

comes out of my mouth”

>>

“can you forgive me?”

>>  
straight men wanting to get fucked by streams of gasoline  
i realize you can't remember me any more than you do now  
is it true you haven't had a drink in 18 years?

>>  
rahmeer is not a poet  
I'll slap you and make you grow hair

>>  
I speak for those who have eaten too much

>>  
teach me how to read

>>  
a straight-line activity  
taken from other places  
you aren't going to get it

>>  
where is your lust?  
"living in a rabbit warren"

>>  
i could tell he says this often

>>  
there's no such thing as interesting.

>>

what do you think inside your body smells like?

>>

hold on I need to clean the bottom of my shoes.

>>

let's not worry about the bottoms of our shoes!

>>

I can be God.

It's dangerous.

>>

maybe I dreamed it, but I remember us  
thinking "this is in danger of getting lost"  
so I put it aside somewhere to keep it safe

an I don't know if you've ever put something aside to keep it safe  
but that's when I tend to lose everything

>>

and so every time work crossed my mind

it bothered me

>>

he cupped the lit cigarette with the hot side facing in

>>

you're going to live a long time

>>

palm reader

left-turner who won't enter the intersection

interested in the details of men

>>

my uncle's heart stopped over the weekend

>>

somebody made this for me

>>

people always say things

like,

“aren't you going to be late?”

and,

“no, I have to be there at 3:30.”

>>

school, somebody else's job

your parents

you wanna work

sell rice on the street

cute I think

those is beautiful

you in all the classes

that's where half the people get they clothes

>>

you don't time

people communicate somebody

with her

>>

all the evil that happens when I live





GEORGIA POPOFF



*Rural New York  
United States of America  
Conjoined Twins*

*Bridget's Lament*

I am careful in almost everything. At the crossing down the way, I always stop long before a train comes; then I count to sixty after it passes before heading on. I should have seen clues before I took Timmy's ring. Those brothers are thick as thieves. Some folks still can't tell them apart, even with Jimmy's mole. We always double dated. Thankfully, Maureen and I got on well enough. We started sharing secrets and recipes. Now our doublewide trailers are snug up next to each other. Every morning the boys slink off to their garage before sun with their heavy Thermoses, leaving us on our own. They like their coffee as dark as old engine oil. I missed another clue when Maureen had her first twins. When she popped out her boy, we all sighed in relief. Then came their second matched set. Again, I didn't catch the hint until I watched my own belly bloat. I swear I am as dense as winter honey sometimes. Somehow, God forgot to split my girls in two. I don't get it. An avocado pit breaks open easily enough. Why not my babies? How could God love a seed more than them?

*Splitting the Doctrine of Double Effect in Two*

Though it has been two years, I remember the case as well as my own name. The argument had the bite of an angry gavel pummeling both bench and altar. Burrowed in chambers, the three of us shed our wigs, later our robes; we rolled up our sleeves as we set about doing God's work. We clearly took this case seriously. Early in deliberations, James already needed a smoke; then another and another as if the cigarette's red tip would deliver a sign. We faced the recalcitrant parents, bolstered by the Archbishop's dictum on inherent rights to life. There was no way to avoid a funeral here; our task was to determine whether there would be one or two. No matter what our garb, we are human beneath, parents who fully understand the dilemma. I could not stand by when a child could live. A judge is charged with the responsibility to see reason amid clouds of human passion. How were we to interpret the Will of the Almighty? My deciding vote delivered the surgeon's blade. Now a toddler is thriving and free, her sister a sacred memory. The parents are grateful, believe this outcome to be their Lord's Doing.

*Rural Kazakstan*  
*Fetus in Fetu*

*Fetus in Fetu*

My child breeds a fiery beast. He wails with this devil's breath as he grows round as a melon. In his seventh year, we knew something was wrong. He thrashed on his mat throughout the night. Sixteen moons have since come and gone and he is larger and larger with each sunrise. My husband wants to lay with me to make more sons but I cannot allow demons to claim another of my seed. As my boy seethes green and gray with agony, I struggle to see the truth of him behind his bulging eyes. I shield his face from spring's new brides so their wombs won't turn arid before birthing. I have thrown the stones for answers, wandered the forest for healing roots, still I am helpless to stop his horrid cries. My husband wants to take him to doctors in Astana but I fear we will spread this hex like a fungus. I cannot let my son be battered in the back of the cart either. The road ruts might feed the bloat by bouncing him like a sack of potatoes. I dread that if they cut him open, we will never return to our once quiet world.

