

# TRANSLATION OF CECÍLIA MEIRELES' *ELEGIA* WITH COMMENTARY



CECÍLIA MEIRELES

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**Abstract:** "Elegia" is a poem written by Cecília Meireles laden with sentiment. From its dedication (In memory of Jacinta Garcia Benevides, my grandmother) it is clear that the reader is entering into a land of nostalgia and 'saudades' (an untranslatable word). In this poem Meireles allies the sadness and pain over the loss of her grandmother to feelings of nature and beauty derived from the memories with her grandmother in which she was taught to contemplate and love all things. This translation with commentary hopes to show how the translator of the poem was able to render Cecília Meireles's "Elegia" into the English language and to create a translation that on one hand stands alone in the target language and culture and on the other allows the reader to get the same feel for Meireles's poetry in English as they do in Portuguese.

**Keywords:** Cecília Meireles; Elegy; poetry translation; translation with commentary.

**Resumo:** "Elegia" é um poema de Cecília Meireles carregado de sentimento. Já em sua dedicatória (À memória de Jacinta Garcia Benevides, Minha avó) fica claro que o leitor está a ponto de adentrar uma terra de nostalgia e 'saudades' (palavra intraduzível). No poema, Meireles alia a tristeza e a dor pela perda de sua avó a sentimentos relacionados à natureza e à beleza, derivados das memórias com ela a partir das quais aprendeu a contemplar e amar todas as coisas. Esta tradução comentada espera revelar como o tradutor da "Elegia" conseguiu vertê-la para a língua inglesa e criar uma versão que, por um lado, se mantém de pé por si mesma na língua e cultura alvo, e, por outro, permite ao leitor ter o mesmo tato e sentimento em inglês pela poesia de Meireles como os têm os leitores em português.

**Palavras-chave:** Cecília Meireles; Elegia; tradução de poesia; tradução comentada.

The lowly life of a translator is often burdened with self doubt, criticism and the incessant need to prove a point, no more so than in the realms of translation of poetry. Words cited by the greats (Robert Frost, ‘poetry is what gets lost in translation’; Umberto Eco, ‘translation is the art of failure’) cast shadows on the task at hand, and this internal worrying sometimes completely overshadows the real objective of translating poetry.

Translation is the art of revelation, it makes the unknown known. It is the ability to recognise, re-create and reveal the work of the other artist. Unfortunately the idea of perfection has too often found its way into critical debate about the translation of poetry, and one tends to forget that perfection in translation is inconceivable. Further still, I believe that perfection has no home in translation, just as it has no home in any subjective land.

The real objective is not to try and achieve perfection, for this is a futile and counterproductive act, but to try and achieve in the target language what the poet has done in the source language. In its simplest terms, that is what the translation of poetry is. Certainly there are numerous layers to weave through, layers that intertwine and get tangled up in the process, but these layers are embodied in the aim of the translator. And when a translator creates poems that ‘stand on their own as poems in the target culture’ (Attwater, 124) then it is evident that the numerous layers (rhyme, rhythm, syntax, cultural context, tone, style, semantics) have been dealt with in a competent and sensitive manner, and the translator therefore, has crossed boundaries and broken barriers to make to the public the unknown known.

The appreciation of the translation of poetry, similarly to the appreciation of poetry, is hugely subjective. That is why in recent years, although the process has been dealt with by Holz-Manttari, Neubert and Gabrián since 1984, the idea of commentated translation has grown in popularity considerably. In academic circles it has become increasingly widespread and sought after, and also gives to the reader an extra dimension to ponder upon in terms of the translation that they read. It is, in short, a focus on the *process* and not the *product*. This does not mean however that it takes the significance from the product; in fact it acts as a complimentary component. I firmly believe that it also helps the translator just as much as it aids the reader for it forces the translator to question their choices thoroughly and TAP’s (Thinking Aloud Protocols) do not suffice in the justification of the decisions made, instead they act as a platform to jump from.

Álvarez, in her essay *Evaluating Students’ Translation Process in Specialised Translation: Translation Commentary* lays out a set of guidelines that should be followed when translating a text. These guidelines are used for the process and for the commentary. Of course, these guidelines are for the general spectrum of translation and not specific for the translations of poetry, but nonetheless one can use this article as a starting point for thinking about translation with commentary in relation to poetry. I hope to show, through my commentary, how I was able to translate Cecília Meireles’s *Elegia* to the English language, and although perfection is unreachable, I do feel that the translation stands alone in the target language and culture and that a reader gets the same feel for Meireles’s poetry in the English language as they do in the Portuguese language.

