

Diana DEL ÁNGEL

POEMS

Relics

By the shoots of grass amid the ruins, we'll know the water running underground,
by the ash on the rocks, we'll glean the fire that brought men together,
by the shifting of the leaves, we'll intuit the birds,
through the cracks in the walls, the rain of the days will trickle in
and the rain of the words that parted lip from lip,
a dandelion will conjure childhood and bring us summers warmer than the sun,
and the wind's hermetic tongue will whisper another story of extermination that
will brush against us as we fail to understand it,
there will be nothing to tell us about the wounds,
even the shadows of the mutilated bodies will be rancid,
there will be nothing to tell us about the silence we shared:
dust alone will be the language calling to us from below.

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Translated from the Spanish by Robin Myers

When the Problem Isn't a Lack of Options

The drama of socks has left a less-common occurrence in the shadows, one affecting only half of the world's population, but just as unfortunate: the loss of an earring. Faced with this terrible event, you can choose to:

- a) get rid of the unmatched piece (which doesn't ensure that the memory will also vanish)
- b) store the earring in the container of your choice for mnemonic purposes
- c) continue using the lone pieces (the possibilities for combination are endless)
- d) find ways to search in time and space for that which has disappeared in time and space.

If I choose (b) I'd like to think that when I have a daughter, I'll tell her my life with the help of these small anchors. I imagine that together we'll discover how the lost earrings continued along the stoic path of solitary objects. I don't like to think, however, that that unborn girl could become one less, because in the game of transformations I could be:

- a) the unmatched piece (which doesn't ensure that the memory will also vanish)
- b) the file archived in a container for non-mnemonic purposes
- c) the other side of the loss (this isn't an option, but rather a perennial state)

The loss of a member, considered from its origin to be part of a set, reveals to us:

- 1) in the beginning there was pain
- 2) evading maternity will not avoid loss

La Presa #9 (Ontario, Canada) Spring 2020

Translated from the Spanish by Kimrey Anna Batts

Knitting lesson number one

No paths are tied off forever.
Don't blame them and don't blame yourself.
Everything ends because it had a beginning.

My role in weaving this tale will also end. I
too have left hole in other livez.
It has always been that way: join and divide.

There's no reason to weep losses,
no reason for chest pounding,
no reason to feel deserted in your kidneys,
the gaze of welling eyes isn't understood.

La Presa #9 (Ontario, Canada) Spring 2020

Translated from the Spanish by Kimrey Anna Batts

Heart/ hummingbird

Nican. Here, this night.

We walk. One moment. We walk.

This poem is part of the collaborative piece worked with the photojournalist, Sebastian Hidalgo. It was presented in the Live show of Lit&Light Fest in Chicago (October, 19th, 2019) y en la Ciudad de México (February, 15th, 2020). The words in Nahuatl, whose meaning is the phrase that follows, are in italics.

I painted seashells on your chest. We blossomed.

["All we can hear is the creak of the top, one edge peeling away from the other like an eyelid, and Julio's body is exposed, looking out at us from the distant and unforgettable night of September 26."]

The hummingbird is the heart of the world.

The face is the flower of the body.

Your body a beating heart.

Take my hand. One moment. I take your hand.

Our hearts dance.

["hairline fractures in at least 10 of Julio's front ribs (the human ribcage has 12 front and back ribs and 12 back ones)"].]

We had spring.

One moment.

We had it.

Spring.

And I saw you dance. Close to the sun. Springing heart.

["to take X-rays they'll need to dismantle the bones and remove their soft tissue —which means in turn that they'll be placed in hot water ('cook' is the verb Steve uses) until the ribs themselves are exposed."]

One moment. / *San achica ye nican.*

["Afterwards, the bones will be set back into place, but the body won't look the same as before; that is, it's possible that they won't be able to re-clothe Julio, since only disjointed bones will be left."]

I felt your deep red heart. *Toyolotzin*: our music.

["This is painful for us, but it can't hurt Julio anymore; Julio is resting now."]

Pomegranate flesh.

A bird at last.

Fleeting.

Bird but also seed.

Ruby heart.

An nochipa tlalticpac:

san achica ye nican.

Only a fleeting time here on earth.

The thread of your blood is woven into another body.

Your heart beats in another chest.

Nican: We're only here for a little while,

take my hand, take my face, *toxayac*

We are always.

Translated from the Spanish by José Luis Moctezuma

Notes on the text. The quoted fragments are taken from *Procesos de la noche* (Almadía, 2017); the English translation of the fragments were made by Robin Myers in 2016, to whom I owe thanks for their skill and generosity.

The texts in náhuatl, except on pages 12 and 16, are from a poem by Nezahualcóyotl, sometimes titled "I ask this."

