

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

The Harder You Pull

At last, I was recaptured by his love
Resisting had no effect
Love is like an ocean without a shore
How can one swim there, oh wise one?
Love must be taken right to the end
Many unsuitable things must be accepted
Ugliness must be seen as if it were good.
Poison must be taken as if it were sugar
I was disobedient and did not understand:
The harder you pull, the tighter the rope.

—Raba'a

Hard Heart

The lover left, not noticing my sad heart
And shunned my worldly burning sigh
My tears covered the earth, from one end to another
The unfaithful lover did not even pass my way
My sigh left me and reached seventh heaven
And had no effect whatsoever on his hard heart.

—Jahan Malik Khatun

I Drink Love

Like a flower I shall embrace your love
And then switch off the light of reason.
I shall place my head between your breasts,
I drink love from the scent of your body.

—Homa Katouzian

Soneto

Detente, sobra de mi bien esquivo
Imagen del hechizo que más quiero
Bela ilusión por quien alegre muero
Dulce ficción por quien penosa vivo

—Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz

Stop, shadow of my good elusive
image of the spell that I love the most
Beautiful illusion for whom I gladly die
Sweet fiction for whom painfully I live

Gritei

Gritei seu nome na rua
E você nem virou.
Gritei seu nome no mar,
Largou ferros e zarpou.
Gritei seu nome no céu,
Criou asas e voou.
Gemi seu nome na cama
E você se aconchegou.

—Lígia Vellasco

I Shouted

I shouted your name on the street
And you didn't even turn.
I shouted your name at sea,
you released ancor and set sail.
I shouted your name at the sky,
You grew wings and flew.
I groaned your name in bed
And you snuggled up.

Clouds

I watched as they ruptured,
ash black and pallid I saw mountainous clouds
split and spew rain
for two hours.

Everywhere water, plants and rainwater,
a riot of green on the earth.
My lover's gone off
to some foreign country,
sopping wet at our doorway
I watch the clouds rupture.

Mira says, nothing can harm him.
This passion has yet
to be slaked.

—Mirabai

Five pieces for Soprano and Bassoon by Francisco Mignone, based on Brazilian Popular Folk Texts

Assombração

Na noite preta assombração anda
vagando
A trovoadá pelo céu vai estourando
O Saci anda pedindo a cachaça pra
bebê

O vento vai zunindo pelo mato a
remexê?
Parece até que entre as folhas vai
passando
O diabo rindo do pavor que a gente
tem

E a gente ouve lá no escuro a
gargalhada
Vai vê quem é: Não é nada nem
ninguém. Ai! Ai!
E o vento continua o seu lamento
sem parar
Ui...
Ai de quem pelo mato tem de ir na
noite preta gargalhada do diabo vai
ouvir.
Zum, zum, zum, etc...Oi!

Ghost

In the black night a ghost is
wandering
A thunderstorm explodes in the sky
And the Saci (a one-legged Wood Elf
w/a pipe) is asking for cachaça
(Brazilian hard liquor) to drink
The wind is whistling through the
woods, rustling
It looks like it is passing through the
leaves
And the devil is laughing at the fear
of the people

And we hear, in the darkness, the
laughter
Go see who it is: It is nothing, no one.
Ah! Ah!
And the wind continues his lament
without ceasing
Ooee...
Oh, sad is the one who has to go into
the woods on this dark night. The
devil's laughter is going to hear you.

Quando na Roça Anoitece

Quando na roça anoitece
E o sol ao longe desce
Dando o céu para o luar

A lua surge de prata
Do fundo negro da mata
E o pinho pois-se a chorar, Ah...

No meu peito que é so pena
Depois que meu grande amor
Foi-se embora pro sertão
Meu coração desolado
Meu coração altaneiro
Não soube vergar, que brou...Ah...

Canto de Negros

Negro quando canta fica triste mas
não chora e vai lembrando a tristeza
que mora na canção.

Negro fez feitiço pra sua pena acabar
rezou uma reza muito boa pra aquela
tristeza a melhorar

Quem nasce na escravidão há de
penar toda a vida
Negro flor da escravidão tua alma é
pena vivida
Já se foi o cativoiro mas tua sina é ser
cativo

Até o teu amor fugiu
A tua alma inda é escrava daquele
amor que te iludiu! Ah!

When dusk comes to the plantation

When dusk comes to the plantation
The sun sets in the distance
Surrendering the sky to the
moonlight
The silver moon rises
And out of the darkness of the woods
A guitar begins a lament...Ah...

In my chest there is only pain
After my great love
Went away to the plains
My desolate heart
My hopeful heart
Did not know how to bend, it broke...
Ah...

Song of Black People

A black person sings sadly but does
not cry
And remembers the sorrow that lives
in the song.

A black person placed a spell for the
suffering to end
Prayed a very good prayer for the
sorrow to ease

Who is born into slavery suffers an
entire life
Black person, flower of slavery, your
soul is a living torture
Captivity has gone but your fate is to
be captive

Even your love fled
And your soul is still enslaved of that
love that deceived you! Ah!

Canção da Mãe Paupérrima

Drume, drume m'a fiínha
 Calunguinha de sinhá
 Drume fais favô
 drume pra sonhá com seu amô.

Quem nasceu pra padecê
 inda pode remediá
 fecha os oio pra esquecê
 Sonha inté a dô passa

Drume, drume m'a fiínha
 Calunguinha de sinhá
 Drume fais favô
 drume pra fala com seu amô.

Pinhão Quente

Pinhão quente oi gente!
 'stá quente mulata!
 Pinhão quente! Que queima a gente!
 'sta quente mulata!
 Oi, que 'stá quente que 'stá quente

—Portuguese Translations by Irna Priore

Lullaby of the Poorest Mother

Sleep, sleep my little daughter
 My dearest
 Please sleep
 Sleep to dream of your love

Who was born to suffer
 Still has a chance
 Close your eyes to forget
 Dream until the pain goes away

Sleep, sleep my little daughter
 My dearest
 Please sleep
 Sleep to dream that you are speaking
 to your love.

Hot Pine Nuts

Hey Everbody, Hot pine nuts!
 It is hot mulata (a mixed woman)!
 Hot pine nuts! That burns us, dear
 mulata!
 Hey, it is hot, it is hot