*Elegia* is a poem laden with sentiment and from the dedication it is clear to see that the reader is entering into a land of nostalgia and 'saudades' (an untranslatable word). In this poem, written in memory of her grandmother, Meireles allies the sadness and pain over the loss of her grandmother to feelings of nature and beauty derived from the memories with her grandmother in which she was taught to contemplate and love all things.

The poem itself is written in eight parts, and each part confronts an emptiness in what Meireles envisions of the world and yet it is in this emptiness that she is able to remember her grandmother. The poet 'moulds' images of nature with the death and life of her grandmother, binding them eternally. It is in this harmony of images that the poignancy is conveyed.

*No dia seguinte, estavas imóvel, na tua forma definitiva,  
modelada pela noite, pelas estrelas, pelas minhas mãos.*

It is images like this that anchor the poem and that were crucial to translate with the same sentiment and emotion, while all the time maintaining the rhythm of the poem that grows almost unnoticed.

*The next day, you were motionless, in your definitive form,  
Moulded by the night, by the stars, by my hands.*

The rhythm, assonance and alliteration grow slowly within the poem, almost invisibly, but the repetition of certain words and images are heavy and hard and hit home with such a force that it is hard to stay standing under the weight of the loss that the poet instills. It also created many problems in the translation as Meireles chose the word 'inútil' to repeat in order to create this sense of loss and emptiness in the first two parts of the poem, and in each context it is the perfect word and sits effortlessly in the image she creates. Unfortunately in English this word does not fit each context quite so well. It could be translated, depending on the context, as: worthless, useless, futile, unnecessary, needless or hopeless. But it is precisely in the repetition of 'inútil' that this poignancy and hopelessness is created.

In the first part, the last line is:

*Mas também isso foi inútil, como tudo mais.*

And the translation of the word I chose was 'useless', and in this example the word suits the context:

*But this too was useless, like everything else.*

The second stanza of the second part starts with:

*Mas tudo é inútil,*

and it is here that the repetition starts its heavy hold on the heart of the reader, and it is here that I realised that to continue without this repetition would seriously harm the reading of the poem and that is why I chose again 'useless'. Although in this context and the ones to follow I do not think it is the best word in an isolated reading of the stanza, I think that the overall repetition of the word creates the poi-

gnancy and emptiness that Meireles intended. It is even more effective because of the wonderfully detailed images in between the repetitions. The poem itself grows and is layered by these images, only to be confronted with the same sentiment:

*But everything is useless*

In the third part Meireles exquisitely binds nature, memory and grief in five stanzas that are bursting with sentiment and emotion. Although there are no outright rhymes in this part, each stanza is littered with half rhymes along with alliteration and assonance that gives a fluidity to Meirele's sadness:

*Minha tristeza é não poder mostrar-te as nuvens brancas,  
e as flores novas como aroma em brasa,  
com as coroas crepitantes de abelhas.*

The repetition of the soft 'a' sound in Portuguese along with the alliteration of 'c' in the last line creates a musical quality to the stanza, and enforces a balladic strength to the sentiment:

*My sadness is not being able to show you the white clouds,  
and the new flowers of ember aroma,  
and the crackling crowns of bees.*

The English counterpart, although changed slightly, still embodies this assonance, but not only of the 'a' sound but of 'o' and 'a', and the final line retains the plosive 'c' sound from the original. All the while the emptiness is growing through these images. Meireles manages to close the gap between her grandmother and nature in this part by delivering a rare and mystical image of her grandmother taking the moon in her hands, making her an almost godlike figure:

*Tomarias o luar nas tuas mãos,  
fortes e simples como as pedras,  
e dirias apenas: "Como vem tão clarinho!"*

In the English translation, I changed the wording of the last quoted line, as the direct translation, without this ability to use 'inho' in English, lost a sense of affection. I was, however, able to create a strong driving alliteration that gives the English stanza a soft, and whispery tone due to the smooth sound of the 's':

