

SLOW READING CLUB

25-11-23

the smugglers, or;
si muero en la car-
retera

the smugglers, or; si muero en la carretera

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this pamphlet has been gathered by slow reading club on the occasion of a collective reading session, organised by festival sâlmon, on 25 november, 2023 at hangar in barcelona.

VIRGILIO PIÑERA

the fall (1944)

translated by Mark Schafer

We had scaled the three-thousand-foot mountain. Not to bury a capsule there at the peak, nor to raise the flag of the bold alpine climbers. After a few minutes, we began the descent. My companion followed me, bound, as is usual in these situations, by the same rope that ringed against my waist. I figure we had descended exactly ninety-eight feet when one of my companion's cleated boots glanced off a rock, causing him to lose his balance and somersault ahead of me. Since the rope wound between my legs, it jerked me hard, and to avoid being tossed over the edge, I had to twist around backwards. He, in turn, directed his fall to the spot I had just occupied. His decision was neither ridiculous nor absurd; on the contrary, he was responding to a profound understanding of those situations still unlisted in the manuals. The force of his movement caused a slight adjustment, and I suddenly saw my companion passing like a meteorite between my legs, and then the jolt from the rope — fastened, as I mentioned, to his back — turned me around into my original position of descent. He, undoubtedly obeying the same physical laws as I, and having traveled the distance permitted by the rope, was flipped over backwards, which naturally brought us face to face. We didn't say a word, but both of us knew that the headlong fall was inevitable. And so it happened that, after an indefinite period of time, we began to fall. Because my sole concern was to avoid losing my eyes, I put all my effort into preserving them from the terrible effects of the fall. As for my companion, his only worry was that his beautiful beard — colored an admirable gray like gothic glass — reach

the plain intact, not even slightly dusty. So, with utmost determination, I covered the bearded portion of his face with my hands; he, in turn, placed his hands over my eyes. Our velocity was increasing by the second, as is required in these cases of bodies falling through space. Suddenly, I looked through the slight spaces between his fingers and saw a sharp rock raze the top of his head. Suddenly I had to turn my own head to confirm that my legs had been separated from my torso by a rock, possibly of calcereous origin, whose serrated edge severed anything that came against it with the perfection of a saw used in the construction of ocean liners. With some effort, it is only fair to admit, we were saving my companion, his beautiful beard, and me, my eyes. It is true that now and then — every fifty feet or so, as I calculate it — a part of our bodies would be separated from us. For example, during five such intervals, we lost my companion, his left ear, his right elbow, a leg (I don't remember which), his testicles, and his nose; I, the upper part of the thorax, my spinal cord, my left eyebrow, my left ear, and my jugular vein. But this is nothing compared to what followed. A thousand feet above the plain, all we had left respectively was the following: my companion, his two hands (only to the carpal bones) and his beautiful gray beard; I, my two hands (also only to the carpal bones) and my eyes. A slight fear began to possess us. What if our hands were torn away by another boulder? We kept falling. Approximately ten feet above the plain, a pole left out by a worker capriciously caught the hands of my companion. Seeing my own orphaned eyes left totally unprotected, I must confess with eternal, unforgettable shame, I withdrew my hands from his beautiful gray beard to protect my eyes from any impact. I was unable to cover them, for my hands were immediately caught in the same fashion by another pole pointing in a different direction from the aforementioned pole, at which point we were separated from each other for the first time during the entire descent. But I couldn't complain; my eyes landed safe and sound on the grassy plain and could see a little ways off, the beautiful gray beard of my companion, shining in all its glory.

from Cold Tales

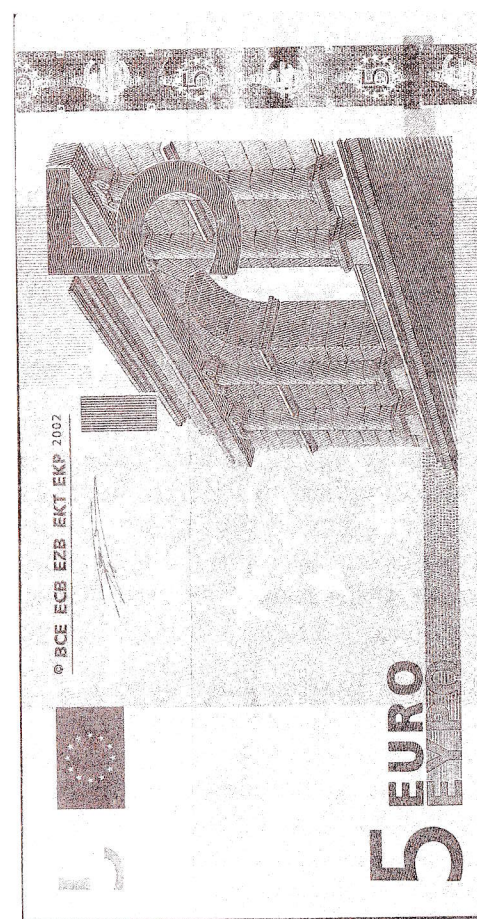
la caída (1944)

Habíamos escalado ya la montaña de tres mil pies de altura. No para enterrar en su cima la botella ni tampoco para plantar la bandera de los alpinistas denodados. Pasados unos minutos comenzamos el descenso. Como es costumbre en estos casos, mi compañero me seguía atado a la misma cuerda que rodeaba mi cintura. Yo había contado exactamente treinta metros de descenso cuando mi compañero, pegando con su zapato armado de púas metálicas un rebote a una piedra, perdió el equilibrio y, dando una voltereta, vino a quedar situado delante de mí. De modo que la cuerda enredada entre mis dos piernas tiraba con bastante violencia obligándome, a fin de no rodar al abismo, a encorvar las espaldas. Él, a su vez, tomó impulso y movió su cuerpo en dirección al terreno que yo, a mi vez, dejaba a mis espaldas. Su resolución no era descabellada o absurda; antes bien, respondía a un profundo conocimiento de esas situaciones que todavía no están anotadas en los manuales. El ardor puesto en el movimiento fue causa de una ligera alteración; de pronto advertí que mi compañero pasaba como un bólico por entre mis dos piernas y que, acto seguido, el tirón dado por la cuerda amarrada como he dicho a su espalda, me volvía de espaldas a mi primitiva posición de descenso. Por su parte, él, obedeciendo sin duda a iguales leyes físicas que yo, una vez recorrida la distancia que la cuerda le permitía, fue vuelto de espaldas a la dirección seguida por su cuerpo, lo que, lógicamente, nos hizo encontrarnos frente a frente. No nos dijimos palabra, pero sabíamos que el despeñamiento sería inevitable. En efecto, pasado un tiempo indefinible, comenzamos a rodar. Como mi única preocupación era no perder los ojos, puse todo mi empeño en preservarlos de los terribles efectos de la caída. En cuanto a mi compañero, su única angustia era que su hermosa barba, de un gris admirable de vitral gótico, no llegase

