

Spring 2000

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mOthertongue Editors
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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mOther *tongue*

Me aproximo de minha língua

Como se fora uma língua estrangeira...

PN
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M68
V.7
2000



University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

L I B R A R Y

mOthertongue

A Multilingual Journal of the Arts

Sponsored by the Department of Comparative Literature,
The Student Affairs Cultural Enrichment Fund
and the University of Massachusetts Arts Council.

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Spring 2000

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Contents

Tat'yana Agapov	
Passageway	5
Lilian Feitosa	
inintitulado (untitled)	6
Edna DaCosta	
Oda A Mi Bandera (Ode to my Flag)	8
Clara Eugenia Ronderos	
Marea Baja (Low Tide)	10
Katherine Roback	
Es Waren Zwei Von Ihnen (The Two of Them)	12
Alfonso Ferreras	
El Tiempo (Time)	14
Helkiah Tinkham	
A Childhood Quilt	16
Helkiah Tinkham	
The Groom	17
Lilian Feitosa	
inintitulado (untitled)	18

Michael Boyle	
Mi Cama (My Bed)	20
Juliet Carvajal	
una pequena oda... (Small Ode)	22
Clara Eugenia Ronderos	
Seducción (Seduction)	24
James Royland	
Conejo de Polvo (Dust Bunny)	26
Alfonso Ferreras	
A una Estrella Rosa	28
Tat'yana Agapov	
Harmony	30



Passageway

Tat'yana Agapov

Tat'yana Agapov
"Passageway"

Inintitulado

Lilian Feitosa

Me aproximo de minha língua
Como se fora uma língua estrangeira
Leio palavra por palavra
Olhando pra cada uma
Como se fosse tão nova pra mim...
Como se eu tivesse que decifrar
Cada significado para chegar - enfim -
ao todo

E se essa não fosse a minha língua?
Como seria aprendê-la?
Como seria ler e olhar cada palavra
Com uma fascinação e uma dificuldade
tão grande de articulá-las
e formar uma frase sequer!

Chega a ser estranho,
Chega a doer só em pensar que
estas palavras pudessem de repente
soar estranhamente pouco familiares
aos meus surpresos ouvidos.

é que se elas não tivessem sido
sempre como música...
E se eu não estivesse aqui tão distante,
eu não conseguiria imaginar-
nem sequer por um momento-
que ela não fosse a minha língua...

Untitled
Lilian Feitosa

I approach my (mother) tongue
As if it were a foreign tongue
I read word by word
Looking at each one
As if it were so new to me...
As if I had to decipher
Each meaning to reach - finally -
the whole

What if this weren't my tongue?
How would it be to learn it?
How would it be to read and look at each word
With such a fascination and such a great
difficulty to articulate them
and to form any sentence!

It feels strange,
It hurts only to think that
these words could suddenly
sound strangely little familiar
to my surprised ears.

It's because if they hadn't been
always like music...
And if I were not here so far away,
I wouldn't be able to imagine-
not even for a moment-
that it was not my (mother) tongue...

Oda A Mi Bandera

Edna DaCosta

Rojo, Verde, Amarillo
Los colores de la libertad
Los colores que representabam
el Sufrimiento de mi gente

La estrella negra son lod hijos,
que has cargado en tu vientre
El maíz es el sacrificio que pasaste,
para alimentar a tus hijos

Representabas mi Africanidad
Pero decidieron cambiarte;
Diz que no eras original
Que eres igual al del que un dia,
fué tu hermano

Asi como eres, ya no te queiro
A pesar de que un día te quise,
con todo mi corazón
Entonces representabas todo,
todo en lo que yo creía.

Ode to my Flag

Edna DaCosta

Red, green, yellow
the colors of liberty
the colors that represented
the suffering of my people

The black star are the children,
you carried in your womb
The maize is the sacrifice,
you went through to feed your children

You represented my Africanity
but they decided to change you;
they said you were not original
that you're equal to that of the one that someday,
was your brother

The way you're now, I don't love you
Even though I had loved you,
with all my heart
then you represented everything,
everything that I believed in.

Marea Baja
Clara Ronderos

Esta mañana ruge el mar con furia sosegada
y viste la arena un ceñido traje
de torero en fiestas.
Música de acordeón
se baña en el vaiven salado
de la brisa
y soy feliz.
En medio del desorden, llena de sal y luz,
de aquello que no soy
y es todo cuando se funde a mí,
esta mañana sonrío
sacudida
por el ir y venir del mar.
Vela hinchada
en medio de la quietud
enorme
desde donde se mira
la redondez total del horizonte.