*You would take the moon in your hands,  
strong and simple like stone,  
and simply say: 'how come so pale!'*

The fifth part opens with an image of the grandmother's grave. This gives a harsh contrast to the previous marvellous images of the poem and yet manages to further the link between the grandmother and nature. Even the language and tone changes somewhat here and becomes more direct and simple:

*Um jardineiro desconhecido se ocupará da simetria  
desse pequeno mundo em que estás.*

In the English translation, although the rhythm and assonance of the words that end in 'o' are lost, a half rhyme is gained at the end of the two lines creating the same sense of rhythm and metre in the Portuguese original:

*An unknown gardener will look after the symmetry  
of this small world in which you stay.*

The rest of this fifth part creates the parallels of death and the grave with the images that the grandmother once loved: the sea and fruit and flowers. The poet's own sadness once again enters as the three main themes are newly presented:

*Mas a mim – se te chamar, se chorar – não me ouvirás  
por mais perto que venha, não sou mais que uma sombra  
caminhando em redor de uma fortaleza.*

*As for me- if I call you, if I cry- you won't hear,  
no matter how close I get, I am only a mere shadow  
wandering within a fortress.*

These images poignantly convey the unending space that now inhibits the world of the poet and her grandmother; it is more poignant still because no matter how much the poet remembers her grandmother, no matter how much she is alive within the nature that surrounds the poet's life, she is still unreachable, untouchable. In this stanza I had to work with the syllable count in order it to have the same falling rhythm as the original. Of course, in Portuguese poetry the syllable count is often two or three more than the English counterpart, and I tried to keep the same amount of syllables, but when I did this the last line sounded unruly, and gave the sense of an enjambed line, as if the stanza would continue. In order to create the finality of the stanza I needed to change the syllable count of the last line to eight syllables (almost iambic pentameter) to create the finality of the image.

The seventh part is undoubtedly one of the most poignant, and does not stray from the previous themes but instead it looks upon these themes from a different perspective. The poet starts to see nature differently because of the loss of her grandmother; it is no longer the same and can never be what it was. In this part, similarly to the second and third parts, Meireles uses the heavy repetition of words to reinforce and solidify the sentiment she feels. In the Portuguese original it is the verb 'faltar' that is repeated, and in the English translation I chose to change this to a noun for two reasons: the verb equivalent in English is weaker and does not weigh the same, and also by using the noun 'absence' I was able to further a repetition and strengthen an image from the original.

*faltam os teus dois braços numa janela, sobre flores,  
It is the absence of your two arms in a window, over flowers,*

*Faltam teus olhos com ilhas, mares, viagens, povos,  
It is the absence of your eyes with islands, seas, adventures, races,*

*Ah, falta o silêncio que estava entre nós,  
Oh! The absence of silence that hung between us,*

*Tudo em ti era uma ausência que se demorava:  
 uma despedida pronta a cumprir-se.  
 Everything about you was a delayed absence:  
 a parting ready to be fulfilled.*

The examples above are taken chronologically from the seventh part, and in the last example I was able to repeat ‘absence’ whereas the words differed in Portuguese: ‘Falta’ and ‘ausência’. By using the repetition of ‘it is the absence’ I was forced to play a little with the line breaks and the syllable count, because in the original two syllables were used with the verb ‘faltar’ but in the English counterpart I had to use five syllables in order to create this sense of repetition.

The eighth and final part to the poem is an attempt at rejoicing, yet in the end it is the overwhelming absence that still overshadows the poem. There is an imbalance of emotion created through the imagery: the grief still outweighs the joy. Meireles tries to let go, and it is in this struggle that the sense of isolation seeps through. There were many challenging moments in the translation of this final part, but none were more evident than in the creation of this juxtaposition of emotions. Below is one such synecdoche.

*E hoje era o teu dia de festa  
 Meu presente é buscar-te:  
 Não para vires comigo:  
 para te encontrares com os que, antes de mim,  
 vieste buscar, outrora.  
 Com menos palavras, apenas.  
 Com o mesmo número de lágrimas.  
 Foi lição tua chorar pouco,  
 para sofrer mais.*

This stanza, like so many in this poem, build upon an emotion, with the final line the one to really hit home. In this stanza the pace slows heavily, and it is almost like the footsteps of the griever behind a hearse. The commas, colons, full stops, and short weighty syllables give the stanza a trudging effect.

