

# *Second Tongue*

SAMPLER

## ALSO BY YOLANDA CASTAÑO

### POETRY

- Elevar as pálpebras* (1995)  
*Delicia* (1998; 2nd edition, 2006)  
*Vivimos no ciclo das erofanías* (1998)  
*O libro da egoísta* (2003; 2nd edition, 2004)  
*Profundidade de campo* (2007)  
*Erofania* (2008)  
*A segunda lingua* (2014)

### SELECTIONS

- Edénica* (2000). Includes CD with poems set to music.  
*O puño e a letra* (2018) (40 selected poems illustrated by  
40 Galician cartoonists.)

### POETRY FOR CHILDREN

- Punver* (2006). Illustrated by Eduardo Hermida.  
*Cando eu saiba ler* (2009). Illustrated by Xosé Tomás.  
*Punver de volta* (2009). Illustrated by Eduardo Hermida.  
*Cando eu saiba ler* (2009). Illustrated by Xosé Tomás.  
*Verdedades* (2012). Illustrated by Xosé Tomás.  
*Coller as rendas* (2015). Illustrated by Xosé Tomás.  
*Sementes viaxeiras* (2019). Illustrated by Xosé Tomás.

### AS EDITOR

- Pequenos encontros, as marcas deixadas* (2010)  
*Cociñando ao pé da letra* (2011)  
*Sempre marzo* (2019)

### AS TRANSLATOR

- Nikola Madzirov: *Lo que dijimos nos persigue* (2013, with Marija Petrovska  
Marko Pogačar *La región negra* (2014, with Pau Sanchis)

Several collections have appeared in French, Italian, Macedonian,  
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Yolanda Castaño

*Second Tongue*

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*translated from Galician  
by Keith Payne*

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A segunda lingua

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## CALAMAR

Baixo o teu medio favorito  
nada un banco de respostas.  
As túas conviccións nenas  
dormen con peixes.

O que se sustenta na pluma brilla  
canto máis negro é o seu redor.

Polo menos, ti,  
empregarías toda esa tinta  
con más talento.

As algas transparentes  
agárranse a un motivo molusco.

A vergonza é un calamar.  
Co medo escuréceo todo  
e ten  
demasiadas  
patas.

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## SQUID

Under your favourite element  
a shoal of answers floats  
while all your girlish notions  
are swimming with the fish.

Everything that gleams through the pen  
pours darkness

you at least  
would make better use  
of this ink.

The seaweed limpet  
clings to its convictions.

Shame is a squid:  
it scuttles  
behind everything  
and has  
far  
too many  
legs.

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## RECICLAXE

E o azougue gastado no espello do toucador.

Dende a man que procura o pálpito  
aproveito folios xa usados;  
a tinta negra da outra cara advírtese por tras  
e penso  
que tamén se escribe así,  
anotando palabras novas mentres outras  
anteriores  
se transparentan.

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## RECYCLING

And the quicksilver gone from the mirror.

From the hand feeling for the trace  
I make the best of jaded pages;  
the black ink from the flip side shows  
and I think  
this could also be writing;  
scribbling new words while other  
earlier words  
seep through the page.

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## CÓMO LER POESÍA

*Deberías haberme visto leyendo a Marx  
en la playa*

ALBERTO SANTAMARÍA

Tombada sobre a area, dúas horas na praia  
ata que as miñas escápulas encastan co horizonte.  
Todos os punto e seguido que escribín na miña vida  
son mil menos ca os graíños sobre os que tendo a toalla.  
Dende aquí podo ver cumes, toldos, metas,  
tellados sobre os que as rulas fan prácticas de voo.

Ao areal sáenlle no verán parosoles coma espullas,  
e no ceo as nubes bobas: onde vai unha, van todas.

Boca arriba sobre a area, estudo a mellor postura  
para que nada me expulse desta voz extraterrestre.  
Un leve xiro de cabeza ha de poder ser abondo;  
o ceo é mellor non miralo nunca de frente.  
Pecha sempre o ollo ao que lle toca estar arriba,  
fai que o teu propio nariz sexa quel de tapar o astro,  
pero mantén a outra córnea enlocada e ben alerta,  
suxeita firme o libro, muda adoitio de postura.

As barrigas dos bes han acabar por flotar nas ondas.  
Protexe a pel, destapa o resto.  
Deixa que as palabras remonten os seus propios símbolos.  
Non intentes traducir o son que fan as buguinas.

## HOW TO READ POETRY

*You should have seen me on the beach  
reading Marx*

ALBERTO SANTAMARÍA

Lying for hours on the beach till my shoulders  
sink into the horizon     every full stop  
tapped out will never amount to more  
than the grains of sand under this towel.  
I can see the peaks, the awnings, the nets  
and the pigeons rehearsing flight.

All across the sand sun brollies blister in the summer  
and the clouds mob; where one goes, they all follow.

