Like the Rains Come
Also by Mercedes Roffé:

In Spanish:
Poemas (Madrid, 1978)
El tapiz de Ferdinand Oziel (Buenos Aires, 1983)
Cámara baja (Buenos Aires, 1987; Santiago de Chile, 1996)
La noche y las palabras (Buenos Aires, 1996; Santiago de Chile, 1998)
Antología poética (Caracas, 2000)
Canto errante (Buenos Aires, 2002)
Memorial de agravios (Córdoba, 2002)
La ópera fantasma (Buenos Aires, 2006)

In French:
Rapprochements de la bouche du roi (Montréal, 2008.
Translated by Nelly Roffé)
Définitions mayas et autres poèmes (Montréal, 2004.
Translated by Nelly Roffé, with a Preface by Hélène Dorion)

In Italian:
L’algebra oscura (S. Marco in Lamis, 2004. Translated by Emilio Coco)

In Romanian:
Teoria culorilor (Bucharest, 2006. Translated by D. M. Ion)

In English:
   Translated by Margaret Carson)
   Translated by Janet Greenberg)
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Lower Chamber</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night and Words</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial by Ordeal</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayan Definitions</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
from
The Lower Chamber
A scene of return is drawn
Voices
National language the music
of the spheres
Perhaps because of being in the air
Because of being
in flight
Because of being
in transit
Transit
Synagogue of the
The detailed catalogue of the tribe
Ceuta
Tangier
Oran
The fleeting prison
the bangles
the myth of the Moor and the old songs
The intersection: seven languages
Casablanca:
the end of a tale that is never told
but counts
Oran:
the name that circumcises that which is said to be
uncircumcisable
Without the A there is no concert
    just Solos
Transit
Scene of return
The angel comes to transfix a lung addicted
to the literary tradition
The whitewashed tradition of a convent
You confuse a headquarters with a convent
    the same
as your
daughter’s
    mother’s
    grandmother’s house
Orthopedics
    WANTED
The mirror
Your fate on a piece of paper
A convent, wants
A white enclosure in which
to be
    traversed
    transfixed
    wedded to
Father and master
You, who fears the lyre
    sing to me
    tell me
    make me
    endow me
    cover me
He who fears the lyre
    the music of the spheres
Won’t arrive
Slanting view
Father
Mother
Uncle
Aunt
What am I doing here?
I run away to a party
A party
  quickly!
   A party
Remember me
  It’s me
   I’m here
There is no party without gods
A fellow called . . .
   A fellow called . . .
Mesié Fifi!
   Mesié Fifi!
Oh flame of love
The king dies
The king has died
Long live the king
He said:
   “too pointed a discourse”
And the green elf sang in falsetto:
   “Be sharp, darling! Immortalize
this lanthean silhouette
   Don’t be
a bad girl,
   eh?”

She said:
   “Be more yourself”
And the green elf choked on the wine
It's been two years
assuming that it . . .
Two years of what?
It was cold
Two years ago it was a title for a poem without name
   and the open sheets among Rilke’s shrouds
All the amber
Me
All the amber from afar that came in ships
Like me
Amber like the eyes of the sirens
She isn’t a siren
But
All the amber had come in ships for the feast
Oh night sweeter than the dawn
Transfigured night
The waiting
So Parisian!
The beret with a visor and the scarf
A melancholy, little, trembling pimp
A betrayal at the hands of the-much-awaited-one
The beloved with the beloved
The beloved transformed in the beloved
So Parisian! It flies away
Her face appears on the walls of an office restroom
like obscene, political graffiti – X loves – Death to the
traitors – Barbarians – and the dead – X loves – 781-1452
– Spitting forbidden – Screaming forbidden – Speaking
forbidden – The two names together forbidden – The
one who squeals is – the one who doesn’t

Her face on the wall
of an office restroom
   of a bar
   a school
The little school, yes
The grapevine
It was easy for me then
It was not necessary
It was not necessary to tell you I hate you
I didn’t have to say
I didn’t have to look, listen, know
that all the sirens’ eyes
are the color of amber
I didn’t
have to come on that ship and then
perhaps I would have never ever
Transfigured night  x  Night in the Gardens of Spain

Today, like today
like that night
a night
a night all filled with murmurs
all of it
all of it
dance for the big toe of the right foot
trembling dance for the little pimp
It was cold
Shivering underneath an embroidered shirt
Shirts worn by grooms at their weddings
Embroidered shirts
Shirt underneath the bullfighter’s vest
Shirt the priest
    the surgeon
Shirt
Shirts worn by pimps at their funerals
and berets with visors
Parisian
It was cold in the open sheets of
Me—the beloved in the beloved
Dawn
The night transfigured in forgetfulness
Never more
Here nothing has happened
It was for thee
For thee it was
which dog will lick what you leave
Agape
Without gods there is no party
Trembling
Poor little one, the scrounger
almost flying
It was the music of wings
It was amber