

Spring 1996

mOthertongue Spring 1996 (Full Document)

mOthertongue Editors
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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A multi-lingual journal sponsored by the Department of Comparative Literature
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Vol. 3

Spring 1996



University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

L I B R A R Y



mOther tongue

*A journal sponsored by the
Department of Comparative Literature
at the
University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

The editors of *mOther tongue* would like to acknowledge William Moebius for his endorsement and support, Edwin Gentzler for his liberal dispensing of translation services and otherwise supportive attitude, Linda Papirio for being our personal office supply and copy store, as well as a generally cheery person, Irene Starr for letting us take over the FLRC computers, The Dean Edwards, and, of course, the submitters whose literary endeavors made it all possible.

Sincerely,
Christopher Carlton
Natasha Hunter
Janet Perles
Mirran Raphaley
Natanya Wachtel

mOther tongue art designed by Tiago Estrada



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Foreword

With each additional year that this journal is published, it is hoped that progressively fewer people will have to ask the question: “mOther tongue? What’s that?” However, since we are not yet a household name, some explanation is due.

mOther tongue is the first and, to our knowledge, the only multi-lingual student publication at the UMass Amherst. It aims to provide a forum for students to express themselves in a language that is not English, whether that language be a native tongue or one that they have learned or are learning. Readers enjoy the fruits of an eclectic group of languages and styles.

This year *mOther tongue* is proud to include a new language in its pages — that of bilingualism. It speaks to the fluidity and melting of languages that is forever taking place. We hope that an increasingly diverse spectrum of writings and art will find its way into the journal and make its way back out again to an equally diverse and expansive readership.

Submissions are accepted year-round in the Comparative Literature Department, 303 South College, and are published in late Spring. In addition, there is a reading which follows shortly after each publication where the writers read their work both in the original and the English translation.

Happy reading!

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Trip to Guatemala

The Daughter Talks, the Tourist Listens

Every morning our mother
ties our braids all up
with multicolored ribbons
and all you want most of you
is to take our pictures.
Buy something from us! After
all, our mother, she does
nothing but sit all day
in the market with the other
sisters and brothers 5 or 6 of them
selling oranges and watermelon
slices. All she wants is to give, money
to the church. To put up a little cross
secuestroles
asesinados
heridos
asesinados

Felipe Quiéju Culan
Pedro Dominican Vasques
edad
45 años
nació
el mes
de noviembre
1945

Ave Maria
and our christs and three kings
sometimes wear towels and
scarves
for shawls

to be better dressed
for our funerals
as we sing
carrying the coffin
of the recent government
victim out and we would also
like to play
basket
ball
please señorita
can't you help us at all?

*And the Other Daughter Talks,
And the Tourist
Though Squirming
Still Listens*

...our brother
 he sits in the streets
 surrounded by
 firewood
 trying to sell
and our grandmother
she sits barefoot
swollen foot
on her knees
blanket/cloth
folded across her head
selling bananas
but she is too old
and nobody buys from her
please señorita
can you give us nothing at all?
and our youngest -- he sits in
the dock with protruded belly and fever
begging for peanuts and galeterias
and we go to the hang out
 of the smoking and drinking god
the goddess his partner
 has another shrine
 which is secret
and all of us will laugh at you, our hands
over our smiling mouths
and we won't tell you anything at all

and we litter the streets on easter with
flowers
mañana means, señorita
tomorrow will be better, even if today you
were
sick and disturbed and ill
agitated by our disaster.

-Batya Weinbaum

A Shower

Each morning,

I take a shower.

In the shower,

I put some shampoo on my head.

Then,

I wash my arms and torso with soap.

After,

I bend down and wash my legs, my behind,
and my front.

Oh!

I almost forgot to put some soap on my feet
and between my toes.

But, I must come back up and put some
behind my ears, around my neck, and on my
face.

Now,

my body is covered in soap.

What?

