Arctic Poems
Also available in this series:

Skyquake / Temblor de cielo
Square Horizon / Horizon carré
Equatorial & other poems

Selected Poems
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*Poemas árticos* was originally published in Madrid in 1918 by Imprenta Pueyo. The texts here, including the French versions, are based on those printed in the author’s *Obra poética*, ed. Cedomil Goïc, Paris: ALLCA XX, 2003.

There are slight differences in the layout of the poems in the *Obra poética* when compared to the 2012 volume issued by the Fundación Vicente Huidobro and Ocho Libros Editores, Santiago. The latter edition does not claim to be an exact facsimile of the first edition and we have therefore opted for the safe route of following the *Obra poética*, whose editors based their decisions on the first edition and on the author’s manuscripts. Once a facsimile of the first edition becomes available we may reconsider this.
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Vicente Huidobro and *Arctic Poems*

Huidobro (1893-1948) published *Poemas árticos* in Madrid in 1918, this being the last of a rapid series of publications which established him as a major new talent both in French and in Spanish.¹ In the period 1917-1918, his publications were: *Horizon carré* (Square Horizon, in French; Paris, 1917), *El espejo de agua* (The Water Mirror, 2nd edition, in Spanish; Madrid, 1918) *Tour Eiffel* (Eiffel Tower, in French; Madrid, 1918), *Hallali* (in French; Madrid, 1918); *Ecuatorial* (Equatorial, in Spanish; Madrid, 1918) and the present volume, likewise published in Spanish in Madrid. These publications mark the beginning of the author’s engagement with the European avant-garde, and a transition away from the symbolist style (in Spanish, *modernista*, not to be confused with Anglo-Saxon modernism) that had dominated his writing prior to his move to Europe. One of those preceding volumes is typical of the transitional work from the end of his first Chilean years: *Adán* (Adam, Buenos Aires, 1916; written 1914). By contrast, *El espejo de agua* (first edition, Buenos Aires, 1916), is a kind of “bridge” volume to the new style. It seems that the Buenos Aires edition of the latter volume did exist, notwithstanding some suggestions to the contrary, but very few copies were distributed, and thus its later reappearance, apparently out of sequence, in Madrid might serve to confuse one’s appreciation of the development of his work. Huidobro continued to rate that volume, and selected work from it for subsequent editions, including his French-language selected poems, *Saisons choisies* (Selected Seasons; Paris, 1921), albeit with a different organisation of the texts on the page.

*Poemas árticos* is particularly interesting in that it shows the author bringing into Spanish the lessons he had learned (and already deployed in *Horizon carré*) from Apollinaire and Reverdy—friends from his earliest days in Paris. This book, together with the chapbooks *Hallali* and *Tour Eiffel*, was to have a significant impact on the nascent domestic avant-garde in Madrid. Some of the poems were later translated by Huidobro for publication in French magazines, and those versions are also offered here in an appendix.

Together with the experimental French poets, Huidobro was also quickly drawn into the group of expatriate Spanish artists—Picasso, and Juan Gris chief among them. Both Picasso and Gris drew portraits of

¹ The others are also available from Shearsman: *Square Horizon* in one volume and the other four publications in a compilation volume, *Equatorial and other poems.*
POEMAS ÁRTICOS

A Juan Gris y Jacques Lipchitz
Recordando nuestras charlas vespérales en aquel rincón de Francia
ARCTIC POEMS

For Juan Gris and Jacques Lipchitz
Remembering our evening conversations in that corner of France
HORAS

El villorio
Un tren detenido sobre el llano

En cada charco
duermen estrellas sordas
Y el agua tiembla
Cortinaje al viento

La noche cuelga en la arboleda
En el campanario florecido

Una gotera viva
Desangra las estrellas

De cuando en cuando
Las horas maduras
Caen sobre la vida
The shanty town
A train halted on the plains

In every puddle
defaf stars sleep
And the water trembles
Curtain in the wind

Night hangs in the plantation
In the overgrown bell tower

A living leak
Bleeds the stars dry

From time to time
The ripe hours
Fall upon life
Una corona yo me haría
De todas las ciudades recorridas

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Silban en los llanos
locomotoras cubiertas de algas

**AQUÍ NADIE HA ENCONTRADO**

De todos los ríos navegados
Yo me haría un collar

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Cien embarcaciones sabias
Que han plegado las alas

Y mi canción de marinero huérfano
Diciendo adiós a las playas

Aspirar el aroma del Monte Rosa
Trenzar las canas errantes del Monte Blanco

Y sobre el zenit del Monte Cenis
Encender en el sol muriente
El último cigarro

Un silbido horada el aire

No es un juego de agua
A crown would I make for myself
Of all the cities I have been through

London            Madrid            Paris
Rome              Naples            Zurich

