



POESIA [POETRY]

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from: O SEU A SEU TEMPO, 1966

[Each thing in its time]

The House of the World

Sometimes what seems
to be a birthmark on one's face
is the house of the world
is a mighty armoire
with bloody tissues stored there
and with its tribe of sensitive doors

It smells of erotic cobwebs. A delirious chest
on the scent-of-the-sea of sensuality.

A bracing sea. Roman walls. Any and all music.
The hallway recalls a rope stretched between
the Pyrenees, the windows between Greek faces.
Windows that smell of the air outside,
of the air's marriage to the ardent house.

I reached the door gleaming.
I interrupt the family objects, I throw open
the door.
I switch on the lights, switching everything around,
the new landscapes are lucid, light
is a clear painting, I remember more clearly:
a door, an armoire, that house.

A green, oval-shaped mirror
seems to be a tin bulging
with a shark writhing in its stomach,
its liver, its kidneys, its bloody tissues.

It's the house of the world:
it's here, it disappears.



Magnolia

Exaltation of the minimal
and the magnificent lightning
of the master event
restore to me my form
my splendor.

A tiny crib cradles me
where the word elides
into matter – into metaphor –
as needed, lightly, wherever
it echoes and slides.

Magnolia,
the sound that swells in it
when pronounced,
is an exalted fragrance
lost in the storm,

a magnificent minimal entity
shedding on me
its leaves of lightning.

The Poem Teaches the Art of Falling

The poem teaches the art of falling
on various kinds of ground
from losing the sudden earth under our feet
as when a love collapses
and we lose our wits, to confronting
the promontory where the earth drops away
and the teeming absence overwhelms

to touching down after
a slowly sensuous fall,
our face reaching the ground
in a subtle delicate curve
a bow to no one particular
or to us in particular a posthumous
homage.

Head in an Ambulance

There are cyclical wounds furious flights
inside rounded air sacs
wounds that are thought of at night
and break out in the morning

or that open up at night
and in the morning are thought of
along with the other thoughts
our organs are adept
at inventing like bandages

compresses helmets
sacraments
for securing the head
when it breaks away from us

when it's able to sense us
in a syncope or naked exposure
or in a more spacious error
or in a quieter letter
or in the torture chamber
in the dark chamber, of childhood.





from: TERRA IMÓVEL, 1964
[Unmovable Earth]

The Debt

Alive in the dagger's instantaneous lip
in the daily arrested hour

The debts grow they're already rough
they hurt the skin they're already pus

The day starts out from shadows
as a people starts from dust
Hour after hour light and death coincide

The debt spreads it spreads its wings
it seizes my weak dreams everything tempts it

Behind the gesture I make
my hand is alone my fingers conspire
asymmetrically
sticking out from my body until death

I'd give them away today if I could
But what weapon can separate them from me?

While I'm thinking
the debt keeps growing

Houses

I

The houses came at night
In the morning they're houses
At night they stretch their arms upward
and give off smoke all ready to depart

They close their eyes
they travel great distances
like clouds or ships

Houses flow at night
under the rivers' tides

They are far more docile
than children
Closed up inside their plaster
they ponder

They try to speak very clearly
in the silence
with their voice of slanting rooftiles

II

She vowed to be a virgin all her life
She lowered the blinds over her eyes
she fed on spiders
dampness
slanting rays of sunlight

When touched she wanted to flee
if a door was opened
she concealed her sex

She caved in under a summer spasm
all wet from a masculine sun

V

Crazy as the house on the corner was
she took in people at any time of day

She was falling all apart and
just think of it invited whores
rats storks nests train whistles
drunks and pianos
as well as all the voices of wild animals





from: A LUME, 1989
[Light]

Waking up on the Street of the World

early morning. footsteps of people going out
with a definite destination or indefinitely stumbling
the sound falling in my room and then
the light. no one knows what goes on
in this world. what day is today?
the bell solidly tolls the hour. the pigeons
smooth their feathers. the dust falls in my room.

a pipe burst open next to the sidewalk
a dead pigeon was swept away in the torrent
along with the pages of an old newspaper.
the slope rules
a car went under
double doors close
our yolk in the egg of sleep.

horns and sirens. it's still not clear
via satellite just what happened. the alarm
of the jewelry shop went haywire. hanging sheets
fan the buildings. pigeons peck

the glaze on the tiles. those who woke up have come
to the window. the alarm won't quit. the blood
seethes. the precious image via satellite didn't arrive the vcr
recorded nothing

and from a flower-pot on a balcony a drop of water
falls and lands on the bank teller's suit



Henry Moore's Women in the Gardens

The smell of rain has infected the gardens
Henry Moore's women inhale the air.

And you, son, take aim at me, camouflaged
in the cavernous whiteness of those beings.
"Dead!, you're dead!" you exult.

Among the magic projectiles adrift
– now chrysalises now arks in the flood –
they ask in their calm bodies for peace
with the earth, its furrows, its grass.

Are these our ships returning to the soil?



translated from the Portuguese by Richard Zenith