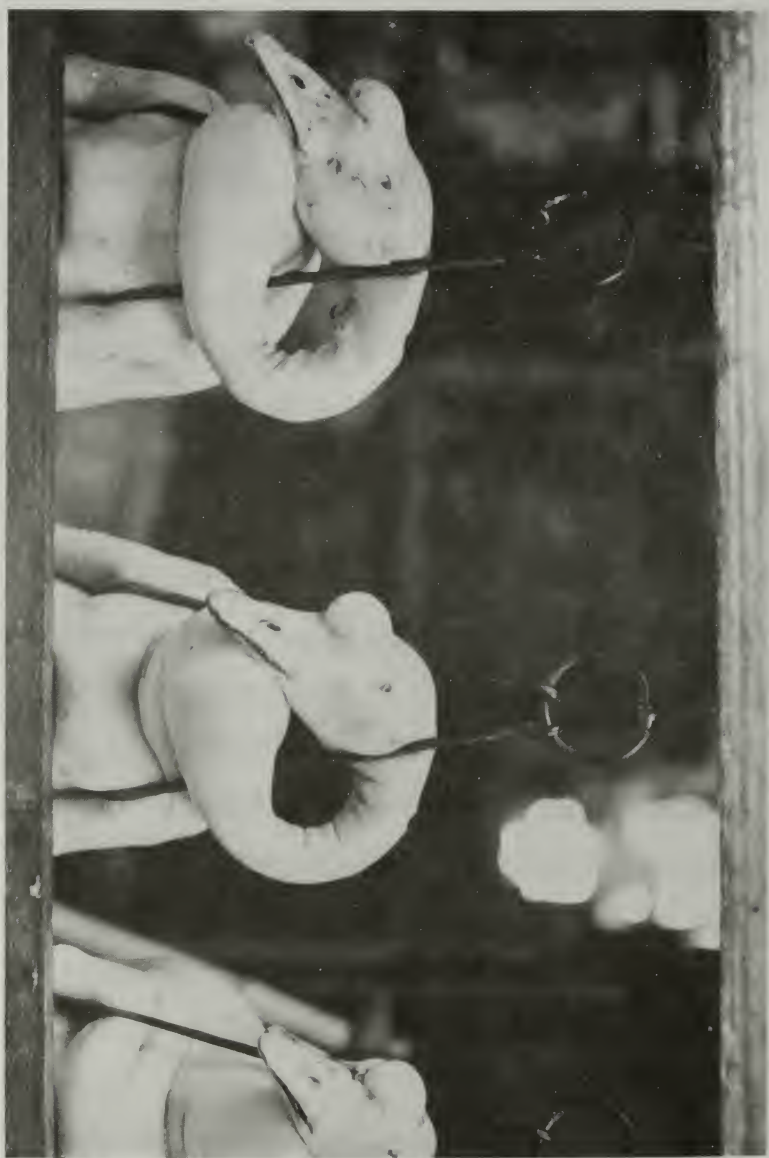
There isn't any water!

