

## **Esther Pujolràs-Noguer**

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### **Photographer**

I write the light  
and mourn the shadow  
with my dexterous irises –

the feeble mountain range  
that stretches beyond memories,  
the beasts, the dregs, the rocks, the flowers ... –

all yield to my terrible squint.

Sometimes I think it is blindness that moves me;  
an iron-scented will that bends souls  
and re-imagines darkness.

My conquest is infinite and eternal;  
nothing can escape a hollow eye  
moulded by history and legends and sap  
and yet my colonization fails  
with every stroke of colour,  
every mortal breath.

I release my prey  
and anoint your forehead  
with the dew I spared  
morning after morning,  
wishing you were here,  
stepping into the camera,  
cradling the night,  
forgiving my malaise,  
finally dreaming me.

### **Aimless Wanderer**

I dance on the skeletons of history,  
carefully crashing the unwritten landscape  
with my *mzungu* dreams.

A plethora of singeing tunes  
buzz unremittingly in my untrained ears;  
the sounds beat against my temples,  
profane and yet spirit-like.

The sun is not gentle;  
nor is the breeze a welcoming puzzle.  
The air, fragrant with heat, waves its arms  
in unsophisticated lines of poetry:  
a *malenga*-rhythm,  
immune to gravity  
and translation.

I lie on the threshold of wisdom,  
desiring undesirable quests,  
devising tricks to fool  
unchartered memories,  
unanswered pleas,  
unresolved yearnings.  
I think I am willing to faint.

Here, the imagination rests serene,  
placated, miraculously subdued.

### **South**

I think my aroma has always been with you.  
The white and elusive light from the north  
is not what you wanted. I came to you  
with the years in my mouth and the promise  
to love you. The land of fire and madness  
in the palm of my hands, the night that never  
dies in anguish, the crimson lines of lust.  
I call you in my Moorish tale, one rusty letter  
of incense, vaporous and perfumed, disclaimed.  
My heat travels northwards to feed you  
with the hearts of blood and sand. A rain of sighs  
covers the sea with my endless longing while  
a guitar is whispering to your ear  
that the sun has cremated my steps and now I wander  
in fear, in fear of having to kill you, once again.

### **Queen of Hearts**

You don't notice my entrance –  
entranced as you are in my dream.  
A born provocateur,  
I inhabit your bed  
with unusual finesse.  
The lines on your forehead  
surrender to my kisses  
and a desperate sigh  
unfurls, unattended and fresh,  
from your not quite open lips.  
My hands, vivacious and nimble,  
caress that heart you so graciously hide.  
I could so easily extract it – a fissure so clean  
no doctor would ever detect.  
This is an ancient art, this murdering gift,  
this gentle touch, this deadly warmth.  
I could eat you whole and you wouldn't stir a bit,  
so deliciously killed, so disarmingly mine.  
Instead, I leave,  
wet and full,  
the desire of you  
streaming down my legs,  
knowing you will wake up  
insatiate and naked,  
thinking what strange miracle  
the night is.

### **Voyagers**

Our skin flattens like a map  
folded in darkness,  
succinctly tied to your heaving pulse.

Asleep, you let our hands caress your thighs;  
our lips inhale your odour,  
our legs submerge your body  
which, puckered and pained,  
slides towards our bellies  
and sinks.

We are not that strange.  
We only want to blot your tears,  
take you back to she who loves you.

We are not that wicked.  
We only want to tame your chains,  
take you back to she who misses you.

We are not that powerful.  
We only want to embrace your heart,  
take you back to she who mourns you.

Awaken, you let our breath guide you;  
our eyes gulp your mouth,  
our hair engulfs your face  
which, supple and serene,  
melts with the shore  
and vanishes.

Our skin flattens like a map  
folded in daylight,  
sailing languidly on your life.

**Esther Pujolràs Noguera** is a lecturer in American and Postcolonial Literature at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She has also taught poetry as an optional fourth-year subject and her methodology consisted of a combination of literary analysis and creative writing workshops. The poems written by students as a direct outcome of this course have been published online in a book entitled *Poetic Lessons. Poetry In/From the Classroom*. Together with her colleague, Felicity Hand, she has organized creative writing workshops in Kampala, Uganda as therapy for women who have been victims of gender violence. *In/Visible Traumas* gathers some of the most significant writing pieces produced in those creative writing workshops. She writes poetry in both Catalan and English. In the case of English, she won third-prize in the International Poetry Competition organized by the London Centre of Interdisciplinary Research with the poem “Yo, la peor de todas (Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz)”.