a la llanura ni siquiera ligeramente empolvada. Entonces yo puse todo mi empeño en cubrir con mis manos aquella parte de su cara cubierta por su barba; y él, a su vez, aplicó las suyas a mis ojos. La velocidad crecía por momentos, como es obligado en estos casos de los cuerpos que caen en el vacío. De pronto miré a través del ligerísimo intersticio que dejaban los dedos de mi compañero y advertí que en ese momento un afilado picacho le llevaba la cabeza, pero de pronto hube de volver la mía para comprobar que mis piernas quedaban separadas de mi tronco a causa de una roca, de origen posiblemente calcáreo, cuya forma dentada cercenaba lo que se ponía a su alcance con la misma perfección de una sierra para planchas de transatlánticos. Con algún esfuerzo, justo es reconocerlo, íbamos salvando, mi compañero su hermosa barba, y yo, mis ojos. Es verdad que a trechos, que yo liberalmente calculo de unos cincuenta pies, una parte de nuestro cuerpo se separaba de nosotros; por ejemplo, en cinco trechos perdimos: mi compañero, la oreja izquierda, el codo derecho, una pierna (no recuerdo cuál), los testículos y la nariz; yo, por mi parte, la parte superior del tórax, la columna vertebral, la ceja izquierda, la oreja izquierda y la yugular. Pero no es nada en comparación con lo que vino después. Calculo que a mil pies de la llanura, ya solo nos quedaba, respectivamente, lo que sigue: a mi compañero, las dos manos (pero solo hasta su carpo) y su hermosa barba gris; a mí, las dos manos (igualmente solo hasta su carpo) y los ojos. Una ligera angustia comenzó a poseernos. ¿Y si nuestras manos eran arrancadas por algún pedrusco? Seguimos descendiendo. Aproximadamente a unos diez pies de la llanura la pértiga abandonada de un labrador enganchó graciosamente las manos de mi compañero, pero yo, viendo a mis ojos huérfanos de todo amparo, debo confesar que para eterna, memorable vergüenza mía, retiré mis manos de su hermosa barba gris a fin de protegerlos de todo impacto.

No pude cubrirlos, pues otra pértiga colocada en sentido contrario a la ya mencionada, enganchó igualmente mis dos manos, razón por la cual quedamos por primera vez alejados uno del otro en todo el descenso. Pero no pude hacer lamentaciones, pues ya

mis ojos llegaban sanos y salvos al césped de la llanura y podían ver, un poco más allá, la hermosa barba gris de mi compañero que resplandecía en toda su gloria.”



diary (1953)

translated by Lillian Vallee

Friday

I write this diary reluctantly. Its dishonest honesty wearies me. For whom am I writing? If I am writing for myself, then why is it being published? If for the reader, why do I pretend that I am talking to myself? Are you talking to yourself so that others will hear you?

How far I am from the certitude and vigor that hum in me when I am, pardon me, "creating." Here, on these pages, I feel as if I were emerging from a blessed night into the hard light of dawn, which fills me with yawning and drags my shortcomings out into the open. The duplicity inherent in keeping a diary makes me timid, so forgive me, oh, forgive me (perhaps these last words are dispensable, perhaps they are already pretentious?).

Yet I realize that one must be oneself at all levels of writing, which is to say, that I ought to be able to express myself not only in a poem or drama, but also in everyday prose—in an article or in a diary—and the flight of art has to find its counterpart in the domain of regular life, just as the shadow of the condor is cast onto the ground. What's more, this passage into an everyday world from an area that is backed into the most remote depths, practically in the underground, is a matter of great importance to me. I want to be a balloon, but one with ballast; an antenna, but one that is grounded. I want to be capable of translating myself into everyday speech, but—*traduttore, traditore*. Here I betray myself, I am beneath myself.

The difficulty consists in the fact that I write about myself not at night, not in isolation, but right in a newspaper in front of people.

In these circumstances, I cannot treat myself with the appropriate gravity, I have to be "modest" and then again, I am tormented by that which has tormented me throughout my entire life and which has so greatly influenced my way of being with other people. The necessity of slighting myself in order to be in tune with those who slight me, or who don't know the least little thing about me. I will not submit myself to that "modesty" at any price and I consider it my mortal enemy. Happy Frenchmen who write their diaries with tact, except that I don't believe in the value of their tact, I know that theirs is only a tactful circumvention of the problem, which by its very nature is unsociable.

But I should grab the bull by the horns. From childhood I have been very much initiated into this matter; it grew right along with me so that today I should be pretty comfortable with it. I know and I have said this on many occasions, that every artist has to be pompous because he aspires to be on a pedestal. Yet I have also said that concealing these pretensions is a stylistic flaw, and a sign of a faulty "inner resolution." Openness. One must play with uncovered cards. Writing is nothing more than a battle that the artist wages with others for his own prominence.

Yet if I am incapable of making this thought real here in the diary, what is it worth? Yet somehow I cannot, and something bothers me because there is no artistic form between me and people and our contact becomes too embarrassing. I ought to treat this diary as an instrument of my becoming before you. I ought to strive to have you understand me in some way, in a way that would enable me to have (and let this dangerous word appear) talent. Let this diary be more modern and more conscious and let it be permeated by the idea that my talent can arise only in connection with you, that is, that only you can excite me to talent or, what's more, that only you can create it in me.

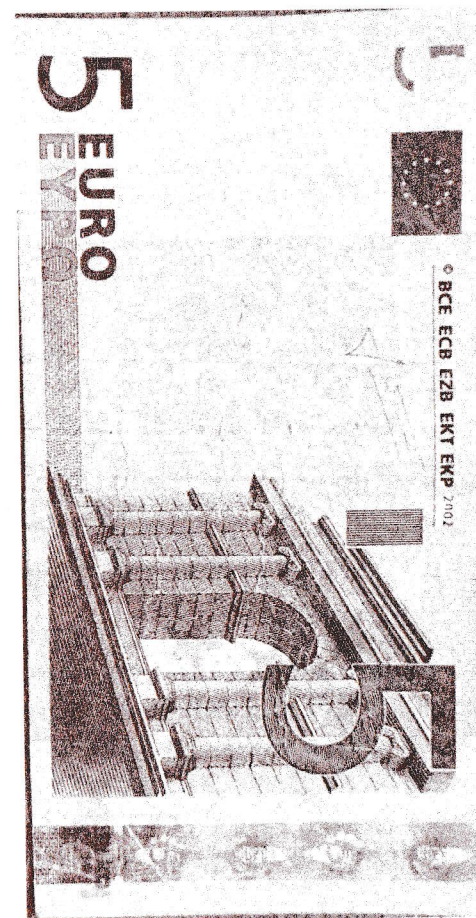
I would like people to see in me that which I suggest to them. I would like to impose myself on people as a personality in order to be its subject forever after that. Other diaries should be to this one what the words "I am like this" are to "I want to be like this." We are used to lifeless words that merely ascertain. A better word is one that brings to life. *Spiritus movens*. If I could only succeed in

summoning the spirit that moves to the first pages of this diary, I could do a great deal. I could, first of all (and I need this even more because I am a Polish author), shatter this narrow cage of concepts in which you would like to imprison me. Far too many people, worthy of a better fate, have been shackled. I alone should designate the role I am to play.

Furthermore, by suggesting, somewhat in the way of a proposition, certain problems, more or less linked to me, I pull myself into them and they lead me to other secrets still unknown to me. To travel as far as possible into the virgin territory of culture, into its still half-wild, and so indecent, places, while exciting you to extremes, to excite even myself . . . I want to meet you in that jungle, bind myself to you in a way that is the most difficult and uncomfortable, for you and for me. Don't I have to distinguish myself from current European thought? Aren't my enemies the currents and doctrines to which I am similar? I have to attack them in order to force myself into contradistinction and I have to force you to confirm it. I want to uncover my present moment and tie myself to you in our todayness.

