

Some poems from *Goose's games* by Elizabeth Hildreth (from *Jocs de l'Oca* by Anna Aguilar-Amat)

**L'original en català a sota.
The Catalan original below.**

Dream

I lose sight of the boy when he quickly disappears
into the hole of the stairs of his father's.
Time goes by. And it seems big and slow.
And all of a sudden one clear and pointed doubt
hits me: it's been just a dream, the fact
that I've ever had a son.
Maybe now I'm waking up from a night of ten years,
from a sleep full of cries and smiles and
lights. And nothing is real but this:
an unfixed waiting period
in the seat of some vehicle, in front of
the power steering that's ignoring its fate.
I can get out, and I do; I walk until I reach the doorbell
and I press it, yes, twice, until I hear the voice, a little impatient
because of my impatience. He says he's coming now.
And he comes. And he smiles. And the dream goes on.

Somni

Perdo de vista al nen quan rabent entra
pel forat de l'escala del seu pare.
Passa el temps. I em sembla molt i lent.
I de sobte m'assalta el dubte transparent i cònic
que hagi estat un mer somni el fet que mai
hagi tingut un fill.
Tal vegada desperto d'una nit de deu
anys, d'un son ple de plors i somriures i
llums. I que el real no sigui sinó això:
una espera inestable a la butaca d'un vehicle,
en front d'un volant conductor que ignora
el seu destí.
Puc descendir, i ho faig, camino fins al timbre
i el pitjo, sí, dos cops, fins que sento la veu,
una mica impacient per la meva impaciència.
Que ara baixa. I baixa. I somriu. I el somni
continua.

Hospital for Dolls

I don't know why it's not easy
to learn those things you already knew.

You inherited your mother's doll
and she was made of porcelain
and she broke immediately.

You and your mother covered and carried her to the hospital.
Her forehead was split open and the blood was white
as a boiled egg.

You don't know what happened when the doll got better.
If you broke her again, or she came back to the
closet in one piece, or if she was taken away from you.
And in any case: forty years later
you'd forgotten,
with all the new toys,
that some things break.

These days, if it doesn't work, it's tossed out;
you buy another one. And then when that one breaks,
you hit it until it explodes so you can replace it.
Everybody knows how to do it: the rich and the poor.
Still, maybe that thing called "patching,"
is reserved for the poor,
even if they're rich.

But the question isn't whether the difficult is worth more.
It's simply about the work you've chosen.
There are the architects and the creators.
Afterwards, there are those who fix things.
And in some places, maybe inside the poems,
the souls of the toys must still be there.

Hospital de nines

No sé perquè no és fàcil
aprendre aquelles coses
que sabies.
Vas heretar la nina de la mare i era
de porcellana i es trencà
de seguida.
La vàreu dur abrigada a l'Hospital.
Tenia el front obert i la sang era
blanca. Com si fos un ou dur.

No sé què va passar quan la nina
es guarí. Si la trencares altre cop, si va
tornar a l'armari sencera o desnonada.
I el cas: que quaranta anys més tard
havies oblidat,
amb les joguines noves,
que hi ha coses que es trenquen.
Ara, si no funciona, es llença;
se'n compra una altra. I fins i tot,
si no fa el que volíem, la podem
colpejar fins que rebenti i així
podem substituir-la.
Això ho sap fer tothom: el ric i
el pobre.
O potser allò que es diu a-pe-da-çar,
només ho sap fer el pobre, tot i que
sigui ric.
Però no és que allò difícil sigui més
valuós. És simplement la professió
que tries.
Hi ha els arquitectes i els creadors.
Després hi ha els qui reparen.
I en algun lloc, potser dins els poemes,

hi ha d'haver encara
ànimes de joguines.

While Taking a Walk

(In the style of Carles H Mor)

A says that B is saying bad things about C to D.

D replies that C is saying bad things about B to A.

So, C will know through D that B is saying bad things about him,
and B will know through A that C is doing the same.

B and C have never spoken to each other. They never will.

A and D will speak about this again.

Tot passejant...

(A la manera de Carles H Mor)

A diu que B parla malament de C a D.

D contesta que C parla malament de B a A.

Així doncs C sabrà per D que B parla malament d'ell,
i B sabrà per A que C fa el mateix.

B i C no havien parlat mai. Mai no ho faran.

A i D tornaran a parlar-ne.

To the Crew of Alitalia AZ75 Flight with Destination Rome*

Flying without wings might seem
easy--but only
if you can train your eyes to see
a lot, to touch a few.

The world is in your hands held by
God, aerodynamics. As you give
a cup of coffee to a passenger, you
smile, you're Robinson Crusoe in
an island-cloud, and you simply ask:
"Look out of the window and write me
a brief poem for my next flight."