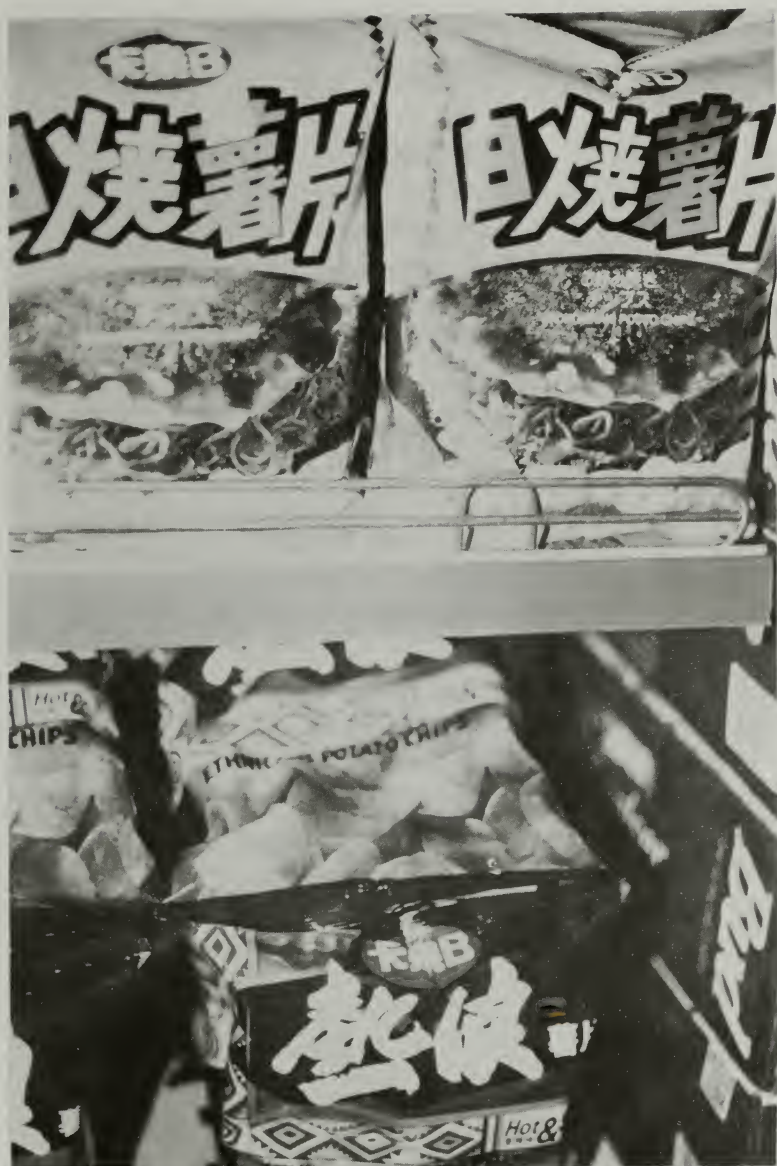
Une Douche

Chaque matin,
je prends une douche.
Dans la douche,
je me mets du shampoing sur la tête.
Ensuite,
je me lave les bras et le torse avec du savon.
Après,
je me penche et je me lave les jambes, la
derrière, et le devant.
Oh!
J'ai failli oublier de mettre du savon sur mes
pieds et entre mes orteils.
Mais,
je dois remonter et en mettre derrière les
oreilles, autour du cou, et sur la figure.
Maintenant, mon corps est couvert de savon.

Quoi?
Il n'y a pas d'eau!

-Justin Siegel





Henka

I am myself
What breathes
Inside my heart

What has happened recently
Has left me damaged
Yet I cannot let it go

I think that I am alright
Yet, through and through
I thought to be larger than life

You could call it life
But today is hard
Wouldn't you say?

Tomorrow is far away
It comes from a distance
And I cannot see it

僕は僕
心の中に
何かいる

最近の経験
傷を付いて
忘れなく

だっしょうぶ、かも
でも、ずっと問題
思ってた

人生という
今日は大変だよ
本当じゃない？

明日は遠い
あそこから来る
見えないよ

-Dan Castellano

Revolutionary Gesture

The muse leapt from her bed to the window
and in an unprecedented gesture
fell to the ground and died
having forgotten how to fly.

Beneath a sky
 going very slowly from a brilliant blue
 to an aged grey
the trees lost
 their final beauty
 of blood and captured sun.

The poet remained unmoving
unable to react;
in the absence of instructions
the world disappeared.

Gesto de revolución

La musa saltó de su cama a la ventana
y en un gesto sin precedente
cayó al suelo y murió
había olvidado como volar.

Debajo de un cielo
que iba muy despacio de un azul
brillante
a un gris envejecido,
los arboles se pierden
su último belleza
de sangre y sol captado.

El poeta se quedó inmóvil
sin poder reaccionar;
en la ausencia de instrucciones
el mundo desapareció.

Jennifer Rodgers

Burden

Wrapped in my cloak
I have buried
this burden
this shameful secret .
Make no mention
of this weight to anyone
My friends mock,
they can't understand-
Why don't I hide you?

So today I set off
to bury
this burden of mine.

There was a time,
not long ago,
Your memory
flitted through my mind
like rose-petals
in the wind.

Today
this memory of yours
has become a burden.

-Kanwalroop Dhanda

ਬੋਝ

ਦੁਧੌਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੁਕਾ ਕੇ
ਦੱਬ ਆਈ ਸਾਂ
ਇਹ ਬੋਝ,
ਇਹ ਸਰਮਸਾਰ ਤੇਰ।

ਨਾਂ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਾਂ
ਇਸ ਤੇਰ ਦਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ।
ਸਹੇਲੀਆਂ ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਹੱਸਣ,
ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਸਮਝਦਾ
ਮੈਂ ਕਿਉਂ ਰੁੱਠਾਂ
ਲਾਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਂਦੀ ?

ਇਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ
ਮੌਜ ਨਿਕਲੀ ਸਾਂ
ਮੈਂ ਦੱਬਣ ਇਸ ਬੋਝ ਨੂੰ।

ਇਕ ਸਮੇਂ
ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਨਹੀਂ,
ਤੇਰੀ ਘਾਟ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੱਥੇ ਵਿਚ
ਗੁਲਾਬ ਦੀ ਧਰੀਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ
ਮਿੱਠੀ - ਮਿੱਠੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਲਿਮਾਉਂਦੀ ਸੀ।

ਅਮਜ

ਬੋਝ ਬਣ ਗਈ ਹੈ
ਤੇਰੀ ਘਾਟ ॥

Kind of a love poem....I guess

While I taste the bitterness
of this sweet coffee —
I can't stop thinking about
the sweetness of your lips —
that I've never kissed.