In this little diary I would like to set out to openly construct a talent for myself, as openly as Henry fabricates a marriage for himself in the third act. Why openly? Because I desire to reveal myself, to stop being too easy a riddle for you to solve. By taking you to the backstage of my being, I force myself to retreat to an even more remote depth.

That is all. If only I could summon the spirit. But I don't feel equal to the task. Three years ago, unfortunately, I broke with pure art, as my kind of art was not the kind that could be cultivated casually, on Sundays or holidays. I began to write this diary for the simple reason of saving myself, in fear of degradation and an ultimate inundation by the waves of a trivial life, which are already up to my neck. Yet it turns out that even here I am incapable of total effort. One cannot be nothingness all week and then suddenly expect to exist on Sunday. Journalists and you, honorable counselors and spectators, have no need to fear. You no longer need to feel threatened by any conceit and incomprehension on my part. I am tumbling into publicism along with you and the rest of the world.



that flaming brand (2020)

the light was only ever a sword
was only ever a fire to take my skin
from me

the car wrapped around a pole at the
centre of the milky way

a history of violets (1965)

translated by Jeannine Marie Pitas

xi

The gladiolus is a spear, its edge loaded with carnations, a knife of carnations. It jumps through the window, kneels on the table; it's vagrant flame, burning up our papers, our dresses. Mother swears that a dead man has risen; she mentions her father and mother and starts to cry.

The pink gladiolus opened up in our house.

But scare it, tell it to go.

That crazy lily is going to kill us.

xv

The mushrooms are born in silence; some of them are born in silence, others with a brief shriek, a soft thunder. Some are white, others pink; that one is gray and looks like a dove, the statue of a dove; still others are gold or purple. Each one bears—and this is what's awful—the initials of the corpse it comes from. I do not dare to eat them; that most tender meat is our relative.

But, come afternoon the mushroom buyer arrives and starts picking. My mother gives him permission. He chooses like an eagle. This one white as sugar, a pink one, a gray one.

My mother does not realize that she is selling her race.

xviii

At that hour, the tiny underground creatures were starting thier work (those ones that wear heavy coats and work to the rhythm

of drums: toc-toc). At that hour the moon had reached the summit of its brilliance, and all the doves scattered over the moon. But from a distance those birds looked like butterflies, great, sparkling flies. The doves flew over the moon, pecking at it, caressing it.

All of this became clearer as I watched the scene from the black forest of orange trees. And my grandparents sitting there, frozen, thier cloaks a pale pink, thier ill-fated braids.

They always held some too-brilliant thing in their hands; they showed it; they hid it. Is it a fallen dove? I stepped closer, looking, asking—Or is it a little hare from among the irises?

But they always gave me the strangest reply.—It is a saint, they said.—It is San Carlos, San Cristóbal, Santa Isabel.

I cannot put my memories in order.
The moon wrecks them every time.

xix

Beyond the land, through the air, in the full moon's light, like a lily's stem, it loads its side incessantly with hyacinths, narcissi, white lilies. The wolves draw back at the sight of it; the lambs get down on their knees, crazy with love and fear. It moves on, goes off like an errant candelabra, a bonfire; it goes towards the house, passes the cabinets, the hearth; with only a glance it burns the apples, illuminates them, wraps them in candied paper; it flings colored stones into the rice; it makes the bread and pears glow. It drives itself into the table like a November yucca branch; it hunts a star, it stuffs itself with candles, pine nuts, little bottles. It breaks into the bedroom, spins over my dream, over my wide-open eyes; it floats in the air like a three-tiered crown of pearls, a lamp. It is a fish, a coral branch outside the water, each piece of coral as swollen as a bud or a lip. It flies back toward the moon; it scares the horses and owls, who break into flight and instantly stop. It calls to me. To me, sleepless, and we go off beyond the hills, away from the night workers who tried to mow it down like a hydrangea.

xxiii

The gladioli are made of marble, of pure silver, of some ghostly fabric, organdy; they are the bones of Most Holy Maria; they are

still walking through this world.

For a long time these spectral stems have followed me. At night they come in through the window; if I am sleeping, they enter my dream; if I am awake, I find them standing at the foot of my bed.

The gladioli are like the angels, like the dead. Who can free me from that tenuous stem, from the gaze of that blind man?

xviii

I remember the white, folded cabbages—white roses of the earth, of the gardens—cabbages of marble, of most delicate porcelain; cabbages holding their children inside.

And the tall blue chard.

And the tomato, a kidney of rubies.

And the onions wrapped in silky paper, rolling paper, like bombs of sugar, salt, alcohol.

And the gnome asparagus, turrets of the kingdom of gnomes.

I remember the potatoes, and the tulips we always planted among them.

And the snakes with their long, orange wings.

And the tobacco of fireflies, who smoked without ceasing.

I remember eternity.

historial de las violetas ⁽¹⁹⁶⁵⁾

xi

El gladiolo es una lanza con el costado lleno de claveles, es un cuchillo de claveles; ya salta la ventana, se hincan en la mesa; es un fuego errante, nos quema los vestidos, los papeles. Mamá dice que es un muerto que ha resucitado y nombra a su padre y a su madre y empieza a llorar.

El gladiolo rosado se abrió en casa.

Pero, ahuyéntalo, dile que se vaya.

Esa loca azucena nos va a asesinar.

xv

Los hongos nacen en silencio; algunos nacen en silencio; otros, con un breve alarido, un leve trueno. Unos son blancos, otros rosados, ese es gris y parece una paloma, la estatua de una paloma; otros son dorados o morados. Cada uno trae — y eso es lo terrible — la inicial del muerto de donde procede. Yo no me atrevo a devorarlos; esa carne levisima es pariente nuestra.

Pero, aparece en la tarde el comprador de hongos y empieza la siega. Mi madre da permiso. Él elige como un águila. Ese blanco como el azúcar, uno rosado, uno gris.

Mamá no se da cuenta de que vende a su raza.

xviii

A esa hora, los animalitos de subtierra empezaban su trabajo, (los que usan saco duro y laboran al ritmo de tambores: toc-toc). a esa hora la luna llegaba hasta aquel sitio logrando su máximo fulgor; y el palomar se desataba sobre la luna; pero esos pájaros, de lejos, parecían mariposas, grandes moscas centelleantes. Las palomas sobrevolaban a la luna, la picoteaban, la acariciaban.

Y todo esto se hacia más evidente al mirar los cosas desde el bosque negro de naranjos. Y los abuelos allí sentados, inmóviles, con sus batones en rosa pálido, sus aciagas trenzas.

Siempre tenían en la mano algo excesivamente brillante, lo mostraban, lo escondían. ¿Es que se cayó una paloma? — yo me acercaba, espiaba, suplicaba — ¿o es una liebre de los lirios?

Pero ellos, daban siempre una respuesta extraña: — Es un santo, — decían — es San Carlos, San Cristóbal, es Santa Isabel.

