

THE SEEDS OF TIME

Poetry Of Manuel Maples Arce
1919-1980

• **bilingual edition** •

translated by Diane J. Forbes

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Para don Manuel

“... a [sus] plantas, igual que un haz de flores,
pongo la estrofa de mi rendimiento.”

(MMA, de “A Puebla”)

Para Mireya

“¡Oh tiempo! ¡Oh río de la existencia!”

(MMA)

Para doña Blanca

“Una brizna de muguet...”

(MMA)

I. Introduction

“Remember me’ es lo que pido. / ‘Remember me’ is what I ask.” Maples Arce didn’t want to be forgotten and he didn’t want to forget. He wanted to remember and be remembered. This preoccupation with presence and loss starts with the dichotomy of separation vs. union in his early poetry collections: fugacity, never being able to retain anything in his grasp, goodbyes, separation, and a consequent desire for union, harmony, continuation. This Modern problem of things being broken or absent, wanting to fix them and return to harmony, while simultaneously being fascinated by everything new, dynamic and of the moment, so prevalent for Maples Arce in the 1920s, grows to deeper proportions in the 30s and 40s regarding the creative force and existential questions, and continues in the later poems of the 60s and 70s on a more intimate level. Remembrance and oblivion, continuing and ceasing, presence and loss, creation and destruction, life and death, renovation and stagnation, like waves rolling in to shore, these fill Maples Arce’s poetry.

Manuel Maples Arce was born May 1, 1900, in Papantla, Veracruz, Mexico, to Manuel Maples and Adela Arce (the names make it seem like destiny). His birth date has been copied incorrectly (as 1898) in scores of publications. Indeed, he was born with the century and matured along with it, through energetic youth, revolution, lively creativity, intellectual pursuits, politics, marriage, family,

diplomacy, war, conflict, retirement, retrospection, and introspection. He studied law, worked in government, advocated for social justice, had a long and highly respected career in the Mexican diplomatic corps around the world (four continents), promoted Mexican culture, had a loving family, read everything and knew everyone, traveled everywhere, wrote important engaging poetry, and participated in a lifelong literary tertulia with the world, always fascinated by poetry, languages, theater, and art. The detail in his memoirs proves that he did remember everything.

Maples Arce is very much in vogue in Mexico right now. A quick internet search reveals scores of images and entries. Perhaps his current somewhat restricted name recognition outside of Mexico is due to the fact that he was not very prolific in his poetry production (four short volumes in 25 years, one later set spanning the next 35 years), while he more prolifically over the years dedicated himself to conversation about literature and art, to cultural diffusion, essay writing, and to his job as a diplomat. In the 1920s, however, Manuel Maples Arce was well known in Mexican literary and art circles as the leader and prime instigator of the avant-garde, with pop “happenings,” café discussions, and articles and poems in every Mexico City newspaper’s literary supplement, just about every week. He collaborated with the Mexican muralists. He brought the Mexican Revolution to literature. This was no small feat, and it influenced all Mexican literature that followed, opening the door for modernization and experimentation. He was very active in the 20s, got to know important established writers as well as new writers, musicians and artists. He made himself known, and made his desire to

renovate poetry known. Maples published manifestos and two volumes of poetry in Mexico City in the early 1920s. His publication work in Jalapa in the mid- to late-1920s was mostly state press on public education, labor and social justice topics, except for some literature by his Estridentista colleagues and his own book of poetry, *Poemas Interdictos* (1927). As Maples Arce moved into the diplomatic service in 1935, his writing traveled with him. Friends abroad wrote book reviews and congratulatory notes on his new publications, especially the 1947 *Memorial de la Sangre*, with some copies of reviews appearing in Mexico City newspapers, but the effect was perhaps not as direct as it might have been had he been writing in Mexico. Nevertheless, life abroad was what fueled the creative fires for Maples' mid-career poetry, finding reflection and inspiration in history, art, and ancient civilizations, along with witnessing the suffering and destruction of war. Back in Mexico after retiring, his later poetry explores autobiography and the "big picture" along with personal preoccupations about life and death. The three vanguardista poetry collections (*Andamios Interiores*, 1922; *Urbe*, 1924; *Poemas Interdictos*, 1927) were published in small numbers, which was common at the time. *Memorial de la Sangre* (1947), written while in Europe, was published in Mexico while he lived in Panama. The third volume of his memoirs was published in Mexico posthumously (1983), but the first two volumes were published in Spain while he lived in Lebanon (1964 and 1967), and the de-facto fifth book of poetry, which gathered the previously uncollected poems, did not appear until shortly after Maples Arce's death, as it was placed at the end of the complete poetry (*Las semillas del tiempo*, Mexico, 1981, circulated in 1982).

