

POETS

'IN MEMORIAM' OF DICK SIMON,
WHO WASN'T AS MANY OTHERS ARE

"Los Poetas" translated by Dr. Kevin Fagan

We poets live for you to devour
Our secretions
(Oh the soul's pollution.)

Worms on top of worms
We have worked with our saliva, for you to glorify it
In the Academic Senate, but there's a difference:
We are so much in a hurry to die as you
To reach the glory, academic glory
Administrative, deductive, afflictive, catarrhal glory.
The Gruyere cheese which turns mad the little rats
Or the rotten *cacio cavallo*, as Emilio Salgari said
In *The Liguria Shipwrecks*.¹

Pindar already said it all, and it was dawn in the world
—This world, because there were others before
And others will be after
There's no after or before,
By the way, and glory precedes and prepares death—
Aeschylus was killed by a turtle fallen from an eagle
Taking it to feast in the Olympus Mountain.

La manzana pútrida envenenada
Que comíamos en el cementerio junto al mar
Vuelve a la garganta, con sabor ácido
Pero en buenas cuentas, nos perfuma el aliento
(Hay muchos perros en Montpellier.)

No teman ustedes, amigos escrutadores
Escarbadores, desmenuzadores, *scavengers*:
Toda la mierda que nos comimos les será transferida íntegra.
Ustedes la analizarán semánticamente
Púdicamente, indecentemente,
Fríamente, estrambóticamente.
Pero sobre todo, estúpidamente
Y las palabras
Que una vez acariciamos los poetas se volverán en vuestros bolsillos
Un increíble saco de cabezas y restos de pescado
O huevos de codorniz hechos papilla por brujos aprendices
Definitivamente olvidados de cómo abrir o cerrar el Libro.

Ya no recuerdo el tiempo en que yo mismo fui poeta...
Me he transmutado insensiblemente en una sílaba absurda
Pronunciada o soplada dentro de una botella.
Mi saliva se estiró en las pezuñas de los poderosos
Que aplastaban, sin inmutarse, tanto la hierba como las alfombras.

En otra vida fui poeta y ahora lo lamento
Porque ese canto todavía produce un eco penoso en mis tripas:
Es el alma que se escapa aullando, como esos canes arrastrados
Y ahorcados por los perreros en Chile
Dejaban una estela de residuos evacuados en terror.
Luego, gracias a la *manu militari*
Se repitió la hazaña con los hombres.

Ahora, aquí mismo, treinta años después
Los gorilas son ratas disfrazadas de víboras
Con la última piel que ellas abandonaron
En el desierto de Mojave.

The putrid poisoned apple
Which we used to eat in the cemetery by the sea
Returns to the throat, with an acidic taste
But, after all, it adds perfume to our breath
(There are many dogs in Montpellier.)

Don't be afraid, you scrutinizing friends,
Scratchers, crumblers, scavengers:
The shit we ate will be transferred to you in full.
You will analyze it semantically
Chastely, indecently,
Coldly, queerly
But above all, stupidly
And the words
We poets once caressed will turn
Inside your pockets into an incredible bag of fish's eggs and leftovers
Or quail eggs minced by wizard's apprentices
Who definitely forgot how to open or close the Book.


I don't remember the time in which I was a poet...
I have transformed insensibly into an absurd syllable
Pronounced or blown into a bottle.
The hoofs of the powerful stretched my saliva
Which impassively crushed either grass or carpets.

In another life I was a poet and now I regret it
Because that song still produces a painful echo in my bowels:
It is the soul that escapes howling, like those canines
Dragged and strangled by Chilean dogcatchers
Used to leave a wake of residues evacuated in terror.
Afterwards, thanks to the *manu militari*
The deed was repeated with human beings.

Now, precisely here, thirty years after,
The goons are turned into rats disguised as vipers
With the last skin they abandoned
In the Mojave Desert.


Me llamo Neruda, Paul Celan,
Hart Crane, Leopardi, Unamuno, Verlaine...
Sean nuestros huesos bien servidos en la mesa espartana
Donde pajarillos, cuervos y elefantes marinos picotean nuestras
Semillas recién devueltas por la Nada.

Todo se muere entonces
Cuando vuestra sonrisa leve se abre comiendo el último residuo
De nuestras odas a los ruiñeños y las urnas griegas
Que aquí no existen—vive Dios—pero sí sopla
Un Viento del Oeste que trae un devastador perfume a coles podridas.

Cuando el cielo ya no tiene tapujos
Cuando los caminos previamente hollados se borran. 

My name is Neruda, Paul Celan,
Hart Crane, Leopardi, Unamuno, Verlaine...
May our bones be served in the Spartan table
Where little birds, ravens and sea elephants beck
Our seeds just returned from Nothingness.

Everything then dies
When your little smile opens to eat the last residue
Of our odes to Nightingales and Grecian urns
Which here don't exist—God lives—but instead blows
A West wind bringing a devastating perfume of rotten cabbage.

When the sky doesn't have any more concealment
When all previously traveled roads are erased. 

Notes

1. The author speaks about Emilio Salgari (1863–1911) a famed author for juvenile and adventure literature. *The Liguria Shipwrecks* is a novel about refoundation of humanity, like De Foe's *Robinson Crusoe* or Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island*. 'Cacio cavallo' is a tasty Napolitan cheese.