No puedo ordenar mis recuerdos.
La luna me los desbarata cada vez.

xix

Más allá de la tierra, por el aire, en el plenilunio, como una vara de azucenas, su costado se carga sin tregua, de jacintos, de narcisos, de azucenas. Los lobos al mirarle se amilanan; los cordeiros se arrodillan, locos de amor y de miedo. Él ambula, va, como un candelabro errante, como una hoguera, va hacia la casa, pasa junto a los armarios, al hogar; con sólo mirarlal asala manzana,

las, las abrillanta, las envuelve en papel confitado, echa piedrecillas de colores en el arroz, hace fosferecer los panes y las peras. Se hincan en mitad de la mesa como una vara de yuca por noviembre, caza una estrella, se carga de velitas, de piñones, botellitas. Va hacia el dormitorio, gira sobre mi sueño, sobre mis ojos bien abiertos; se sostiene en el aire como una corona hecha por tres hileras de perlas, como una lámpara. Es un pez, una rama de coral fuera del agua con cada coral bien henchido igual que un pimpollo o como un labio. Vuelve hacia la luna; ahuyenta a los caballos, las lechuzas, que se precipitan en vuelo en un instante y se detienen. Me llama. A mí que estoy desvelada; y nos vamos más allá de las colinas, de los labriegos nocturnos que quisieran segarla como a una hortensia.

xxiii

Los gladiolos son de mármol, de plata pura, de alguna tela fantasma, de organdí; son los huesos de María Santísima, que aún andan por este mundo.

Hace mucho me persiguen esas varas espectrales. Por la noche cruzan la ventana; si estoy soñando se entran en mi sueño, si me despierto, están de pie junto a la cama.

Los gladiolos son como los ángeles, como los muertos. ¿Quién me libra de esa vara tenue, de la mirada de ese ciego?

xxxv

Me acuerdo de los repollos acresponados, blancos, — rosanieves de la tierra, de los huertos —, de marmolina, de la porcelana más leve, los repollos con los niños dentro.

Y las altas acelgas azules.

Y el tomate, riñón de rubíes.

Y las cebollas envueltas en papel de seda, papel de fumar, como bombas de azúcar, de sal, de alcohol.

Los espárragos gnomo, torrecillas del país de los gnomos.

Me acuerdo de las papas, a las que siempre plantábamos en el medio un tulipán.

Y las víboras de largas alas anaranjadas.

Y el humo del tabaco de las luciérnagas, que fuman sin reposo.
Me acuerdo de la eternidad.



the names of the women (2019)

translated by Mara Faye Lethem

Eulàlia did tell them how the Great He-Goat's anus was so soft, tender as a newborn's from how we coddled and kissed it, and how his shaft was cold as an icicle, and I laughed and laughed and laughed, and all that laughing 'twere what got me hanged. 'Twas that laughter, like a heady venom inside me, like the witch milk from a spurge, 'tis why I remember all the things. Because the laughter was white and contagious like tickles there inside my blood and if you broke my arm, white milk would come out instead of red blood. And the laughter left me emptied. They could've saved themselves the trouble of the tortures and the rooms that stank of piss, could've saved those ropes that stretched out so long, and the wool rags full of ash, and their waiting for me to stop laughing and confess. Confess what? Laughing was a good thing, 'twas a cushion, 'twas like eating a pear, like sticking your feet into a waterfall on a summer's day. I ne'er would've stopped laughing for all the gold in the world, not for all the hurt in the world.

The laughter unhitched me from the arms and legs and hands what'd been my loyal companions till then, and from the skin I'd covered and uncovered so many times, and it washed away the pain and grief over things that men can do to you. It done emptied me out like a dunderhead, all that heeheeheehee and hahahaha, and my noggin went clong-clong with the whistling air that entered me and came out my nose and ears. The laughing left my little head clean as a walnut shell, fit to hold all the stories and all the things what we said we done, and all the things they said we done against God and Jesus and

all the saints and the Virgin. What Virgin? A god like each of their fathers, evil, evil, evil, and a torturer like them, and frightened by all the lies they'd repeated so many times they done come to believe them. For there be not a single one left on these mountains, nary a one of those who did point at us, who locked us up, who searched for the devil's mark upon us, who knotted the nooses and tightened the ropes. Because staying or not staying had nary a thing to do with the fires of hell, nor with divine punishment, nor with any faith, nor with any sorts of virtue. No. Being able to get up every morn to gather penny buns and golden chanterelles and to make piss and tell stories tis to do with the thunderclaps what befall that tree and that man. 'Tis to do with the infants born whole and the infants what aren't, and the infants born whole but with their innards not in the right places. Has to do with being the bird what the buzzard hunted or the hare the dog hunted, or not. And the Virgin and child and the demon 'twere all fashioned of the selfsame folly.

Of us all, 'tis Joana the eldest. She did come from a house nigh mine, Joana did, and everyone did know she would make cures in a cauldron, and one day she bade me join her if I so desired to learn, and if I desired to go along with her at night. And to have her teach me how to cure fevers, and inflict the evil eye and goiters, and nursling maladies and wounds and cattle diseases. And to find lost and stolen objects and cast glances. Oh, such innocence. For ere our biggest sin against God 'twas getting up every morn after they hanged us, and gathering flowers and eating blackberries.

They all left Joana be and they all did call for her when they went into labor or suffered goiters. Until that time when the hail fell heavy. Joana kept a field of wheat, and when the hail razed all the other fields, nary a hailstone fell on hers. They did say 'twas Joana had made the storm with some of her powders. Sorceress! they did yell. And then the son of her neighbor, who was called Little Joan, a five-year-old lad who was just about the first to call her sorceress, fell ill and his feet did swell purple and black, and he did expire four days later, and everyone did point at Joana, and did exclaim that she had empoisoned his victuals. Get her, get that old strumpet, that sorceress! And they did. And soon after that, little, little tiny frogs did rain down, and Joana sayeth unto them that if she so desired she could

bring on the hail, or bring down a rain of frogs, or make all their livestock die, and then they did take me also and Joana said nothing more ever again. But I was fine, for I learned to laugh.

And then Eulàlia did appear, from Tegurà de Dalt, and she did tell them how she had once gone to Andorra to unearth a dead baby and extract its lungs and liver, to make of it an unguent to kill people and livestock. And then she did tell of how she bound men so they could not lie with other women but only with their wives. Since she made six knots on the strings of their undergarments and then with every knot she did say, I bind you on behalf of God, Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and the whole heavenly court, and on behalf of Beelzebub and Tió and Cuxol, so that you cannot join carnally with any woman who be not your wife.

And once, she bound a man and a woman, who were neighbors of hers and who were cruel and threw rocks at her. She did bind them with hairs from their heads, so they couldn't copulate. And when the husband wasn't there, the woman couldn't live without him, and when he was there and wanted to come close to her, her entire body itched such as she thought she might die, and she couldn't stand to be near him. And that way four years passed. Four years! Hahaha heehee. And then one day, their son who took care of their goats brought the animals past Eulàlia's land, and Eulàlia did say oh may bad wolves devour your goats. And right then and there, a wolf pounced into his herd and killed a goat. Then they took Eulàlia, too, and when they had her, she dared tell them that one night the four of us had snatched a nursling from his mother's side, and taken him to a field, and we had played with him as if he were a ball.

Eulàlia always did tell the best stories, still does, better than anyone. Stories that make me laugh, laugh, laugh, until something loosens up inside of me, even deeper inside than the little drops of piss. She tells stories, and we are there in her stories, and verily what a joy 'tis to be there in them. Inside Eulàlia is a little voice, deep, deep inside, what tells her tales, a little voice, the devil's voice, what told her about the misdeeds, and 'twas spurred on by the pain men inflicted upon her and unleashed like a tongue what no longer knows how to lie still.