Notes for another volume of poetry and other manuscripts were stolen along with a suitcase in Colombia in 1952. The fact that Maples was away from Mexico for years at a time during the 1930s-60s may have caused his later work to be less well known by the Mexican public, while the later work was better known abroad than his vanguardista period. Maples' 1940 polemical anthology of Mexican poetry caused more harm than good to his reputation, due to conflicts with the Contemporáneos group of poets. In all, a poet arguably of the stature of César Vallejo or William Carlos Williams, for example, and who was the internationally acknowledged leader of the avant-garde in Mexico, Maples Arce's work is known today mostly in Mexico among university literary circles and by some artists, and only his Estridentismo period is discussed. Over the years, there have been waves of interest in his work in Mexico on the occasion of his or Estridentismo's anniversaries, but he is still not much anthologized, though there has been quite a lot of interest in his early work recently, especially now in the age of electronic publication and You Tube. Long ignored, Maples Arce's estridentista work is now in vogue in Mexico among scholars, teachers and students, it is taught in Mexican university literature courses and selections can be found in electronic media. There have also been some recent museum exhibits on Estridentismo, including artifacts donated by the Maples family. Still, he is virtually unknown by non-Mexican Hispanists and unknown by the English-language literary community in the U.S. The Universidad Veracruzana press has published a new printing (2013) of *Las semillas del tiempo*, the original 1981 edition of which, by Fondo de Cultura Económica, had long been out of

print. I hope that it along with the present bilingual edition, will help to encourage more familiarity with Maples Arce's work and gain him the recognition and remembrance that his poetry so well deserves.

Maples Arce started writing poetry as a teenager in Tuxpan and Veracruz in the milieu of Modernismo. By 1921 in Mexico City, he and his closest friends were itching to shock the literary public into the 20th century and renovate literature, in effect, bring the Mexican Revolution to the arts. Maples writes his first avant-garde manifesto, "*Actual, No. 1: Hoja de Vanguardia, Comprimido Estridentista de Manuel Maples Arce*," and posts the sheet on the streets of Mexico City overnight in December, 1921. It aimed to shock and awaken the sleepy postmodernista literati and academics and start something new—"Chopin to the electric chair!" The manifesto named several international avant-garde writers and artists, and proposed literary renovation and a cult of the present moment ("Hagamos actualismo"), akin to Ezra Pound's exhortation "Make it new," but more like "Make it Now!" This had at least part of the desired effect, scandalizing the establishment and getting Maples Arce attention from literary friend and foe alike. A series of performance art events followed around the city, and word spread. Some artist friends introduced Maples to writer Arqueles Vela, and they began a new movement, "Estridentismo." Word spread in the capital and to other cities, and soon they were joined by artist Fermín Revueltas, writer Germán List Arzubide and sculptor Germán Cueto, then artists Ramón Alva de la Canal and Leopoldo Méndez, and writer Salvador Gallardo. Allies included Diego Rivera, Silvestre Revueltas, Fernando Leal, Jean Charlot, and others, in-

cluding muralists, photographers, and musicians. Maples knew all of the Mexican muralists very well and they exchanged ideas from their time at the Academia de San Carlos and the Escuela al Aire Libre de Coyoacán to the time the murals were being painted in the Preparatoria and Bellas Artes and beyond. It was a lively period of creativity in all of the arts in Mexico.

In 1922, Maples Arce published his first volume of poetry, *Andamios Interiores*. This book is a bridge between Modernismo and Vanguardismo, showing the poet who wants to ring in the new, while still a bit melancholic over losing his old love. The poems are a beautiful combination of innovative modern-world image structures, juxtaposition of opposites, unexpected image combinations, technical prowess in verse construction (such as manipulation of syllable count to emphasize crucial points in the poem), and an anxiety over loss and separation. The interplay between the poet-narrator and his lover symbolizes the death of Modernismo and the move to Vanguardismo.

