



© Pieter Vandermeer / Tineke de Lange

NUNO JÚDICE

(Portugal, 1949)

[Wednesday 30 June 2004]

Nuno Júdice was born in 1949 in the village of Mexilhoeira Grande in the Algarve. He studied in Lisbon, where he received a Master's degree in Romance Languages and Literature and in 1989 a PhD, with a dissertation on medieval literature. A professor at Lisbon's Universidade Nova, he served from 1997 to 2004 as the cultural attaché of the Portuguese Embassy in Paris. His poetry has garnered various prizes and is widely translated.

A literary critic, essayist, and writer of fiction with various titles to his credit, Júdice is best known as a poet, with some twenty collections of verse to his credit. His poetry is conversational in tone, without any evident laboring over the right word here, the special metrical or sound effect there. But we find, lightly embedded in his verses, a profound theoretical reflection on life and on individual lives – lives he has perhaps lived, or dreamt, or witnessed. Some of the poems read like parables or allegories, but what do the symbols mean? Maybe they don't mean anything, and maybe that doesn't matter. Júdice's poetry is a journey through memories, visions, real and imagined experiences, ideas and hypotheses, without any hope – or concern – to arrive at a conclusion.

© Richard Zenith

POEMS

ARCHAEOLOGY

BIOGRAPHY

CAFÉ TABLE

D.H. LAWRENCE'S FIGS

EPITAPH

ETHICS

EUROPE IN ROTTERDAM

HOMAGE TO ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

HOW TO MAKE A POEM

ITINERARY

MEDITATION ON RUINS

POEM

RECIPE FOR MAKING THE COLOUR BLUE

SUNDAY AT HOME

SUSANA'S BATH

THE GOLDEN AGE

THE LAND OF NEVER

VIATICUM

"YES, I WAS A PROPHET"

ARCHAEOLOGY

I look at the mould of men who were content to have an outline of the divine. With the winds and tides it has dissolved, freeing itself from the ephemeral alchemy of hands, sharing in the secret of cyclical movements, random changes, decisions written in a star's path.

I pick up the figure that seemed lost. A quick glance with the flutter of butterfly wings in the afternoon's cremation . . . I seek its abyss, a well's black depth staring back with no surface reflection, and I find its restless emptiness in a silence of mirrors.

Although they say a reproduction can never have the luster of the original, this image offers a taste of dead things: the light of dawn, the gold

ARQUEOLOGIA

Aqui, o molde dos que se limitaram a um contorno do divino – desfaz-se com os ventos e as marés. Libertou-se da alquimia efémera das mãos; e comunga o segredo dos movimentos cíclicos, das mudanças de acaso, das decisões inscritas num rumo de astro.

Tiro a figura que parecia perdida. Um olhar breve com o bater de asas da borboleta na incineração da tarde . . . Procuro o seu dom de abismo, um fundo negro de poço que me fixa sem o reflexo da superfície: e encontro o seu vazio inquieto num silêncio de espelho.

Embora se diga que uma reprodução não terá nunca o fulgor do original, esta imagem dá-me um

of an ocean horizon, the foggy breath of early morning. I linger with them, content to feel their slow corruption in the soul's roots.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

Biography

He fell into desire, the melancholy sin of love, delight in the moment that time erases. To the abstract froth of life he surrendered the solitude he'd inherited from night. He entered a river of indefinite words, abandoning the safety of the banks.

He came to know the pale side of faces; he aroused bodies and remembered only a shadow's cold; he saw absence distil in his autumn-numbed senses and remained indifferent, looking forward to the joys of spring.

But in the season that recalls the departed girl, something went wrong. He didn't set the alarm clock for the right time; he didn't hear the name by which lovers recognize each other. He'd hardly slept the night before; he'd amused himself.

In the end he was left with a residue of song: the revelation of a voice's echo without the substance of lips, abrupt like a few strands of old hair in the emptiness of the poem.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

sabor de coisas mortas: a luz nascente, o ouro de um horizonte marítimo, o fumo húmido da respiração matinal. Deixo-me estar com elas; e limito-me a sentir a sua lenta corrupção nas raízes da alma.

© 1994, Nuno Júdice
From: *Meditação sobre ruínas*
Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa, 1994

Biografia

Incorreu no desejo, no pecado melancólico do amor, no gozo do instante que o tempo apaga. Cedeu às espumas abstractas da vida a solidão herdada da noite. Entrou num rio de palavras difusas, abandonando a segurança das margens.

Conheceu o pálido reverso dos rostos; acordou corpos dos quais só lembra um frio de sombra; viu a destilação da ausência nos sentidos que o outono entorpece, indiferente, na expectativa dos júbilos primaveris.

Na estação que traz de vota a fúnebre rapariga, no entanto, algo correu mal. Não marcou o despertador para a hora certa; não ouviu o nome que assinala o reconhecimento dos amantes. Dormira pouco a noite passada; distraíra-se.

Sobrou-lhe de tudo isto um resíduo de canto: revelação de um eco de voz sem a opacidade de lábios, súbita como a imagem de uns cabelos antigos no vazio do verso.

© 1994, Nuno Júdice
From: *Meditação sobre ruínas*
Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa

CAFÉ TABLE

She was sitting in the middle of the café, with full tables all around her. She was alone, and her gaze was lost between the air and the counter, pretending to be attentive to what was going on, as though something actually was going on. She'd finished her espresso; and the glass of water was still full, next to an ashtray, which wasn't serving any purpose since she didn't smoke.

I followed the direction of her eyes, looking into the emptiness that gathered in the place where mine and hers crossed, in that white zone where the cigarette smoke absorbed the conversations and the clatter of cups. Then I forgot about her for a little bit, in the illusion that she was alone, until I noticed that someone was coming in through a door.

I didn't stay long enough to learn if whoever had arrived was the one she was waiting for, or if she would continue to stare at the blankness of the wall where a clock insisted on telling the time. And I continue to see her, brushing her hair from her face, with that gesture of one who imagines that someone is about to arrive, without knowing that the one she was waiting for had left her all alone, with me.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

MESA DE CAFÉ

Estava sentada no meio do café, com as mesas cheias à sua volta. Estava sozinha, e o olhar perdia-se entre o ar e o balcão, fingindo estar atenta ao que se passava, como se alguma coisa se passasse entretanto. Tinha tomado o café; e o copo de água estava cheio, ao lado de um cinzeiro que não servia para nada porque não fumava.

Segui a direcção dos seus olhos, vendo o vazio formar-se no lugar em que os meus e os dela se cruzavam, nessa zona branca do café em que o fumo dos cigarros absorvia as conversas e o barulho das chávenas. E deixei-a estar, por algum tempo, na ilusão de que estava sozinha, até olhar para a porta, de onde alguém viria.

