



A NIGHT OF POETRY IN URUGUAY

An Anthology of the New Wave

EDITED BY JESSE LEE KERCHEVAL

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SLAM COPA FILBA – SEPTIEMBRE 2017 (POETA PABLO PEDRAZZI)

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Edited and introduced by
Jesse Lee Kercheval

A Dispatches Virtual Chapbook



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Dispatches Virtual Chapbook #4

Photo by Paola Scagliotti.

Dispatches Virtual Chap Books are a fragmentary sublapidary of Dispatches Editions which itself is a figment of Dispatches from the Poetry Wars' promiscuous and undisciplined imagination of being together in the work of the poem.



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A NIGHT OF POETRY IN URUGUAY

JESSE LEE KERCHEVAL

RIGHT NOW IT IS EARLY FALL in Montevideo (March is the September of the Southern Hemisphere) and all the poetry reading series, book launches and other poetry events have started up again with a bang. Uruguay, with a population of only 3.3 million, is the smallest Spanish speaking country in South America, but it is a country—and Montevideo is a city—absolutely full of poets. Today is El día de la poesía/ International Poetry Day and tonight there is a tribute to Ida Vitale, with her present, at the Blanes Museum of Art. Ida Vitale, born in 1923, is the last living member of the illustrious Uruguayan literary movement Generation of '45 that included other stellar women poets such as Amanda Berenguer and Idea Vilariño, as well as poet Mario Benedetti and novelist Juan Carlos Onetti and, as an ex-officio Argentine member, Jorge Luis Borges. At the same, the Casa de los Escritores de Uruguay / House of Uruguayan Writers will hold an evening long celebration of poetry with roundtables and readings that ends with an open mike. I will try to hop from one to the other. That is a typical evening in Montevideo when it comes to poetry, often with an earlier event, perhaps a book launch, followed by a later reading in a bar. Tomorrow night, there is a launch by the digital platform, Liberoamérica, of their first digital book, an anthology of poetry by women. Friday night, is the long running, late night poetry series Ronda de poetas, run by the poet Martín Barea Mattos. And I am sure I am missing at least a couple of readings or events in what is left of this week on this list. So welcome to poetry in Uruguay!

I first heard many of the poets I selected for my anthology, *América invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets*, which features poets under forty, read in Kalima, a bar or boliche that hosts an ever changing series of poetry readings. There is also a very popular poetry slam series, Slam Montevideo, started just a few years ago by the poet Pablo Pedrazzi (whose nom de poet is Pabloski) that draws a lot of young poets. And a series, Orientación Poesía, run by a wonderful group of young poets who teach workshops in high schools, including those in the countryside and in the poorer neighborhoods in Montevideo. That series, in addition to readings, publishes an online anthology called *En la camino de los perros* of poetas ultrajóvenes/ very young poets. You can check out the anthology and the project here. <https://enelcaminodelosperros-wordpress.com>

But a typical reading in Uruguay is not segregated by age or segregated into established poets and emerging ones. A reading usually includes poets of all ages and accomplishment and might feature five to eight poets from eighty to eighteen reading at the same event. Uruguay is also a country with an amazing and unbroken tradition of poetry by women, stretching from María Eugenia Vaz Ferreira (1875-1924) and Delmira Agustini (1886-1914) through the poets I mentioned above as part of the Generation of '45 to the present. The poet Juana de Ibarbourou (1892-1979) even appears on the 1000 Uruguayan peso bill. So to make this chapbook mirror a typical reading, I've included work by eight poets, seven young or younger poets and one more established poet, as well as work by four women poets and four men.

As it is everywhere, it is the poets who make things happen in poetry and the biographies of this group make that clear this is the case in Uruguay as well. Silvia Guerra (1961, Maldonado, Uruguay) is the senior poet in the group. She was the co-editor of the seminal Uruguayan poetry press La Flauta Mágica, organized many events and readings series at the Fundación Nancy Bacelo and the National Academy of Letras and has been a wonderful source of information for many a translator who has come to Uruguay, including me. Miguel Avero is one of the founders of Orientación Poesía, the group I mentioned above that brings poetry readings and workshops to high schools throughout Uruguay and edits the online journal of young poets. Laura Chalar is the editor and translator of an anthology of Uruguayan poetry published in the U.S. *Touching the Light of Day: Seven Uruguayan Poets*. Diego Cubelli (1990, Montevideo, Uruguay) is the editor of the journal *Sitio de poesía* and vice president of the Casa de los Escritores del Uruguay. Ignacio Fernández de Palleja (1978, Trente y Tres, Uruguay) is the one poet in this group who lives and works outside Montevideo, in the coastal city of Maldonado where he is co-coordinator of a wonderful reading series at the Cafe

Paris. Alicia Preza co-runs the literary series La pluma azul in Montevideo. Juan Manuel Sánchez and Karen Wild Díaz both often read in the series I have mentioned, and Karen, who is a dancer, often incorporates that work into her readings as well.

So as you read this chapbook, imagine you are sitting at a table in a bar, with a strong glass of tannat, the most Uruguayan wine, among friends and fellow poets while outside, on a leafy street, people walk by in the fall night on their way home to dinner. And settle in among friends to listen to the poetry.