Low Tide
Clara Ronderos

This morning the sea roars with silent fury
and the sand wears a tight festive
bullfighter's dress.
The music of accordians
bathes in the salty swaying
of the breeze
and I am happy.
Lost in disorder, covered by salt and light,
by that who is not me
and is everything when it blends with me
this morning I smile
shaken
by sea wave,
swollen sail
amid the immence
quietness
from which
the total roundness of the horizon
can be seen.

Es Waren Zwei Von Ihnen
Katherine Roback

Er war blond, ein weiches, sanftes, goldens blond,
Und sie ein wunderschönes, schimmerndes, dunkles kastanienrot.
Sie waren so unterschiedlich wie der Tag und die Nacht,
Aber gleichzeitig waren sie auch gleich,
So wie manchmal der Sonnenaufgang und Untergang sich ähnlich sind.

Er war stark. Eine wilde Stärke lag in ihm.
Ihre unglaubliche Stärke kam vom Beschützerinstink.
Ihre Stärken waren manchmal erschreckend wild und beängstigt.
Wenn sie loslegten, war es oft besser ihnen aus Weg zu gehen;
Und doch waren sie so sanft, so vorsichtig, einem nicht weh zu tun.

Er war ganz gerne auch mal allein, war zufrieden in seinem Zimmer zu liegen.
Sie musste immer Gesellschaft haben, wie eine Schatten konnte sie Dich verfolgen.
Er war eigentlich sehr ruhig, zufrieden mit sehr wenig,
Sie war eine Schmusebacke, die nie genug kriegen konnte.
Meine Güte, was würde ich nur ohne meine beiden Hunde (Sebastian und Antigone)
machen.

There were Two of Them

Katherine Roback

He was blond, a soft, gentle blond;
And she a wonderful, shimmering, dark chestnut-red.
They were as different as day and night,
But also, they were as well the same,
Like sometimes the sunrise and the sunset are alike.

He was strong. A wild strength was in him.
Her unbelievable strength derived from her instinct to protect.
Their strengths sometimes were shockingly wild and frightening.
When they got started it was better to get out of their way;
And yet were they so tender, so cautious not to hurt one.

He enjoyed being on his own every now and then; was content with lying in his room.
She always needed company, like a shadow could she haunt you.
He always was very calm, content with very little,
She loved cuddling, never could get enough.
My God, what would I do without my dogs (Sebastian and Antigone).

Translated by Ute Wohlleben

El Tiempo
Alfonso Ferreras

Venerabilísimo Reloj,
dejas de mirar con ironía
la forma en que mi cuerpo se hace trizas
bajo tus rapaces tic-tacs
rotantes.
¡Cuán necio eres!
Tus cómplices manecillas no pueden llegar
a los secretos y planes de mi alma.
¿Qué sabes tú del más allá,
donde tu poder reflejo,
jamás puede alcanzar?

Time

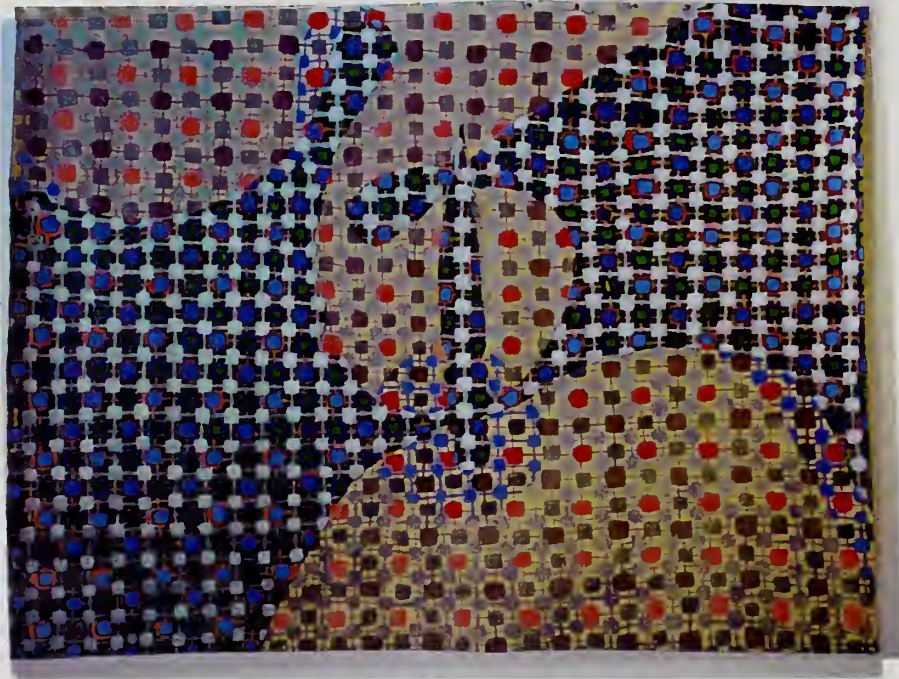
Alfonso Ferreras

My most venerable Clock,
stop looking ironically
at how my body falls to pieces
under your predatory,
rotating tic-tacs.

