

Charenton

Also by Chus Pato:

In Galician:

Urania. Vigo: Calpurnia, 1991.

Heloísa. A Coruña: Espiral Maior, 1994.

Fascinio. Muros: Toxosoutos, S.L., 1995.

A ponte das poldras. Santiago de Compostela: Noitarenga, S.C., 1996.

(2nd edition: Galaxia, 2006).

Nínive. Vigo: Xerais, 1996.

Heloísa. Madrid: La Palma, 1998.

m-Talá. Vigo: Xerais, 2000.

Charenton. Vigo: Xerais, 2004.

In Galician and Spanish:

Un Ganges de palabras (selected poems edited and translated by Iris Cochón, Colección Puerta del mar, CEDMA, Málaga, 2003).

In English:

from *m-Talá* (chapbook trans. Erín Moure, Nomados, Vancouver, 2002)

Also by Erín Moure:

O Cadoiro

Little Theatres

O Ciudadán

A Frame of the Book

Pillage Laud

Search Procedures

The Green Word: Selected Poems 1973-1992

Sheepish Beauty, Civilian Love

WSW (West South West)

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Domestic Fuel

Wanted Alive

Empire, York Street

CHUS P A T O

Charenton

translated by Erin Moure

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to Heriberto Bens

for such beauty to exist you have to imagine a wall [(– this wall, is it high?) (– vast)] of brick with buttresses shoring up its rhythm; in front of it, a green border masks a doorway lost in time. An older poet walks past here each morning, her emotions more or less / like the building, boarded up, abandoned to disintegrate. To her, doubts have the texture of gorges and the pent gasp of mouth-to-mouth, and as for her more or less – poetic? – efforts, she's not sure if she should keep dragging this code through narrow and twisting alpine passes, or if she should persevere or not with the taxing exercises of rescue and shipwreck, if she should just give up all that has been obsession and justification for life.

now she sets soft greenery in front of you (moss) that grows at the rim of sewer covers or in the geometrical quadrangles of flagstones (in fact, there's a sidewalk here). In the middle, the poet, devastated as an architecture (without acanthus, capital, fust, doric) – possibly even the building at 15, B Street in the strangest of towns, in a remote country – was stopped short by a disappearance, by lack of energy, of projects... by the corrosion of years. Later a first field of frost.

the dream is of a remote bombardment. tree roots overgrow
the city's destruction,
it dreams (the tree) this bombardment, remote in time

neither sap nor squirrel grasp what i know: that the forest
flourishes over the rubble of a decimated city

as the tree dreams, so does a heart: in Baghdad-Vietnam, in shell-
pocked Afghan ranges, on the coasts of Galicia, in Hiroshima

i'd point out the highest number of dead, but where does it
end? *the heart of a century*, when did it start to form?
and how and where

it's something of unusual value
in the ample vestibule of the place where i work // it's
stone

no one, not even the best ballerina, can cross the laser barrier
that protects it
not even the most agile girl-contortionist of Tonking or
ancient China

it's granite
you can see it if you look close to the edge where it's laminated
but never through the mantle that coats it
a mantle that writes the century's root, there where the heart
splits into two breasts or two hills

oilTactile, supremacist

from the immense perhercynicalian stones (discontinuous
from Malpica to Tui) out to salicornian coral

loop

the body folds inward to become lake, in the trance hundreds
of faces of the child buddha, in procession, filed through the
bedroom

******though it's not far, someone (male) under the arcades of the
Main Square insists on accompanying me. We move at extreme
speed veering past all sorts of obstacles (Mumbai, Calcutta, in
any case through a non-Western city). We return to the starting
point

it acts as a metaphor for poetic labour, the rhapsodist occupies the
copilot's seat (no one drives the automobile), the mathematical
muse is in the back, protected from the wind by the trunk lid,
she propels the vehicle

dreams leave no contiguous mark on the immediate desire of
the body

an imposing square, abrupt (hemmed in by buildings, medieval or napoleonic), points the way to this main floor where we won't find sarcophagi, just a meticulous and monotonous succession of hyperboreal columns and chaldean arches

a lacunal sky, a bog or basin, metaphorical and elusive, covers this frontpiece of love (or codex) in which it is possible to intuit necromantic facades and towers, along with nuptial flowers and leonine butterflies in that purest Venetian style which a brilliant native bard calls an Amazonia of granite

it sweeps upward in a vertical of igneous intrusion
its pages are of fog, thick fog or smoke, dense smoke
they're born from heat concentrated in the air above the earth's
frigidity or from the combustion of oaks, right where their
trunks are most vulnerable to destruction by stag beetles. All in
all, it's clearer than the night that surrounds it (a thousand ewes
and Karakoul rams), Chernozem, black

a heart centred, a ramification of arteries (...)