*Aberration*

It took more than a nutcracker to free that wretched cashew from my soft shell. I can never escape that I was not alone. My eldest sister taunted me that I was a boy who bred a monster whose head was misshapen as an octopus strangled in a net, with huge spooky eyes and tentacles where arms and legs should be. The nightmares robbed me of more than sleep. Now the scar slicing my belly like a crooked zipper haunts me. I hear a stifled breathing behind my wound late at night in the dark, a phantom rasp for which I am the sole audience. Soon after the horrid almost brother was cut out of me, villagers stopped their prayers. I learned to address the soccer ball with my foot like other children because I could finally see both. Still, my mother averted her eyes whenever I entered the room. I knew that I repulsed her, feared that she held me responsible for the failure of the mutual birth. My father explained that Mother could not bear her guilt for believing me demonic. He begged me to love her anyway, to wait until she could drop her veil and relent.

## *The Agnostic Parses It Out*

Unlike dread, matter dissolves like sugar, or salt on a wound.  
A child challenges the slow unfolding of butterflies.  
I just don't get it! How does that happen?

She tried to capture Thor's bolt in her own small hands  
to answer these long-burning questions.  
If there are so many animals, where are all their dead?

Joy is beside herself. The punctuation of birds  
opens her revelation cupboard, the chatter before  
sun slips from grasp, a bubble down the drain.

Earth is in constant redefinition. When we witness truth,  
an apple, perchance, no sacrifice is too much to die for.  
An oscilloscope of goldfinches monitors dusk.

Apostrophes at the feeder. Streamlined little bellies  
defy gravity, a seed at a time.  
Her oracle, a tender chirp.

There's a story behind each shoe littering the highway  
how it was stolen by some odd vortex  
of open window.

We come from nothing into this world. And here,  
the quandary—how to reply to an innocent's honest question?  
None of us can really know. Wonder is answer enough.

We fear returning to that place stars define as home.  
The coordinates of where God resides.  
The morning Joy turned compost defined how the Sphinx  
got buried in the first place, a greater feat than wind  
could manage. In a flash, it all made sense.  
Organisms feed on each other. Joy suddenly sees no horror.

The dust around us is dead skin, sifting off  
as we drink coffee, mow the lawn, sit to sew, or write a poem.  
Ashes to ashes, an inevitable collection of knots and bones.



*The Agnostic Finds Proof in Oddities*

Swamp gas.

Flocks of starlings drop from the sky.

Two-headed snakes.

The surge of the Northern Lights.

Albinos.

Storms that stop humans in their tracks.

Quarks.

Parasitic heads that think for themselves.

A full night's sleep.

# *Confession*

*I come to the garden alone...*

Pulling weeds is always church

intoxicating soil

the dank insistent pressure of survival

heady with impossibility

the conundrum of growing things

how they march through toward light

never bending a petal or spindly stem

the universe itself a glistening worm

Even as a baby gardener I knew

I bend and move differently

than squirrels or the sad pace

of barren women

But like squirrels

I am relentless

On Sundays my weed worship

taunts the good men of the Baptist Church

across the street who drop off their women

mothers children the finery a flower parade

They saunter from their cars in trim suits

to climb the stairs to the red wood door

solid from years of preaching

seeped into the grain

At one time it seemed a sacrilege to rip leafy

weeds from their beds but the passion required

of gardening is sacrament

I testify to the ephemeral  
My thighs are sturdy trunks

The men open the red door  
Pastor extends his hand

Some return to their gardens to pick snap peas  
the little boats they will ride on confusion currents  
barely uttering their confessions  
that fear is at the helm  
and perhaps silent passion is sin