Não fiquei para saber se quem chegou era quem ela esperava, ou se continuaria a fixar o horizonte da parede onde um relógio insistia em pontuar o tempo. E continuo a vê-la, puxando o cabelo para trás, num gesto de quem julga que alguém vai chegar, sem saber que quem havia de chegar a deixou sozinha, comigo.

© 2005, Nuno Júdice
From: *Geometria variável*
Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

D.H. LAWRENCE'S FIGS

Lawrence recommended that the fig be divided into
into four pieces, for eating, after discarding
the skin. In this way, he reasoned, society would
not look
askance upon the act of cutting open the fig and
of
savoring it slowly, as one would read a poem.
But
not all figs can be eaten in such a way; and
in the case of green figs, it's better to skin them
from
the top down, without separating the skin
completely
from the fruit; it's only after eating the top part,
that
the moment arrives where there is only a bit of
fig left
clinging to its skin. Then you can finally pluck
it, and finish
eating what is left, for the meal to be complete.

Indeed, Lawrence also acknowledges this
solution (and
also says it's okay to eat the skin); but we must
go even further than he does, which means that
we must
also consider the tree itself. And if, while we're
eating
the fig, the tree grabs our soul with its rough
branches, making it necessary to pull back its
leaves to see how
it is we can escape beneath it, the taste which
lingers in the mouth
recalls the image of the primitive woman, with
her round womb
like the one of the early figs of Saint John, the
first ones, that are gathered up
whole, in one sweep of the hand. So, my hand
becomes an extension of the fig tree, and I
begin to think
that perhaps fig leaves will start growing from
my arms,
as though they were branches; and that these
leaves will hide
the figs that I will gather, keeping them fresh.

OS FIGOS DE D.H. LAWRENCE

Lawrence aconselhou a que se partisse um figo
em quatro pedaços, para o comer, depois de
deitar fora
a casca. Deste modo, pensava ele, a sociedade
não veria
com maus olhos o gesto de cortar o figo, e de o
saborear lentamente, como quem lê um poema.
Mas
nem todos os figos se podem comer desta
maneira; e,
no caso dos figos verdes, o melhor é tirar-lhes a
pele a
partir de cima, sem que ela se desprenda
completamente
do fruto; e só depois de comer a parte de cima, é
que
chegará o momento em que só vai ficar um
pouco de figo
a segurar a casca. Nessa altura, pode-se arrancá-
la, e acabar
de comer o que sobra, para que a refeição fique
completa.

De facto, Lawrence também admite esta
solução (e
aceita que se coma também a casca); mas
teremos
de ir mais longe do que ele, o que significa
que se deve também pensar na figueira. E se, ao
comermos
o figo, a árvore nos agarra a alma com os seus
ramos
ásperos, obrigando-nos a afastar as folhas para
ver como
é que se pode fugir debaixo dela, o sabor que
fica na boca
lembra a imagem da mulher primitiva, com o
seu ventre redondo
como o dos figos de S. João, os primeiros, que
se colhem
com um gesto só, ficando inteiros na mão.
Então, a mão
torna-se um prolongamento da figueira, e
começo a pensar
que talvez possam nascer folhas de figueira nos
braços,
como se estes fossem ramos; e que essas folhas

Alternatively, I could transform the trunk of the fig tree into the body of a naked woman; and these leaves would adorn her. But the fig that I have in my hand will make me feel her soft breasts, making it seem like in stripping the skin from the fig the woman might appear from within, and I would reach the same conclusion as Lawrence about the many ways to eat a fig.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

servirão para tapar os figos que irei colher, mantendo a sua frescura.

Em alternativa, poderei transformar o tronco da figueira num corpo de mulher nua; e essas folhas irão vesti-la. Mas o figo que tenho na mão far-me-á sentir os seus seios macios, fazendo com que, ao tirar a casca do figo, a mulher saia de dentro dele, e eu possa chegar à mesma conclusão de Lawrence sobre as múltiplas formas de comer um figo.

© 2006, Nuno Júdice

From: *As coisas mais simples*

Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

Epitaph

The best died in epidemics: some went by the plague, others by the flu they called pneumonic, still others by St Vitus's dance, leprosy or consumption, the simple or galloping kind. This, when they didn't put a gun to their head, hang themselves from a street lamp, or jump into the river. There were others who stopped writing, who drank until they lost their minds, or who simply quit without explanation. As if life depended on so little: a few lines scribbled on scraps of paper, phrases that might or might not rhyme, thoughts . . . which they might have kept to themselves. But when I read them I understand their despair. It's not every day beauty appears to man; perfection does not always seem to be of this world. Yes: I climb the steps to the top, from where I can see the city in spite

Epitáfio

Morreram da epidemia, os melhores: a uns, levou-os a peste; a outros, a gripe a que chamaram pneumónica; e houve os da doença de S. Vito; os da lepra, os da tísica, galopante ou não. Isto, quando não davam um tiro na cabeça, não se enforcavam num candeeiro, não se deitavam ao rio. Houve ainda os que deixaram de escrever; os que beberam até perder o juízo; os que, pura e simplesmente, desistiram sem nada explicar. Como se a vida dependesse de tão pouco – linhas rabiscadas em papéis baratos, frases que podiam ou não rimar, pensamentos . . . que poderiam ter guardado para eles próprios. No entanto, quando os leio, percebo o seu desespero. A beleza não aparece todos os dias à vista do homem; a perfeição nem sempre parece uma coisa deste mundo. Sim: subo as escadas até ao fim, de onde se vê a cidade, embora

of the stormy weather. What
is happening, right now, beneath
those rooftops? What subtler
epidemic has grounded those
who so recently dreamed of flying?

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

Ethics

I stand before the sea, before its waves,
before the tides stirred by September, before the
grays
and blues that alternate with strange greens;
a voice speaks of madness, or of the empty gaze
of fish, or of a topic dried up like seaweed
at low tide; a wind swept the beach
in the silence of afternoon, restoring an ancient
unity
to the body of the waters. The sea, meanwhile,
thinks
it has been forgotten. Its depths guard the
images
no longer preserved in dreams, arms that grasp
onto shipwrecked masts. An abstract ship
sails slowly over the horizon that the morning
didn't see,
passing to the other side of the earth, oblivious
for the time being to the music of the ports. The
poem,
I was told, didn't notice this distraction: it
crossed
the boundary of eternity, donned nocturnal
words, and allowed death to contaminate it.
From the shore I don't perceive this; and I recite
it
slowly, repeating in a low voice
all of its contradictions.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

o tempo esteja de tempestade. O
que se passa, neste instante, sob
aqueles tectos? Que epidemia, mais
subtil, prende ao chão os que,
ainda há pouco, sonhavam com o voo?