If you are interested in reading more Uruguayan poetry in translation, here are some suggestions:

Anthologies

Hotel Lautreamont: Contemporary Poetry from Uruguay (Shearsman, 2011), edited by *Dispatches* co-editor Kent Johnson and Uruguayan poet Roberto Echavarran is the perfect place to start and it includes more poems by Silvia Guerra.

América invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets (University of New Mexico Press, 2016). The anthology I edited with poets under forty. It has a wide variety of poetic styles and each poet has their own poet/translator so a variety of translations styles as well.

Touching the Light of Day: Seven Uruguayan Poets (Veliz Books, 2016). A selection of earlier poets, none still living, Julio Herrera y Reissig, Susana Soca, Alfredo Mario Ferreiro, Líber Falco, Pedro Piccatto, and Humberto Megget, translated into English by the Uruguayan poet Laura Chalar. I especially love Líber Falco.

Individual collections

Some of the greats:

Mario Benedetti: *Witness: The Selected Poems of Mario Benedetti*, translated by Louise Popkin (White Pine Press, 2012)

Marosa di Giorgio: *I Remember Nightfall*, translated by Jeannine Marie Pitas (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2017). Also, *Diadem: Selected Poems*, translated by Adam Giannelli (BOA, 2012) and *The History of Violets*, translated by Jeannine Marie Pitas (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2010).

Circe Maia: *The Invisible Bridge/ El puente invisible: Selected Poems of Circe Maia*, translated by Jesse Lee Kercheval (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015).

Ida Vitale: *Garden of Silica*, translated by Katherine M. Hedeem and Victor Rodriguez Nuñez (Salt Publishing, 2010).

Books in translation by other, younger Uruguayan poets:

Never Made in America: Selected Poems of Marín Barea Mattos, translated by Mark Statman (Dialogos Books/Lavender Ink, 2017).

The Red Song by Melisa Machado, translated by Seth Michelson (Action Books, 2018)

Fable of an Inconsolable Man by Javier Etchevarren, translated by Jesse Lee Kercheval (Action Books, 2017)

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SILVIA GUERRA

TRANSLATION FROM THE SPANISH BY JESSE LEE KERCHEVAL AND JEANNINE PITAS

On the other end of the line balances the helplessness
But in the middle is everything. Fighting for its impossible form.
Accumulating in ceaseless production. You smell
you hear the background noise which quickens its pulse. It emerges
from dreams mixed with tatters of fog, creaking
with astonishment in the half-light. Rocking, and loving
dialogue rests on laurels of peace. You prefer the month of plowed earth
as marked by memory and this voice
that's heard on the high-speed platforms repeating
don't think — don't think—
don't think—don't think. It holds because the only life the only
way of being alive has dictated this number. That drips into
the specificity of this stretch. Perdition appears in the eyes
just when the illness is taking a turn.
The projection pulls the halo further away. That tug. No one will know anything anymore.
Only the voice booming on the platform to the beat of the hum
And it seems to say *Chajá! Chajá! Chajá!*

Note: Chajá, here, refers both the sound the train makes and the chajá, a large Uruguayan bird (Chauna torquata) famous for its distinctive song or cry.

En la otra punta de la línea se balancea la impotencia
Pero en medio está todo. Pugnando por su forma imposible.
Acumulándose en el producimiento interminable. Se huele
se oye el ruido de fondo que acelera su pulso. Emerge
de los sueños mezclada con la niebla en jirones, crujiendo
de asombro en la penumbra. Acunada, y el diálogo
amoroso que descansa en la paz del laurel. Preferís el mes de
tierra removida como marca el recuerdo y esa voz
que se escucha en los andenes de alta velocidad repite
no te creas –no te creas–
no te creas –no te creas. Se sostiene porque la sola vida la sola
manera de estar vivo ha dictado esa cifra. Que gotea en
la especificidad del tramo. Aparece en los ojos la perdición
justo cuando la enfermedad daba la vuelta.
La proyección tira del halo más allá. Que jala. Ya nadie sabrá nada.
Solamente retumba la voz de los andenes al compás del zumbido
Y parece que dice Chajá! Chajá! Chajá!

MIGUEL AVERO

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY JONA COLSON

ABSENCES

Their figures
hide unwillingly.
They appear and disappear
in the interminable traffic,
we lose sight of them,
we find them again.

To the naked eye
the gray sidewalk burns.

Soaking their soles
the sleeping asphalt
is the route
for infinite seas.

Slowly the sun sets between buildings.

The blinding light erects
shadows in the alley.
With each construction,
with each block of stone raised,
legions of beings
seek to heal reality.

They weave fictional worlds,
among humidity's scars,
a box gathers them together
like the fire of long ago

and sooner or later
as in a deformed dream

the absences revealed
unmask loneliness.

AUSENCIAS

Sus figuras
se esconden sin quererlo.
Aparecen y desaparecen
en el interminable tránsito,
les perdemos la pista,
los volvemos a encontrar.

A simple vista
les quema la vereda gris.

Empapándoles las suelas
el dormido asfalto
es recorrido
por infinitos mares.

Atardece lentamente entre los edificios.

La cegadora luz erige
sombras en el callejón.
En cada construcción,
en cada cubo de piedra levantado,
legiones de seres
buscan subsanar la realidad.