Some of us stay home embattled with chicory

On Sunday cars jerk  
then stoically slide away from driveways  
and carports to a small sip of salvation  
iced tea solace a gentle word  
of scripture to carry like a hanky  
through the weary week

What if a wish was an actual light  
with a three-way opportunity to turn  
tears to soft gray ash  
Would any of us exercise the right  
to cry as our choice

Pastor frequently invites me to his sanctuary  
He says *Come as you are*

Instead I carry a vase brimming with new  
blooms to the church mothers on Saturday  
Instead I commit murder in the garden

## *Inside Voice*

*In my dream*

*I am dying*

*My voice is hollow*

*In my dream I am*

*a cavern*

*My pupils bats*

*claws clutching*

*a crumbling ledge*

*My eyes hang dead*

*sleep away the day*

*This dream shattered*

*Shards of last screams*

*slice into no voice*

*blind*

*voided*

*Anonymous*

In the same way an insect crusade  
conquers a sturdy coffin

winter petrifies tree roots  
and stills the water table

It took someone else's poem  
to form these frost line questions

Does ice slow the decay or hasten  
a discarded body to deterioration

Does hair search and anchor like shallow  
roots of willow and milkweed

Do nails lengthen  
brittle and layered as mica

## *The Agnostic Struggles with Gravity*

She drops her hair pick  
then her eye liner  
A crumble of toast

pulled to the floor  
without warning  
It's Thursday

Joy's knees hurt  
and she tends to fall  
This concerns her

Statistics for mortality  
after breaking a hip  
are staggering

She is not yet sixty  
but it is looming  
like a storm

She must change  
her perspective on calories  
Not units of taste

but fuel to burn  
as she navigates  
the sidewalk cracks

and loathsome stairs  
lugging the body  
that has carried her

through this life  
The earth beneath her  
pulling her back







OANA AVASILICHIOAEI

from *Liminal*

These poems, excerpted from *Liminal*, are plucked and composed out of the field of my own translations of Paul Celan's early Romanian poems; they border, transgress and traverse the porous body of our languages.

*Brow Shore*

on your brow, morning wakes cross-eyed  
sky, an argument where the owned  
dispute over their crown of scales  
tattooing the budding hour in the skin of your temples

unsettled and greedy to clamour  
inside your helmet, bite from your brow  
which is a casement, a wreathed summit, a drifting vault,  
reach this shore of yourself

slabs of lids rise, as thought from a temple  
where a leaf settles, then mounts to the swollen sky,  
the window, where we scramble as though to a shelter  
to watch, slumberous and dishevelled, the sky  
bear down on your laurel-adorned temple, your eyes' hoods

contour of these dew-torn thoughts, an island?  
a mirage? a splintered profile?

## *Blindfolded*

Night draws bruised bags under the eyes  
Open the windows  
From the forest submissive look at the world  
Wait for a voiced leaf  
Will ash rekindle?  
From nakedness perhaps or from a laurel  
In the temple an arm twists  
Into a shadow gardened by a late twilight  
Will the shoulders grow arms?  
Wind burst?  
Our dispute enflames the hall  
Hear the scurry in the vacant room?  
Window's curtains, hair?  
Displaced bell rattles the night  
Yet we'll slowly  
Hooded burning gaze  
Let it rinse the eyes, so we'll think we're pacing together  
From the tropics, people dream of flight in their sleep  
No eyes, yet the shoulders luminous stand the expanse  
Can you scent a forest of maples?

*Dishevelled Helmet*

hair streaming from hands, from mirrors  
from trees twilight-sown, foliage forever dishevelled  
slumbering hair cascades burst through  
the shadowed swamp, frozen lake  
after all the fruitless waiting  
curtains of tresses voice courageous in the breeze  
trace hair's shadow in the sand of a palm  
feather the somnolent sky to dusk with your raven  
halo of an aerial shipwreck  
dishevel me up the stairs  
await, spectacular in your mane, on the final step  
to dissemble my curtain, my hooded, my exile  
endless ramifications of the aerial roots  
my concrescent heady prophecy  
shimmering in tresses of uncertainties  
its shadow in the sky of your own  
contradictory word hanging from your throat