These cold winter mornings
won't let me live without wanting
your Caribbean *lecho*

And all the hours that I've wasted in
dreaming of being the owner of your memories
make me feel like an aging flower.

This strange sensation of sadness
that invades my roots —
is only the reflection
of my soul
It reminds me that
in feeling this way —
I've already won
because feeling this way
let's me know I'm alive
and even if it hurts
like the heaviest tear in the world
it doesn't matter anymore
because I just saw you two minutes ago—
and that is enough to make me happy.

Casi un poema de amor . . . Creo

Mientras saboreo lo amargo de
este dulce café no puedo dejar de pensar en la
dulsura
de tus labios que no he
besado

Las mañana frías de este
invierno no me dejan vivir
sin desear el calor
Caribeño de tu lecho

Y todas las horas del mundo
que he perdido soñando con
ser dueña de tus recuerdos
me hacen sentir como una
flor marchita en el florero
del olvido

Esta extraña sensación de
tristeza que invade hasta las raíces
de mi ser
es solo el espejo de mi alma
recordandome que con solo
sentirme así ya he ganado
pues sé que estoy viva
y que aunque duela como
la lágrima más pesada del mundo
ya no importa por que hace dos minutos
te vi y eso ya es suficiente para hacerme feliz.

Mercedes Betanco





MELANCHOLY!

Last night I recalled
the heat of my country
In the night... in the cold...,
my soul shivering
I heard your voice
which asked me softly:
Eh, why did you go?
When are you coming back?

I saw the palms dance in the sea breeze,
and the undulating waves carry me their
stories
of death, love, joy and madness...

Last night I recalled
how at home it doesn't get cold.
When I'm there, they don't ask me who I
am...
where I'm from...!
my body never gets tired under the burden of
winter clothes
and my nose... and my mouth...,
don't behave like a chimney
sending smoke
obstructing the view of my ancestors and my
destiny

Last night in the black of winter
I recalled
Evenings at the Champs-de-Mars
lovingly intertwined in a passionate surge
exchanging kisses in the shadows of the trees.

And your voice...
Your voice which says tenderly in my ear
Come back! Come back!
Haïti is your country.
It is there that happiness awaits you,
that your joy...
that your joy for life can be realized
...that your soul feels the lightest...!

Come back! Come back!
Haïti is your country!

trans. Natasha Hunter

MELANCOLIE!

Hier soir je me suis souvenu
de la chaleur de mon pays.
Dans le noir... dans le froid...,
mon âme frissonante,
j'ai entendu ta voix
qui me demandait tout bas:
Eh, pourquoi tu es parti?
Quand est-ce que tu reviens?

J'ai vu les palmes danser sous la brise de la
mer,
et les vagues ondulantes m'apporter ses
histoires
de mort, de joie, d'amour et de folie...

Hier soir je me suis souvenu
que chez moi il ne fait pas froid.
Quand j'y suis, on ne me demande jamais
qui je suis...
d'ou je viens...!
mon corps ne se fatigue jamais sous le
fardeau des
habits d'hiver
et mon nez... et ma bouche...,
ne se comportent pas comme une cheminée
envoyant de la fumée
obstruant la voie de mes ancêtres et de ma
destinée

Hier soir dans le noir d'hiver
je me suis souvenu
des soirs à Champs-de-Mars,
des amoureux entrelacés dans l'élan
passionnel
échanger des baisers à l'ombre des arbres.

Et ta voix...
Ta voix tendrement qui me disait à l'oreille
Reviens! Reviens!
Haïti est ton pays.
C'est là que le bonheur t'attend,
que ta joie...
que ta joie de vivre peut-être réalisée
...que ton âme se sent la plus légère...!

Reviens! Reviens!
Haïti est ton pays!

Moïse s. Tirado

IMÁGENES EXTIRPADAS
COMO VÍSCERAS MALIGNAS
VIOLADORAS DEL ESPÍRITU
BLANCAS PAREDES
AIRE MATERIALIZADO
PAZ DEL VACÍO
MI LIBERTAD.

María Engracia López-Sánchez

UPROOTED PICTURES
AS MALIGNANT VISCERA,
RAPING A SOUL.
BLANK, THE WALLS.
OXYGEN CLEAR.
PEACE IN THE VOID.
MY FREEDOM.

trans. E. Olmstead



Eating A Mango In Bolivia

We are sitting on the corner and
it's hot.