Se tejen mundos ficticios,
entre cicatrices de humedad,
una caja los reúne
como el fogón de antaño

y tarde o temprano
como en un deformado sueño

las reveladas ausencias
desenmascaran soledad.

HEGEMONY

What sheltered
our heart
yesterday,
was losing sharpness
in the humidity.

Before the breast
became stone,
before our mouth
accumulated those ruins

the same window
piled up other moments.

Everything sublime
stopped in the distance,
those shoes
wandering
where we would like
to be again,
the old scars
forgotten.
We are not the same.

Walls that surrounded
infinite beings
are not lodged
moored
inside us,

the sky is watching us
like a naked abyss,

the water establishes
its celestial hegemony.

HEGEMONÍA

Lo que albergó
nuestro corazón
ayer,
fue perdiendo nitidez
en la humedad.

Antes de que el pecho
se convirtiera en piedra,
antes de que en nuestra boca
se acumularan esas ruinas

la misma ventana
apilaba otros momentos.

Detenido en la distancia
todo lo sublime,
aquellos zapatos
errantes
en los que quisiéramos
volver a estar,
las viejas cicatrices
olvidadas.
No somos los mismos.

Paredes que rodearon
infinitos seres
se alojan ahora
amarradas
en nuestro interior,

el cielo nos observa
como a un desnudo abismo,

el agua establece
su hegemonía celeste.

FOREWORD

Extension of thunderclouds in childhood.
The faded days of yesterday
are reduced to ashes
absorbed by your clear eyes.
What in that time
put down roots
remains in an underworld
of impenetrability.

Knowing
that nothing will come to your aid:
neither the feet of a child pressing the grass
or outlining the bare sides
of the stream,
nor the wind shaking
like a wet dog.

You can no longer distinguish
the lightning bolt in night's face.
How to unearth
the bleeding sky
you contemplated before?

The rain foreshadowed the future
but we were children
with no need to remember.

PRÓLOGO

Extensión de nubarrones en la infancia.
Reducidos a cenizas
los descoloridos días del ayer
absorbidos por tus limpios ojos.
Lo que en aquel tiempo
echó raíces
permanece en un submundo
de impenetrabilidad.

Recapitular sabiendo
que nada vendrá en tu auxilio:
ni los pies de niño aprisionando el pasto
o delineando los costados
desnudos del arroyo,
ni el viento sacudiéndose
como un perro ensopado.

Ya no distingues
el tajo del relámpago en el rostro de la noche.
¿Cómo desenterrar
el cielo sangrante
antes contemplado?

La lluvia prologaba el porvenir
pero éramos niños
sin necesidad de recordar.

ONEIRIC

Neither your return to the almost invisible earth,
nor the fleeting path of your fingers
in the blue of the crystals,
could turn the walls
of my dreams somber.

Nor the helpless
wind-blown clouds,

Nor the notebook wet
with my faded drawings.

Nor those eyes
simulating
your watery spheres

or the dog prowling
the ruthless corners
of winter.

But one day
the black harvest
will grow on my land,

I'll keep the cold gun
in my closet

and I will recognize in my gestures
the signs of this afternoon

that after the fissures
of a memory
will no longer be mine.

ONÍRICO

Ni tu regreso a la tierra casi invisible,
ni el camino sin retorno de tus dedos
en el azul de los cristales,
pudieron volver sombrías
las paredes de mis sueños.

Ni las indefensas nubes
medidas por el viento,

ni el cuaderno mojado
con mis desteñidos garabatos.

Tampoco aquellos ojos
simulando
tus líquidas esferas

o el perro merodeando
las esquinas
despiadadas del invierno.

Pero un día
la cosecha negra
crecerá en mi predio,

guardaré en mi armario
el arma fría

y reconoceré en mis gestos
los indicios de esta tarde

que tras las fisuras
de un recuerdo
habrá dejado de ser mía.

LAURA CHALAR

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY THE AUTHOR

JUICE

There is something good in the fact of
slicing an orange
and knowing you will drink juice
when you return.

When you return, or maybe don't –
because it must be said that you never
leave completely.

Not while your scent remains
in a hollow in the bed
or yesterday's shirt
is still hanging on a chair.

With a stubborn kiss still on my mouth
and your love in my favor
like a good wind
this act of squeezing an orange
has something of a warm,
candid liturgy.

JUGO

Hay algo bueno en el hecho de
cortar una naranja
y saber que vas a tomar jugo
cuando vuelvas.

Cuando vuelvas, o tal vez no –
porque hay que decir que nunca
te vas del todo.

No mientras se quede tu perfume
en el hueco de una almohada
o la camisa de ayer
cuelgue todavía de la silla.

Con un beso pertinaz aún en mi boca
y tu amor a mi favor
como un buen viento
este acto de exprimir una naranja
tiene algo de liturgia
tibia y cierta.

DIEGO CUBELLI

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY JESSE LEE KERCHEVAL

OBLIVION WILL SPEAK

I

he who forgets dies twice
the emptiness of the blood
 matters little

this little truth

all a lie.