The little voice came from deep inside her own head, like a fount, springing forth with images and words.

“We entered the forest, I upon a black she-ass, and Dolceta from Can Conill”—“‘tis I!” I exclaimed—“upon a fox, and there was no moon and the stars gave nary any light, and a branch leaped out into my path verily like a claw scratching my face, and I said, ‘Jesus!’ and I fell from the she-ass, and Dolceta said, ‘Never say “Jesus” again.’ And I paid her mind. We did go to the Roca de la Mort, we did go there with our armpits smeared with an unguent that scorches the hairs forevermore, and that is why our armpits are bare. When we were there at the Rock, all of us, men and women, did mark a cross upon the ground and we did lower our skirts and we did each place our buttocks there upon the cross, forswearing faith and God. And then we did kiss the devil’s anus, one by one. And sometimes he took the form of a calico cat and sometimes of a he-goat, and he said unto us, ‘Art thou with me, my child?’ and we all did answer yes. And then we ate cheese and fruit and honey, and we drank wine, and we all joined hands, men, women, and demons, and we embraced and we kissed and we danced and we fornicated and we sang, all together.”

Margarida cried. She cried and denied everything, she cried and cried at the injustice of it all and sometimes she shrieked, and I told her, come now, Margarida, don’t cry, all four of us locked up there in the same dark cell that wasn’t even a cell, that was for holding livestock. And we made a good pair, Margarida and I, because I just laughed and laughed, and she just cried and cried, and sometimes the more she cried, the more her face contorted, and the more snot and saliva dripped from her, with her face all red and all swollen and all ugly, the more I laughed, and the more I laughed, the more she cried, and I told her, come now, Margarida, don’t cry, and we made a good pair. Margarida denied every accusation, one after the other, and the only thing she would admit to was having set the table at night. Placing the tablecloth, and bread and wine and water and a mirror, so the evil spirits could gaze upon themselves while eating and drinking, and not kill her babies. But they only need one little thing to hang you anyway.

from When I Sing, Mountains Dance

el nom de las dones (2019)

N’Eulàlia els digué que el boc tenia el cul molt fi, molt fi, com el d’una criatura de bolquers, de tants petons que l’hi havíem fet, i que tenia el membre fred com un tros de gel, i a mi me va fer riure, i riure i riure, i a mi me van penjar de tant que vaig riure. I va ser pel riure, com una metzina embriagadora que se’m va ficar dintre, com la llet de bruixa de les lleteres, que recordo totes les coses. Perquè el riure, dins de la meva sang, blanc i encomanadís com les pessigolles, que si me trencaves un braç sortia llet blanca en comptes de sang vermella, me va buidar. Si se n’hagueren pogut estalviar, de tortures i d’habitacions, totes que feien pudor de pipí, i de cordes que s’estiraven llargues, llargues, i de draps de llana plens de cendra, i d’esperar que parés de riure i confessés. Confessar què? Si el riure era l’única cosa bona, era un coixí, era com menjar-se una pera, era com ficar els peus en un salt d’aigua un dia d’estiu. No haguera parat de riure ni per tot l’or del món, ni per tot el mal del món.

El riure me va desenganxar dels braços i cames i mans que m’havien acompanyat tan fidelment fins aleshores, i de la pell que havia vestit i desvestit tantes vegades, i me va rentar el mal i la pena per les coses que et poden fer els homes. Me va buidar com a una beneitona, tant de hihihhi i hahahaha, i el cap, que me feia clonc-clonc amb l’aire que xiulava quan m’entrava i em sortia pel nas i les orelles. Me va deixar el caparró com la closca d’una nou, a punt per guardar-hi totes les rondalles i totes les històries i totes les coses que els vam dir que feiem, i totes les coses que van dir que havíem fet en contra de Déu i de Jesús i de tots els sants i de la Verge. Quina Verge? Un Déu com el pare de cada un, dolent, dolent, dolent, i torturador com ells, i esporuguit de totes les mentides que, de tant dir-les, s’havien cregut. Que no se n’hi ha pas quedat cap dels que ens assenyalaren, ni dels que ens tancaren, ni dels que ens buscaren les marques de

bruixes, ni dels que feren els nusos i tibaren les cordes, per aquestes muntanyes. Que quedar-se o no quedar-se no té pas a veure amb el foc de l'infern, ni amb el càstig diví, ni amb cap fe, ni amb cap virtut de res. No. Poder collir ceps i vaquetes i fer pipí i explicar històries i llevar-se cada matí té a veure amb els llamps que cauen sobre aquest arbre o sobre aquest home. Té a veure amb els nens que surten sencers i els nens que no, i els nens que surten sencers però per dintre no tenen les coses al seu lloc. Té a veure amb ser l'ocell que ha caçat l'aligot o la llebre que ha caçat el gos, o no. I la Verge i el nen i el dimoni estaven tots fets de la mateixa beneiteria.

De totes les que som, na Joana és la mes vella. Era d'una casa vora la meva, na Joana, i tothom sabia que feia medicines en un tupí, i un dia me va dir que si en volia aprendre, i si me'n volia anar amb ella a la nit. I si me'n va ensenyar, de curar febres, i mals d'ulls i gatirons, i mals d'infants i ferides i malalties d'animals. I de recuperar objectes perduts i robats i de fer males mirades. Innocents de nosaltres. Si la cosa més en contra de Déu que hem fet mai és llevar-nos cada matí després que ens pengessin i collir flors i menjar mores.

A na Joana tots la deixaven fer i tots la volien si havien de néixer criatures o si tenien gatirons. Fins que una volta va pedregar molt, i na Joana tenia un camp de blat, i en totes les terres on va pedregar no hi va quedar res, i al camp de na Joana no hi caigué una sola pedra. I digueren que na Joana havia fet el temporal amb unes pólvores. I li cridaren metzinera! I aleshores el fill del seu veí, que s'anomenava Joan Petit, que era un mosset de cinc anys que li havia dit metzinera davant de molts d'altres, prengué mal als peus i se li inflaren morats i negres, i es morí al cap de quatre dies, i tots exclamaren que na Joana li havia emmetzinat les sopes. I li cridaren, preneu-la, la vella bagassa, metzinera! I la prengueren. I poc després de prendre-la, plo-gueren granotes petites, petites, i na Joana els digué que si ella volia podia fer pedregar, o podia fer caure granotes o podia fer-los morir tot el bestiar, i llavors a mi me prengueren també i na Joana no va dir mai més res. Però jo rai, que vaig aprendre de riure.

I llavors va aparèixer n'Eulàlia, que era de Tegurà de Dalt, i els digué que una vegada se n'havia anat fins a Andorra a dessoterrar un infant mort i que li va extreure la freixura i el fetge, i que en feu

un ungüent per matar gent i bestiar. I llavors els va explicar com lligava els hòmens perquè no poguessin jaure amb altres dones sinó amb llurs mullers només. Com els hi feia sis nusos als cordons de les bragues i llavors deia a cada nus, jo et lligo a tu de part de Déu, de sant Pere i de sant Pau i de tota la cort celestial, i de part de Belzebú i Tió i Cuxol, que no puguis unir-te amb cap dona carnalment sinó amb la teua muller.