Urbe (1924) brings to the fore Maples Arce's growing political conscience and deep concern for workers' rights, the gradual corruption of the Revolution, violence in state and national politics, and his great admiration for the dynamic modern city. Perhaps it was fate that May 1, his birthday, would become international workers' day. The Estridentista magazine *Horizonte* published a number of articles on workers' rights, from Jalapa. Maples describes the violence and political chaos in Mexico during the 1920s and the resulting fear and frustration, in his memoir *Soberana Juventud*.¹

1 (Translation): "Life in Mexico in those years was tense with difficulties and potential military uprisings. After every presidential election there was only a relatively short pause of public tranquility, then political

II. Manuel Maples Arce—Vita

1900—Born May 1, in Papantla, Veracruz, Mexico. Maples Arce attends elementary school in Tuxpan, Veracruz. The great Tuxpan River is a lifelong source of companionship and inspiration to Maples.

1914—Starts secondary school in the state capital, Jalapa. Early interest in writing.

1915—Returns to Tuxpan to stay with family during the worst of the political crisis.

1916—Goes to the city of Veracruz to continue secondary school. Starts a student newspaper and collaborates on two city newspapers, *El Dictamen* and *La Opinión*. Begins writing poetry in earnest. Shows leadership skills.

1920—Moves to Mexico City to study law at the Escuela Libre de Derecho. Makes friends with other writers and artists of his generation. Valuable friendships with older writers such as Ramón López Velarde and Rafael López. Reads as much as he can. Collaborates on the magazines *Zig-Zag*, *Revista de Revistas* and *El Universal Ilustrado*. Gains social and political conscience.

- 1921—Desire to renovate Mexican literature. Publishes first Estridentismo manifesto: *Actual No. 1—Hoja de Vanguardia, Comprimido Estridentista de Manuel Maples Arce* and posts it around the city. Gains attention and is joined by like-minded people.
- 1922—Publishes his first major volume of poetry, *Andamios Interiores: poemas radiográficos*. Provokes quite a reaction. Effectively breaks the Postmodernista hold on Mexico. Receives international attention. Other young writers join the Estridentismo group. They write another manifesto and post it on December 31.
- 1923—Estridentistas write literary magazine *Irradiador*.
- 1924—Publishes *Urbe: poema bolchevique en 5 cantos*, inspired by the new dynamic modern technology in the city, the struggle for workers' rights, the volatile political situation of Mexico, the violence in Congress, and the gradual corruption of the Revolution. Maples calls *Urbe* a song with a heartbeat of hope and desperation. John Dos Passos comes to Mexico to meet Maples Arce, reads *Urbe* and translates it into English (*Metropolis*). Maples was deeply affected by the country's upheaval, and said "Such was Mexican life, and, in my youth, I felt I was its prophet." (*Soberana Juventud*, p. 149)
- 1925—Graduates from the Escuela Libre de Derecho and receives his law degree (writes his thesis on

agrarian reform). Moves to Jalapa with a letter of introduction in hand to General Heriberto Jara (Revolution veteran and progressive governor of the state of Veracruz) written by Alfonso Cravioto. Jara invites Maples to join his government as head trial judge in lower court. He is soon promoted to Secretary of Government, and Interim Governor during any of Jara's absences from the city. Maples brings his family to live with him in Jalapa; his father dies suddenly just after the move. Maples calls in his Estridentismo friends to manage press jobs sponsored by the Jara government, especially the magazine *Horizonte*. They publish the first book-length edition of Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo*. Maples works on issues of labor, social justice, gun control, agriculture, oil, education, health, and infrastructure. There is serious political division in the Veracruz state government, accompanied by violence. Maples has more than one close call (life in danger).

1927—Publishes third volume of poetry, *Poemas Interdictos*, in Jalapa. The Jara government is forced out by the opposition in 1927 and Maples decides to leave Jalapa with his family (out of loyalty to Jara) and moves back to Mexico City. The Estridentistas each go off in their own direction, and in effect, the Estridentismo movement ends (having been the longest-running vanguardista movement in Latin America.)

1928—After leaving Jalapa, Maples works for the Álvaro

Obregón presidential re-election campaign until Obregón is killed. Maples works briefly as legal counsel to the Secretariat of Government (like the Department of State). Is elected to the Veracruz state legislature as representative of the district of Minatitlán and Acayucán, a two-year term. Was not able to achieve many of his goals, as other parties made it impossible. The violence and personal attitudes left him irritated and hurt by the futility and failure of his idealistic efforts. The fact that the poet had worked as a judge and congressman made him conscious of all of the faults within the government. This produces a renovated desire to travel and study.

1930—Goes to Paris to study French at the Alliance Française and international law at the Sorbonne. Reads modern European literature, meets all the important writers and artists. Great camaraderie. Brief stops in Havana and New York City. Travels through Spain. Many Mexican writers and artists are also in Paris at the time. Lively tertulias. Runs out of money and has to return home.