II

elusive shroud in the world
hands at work

but it is not enough to say

the only wisdom is oblivion

III

there are no lines in the body
nor in things

there are limits between the skin
and others

the gaze understands

DIRÁ EL OLVIDO

I

muere dos veces el que olvida
poco importa el vacío
de la sangre

esta poca verdad

toda la mentira.

II

mortaja esquiva en el ámbito
trabajan las manos

pero no alcanza con decirlo

la única sabiduría es el olvido.

III

no hay líneas en el cuerpo
ni en las cosas

hay límites entre la piel
y los otros

entiende la mirada.

IV

the flesh is so little
the holes
and your brief say

if I could
maybe
 who knows.

V

I stole oblivion
 and the words

centuries to imitate
what no one knows

 I work for the silence.

VI

reason for existence

all
 depends on
the red of the beholder.

VII

a rough pretense

the sound
of memory.

IV

tan poco es la carne
los huecos
y tu breve decir

si pudiera
tal vez
 quien sabe.

V

robé el olvido
 y las palabras

siglos para imitar
lo que nadie sabe

 trabajo para el silencio.

VI

razón de existencia

todo
 es según
el rojo con que se mire.

VII

un áspero fingir

el sonido
de la memoria.

VIII

return to me the last memory
a slight record
rest

the numbers are not enough

The rondeau sounds the
just tempest never lies

IX

winter matters

nothingness
a little

VIII

devuelve el último recuerdo
un leve registro
resto

no dan los números

rondó suena nunca miente la
justa tempestad.

IX

importa invierno

un poco
la nada

IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ DE PALLEJA

TRANSLATED BY JESSE LEE KERCHEVAL

Egg

IN THE MOST REMOTE PART OF THE COUNTRY, the ñandus feather with ash the green emerging from the red mantel. Men open the earth. One wonders if the color could be the fruit of the revolutions that were here, of the successive destructions. Below the rust-colored mantel comes the foundation, gray and amorphous, hard like an ancestral trauma. A spark blows up every thing. Then, the basalt shows its hollows, its cavities lined with a sharp glittering, ready to make a drug of light at the tiniest crack. Scattered around the place are rocks of different sizes, inexpressive on the outside, inhaling the blue with crystalline teeth thirsty to be adored, converted into silver. Peel and pulp of the hard fruits of the underground tree.

I find an egg-shaped stone. Absolutely opaque, with encrusted in dirt. I take it; I am going to keep it. I'm resolved never to split it, so that inside there is crystal and at the same time there is not, so that the possibility gestates in its greatest brilliance.

HUEVO

EN LA ZONA MÁS LEJANA DEL PAÍS, los ñandúes empluman de cenizas el verde que emerge del manto rojo. Los hombres abren la tierra. Uno piensa si el color será fruto del jugo de las revoluciones que hubo por allí, de las sucesivas destrucciones. Abajo del manto herrumbrado viene el cemento gris y amorfo, duro como un trauma ancestral. Una chispa lo vuela todo. Entonces, el basalto muestra sus oquedades forradas de destellos filosos, preparados para hacer una droga de luz al mínimo resquicio. Andan dispersas por el lugar rocas de tamaños variados, inexpresivas por fuera, aspirando el celeste con los dientes cristalinos sedientos de ser adorados, convertidos en plata. Cáscara y pulpa de las frutas duras del árbol subterráneo.

Encuentro una piedra con forma de huevo. Absolutamente opaca, con incrustaciones de tierra. La guardo, me la voy a llevar. Estoy resuelto a nunca partirla, para que en su interior haya un cristal y al mismo tiempo no lo haya, para que se geste en su mayor brillo la posibilidad.

ALICIA PREZA

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY JULIA LEVERONE

FROM *FEVER'S OVERTURE*

WE'VE BEEN PLAYING FOR A WHILE. We pull the trigger then aim. We laugh too much without a drop of alcohol. Our substance doesn't exist. Jaime's harmonica is mussed in fear and yokes itself to a groan. Suddenly thunder is heard. The bullet perforated the closet and further in there our animal, the only kind that could be with us without mewing, that kind that still tightens further in and in its wound the knot tightens that conforms us in this radio room spattered by the same transmitter that currently is about to turn off but can turn on alone. That cyclical way of looking at ourselves in the mirror is not on the wall. It's a reflection that shows a fragment of our beading nape. The implosive seed deflects each reflection. And we are all one in multiples of threes with the wrong face at the opening. It's ringing now. We look at each other sideways. It's two in the morning. The sheets the repeated pool.

DE OBERTURA DE FIEBRE

ESTAMOS JUGANDO HACE RATO. Jalamos el gatillo y apuntamos. Nos reímos demasiado sin una gota de alcohol. Nuestra sustancia no existe. La armónica de Jaime de despeina de miedo y se acopla en un quejido. De golpe se oye el estruendo. La bala perforó al ropero y más adentro ahí nuestro animal, el único que supo acompañarnos sin maullar, ése que aun aprieta más adentro y en su herida hilvana el nudillo que nos conforma en este cuarto de radio salpicada por la misma emisora que ahora está por apagarse pero se enciende sola. Esa cíclica forma de mirarnos al espejo no está en la pared. Es un reflejo que muestra un fragmento de nuestra nuca goteando. La semilla implosiva desvía cada reflejo. Y todos somos uno en múltiplos de tres con la cara equivocada en la abertura. Está sonando ahora. Nos miramos de reojo. Son las dos de la mañana. Las sábanas el charco repetido.