I que una vegada va lligar un marit i una muller que eren veïns seus i que eren mesquins i li tiraven pedres. Els va lligar amb cabells dels seus caps, de manera que no poguessin fer còpula. I quan el marit no hi era, la dona no podia viure sense ell, i quan hi era present i se li volia acostar, tota la seva persona formiguejava de tal manera que se sentia morir i no podia suportar que s'ajuntés amb ella. I van estar així quatre anys. Quatre anys! Quin riure. I aleshores un dia, un fill de la parella que guardava les cabres va passar amb els animals per un ermàs de n'Eulàlia, i n'Eulàlia li digué que mals llops se li menjassin les bèsties. I allí mateix, saltà un llop entre les cabres i en degollà una. I llavors la prengueren, a n'Eulàlia també, i quan la tenien presa, els digué que una nit totes quatre havíem llevat un infant de mesos del costat de la seua mare, i ens l'havíem endut a un camp, i havíem jugat amb ell com si fora una pilota.

N'Eulàlia explicava les millors històries, encara les explica ara, millor que ningú. Les històries que a mi me fan riure, riure, riure, fins que alguna cosa se m'afluixa a dintre, més endintre i tot que les gotetes de pipí. Explica històries, i a voltes nosaltres sortim a les històries, i és un goig sortir-hi. N'Eulàlia té dintre una veueta, ben endintre, que li explica les rondalles, una veueta, la del dimoni, que li contava les malifetes, i que el mal que els homes li feien atiava i deslligava com una llengua que ja no sap estar-se quieta. La veueta li venia de dintre del cap mateix, com un aiguaneix, que feia les imatges i les paraules:

Vàrem anar al bosc, a damunt d'una somera negra, jo, i a damunt d'una guineu, na Dolceta de can Conill —que soc jo!, deia jo—, i no hi havia lluna i les estrelles gairebé no en feien, de llum, i una branca em va saltar al pas talment una urpa que m'escarrinxava el rostre, i vaig dir, Jesús!, i vaig caure de la somera, i na Dolceta em va dir que

no digués mai més Jesús. I així ho vaig fer. Anàvem a la Roca de la Mort, i hi anàvem amb les aixelles untades d'ungüent que socarra els pèls per sempre, i per això les nostres aixelles són pelades. Quan vàrem ser a la Roca, tots, homes i dones, vàrem marcar cadascú una creu en terra i vàrem abaixar-nos les faldilles i posàrem les natges cadascú a sobre de la seva creu, abjurant de la fe i de Déu. I després li vàrem besar l'anús al diable, un per un. I a voltes tenia forma de gat de tres colors i a voltes de boc, i ens deia, "Estaràs amb mi, bona infanta?", i totes contestàrem que sí. I després menjàrem formatge i fruita i mel, i beguérem vi i ens prenguérem tots de les mans, homes, dones i dimonis, i ens abraçàrem i ens besàrem i ballàrem i fornica-rem i cantàrem tots plegats».

I na Margarida plorava. Plorava i negava totes les coses, i plorava i plorava de la injustícia i a vegades xisclava, i jo li deia, dona no ploris, Margarida, tancades a la mateixa cel·la fosca, totes quatre, que no era ni una cel·la, que allí abans hi guardaven bestiar. I fèiem una bona parella, jo i na Margarida, perquè jo reia que reia, i ella plora que plora, i a voltes com més plorava ella, i més ganyotes feia, i més mocs i saliva treia, amb la cara tota vermella i tota inflada i tota lletja, més reia jo, i llavors com més reia jo, més plorava ella, i jo li deia, dona no ploris, Margarida, i fèiem una bona parella. Na Margarida negava totes les coses, les unes darrere les altres, i l'única cosa que va confessar va ser haver parat taula a les nits. Posar estovalles i pa i vi i viandes i aigua i un mirall, perquè s'hi miressin els mals esperits, i s'hi trobessin en menjar i en beure, i així no li matessin els infants. Però per una sola cosa petita també et poden penjar.

from Canto jo i la muntanya balla

the pillow book ⁽¹⁰⁰²⁾

translated by Meredith McKinney

Elegantly intriguing things—It's delightful to hear, through a wall or partition of some sort, the sound of someone, no mere gentlewoman, softly and elegantly clap her hands for service. Then, still separated from view behind, perhaps, a sliding door, you hear a youthful voice respond, and the swish of silk as someone arrives. It must be time for a meal to be served, for now come the jumbled sounds of chopsticks and spoons, and then the ear is arrested by the sudden metallic clink of a pouring-pot's handle falling sideways and knocking against the pot.

Hair tossed back, but not roughly, over a robe that's been beaten to a fine floss, so that you can only guess at its splendid length.

It's marvellous to see a beautifully appointed room, where no lamp has been lit and the place is illuminated instead by the light of a brightly burning fire in the square brazier—you can just make out the cords of the curtains around the curtain dais glimmering softly. The metal clasps that hold the raised blinds in place at the lintel cloth and trefoil cords also gleam brightly. A beautifully arranged brazier with fire burning, its rim swept clean of ash, the firelight also revealing the painting on its inner surface, is a most delightful sight. As also is a brightly gleaming pair of fire tongs propped at an angle in the brazier.

Another scene of fascinating elegance—it's very late at night, Her Majesty has retired to her chamber, everyone is asleep and outside a lady is sitting talking with a senior courtier. From within comes the frequent sound of go stones dropping into the box. Delightful too to hear the soft sound of hire tongs being gently pushed into the ash of the brazier, and sense from this presence someone who isn't yet asleep.

A person who stays up late is always elegantly intriguing. You wake in the night to lie there listening through the partition, and realise from the sounds that someone is still up. You can't hear what is said, but you catch the sound of a man's soft laugh, and you long to know what they're saying to each other.



Another scene—Her Majesty has not yet retired. Her ladies are attending her, and the High Gentlewoman or perhaps some other senior gentlewoman for the Emperor's residence, someone who adds formality to the occasion, is also present. People are seated near Her Majesty, engaged in conversation. The lamp is extinguished, but fine details of the scene are illuminated by the light of the fire that burns in the long brazier.

A lady new to the court, someone not of particularly impressive background by who the young gentlemen would naturally consider an object of elegant interest, is attending Her Majesty rather late at night. There's something attractively intimate in the sound of her silk robes as she enters and approaches Her Majesty on her knees. Her majesty speaks quietly to her, and she shrinks like a child and responds in a barely audible voice. The whole feel of the scene is very quiet. It's also very elegant the way, when the gentlemen are gathered seated herein there in the room talking, you hear the silk rustle of people as they leave or enter and, though it's only a soft sound, you can guess who each one would be.

Some gentleman of intimidating rank has come visiting the rooms one evening. Your own lamp is extinguished, but light from nearby penetrates in the room. Since he's someone she would never sit so close to in day light hours, she bashfully draws over a low standing curtain and lies close beside it, head bent over, though even he would surely be able to judge her hair. His cloak and gathered trousers are draped over the standing curtain—something of suitably high rank, of course, although the special olive-green of a Chamberlain of the sixth rank would be just about acceptable. However, if it's one of those deep green cloaks of a normal sixth-ranker, you'd feel inclined to take it and roll it into a ball and consign it to the far reaches of the room, so that when it comes time for him to leave at dawn he'll be dismayed to discover he can't lay hands on it.



It's also quite delightful, in summer or winter, to take a quick peep from the corridor, where you guess someone's sleeping behind a standing curtain from the clothes draped over on end of it.