How foolish you are!

Your complicit hands could not possibly get
to the secrets and plans of my soul.

What do you know of the beyond,
where your reflex power
can never reach?



Helkiah Tinkham
“a Childhood Quilt”
acrylic on canvas



Helkiah Tinkham
“the Groom”
acrylic on canvas

Inintitulado

Lilian Feitosa

Quem sou eu?

Nada, até que um dia
eu possa talvez usar cada
palavra para mostrar
pra mim mesma quem sou.

Para dizer quem sou
com todas as palavras, ficar
descalça, descoberta, desnuda
diante do olhar escrutinador das
minhas próprias palavras

Que irão me perseguir
incessantemente até este dia
em que finalmente
saberei quem sou.

E aí só então estarei livre
para escrever cada uma
delas, e nunca mais
sentir que estou vazia e muda...
Eu saberei quem
sou minhas palavras

Untitled
Lilian Feitosa

Who am I?
Nothing, until one day
I may perhaps use each
word to show
to myself who I am.

To say who I am
with all the words, to be
barefoot, uncovered, naked,
before the scrutinizing look of
my own words

That will persecute me
incessantly until this day
in which I'll finally
know who I am.

And only then I will be free
to write each one
of them, and nevermore
feel that I am empty and mute...
I'll know who
I am my words.

Mi Cama
Michael Boyle

Un largo día de trabajo,
las noches pasan sin esperar por mi.

Quisas, en la soledad me sumerja en sueños
no sin antes caer en las garras de esa...mi cama

Ella me dijo que estaría bien al momento de partir,
que podría pasar una noche mas no sin antes sucumbir en los brazos de esa otra... mi cama

Como podere salir de estas garras, la soledad su partida y mi dulce consuelo
aquella que nunca partira de aqui...tu mi cama

My Bed
Michael Boyle

A long day of work
the nights go by now waiting for me
Perhaps the loneliness will submerge me in sleep
Not before falling in her claws...my bed

She told me it would be fine,
At the moment of departing
I would be able to spend one more night
not before falling to the arms of that other...my bed

How could I escape from these claws, solitude,
her departure and my sweet consolation
that one which will never leave here...you my bed

Una Pequeña Oda...

Juliet Carvajal

Nunca te he visto
Aunque te imagino
Te siento cada instante,
Más cerca que mi propio corazón

Te tengo una gran deuda
Te debo mi existir
Mi cada pensamiento
Mi cada movimiento

Chiquito eres
Para tu obra
Inmenso y vital

Bombita sangrienta
Bolsa musical
Campana de mi suerte

Cuanto te aprecio
Pulmoncito mío

Small Ode
Juliet Carvajal

Never have I seen you
Although I imagine you
I feel you each instant,
Closer than my own heart

I have a large debt (with you)
I owe you my existence
My each thought
My each movement

You're small
But your work
Immense and vital

Bloody pump
Musical bag
Bell of my luck

How I appreciate you
Little lung of mine

Seducción
Clara Ronderos

Fortaleza que la espuma amenaza
como en juego.
Va y viene,
y regresa con mil caras,
con velos, con brillo.
Despedazando el sol,
se lleva granos diminutos.
Luego cava en el profundo foso, otro foso
que socava la estructura.
La mece.
Adormecida, deja a las fauces blancas
su cuerpo blando, verde
ahora, parte de la sal y de la transparencia.

Seduction
Clara Ronderos

Fortress, menaced by foam
like a game.
It comes and goes,
and returns with a thousand faces,
with veils, with luster.
Splintering the sun,
it takes away tiny grains.
Then, rushing into the moat, creates another moat,
that undermines the structure
the structure.
Sleepy, it abandons itself to the white jaws
its body soft, green now,
salty and translucent.

Conejo de Polvo

James Royland

Conejo -conejito - conejón

¿Qué haces en tu soledad?

¿Qué comes en tu hambre?

Te escondes en tu mundo oscuro y tranquilo
hasta que la brisa te junte con la manada.

Tu familia - amigos - compañeros
todos compuestos de la misma cosa,
pero de forma diferente y de colores variantes

Procreas con facilidad.
La muchedumbre multiplica rápidamente sin estímulo.