PERIPHERAL ON THE TIP OF THE MUTED SVELTE, the newest eighth in the kitchen with tin knives seasoning our wait with hunger. There is a welcome prepared, a pill salmon with thermometers will be the hosts of the party. We've already blindfolded ourselves to eat the space we don't see. Something gropes imprecisely, if this were my hand I could write but my body parts change all the time, this mouth I carry no longer belongs to me. A foot falls on the tower, a plant that grows in low humidity unabashedly to bind us. From us something sprouts.

PERIFÉRICOS EN LA PUNTA DEL ESBELTO MUDADO, el nuevo del octavo en la cocina con sus cuchillos de lata sazonando de hambre nuestra espera. Hay una bienvenida preparada, un salmón de pastillas y termómetros serán los anfitriones de la fiesta. Ya nos vendamos los ojos para comernos al espacio que no vemos. Algo tantea equivocadamente, si ésta fuera mi mano yo podría escribir pero las partes cambian todo el tiempo, esta boca que llevo ya no me pertenece. Cae un pie sobre la torre, una planta que crece en la humedad baja sin dignidad para enredarnos. Algo nos brota.

THIS SMALL TABLE BRIMS FROM THE SPELL and we all dance over the wool dog, when we couldn't discern whether anything existed to make us owners, to give illusion to the made. If a blind person was in the hall, if we were within the epidemic of a salt mistaken between bodies that spoke of neons, within steel spurs our fever went down. Someone opened the building's door and we were inert like threads of rain that replicate on that banner that once strung light, the lost morning. If we escape through there, those of us who see without speaking man's alphabets. If we already knew nothing was real, if the invisible always covered us like the bull in its female sliding from death in the last yelp of the bullfighter: to kill to live and not say so.

ESTA MESITA DESBORDA DEL CONJURO CUANDO TODOS bailamos sobre el perro de lana, cuando no discerníamos si algo existía para hacernos los dueños, para dar ilusión a lo creado. Si era una ciega en el pasillo, si estábamos nosotros bajo la peste de una sal equivocada entre cuerpos que hablaban de neones, entre espuelas de acero nos bajaba la fiebre. Alguien abrió la puerta del edificio y estábamos inertes como hileras de lluvia que se replican en esa banderola que alguna vez hilvanó de luz, la mañana perdida. Si por ahí escapamos, los que miramos sin decir alfabetos del hombre. Si ya sabíamos que nada era real, si lo invisible todo el tiempo nos topaba como el toro en su hembra resbalando de muerte en el último grito del torero: matar para vivir y no decirlo.

THIS MORNING THE FEVER ROSE. Forty degrees. We see a fan that opens from the wall and comes toward us like a massive hummingbird that slices colors over boiling skin. It sprays us in rounds with something moist that hangs from its extreme. But this hazes in one turn, we are so many sick that it can't linger on just one. Some see a woman, others see nothing more than a figure reviving our eyes to lift ourselves a while from our pillows. Some scream, others cry. Others nothing. We can barely un-blur the wrinkled sheets covering us. Ernestina has the biggest teeth and smiles at the feet of my bed. I'll be jostled, she'll come close to bite me. I can't distinguish where her inner thigh ends and my hand begins. Her teeth are already above my back. It goes on lowering. The fan retreats and my fever flies over her body. No one will save me. I only hear the jumble of our future child. We are the picture of a flood when the immobile gives up its illustrated permanence. The thermometers hang from the ceiling about to explode. Mercury will rain down on us.

ESTA MAÑANA SUBIÓ LA FIEBRE. Cuarenta grados. Vemos un abanico que se abre desde la pared y viene hacia nosotros como un inmenso colibrí que destaja colores sobre la piel hirviente. Nos moja al pasar con algo húmedo que cuelga de su extremo. Pero se desdibuja en un vaivén, somos tantos enfermos que no puede quedarse en uno solo. Algunos ven a una mujer, otros no vemos más que una figura reavivando nuestros ojos para erguirnos un rato en las almohadas. Algunos gritan, otros lloran. Otros nada. Apenas podemos vislumbrar la sábana arrugada que nos cubre. Ernestina tiene los dientes más grandes y sonrío a los pies de mi cama. Seré vejado, se acerca para morderme. No puedo distinguir donde acaba su entrepierna y comienza mi mano. Sus dientes ya están sobre mi espalda. Sigue bajando. El abanico se aleja y mi fiebre discurre sobre su cuerpo. Nadie me salvará. Solo escucho el balbuceo de nuestro futuro hijo. Somos la foto de un aluvión cuando lo inmóvil dispersa su ilustrada permanencia. Los termómetros cuelgan del techo a punto de estallar. Mercurio lloverá sobre nosotros.