We are dusty,
 tired,
 happy.

Two for one boliviano,
we enter into your
yellow, green,
red, white, and blue
skin.

Color of sand,
The Yungas spilling over with life,
Color of Chilean marvels,
Color of people.

Slowly,
We peel you
and bite into your flesh-
juicy,
sticky,
wet.

And the nectar of your
intoxicating body
covers our chins
and cheeks,
running from our palms
to our elbows.

Where drops of your
blood
fall
into the mouth of
Pachamama.

We leave the corner
and we are dustier,
happy, alive.

Pregnant
with your seed
in our hands
your soul growing
inside of us.

Comiendo un mango en Bolivia

Sentamos en la esquina y
está caloroso.

Estamos polvorosas,
cansadas,
alegres.

Dos por un boliviano,
entramos en tu cascara-
amarillo, verde,
rojo, blanco azul.

Color de arena,
Los Yungas rebosando de vida,
Color de las maravillas chilenas,
color de gente.

Te pelamos lentamente
y mordamos tu carne-
jugosa,
pegajosa,
mojada.

Y el jugo de tu
cuerpo embrigadora
nos cubre las barbillas
y mejillas,
corriendo de las palmas
hasta los codos,

Donde gotas de tu
sangre
cayen
a la boca de la Pachamama.

Nos vamos de la esquina y
estamos mas polvorosas,
vivas, alegres.

Embarazadas
con tu semilla
en nuestras manos,
tu alma creciendo
por dentro.

-Janet Perles

A Friend

I drank some wine among those
Who thought that that's the way things
should be
I left the bar ashamed
And then I felt
The hot wave, the pounding sound of blood
in my head

Slowly I walked along the road
Torn by the gust
Left behind by the cars passing by
In my head I felt a dullness
Which I so much wanted to forget

In the staircase
I was finally completely alone with that
bland pain
At the door - silence I curled up like a mouse
Under the damp heavy blanket
I fell into the emptiness of solitude and
weakness

"What are you doing here, you drunk?"
I heard the warm voice of someone I will
always love
Next to my bed, on the floor
He placed, in wine glass,
A little twig of fragrant lilac.

Pryjaciel

Piłam wino pośród tych
Którzy myśleli że tak ma być
Ze wstydem wyszłam poza drzwi
Kiedy poczułam gorącą falę
Iszum zmałconej krwi

Powolnym krokiem szłam pustą ulicą
Szarpaną przez powiew
Pozostający po przejeżdżających
samochodach
A w głowie czułam otępienie
O którym bardzo chciałam zapomnieć

W klatce schodowej
Zostałam catkiem sama z tępym bólem
Przy drzwiach mieszkania - cisza
Skuliłam się jak mysz
Pod ciężką wilgotną kołdrą,
Zapałam w pustkę samotności i niemocy

"Co tutaj robisz ty pijaku?"
Zapytał ciepłym głosem ktoś kogo zawsze
będę kochała
I koło łóżka na podłodze
Postawił w lampce po winie
Gałązkę pachnącego bzu

Joanna Wisniewska





Don't You Wish You Had An After Dinner Mint?

Ten chocolate chip cookies,
angel hair pasta in alfredo sauce,
white wine,
coffee,
chicken breast,
strawberry cheesecake-
swirling around the bowl.

Some remnants of the binge
clinging to the corners of your mouth
and saliva hanging in strands from your
chin.

Flush the toilet and make it all disappear.
You're wishing that you had some gum-
or something.

Stand up.

Stand up and go back to the table
I know your body feels marbled
but if you don't get up they'll come looking
for you-
and then they'll know what you've done.

Ok now-get up and look in the mirror,
what do you see?

A big fat lie. A big, fat, ugly liar.

Rinse out your mouth
and splash some cool water on your face.
There-now you look almost perfect.

Almost.

Your pants are still too tight for you
and your stomach doesn't stay flat when you
sit

and there's hardly any space
between your thighs when you walk.

Tomorrow you can buy some laxatives
to give your epiglottis a break.

OK?

So go back to the table-
smile-

and don't breathe on anyone
until you take a sip of wine.

No lo haga desea que tengas un después-de-comida mentita?

Diez galletas de chocolate
Pasta de los cabellos del angel en
salsa del alfredo
Vino blanco
Café
Pechuga de pollo
Torta de fresa
Arremolinando alrededor del cuenco.
Unos remanentes del binge
Pegados las esquinas de su boca
Y saliva
Colgando en cuerdos de su barbilla.

