

MASTER OF DISTANCES

SAMPLE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

POETRY

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Shearsman Books, 2019

Nothing is Lost. Selected Poems, translated by Lawrence Schimel,
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Maestro de distancias

*translated from Spanish
by Terence Dooley*

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Solitude, récif, étoile...

S. Mallarmé, 'Salut'

*So time passes before our eyes, cold and indifferent, knowing
nothing of our pain, knowing nothing of our joys, with an icy hand
it leads us further into the labyrinth; at last it leaves us be, and we
look around us and can't make out where we are.*

L. Tieck, *Genoveva*

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Time is an unknown.

Del tiempo no sabemos.

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Time that speeds up, stands still, that doesn't know. Suddenly unsure. Like a dog without a master. A mindset: confusion.

Del tiempo que acelera, que para, que no sabe. Lo inseguro, de pronto. Como perro sin dueño. Un modo de pensar: la confusión.

If the bandages of sleep allow you, look well: someone is coming over the bridge, someone you know nothing about; below, the water flows freely and oscillates its scales, intemperate stream. You gasp like a fish out of water.

Si las vendas del sueño te dejan, mira bien: alguien se acerca por el puente, alguien del que nada sabes; abajo, el agua corre sin obstáculos y agita sus escamas, arroyo intemperante. Boqueas como un pez fuera del agua.

A congregation of clouds, almost sleep-walking, almost vegetal,
taking on the shape of time and its stupor.

*Congregación de nubes, casi sonámbulas, casi vegetales, adop-
tando la forma del tiempo y su narcosis.*

With my heart I passed the winter. Crows came and went with the husk of a tear-duct in their beaks: all was white beneath the eye-lid of a nonexistent sun.

Con mi corazón pasé el invierno. Los cuervos iban y venían con la vaina de un lagrimal en el pico; todo era blanco bajo el párpado de un sol inexistente.

Mitosis of a cell saying *no*, not saying. The eye-lid vibrating, retractile. Rounding the Cape Horn of the day, burning the lifeless folio on the pyre of dreams.

Mitosis de una célula que dice no, que no dice. El párpado vibrante, retráctil. Doblar con palabras el cabo de Hornos del día, quemar el folio inerte en la hoguera del sueño.

You will be the man stretched out on the ground. The long man who gazes long on the stars: eyeless, spiritless, unquestioning. Just the pure inertia of being there, the body's obduracy, that is fear huddled in your ribs, love with no object or commerce.

Serás el hombre echado sobre la tierra. El hombre largo que mira las estrellas largamente: sin ojos, sin afán, sin preguntas. Tan sólo la pura inercia del estar ahí, la terquedad del cuerpo, que es temor encorvado en tus costillas, que es amor sin objeto ni comercio.

You remember that film: the fallow fields covered in snow, the loose dogs, ravening, the hunters in white ermine cloaks, riding down to the river to claim their trophy: a wounded hind. Like a Brueghel painting in which everything happened in slow motion, pitiless as a dream. You remember too the young queen's face: the perfect oval promise of beauty, her maiden lips, the blood that flowed there, prophetic.

Recuerdas aquella película: el barbecho de los campos nevados, los perros sueltos, voraces, los cazadores con sus mantos blancos de armiño que bajaban hasta el río para cobrarse su pieza: una cierva malherida. Como una pintura de Brueghel en la que todo sucediera a cámara lenta, con la impiedad del sueño. Recuerdas también el rostro de la joven reina: el óvalo perfecto de la belleza por hacer, sus labios frescos, la sangre que allí fluía, premonitoria.

Of immaterial time, that weighs out on its scales our pound of flesh.

Del tiempo inmaterial, que mide en su balanza nuestra libra de carne.

In that dream there were three of us against the snow. In that dream we were three crazed people pushing back against the cold.

En aquel sueño éramos tres contra la nieve. En aquel sueño, insensatos, éramos tres contra el empuje del frío.

Lost in dismal games of chance and melancholy. As in this slow and arduous apprenticeship. As in the frenzy of falling leaves.

Extraviados en juegos tristes de azar y melancolía. Así este lento, penoso aprendizaje. Así la furia de las hojas que caen.

How long have we known each other? I never left my post. I looked in the mirror and it was you, it was me. We blent into the same wry face. Inertia of the doomed. We'll go together to the end.

¿Desde cuándo nos conocemos? Nunca dejé mi puesto. Miraba en el espejo y eras tú, era yo. Nos confundíamos bajo idéntica mueca. Inercia de los condenados. Hasta el final iremos juntos.