© 1994, Nuno Júdice

From: *Meditação sobre ruínas*

Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa

Ética

Chego em frente do mar, das suas ondas,
das marés que setembro enfurece, dos cinzentos
e azuis que alternam com verdes estranhos;
uma voz trata da loucura, ou do olhar vazio
dos peixes, ou de um tema ressequido como as
algas
da maré baixa; um vento percorreu a praia,
no silêncio da tarde, devolvendo ao corpo das
águas
uma unidade antiga. O mar, no entanto, supõe
que o esqueçam. Nos seus fundos dormem as
imagens
que o sonho já não guarda; braços que se
agarram
aos mastros do naufrágio. Um barco abstracto
passou devagar pelo horizonte que a manhã não
viu,
entrando no outro lado da terra, esquecido
por instantes da música dos portos. O poema,
disseram-me,
ignorou essa distração: atravessou
o limite da eternidade, vestiu-se com as palavras
nocturnas, deixou que a morte o contaminasse.
À beira-mar, não dou por isso; e digo-o,
devagar, repetindo em voz baixa
todas as suas contradições.

© 1992, Nuno Júdice

From: *Um canto na espessura do tempo*

Publisher: Lisboa, Quetzal

EUROPE IN ROTTERDAM

The heart of Europe is hurting me, with its
veins swollen
by the wind out of the West, and its hands
cracked by the ice
of winters. I sat down with Europe in a
Rotterdam bar,
drawing the maps of the world in my mind; I
made her
drink a Dutch coffee, with her sick lips,
as though Europe were not the insomniac
continent
of the latest millennia, swept by the storms of
mythology, belief shaken by an atheist terror.

I saw Europe in that café in Rotterdam, before
going out
into the streets drawn by compass and set
square;
I asked her where she would like to go; and
heard her
murmur slip out of her plural paleness, as
though
she'd wanted to be the crowd's single face,
and walk anonymously down the cosmopolitan
street,
hearing the voices which speak of to her of
islands and beaches,
that restore her dream of ancient voyages.

In her eyes I see a reflection of the cranes and
winches of Rotterdam port, and I rub it out
with eternity's eraser, so that she'll sit
on the esplanade where I ask her to talk to me;
and
she looks at me, in silence, with her voice
crazed
by an echo of madness; and I listen to her tell
me that
she doesn't know what period she lives in, as
though
it had to be me that had shown her the path.

I take her hand; she comes undone in the
improbable
lines of the poem, where a shadow is
projected, which I lose, in the Rotterdam night.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

A EUROPA EM ROTERDÃO

Dói-me o coração da europa, com as suas veias
inchadas
pelo vento do ocidente, e as mãos gretadas pelo
gelo
dos invernos. Sentei-me com a europa num bar
de roterdão,
desenhando na cabeça os mapas do mundo; e
obriguei-a
a beber o café holandês, com os seus lábios
doentes,
como se a europa não fosse o continente insone
dos últimos milénios, varrido pelos temporais
da
mitologia, de crença abalada por um terror ateu.

Vi a europa nesse café de roterdão, antes de sair
para as ruas desenhadas a compasso e esquadro;
perguntei-lhe para onde queria ir; e ouvi o seu
murmúrio despir-se de uma palidez plural,
como
se ela quisesse ser o rosto único da multidão,
e passear num anonimato de rua cosmopolita,
ouvindo as vozes que lhe falam de ilhas e
praias,
restituindo-lhe um sonho de antigas viagens.

Vejo nos seus olhos um reflexo das gruas e
guindastes do porto de roterdão, e apago-o com
a borracha da eternidade, para que ela se sente
na esplanada onde lhe peço que me fale; e
ela olha-me, em silêncio, com a voz alucinada
num eco de loucura; e ouço-a dizer-me que
não sabe em que tempo vive, como se fosse
eu que lhe tivesse de ensinar o caminho.

Pego na sua mão; e ela desfaz-se nas linhas
improváveis do poema, onde se projecta uma
sombra que eu perco, na noite de roterdão.

© 2006, Nuno Júdice
From: *As coisas mais simples*
Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

Homage to St John of the Cross

When I plucked the fruit from those branches
that had never given shade, night fell
quickly, with no sunset or twilight – a night
already present in each fruit
and thicker each time my lips
touched their acid skin. What night
was in progress? Surely not the bleak night
of weeping and song, nor the compassionate
night that precedes dawn, nor even
that singular night of dream and insomnia,
confounded
in the hypnotic conduct of bodies ruled
by love's torpor. A night without end, since
it had no beginning, definitive in its blind
stare, a reflection without memory that names
what had been nameless, and from the names
takes substance – this night runs
through the middle of me, between who I am
and who I think I am, preventing me from
seeing either
of the sides I occupy. A night that fell, therefore,
where it had always been: a beloved, desired,
rejected repetition of what I describe
whenever I write – the fire I call
but do not see in that dark desire.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

HOW TO MAKE A POEM

If we're going to talk about how to make a
poem,
rhetoric has nothing to do with it. It's simpler
than that, and doesn't
require subtleties or formulas. Pick
a flower, for example, but not one of those
flowers that grow
in the middle of fields, nor the ones they sell in
stores,
or in the markets. A flower of syllables rather, in
which the
petals are vowels, and the stem is the

Homenagem a S. João da Cruz

Quando colhi os frutos daqueles ramos
que nunca deram sombra, a noite desceu
depressa, sem poente nem crepúsculo: a noite
que já estava dentro de cada fruto
e se fazia mais espessa de cada vez que os meus
lábios
tocavam a ácida casca. Que noite
começou então? Não foi, sem dúvida, a noite
áspera do choro e do canto; nem a noite piedosa
que antecede a madrugada; nem sequer
a noite única do sonho e da insónia,
confundindo-se
no curso sonâmbulo dos corpos que o torpor
amante
contamina. Noite sem fim – porque
não teve um princípio – e definitiva no olhar
cego de um reflexo sem memória: dando
o nome às coisas que nunca o tiveram; e
roubando
substância a esses nomes – essa noite
anda pelo meio de mim, entre quem sou
e quem julgo ser, impedindo-me de ver cada um
dos lados em que estou. Noite, então,
que caiu onde sempre estive: amada, desejada,
repudiada repetição do que escrevo
quando escrevo – chamando, apenas,
a chama que não vejo nesse obscuro desejo.