Rojo el retrete
Ya hagalo todo desaparecer.
Desea que tenga un chicle
O algo.
Levantate.
Levantate y vuelves a la mesa.
Sé que tu cuerpo se siente como piedra
pero si no te subes,
Vendran, a buscarte
Y entonces sabran
Que has hecho.
Ok, Levantate y mirate
en el espejo,
?Que ves?
Una gorda, fea, mentirosa.
Enjuague su boca
Y salpiques a su cara con agua fresca

Allí-ahora parece casi perfecto.
Casi.
Tu pantalones todavia es demasiado
apretado para ti.
Y tu estomago no queda firme
cuando sientas
Y apenas hay espacio
Entre tus muslos cuando caminas.
Mañana
Puedes comprar unos laxantes
Darle un descanso a tu epiglotis.
OK?
Así vuelva a la mesa
Sonríe-
Y no respire a nadie
Hasta que toma un sorbo de vino.

Natanya Wachtel

A Bey

In this one you are alone,
staring firmly but your eyes are lost.

You look so distant, so alien, so far
It's like life left you long before you were
gone.

You wrinkle your forehead
but you give me a distant look

many times a I search in vain for that look:
those crystal yellow eyes
of tears that did not know how to fall,
of a wail that froze the coldness of your
solitude...

And me in mine
in search of your company
I long for your presence,
for your stories that I've never known.

You left before I could come to understand
you
~~perhaps I was the one that arrived late~~
The image that you left escapes me
and that I recall today
does not let me possess you. guard you, keep
you.

In my own eyes, sometimes, I look for you.
But only when I can reach deep in my soul
is that, in tears from yours and for myself,
I finally find you.

A Bey

In this one you are alone,
staring firmly but your eyes are lost.

You look so distant , so alien, so far.
It's like life left you long before you were
gone.

Frunces el ceño
pero pierdes la mirada.

muchas veces busco en vano esa mirada:
esos ojos amarillo cristalino
de lágrimas que no supieron salir,
de llanto que congeló el frío de tu soledad...

Y yo en la mía
busco tu compañía.
Urgo por tu presencia en mí,
por tus historias que nunca concocí.

Te fuiste antes de que pudiera entenderte
~~ tal vez fui yo quien llegó tarde.~~
La imagen que dejaste se me escapa
y esa vaga mirada que hoy recuerdo
no me deja poseerte, guardarte, retenerte.

In my own eyes, sometimes, I look for you.
But only when I can reach deep in my soul
is that, in tears from yours and for myself,
I finally find you.

-Jocelyn A. Géliga Vargas

Dance Partner #5

We throw our inhibitions
Into our beer cans
To dance closer
Your hands travel
Over my thighs
Hips-waist-breasts-
I lean in to suck
On your sweet skin
For a moment
We are alone
In the crowded space
Raw lust
You whisper
I squeeze your ass
You close your eyes
"I've never met
A woman like you."
I smile and want
To taste more of you
And I say
"And you never will again."

Cavalier #5

Nous jetons nos inhibitions
Dans nos boites de bière
Pour danser plus de près
Tes mains bougent
Sur mes cuisses
hanches-corps-poitrine
Je me penche pour sucer
Ta peau sucrée
Pour un moment
Nous sommes seuls
Dans cet espace bondé
Désir intense
Tu chuchotes
Je presse ta fesse
Tu fermes les yeux
"Je n'ai jamais reconnu
Une femme comme toi."
Je souris, et veux
Goûter toi en plus
Et je dis
"Et tu ne le feras jamais encore!"

-Natanya Wachtel

Hermana/Sister

For the word sister
I spell with L,
I think of us.
Sister with L the lucha
because we struggle side by side
not even knowing it.
We are both there,
but to each other,
remain invisible.
Your name is not familiar
but your face I always knew.
I see it every morning in the mirror.
My reflection, your face.
Mujer Latina
mujer hermana:
I write of you with L de lucha
for what we've done thus far.
I write with you with L de libre
for what is ahead of us,
our esperanza.

For the word sister
I spell with A,
I think of you.
Sister with A de angustia:
because I see you take his beatings
because I can hear you cry at night,
because I know you give it all to them,
because I fear they blame it all on you.
I've been with you with A de amiga.
I was right there with A de ayuda.
I want to merge in you with A de alma.
I daily think of you with A de amante.

Mujer Latina,
mujer hermana:
I want to help you dust,
but not your house,
your dreams.
I want to help you mend,
but not his shirts,
your scars.