1931—Works as advisor to the Department of Public Education.

1932—Invited to run and is elected to the national Congress, representing the district of Tuxpan. Notes the public works projects he enabled when he was Secretary of State Government. Maples is very popular, but it is a tough campaign due to other

party opposition. Wins election, serves on Congressional Education Commission and leads legislation for university autonomy, national heritage, labor interests of workers, national literary prize, and favors term limits for Congress. During parliamentary recess, he spends the summer in New York City, to learn more English, with an eye toward future work in diplomacy. Several Mexican muralist friends are painting in New York at the time, including Rivera and Orozco.

Mid-1933—Returns to Mexico to finish the legislative session. Works on Lázaro Cárdenas' presidential election campaign. Desire for social reform. Many tertulias with friends; they come to *his* house now. Discussion of literature, art, the future of Mexico, keeping faithful to the Revolution. The Contemporáneos group publishes their Anthology of Modern Mexican Poetry. Maples says they are not innovators, they only imitate their teachers (Modernistas). Maples teaches a class on Art History at the Escuela Normal. Works in the Editorial section of the Department of Public Education. Has great ideas to edit literary classics for schools, but is delayed by busywork and trivial projects, and quits. Goes to ex-president Portes-Gil (a friend and neighbor) to ask about a diplomatic post. Is given a post in Belgium.

1935—Leaves in early May for Belgium. Feels exhilaration and inspiration to write on the ocean voyage. His first post is as secretary of the embassy, and later

“encargado de negocios,” chief of mission. Connects with Belgian literary community.

1930s—Conceives of and begins to write the long poems of *Memorial de la Sangre* while in Belgium, Poland, and Italy and during his travel by ship (the short poems at the end of the collection are from Paris 1929-1930).³

1936—Meets future wife Blanche Vermeersch in the spring in Belgium, they marry August 12, 1936. Son Manuel is born in 1937. Concern for Spanish Civil War. Concern for growing Nazi power and persecution of Jews. Travel in Europe and the Middle East.

December 1937—Transferred to Poland. Deals with international reaction to Mexico’s nationalization of its petroleum industry. Anxiety over increased presence of war machines in Poland.

1938—Transferred to Italy as chief of mission (“encargado de negocios”). As in every country, Maples makes new friends and connects with old friends, espe-

3 (Translation): “After the emotive, radical and psychological vanguardismo of my youth, other forms of expression and experience followed. With time, my poetry advanced in an essential way, not just technically. Existential duration, the pulse of the days, played in it a primordial role, bringing to it a movement of vital force. It no longer tends to express the fugacity of events, but to search for the permanence of the being in total reality: it is the fruit of a different intentionality. Of course, metaphor does not disappear, with its multiple and synthetic meaning, but the poem does not rest exclusively in it. The thematic continuity is greater, tighter, more coherent, and perhaps it allows more complex perceptions and sensations, not only in style, but in the very concept of the poetry and the language that transmit something profound of my subjectivity.” (*Mi vida por el mundo*, p. 72)

cially writers and artists from Mexico and abroad. As usual, travels quite a lot within his assigned country and in neighboring countries.

1940—Publishes his *Anthology of Modern Mexican Poetry* in Rome. World War II in Rome. Suffers severe shortages.

1942—Transferred to Portugal. Daughter Mireya is born there.

1943—Transferred to England as Consul General, with additional representation to the governments in exile of Belgium, Holland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Norway. Witnesses the bombing of London. Severe conditions, dangerous for him and his family, yet nevertheless he remains an avid promoter of Mexican commerce and educator on Mexican culture, as he was in every country where he served.

1944—Named ambassador to Panama. Publishes *Memorial de la Sangre* while he was on a trip back to Mexico (1947). Active in the literary community.

1949—Named ambassador to Chile. Travels to Argentina, visits friend Borges. While Maples serves in Chile, his mother dies in Mexico.

1950—Named ambassador to Colombia. A robbery in his house resulted in the loss of a suitcase containing a portfolio with years of literary work ready for press, the only copy (1952). Maples suffers health

problems due to the high altitude.

1952—Named ambassador to Japan. Octavio Paz is his secretary. Writes *Ensayos japoneses*. Strong cultural exchanges.

1956—Named ambassador to Canada. Son Manuel goes to college and Mireya to junior high school there. Son Manuel marries and stays in Canada. Maples Arce has health problems.

1959—Named ambassador to Norway. Travels to other European nations, particularly in Scandinavia, and to the USSR.