*And today was your feast day!  
 My gift is to find you.  
 Not so you return with me:  
 but so you find those who once, before me,  
 came to take you.  
 With less words, only.  
 With the same number of tears.  
 It was your example to cry little,  
 and to suffer more.*

I kept the same punctuation in the English translation and was able to maintain a very similar dispersion of syllables, and only in the last line did I make any change, and that is only because the ‘para’ in the original is a discourse marker of purpose: the grandmother cried little in order to suffer more. Unfortunately, the use of this discourse marker, ‘in order to’, sounded extremely heavy-handed and out-of-place in the poem, and just ‘to’ was not strong enough to give the same idea, so instead, to maintain the rhythm and the sentiment I had to settle for ‘and to’.

Elegia is not only a poetic masterpiece in terms of its technique, growth and delivery, but is also an epic in the way that it is able to maintain such emotion while all the while embodying three reoccurring themes. As I said at the start of this essay, perfection was never an objective, but when I set out to translate such a poem of raw sentiment, it was to give the reader the same sense of loss, love and bewilderment that Meireles gives her reader, while also capturing the same realms of beauty, nature and wonder.

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*Elegia*

*À memória de  
Jacinta Garcia Benevides  
Minha avó*

1<sup>a</sup>

Minha primeira lágrima caiu dentro dos teus olhos.  
Tive medo de a enxugar: para não saberes que havia caído.

No dia seguinte, estavas imóvel, na tua forma definitiva,  
modelada pela noite, pelas estrelas, pelas, minhas mãos.

Exalava-se de ti o mesmo frio do orvalho; a mesma claridade da lua.

Vi aquele dia levantar-se inutilmente para as tuas pálpebras, e a voz dos pássaros e das águas correr -sem que a recolhessem teus ouvidos inertes.

Onde ficou teu outro corpo? Na parede? Nos imóveis?  
no teto?

Inclinei-me sobre o teu rosto, absoluta, como um espelho,  
E tristemente te procurava.

Mas também isso foi inútil, como tudo mais.

2<sup>a</sup>

Neste mês, as cigarras cantam  
e os trovões caminham por cima da terra,  
agarrados ao sol.  
Neste mês, ao cair da tarde, a chuva corre pelas montanhas,  
e depois a noite é mais clara,  
e o canto dos grilos faz palpitar o cheiro molhado do chão.

Mas tudo é inútil,  
porque os teus ouvidos estão como conchas vazias,  
e a tua narina imóvel  
não recebe mais notícia  
do mundo que circula no vento.

Neste mês, sobre as frutas maduras cai o beijo áspero  
das vespas...  
-e o arrulho dos pássaros encrespa a sombra,  
como água que borbulha.

*Elegy*

*In memory of  
Jacinta Garcia Benevides  
My grandmother.*

1

My first tear fell inside your eyes.  
I was afraid of it drying up: for you to not know it had ever fallen.

The next day, you were motionless, in your definitive form,  
Moulded by the night, by the stars, by my hands.

I exhaled the same cold dew as you, the same clarity of the moon.

Saw that unnecessary day rise up  
to your eyelids, and the birds' voices and the flowing waters  
- uncollected by the stillness of your ears.

Where did you keep your other body? The wall?  
The furniture? In the ceiling?

I leaned over your face, absolute, like a mirror,  
And I searched for you, ever-so sadly.

But this too was useless, like everything else.

2

This month, the grasshoppers chirp  
and thunder strolls upon the earth,  
clinging to the sun.  
This month, when the afternoon breaks, the rain flows by mountains,  
and then the night is clear,  
and the crickets' chirping resonates the wet smell of earth.

But everything is useless,  
because your ears are like empty shells,  
and your still nostril  
cannot breathe the world's  
story whispered by the wind.

This month, wasps' rough kisses fall on ripe fruit...  
- and the birds' cooing ripples the shade,  
like bubbling water.

Neste mês, abrem-se cravos de perfume profundo e obscuro;  
a areia queima, branca e seca,  
junto ao mar lampejante;  
de cada fronte desce uma lágrima de calor.

This month, the carnations open their obscure, profound smell; the sand burns, white and dry, with the flashing sea:  
each brow trickles a tear of heat.