COLLEEN KATTAU

## *Agua bendita*

Yo me voy al río  
Yo me voy al mar  
En el agua confío  
Me enseña a soñar  
Con libertad  
Con libertad  
Con libertad

A la base de un árbol marchito  
Vi la fuente brotar  
Su raíz dio luz al chorro  
Que corre hacia la mar  
hacia la mar  
hacia la mar  
hacia la mar

*Agua bendita, baila conmigo  
Llévame cerca a la verdad  
Con tu sabiduría de milenios  
Prométeme que no pasarán  
no pasarán  
no pasarán*

Yo me fui al monte  
Por el verde saber  
Me quedé sola de noche  
Con nada que temer  
Él me sabe proteger  
me sabe proteger

Y los muertos bailan conmigo  
Alegres me enseñan a festejar  
Tal como el agua me llevan a otros mundos  
Donde mis penas puedo olvidar  
Puedo olvidar, puedo olvidar



*Blessed water*

I went down to the river  
I left for the sea  
I trust in the water  
It teaches me to dream  
Of liberty  
Of liberty  
Of liberty

At the base of a dying maple  
I saw the water flow free  
Its roots gave birth to a stream  
That runs toward the sea  
Toward the sea  
Toward the sea  
Toward the sea

Blessed water, dance with me  
Take me close to a truer path  
With your wisdom of milenia  
Make it so they shall not pass  
They shall not pass  
They shall not pass

I went to the mountain  
To know the green  
I stayed alone all night there  
With no anxiety  
it protects me  
it protects me

and the dead dance with me  
they show me a way to happiness  
like the water they take me to other worlds  
where i can forget all my sadness  
where i can forget, where i can forget

## *Autumn Cold*

Autumn cold  
Not even a star  
Comes out at twilight

Sundown sets hills on fire  
Shadows call the night

The wind brought in a season change  
That left to leave a chill  
Day is done night has come  
The candle burns until

The darkness sings to hold the warmth  
That cannot be bought or sold  
The altered sky  
The for a moment held  
Between the new and old

A star appears beyond the air  
That veiled it to the eye  
The stillness of the missing wind  
Fills the empty sky

The evening lays its blanket down  
To keep the cold at bay  
Just like the wind that cleared the way  
That made me shiver, but made me brave  
Just like the wind that cleared the way  
That made me shiver, but made me brave

## *So much going on*

There's magic in the dark tonight  
Country dogs are barking out there  
They're yapping and howling to the night  
Sensing something in the air.

Fairy came around again  
She's flying around through the song  
Flapping and fluttering to say it's all right  
Its just that there's so much going on

She says, what are you scared about?  
Why are you troubling your mind?  
Go on ahead and sing it out girl  
You'll discover what you find

It's only love, it's only now  
We'll make a way somehow  
It's only love, it's only now  
We'll make a way somehow

Thousands of miles away  
They can target you and shoot you down  
No use running away  
There's no hiding in this town

How do you compete against a gun  
How do you make violence no more  
Well I know I'm not the only one  
But I don't want to win no war

They are so mighty and we're so small  
It will take the strength of us all  
They are so mighty we are so small  
It will take us giving all

Fairy came around again  
She's flying around through the song  
Flapping and fluttering to say it's all right  
It's just that there's so much going on

*Stupid girl*

Stupid girl, out trying to prove your manhood  
No matter how hard  
No one could command you  
And for all your sin you never win

Stupid girl  
Caught holding the leash  
Which end is the noose? Which is the release?

No one could ever tell you what to do  
Break down. You took to a uniform  
No choice for a girl like you  
They threw you into a desert storm  
You tangled up in blue  
And red and white and patriotic porn  
Looks like Eve was a bad apple too  
I don't believe, she was rotten to the core

Hey girl  
No matter how hard  
They never understand you  
For all your sin you never win

Voyeurs saw what they made of you  
Camera ready you were ready to perform  
Now you're covered with black tattoos  
You took on all their wrath and scorn  
You hide yourself from view  
Hoping you will be reborn  
But it doesn't all come down to you  
Far removed from the battlefield we are all war torn

Hey girl  
Let go of the leash

Call it a truce  
Call it release

*Come with me, climb*

Can you conceive of a mountain  
Where the richest green grows from richest soil?  
Growing Eden like their baby  
Nine months yield fruits of their toil.