1962—Named ambassador to Lebanon and Pakistan (residence in Beirut). Publishes in Spain the first two volumes of his memoirs, *A la orilla de este río*, 1964, and *Soberana Juventud*, 1967.

1967—After Mireya graduates from college in Beirut, Maples Arce requests retirement. Returns to Mexico City. After retiring, writes third volume of memoirs, *Mi vida por el mundo* (published in 1983).

1981—Works on editing his complete poetry, *Las semillas del tiempo* (published later that year). Passes away in Mexico City on June 26, 1981.

III. Works by Manuel Maples Arce*

POETRY:

Andamios Interiores, México: Editorial Cultura, 1922.

Urbe, México: Andrés Botas e Hijo, 1924.

Poemas Interdictos, Jalapa, Veracruz: Ediciones de Horizonte, 1927.

Memorial de la Sangre, México: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1947.

Las semillas del tiempo: obra poética 1919-1980, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1981.

EDITORIAL/CRITICISM:

Antología de la Poesía Mexicana Moderna, Rome: Poli-gráfica Tiberina, 1940.

Siete cuentos mexicanos. Panamá: Biblioteca Selecta, 1946.

ESSAY:

Modern Mexican Art (El Arte Mexicano Moderno). London: A. Zwemmer, 1943.

El Paisaje en la Literatura Mexicana. México: Librería Porrúa Hnos. y Cía., 1944.

Peregrinación por el Arte de México. Buenos Aires, 1951.

* Maples Arce dismissed his early modernista book, *Rag, tintas de abanico* (1920), written when he was young, and asked that it not be included in his complete poetry. I have honored that request, the same for his teenage poems.

Incitaciones y Valoraciones. México: Cuadernos Americanos, 1956.

Ensayos Japoneses. México: Editorial Cultura, 1959.

Leopoldo Méndez. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970.

MEMOIRS:

A la orilla de este río. Madrid: Editorial Plenitud, 1964.

Soberana juventud. Madrid: Editorial Plenitud, 1967.

Mi vida por el mundo. Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 1983.

LITERARY MAGAZINES

Collaboration on many literary magazines, including:

Zig-Zag, Revista de Revistas, El Universal Ilustrado, Ir-radiador, Horizonte..

IV. Notes on the poems

Since a full explanation of the poems does not fit into the scope of this book,⁴ I have chosen just a few elements to highlight here.

In *Andamios Interiores*, Maples Arce takes a situation of separation, and shows it like scattered pieces of a broken mirror in which images are reflected and refracted in a jumbled puzzle. The reader must put the puzzle pieces together to understand the picture. In this process, separation becomes union, multiplicity is unity simultaneously, destruction becomes creation. *Andamios Interiores* is the most personal of the books, the most interior. The style is cubist and imagist, as it presents many angles of the story simultaneously, and fulfills Ezra Pound's suggestion that "an image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."⁵ This is similar to the Estridentista idea of the "imagen equivalentista," which when joining two disparate images creates a new third reality. The best example of the puzzle technique is "Prisma," which, although written last, is featured first as the standard bearer of the volume. In this Cubist puzzle image, the narrator is looking out his window at the city on a rainy night, what he sees outside is reflected in the window and the mirror, and he is remembering his train

4 See Diane J. Forbes, "Maneuvering Time and Place: the Poetry of Manuel Maples Arce" (Doral, FL: Stockcero, 2022).

5 Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry* magazine, March 1913.

station goodbye scene with his girlfriend. The verses follow a regular syllable count until the point of crisis when the star of memory falls into the water of silence. That moment cuts the verses into fragments that must be joined to make the 7 or 14-syllable line pattern; this is accomplished by a double intertwining of “del silencio” and “Tú y yo / coincidimos / en la noche terrible.” (“You and I meet in the intense night.”) This “meeting” brings everything together and solves the problem of separation (absence, loss, oblivion). The poem ends with an image of everything being connected in concentric circles.⁶

The poems in the “Voces amarillas” section of *Andamios Interiores* illustrate a dialogue between Modernismo and Vanguardismo, and represent the death of Modernismo. As alluded to in “En la dolencia estática,” the dialogue is also an echo of the dialogue between piano and voice in the *lieder* songs of the Romantic period such as those by Robert Schumann, here paired with avant-garde images. The two voices are the moribund, consumptive girlfriend, representing Modernismo/Postmodernismo, and her lover, the romantic, energetic young poet who represents the new age of the 1920s. She is always ill and longs for the past; he says “Sunshine, whiteness, etc. and no more dry leaves,” calling for an end to Symbolism, *Modernismo*, *Postmodernismo*.