*In English in the original

A la tripulació del vol Alitalia AZ75 amb destinació Roma

Volar sens tenir ales semblaria
una experiència fàcil si no fos
perquè cal fer que els ulls s'avinguin
a veure molt i a poder tocar poc.

En la teva mà, el món, que el fil
de Déu sosté, l'aerodinàmica,
mentre serves la tassa de cafè
a un passatger, somrius, ets
Robinson Crusoe a una illa-núvol,
i simplement demanes:
"Mira per la finestra i escriu-me
un breu poema per el meu proper vol".

Friday or “The Alive Mule”

I say to you:

Do you want to come over to eat some beans,
roasted meat and mushrooms?

"Veux tu venir a['] manger des haricots,
viande au feu, des petits gris?"

Because you are my French teacher.

And you say: oui.

Then I dust
my furniture and floor, I pick the dog shit
out of the grass.

Because you are:

my gardener

my plumber

my French chef

my interpreter

my Che Guevara

my bandit

my pirate

my kiss painter

and fart

my spirited chocolate

my photobooth

my serial killer

my dreamer

my driver

my bon vivant

my massage therapist

my trapeze artist

my reader

my dance partner

my useful/unuseful
my rich/poor
my neveremployed.
The forest is Paris and you are
my proprietaire fonciere.
And I clean the whole house and I make lunch.
With the fire and the garlic and parsley.
And I take a shower and I wear my G-string
even though it scratches me.
And you're late. And I write you a text

at three p.m. And you say:
I didn't come for lunch,
I came for dinner.
And I get kind of angry.
And you get kind of angry.
But later we remember the beautiful
things we've said at other
times. And everybody whistles:

*Quiéreme como te quiero a ti,
dame tu amor sin medida...*

And I eat alone.
And later I sit on Mogambo's sofa.
Because you are Ava Gardner
and I am the two black boys. And I write
poems.
And some day you arrive.
The mountain arrives.
And you are a prophet climbing the mountain.
And you are
my Everest. Because of the howling wind.
Because you're like a Sherpa.
And the Sherpa always drives a mule.

And all mules have their carrot.
And the mule's penis jabs into the ice cube tray
and melts.

As the secret of poetry is *quo-vadis* life,
the secret of life is
just poetry.

Divendres o “La mula viva”

Et dic:

« Vols venir a menjar mongeta tendra,
carn a la brasa i fredolics ? »

« Veux tu venir a manger des haricots,
viande au feu, des *fredolics* ? »

Perquè tu ets el meu professor de francès.

I tu dius : oui.

Aleshores trec la pols dels mobles,
frego el terra, recullo la merda
del gos de sobre de la gespa.

Perquè tu ets:

el meu jardiner

el meu lampista

el meu cuiner (francès)

el meu rapsoda

el meu Xè Guevara

el mau bandoler

el meu pirata

el meu pintor de petons

i de pets

la meva xocolatina de licor

el meu fotomaton

el meu *maton* sense foto

el meu somniador

el meu horticultor

el meu conductor

el meu sibarita

el meu massatgista

el meu trapecista

el meu lector
la meva parella de ball
el meu inútil útil
el meu pobre ric
el meu aturat imparable
El bosc és París i tu ets
el meu *proprietaire foncier*
el meu latifundista.
I rento tota la casa, i preparo el dinar.
Amb la brasa i l'all amb julivert.
I abans em dutxo i em poso el tanga
tot i que em piqui.
I tu trigues molt. I t'escric un SMS
a les quatre de la tarda. I em dius:
no és a dinar que vinc,
és a sopar.
I jo m'enfado una mica.
I tu t'enfades una mica.
Però després recordem les coses
boniques que ens hem dit altres
cops. I tots xiulen:
"Kiéreme como te kiero a tí,
dame tu amor con medida"¹.
I dino jo sola.
I després sec al sofà de Mogambo.
Perquè tu ets l'Ava Gardner.
I jo els dos negres. I escric
poemes.
I algun dia, arribes.
La muntanya arriba.
I ets un profeta "montaña arriba".
I ets
el meu Everest. Pel vent que fa.

¹ Adaptació d'una cançó de Juan Luís Guerra

Perquè sembles un sherpa.
I el sherpa sempre porta la seva
mula. I totes les mules tenen la seva
pastanaga.
I el penis de la mula entra dins de la glassonera
i es fon.

Que el secret de la poesia és la vida *quo-vadis*,
i el secret de la vida és
la poesia.