Come with me, climb  
A steep and narrow path  
Leads to paradise

Go with Yanira as she guides you,  
Her skin dark and clear like a night sky.  
Hear her tell you of the fruit she grows  
And then offers you with a sharing smile

Come on with me, climb.  
A steep and narrow path  
leads to paradise.

*She points across the hill, to the next ridge,  
There the danger lies, so close.  
“But I,” she says, “will shield us from  
the hate they sow  
With this life I grow”*

Can you conceive of a mountain,  
Where the deepest earth keeps spirit strong?  
Eden returns to those who knew it once.  
War passes but the mountain lives on.

Come on with me, climb.  
A steep and narrow path  
leads to paradise.

## *Looking out my window*

He was working in the garden  
Hoping for a little rain  
I came home from driving somewhere  
When the fairy told me plain

*How she came looking out my window  
And she sang why aren't you here?  
You've been gone with far too many dying  
Aren't you tired of the killing years?*

He was caring for the plant life  
When from the house came the finest tune  
there was no one there who could be singing  
But the song filled the afternoon

*When she came looking out my window...*

She danced enough to make a rainbow  
She cried enough to make the rain  
She sang enough to make the wind blow  
She cared enough to keep the flame

She came looking out my window  
And I sang I know you are here  
It's your song watching over the garden  
To remind me of the living years.



*Ready to believe*

Buckets of snow fly in my face  
Hail Mary, full of lace  
I'm not expecting spring  
But I'm ready to believe

We've got vinyl, digital too  
Happy couple, me and you  
Don't expect me to turn them down  
It's when I started to believe  
There's more than just one trick  
And sure as hell more than one sleeve

*Time gives you a hard lot  
Life makes you small  
I'm not waiting for the bliss before the fall  
For the mystery to solve, that won't do at all.*

Feed the hungry, heal the sick  
You know the script sure could use a fix  
I may be ready to turn it down  
But don't expect me to believe  
That what you preach is what you do,  
When what you do is deceive

*Time gives you a hard lot  
Life makes you small  
I'm not waiting for the bliss before the fall  
For the mystery to solve, that won't do at all.*

Buckets of snow fly in my face  
Hail Mary, full of lace.

## *The bridge and the river*

When you cross the Brooklyn Bridge  
It's like you're holding Manhattan in your hand  
Not thinking about what you did  
Just up there in the air between lands  
And you look from either side or straight ahead  
Leaving East you're facing West instead

But it's the river that holds you really  
The river you feel beneath you  
The river that says come and says free me  
And you are free suspended there momentarily

Till the brakes keep you from flying off

I held our love in my hands  
It fell through my fingers like dry beach sand  
It broke like an old glass that I set down too fast on the table

Take me back to that bridge  
Suspended there in possibility  
Oh the thrill at first and at last

But it's the river that holds you really  
The river you feel beneath you  
The river that says come and says free me  
And you are free

Till the brakes keep you from flying off

## *Lucky*

We've got love and we've got need, we've got laughter dark and light  
We are lucky believe you me we might have a home that's safe at night  
Rounded moon and orange sun, rain falling on everyone  
Making green and rainbow signs, we've got clouds that'll blow your mind

Ancient stone and cleansing winds and the trees that bend with them  
Peaceful dunes, turbulent seas, calm bay sides, mysteries  
Earth, water, fire and air, and all creatures everywhere

For the oceans churning, for the seasons turning  
For mountain forest mist, to be touched and kissed  
For the peacemakers, for the caretakers of life  
We are lucky

Hey leaders of the world agree- all these things cost no money  
More than enough for everyone I mean human and non-human  
Lead with love or just step down. There's plenty to go around  
More than enough for everyone I mean human and non-human