© 1994, Nuno Júdice
From: *Meditação sobre ruínas*
Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa

COMO SE FAZ O POEMA

Para falarmos do meio de obter o poema,
a retórica não serve. Trata-se de uma coisa
simples, que não
precisa de requintes nem de fórmulas. Apanha-
se
uma flor, por exemplo, mas que não seja dessas
flores que crescem
no meio do campo, nem das que se vendem nas
lojas
ou nos mercados. É uma flor de sílabas, em que
as
pétalas são as vogais, e o caule uma consoante.

consonant. Place it
in the vase of the stanza, and let it be. So that it
doesn't die,
it's enough to put a little Spring in the water,
which,
on a rainy day, is fetched from the imagination,
or is pushed in through the window when the
cool air
of morning fills the blue room. This is when
the flower begins to seem like a poem, but it's
still not
the poem. For it to really sprout, the flower
needs
to find more natural colors than those
which nature gave it. They might be the colors
of your complexion – its whiteness, when the
sun falls on you,
or the depths of your eyes in which all the
colors
of life mix with the sheen of life. After that,
I pour these colors over the corolla, and watch
them descend
to the leaves, like sap which runs through
the invisible veins of the soul. I can then pick
the flower,
and what I have in my hand is this poem
that you gave me.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl
Publisher: Poetry International Festival, Rotterdam, 2007

ITINERARY

I went to delft, looking for ceramics.
I went to ceramics, looking for delft.
On the maps, neither delft nor
ceramics appeared.
The maps, however, had everything
delft had.
and everything that ceramics had:
the colors,
the lines, the borders.
I put the maps on the wall.
I also put delft on the wall,
and ended up with ceramics from delft.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

Põe-se
no jarro da estrofe, e deixa-se estar. Para que
não morra,
basta um pedaço de primavera na água, que se
vai
buscar à imaginação, quando está um dia de
chuva,
ou se faz entrar pela janela, quando o ar fresco
da manhã enche o quarto de azul. Então,
a flor confunde-se com o poema, mas ainda não
é
o poema. Para que ele nasça, a flor precisa
de encontrar cores mais naturais do que essas
que a natureza lhe deu. Podem ser as cores do
teu
rosto – a sua brancura, quando o sol vem ter
contigo,
ou o fundo dos teus olhos em que todas as cores
da vida se confundem, com o brilho da vida.
Depois,
deito essas cores sobre a corola, e vejo-as
descerem
para as folhas, como a seiva que corre pelos
veios invisíveis da alma. Posso, então, colher a
flor,
e o que tenho na mão é este poema que
me deste.

© 2005, Nuno Júdice
From: *Geometria variável*
Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisboa

ROTEIRO

Fui a delft, à procura de cerâmica.
Fui à cerâmica, à procura de delft.
Nos mapas, não vinham nem delft
nem a cerâmica.
Os mapas, porém, tinham tudo
de delft,
e tinham tudo de cerâmica:
as cores,
as linhas, as fronteiras.
Pus os mapas na parede.
Também pus delft na parede.
E fiquei com uma cerâmica de delft.

© 2005, Nuno Júdice
From: *Geometria variável*
Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

Meditation on Ruins

He disembarked in a living room without chairs
or gilt mouldings:
just rotting beams, vases with plastic flowers,
windows
whose broken panes looked out onto the
highway. No wind,
no sea: only the sound of cars entering through
the cracks
to echo on the ceiling (rafters showing through
the stucco
remains). Outside he hung on to the rusted rails
of decrepit balconies. He discerned, through the
underbrush
that was overrunning everything, a landscape
worthy
of a Romantic painting. The houses covering
the valley and
the hills taken over by scrap iron hide a past
with flocks and shepherds. But perhaps the
flute's song
was never heard here. Indeed, this house
conserves nothing
but ancient silences, which the using has
transformed into sepia
spots in memory. Now they're blended into the
colour of the walls
and harbour only dens of scarcely discernible
reptiles,
in winter, hidden from the universe. But
someone was here
very recently. And a pile of wood still smokes
as
the sun ascends from the horizon, where dawn's
cold colours
do not dissipate, and no bird greets
the new day.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

Meditação sobre ruínas

Desembarcou numa sala sem dourados nem
cadeiras:
madeiras velhas, jarras com flores de plástico,
janelas
de vidros partidos para a auto-estrada. Nem
vento,
nem mar: só o ruído dos carros entrava pelas
fendas
para ecoar no tecto (madeiras à vista entre os
restos
de estuque). Depois, na rua, pendurou-se nos
ferros podres
de antigas varandas. Percebia-se, por entre os
arbustos
que invadiam tudo, uma vista que teria sido
digna
de um quadro romântico. O vale, coberto de
casas, e
os montes invadidos por ferro-velho, ocultam
um passado
de rebanhos e pastores. Mas talvez não se tenha
ouvido aqui
a música da flauta. Com efeito, esta casa limita-
se
a guardar antigos silêncios, que o uso
transformou em manchas
sépia na memória. Agora, confundem-se com a
cor das paredes;
e só abrigam tocas répteis, que apenas se
adivinham,
no inverno, escondidos do universo. Mas
alguém passou por aqui,
há pouco; e um monte de madeira fumeja,
ainda, enquanto
o sol avança a partir do nascente, onde as cores
frias
da madrugada não se dissipam, nem pássaro
algum saúda
o nascer do dia.

© 1994, Nuno Júdice
From: *Meditação sobre ruínas*
Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa

POEM

It's the simplest things that I hear in the wind's intervals, when the simple beating of the rain on the windows breaks the silence of night, and its rhythm overwhelms that of words. Sometimes, it is a tired voice, that tirelessly repeats what the night teaches those who live it; other times, it runs, hurriedly, mowing down meanings and phrases as though it wanted to reach the end, more quickly than the dawn. We're talking about simple things, like the sand which is scooped up, and runs through your fingers while your eyes search for a clear line on the horizon; or things that we suddenly remember, when the sun emerges from a brief tear in the clouds. These are the things that happen, when the wind remains; and it is these we try to recall, as though we had heard them, and the noise of the rain on the windowpanes had not snuffed out their voice.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

Recipe for Making the Colour Blue

If you wish to make the colour blue take a piece of sky and put it in a pot large enough to place on the flame of the horizon. Stir into the blue a pinch of early morning red until it dissolves. Pour everything into a brass bowl that has been well washed to eliminate all of the afternoon's impurities. Finally, sift in a few smidgens of gold from the sand of midday until the colour adheres to the bottom of the bowl. To prevent the colours from separating with time,

POEMA

As coisas mais simples, ouço-as no intervalo do vento, quando um simples bater de chuva nos vidros rompe o silêncio da noite, e o seu ritmo se sobrepõe ao das palavras. Por vezes, é uma voz cansada, que repete incansavelmente o que a noite ensina a quem a vive; de outras vezes, corre, apressada, atropelando sentidos e frases como se quisesse chegar ao fim, mais depressa do que a madrugada. São coisas simples como a areia que se apanha, e escorre por entre os dedos enquanto os olhos procuram uma linha nítida no horizonte; ou são as coisas que subitamente lembramos, quando o sol emerge num breve rasgão de nuvem. Estas são as coisas que passam, quando o vento fica; e são elas que tentamos lembrar, como se as tivéssemos ouvido, e o ruído da chuva nos vidros não tivesse apagado a sua voz.