Some poems from *Up, down, strange, charm, top & bottom. 37 particular poems and a Chromatic letter* by Elizabeth Hildreth (from *Amunt, avall, estrany, encant, cim i fons. 37 poemes particulars i una carta cromàtica* by Anna Aguilar-Amat)

10 Minutes of Happiness

Do not close the fist!
Do not press the golden sand that God
has put into the palm of your hand,
because you will lose everything.
Keep your palm open (and the fingers
closed) and enjoy its lovely weight.
There may be 10 minutes of happiness
before a great wind blows it away.
But at least you will have this brief time,
and the certainty that your ambition
didn't make the sand disappear.

10 minuts de felicitat

No tanquis el puny!

No premis la sorra d'or que Déu
ha posat al palmell de la teva mà,
perquè la perdràs tota.
Manté el palmell obert (i els dits
tancats) i gaudeix del seu pes preciós.

Potser només seran 10 minuts de felicitat
abans que un gran vent bufi i se l'emporti.

Però almenys tindràs aquest temps breu,
i la seguretat que no és la teva ambició
qui l'ha fet desaparèixer.

Jealousy

Your jealousy has entered
my mouse trap and has been snapped.
Dog food attracts mice and
mice attract traps and traps attract jealousy.
The one who says "love", "love" is only asking for it.
The baby on the subway is wrapped too warmly,
and this is just one shape of hatred. Even fresh love
sweats and if you don't wash it,
it reeks.
The standing water in the store's back alley,
and any form of hatred is jealousy.
Your pus stinks and the evil makes you blind.
Leave the loneliness to me, I say to you,
and give yourself back your life.
I don't have any of the things you think you might lose.

Gelosia

La teva gelosia ha entrat a la meva
ratonera i s'ha escanyat.

El menjar del gos atreu els ratolins
i els ratolins les trapes i les trapes
la gelosia.

El qui diu “amor”, “amor”, només en demana.

El nadó viatja en metro sempre massa
abrigat, i és una forma d'odi. De l'amor
fresc se'n desprenen uns líquids que
si no es renten *de totes mangueres* poden.

L'aiguamoll d'un mercat al carrer del
darrere i tota forma d'odi és gelosia.

El pus et put i el mal et torna cec.

Deixa'm la soledat, et dic, i retorna't
la vida.

Jo no tinc res del que et pugui ser pres.

Menstruation

You bleed red tears
from your fourth mouth
while your eyes leak
pieces of sea you've seen.
You wonder why life brings you
to the same crossroad, why you
can't get used to it, what was the point
of reading Borges so young or
maybe you never understood him or
maybe it's his fault.
It's up to you to stop the avalanche
of painful thoughts that
invade your brain like an army of GI Joes
somebody's brought to life:
you remember, without wanting to,
all the moments in hospitals,
all those nights without sleeping,
all the absences of those you love who
accuse you of having left them.
You want to go to a village that
isn't on the map anymore
and the map suggests
the name of a place that never existed.
You need to erase the past and stop painting
the future. And to live in the present you find
these lines inside
this gray morning of gray soul.
And you say thanks.
Hopefully your sadness
--at least today—means everybody else feels
a little stronger than usual.

Menstruació

Sagnes llàgrimes roges
per la quarta boca
mentre els ulls vessen
trossos de mar que has vist.
Preguntes perquè la vida et torna
a idèntiques cruïlles, perquè
no t'acostumes, de què
ha servit llegir Borges tan jove
o si mai l'has entès o és
culpa seva.
És cosa teva frenar l'allau
de records dolorosos que
et prenen el cervell
com un exèrcit de War Hammers
que algú ha fet cobrar vida:
recordes sens voler
tots els moments als hospitals,
totes les nits sense dormir,
tota l'absència dels qui estimes que
t'acusa d'haver-los deixat tu.
Vols anar a un poble que ja no surt
al mapa, i el mapa et diu
els topònims de llocs inexistents.
Has d'esborrar el passat i no pintar
el futur. I per viure el present trobes
aquestes ratlles dins
aquest matí gris d'ànima grisa.
I dones gràcies.
Tant de bo el teu desànim
faci que avui els altres
es sentin molt més forts.

The 10 Commitments

For the essential we don't need too much.

Joan Vinuesa

A poor person will never be more solvent than a rich one.

A young person will never be wiser than an old one.

A person from the south will never be accepted like one from the north.

A foreigner will never overtake a native.

An uneducated person will not write poems.

A small language will not say more than a big one.

A woman will never be smarter than a man.

A black person will never be more elegant than a white one.

A weak person will never be more powerful than a strong one.

But the poor person can become rich,

the young, one day, will be old,

the Southerner will give birth to children in the North and

the foreigner will register himself at the Council House.

The uneducated will learn to say new verses,

the small languages will sing at football stadiums.

The weak will sharpen their wit.

However, a woman will never be a man.

