

BACHIANAS

Gloria Gervitz + Sarah Roth

he opened thing explodes. Give me re
e newborn. Give me refuge in this bur
this silence. Open me like a furrow. I
y tremor is a sacred begging? Green
loan. Thick vigil. Root. Thought of the 1

Is fear, perhaps, the highest? |

The poetess sits in a garden, writing into an accordion-bound notebook. It is night. It is a still night. Black willows and cottonwoods press against the walls of the garden, leaves of skin gleaming flatly in moonlight. As the poetess writes, furrows demarcate the skin of her back, thin and deep and curved, as if drawn by the filed tips of fingernails.

SURCOS

Mother of God! Our Lady!
the heart
is an unruly master.

-William Carlos Williams

1

lo abierto estalla
refúgiame en lo tierno
en lo que está naciéndose
en este balbuceo
el aire casi agua
de este silencio
ábreme como un surco
ya casi no tiemblo
¿o es que el temblor se hizo ruego?
el verde negro
y el deseo
pulpa de sueño
gemido
espesa vigilia
raíz
pensamiento de la noche
¿acaso es el miedo
el altísimo?

FURROWS

Mother of God! Our Lady!
the heart
is an unruly master.

-William Carlos Williams

1

the bursting open
refuge me in tenderness
in that which is born
in this burbling
the air nearly water
of this silence
open me like a furrow
I barely tremble—
or is my tremor a sacred begging?
green black
and desire
dream pulp
moan
thick vigil
pansy
thought of the night
root
is fear perhaps
the highest?

wer, between me and myself, in that calm Jan
Always more... guest. In the transparency, brow
: Plea pit. Dislocation in this yellow

The poetess is an incantress. *The opened thing explodes*, the poetess writes, and a crocus bursts into flame beside her, spitting ash onto the poetess' slipper. The grooves traced along the poetess' back weep, yet do not stain the poetess' dress. The poetess must write in her own blood in order to incant effectively.

2

y baja

entre mí
y yo misma

en aquel enero calmo
en su declive

más siempre
huésped

en la transparencia
pardas nubes como un rezo

súplica tajo
dislocamiento

en este paisaje amarillo

2

and lower

between me
and myself

in that calm January
in its decline

always more
guest

in the transparency
brown clouds like a prayer

plea pit
dislocation

in this yellow landscape

n that hole, in that **meat mirror**, on
where I lie in solitude. And lower—to w
t arches. It swings. Yet the fall most
his **meat**. And the avid **corpse** dares
e.

Refuge me in tenderness, the poetess writes.
Her back weeps, and a tendril shoots from
the ground to ensnare one of her forearms.
The vine's edges are smooth and poisonous.
The poetess smiles. *Refuge me in this
bubbling*, she writes, *the air nearly water*,
she writes, *of this silence*.

3

ahí en ese agujero **flesh**
en ese espejo de la carne **meat**

en esos bordes donde yazgo
en lo sola

y baja
hasta donde duele

se arquea
se cimbra

ya la caída
más colmada

abre esta carne

y el cuerpo
ávido

no se atreve a renunciar

3

there in that hole
in that mirror of **flesh**
borders
in those edges where I lie
in solitude

and lower
to where it hurts

it arches
it swings

yet the fall
most sated

opens this **flesh**
meat

and the avid
body
corpse

dares not to renounce

6

will feel pain. The pain
leads. Like a raised fist. S
ning orphan. Like a kap
Her blacked-out passion

What magic, the poetess thinks. What fateful
eloquence, the poetess thinks. My ink is
everywhere, the poetess thinks.

A garden of my very own poison.

4

The pain will be in pain
Will burn

Like a stain spreads
Like a raised fist

Burning until the very last moaning
orphan

Like a kapok tree

She pain
She blacked-out passion

4

Eat the pain
Burn

Like a stain spreads
Like a raised fist

Burning itself until the last orphan,
moaning

Like a kapok tree

Pained
Blacked-out passion

the hurt will hurt
will smolder

like a stain spreads
like a raised fist

smoldering until the last moaning
orphan

like a kapok tree

the pained woman
the blacked-out passion

4

duélase el dolor
árdase

como una mancha se extiende
como un puño levantado

ardiéndose hasta lo más huérfano
gimiéndose

como una ceiba

la dolorosa
la desmayada pasión

the abyss of heights, swallows
in your weight, these words. The
eye, and the body gives.

The poetess' eyelids are leaden. Vines shoot from the soil to enwrap her elbows and shoulders. The poetess shakes with desire. Or maybe with piety. Green is desire, she thinks. Black is piety, she thinks. *Thick vigil*, she writes. Dulcet pain, a sweet flaying.

5

From the abyss of heights,
swallows fall as stones.

Beneath your weight,
these words:

The hand sinks into the gaze,
and the body cedes.

5

from the abyss of heights
swallows drop like stones

beneath your weight
these words

the hand submerges in the gaze
and the body gives

5

desde el abismo de las alturas
las golondrinas caen como piedras

bajo tu peso
estas palabras

la mano se hunde en lo mirado
y el cuerpo cede

one knows nothing—not even to flee from the unknown
isolation of opened solitude, in the violence of stillness.
ing that meat, trembling in that meat. The trembling for
ord attends. And it demands. It suffers, in that, her demand

Even if she has nothing more to say.