The poems of the other sections depict “Prisma”-like puzzle scenes of cafés and the city, weaving the pieces of the separation/union dichotomy. These poems are also full of synesthesia and pairs of opposites. Inner scaffolds (*andamios interiores*) are like skeletons, they are what hold us

6 Compare William Faulkner’s ripple theory, and by extension, John Donne’s “No man is an island.”

together, and what we see on x-ray films (hence the subtitle, *poemas radiográficos*); they are our innermost self.

As Maples Arce moves to *Urbe*, the topic becomes more global rather than personal. There are echoes of Whitman in the affirmative verses about the dynamism of the modern city, and there is a more contemporary feeling in the darker passages about the political violence. *The City* is humanity's creation, the dynamic pulse of our civilization.

In *Poemas Interdictos*, the topic becomes less sentimental, cleaner, clearer, with more modern themes and with a highly emotive content. *Prohibited Poems* show the poet-artist defying rules and asserting independence, forging ahead with creation. "80 H.P." (80 horsepower) tells of a car ride from the city to the outskirts of town. For a Ford Model T, up until 1926 horsepower was about 22 HP (20 HP in 1911). For 1926-27, horsepower was reduced by lowering compression to compensate for lower octane gas then. A Model T could go 30 mph or more on a good road and get 10-12 miles per gallon. (However, modifieds at the Indianapolis speedway in the 1920s ran an average speed of 100 mph.) So for a regular car, Maples Arce is dreaming of quite a lot of power and speed for the time.

"T.S.H." stands for "telefonía sin hilos," or wireless telephony. Maples Arce read this poem over the air in the first broadcast of the first radio station in Mexico. He was on the program with composer Manuel M. Ponce and journalist Carlos Noriega Hope.

Poemas Interdictos was published in 1927, the same year as Charles Lindberg's famous non-stop transatlantic flight in the Spirit of St. Louis, and Maples Arce's "Canción desde un aeroplano" reflects the world-wide fascination with airplanes and flight.

MANUEL MAPLES ARCE
LAS SEMILLAS DEL TIEMPO:
POESÍA COMPLETA
1919-1980

If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act I, scene III, 58-61

A la memoria de mis padres
Manuel Maples y Adela Arce

MANUEL MAPLES ARCE
THE SEEDS OF TIME:
COMPLETE POETRY
1919-1980

Translated by Diane J. Forbes

If you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act I, scene III, 58-61

To the memory of my parents
Manuel Maples and Adela Arce

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ANDAMIOS INTERIORES

Poemas radiográficos

1922

Verdadero artista es el hombre que cree
absolutamente en sí, porque él es
absolutamente él mismo.

Óscar Wilde

A la que sacudió sobre mi vida una primavera de alas.

PRISMA

Yo soy un punto muerto en medio de la hora,
equidistante al grito náufrago de una estrella.
Un parque de manubrio se engarrota en la sombra,
y la luna sin cuerda
me oprime en las vidrieras.

Margaritas de oro
deshojadas al viento.

La ciudad insurrecta de anuncios luminosos
flota en los almanaques,
y allá de tarde en tarde,
por la calle planchada se desangra un eléctrico.

El insomnio, lo mismo que una enredadera,
se abraza a los andamios sinoples del telégrafo,
y mientras que los ruidos descerrajan las puertas,
la noche ha enflaquecido lamiendo su recuerdo.

El silencio amarillo suena sobre mis ojos.
¡Prismal, diáfana mía, para sentirlo todo!

INNER SCAFFOLDS

X-ray Poems

1922

The true artist is a man who believes
absolutely in himself, because he is
absolutely himself.

Oscar Wilde

To the one who fluttered a springtime of wings over my life.

PRISM

I am a still point at the center of the hour,
equidistant from the cry of a falling star.
A bicycle park crouches in the shadows,
and the unwound moon
presses me to the windowpane.

Golden daises
plucked by the wind.

The rebel city of neon signs
floats in the calendars,
and there from time to time,
on the flat-ironed pavement a streetlight bleeds.

Insomnia, like a climbing vine,
hugs the green scaffolding of the telegraph poles,
and while noises break open door locks,
night has grown thin licking the wound of her memory.

Yellowed silence sounds over my eyes.
My diaphanous prism, to feel it all!

Yo departí sus manos,
pero en aquella hora
gris de las estaciones,
sus palabras mojadas se me echaron al cuello,
y una locomotora
sedienta de kilómetros la arrancó de mis brazos.