The scent of incense is a most elegantly intriguing thing. I well remember the truly wonderful scent that wafted from Captain Tadanobu as he sat leaning by the blind of the Little Door of Her Majesty's room one day during the long rains of the fifth moon. The blend was so subtle there was no distinguishing its ingredients. Of course it's natural that scent is enhanced by the moisture of a rainy day, but one couldn't help remarking on it even so, It was no wonder that the younger ladies were so deeply impressed by the way it lingered until the following day in the blind he'd been leaning against.

Rather than stringing along a large crowd of retainers of varying lengths, none of whom looks particularly smart or impressive,

it's far more refined for a gentlemen to go about in a beautifully gleaming carriage that he's had for only a little while, with ox drivers dressed with appropriate smartness, who can barely keep up with the spirited ox as it rushes along ahead of them.

What really does catch the attention with it's elegant suggestiveness is the sight of a slender retainer dressed in graded-dye skirted trousers in lavender or some such colour, with upper robes of something appropriate—glossed Silke, kerria-yellow—and shiny shows, running along close the the axle as the carriage travels.



if i die on the road (1970)

translated by Alex Reynokds, Martin Zícarí & Slow Reading Club

i

If I die on the road lay me no flowers.
 If on the road I die lay me no flowers.
 On the road lay me no flowers if I die.
 Lay me not if I die flowers on the road.
 Lay me not on the road flowers if I die.
 No flowers on the road if I die lay me.
 No flowers on the road lay me if I die.
 If I die no flowers on the road lay me.
 If flowers I die on the road lay me not.
 Flowers if I die not on the road lay me.
 If flowers I die lay on me the not road.
 Flowers if lay I die me on not the road.
 I die if lay flowers the on me on road.
 The I die on if lay not me road.
 If flowers I die lay on me the not road.
 Flowers if lay I die me on not the road.
 If I die on the flowers lay me not on the road.
 If flowers I die lay me not on the road.
 If on the road flowers lay me not if I die.
 If on the I die lay me not on the road flowers.

ii

Going in a rust bucket, in a tin heap,
 I'm going on the road.
 I'm going, getting going on the road.

I'm going to a flower garden that is by the road.
 I'm going in a rust bucket, in a tin heap,
 going to buy flowers for my dead.
 But lay me no flowers if I die on the road.

iii

If I die on the road bury me in the garden
 that is by the road, but lay no flowers for me.
 When one meets their end on the road
 One has no flowers laid for them from that or any other garden.

iv

If I die, if I don't die,
 If I die because I don't die.
 If I don't die because I die.
 If I die on the road.
 If I don't die but on the road I do die.
 If I die because I don't die on the road.
 If I don't die because I die on the road.
 Lay me no f, lay me no l, lay me no o,
 Lay me no w, lay me. no e, lay me no r, lay me no s.
 Lay me no flo, lay me no wers,
 If I die on the r.

si muero en la carretera (1970)

i

Si muero en la carretera no me pongan flores.
 Si en la carretera muero no me pongan flores.
 En la carretera no me pongan flores si muero.
 No me pongan sin muero flores en la carretera.
 No me pongan en la carretera flores si muero.
 No flores en la carretera si muero me pongan.
 No flores en la carretera me pongan si muero.
 Si muero no flores en la carretera me pongan.

Si flores me muero en la carretera no me pongan.
 Flores si muero no en la carretera me pongan.
 Muero si pongan flores la en me en carretera.
 Si flores muero pongan en me la no carretera.
 Flores si pongan muero me en no la carretera.
 La muero en si pongan no me carretera.
 Si flores muero pongan en me la no carretera.
 Flores sin pongan muero me en no la carretera.
 Si muero en las flores no me pongan en la carretera.
 Si flores muero no me pongan en la carretera.
 Si en la carretera flores no me pongan si muero.
 Si en el muero no me pongan en la carretera flores.

ii

Voy en cacharrito, en una cafetera,
 yo voy por la carretera;
 yo voy, voy yendo en la carretera.
 Yo voy a un jardín de flores que está por la carretera,
 yo voy en un cacharrito, en una cafetera,
 voy a comprarle flores a mis muertos,
 pero no me pongan flores si muero en la carretera.

iii

Si muero en la carretera me entierran en el jardín
 que está por la carretera, pero no me pongan flores,
 cuando uno tiene su fin yendo por la carretera
 a uno no le ponen flores de ese ni de otro jardín.

iv

Si muero, si no muero,
 si muero porque no muero
 si no muero porque muero.
 Si muero en la carretera.
 Si no muero pero en la carretera si muero.
 Si muero porque no muero en la carretera.
 Si no muero porque muero en la carretera,
 no me pongan f, no me pongan l, no me pongan o,
 no me pongan r, no me pongan e, no me pongan s,
 no me pongan flo, no me pongan res
 si muero en la c.

reggae fi may ayim ⁽¹⁹⁹⁶⁾

*it weard how life wid det kyan canspyah
 fi shattah di awts most fragile diziah
 ow histry an byagrafi kyan plat gense yu
 an dem 'angst' an dem 'anomie' gang-up pon yu*

afro-german warrior woman
 from hamburg via bremen
 den finally
 berlin

it woz in di dazlin atmosfere
 a di black radical bookfair
 dat mi site yu
 sweet sistah
 brite-eyed like hope
 like a young antelope
 who couda cope

wid di daily deflowahin a di spirit
 wid di evryday erowshan a di soul

two passin clouds you and I
 inna di dezert a di sky
 exchingin vaypah
 but in di commerc a di awt
 woz it fair trade in regret
 in love an lauftah?

mi nevah know
mi coudn tell
mi shouda site seh

tru all di learnin
di teachin
rizistin
an assistin
di lovin
di givin
organizin
an difyin

dat di kaizah a darkness
did kyapcha yu awt
dat di lass time mi si yu
would be di lass time mi si yu
dat you woz free
fallin screamin
terteen stanzahs down
yu final poem in blood pan di groun
dat soh sudden dat soh soon
you woodah fly out
pon a wan way tickit to ghana
gaan ketch up wid you paas
mongst yu ancestaz

wi give tanks
fi di life
yu share wid wi
wi give tanks
fi di lite
yu shine pon wi
wi give tanks
fi di love
yu showah pon wi
wi give tanks
fi yu memari

SAMUEL BECKETT

ping (1967)

translated by Samuel Beckett

All known all white bare white body fixed one yard legs joined like sewn. Light heat white floor one square yard never seen. White walls one yard by two white ceiling one square yard never seen. Bare white body fixed only the eyes only just. Traces blurs light grey almost white on white. Hands hanging palms front white feet heels together right angle. Light heat white planes shining white bare white body fixed ping fixed elsewhere. Traces blur signs no meaning light grey almost white. Bare white body fixed white on white invisible. Only the eyes only just light blue almost white. Head haught eyes light blue almost white silence within. Brief murmurs only just almost never all known. Traces blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white. Legs joined like sewn heels together right angle. Traces alone unover given black light grey almost white on white. Light heat white walls shining white one yard by two. Bare white body fixed one yard ping fixed elsewhere. Traces blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white. White feet toes joined like sewn heels together right angle invisible. Eyes alone unover given blue light blue almost white. Murmur only just almost never one second perhaps not alone. Given rose only just bare white body fixed one yard white on white invisible. All white all known murmurs only just almost never always the same all unknown. Light heat hands hanging palms front white on white invisible. Bare white body fixed ping fixed elsewhere. Only the eyes only just light blue almost white fixed front. Ping murmur only just almost never one second perhaps a way out. Head haught eyes

