

Five Poems

Small words

I told myself last night that I would, from now on,
Write short poems, ephemeral words here and there
Where life or the hint of its intractable sense could be figured out
Incanted in small doses to find body and house

I told myself this promise
Write small words, senseless lists that my intrinsic Lusitanian taste
Bred on the other side of the Atlantic, with lush, emotional, visceral sentences
Naturally rejects
Avid that it is to spew ink through nothingness and appease the fear
And loneliness of life—that *fado* that we cannot escape

Go against that inclination, be the other of yourself
And in that process find the twin that walks in you
And makes sense of you
You are, after all, a citizen of the world
And adaptation and growth is your ontological destiny

The kitchen

The kitchen where she stands is bound to nothingness
In the middle there is the table
The bread and the olive oil, and in special days, a note of rosemary
Singing its perfume amidst the stale air of condiments
Suspending the hard labour that the mistress of the house endures

If I stare at the table enough time, I see all the people she has fed
Over the centuries, in aprons of colours entangled in grease stops
All marks of life, days and nights come and still your place remains
The same corner is your corner

Dreams, you say,
Dreams are made of incense smells that I conjure in this small corner
Where I live
Dreams are built from inside out

Perhaps she is right,
And I am only intruding in her perfection

Notions of God

There are truly beautiful people in the world. And when they are truly beautiful, they remind you of God. They are God. And then you want to go on living in the world. In this world. Forever.

She dreamed of a Pegasus: a sturdy, gentle white horse with wings that would cross her from here to the end of the world, that would dance her into a round interminable whirl when she could finally be whole, nothing missing, accompanied by all. Feel the exact point. That would be her voyage to God. That would be God.

Between the point of her chest, where purple gulfs of life are executed impeccably by jinn from regions in superior Abyssinia, and the lower back of her spine, where marrow meets bone, she could spend whole days, immersed into things, true, full things, and feel as if all that ever was or would be, had joined her for a solemn session of precise collective understanding. Between those points and in those correct days, she sworn in frank and sincere faith that her meeting had been with God.

Sometimes the valleys and the hills merged, and she could only know the world through encrypted notes, sounds that only people who don't speak any language know to be of very high value. It happened on special days when she chose to crisscross time without the thick sheet separating all the geometric figures that mark up the world, when she meandered between hopes and the ropes of minimal possibility, laying down her body fully on the earth. It was a darling pleasant game brought about by the deep nobility that drove her ontological desire, that inescapable fever always boiling in her blood. The red crimson lust of the voice that never left her, incessantly calling her to enter a better house: that coveted sleep into the dome of darkness or the castle of blind insight, depending on the alphabet you choose to name your prophet.

The Gemini in me

I am a Gemini. Full of selves: well, two selves at least—my father and my mother. From my father I possess a poetic undertone: I inherited his love for proverbs, those wise words told to him by his father who heard it from his grand-mother in a line that never ends. Words and words travelling down, from the very beginning, when humans started to think about how to express their love for one another through clean syllables—likely because they felt lonely and the other was the way to the self. He, my father, also gave me another genetic inheritance: the capacity to feel, very deeply, the earth in my bones: the astonishing and vibrant power of the spring, the warm darkness of the winter and the milder feelings of the other two seasons, each entering every fiber of my body so that I can fully feel like a being of the land. My mother is another story: mama of ten children she had to think complicated thoughts to explain the complication that her life came to be. The dialectics of her oppression got enmeshed in the Hegelian twisted philosophical ideology of the one who slaves and the one who masters and all the ensuing confrontations that arise from such disagreeable dichotomies. She passed this hindrance to me making me more intellectual than I in fact wish to be, for in being more intellectual, I lose my natural ways of life: to love just because one loves, to be just because one is fundamentally a being who fundamentally is. I wish I could only follow my father's inheritance and feel like a true daughter of this earth, speak that language that emerged at the beginning as a way to tell the other the love we feel. This does not mean that I can renounce my mother. I cannot for I am truly her daughter.

I sit here

I sit here and I wait for death. Sometimes I go out and love the world, every person in it, every bit of it, but then I return to my destiny and I wait again. My bones bend up and down, I do all the chores that life demands: discuss philosophy in my classes, the anxiety of our human responsibility or the anxiety of knowing that we will never know everything and control in fact very little: despite the microscope, the telescope, the cell phone, the great wide web—or the tall beautiful body dressed in a masculine suit that turns eyes. I sit here and I wait for death: I get excited sometimes, stare in wonder and awe at a magnificent letter that composes a magnificent word because once upon a time, our ancestors, moved by the same fear invented symbols to interpret the unnameable. I read the fluid Clarice and her *Água Viva* and I melt under a beautiful illusion that I am in sync with everything, that God is in my bones, that I am God, soul and matter joined in a communion superior to the consubstantiation that happens at mass on Sundays when Padre Lévido raises his white ring-less hand with the round and pristine wafer before he gently breaks it in his mouth barely moving his teeth, careful not to bite into the sacred and disturb the spell. Last week, under an act of love and fundamental need, I read Clarice to my class, my class on ethics and rhetoric, full of young eager students who want to find their divine on their Apple terminal to get rid of the lack, because, being novices of life, they still believe that can be done. I ask them: “Is Clarice psychotic?” They smile at me, their eyes not saying what they feel, holding on to the rational grip they have been taught to keep since they entered grade one and their magic was broken by the unkind ruler of the teacher who herself was a victim of a system that breaks us all. One of them, though, is brave and says: “There is a sadness, a longing in her writing, but also a joy.” My eyes rose to splendour when I heard her because I no longer felt alone. I said: “Yes, you got it.” And then I said it again. I sit here and I wait for death and on good days I go out to perform the duties of life and I am lucky like that. Lucky like that.

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