For the word sister
I spell with R,
I think of me.
Sister with R de rabia,
por no saber cómo llegar a ti,
por perder tiempo,
por dejarte sola,
por esperar en vez de avanzar.
Rabia because god failed us
long before
we had even been born.
Mujer Latina,
mujer hermana:
ardo por dentro cuando pienso en ti.
I want my fire to leave no ashes;
I want it to erect
and not to tear apart.
I want my blazes to spread to your backyard
and join us,
bright and passionate,
always,
in sisterly war.

For the word sister
I spell with C,

I think of her.
Sister with C de compania,
sister with C de comarada,
sister with C de continuemos
sister with C de coño,
I want better for us.
Nos pertenece.

-Jocelyn A. Géliga Vargas



That Night

Pushing so hard nearly stopped my heart;
I became unconscious with a sore fart.
Tapping on the ground helped me a lot
Because I was nervous and standing in the
middle of the club.

I said, "Ohwhat a journey!"
He said: "Don't even talk to me like that
bitch!"
I was amazed at myself
Because I pushed him so hard to the floor.

I turned around with no regret;
But.....Where was I all of a sudden?
I thought I lost my consciousness
"What the fuck is **this** shit?"
Oh my God! It is a piece from the vomited
tart!

I said: "My heart can't stand this anymore.
Convince me not to start the end of the fight.
Because isn't he just a townie anyway?
I could die from his stench.

Jerks jerks...they are everywhere.
I looked at him straight
But he threw me a lock of his hair; Shit!
A lock of my hair . . .Where was I all of a
sudden again? Damn it!
I said: "I hate boots sometimes!"

He started slam dancing with the pencils.
They were flying and painting the lights.
I caught one that was red and,
Yes! He was crying out
Because I stabbed him in the heart.

Poor kid rolling on the floor
(Like me as usual...)
I was proud of myself
Because I taught him the power of the mad!

Then I liked it:
I liked being in the jungle.
The music got to me badly
Because I was crazy.....that night!

O Gece

Onu delice itmek nerdeyse kalbimi
durdurdu.

Acı bir osurukla beynim döndü.
Ayağımı tikirdatmak bana çok yardım etti
Çünkü sinirliydim ve kulübün
ortasındaydım.

Dedim ki: "Oh... nasıl yolculuk ama?!"
O dedi ki: "Benimle öyle konuşma esek!"
Kendimle gurur duydum
Çünkü onu sahneden aşağı ittim.

Hiçbir acı duymadan arkamı döndüm;
Ama... nerdeydin birden?
Aklımı kaybettim sandım.
"Bu iğrenç bok gibi şeyde neyin nesi?
Aman Tanrım! Kusulmuş tartten bir parça!"

Dedim ki: "Kalbim buna daha fazla
dayanamıycak.
Kavganın sonunu başlatmamak için beni
ikna et.
O bizim Doğulu magandalardan değil mi?
Kokusundan nerdeyse ölücem!"

Krolar krolar... heryerdeler.
Direkt ona baktım;
Ama o bir deste saç fırlattı;
Benim saç destem... nerdeydin gene?
Kahretsin!
Dedim ki: "Bazen botlardan nefret
ediyorum!"

O kalemlerin içine daldı.
Kalemler uçuyor spotlari boyuyorlardı.
Kırmızı olan bir taneyi kaptım ve
Evet! O bağırıyordu
Çünkü onun kalbini deldim.

Zavallı çocuk yerde yuvarlanıyordu.
(Benim herzamanki halim . . .)
Kendimle gurur duymuştum
Çünkü ona delinin gücünü öğrettim.

Sonra, hoşuma gitti
Ormanda olmak hoşuma gitti
Müziğe kapıldım
Çünkü ben deliydim . . . o gece.

Dilsad Cire

The Smoke's Silence

Here I sit alone with my (cigarette),
to stay here a moment
in the silence of the smoke.

I feel the sadness
of having hands tied behind (my back)
and yet I continue to smoke.

The fire comes from within
and exits to the outside
looking for freedom...

...but my heart still burns
my heart still burns.

Silencio del Humo

Aquí me siento solo con mi garro,
para quedarme un rato
en el silencio del humo.

Siento la tristeza
de tener los manos atados por atrás
pero todavía fumo.

El fuego viene por adentro
y sale por las afueras
buscando mi libertad...

pero todavía quema el corazón
todavía quema el corazón.