ALREADY LIGHT ENTERS THE SLITS ON OUR FACES. We rave a little, we couldn't deliver what was requested on time. Still, they keep waiting. We aren't ones for orders nor for hearing laments in the morning. We also learned to fear Ernestina. We were left with a desire to go back in the basement. Something pushes us again to the rusted door. And we can't keep from sneaking behind another poem like caterpillars. As always, unapproachable. Which is why we wrote a few notes that nourish at least what the mouth encloses. Already the music of the four twins plays. The cat from the perch follows. They say it came from the basement and now returns. I would suspect this also, except for that left eye that appears to sense each one of the strokes we leave in the nights. They say that we came from outside. Linger and see, something from inside. If no one said that an invention was sufficient. An undeniable vertigo transferred our location. We'll write the whole night like we were them. No one asked us if we wanted to be this cadence of alienated observatories. If I don't speak of descent nor of planets. Hilarious dialogue of the eyes at their opening. Already the drawbridge lifts over the absurd outline we keep underneath the plates of our body. We sweat all night. It's fairly inaudible. We aren't programmed for this. Our body too was in the photo. We learned to eat the fruit and no one blames us. We're fairly alike.

YA ENTRA LA LUZ POR LAS HENDIJAS DE LOS ROSTROS. Deliramos un poco, no pudimos entregar a tiempo lo pedido. Aun así, siguen esperando. No somos buenos para las órdenes ni para escuchar lamentos a la madrugada. También supimos tener miedo de Ernestina. Nos quedamos con ganas de volver al sótano. Algo nos empuja otra vez hacia la puerta herrumbrada. Y no podemos dejar de deslizarnos como orugas atrás de otro poema. Como siempre, inabordable. Por eso escribimos algunas notas que sustentan al menos lo que la boca encierra. Ya suena la música de las cuatro gemelas. El gato de la percha viene detrás. Dicen que vino del sótano y ahora regresa. Yo también sospecharía, sino fuese por ese ojo izquierdo que parece adivinar cada uno de los trazos que dejamos en las noches. Dicen que nosotros venimos de afuera. Quédese para mirar, algo de adentro. Si nadie dijo que un invento fuese suficiente. Un vértigo indudable nos trasladó de sitio. Vamos a escribir toda la noche como si fuésemos ellos. Nadie nos preguntó si queríamos ser esta cadencia de observatorios alienados. Si no hablo de linaje ni de planetas. Hilarante diálogo de los ojos en su abertura. Ya se alza el puente móvil sobre la absurda maqueta que guardamos debajo de las láminas del cuerpo. Sudamos toda la noche. Es algo inaudito. No estamos programados para eso. Supimos comer del fruto y nadie nos culpa. En algo nos parecemos.

JUAN MANUEL SÁNCHEZ

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY JESSE LEE KERCHEVAL

FROM *FOR THE SEALS*

IV

Caffeine is
the motor of capitalism
dispels the morning mists
when there is no desire
it pushes the affection balances
that never have
enough hugs
robs hours of sleep
when biology urges
deadlines.

Caffeine is
the motor of capitalism
but it alcohol also works
prozac, antipsychotics
fluoxetine, anti-acids
cocaine, muscle relaxers.

But better
not to talk about this
it's not something
the department
of human resources
knows about.

V

Each sale
each action
each atom of
the air you breath.

DE *PARA LAS FOCAS*

IV

La cafeína es
el motor del capitalismo
disipa las nieblas matutinas
cuando no hay ganas
apura los balances mimosos
que nunca tienen
suficientes abrazos
roba horas al sueño
cuando urge la biología
de los plazos.

La cafeína es
el motor del capitalismo
también sirve el alcohol
el prozac, los ansiolíticos
la fluoxetina, los antiácidos
la cocaína, los descontracturantes.

Pero de eso
mejor no hablar
no sea cosa
que se entere
el departamento
de recursos humanos.

V

Cada venta
cada acción
cada átomo del
aire que respiras.

Has
its ticket
its receipt
its bill
its invoice
its voucher
its authorization.

And so
between trade
and finance
we fell
the world

VI

Squares with glass
this world is
squares with glass.

Good and sterile
every sharp edge numbered
squares with glass.

And if possible
an apartment
on a very high floor
tiny people
to remind me
that they're there
to be stepped on.

Tiene
su boleta
su recibo
su remito
su factura
su comprobante
su conforme.

Y así
entre comercio
y finanzas
talaremos
al mundo.

VI

Cuadrado y con vidrios
el mundo es
cuadrado y con vidrios.

Bien aséptico
cada arista numerada
cuadrado y con vidrios.

Y en lo posible
es un piso
bien alto
la gente pequeña
me recuerda
que está
para ser pisada.

X

A seal should
complain about how low
his salary is
should never stop
complaining how low
his salary is.

But always
show off
how much he makes.

XIV

None of this
may be true
on the first day
money was created
on the second
the corporations
and on the third
the mirrored buildings.

None of this
cures my vertigo
I know one day
it will all disappear
the convertibles, the bank accounts
the cell phones, the business magazines
the adjective “exclusive”.

And the misery
will come.

X

Una foca debe
quejarse de lo bajo
que es su sueldo
nunca dejar de
quejarse de lo bajo
que es su sueldo.

Pero siempre
aparentar
que gana mucho.

XIV

Nada de esto
puede ser cierto
en el primer día
se creó el dinero
en el segundo
las corporaciones
y en el tercero
los edificios espejados.

Nada de esto
me quita el vértigo
sé que un día
todo desaparecerá
los convertibles, las cuentas bancarias
los celulares, las revistas empresariales
y el adjetivo exclusivo.