El Viento a todos les pone a correr;
enajenándolos del Hogar, conocido - seguro
lugar donde viven los calcetines solitarios y perdidos.

Al ganador de la carrera-
él que veo primero-
le doy el premio:

un viaje con todos los gastos ya pagados-
al nuevo hogar;

al basurero - con tus parientes ya atrapados.

*“...y todos paran en el mismo lugar;
del polvo fueron hechos todos,
y al polvo todos volverán.”*

Dust Bunny

James Royland

Rabbit - little bunny - giant rabbit
What do you do in your solitude?
What do you eat in your hunger?

You hide in your dark and tranquil world
until the breeze joins you with your herd.

Your family - friends - companions
all the same,
and yet of different shapes and varying colors.

You procreate easily.
The multitude multiplies quickly with no stimulus.

The wind makes all run;
distancing you from Home, familiar - safe
place where solitary and lost socks live.

To the winner of the race-
to him whom I see first-
I will give the prize:

An all-expenses-paid trip
to a new home;
to the dump with your already trapped relatives.

*“...and all go to the same place;
all came from dust,
and to dust all return.”*

Translated by Michal Lumsden

A una Estrella Rosa

Alfonso Ferreras

Tomarme gota a gota
la miel de tu cuerpo,
y la juguetona y traviesa melodía de tu alma,
quisiera,
penetrar en ellos así
a un ritmo despacito
pero con llamas de fuego
que no conozcan fin,
para atrapar el instante
más allá de la carroña
de las Flores del Mal de Baudelaire
en horas
y horas
hasta el profundo azul del infinito,
rozando tú y yo embriagados de cielo
la inmensidad de sus estrellas.

Me rindo al suave calor de tu mirada
a tu serenamente blanca sonrisa,
ella que me abraza
desde cada poblado espacio en que se coloca
y conforta mis heridas
atravesadas por dagas de hielo,
y de fango.

Mis ojos están que no reposan
de tanto saborear las delicias de tu figura toda,
y uno de ellos, guiñado,
se derrite detrás de tu andar
lleno de una fragancia
con una gracia y donaire sin igual.

To Rose, a Star

Alfonso Ferreras

I'd like to sip drop by drop
the honeydew of your body
and the playful and jestful melody of your soul;
penetrate them
like this, slowly, rhythmically,
with searing flames that
know no end;
catch the instant beyond
the carcass of Baudelaire's *Flowers of Evil*,
minute by minute, to the blue
depth of the infinite-
You and I touching one another,
drunk from
the immensity of the starry sky.

I surrender myself to
the sweet warmth of your glance,
to the serenity
of your diaphanous smile,
smile that encompasses me
from whatever direction
in space it fills,
smile that heals my wounds
pierced through by muddy,
icy daggers.

My eyes can't get enough
of the delights of your body,
and one of them, blinking,
melts away from your walk
filled with grace, with
harmony unequalled.



—Lara, page 1

About the Contributors

Tat'yana Agapov was born in Fergana, Uzbekistan and now resides in Massachusetts. Her work has been featured at the Augusta Savage Gallery in Amherst, Mill Street Gallery in Greenfield, and Greenfield Community College. This spring she is graduating from the BFA program at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst.

Lilian Feitosa is from São Paulo, Brazil and writes in her mother tongue, Portuguese. She is a graduate student in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts.

Edna DaCosta was born in the Cape Verde Islands and came to the United States at 10. Edna is a junior majoring in HRTA and Spanish at the University of Massachusetts.

Clara Ronderos is a graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Massachusetts. She writes in her native Spanish.

Katherine Roback is a Junior in the Animal Science Department at the University of Massachusetts. Her poem is written in her native German. Katherine is also a member of the UMass Marching Band.

Alfonso Ferreras, a Fulbright-Lapsau grantee, is a graduate student in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts. He is originally from the Dominican Republic, where he was an elementary and English teacher at Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo.

Helkiah Tinkham will be graduating this spring with a BFA degree in painting and printmaking. She has traveled extensively, collecting artwork for her father's gallery, Restless Native. Helkiah is also the proud mother of a beautiful daughter named Elende.

Michael Boyle is a Microbiology and Psychology major at the University of Massachusetts. He was born and raised in the Panama Canal Zone, Panama.

Juliet Carvajal feels she is a daughter of the Americas and a citizen of the world. She speaks both English and Spanish natively. Her four children were born in three different Latin American countries, she feels that she has left pieces of her heart in each.

James Royland has written his poem Conejo de Polvo in Spanish. He is an undergraduate student at the University of Massachusetts.