© 2006, Nuno Júdice
From: *As coisas mais simples*
Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

Receita para fazer azul

Se quiseres fazer azul, pega num pedaço de céu e mete-o numa panela grande, que possas levar ao lume do horizonte; depois mexe o azul com um resto de vermelho da madrugada, até que ele se desfaça; despeja tudo num bacio bem limpo, para que nada reste das impurezas da tarde. Por fim, peneira um resto de ouro da areia do meio-dia, até que a cor pegue ao fundo de metal. Se quiseres, para que as cores se não desprendam com o tempo, deita no líquido um caroço de

drop a charred peach pit into the liquid.
It will disintegrate, leaving no telltale
sign, not even – from the black ash – an ochre
trace
on the golden surface. You may then raise the
colour
to eye level and compare it with genuine blue.
The two colours will look so alike
that you cannot distinguish one from the other.
This was how I did it – I, Abraham ben Judah
Ibn Haim,
illuminator from the town of Loulé. And I left
the recipe
for whoever, one day, would imitate the sky.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

SUNDAY AT HOME

Tomorrow might be Sunday, and
sunless; I might hear the bells and
say that it was just an illusion; I might
go down to the street and not find the man
who sells newspapers; I might go as far as
the square and not see the women
moving in a group towards church, where
mass is about to begin.

Tomorrow might not be Sunday,
and the streets empty as though
there were nothing to do; it might not
be Sunday, and all the stores
closed; it might not
be Sunday and someone asking
what does one do when it is
not Sunday.

Tomorrow might be any day,
and I not knowing what day it is; I might
look at my watch and discover that
its hands have stopped; I might
here someone speaking, and have no idea where
the voice that comes from their mouth comes

pêssego queimado.
Vê-lo-ás desfazer-se, sem deixar sinais de que
alguma vez
ali o puseste; e nem o negro da cinza deixará
um resto de ocre
na superfície dourada. Podes, então, levantar a
cor
até à altura dos olhos, e compará-la com o azul
autêntico.
Ambas as cores te parecerão semelhantes, sem
que
possas distinguir entre uma e outra.
Assim o fiz – eu, Abraão ben Judá Ibn Haim,
iluminador de Loulé – e deixei a receita a quem
quiser,
algum dia, imitar o céu.

© 1994, Nuno Júdice
From: *Meditação sobre ruínas*
Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa

DOMINGO EM CASA

Amanhã podia ser domingo, e
não haver sol; podia ouvir os sinos e
dizer que era apenas uma ilusão; podia
descer a rua e não encontrar o homem
que vende os jornais; podia chegar
ao largo e não ver as mulheres
em grupo a caminho da igreja, onde
vai começar a missa.

Amanhã podia não ser domingo,
e as ruas estarem vazias como se
não houvesse nada para fazer; podia não
ser domingo e todas as lojas
fecharem; podia não
ser domingo e alguém perguntar
o que é que se faz quando não
é domingo.

Amanhã podia ser um dia qualquer,
e não saber em que dia estou; podia
olhar para o relógio e descobrir que
os ponteiros estão parados; podia
ouvir alguém falar, e não saber de onde
vem a voz que sai da sua boca, como

from,
as though I were all alone.

And then, I might open the door and
see that Sunday wants to come in; and
pull it into my house, so that
the outside was left Sundayless; and
go out into the street on any day
whatsoever, asking passersby
if they saw which way Sunday went.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

SUSANA'S BATH

Between her and the water, a thread
of gold. Then, she turns off the light, and
the gold becomes silver, and the silver
evaporates in shadow. It's just
her that's left, motionless, beneath the sky
where the stars are eyes, and the
moon a reflection of her skin.

But she turns the light back
on, as though she wanted
them to see her. And when she looks
into the mirror, she discerns the beauty
of her body which she puts to
dancing, as she undresses
and all of the stars shine
like eyes eager for life.

Then, turning off the water,
she slips into the tub. And the old men
leap out from behind the curtains, from
out of the canebrakes, from beneath
the grass, down from the canopies
as she, with her back to them,
scrubs her skin with the sponge
of those ranging eyes.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

se estivesse sozinho.

Ou então, podia abrir a porta e
ver que o domingo quer entrar; e
puxá-lo para dentro da casa, para
que lá fora fique sem domingo; e
sair para a rua num dia qualquer,
perguntando a quem passa
se viu passar o domingo.

© 2006, Nuno Júdice

From: *As coisas mais simples*

Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

O BANHO DE SUSANA

Entre ela e a água, um fio de
ouro. Depois, fecha a luz, e
o ouro passa a prata, e a prata
evapora-se em sombra. Só
ela fica, imóvel, sob o céu
onde as estrelas são olhos, e a
lua um reflexo da sua pele.

Mas volta a acender
a luz, como se quisesse que
a vissem. E quando se olha
ao espelho, descobre a beleza
do seu corpo que ela faz
dançar, enquanto se despe,
e todas as estrelas brilham
como olhos ansiosos de vida.

Então, fechando a água,
entra na banheira. E os velhos
saltam de trás das cortinas, de
dentro dos canaviais, de baixo
da relva, de cima dos dosséis,
enquanto ela, de costas para eles,
esfrega a pele com a esponja
desses olhos que a atravessam.

© 2006, Nuno Júdice

From: *As coisas mais simples*

Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

The Golden Age

A curve in time, like a curve in a road,
veers man from his old way. The landscape
suddenly changes: wooden houses, the black
covering of the bridge, the green of the
fields. He sits on a rock. He doesn't know
where he is. He can't hear the voice calling
from the depths for him to return.

He knows he can advance
if his eyes do not fix
upon the known. Without moving
he senses a transformation that makes
what's strange discernible
and familiar. And so he returns
to the rigour the gods stole
with the first scream.

Other men, meanwhile, advance
across this landscape, knocking down
fences. They have hoes, sickles, faces
blanched from insomnia. Some
laugh. And they sing when the land
opens in furrows that climb
the hills, go down the hills,
and are lost across the plains.