Y vendrá
la miseria.

The misery
is so sure
of winning
that it gives us
a head start
on a fortune

XV

All of us fear
the sacred signal
ordering the cosmos
from the forbidden office.

A mysterious voice
on the other end
of the line
and a hieroglyphic
signature
at the bottom of
banking documents.

In terror
the seals
barely manage
to keep
applauding.

La miseria
está tan segura
de ganar
que nos da
toda una fortuna
de ventaja.

XV

Todos temen
el signo sagrado
ordenando el cosmos
desde la oficina prohibida.

Una voz misteriosa
del otro lado
de la línea
y una jeroglífica
rúbrica
bajo los documentos
bancarios.

En su pavor
las focas
sólo atinan
a seguir
aplaudiendo.

KAREN WILD DÍAZ

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY RON PAUL SALUTSKY

POEMS WRITTEN IN OBLIVION

being human

the human itself may not transcend being
since there is in the world at least someone
before whom we undress
before whom we are
totally
vulnerable

all the stones you placed

all the stones you placed
on my back:
hatred, bitterness
...but when I'm alone
and where is life:
all the flowers you placed
on my back
—oh how cruel
your tenderness

mirror

there was a time when looking in the mirror
it was not me
it was someone like me
but not me
likewise some time ago
I look in the mirror and I am I
no doubt
it's nothing more than my image

LOS POEMAS QUE ESCRIBÍ EN EL OLVIDO

ser humano

propio de no trascender al ser humano
es que haya en el mundo al menos alguien
ante quien nos desnudemos
ante quien seamos
totalmente
vulnerables

todas las piedras que puso

todas las piedras que puso
en mi espalda:
odio y amargura
...pero cuando estoy sola
y dónde está la vida:
todas las flores que puso
en mi espalda
-ay qué cruel
su ternura

el espejo

hubo un tiempo en que al mirarme al espejo
no era yo
era alguien semejante a mí
pero no yo
igualmente ya hace un tiempo
me miro al espejo y soy yo
no hay dudas
que es nada más que mi imagen

to the bone

an affection, deep affection
innocent desire for happiness
a playing with time and losing track
and believing above all in the links
like a mystic
I see my bone up ahead
I see myself from afar
from my present I keep my distance
am I bone or am I flesh?
and what if my bone is mirage?
I do
I could not even move my flesh
I'm on my ankles
training

prunes

my old love
big sad eyes
the color of honey
and big and sad
so big and so sad
and with so much love
as to close themselves
and leave you inside

my old love
drying
upside down
like flowers
my old love
grapes
prunes

hacia el hueso

un cariño, un profundo cariño
un deseo inocente de felicidad
un jugar con el tiempo y perder la cuenta
y creer sobretodo en los vínculos
como una mística
veo a mi hueso allá adelante
me veo a lo lejos
de mi actualidad guardo distancia
¿soy mi hueso o soy mi carne?
¿y si mi hueso es espejismo?
hago
no he podido aún trasladar mi carne
estoy en mis tobillos
me entreno

ciruelas pasas

mi viejo amor
grandes ojos tristes
color de miel
y grandes y tristes
tan grandes y tristes
y con tanto amor
como para cerrarse
y dejarte adentro

mi viejo amor
secándose
cabeza abajo
como las flores
mi viejo amor
uvas
ciruelas pasas

one of these nights

he leaves the closet, leaves the books awhile
since his back and neck
lived on my desk
and his warm naked body
slept in my bed
even longer since I awaited him at my door
I don't guess we'll cross paths at the corner
going to meet
or when I look for calls, messages,
they are not his messages, calls I look for
but
mechanically
the figure and last substrate of his thought
still breathe
under piles of blankets
I get distracted, sigh:
he will die
one of these nights

cualquiera de estas noches

se va del ropero, se va de los libros
hace tiempo su espalda y su nuca
no habitan mi escritorio
y ya no dormita en mi cama
su tibio cuerpo desnudo
más tiempo aún no lo espero en mi puerta
no imagino cruzarlo en la esquina
ir a su encuentro
o cuando busco llamadas, mensajes
no son sus mensajes, llamadas que busco
pero
mecánicamente
su figura y el sustrato último de su pensamiento
aún respiran
bajo montones de frazadas
me distraigo, suspiro:
se va a morir
cualquiera de estas noches

THE POETS

Miguel Avero was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1984. He is a founder of Orientación Poesía which brings poetry readings and workshops to high schools throughout Uruguay. His books include *Arca de Aserrín*, *Micaela Moon*, *Que Nadie Preguntate Por Ti* and *La Pieza*. His work appears in translation in the anthology *América invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets* and in *Palabras Errantes: Latin American Literature in Translation*, *Prairie Schooner* and the *Tupelo Quarterly*.

Laura Chalar was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1976. A lawyer by profession, she is the author of five poetry and two short story collections, as well as of several translations from and into Spanish and one children's book. Her anthology *Touching the Light of Day: Six Uruguayan Poets* is available from Veliz Books. She translated her own poem featured here.