For the oceans churning for the seasons turning  
For mountain forest mist, for being touched and kissed  
For the peacemakers, for the caretakers  
For beings great and small, for the love of all  
For peace in our lifetime, until the end of time  
We could be lucky

## *Combat paper\**

Take your uniform and cut it up into the water  
Boil it down to pulp and watch the water transform it  
Into fiber into material renewed  
Back to paper,  
To find a way back to you

Blood, sweat and tears are washed away as you reclaim them  
With a blank slate the art you make helps you rename them  
And the violence that the object signified  
Becomes a work of art  
Wonderful, dignified

*Warrior to artist the road has been rough  
To recover who you are  
Paper over rock is now enough  
For the healing to start  
For change to come through art*

Journal, poems and broadsides, painted canvas, sculpted intricate forms  
Memories uncovered in an alchemy where you are reborn  
And it is your own labor now  
A common project shared anew  
Combat paper  
To find a way back to you



## Contributors

**Celia Caturelli**, a visual artist and a poet, studied Modern Literature in her hometown at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina. At the same time she studied painting and free graphics at the Escuela de Bellas Artes Dr.Figueroa Alcorta and der Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina. 1994-95 she was awarded the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant N.Y., N.Y. Caturelli has participated in a number of exhibitions, including the exhibition *Argentines in the mirror* in 2001, which was organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Argentina and the Goethe Institute. Caturelli has published recently *Cantos del Carnicero* (2012). She currently lives in Berlin and Düsseldorf, Germany, where she teaches foundations of art and painting at the University of Applied Sciences.

**John Colasacco** is the author of *Antigolf*, forthcoming from CCM Press. He is a recent winner of the Iowa Review Award in poetry and Opium Magazine's Schya Scanlon Seven-Line Story Contest. Other stories and poems have appeared in *Black Clock*, *TheNewerYork*, *LIES/ISLE*, and *Gigantic*.

**Georgia Popoff** has two volumes of poetry (*Coaxing Nectar from Longing* and *The Doom Weaver*), and coauthored *Our Difficult Sunlight: A Guide to Poetry, Literacy, & Social Justice in Classroom & Community* (with Quraysh Ali Lansana), finalist for an NAACP 2012 Image Award. *Psalter: The Agnostic's Book of Common Curiosities*, her third collection of poems, is forthcoming from Tiger Bark Press in 2015. She is an artist educator, professional development specialist, and *Comstock Review* senior editor. Currently, Georgia is the Workshops Coordinator for the Downtown Writers Center adult curriculum and its youth program, the Young Authors Academy, in Syracuse, NY.

**Oana Avalichioaei's** work as poet and translator explores history, geography, public space, textual architecture, multilingualism, sound, translation, textual and collaborative performance. Her books include *Abandon* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2005), *feria: a poempark* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2008), and most recently *We, Beasts* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2012). Avalichioaei lives in Montreal, Quebec. Her website is [oanalab.com](http://oanalab.com).

**Colleen Kattau** is currently an Associate Professor of Spanish at SUNY College at Cortland. She received her Ph.D. in Spanish Language and Culture from Syracuse University. Kattau has published articles on Latin American women writers and Latin American New Song (*Nueva cancion*) and is also a singer/songwriter. She has recorded four CDs and three compilation benefit CDs and has created multimedia presentations on art and activism. She believes in the transformative power of art and song to create a better world. This year Kattau was named winner of the Grassroots Festival of Music and Dance band contest, and was a featured artist at the Northeast Regional Folk Alliance and other folk festivals.

## Translator

**Libertad Garzón** is an Associate Professor of Literature at the Autonomous University of Colombia. She received her Master's degree in Latin American Literature at Syracuse University, and is currently pursuing her PhD at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Libertad is the Associate Editor of *Corresponding Voices, Vol. 7*, and she has collaborated with Point of Contact as editor and translator since 2005. She is author of several articles and translations, amongst which are Saúl Yurkievich's poems, translated with Pedro Cuperman and published in *Saúl: Letters between the poet and her translator*, Point of Contact, 2008. Her PhD thesis is based on these translations.



# Notes