Hoy suenan sus palabras más heladas que nunca.
¡Y la locura de Edison a manos de la lluvia!

El cielo es un obstáculo para el hotel inverso
refractado en las lunas sombrías de los espejos;
los violines se suben como la champaña,
y mientras las ojeras sondean la madrugada,
el invierno huesoso tiritita en los percheros.

Mis nervios se derraman.

La estrella del recuerdo
naufra en el agua
del silencio.

Tú y yo
coincidimos
en la noche terrible,
meditación temática
deshojada en jardines.

Locomotoras, gritos,
arsenales, telégrafos.

El amor y la vida
son hoy sindicalistas,

y todo se dilata en círculos concéntricos.

FLORES ARITMÉTICAS

ESAS ROSAS ELÉCTRICAS ...

Esas rosas eléctricas de los cafés con música
que estilizan sus noches con “poses” operísticas,
languidecen de muerte, como las semifusas,
en tanto que en la orquesta se encienden anilinas
y bostezo la sífilis entre “tubos de estufa”.

Equivocando un salto de trampolín, las joyas
se confunden estrellas de catálogos Osram.
Y olvidado en el hombro de alguna Margarita,
deshojada por todos los poetas franceses,
me galvaniza una de estas pálidas “ísticas”
que desvelan de balde sus ojeras dramáticas,
y un recuerdo de otoño de hospital se me entibia.

Y entre sorbos de exóticos nombres fermentados,
el amor, que es un fácil juego de cubilete,
prende en una absurda figura literaria
el dibujo melódico de un vals incandescente.

El violín se accidenta en sollozos teatrales,
y se atraganta un pájaro los últimos compases.
Este techo se llueve.
La noche en el jardín
se da toques con pilas eléctricas de éter,
y la luna está al último grito de París.
En la sala ruidosa,
el mesero académico descorchaba las horas

ARITHMETIC FLOWERS

THOSE ELECTRIC ROSES...

Those electric roses of the music cafés
that stylize their nights with operatic poses,
languish moribund, like semiquavers,
while in the orchestra anilines are lit
and syphilis yawns among the stovepipe hats.

Misjudging a springboard dive, their jewels
look like Osram catalogue stars.
And forgotten on the shoulder of some Daisy,
depetaled by all the French poets,
I am galvanized by one of these pale “-istics”
that keep their dramatic dark undereye circles awake free of charge,
and an autumnal hospital memory cools me down.

And between sips of exotic fermented names,
love, which is an easy dice game,
in an absurd literary figure turns on
the melodic sketch of an incandescent waltz.

The violin breaks down in theatrical sobs
and a bird chokes on the last strains.
Leaking through the roof,
night in the garden
powders its nose with ether batteries,
and the moon is wearing the latest fashion craze.
In the noisy ballroom,
the academic waiter uncorked the hours.

TODO EN UN PLANO OBLICUO ...

En tanto que la tisis —todo en un plano oblicuo—
paseante de automóvil y tedio triangular,
me electrizo en el vértice agudo de mí mismo.
Van cayendo las horas de un modo vertical.

Y simultaneizada bajo la sombra eclíptica
de aquel sombrero unánime,
se ladea una sonrisa,
mientras que la blancura en éxtasis de frasco
se envuelve en una llama d'Orsay de gasolina.

Me debrayo en un claro
de anuncio cinemático.

Y detrás de la lluvia que peinó los jardines
hay un hervor galante de encajes auditivos;
a aquel violín morado le operan la laringe
y una estrella reciente se desangra en suspiros.

Un incendio de aplausos consume las lunetas
de la clínica, y luego —¡oh anónima de siempre!—
desvistiendo sus laxas indolencias modernas,
reincide —flor de lucro— tras los impertinentes.

Pero todo esto es sólo
un efecto cinemático,
porque ahora, siguiendo el entierro de coches,
allá de tarde en tarde estornuda un voltaico

ALL ON A SLANTING PLANE ...

While tuberculosis—all on a slanting plane—
 is an automotive passer-by and triangular tedium,
 I am electrified in the acute vertex of myself.
 The hours fall vertically.

And simultaneized under the ecliptic shade
 of that unanimous hat,
 a smile tilts,
 while the whiteness of bottled ecstasy
 is enveloped in a flame of gasoline d'Orsay.

I am thrown out of gear in the light
 of a movie ad.