The poetess etches the sky above. *Abyss*, in white threads. *Gaze*, in twisted white stitches. From tangled words, wingless birds fall, heavy as rocks. Swallows' raw bodies accumulate on the garden floor, muffling the sounds of footsteps and an echoed voice.

6

y uno no sabe nada
ni siquiera huir de ese no saber

uno está en lo solo de lo abierto sola
en la violencia de la quietud

los dedos abriendo esa carne
temblándose en esa carne

el temblor se repliega
y la palabra acude

y se exige

se padece
en esa su exigencia

aunque no tenga ya nada que decir
nada más que decir

6

and one knows nothing
not even to flee from the unknown

that of not knowing

one is in the isolation of opened solitude
in the violence of stillness

fingers opening that flesh
trembling in that flesh

the tremor folds
and the word attends

and it demands

it suffers
in that: her demand

even if she has nothing more to say
nothing more to say

m whence comes the gift? Monotonous
ls. Ripping wingbeats. Chips. Spl
rything swelled below the skin.

A catamaran floats southwards, from gulf to
ocean. The vessel is propelled by sighs. The
poetess rests her ankles on the boom.

Billowing, a sail of skin.

Drifting, a crew of angels.

drifting

...is the shipwreck then a harvest, does
tempest carry the grain for thee?

G.M. Hopkins

drifting

...is the shipwreck then a harvest, does
tempest carry the grain for thee?

G.M. Hopkins

from what release, the offering?

petals of water

peals monotonous

wingbeats

ripping

¿desde qué desprendimiento la ofrenda?

pétalos de agua

monótonos

aleteos

desgajando

splinters

chips

and all that swelling under the skin

astillas

y todo ese oleaje bajo la piel

am water, descending. Trembling—below
punching—below. Opening and hurrying. Syllal
lightning. Before June, before the rains, *saudade*.

In the galley, an angel of water droplets grasps
for language. On the deck, an angel of longing
grasps for matter.

The poetess writes into her
accordion-bound notebook, *before the rains*,
and the poetess' back grooves. The angel of
water droplets dissipates. The poetess looks to
the sky. It is opening.

he rain is an initiation, like drinking her
leaving her doing. Watching her doing.
outing pastures, water interrupts, near to th
he rapid fall, in disarray, flows.

Rainfall tastes of hemlock. The poetess
opens her mouth, licking the points of her
teeth, licking her wounds.

The horizon sighs, pulling the
catamaran towards Disarray. The black sun
burns against the shadow of the moon.

llueve

es una iniciación

como si hubiera bebido cicuta

la deja hacer
la mira hacer

en sus parajes de grito

el agua irrumpe

cerca del sollozo

la caída irrumpe

en desbandada

fluye

it rains

it is an initiation

like drinking hemlock

it leaves her doing
it watches her doing

in her shouting wilderness

water breaks

near sob

the fall breaks

in disarray

flowing

as if she had drunk poison

pastures

interrupt

and the body opens itself, offers itself. In the d
underbelly, your fingers are fast and merci
ings doubling over. Docile **corpse**. Broken t
anch. Friesian smell. A tumbling over the cli
ge from the deepest. I am breaking **calyx**.

The black sun sets into velvet. At the
horizon, ghost limbs unfold like sepals.

Angels gather on deck, coalescing in
pearls at the railings. Through their veil, the
poetess traces memory: falling.

Blood like nectar. Scattering petals.
Beneath, the stubborn seedling.

y el cuerpo se abre
se ofrece

en lo vulnerable oscuro del desamparo

tus dedos rápidos misericordiosos

las piernas doblándose

el cuerpo dócil

desprendida rama

olor a frisias

un desbarrancarse

desde lo más hondo

me estoy rompiendo

cáliz

and the body opens
offers

in the vulnerable helpless dark
is offered

your fingers fast and merciful

legs folding

the docile body

detached limb

Friesian smell

a falling over the precipice

from the depths

I am breaking

chalice

nyself. A pure flight. I
. Unmeasurable corpse

Disarray is a precipice. As the catamaran sails closer and closer, the remaining angels dissolve, bent over the railing, leaving strands of memory in their wakes. The poetess climbs the sail. Reaching the top, she writes one word into her accordion-bound notebook:

nadie ni yo misma
un puro vuelo

seco el fluír

las flores dique

el cuerpo inmensurable

nobody not even myself
a pure flight

flowing dry

the dam flowers

the immeasurable body

aid: You've ripped my
My clothes are shadows
re the shadowiest. You
me. Yet I am the one
; boundaries.

y dijo

no tengo más corazón que el que tú rasgas
oscuras son mis ropas
y tú más oscuro que nunca
me desbordas
pero soy yo la que cruza los límites

and she said

I have no more heart than the one you rip
dark are my clothes
and you, darker than ever
you surpass me
yet I am she who crosses the limits