Mas tudo é inútil,  
porque estás encostada à terra fresca,  
e os teus olhos não buscam mais lugares  
nesta paisagem luminosa,  
e as tuas mãos não se arredondam já  
para a colheita nem para a carícia.  
Neste mês, começa o ano, de novo,  
e eu queria abraçar-te.  
Mas tudo é inútil:  
eu e tu sabemos que é inútil que o ano comece.

But everything is useless,  
because you are leaning on fresh earth,  
and your eyes no longer search for new places  
in this clear passage,  
and your hands no longer hold  
for the harvest nor for the caress.  
This month, the year starts, again,  
and I would like to embrace you.  
But everything is useless:  
you and I both know it is useless for the year to start.

3<sup>a</sup>

3

Minha tristeza é não poder mostrar-te as nuvens brancas,  
e as flores novas como aroma em brasa,  
com as coroas crepitantes de abelhas.

My sadness is not being able to show you the white clouds,  
and the new flowers of ember aroma,  
and the crackling crowns of bees.

Teus olhos sorririam,  
agradecendo a Deus o céu e a terra:  
eu sentiria teu coração feliz  
como um campo onde choveu.

Your eyes would smile,  
thanking God for the earth and sky:  
I would feel your happy heart  
like a meadow amongst the rain.

Minha tristeza é não poder acompanhar contigo  
o desenho das pombas voantes,  
o destino dos trens pelas montanhas,  
e o brilho tênue de cada estrela  
brotando à margem do crepúsculo.

My sadness is not being able to share with you,  
the outline of flying pigeons,  
the destination of trains on the mountains,  
and the airy shine of each star  
blossoming dusk's margin.

Tomarias o luar nas tuas mãos,  
fortes e simples como as pedras,  
e dirias apenas: "Como vem tão clarinho!"

You would take the moon in your hands,  
strong and simple like stone,  
and simply say: 'how come so pale!'

E nesse luar das tuas mãos se banharia a minha vida,  
sem perturbar sua claridade,  
mas também sem diminuir minha tristeza.

And your moon hands would bathe my life,  
without upsetting its clarity,  
and without diminishing my sadness.

4<sup>o</sup>

4

Escuto a chuva batendo nas folhas, pingo a pingo.  
Mas há um caminho de sol entre as nuvens escuras.  
E as cigarras sobre as resinas continuam cantando.

I listen to the rain beating against leaves, drop by drop.  
But there is a streak of sun amongst the dark clouds.  
And the grasshoppers continue singing.

Tu percorrias o céu com teus olhos nevoentos,  
e calcularias o sol de amanhã,  
e a sorte oculta de cada planta.

You would wander the sky with foggy eyes,  
and calculate tomorrow's sun,  
with luck concealed in every plant.

É amanhã descerias toda coberta de branco,  
brilharias à luz como o sal e a cânfora,  
tomarias na mão os frutos do limoeiro, tão verdes,  
e entre o veludo da vinha, verias armar-se o cristal  
dos bagos.

E olharias o sol subindo ao céu com asas de fogo.  
Tuas mãos e a terra secariam bruscamente.  
Em teu rosto, como no chão,  
haveria flores vermelhas abertas.

Dentro do teu coração, porém, estavam as fontes  
frescas,  
sussurrando.  
E os canteiros viam-te passar  
como a nuvem mais branca do dia.

5<sup>a</sup>

Um jardineiro desconhecido se ocupará da simetria  
desse pequeno mundo em que estás.

Suas mãos vivas caminharão acima das tuas, em  
descanso,  
das tuas que calculavam primaveras e outonos,  
fechadas em sementes e escondidos na flor!

Tua voz sem corpo estará comandando,  
entre terra e água,  
o aconchego das raízes tenras,  
a ordenação das pétalas nascentes.

À margem desta pedra que te cerca,  
o rosto das flores inclinará sua narrativa:  
história dos grandes luareis,  
crescimento e morte dos campos,  
giros e músicas de pássaros,  
arabescos de libélulas roxas e verdes.  
Conversareis longamente,  
em vossa linguagem inviolável.

Os anjos de mármore ficarão para sempre ouvindo:  
que eles também falam em silêncio.

Mas a mim – se te chamar, se chorar – não me ou-  
virás  
por mais perto que venha, não sou mais que uma  
sombra  
caminhando em redor de uma fortaleza.

