

Sur(rendering)

SAMPLER

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Mario Martín Gijón

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translated from Spanish by
Terence Dooley

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Love Games

Mario Martín Gijón's (*Sur*)*rendering* is a sequence of short passionate lyrics describing a love lost and found. This might sound like nothing new in the history of poetry, but the poet immerses us in his story by a complex process of linguistic recreation: recreation in the sense of re-invention and recreation also as play, or playfulness.

Eduardo Moga explains his method: ‘The poetry of Mario Martín Gijón is characterised by a morphological promiscuity which springs from an intense awareness of the susceptibility of language to experiment. Words become lexical clay in the hands of the poet, or articulated entities into which other words may be telescoped. Words break, unscrew, crumble onto the page like sand. They are like scattered pieces of a mosaic reassembled to form a new puzzle. This is done by the insertion of brackets around letters, slashes allowing a choice between letters, dashes severing or connecting syllables, suffixes or prefixes belonging equally to the words surrounding them. It multiplies the ways in which a phrase can be read, multiplies its potential simultaneous meanings.’ So the poet is able to juggle the memory of pleasure with present suffering, joy and pain in a single verse: (pre/es/ab)sence. Ambiguity striving for synchronicity, the language of love becoming as fraught with contradiction as love itself.

Translating Mario Martín Gijón involves being faithful to his meanings while completely displacing and reconstructing his effects. Words must be found in English (often elsewhere in the poem) capable of the dislocations and relocations, the Russian doll/Rubik cube effect, his method demands. The strange harmony and beauty of his lyric voice must also be reproduced. I hope I have done so.

Terence Dooley

Abrazo: única luz.
De nuestros cuerpos brota.

—Juan Rejano

Abtrünnig erst bin ich treu.

—Paul Celan

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Embrace: single light.
It springs from our bodies.

—Juan Rejano

Apostate only am I true.
—Paul Celan
(trans. John Felstiner)

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I

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I

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origen de la imagen de la gema
de tu rostro
en el sueño
se acercaba cercado de certezas
(es un sueño no es real despertaré)

cernida por el cierzo de esa noche
te alejaste al ritmo de mis párpados

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origin of the image
of the jewel
of your face
in dream
loomed closer closed and definite

(it is a dream it isn't real you woke)

sifted by the north wind of that night
you left to the beat of my eye-lids

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el averno de no ver
te

el callado son de tu son
risa
la gozosa caída de tus pa
sos tan bella

tu labrar mis palabras en silencio
el templado mar de tu mirada con templada
luz
navegando el tiempo de mis ojos

toda esta carencia endurece
los muros de mi in(v/f)ierno

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Avernus, unsoundable pit—

your silent sewing of my words
the temperate sea I

see in your comtemplate
eye

sailing the (h)our of my light

all this without-ness
cementing the walls
of my winter shell

la promesa de me-d(ec)irte hasta tu me
dio
fuerza esperanzada para seguir

apalabmando la labranza
trazando los surcos
de tu cuerpo ausente
repartiendo semilla
en la tierra baldía

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the promise of (as)saying you

s(u/e)rv(ey)ing you gave
me hope and strength to
cont(ai)n(yo)ue
giving my word ploughed
ground
following the furrows
of your abs(c)ent
body
sowing seed
on barren land

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la gota que colma el vaso

necio nací y cie

go

te

án

do

me

a otro día atrabiliario de bilis sin tu sal

iva

a donde nadie ni dioses nada me dieran

otro día de espera y doyme a los diablos

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tap dripping

bad was I born and blind–

ly

go

drib–

bling

down

a drain

to bilious days without
your swe(e/a)t rain

your sal[i]v(e/a)

where no-one no angel
dangle

hopeful dev and I go
to the devil

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soy planta que se seca sin la savia
del sabor sabio de tus besos

mis dedos tallos que se quiebran
sin tu susurro de piel

sin-copa-da
des
prendida

entre las sábanas

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I am a withered plant without
the wise juice of your kiss
my fingers broken stems without
the whisper of your s(y/i)n–
copated skin

depr(i/a)ved
within these sheets

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reloj interno

sanguinaria arena la del tiempo
que cae por mis venas en tu ausencia
saja la aguja la carne de las horas
adversas de mi extraviado reloj
oculto imán orientado hacia ti

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internal clock

the bloodstained sand of time
falls through my veins when you are gone
the hands rip open the flesh
of inimical hours on my lost clock
hidden magnet pointing towards you

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sacrificio sin fe

aterrado de tierra sin tus huellas
caminé hoy por las afueras
de tu nombre

el aire traía un olor a quema-do
lor
enervado sacrificué
en el ara de tu ausencia
de los cielos
¿propiciatorios?

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burnt offering

terrified by terrain untrodden
by you I
wandered through the suburbs
of your name

the irate air
bore embers of scorched pain
weak I sacrificed
on the altar
of your absence
from heaven
in propitiation?

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