Locomotives covered with algae
whistle on the plains

HERE I HAVE FOUND NO ONE

Of all the rivers I have sailed
I would make myself a necklace

The Amazon      The Thames
The Seine        The Rhine

A hundred wise vessels
That have folded their wings

And my orphan sailor’s song
Saying farewell to the shore

Breathing in the scent of Monte Rosa
Braiding the drifting white tresses of Mont Blanc

And on the summit of Mont Cenis
In the setting sun lighting
My last cigar

A whistle pierces the air

This is no fountain
ADELANTE

Apeninos gibosos
Marchan hacia el desierto

Las estrellas del oasis
Nos darán miel de sus dátiles

En la montaña
El viento hace crujir las jarcias
Y todos los montes dominados
Los volcanes bien cargados
Levarán el ancla

ALLÁ ME ESPERARÁN

Buen viaje

Un poco más lejos
Termina la Tierra

Pasan los ríos bajo las barcas
La vida ha de pasar
ONWARD

Hunchbacked Apennines
Head for the desert

The stars in the oasis
Will give us honey from their dates

On the mountain
The wind makes the rope creak
And all the conquered mountains
The well-loaded volcanoes
Will raise anchor

THEY WILL WAIT FOR ME THERE

Have a good trip

A little further out
The Earth ends

Rivers pass under the boats
Life must pass

SEE YOU TOMORROW
NOCHE

Sobre la nieve se oye resbalar la noche

La canción caía de los árboles
Y tras la niebla daban voces

De una mirada encendí mi cigarro

Cada vez que abro los labios
Inundo de nubes el vacío

En el puerto
Los mástiles están llenos de nidos

Y el viento
gime entre las alas de los pájaros

LAS OLAS MECEN EL NAVÍO MUERTO

Yo en la orilla silbando
Miro la estrella que humea entre mis dedos
NIGHT

Over the snow you can hear the night slip by
The song fell from the trees
And beyond the fog there were voices

With a glance I lit my cigar
Every time I part my lips
I flood the emptiness with clouds

In the harbour
The masts are full of nests
And the wind
moans in the wings of birds

THE WAVES ROCK THE DEAD SHIP

Whistling on the shore
I watch the star smoking in my fingers
ALERTA

Media noche

En el jardín
Cada sombra es un arroyo

Aquel ruido que se acerca no es un coche

Sobre el cielo de París
Otto von Zeppelin

Las sirenas cantan
Entre las olas negras
Y este clarín que llama ahora
No es el clarín de la Victoria

Cien aeroplanos
Vuelan en torno de la luna

APAGA TU PIPA

Los obuses estallan como rosas maduras
Y las bombas agujerean los días

Canciones cortadas

tiemblan entre las ramas
El viento contorsiona las calles

CÓMO APAGAR LA ESTRELLA DEL ESTANQUE
Alert

Midnight

In the garden
Every shadow is a stream

That approaching sound is not a car

Over the Paris sky
Otto von Zeppelin

The sirens sing
In the black waves
And this trumpet now calling
Is not the trumpet of Victory

A hundred aeroplanes
Fly around the moon

Put out your pipe

The shells explode like ripe roses
And bombs pierce the days

Songs cut short
tremble in the branches
The wind leaves the streets writhing

How is the star in the pond switched off
Un cigarrro en el vacío
A lo largo del camino
He deshojado mis dedos
Y jamás mirar atrás

Mi cabellera
Y el humo de esta pipa

Aquella luz me conducía
Todos los pájaros son alas
En mis hombros cantaron

Pero mi corazón fatigado
Muerto en el último nido

Llueve sobre el camino
Y voy buscando el sitio donde mis lágrimas han caído
ROAD

A cigar in the emptiness

Along the road
I stripped leaves from my fingers
And never looked back

My hair
And the smoke from this pipe

That light guided me
All the wingless birds
Sang on my shoulders

But my weary heart
Died in the final nest

It’s raining on the road
And I go in search of the place
where my tears have fallen
EMIGRANTE A AMÉRICA

Estrellas eléctricas
Se encienden en el viento

Y algunos signos astrológicos
han caído al mar

Ese emigrante que canta
Partirá mañana

Vivir

Buscar

Atado al barco
como un horóscopo
Veinte días sobre el mar

Bajo las aguas
Nadan los pulpos vegetales

Detrás del horizonte
El otro puerto

Entre el bosque
Las rosas deshojadas
iluminan las calles
EMIGRANT TO AMERICA

Electric stars
Switch on in the wind

And some astrological signs
have fallen into the sea

That emigrant who’s singing
Will depart tomorrow

Living
Searching

Tied to the ship
as if to a horoscope.
Twenty days at sea

Beneath the waves
Swim the vegetal octopi

Beyond the horizon
   The other harbour

In the thicket
Roses stripped of their petals
   light up the streets