Queria deixar-te aqui as imagens do mundo que  
amaste:  
o mar com seus peixes e suas barcas;  
os pomares com cestos derramados de frutos;

And tomorrow you'd descend covered in white,  
and brighten the light like salt and camphor,  
Take the fruits of the lemon tree in your hands,  
so green,  
and among the velvet vines arm yourself with  
crystal berries.

And you'd watch the sun stretching into the sky  
with wings of fire.  
The earth and your hands dry quickly.  
In your face, as in the ground,  
would be red, open flowers.

Your heart, however, housed fresh fountains,  
whispering.  
And the rose beds saw you pass  
like the whitest cloud in the sky.

5

An unknown gardener will look after the sym-  
metry  
of this small world in which you stay.

His living hands will pass over yours, at rest,  
yours that calculated springs and autumns,  
closed in seeds and hidden in the flower!

Your bodiless voice will be in command,  
between earth and water,  
the cosiness of the tender roots,  
the arrangement of the spring petals.

Alongside this stone that encloses you,  
the face of flowers will tilt your narrative:  
stories of magnificent moonlight,  
life and death of meadows,  
spins and songs of birds,  
arabesques of green and purple dragonflies.  
You will talk at length,  
in your sacred language.

Angels of marble will forever listen:  
for they also speak in silence.

As for me- if I call you, if I cry- you won't hear,  
no matter how close I get, I am only a mere sha-  
dow  
wandering within a fortress.

I would like to leave you among the images of  
the world you loved:  
the sea with its fish and its ferries;  
orchards and baskets overflowing with fruit;

os jardins de malva e trevo, com seus perfumes  
brancos e vermelhos.

E aquela estrela maior, que a noite levava na mão  
direita.

E o sorriso de uma alegria que eu não tive,  
mas te dava.

6<sup>a</sup>

Tudo cabe aqui dentro:  
vejo tua casa, tuas quintas de fruta,  
as mulas deixando descarregarem seirões repletos,  
e os cães de nomes antigos  
ladrando majestosamente  
para a noite aproximada.

Tange a atafona sobre uma cantiga arcaica:  
e os fusos ainda vão enrolando o fio  
para a camisa, para a toalha, para o lençol.

Nesse fio vai o campo onde o vento saltou.  
Vai o campo onde a noite deixou seu sono orvalha-  
do.  
Vai o sol com suas vestimentas de ouro  
cavalgando esse imenso gavião do céu.

Tudo cabe aqui dentro:  
teu corpo era um espelho pensante do universo.  
E olhavas para essa imagem, clarividente e como-  
vida.

Foi do barco das flores, o teu rosto terreno,  
e uns líquens de noite sem luzes  
se enrolaram em tua cabeça de deusa rústica.

Mas puseram-te numa praia de onde os barcos saí-  
am  
para perderem-se.  
Então, teus braços se abriram,  
querendo levar-te mais longe:  
porque eras a que salvava.  
E ficaste com um pouco de asas.

Teus olhos, porém, mediram a flutuação do cami-  
nho.  
Por isso, tua testa se vincou de alto a baixo,  
e tuas pálpebras meigas  
se cobriram de cinza.

7<sup>a</sup>

O crepúsculo é este sossego do céu  
com suas nuvens paralelas  
e uma última cor penetrando nas árvores  
até os pássaros.

gardens of mallow and clover,  
with white and red perfume.

And the large star that the night held in its right  
hand.

And the smile of happiness that I didn't have,  
but gave to you.

6

Everything fits inside here:  
I see your house, your fruit farms,  
the mules leaving full unloaded carts,  
and the dogs with ancient names  
howling majestically  
for the night to come.

The creak of the mill over the archaic tune:  
and the spindles still spinning thread  
for the shirt, for the towel, for the sheet.

This thread goes to the meadow where the wind  
skipped.  
To the meadow where the night left its dewy  
dream.  
To the sun with its garments of gold  
riding this immense hawk of the sky.

Everything fits inside here:  
your body was a thinking mirror of the universe.  
And you looked at this image, touched and clair-  
voyant.

It was the earth of the flowers, your worldly fa-  
ce,  
and some lichens of the lightless night  
curled up in your head: a rustic goddess.