Face up and fidgeting for the best angle  
so nothing distracts me from the voice of beyond.  
Just a slight turn of the head will do;  
best not catch the sky straight in the eye  
so I close the one that's looking to the light  
shade the blue    but keep the other cornea  
focused, fixed on the page       Now change.

The bellies of all the capital Bs end up on the sea  
you cover up your skin but let the rest breathe.  
Let the words float on the tides of themselves  
but don't make a fist of the sound of seashells.

## FACER DIETA

Todas as cousas que non dis  
enchen a despensa do meu tempo.

Sobre os fogóns, a voz é unha chama  
que sabes avivar baixando o lume.

Cóntasme entón que vas facer dieta.  
O teu amor pola comida vai pasar a ser vicario.

A renuncia atópase nalgún recanto ao fondo de nós:  
debes espremela por ti mesma coma unha froita.  
Igual que eu non podo  
falar a través da túa voz,  
nin mastigar a comida por ti porque non somo  
paxaros.

Acabarás por lograr que te sacie  
non a carne, pero o seu signo.

Non saibas más do que precisás,  
non tragues aquilo que só tende  
a se acumular en recantos pouco ventilados.

Non quedes a mirar como o capital compra o desexo.  
Todas esas gorxas rebozando en apetencia os seus tributos.

Que outras ratas devoren ese dezmo.  
Ti non sabes canto me alimentas.

## ON A DIET

Everything you've never said  
fills the shelves of my days

over the flame your words flare  
as you lower the heat

you tell me you're going on a diet  
to live vicariously your love of food.

Your flair to refuse is hidden within:

you should find and squeeze it like a fruit.  
I can't say your words for you  
nor can I chew your food for you  
– we're not birds.

You'll still be stuffed  
not with the cream, but the filling.

Don't ask more than you need to  
or swallow too much  
– it'll only stick to you.

Don't crave a golden grill for your mouth  
all those gullets sopped in their own starving.

Leave the rats devour the scraps from the table.  
You've no idea how you nourish me.

## METROFOBIA

Ao fondo da paisaxe, a chuvia  
esvaece as nubes cun borrón.  
Esta folla de ruta milita na xograresca.

Xa teño gana de partir e o meu coche é un soldado.  
Non vas oíndo chifrar o seu cargamento sensible?  
As estradas comarcais parecen  
cadernos pautados.  
Gustariáme sucar os montes cun poema ao lombo coma os viaxantes.  
O meu coche é unha bala prateada con  
ritmo en vez de pólvora, e eu dígolle: “Vamos!”.  
Xuntos atravesamos vales, barrios de funcionarios,  
as grandes explotacións eólicas  
danme ganas de loitar contra os xigantes.  
O meu coche mais eu entendémonos sen dicirnos nada.

Flores brancas do ibuprofeno,  
o meu coche é un soldado  
e eu dígolle: “Vamos recitar poemas  
a Monforte de Lemos!”,  
e el  
acompassa o seu motor ao meu rexistro,  
repenica,  
badalea  
áinda que teña  
metrofobia.

## METROPHOBIA

Off in the distance the rain  
stains the clouds.  
This map is true for balladeers.

I can't wait to go round and my car is a good soldier,  
can you hear its sweet cargo whistle?  
The old roads open up  
like a ruled notebook,  
how I'd love to score the mountains like a sales rep  
my case full of poems

My car's a silver bullet burning with rhythm  
instead of gunpowder and I shout *Vamos!*  
Together we bear down on valleys  
civil servant suburbs and those huge windmills  
urge me on to face the giants.  
We get each other, my car and me  
– no words are needed.

White lilies of paracetamol,  
my old soldier  
and I say *Let's go read poems*  
*in Monforte de Lemos!*  
his engine  
humming along to my tune;  
it rattles  
and sings  
even though he's got  
metrophobia.

## PEDRA PAPEL TESOIRA

Cando miran os ollos pechados,  
as rodas vólvense un xogo de mans.

(O libro da poesía ábrese de máis  
e convértese en baralla).

Non é arrogante acender unha luz,  
tampouco miserable escribirmos ás escuras.

Non perdas áncora ao mundo,  
nin tacto co que as palabras soporta,  
non temas en serrarlle as patas  
para que poida chegar áinda máis alto.

Aquí  
xeramos linguaxe.

Realmente escribimos  
porque unha imaxe vale máis ca mil palabras.

## ROCK PAPER SCISSORS

When shut eyes can see  
the cycle becomes a sleight of hand.

(The poetry book opens far too much  
and up pops a deck of cards).

It's not cocky to flick a switch,  
or afflicted to write in the dark.

Don't let go your hold on the world  
or lose touch with the word footing,  
take a saw to its legs  
you might find you reach even higher.

Here  
we provoke language.

Of course we write  
for a picture's worth a thousand words.