And a black person will never be white.

Tell me, my friend,

Is your heart the same color as a black heart?

Then yes, it will be the case:

I will be able to love you like a woman.

Els 10 manaments

Essencialment cal no massa.

Joan Vinuesa

Un pobre mai no serà més solvent que un ric.
Un jove mai no serà més savi que un vell.
Un del sud no serà mai acceptat en societat com un del nord.
Un foraster no manarà un nadiu.
Un inculte no escriurà poemes.
Una llengua petita no dirà més que una de grossa.
Una dona no serà mai més llesta que un home.
Un negre mai no serà més elegant que un blanc.
Un dèbil mai no serà més poderós que un fort.

Però el pobre pot esdevenir ric,
el jove un dia serà vell,
el sureny parirà fills al nord i
el foraster s'empadronarà.
L'inculte aprendrà a dir els seus versos,
les llengües cantaran als estadis.
Els dèbils aguditzaran l'enginy.

Tanmateix una dona mai no serà un home.
I un negre mai no serà un blanc.

Digues-me, amic meu,
¿és el color del teu cor com el d'un negre?
Llavors sí, serà el cas,
que jo et podré estimar com una dona.

The Shape of Happiness

As life goes on,
happiness changes shape.
First it was a starling in
a squadron that shit on
Rome.

After that it was lichen
in a cup of coffee and later
a Tillandsia aeranthos,
a plant without roots,
a carnation of the air
that lives by
hanging on a tree branch or a telephone
wire.

As life goes on,
happiness changes shape,
and today is like an egg that,
in one eye,
can change everything
into the beginning.
Every little thing is the end of a story
and the beginning of a tale.
As the world empties its heart
you are a ship, leaving this port
and arriving slowly at another.
(Dock workers and prostitutes play a short
game of cards in a rancid tavern.)
You are not thirsty or hungry.
You learned to feed yourself
from the wind.
Emptiness fills the sail of absence;
when to succeed or to wreck the ship

are not matters
for others to judge.

As evening goes on,
all evenings go on
like a cloud of fish
underneath the hull
of your ship.
And as the verse goes on
the shark of Monday
is delayed
and one word after another
becomes the deciding moment
like when ice melts
or hot water boils
without changing
temperature.

As the poem goes on,
the idea changes form.
Life goes on like it is
tailored exactly to you,
and the whole suit is stuffed in the sleeve.
You are nothing but a part
of the happiness you're looking for.
You are the eye in an egg, and in the egg
a heart, and in the heart,
a gong
that sounds into the empty
room where you write.

As death goes by,
life changes shape
and it's like a dog
that stares at us behind glass

waiting for breakfast.
And after breakfast,
it stares at us behind glass.

And that's the shape of happiness,
sometimes.

Més sobre la felicitat. Timbes de cartes curtes

A mida que la vida passa
la felicitat canvia de forma.
Primer era un estornell dins
un estol que defecava sobre
Roma.

Després semblava un líquen
dins una tassa de cafè i més tard
una *Tillandsia aeranthos*,
la planta sense arrels,
un *clavell d'aire*, que viu
penjat d'un arbre o d'un fil
del telèfon.

A mida que la vida passa
la felicitat canvia de forma i
avui és com un ou que,
dins d'un ull,
ho pot transformar tot
en un començament.

Cada petita cosa és la fi d'una història
i l'inici d'un conte.

I mentre el món es va buidant d'afectes
tu ets un vaixell que s'allunya d'un port
i que s'acosta lentament a un altre.

(Estibadors i prostitutes juguen
timbes de cartes curtes a la taverna rànica.)

No passes set, ni gana,
car has après a nodrir-te de brisa.
El buit infla la vela de l'essència
quan reeixir o naufragar
no són qüestions que hagin de jutjar
els altres.

A mida que la tarda passa
passen totes les tardes
com un núvol de peixos
sota el casc del teu iot.
I mentre passen versos
el tauró del dilluns
es retarda,
perquè un mot rere un altre
fan el teu moment àlgid
com el gel quan es fon
o com l'aigua quan bull
en què es deté l'augment
de la temperatura.

A mida que el poema passa
la idea va canviant de forma.
La vida passa a mida, com feta
per un sastre,
i el *trajo* és dins la màniga.
De la felicitat que cerques
tu no ets sinó una part:
ets un ull dins d'un ou i dins de l'ou
tens cor, i dins del cor,
un gong
que sona
en la buidor de l'estança on escrius.

A mida que passa la mort
la vida va canviant de forma.
I és com un gos que et guaita
rere el vidre esperant l'esmorzar.
I després d'esmorzar,
et guaita rere el vidre.

Així és la forma de la felicitat,
a voltes.