Perhaps one day
they will meet.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

THE LAND OF NEVER

If I went to the land of never,
I would have everything I wanted in a bed of
nothing:

the dreams that no one had when
the sun came up in the morning;

the girl who sang in a bed
of vivid flowers;

the water that tasted of wine in the mouth

A idade do ouro

Uma curva no tempo, como num caminho,
desvia o homem da direcção antiga. De súbito,
uma paisagem diferente: casas de madeira,
a cobertura negra da ponte, o verde dos
campos. Aí, senta-se numa pedra; não sabe
onde está; nem ouve que o chamam,
do fundo, para que regresse.

Ele sabe que pode avançar,
se os olhos não fixarem
a imagem conhecida. Imóvel,
uma transformação faz com que
as coisas estranhas se tornem perceptíveis
e familiares. Assim, regressa ao rigor
que os deuses lhe roubaram
com o grito inicial.

Porém, outros homens avançam
por essa paisagem, deitando abaixo
os muros. Têm foices, enxadas, rostos
embranquecidos pela vigília. Riem,
uns; e cantam, quando a terra
se abre em sulcos que sobem
os montes, descem colinas,
e se perdem na planície.

Um dia,
talvez se encontrem.

© 1994, Nuno Júdice
From: *Meditação sobre ruínas*
Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa

A TERRA DO NUNCA

Se eu fosse para a terra do nunca,
teria tudo o que quisesse numa cama de nada:

os sonhos que ninguém teve quando
o sol se punha de manhã;

a rapariga que cantava num canteiro
de flores vivas;

a água que sabia a vinho na boca
de todos os bêbedos.

of every drunk.

I would ride my bicycle without having to pedal,
down a street of clouds.

And when I had reached the sky, I'd step
on the stars that had fallen on the misty ground.

The land of never is where I would never
arrive if I went to the land of never.

That is why I scoop up the ground,
filling up bags with the earth of never.

One day, when someone asks me about the land
of never,
I'll empty all the bags on their doorstep.

And the girl who sang will come out of the
earth
with a bed of vivid flowers.

And the drunks will fill their glasses
with the water that tastes of wine.

In the land of never, with the sun rising
when the day is born.

© Translation: 2007, Martin Earl

Viaticum

They recognize each other at night by the voice,
by
their breathing, by a dark tenderness of arms.
They recognize each other slowly, as if
they had never met, nor exchanged the strange
words of a farewell.
They recognize each other by their desperate
unfamiliarity
that robs both sides of feeling, leaving them
with the aridity of a reflection.

Come from that wharf that was ravaged by
winter,
that was not visited by ships, by birds, or by

Iria de bicicleta sem ter de pedalar,
numa estrada de nuvens.

E quando chegasse ao céu, pisaria
as estrelas caídas num chão de nebulosas.

A terra do nunca é onde nunca
chegaria se eu fosse para a terra do nunca.

E é por isso que a apanho do chão,
e a meto em sacos de terra do nunca.

Um dia, quando alguém me pedir a terra do
nunca,
despejarei todos os sacos à sua porta.

E a rapariga que cantava sairá da terra
com um canteiro de flores vivas.

E os bêbedos encherão os copos
com a água que sabia a vinho.

Na terra do nunca, com o sol a pôr-se
quando nasce o dia.

© 2006, Nuno Júdice
From: *As coisas mais simples*
Publisher: Dom Quixote, Lisbon

Viático

De noite, conhecem-se pela voz, pela
respiração, por um negro afecto de braços;
conhecem-se devagar, como se nunca se
tivessem encontrado, nem trocado as palavras
estranhas de uma despedida;
conhecem-se pelo desespero da ignorância, que
a uns e outros rouba o sentimento, deixando-os
entregues à segura de um reflexo.

Vinde: desse cais que o inverno devastou,
que os barcos não procuram, nem as aves, nem
a mais louca das antigas prostitutas; e
trazei convosco um refúgio de sombras nos
lábios, uma infecção de alma no cansaço

the craziest old whore imaginable, and
bring with you a refuge of shadows on
your lips, an infection of the soul in the
weariness
of your bodies, the strain of a glaze in the
obscurity
of your eyes.

Partake with me in life's disorder,
in the indecision of roads,
in the wound of a silence where
a smile you once loved and
your ageless face flow
like images in a dream.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

“Yes, I was a Prophet”

I experience contact with shades,
nausea from the effervescence of ruins, of the
leaves
that take the virgin form of a trunk. I'm already
a habit,
inhabited by different spiritual directions, heard
at the bottom of human
wells: a tone of voice that multiplies the
anxious contradiction
of nostalgias. I was told:

“Seek the first degree of happiness in the chorus
of the dead, a final howl of suffering in the
obsessiveness
of oystermen . . .”, and the words came to me
in a tumult, in heavy breaths, in a death rattle

of the aged. And I saw the end: the spiraling fall
of the stars, the face
of a blue ice, the sound of waves drowning out
the image
of a belly rent to the entrails. No exorcism
could restore
my strength. I entered the procession of the
sleepwalkers,
uniting my voice to the common lament. “Who

dos corpos, o fardo de um brilho na obscuridade
dos olhos.

Comungai comigo na desordem da vida,
na indecisão dos caminhos,
na feira de um silêncio por onde escorrem,
como as imagens de um sonho,
um riso amado, outrora, e
o teu rosto sem idade.

© 1992, Nuno Júdice

From: *Um canto na espessura do tempo*

Publisher: Lisboa, Quetzal

“Sim, fui um profeta”

Experimento um contacto de sombras,
o mal estar de uma efervescência de ruínas, das
folhas
que tomam a forma virgem de um tronco. Sou
já um hábito,
habitado por diferentes direcções de espírito,
ouvido no fundo dos poços
humanos: um tom de voz que multiplica a
contradição ofegante
das nostalgias. Diziam-me:

“ – Procura no coro dos mortos o primeiro grau
da felicidade; na obsessão dos pescadores de
ostras
um derradeiro uivo de sofrimento . . . ” e as
palavras chegavam-me
em tumulto, numa pesada respiração, num
estertor

de velho. Então, vi o fim: a queda sinuosa dos
astros, o rosto
de um gelo azul, o ruído de ondas sobrepondo-
se à imagem
do ventre rasgado até às entranhas. Nenhum
exorcismo me restituiu

is this?”
“The taciturn poet, the ancient bearer of
absolution.”
And they remarked:
“What good is he now? . . .” And the tide
billowed
like the clouds at twilight! Among men there
are some
who still remember: the drunk storyteller, the
blind musician
of fairs, the mad fortuneteller. The children
stone them
at the village gates. One of them appeared, one
morning, floating
in the canal

and his eyes saw everything.

