Two Poems
Two Poems:

Malvinas & Points of Collapse

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Malvinas
Malvinas is a large fragmentary poem. Sometime after the end of the war the idea of writing about the islands came to me quite clearly. But it wasn’t long before the inevitable doubts crept in. In what way would the poem develop? How would I solve the various problems regarding its form and nature? For example, how could I avoid a patriotic tone, not fall into demagogy, ideological dogma and the like?

All these doubts (in reality, fears, as writing about the Malvinas carries several risks) seemed insoluble.

Then a few years passed with me seeming to have forgotten all about the idea, until around the middle of 2008, by which point all my doubts seemed to have resolved themselves. There was a sense of things having finally come together and the poem suddenly sprang into being.

It consisted of three voices: one anti-epic, one geographic and one subjective. The first encompasses the real and imaginary events of the poem; the second refers to the physical characteristics of the island and the third is that of a soldier-persona who returns to these islands twenty years after the war.

I was interested in this mosaic play, this play of scenes; I was, and remain, interested in the secret relationships that established themselves among the various fragments.

Not to mention the way certain narrative elements irrupted into the text.

M.S.
Malouines Soledad Falklands Borbón
Gran Malvina Trinidad Pelada Sebaldes
San José Bouganville Malvinas No
Malouines No Falklands Goicochea
Del Pasaje No Falklands No Malouines
Malvinas Borbón Soledad No Malouines
San Rafael Pelada Bouganville Malvinas
Gran Malvina Leones Marinos Soledad
San Rafael No Falklands Trinidad Soledad
Sebaldes Malvinas Sebaldes Goicochea
Soledad San Rafael Malvinas Borbón San
Rafael Trinidad Bouganville De los Leones
Marinos Aguila No Malouines Sebaldes
San Rafael No Falklands Goicochea
Malvinas Malvinas Malvinas
DEMOLITIONS: mortars impact upon wounded peat, upon trenches filled with boys smeared with the burning mire of war: sharp claws cut furrows across the small men's faces contorted with fear, touch down upon the terror of a fragmented terra firma, trepanned and smoking beneath the Malvinas sky; this grey and misty sky is created by the ascension of so much useless death, the futility of death erodes the clouds, the rotting steamroller clouds weigh upon the kelpers, upon the Brits, upon the Argies: each one dragging their innocent flesh over the tundra while being gnawed by the bite of an enormous fraud;
the ferocious portrait of the Queen, the dense, solemn granite bulk of the Military Fatherland collapses onto their shoulders, their backs; the marble shroud of sacrifice flattens their stooped silhouettes; the Holy Nation, the Holy Empire sacrifice these men at the altar of Righteousness and of Honour, these bleeding, bruised and bruising lads running zigzag like rabbits through the burning shrapnel tracers.
HE SENSES life when he hears the maddened calls of marine birds amid the crags; when he walks on rivers of stone carpeted with murmurs of water and fossil remains; painful clippings from his past appear reproduced in groups of damp, hermetic tussocks: scattered over the plain, they make this people-less planet visible.

He stops and suddenly realises just how far he was—until that scenic revelation—from the very notion of fulfilment; how remote —rupture of progress, fractured inertia—from that initiating act, from that beat that resembled a spark between the fog and the smoke.

The possibility of a reunion with a past that he wants he wanted to forget arises in the
imaginary shape of a toboggan lying flattened where he slides, where he allows that body and himself to slide; he falls into the superficial depth of his image, towards the recognition of these bushes—“holy, holy,” he murmurs as he caresses them—that seem to form a new instance of his soul.

He spots a clearing in the bushes, a possible oasis of purity, and stoops to make his way through the reed bed, then remains immobile in this space.

The wind is overwhelming, shaking him out of his impassivity; the screeching and rasping of distant sounds, of screams from the past, permeate the air; like metal scraping against a windowpane.
NOTHING REMAINS: the dim certainty of a dawn attack and fingers rhythmically stroking the barrel of a gun; fingers trembling with cold running their filthy calloused flesh over dull metal; dull grey metal caressed by words, gently brushed by murmurs from the mouths of boys; their ferric phonemes in stark relief against the shuddering night air, beneath the luminous zones of the flares.
In the suffering ditches small men exchange rumours under the protection of a shield of mist, safe behind the congealed damp of the islands; disturbances mounds orders retches astride silence, spasms beneath the mortal dome of bravery, of animal honour fleeing the scene by frog hops.
(TO HAVE NOTHING, to desire nothing, to be without before or after, to observe the flux of emotions, of memories, of thoughts; to feel immobile and remain so, without thinking, thinking from the depths of non-thought, to contemplate the maelstrom of events, to let them happen and forget them; to forget everything, to become empty, amnesiac, the gaze focussed beyond seeing and beyond this life that ceases to be a dream, that is not even a dream.)

And the ex-soldier, the ex-man, hears the savage murmur of vegetation rustling in the wind; he sees the marine birds' footprints, their various paths across the stones; he sees the frosty ground, a few drops hanging from
the leaves above the tussocks; he feels in his own flesh the albatross’ beak as it pecks at the silvery remains of a fish, devouring it in bloody segments; he sees the clouds’ capricious sketches, their skittery movements; he sees the wet and yellowy moss rotting upon older moss long rotted and still rotting upon the peat; he watches a seal’s corpse disintegrate, its flesh spreading towards him, transforming into a writhing, slithering orgy of maggots; he hears the wet slobbery buzzing of this seething mass; he makes out, a few metres away, seagulls, cormorants, plovers and kelp geese flapping their wings, hunting, defecating, pecking, cawing.

*Everything is the same forest.*
THE MALVINAS ISLANDS form part of an archipelago situated in the South Atlantic Ocean. They are roughly 550km from the entrance to the Magellan Straits and comprise more than one hundred islands, the largest of which are Soledad and Gran Malvina. The former has a surface area of 4,353km² and the latter 6,307km². Rugged plains with rocky outcrops are the territories’ predominant features.

Between April and June 1982 1,847 people were wounded there. Between April and June 1982 907 people died there.
FOUR STAKES driven into the black and red soil of the Malvinas.
Wrists swollen by restraints, taut rope, bits of leather (the young lad lies staked just like the small fort gauchos back in 1870), ankle bones visible in the gaping wound of the same old story.
The defenceless body with its face to the stars forms an X; easily discernible from the sky as an olive green letter on the black, sometimes red, Malvinas soil.
The man watches the stars, feels the cold metal sheet of the night weigh upon him, flatten and lacerate him; he trembles there, the ignored one, the one dying of disgust and fear.

Why him?
The drenching dew covers him, his pale, innocent flesh wounded by cruelty, rotting with each passing second, bleeding from the belt blow dealt by his countryman and shot by English bastards. What exactly are they all doing there? The earth receives him, the earth watered by the howls of innocent men. The cowardice and heroism of the young men produce roars that protect the mist perforated by projectiles, illuminated from within by flares, by fury, by terror, by the sharp crosses of the bayonets on the bullet-riddled manure of betrayal. The Argentinian, the Argie, lies staked to the black-red Malvinas soil; he sees the sky, he sees the stars, he sees a fragment of the infinite. But he’ll never reach them.