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## Poets

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## 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*.<sup>1</sup>

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 ruiséñores 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.