© Translation: 1997, Richard Zenith

a força. Entrei na procissão dos sonâmbulos,
juntando a voz ao gemido comum. “ – Quem é
este?” –
“ – O taciturno poeta, o antigo portador de
absolvição.”
E comentavam :
“De que nos serve, agora? . . .” E a maré
engrossava
como as nuvens do crepúsculo! Entre os
homens ainda há
quem se lembre: o bêbado contador de histórias,
o músico
cego das feiras, a louca decifradora das sinas.
As crianças apedrejam-nos
à entrada das aldeias. Um deles apareceu, de
manhã, boiando
no canal

– e os seus olhos viam tudo.

© 1991, Nuno Júdice
From: *Obra Poética (1972-1985)*
Publisher: Quetzal, Lisboa

ARTICLES

Nuno Júdice's Meditations on Life's Ruins

January 18, 2006

Poetry as observation and reflection, without higher purposes, a species of “psychological and spiritual hygiene” – this, according to translator Richard Zenith, is what characterizes Nuno Júdice’s important collection, *Meditation on Ruins*.

He seems, at first glance, to be a poet without ambition. Though certain poems stand out above others, he is obviously not shooting for individual literary masterpieces. Nor is his project to recreate in the manner of a Borges, or to shock with the audacity of his formal innovation. He is not concerned to hone his consciousness, analyse, synthesize, or arrive at considered judgements or conclusions, let alone teach anything to his readers. Poetry for Nuno Júdice is a species of psychological and spiritual hygiene, a way to receive and process life, an instrument for reflecting on past history – the poet’s own and that of Western culture – and on the present state of things. This posture becomes militant in *Meditation on Ruins*. Here we will find no warm and fuzzy ‘poetic’ pay-offs, no rhetorical sighing over the poignant beauty that exists, after all, in the very

heart of the world's sadness and desolation. Júdice eschews the higher register, preferring colloquial speech delivered in a deadpan style, and he goes out of his way to break the lines of his poems at the most inopportune places, after a *the* or a preposition, or in the middle of a compound verb, but he does all of this discreetly, without fanfare, retaining the basic poem structure he inherited from tradition, because why not? Why disdain what came before him and contributed to his own formation? He is not an angry young rebel. He has no antilyrical axe to grind. He is, in fact, a poet without axes, trying to prove nothing.

Júdice is so consistently sceptical that we could well imagine him as a deconstructionist, but he was born too late for that. He 'disembarked', as the title poem of this collection tells it, in a world that was already lying in ruins. Throughout the rest of this book we meet blighted landscapes, dregs washed up on foggy shores, eroded myths, residual childhood memories, archaeological remnants, disintegrating grammars, and the rubble of relationships condemned from the start to be clumsy, impossible constructions. What is missing, perhaps strangely, from these scenes of wreckage is bitterness. The poet, although he harbours no illusions that the world's physical and spiritual shards can be reassembled into a coherent ensemble, decisively takes the pieces in his hands, turns them over and looks at them closely, not without nostalgia but with rigour – the kind of rigour named in the second stanza of the first poem ('The Golden Age'), whose subject

*(. . .) knows he can advance
if his eyes do not fix
upon the known.*

It is the rigour of unembarrassed love, of complete openmindedness and emotional vulnerability, of an unencumbered gaze that regards the other – be it a person or object – without preconceptions, without daring to presume that this other is already known to us. It is the rigour of honest encounter, the rigour of a valid I before an equally valid you, a desire for intimate acquaintance rather than a knowledge that would define and delimit. It is the willingness to be surprised, for better or for worse. It is, reports Júdice in the cited stanza, "the rigour the gods stole/ with the first scream", which suggests the human mind at its freshest and most spontaneous, before the gods and civilization ever arrived.

Nuno Júdice seems not to believe or even disbelieve in God, but his 'Homage to St John of the Cross' confirms to us the religious nature of the meditation announced in his book's title – religious in the sense of "receptive to mystery". Júdice's poetic meditation does not remain at the surface but freely penetrates things, seeking out their historical and spiritual "abyss, a well's black depth staring back/ with no surface reflection" (in 'Archaeology'). There is no ecstatic union at the end of his dark night, but there are glimmers of light, there are connections to be noted, and even an unexpected calm in the storm, born out of the poet's acceptance of the world such as it is – shattered, scattered, and ultimately inscrutable. His attitude, in this respect, is more scientific than religious. However receptive Júdice may be to mystery at all levels, spiritual included, he refuses to view reality through the corrective lenses of a redeeming theology, a utopian ideology, or an exonerating aesthetics. He surveys the chaos without a filter, on site, travelling to and wading through ruin after ruin, taking notes like a scientist so impartial that he didn't even bring along a

working hypothesis, merely an affection for the objects he studies. As if that's all that were needed.

It is hard, when we read these poems, not to think of Hölderlin and the German Romantics, and the Symbolists that followed them. Autumn and winter are the dominant seasons, night (a word with more than sixty occurrences in this book) the most frequent time of day. And even when there is sunlight the atmosphere may still feel nocturnal, 'excessive', charged with the weight of nature, the impacted past. But Júdice, unlike the Romantics, has no programme, no personal project, no heady confidence in the power of the subjective I to apprehend and transcend. He sometimes discovers profound connections, but he does not actively seek them. Ruins are not an exotic door of access to the values of antiquity or some higher perfection; they are the end which modern civilization has arrived at and must now confront.

Júdice's symbols, on the other hand, often seem to be below the level of consciousness or even outside it. In his poetic universe everything is in a permanent state of flux, and the poem is his journey through a menagerie of usual and unusual images, bits of history, fantasies, cultural references, geographies, photographic remembrances and apocalyptic utterances. In 'Ethics' the narrator begins:

*I stand before the sea, before its waves,
before the tides stirred by September, before the greys
and blues that alternate with strange greens;
a voice speaks of madness, or of the empty gaze
of fish, or of a topic dried up like seaweed
at low tide; a wind swept the beach
in the silence of afternoon, restoring an ancient unity
to the body of the waters.*

But this unity is only one more element in the chaos, lasting no longer than the gust of wind, and in the end we find the narrator reciting the poem "slowly, repeating in a low voice/ all of its contradictions". Yes, Júdice's poems seem to be replete with symbols, with natural phenomena placed in crepuscular environments and endowed with the significance of Baudelairean *correspondances*, but one ultimately feels – and a relativizing, postmodern narrative voice periodically reminds us – that they may correspond to nothing more than a poetic mood. If Nuno Júdice does not address the question of God's existence (though the poem 'God' suggests a certain nostalgia), neither does he make a judgement call on life's uncanny coincidences and quasi-symbols, on those everyday sights that sometimes strike us as visions, on those ordinary moments that loom like large or small epiphanies. Júdice is obviously fascinated by these events – they are the stuff of his poetry – but he presents them with prophetic detachment. Let the reader decide, if it is important for her or him to decide, what they might mean.