But they will put you on a beach where the boats  
leave  
to lose themselves.  
Then, your arms open,  
wanting to take you further:  
because you were the one who saved them.  
And you were left with wings.

Your eyes, however, measured the ever-  
changing passage.  
Hence, your creased forehead from high to low,  
and your gentle eyelids  
covered in ashes.

7

The dusk is the sky's silence  
with its parallel clouds  
and the last of colour penetrating the trees  
even the birds.

É esta curva dos pombos, rente aos telhados,  
este cantar de galos e rolas, muito longe;  
e, mais longe, o abrolhar de estrelas brancas,  
ainda sem luz.

Mas não era só isto, o crepúsculo:  
faltam os teus dois braços numa janela, sobre flo-  
res,  
e em tuas mãos o teu rosto,  
aprendendo com as nuvens a sorte das transforma-  
ções.

Faltam teus olhos com ilhas, mares, viagens, po-  
vos,  
tua boca, onde a passagem da vida  
tinha deixado uma doçura triste,  
que dispensava palavras.

Ah, falta o silêncio que estava entre nós,  
e olhava a tarde, também.  
Nele vivia o teu amor por mim,  
obrigatório e secreto.  
Igual à face da Natureza:  
evidente, e sem definição.

Tudo em ti era uma ausência que se demorava:  
uma despedida pronta a cumprir-se.

Sentindo-o, cobria minhas lágrimas com um riso  
doido.  
Agora, tenho medo que não visses  
o que havia por detrás dele.

Aqui está meu rosto verdadeiro,  
defronte do crepúsculo que não alcançaste  
Abre o túmulo, e olha-me:  
dize-me qual de nós morreu mais.

8ª

Hoje! Hoje de sol e bruma,  
com este silencioso calor sobre as pedras e as fo-  
lhas!  
Hoje! sem cigarras nem pássaros.  
Gravemente. Altamente.  
Com flores abafadas pelo caminho,  
entre essas máscaras de bronze e mármore  
eterno rosto da terra.

Hoje.

Quanto tempo passou entre a nossa mútua espera!  
Tu, paciente e inutilizada,  
cantando as horas que te desfaziam.  
Meus olhos repetindo essas tuas horas heróicas,

It is this curve of pigeons, close to the roofs,  
this singing of roosters and doves, far;  
and, farther still, the lightless blossom  
of stars.

But it's not just this, the dusk:  
It is the absence of your two arms in a window,  
over flowers,  
and in your hands your face,  
understanding the luck of transformation with  
the clouds.

It is the absence of your eyes with islands, seas,  
adventures, races,  
your mouth, where the passage of life  
had left a sweet sadness  
that went without words.

Oh! The absence of silence that hung between  
us,  
And that look of the afternoon, too.  
And in that silence lived your love for me,  
binding and secret.  
Equal to the face of Nature:  
evident and defineless.

Everything about you was a delayed absence:  
a parting ready to be fulfilled.

With this feeling I would cover my tears with a  
frantic smile.  
Now, I am afraid that you didn't see  
what was really hidden behind.

Here is my true face,  
in front of the dusk you never reached.  
Open the tomb and see myself:  
tell me which of us died more.

8

Today! Day of sun and mist,  
with this mute heat on stones and leaves!  
Today! Lacking birds and grasshoppers.  
Sorely. Highly.  
With airless flowers along the path,  
among these masks of bronze and marble  
in the eternal face of earth.

Today.

How much time passed between our mutual wai-  
ting!  
You, patient and vacant,  
counting the hours that left you undone.

no brotar e morrer desta última primavera  
que te enfeitou.  
Oh, a montanha de terra que agora vão tirando do  
teu peito!

Alegra-te, que aqui estou,  
fiel, neste encontro,  
como se do modo antigo vivesses  
ou pudesses, com a minha chegada, reviver.

Alegra-te, que já se desprendem em tábuas que te  
fecharam,  
como se desprende o corpo  
em que aprendeste longamente a sofrer.

E, como o áspero ruído da pá cessou neste instante,  
ouve o amplo e difuso rumor da cidade em que  
continuo,  
-tu, que resides no tempo, no tempo unânime!