-Mark Szretter





Scenes from "Real" Life

I always talk so loud and fast. And I laugh so hard. I want to talk hard so I can surprise them. I don't know why I bother, since my mere presence paralyzes them. I enter the pharmacy and all activity stops: the cashier does not punch one more key; the pharmacist doesn't give out another prescription, not even to his mother; the sick person stops in mid-sneeze, halfway up the road from throat to nose; the little old parishioner women stop their delightful and ritualized morning gossip. All eyes freeze, they rest on me while I retreat down the narrow aisle of the pharmacy; long and heavy is the road that takes me to the last corner of the store, in determined search of a mere liter of milk. I want to laugh with my noisy guffaws, but the scene doesn't amuse me in the least. I wanted to talk loud to give them a scare, but what does it matter if when I go to take out my wallet to pay -- like a good "American" citizen -- the cashier freaks and calls security? When I took out my umbrella, her fear saw a cannon there.

Escenas de la Vida "Real"

Yo siempre hablo tan alto y rápido. Y me río tan duro. Yo quiero hablar duro para asustarlos. No sé porqué el esfuerzo, pues mi mera presencia los paraliza. Entro a la farmacia y toda actividad se detiene: la cajera no hunde una tecla más , el farmacéutico no le despacha una receta ni a su madre, el enfermo detiene su estornudo ahí mismo, a mitad de camino entre garganta y nariz, las viejitas feligreces paran su deleitoso y ritualizado chisme matutino. Todos los ojos se congelan, se posan en mí mientras culipandeo por los estrechos pasillos de la farmacia; largo y pesado el camino que me lleva hacia la última esquina del local, en determinada búsqueda de un mero litro de leche. Yo quisiera reirme con mis estruendosas carcajadas, pero la escena no me causa gracia alguna. Yo quisiera hablar duro para darles un susto, pero qué importa si cuando voy a sacar la cartera para pagar -- como todo buen ciudadano "americano"-- la cajera pega un brinco y llama a seguridad. Cuando saqué mi sombrilla, su miedo vio allí un cañon.

Jocelyn A. Géliga Vargas

Biographies

Mercedes Betanco is a senior sociology major with a certificate in Latin American Studies. She spent her childhood in Mexico and Nicaragua before moving to Florida. She hopes to pursue her studies in Latin American women's issues.

Dilsad Cire is a Marketing major and is originally from Istanbul.

Dan Castellano is a senior in the School of Management. He has spent his four years at UMass trying to bridge the gap between the business world and the real world, for himself, and for his fellow students. He will graduate knowing that he has chosen to take part in the struggle... but the struggle continues.

Natasha Hunter is a senior in Comparative Literature and Russian. Her submitted photos were taken while volunteering at an orphanage in Verkhniy Tagil, in the Ural Mountains.

Dhandra Kanwalroop is a PhD candidate in Operation Management. When asked a year ago whether she thought in English or Punjabi she realized that different types of thinking necessitated different languages.

Intellectual thought, she discovered, was English, while her emotional processes were in Punjabi. Poetry has become a way for her to explore and create emotional narratives.

Erik Olmstead is pursuing the M.A. in Hispanic Literatures. He is currently preparing an eclectic collection of writings in two languages about animals, entitled Fauna.

Janet Perles is graduating in May (she hopes) with a Bachelors degree in Comparative Literature, a minor in Spanish and a certificate in Latin American Studies. She spent a semester abroad in Valparaíso, Chile.

Jennifer Rodgers is PhD candidate in Comparative Literature facing with great terror the prospect of taking her exams in September. In addition to speaking Spanish, Portuguese, French, English she is fully conversant in Cyber and is amused easily.

María Engracia López-Sánchez is a native of Spain, pursuing the M.A. in Hispanic Linguistics.

Justin Siegal is completing his Masters degree in French Literature. In addition to being published in the 1995 issue of *mOthertongue*, he recently had a poem published in the journal, 5th Gear.

Mark Szretter is a student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese who has a particular interest in writing Latin American culture and plans to spend the forthcoming year studying in Argentina.

Moïse Tirado is a graduate student in the Department of Political Science. He is originally from Haïti, and completed his undergraduate career at Umass with a major in Social Thought and Political Economy.

Jocelyn Gélige Vargas is a graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

Natanya Wachtel is an undergraduate student of Psychology and Comparative Literature who has spent time living and traveling in Hungary, France, Chile, and Hong Kong.

Joanna Wisniearska is a graduate student in the entomology department. She moved from Poland to the United States twelve years ago. She feels that poetry is one of the best ways to express her feelings.

