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

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 trovoada 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 cativeiro 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 fiinhá
Calunguinha de sinhá
Drume fas favó
drume pra sonhá com seu amô.

Quem nasceu pra padecê
inda pode remediá
fecha os oio pra esquecê
Sonha intê a dó passa

Drume, drume m’ a fiinha
Calunguinha de sinhá
Drume fas favó
drume pra fala com seu amô.

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.

Pinhão Quente
Pinhão quente oi gente!
‘stá quente mulata!
Pinhão quente! Que queima a gente!
‘stá quente mulata!
Oi, que ‘stá quente que ‘stá quente

—Portuguese Translations by Irna Priore

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