Ouve-o e relembra  
não as estampas humanas: mas as cores do céu e da  
terra,  
o calor do sol,  
a aceitação das nuvens,  
o grato deslizar das águas doces,  
tudo o que amamos juntas.  
Tudo em que me dispersei como te dispersaste.  
E mais esse perfume de eternidade,  
intocável e secreto,  
que o giro do universo não perturba.

Apenas, não podemos correr, agora,  
uma para a outra.

Não sofras, por não te poderes levantar  
do abismo em que te reclinas:  
não sofras, também,  
se um pouco de choro se debruça nos meus olhos,  
procurando-te.

Não te importes que escute cair,  
no zinco desta humilde caixa,  
teu crânio, tuas vértebras,  
teus ossos todos, um por um...

Pés que caminhavam comigo,  
mãos que me iam levando,  
peito do antigo sono,  
cabeça do olhar e do sorriso...

Não te importes. Não te importes...

Na verdade, tu vens como eu te queria inventar:  
e de braço dado desceremos por entre pedras e flo-

My eyes repeating your heroic hours,  
in the blossoming and perishing of the last spring  
that you graced.  
Oh, the mountain of earth that now is taken from  
your chest.

Rejoice, I am here,  
loyal, in this encounter,  
as if you still lived the old way  
or could, with my arrival, relive.

Rejoice, you are already free of the boards that  
enclose you,  
like your body is free  
from learning of long suffering.

And, as if the rough clatter of the shovel at this  
moment ceased,  
you hear the ample, scattered rumours of the city  
in which I continue,  
-you, that resides in time, in unanimous time.

Hear and remember  
not the human prints: but the colours of the sky  
and earth,  
the heat of the sun,  
the acceptance of clouds,  
the gratitude slide from sweet waters,  
everything we loved together.  
Everything in which I will disperse as you dis-  
persed.  
But with this perfume of eternity,  
untouchable and secret,  
that the turning of the universe cannot disturb.

Only, we can't run, now,  
one to the other

Don't suffer because you cannot rise  
from the abyss in which you rest:  
don't suffer, either,  
if a little weeping weighs upon my eyes,  
while looking for you.

It does not matter what you hear fall,  
in the zinc of this humble box,  
your skull, your vertebrae,  
all your bones, one by one...

Feet that walk with me,  
hands that were going to take me,  
heart of an old dream,  
head of looking and of smiling...

Don't worry. Don't worry...

In fact, you come like I would like to create you:  
and arm in arm we descend between flower and

res.  
Posso levar-te ao colo, também,  
pois na verdade estás mais leve que uma criança.

- Tanta terra deixaste porém sobre o meu peito!  
irás dizendo, sem queixa,  
apenas como recordação.

E eu, como recordação, te direi:  
- Pesaria tanto quanto o coração que tiveste,  
o coração que herdei?

Ah, mas que palavras podem os vivos dizer aos  
mortos?

E hoje era o teu dia de festa  
Meu presente é buscar-te:  
Não para vires comigo:  
para te encontrares com os que, antes de mim,  
vieste buscar, outrora.  
Com menos palavras, apenas.  
Com o mesmo número de lágrimas.  
Foi lição tua chorar pouco,  
para sofrer mais.

Aprendi-a demasiadamente.  
Aqui estamos, hoje.  
Com este dia grave, de sol velado.  
De calor silencioso.  
Todas as estátuas ardendo.  
As folhas, sem um tremor.

Não tens fala, nem movimento nem corpo.  
E eu te reconheço.

Ah, mas a mim, a mim.  
Quem sabe se me poderás reconhecer!

stone.  
I can lift you on my lap, too,  
for you are as light as a child.

-Yet, you left so much earth on my chest!  
you will say, without regret,  
but as a remembrance.

And I, as a remembrance will say:  
-Would the heart you had weigh as much as  
the heart I inherited?

Oh, but what words can the living give to the  
dead?

And today was your feast day!  
My gift is to find you.  
Not so you return with me:  
but so you find those who once, before me,  
came to take you.  
With less words, only.  
With the same number of tears.  
It was your example to cry little,  
and to suffer more.

I learned it too well.  
We are here, today.  
With this grave day of foggy sun.  
Of silent heat.  
All of the statues aglow.  
The leaves, without a tremor.

You have no speech, no movement, no body.  
Yet I recognise you.

Oh, as for me, as for me,  
who knows if you'd recognise me.

*Tradução de:*

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