Diego Cubelli was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1990. He is the author of *Reino del apóstata*, (LoQueVendr., 2014); *Trabajo para el silencio*, (Yaugurú, 2015); *No todas las luciérnagas el dulce pecho agrandan* y *De tu país ya no se vuelve*, (Edición digita, 2016). He is the editor of the journal *Sitio de poesía* and vice president of the Casa de los Escritores del Uruguay.

Ignacio Fernández de Palleja was born in Trente y Tres, Uruguay in 1978. He works as a teacher of Spanish and Portuguese. He is the author of the poetry collections *Poemas desde un Peugeot rojo y una carretera quieta* (civiles iletrados), *Poemas altibajos* (Trópico Sur) and the story collection *En negro y negro* (Estuario Editora). His work appears in translation in the anthology *Earth, Water and Sky: A Bilingual Anthology of Environmental Poetry* (Dialogos Books).

Silvia Guerra was born in 1961 in Maldonado, Uruguay. Her books include *Un mar en madrugada* (Hilos Editora, Buenos Aires, 2018), *Pulso* (Amargod ediciones, Madrid, 2011), and *Estampas de un tapiz* (Plaqueette, Pen Press, New York, 2006). She is also the author of *Todo comienzo lugar*, co-edited with the Cuban poet José Kozzer (Editorial Casa Vacía, Richmond- Virginia, 2016) and *Fuera del relato* (Bassarai, Spain, 2007), a fictionalized biography of Lautréamont. From 2009-2011, she was the co-editor of the seminal Uruguayan poetry press *La Flauta Mágica*. In 2012 she was awarded the Morosoli Prize in Poetry for her career.

Alicia Preza was born in Montevideo in 1981. She is a Uruguayan poet, playwright, theater director, and actress. Her book of poetic prose, *Obertura de la fiebre* [Fever's Overture], emerged in 2016 (Editorial Yaugurú). Her poems appeared in translation in the anthology *América invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets* (The University of New Mexico Press) and in the magazines *Circumference* and *Palabras errantes*. She co-runs the literary group La pluma azul in Montevideo.

Juan Manuel Sánchez was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1983. He is a student in literature at the Universidad de la Republica and works in the Museo Figari in Montevideo. He is the author of *Para las Focas*, which won the 2010 first prize for young poets from Casa de los Escritores del Uruguay. His work has appeared in translation in *Palabras Errantes* and *América Invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets*. Karen Wild Díaz was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1984. She studied philosophy at the University of Paris 8-Vincennes-Saint Denis, and is now an assistant professor at the University of the Republic. Her first book in English, *Anti-Ferule* (Toad Press, 2015) was originally published as *Anti-Férula* (2013, Buenos Aires: Editorial Itinerante; 2014, NiñoBúho cartonera). Her poems have appeared in English translation in *Action Yes*, *Blue Lyra Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *Drunken Boat*, *Waxwing*, and *América Invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets*.

THE TRANSLATORS

Jona Colson's poetry has appeared in *The Southern Review*, *Subtropics*, *The Massachusetts Review*, and other journals. He teaches at Montgomery College in Maryland and lives in Washington, D.C. His translations of Miguel Averó also appear in *América invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets* and various literary magazines. He is currently translating *Arca de Aserrín* by Averó and these poems are from that book.

Jesse Lee Kercheval's recent translations include *The Invisible Bridge. El puente invisible: Selected Poems of Circe Maia* and *Fable of an Inconsolable Man* by Javier Etchevarren. She is also the editor of *América invertida: An Anthology of Emerging*

Uruguayan Poets and Earth, Sky and Water: A Bilingual Anthology of Environmental Poems. She is also the author of fourteen books of poetry and prose including *The Alice Stories*, winner of the Prairie Schooner Fiction Book Prize and the memoir *Space*, winner of the Alex Award from the American Library Association.

Julia Leverone teaches poetry and Spanish at UT Dallas. Her book of selected translations of poems by Paco Urondo, *Fuel and Fire*, is forthcoming from Diálogos Books. Her second chapbook, *Little Escape*, won the 2016 Claudia Emerson Poetry Chapbook Award and is forthcoming from JMWW. Her translations have appeared in literary venues including *Witness*, the *Boston Review*, and *Gulf Coast*. She is the editor of *Sakura Review*.

Jeannine M. Pitas is a poet and Spanish-English translator who has been working on Uruguayan literature since 2006, when she received a Fulbright grant to translate the work of poet Marosa di Giorgio. Her translations include the five-book compendium of di Giorgio's work, *I remember nightfall*, (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2017). Her own works include the poetry chapbooks, *Our Lady of the Snow Angels* and *A Place to Go*, (Lyricalmyrical Press) and the poetry collection *Thank You For Dreaming*. She currently teaches at the University of Dubuque in Iowa.

Ron Paul Salutsky is the author of the poetry collection *Romeo Bones* (Steel Toe Books, 2013), and translator for Uruguayan poet Karen Wild Díaz's *Anti-Ferule*, winner of the Toad Press International Chapbook Series 2015. Ron's poetry, translations and fiction have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *World Literature Today*, *Colorado Review*, *Interim*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Narrative*, *Copper Nickel*, and *América Invertida: An Anthology of Emerging Uruguayan Poets*. Ron lives in Ochlocknee, Georgia, and runs Red Oak Real Estate, a firm dedicated to restoration of midcentury homes in the Florida Panhandle.