1

when i affirm

“they, my ancestors, had a home (idiom, territory), knew
vocables to describe any /all accident of topography”

and i maintain

“i don’t live on the earth as my ancestors did, i don’t know any
names (idiom-territory) other than forest, tree, field of grain”

i’m not making a value judgement, i don’t set myself up in
opposition nor do i consider myself a subject of progress

i say

“they were labourers, tied to the triennial rotation of crops and
before that to the glebe”

i note a discharge of power, a paradigm shift

★★

to codify emigration not simply as an assault on identity [(of
we Galicians) as a people] but also as a negation and search for
freedom (resistance against horrific working conditions and
freedom of new political conditions, conditions of life)

[on the desire for mobility]

explore the following discourses:

the mercantile argument of the modern age, the romantic
subject of the first industrial revolution // the poem-machine
of the avant-gardes (assembly line, taylorism)

value theory in the era of informational accumulation
decide which kinds of individuation and poetic bodies produce
and which scriptural prototypes block these propositions or are
fundamentalist (nostalgic-backwards)

which is to say, link production machines // gradients in the
poem

as this poem 'No Delicacies' by I. Bachmann did with the Cold
War at its point of highest tension

*(...) i have learned meaning
with words
that exist
(for the lowest class)*

*hunger
 dishonour
 tears
 darkness (...)*

(Someone really should. Others should.)

My part, let it be lost.

and it's mind-boggling even by half because it's life and death
and the here and now is the south seas

canterbury-bells clamped shut in awesome sheaths of masculine
protection; so there'll be blossoms, if they snow over the dunes,
water not quite hardened

my feet do it automatically, clench at the cliff-face like a colony
of goose-barnacles

★★

(...) on the other hand i persisted in seeing the reeds in imagist
fashion and approached blackened sands and whiter sands,
dunes and dune grasses, discerned congers seabass and black-
bellied anglers out of the great ocean waters... such obsessed
description... i also feel incredible *reserves of fear*, of bivalves
and crustaceans//of sheer prodigiousness

under a pretentious awning (precarious); musicians from the
steppes, here from the far ends of the globe, played lutes, wind
instruments, portentious keyboards and endless percussion and
above it all, an ecstatic voice... i couldn't drag myself away from
the tent before three, four, five in the morning

now the mountain range is etched in stony clarity, lily light,
rosy sea-light, begins to recede as do the songs, but the cerebral
spinning of the earth or forests hadn't yet begun, the warren of
the deeps hadn't yet touched me... Jekyll hadn't left me either, in
the intoxication of his singular present he talks endlessly to me
under matted August vines tangled up and invaded by night's
dark lightning. Jekyll (my little-death/petite-a in the symbolic
house of language, dissection department, studies in anatomy)

i check on the children napping in their lairs (stuck to the mossy
roots: a small sun, east)

i am the pyramid of Cheops, the temple of Hatshepsut and as
beautiful as Attila
my heart

an exodus from Earth

the vending machine for language-intelligence can push its own
button. Submerged plants tremble (Barbizon school) in the
force of the river. Where batrachia / once thrived

literally, huge deactivated machines fertilize my CsO

my memories don't want immortality

i never listened to Sara-nat, didn't see her / ever. i'm Sara-nat
when rain fills my lungs (the text). And – such pleasure! – the
void

a heart is an infinite of language

inside, it cardio-propels itself [(40-400 stenosphere) crust] like a
drift of continents

i don't know how it will all end and i don't care either but i think
maybe i should look for the final vertex that might lead me to a
different azimuthal projection or Mercator mapping

(the opaque black membrane)