The poet as prophet, in the line of "the drunk/ storyteller, the blind musician/ of fairs, the mad fortuneteller" (in 'Yes, I Was a Prophet'), is an attitude that might make us wonder if Júdice's work is old hat. It is and isn't. It is so old in its aspirations – harking back to when poetry, prophecy and

song were all one and the same art – that in the contemporary setting, which is where most of Júdice’s poems operate, it comes to us on the psychological level as an antidote to the alienation spawned by hypercivilization, and on the literary level as a refreshing change from the realism, neoformalism, intimism and linguistic high jinks that dominate today’s poetry scene. And yet there is in Júdice no harking after old truths or trying, like many of his contemporaries, to invent new ones. He is far too cognizant of where human thought has arrived to suppose that general conclusions are still possible or even desirable. He merely seeks to explore the terrain of existence, to try to feel at home there. He is not a prophet of timeless verities but a medium – an almost oblivious medium – of tiny, fragmentary, mortal truths as hard and real and perishable as stone. What he wants is to touch the stone (another oft-occurring word in his poetry), not enshrine truth. It is as if truth, fragile and elemental, were not abstractable from stone.

The poem as prophecy, far from being a mimesis or the outcome of analytic study or observation, is a vehicle by which to investigate what is not yet known. And even what we once knew, when separated from us by the passage of time or a sharp change in the weather, shifts back into the realm of the unknown or insubstantial. Júdice offers no answers to the reader, but we are invited to join his doubtful, or doubt-filled, journey:

*Partake with me in life’s disorder,
in the indecision of roads,
in the wound of a silence where
a smile you once loved and
your ageless face flow
like images in a dream.*

This stanza is taken from ‘Viaticum’, a title whose irony is reinforced by the word ‘partake’, which in the original more strongly suggests the partaking of communion wafers. Irony in Júdice, though it rarely shouts out, always seems to be lurking under the textual surface, betraying the poet-prophet’s contemporary, noningenuous sensibility. In his wry moments, he takes swipes at philosophical speculation and at the “minuscule anxieties” found in poetry, a strategy that allows his own verse to accommodate more philosophy and, especially, more of the anxiety that nags him. Whereas melancholy in many poets, going back at least as far as Horace, is a kind of constant and even comforting state of wistful reverie, Júdice’s anxiety is a jittery, psychological dis-ease aroused by the sense data, memories and oneiric images that bombard the poet, apparently with his consent and complicity.

Expressed very often in the form of nostalgia, not only for his childhood but for historical periods he never lived and for futures he can only dream of, this anxiety reminds us of Portugal’s poet of many disguises when masquerading as himself, Fernando Pessoa, or as the later Álvaro de Campos, or as Bernardo Soares, fictive author of *The Book of Disquiet*, a prose work that disguises some of Pessoa’s best poetry. Júdice’s poetry contains subtle but frequent references to Pessoa (1888-1935), who experienced the postmodernist malady *directly* – through his acute artistic and psychological fragmentation – before it ever became a discourse. But not even Pessoa felt the “crumbling of

words” (in ‘Decadence’) and “dead branches” of syntax (in ‘Account of Maritime Routes’) that threaten the very viability of language for Júdice and other present-day poets who are still questioning, still pushing, who have not capitulated to poetry understood as a lofty colloquy. This linguistic embarrassment, or distrust, also explains Júdice’s reticence to pronounce truth and his countervailing restlessness to keep looking for it, or for something.

Adapted from the Afterword to *Meditation on Ruins*, Archangel Books, 1997.

© **Richard Zenith**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Poetry in Portuguese (partial listing):

- A Noção de Poema*. Publicações Dom Quixote, Lisbon, 1972.
As Inumeráveis Águas. Assírio & Alvim, Lisbon, 1974.
O Mecanismo Romântico da Fragmentação. Inova, Porto, 1975.
O Corte na Ênfase. Inova, Oporto, 1978.
O Voo de Igitur num Copo de Dados. & etc., Lisbon, 1981.
Lira de Líquen. (Prémio de Poesia do Pen Clube), Rolim, Lisbon, 1985.
A Condescendência do Ser. Quetzal, Lisbon, 1988.
Enumeração de Sombras. Quetzal, Lisbon, 1989.
As Regras da Perspectiva. (Dom Dinis Prize), Quetzal, Lisbon, 1990.
Um Canto na Espessura do Tempo. Quetzal, Lisbon, 1992.
Meditação sobre Ruínas. (Portuguese Writers’ Association Grand Prize for Poetry), Quetzal, Lisbon, 1995.
O Movimento do Mundo. Quetzal, Lisbon, 1996.
A Fonte da Vida. Quetzal, Lisbon, 1997.
Teoria Geral do Sentimento. Quetzal, Lisbon, 1999.
Poesia Reunida (1967-2000). Publicações Dom Quixote, Lisbon, 2000.
Cartografia de Emoções. Publicações Dom Quixote, Lisbon, 2001.
O Estado dos Campos. Publicações Dom Quixote, Lisbon, 2003.

Nuno Júdice has also published many works of fiction, essays, and several plays.

Works in translation:

Bulgarian

Poesia. Karina M., Sofia, 1999.

Czech

Sarlatova Zena. Argo, 1999.

Danish

Vandlinier. Brøndum, Copenhagen, 1998.

Dutch

Recept om Blauw te Maken. Wagner & Van Santen, Rotterdam, 1998.

English

Meditation on Ruins. Archangel, 1997. Translation by Richard Zenith.

French

Les Degrés du regard (anthologie). L'Escampette, 1993. Translation by Michel Chandeigne.

Le Mouvement du monde. Le Taillis Pré, 2000. Translation by Michel Chandeigne.

Lignes d'eau. Fata Morgana, 2000. Translation by Jean-Pierre Léger.

Jeu de reflets. Chandeigne, 2001. Translation by Michel Chandeigne.

Un chant dans l'épaisseur du temps suivi de Méditation sur des ruines. Poésies/Gallimard, 1996.
Translation by Michel Chandeigne.

Hebrew

Meditation on ruins. Carmel, 2000. Translation by Ahron Amir.

Italian

Antologia. Colpo di Fulmine, 1991. Translation by Adelina Aletti.

Spanish

Teoría General del Sentimiento. Trilce, 2001. Translation by Blanca Luz Pulido.

Un canto para la espesura del tiempo. Calambur, 1995.

Swedish

Källskrift. Aura Latina, 1998. Translation by Lasse Söderberg.