



Luiz Benitez—Five Poems

SHOULD I FLEE OR STAY?

Should I flee to the house of silence,
smiling with motionless eyes, always nodding,
or stay to receive the gestures of strangers
on my chest, ignoring their swords under the gestures?
Should I flee or stay with my hand stretched offering them the fruit,
watching their foreign glances, their ship's motionless sail
in the bay of my life, trading words with them without fear of pirates?
Or escape up the steep slope of my destiny and safe from the ridiculous grin
contemplate myself, hide the sight of my days in secret chests,
sealed to deceit? Should I flee or stay homeless,
exposed to the inquisitive finger and the cunning eye, forced by fear
to engrave my history on sand labs?

A SEASON ROTS

A season rots and under it there's another one,
the grain running along the tree heart falls,
shakes invisible on the grass and in four spasms
dies, as time sandpapers things until leaving only the heart,
offering words and rugged stammerings of emptiness.
The sap, the frozen leaf, the flower and the fruit go into the eye
as a unique body which never dies, and from man
the mortal bone falls down to the fist of the root and the cycle renews
even to the widow's lip. Wet and without eyelids under the sheets
of the wood, the dead man and his hunter rest, brothers at last,
in a blameless darkness that brings them to light.

IDENTITY

We are the future above all.
But nothing happened
without him launching
that new thing you were.
Strange is your fortune:

to be someone who is someone
while it changes.
I'll appoint your figure as relative
and relative every line of its traces.
And I'm going to appoint your gloomy heart
for it's radiant as well:
you go to the reverse through the reverse
and to what is near, you go through the distant.
So sunken, so fast, so secret
a man, a woman see
their shadows, their leaps and their steps.
Even grief was necessary;
your joy was a goldsmith,
an abstract, untiring mason:
today you are the erect and also
the wrecked stone.
Look at these grinding stones,
so many doors and entrances
remember what is blurry,
whisper your true name.
We are. And also we are
what never depends upon us.
So sunken, so fast, so secret
a man, a woman see
their shadows, their leaps and their steps.
The secret of these waters
was always their immortality.
They create the hands. They are the hands.

THE STRANGER

In the life of others like a nomadic face
we enter with violence, with reserve
or aware of us as field to others who cross us.
But we are always the stranger.
Gestures and voices going into the road
and in all directions the wood moved
by the unceasing whisper of unseen stories,
pierce us and leave: the slightest contact
we call years, weeks, months.
We cannot keep anything or anybody,
every glance is pavement to the course.
When everything abides he will say he has arrived.

WHERE MEMORY REMAINS

Where memory remains,
that happy, pregnant noon or gloomy government,
yet dances the first morning of the world,
there are prints of rough wheels
on a plain now held by the mountains,
a miracle that amazes and warms and calms down.
A libellula amorously knitting the air
rebuilds the invisible history;
as in your eyes, the initial wings
glitter in the air of a first yesterday,
with experiments of fish and essays of snakes,
with projected tigers that would then roar, so real,
in the night. And not even an eye,
not even an eye, not even yours,
to see the flight of reptiles
in the green marshes
with their membranous hope
and its green scales,
nor to the first tenants
of the marine hospice in the depth.
Nothing: neither the sign of a hand's trace
in the wet rocks at the border
nor the foot sole in the mud
where musical bushes grew.
Mud and sky and water
and the natural simple breathing of things:
the novelty of barks torn off by the wind
took the whole evening by itself.
Among the maples, the cold that was young
in the world, went by naked,
without knowing it was like this one, slow, in November.
The infinite space of the valleys
where the whole moon could commit suicide,
herons and clouds going up the marsh
and the last cry of a heavy animal
dying in the high and thick of the forest, night of noon,
and was reborn without knowing among the low thickets.
The thick alligators like living buildings in a nightmare,
O the daily miracle of those massive shapes
that lifted their childish eyes to the vault
looking for the explanation to the dream,
O the early progress of the thousand traces under the stones,
just as the twilight revived the scolopendra of mortal mouth
and the mosquitoes gave their living alphabet
to the white orchids,

ah the caress of the carp hunting under the surface
and the waylaying of the tiger-fish on the mangrove trees;
beautiful and gloomy under the boiling water of noon
the seaweeds hid a yet rotten calf dead by dawn.
And the ant of enormous strength bent
the rattan for its hanging nest
and furiously two inflamed creations
confronted under a flat stone.
And the night, the night where all emerged from
ran its ships and constellations
for the passing of the beautiful murderers of the paw,
errant and invisible about the low plateau.
What we would be wandered yet without a place
like an intelligent fume over the world.
And a leap, a scream of lips tinged by the weeds,
a stained sentence forever kissing a neck
displayed the morning again.

Luis Benítez was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1956). Member of the Latin-American Academy of Poetry (USA), the International Society of Writers (USA), World Poets (Greece), the Advisory Board de Poetry Press (India) and the Argentinean Society of Writers. He has received the title of Compagnon de la Poésie, from La Porte des Poètes Association, France. His 37 books of poetry, essays and novels were published in Argentina, Chile, England, France, Italy, Mexico, Romania, Sweden, Uruguay, USA and Venezuela. Between another local and international awards, he has received: La Porte des Poètes International Award (Paris, 1991); Biennial Award of the Argentinean Poetry (Buenos Aires, 1991); Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat Foundation Award of Poetry (Buenos Aires, 1996); International Award of Fiction (Uruguay, 1996); Primo Premio Tusculorum di Poesia (Italy, 1996); 10me. Concours International de Poésie, accesit (Paris, 2003) and the International Award for Published Work “Macedonio Palomino” (Mexico, 2007).