light blue almost white fixed front ping murmur ping silence. Eyes holes light blue almost white mouth white seam like sewn invisible. Ping murmur perhaps a nature one second almost never that much memory almost never. White walls each its trace grey blur signs no meaning light grey almost white. Light heat all known all white planes meeting invisible. Ping murmur only just almost never one second perhaps a meaning that much memory almost never seen. White feet toes joined like sewn heels together right angle ping elsewhere no sound. Hands hanging palms front legs joined like sewn. Head haught eyes holes light blue almost white fixed front silence within. Ping elsewhere always there but that not known. Eyes holes light blue alone uncover given blue light blue almost white only colour fixed front. All white all known white planes shining white ping murmur only just almost never one second light time that much memory almost never. Bare white body fixed one yard ping fixed elsewhere white on white invisible heart breath no sound. Only the eyes given blue light blue almost white fixed front only colour alone uncover. Planes meeting invisible only one shining white infinite but that known not. Nose ears white holes mouth white seam like sewn invisible. Ping murmurs only just almost never one second always the same all known. Given rose only just bare white body fixed one yard invisible all known without within. Ping perhaps a nature one second with image same time a little less blue and white in the wind. White ceiling shining white one square yard never seen ping perhaps way out there one second ping silence. Traces alone uncover given black grey blurs signs no meaning light grey almost white always the same. Ping perhaps not alone one second with image always the same same time a little less that much memory almost never ping silence. Given rose only just nails fallen white over. Long hair fallen white invisible over. White scars invisible same white as flesh torn of old given rose only just. Ping image only just almost never one second light time blue and white in the wind. Head haught nose ears white holes mouth white seam like sewn invisible over. Only the eyes given blue fixed front light blue almost white only colour alone uncover. Light heat white planes shining white one only shining white infinite but that known not. Ping a nature only just almost never one second with

image same time a little less blue and white in the wind. Traces blurs light grey eyes holes light blue almost white fixed front ping a meaning only just almost never ping silence. Bare white one yard fixed ping fixed elsewhere no sound legs joined like sewn heels together right angle hands hanging palms front. Head haught eyes holes light blue almost white fixed front silence within. Ping elsewhere always there but that known not. Ping perhaps not alone one second with image same time a little less dim eye black and white half closed long lashes imploring that much memory almost never. Afar flash of time all white all over all of old ping flash white walls shining white no trace eyes holes light blue almost white last colour ping white over. Ping fixed last elsewhere legs joined like sewn heels together right angle hands hanging palms front head haught eyes white invisible tied front over. Given rose only just one yard invisible bare white all known without within over. White ceiling never seen ping of old only just almost never one second light time white floor never seen ping of old perhaps there. Ping of old only just perhaps a meaning a nature one second almost never blue and white in the wind that much memory henceforth never. White planes no trace shining white one only shining white infinite but that known not. Light heat all known all white heart breath no sound. Head haught eyes white fixed front old ping last murmur one second perhaps not alone eyes unglorious black and white half closed long lashes imploring ping silence ping over.

translations (2009)

en el agua *in the water*
 chicharras *cicadas*
 la pared *the wall*
 la puerta *the doorway, or door*
 la sala *in the living room*
 algo *something*
 huesos *bones*
 de cada cuarto *of each room*
 el espejo *the mirror*
 entremados *support beams or spaces be-
tween the walls*
 nervios *nerves*
 vengo tarde *I'm late*
 ¿Quiubo corazón? *What's up sweetheart?*
 ¿Tienes hambre? *Are you hungry?*
 ay que fresca *my but you're fresh*
 sí, pero no comida *yes, but not for food*
 ruca *Pachuco word for girl*
 pa' no gastar tiempo *so I wouldn't waste any time*
 la cama *the bed*
 tetas *tits*
 pero tu panocha y gusanito *but your pussy and clit are hot*
 estan a toda madre *shit*
 querida *dear, lover*

aquí, *here*
 el cabrón *that asshole*
 y tu familia *and your family*
 novia *girlfriend, lover*
 mi pobre madrecita *my poor mama*
 'ta bueno *it's alright*
 dos pinches horas *two fucking hours*
 la luz de la luna *the moonlight*
 en el sueño una mujer *in the dream a woman*
 antes de que se de cuenta *before she realizes it*
 zempasuchitl *a kind of morning glory called
"flowers for the dead"*
 jíjole *shit, damn*
 ándale *come on*
 vámanos *let's go*
 la vaca *the cow*
 chichis *tits*
 cuando esta ordeñando *when she is milking*
 primas *cousins (female)*
 chinga tu madre *(literally) fuck your mother*
 chingao *fucked*
 una de las otra *one of them*
 monte *woods, thicket, chaparral*
 Ese libro desgraciado me va a volver loca *That no good book is going to
drive me nuts.*
 todo el *all the*
 diosa mía *my goddess*
 chin *damn*
 y este pinche sol *and the goddamn sun*
 troca *pick-up*
 una santa *a saint*
 curandera *healer*
 pero no es nada *but it's nothing*
 El mal aire le había entrado, es todo. Algo le había entrado. *The bad spirits had entered her,
that's all. Something had gotten
into her.*

Quiúbole jefa, vine a ver si
quieres que trabaje mañana

No, no te voy a necesitar
hasta el lunes. Quiero que
comiences muy de mañanita
con la pizcadora de algodón.

Y ¿si llueve?
¿Qué miras? Nada, jefa

Quiero que me ayudes a
componer esa pinche troca

Bueno, jefa. Ojalá que no
llueva. Ojalá que no pierdas
toda tu cosecha. ¿Que tienes,
'tas enferma?

No, es que no dormí anoche

*What's up boss, I came to see if
you want me to work tomorrow.*

*I'm not going to need you 'til
Monday. I want you to start
picking the cotton early in the
morning.*

And if it rains?

*What are you looking at?
Nothing, boss.*

*I want you to help me fix that
goddamn truck.*

*Alright, boss. Hopefully it
won't rain. Hopefully you
won't lose your harvest. What's
the matter? Are you sick?*

*No, I just didn't sleep last
night.*

caliche coarse rock used on dirt roads

brasas coals

y otra pared and another wall

ceniza ash

tres peras peladas three peeled pears

agua water

noche del tigre the night of the tiger

*troquero truck driver, one who hauls
harvested crops*

chinga tu puta madre fuck your mother of a whore

fue bien fácil it was so easy

me cagué de miedo I was so scared, I shit my pants
té de hojas de naranja orange leaf tea

sí, yo sé yes, I know

la gente the people

slow reading club

slow reading club is a
semi-fictional read-
ing group initiated in
2016 by henry
andersen & bryana
fritz. they deal in con-
structed situation for
collective & individual
reading.

the materials of this
reader are considered
study materials and
can only be distribut-
ed within the context
of the slow reading
club as a material for
the collective reading
session.

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slow reading club es
un grupo de lectura
semi-ficticio iniciado
en 2016 por henry an-
dersen y bryana fritz.
Elles se ocupan de
construir situaciones
para la lectura colec-
tiva e individual.

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sideran materiales de
estudio y solo pueden
distribuirse en el con-
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slow reading club for festival sálmon, 25-11-2023