And behind the rain that combed the gardens
 there is a flirtatious bubbling of auditory lace;
 they operate on the larynx of that purple violin
 and a recent star bleeds to death in sighs.

A blaze of applause consumes the orchestra seats
 of the clinic, and then—oh forever anonymous!—
 laying bare her lax modern indolence,
 a relapse—royal flush—through my opera glasses.¹

But all this is only
 a cinematic effect,
 because now, following the funeral of cars,

1 “Flor de lucro” could be a reference to a prostitute, but I have preferred to emphasize the possible reference to a winning hand, royal flush or other surprising stroke of luck in a poker game, here in the game of chance of love, and the translation also can be associated with other images in the poem.

sobre las caras lívidas de los “players” románticos,
y florecen algunos aeroplanos de hidrógeno.

En la esquina, un “umpire” de tráfico, a su modo,
va midiendo los “outs”, y en este amarillismo,
se promulga un sistema luminista de rótulos.

Por la calle verdosa hay brumas de suicidio.

there from time to time a streetcar wire sneezes
in the pale faces of the romantic players,
and some hydrogen airplanes bloom.

On the corner, a traffic umpire, in his way,
measures the outs, and in this sensationalism,
an illuminist system of signs is proclaimed.

Along the greenish street there is a haze of suicide.

A VECES CON LA TARDE ...

A veces, con la tarde luida de los bordes,
un fracaso de alas se barre en el jardín.
Y mientras que la vida esquina a los relojes,
se pierden por la acera los pasos de la noche.

Amarillismo
gris.

Mis ojos deletrean la ciudad algebraica
entre las subversiones de los escaparates;
detrás de los tranvías se explican las fachadas
y las alas del viento se rompen en los cables.

Siento íntegra toda la instalación estética
lateral a las calles alambradas de ruido,
que quiebran sobre el piano sus manos antisépticas,
y luego se recogen en un libro mullido.

A través del insomnio centrado en las ventanas
trepidan los andamios de una virginidad,
y al final de un acceso paroxista de lágrimas,
llamas de podredumbre suben del bulevar.

Y equivocadamente, mi corazón payaso,
se engolfa entre nocturnos encantos de a 2 pesos:
amor, mi vida, etc., y algún coche reumático
sueña con un voltaico que le asesina el sueño.

SOMETIMES, WITH THE AFTERNOON ...

Sometimes, with the afternoon worn at the edges,
a calamity of wings is swept away in the garden.
And while life corners the clocks,
on the sidewalk night's footsteps get lost.

Lurid
yellow gray.

My eyes spell out the algebraic city
amid shop-window subversions;
behind the streetcars façades are revealed
and the wind's wings break on the cables.

The whole aesthetic installation feels at one
with the streets wired with noise,
which crack their antiseptic knuckles over the piano,
and then gather them in a ragged old book.

Through insomnia centered in the windows
the scaffolds of a virginity tremble,
and at the end of a convulsive fit of tears,
flames of decay rise up from the boulevard.

And mistakenly, my clownish heart
gets lost in nocturnal charms at 2 pesos each:
darling, sweetheart, etc., and some rheumatic car
dreams about a voltaic arc that kills his dream.

Sombra laboratorio. Las cosas bajo sobre.
Ventilador eléctrico, champagne + F. T.
Marinetti = a

Nocturno futurista
1912.

Y 200 estrellas de vicio a flor de noche
escupen pendejadas y besos de papel.

Laboratory shadow. Things hidden in an envelope.

Electric fan, champagne + F.T.

Marinetti =

Futurist nocturne

1912.

And 200 stars of vice on the edge of night

spit foolishness and paper kisses.

VOCES AMARILLAS

Y NADA DE HOJAS SECAS ...

(La mañana romántica, como un ruido espumoso,
se derrama en la calle de este barrio incoloro
por donde a veces pasan repartiendo programas,
y es una clara música que se oye con los ojos
la palidez enferma de la súper-amada.)

(En tanto que un poeta,
colgado en la ventana,
se muere haciendo gárgaras
de plata
electrizada,
subido a los peldaños de una escala
cromática,
barnizo sus dolencias con vocablos azules,
y anclada en un letargo de cosas panorámicas,
su vida se evapora lo mismo que un perfume.)

—Mi tristeza de antes es la misma de hoy.

—Tú siempre con tus cosas.

—¡Oh poeta, perdón!

(En el jardín morado
se rompe el equilibrio fragante de una flor.)

—Sol, blancura, etc., y nada de hojas secas.

—La vida es sólo un grito que se me cuelga al cuello
lo mismo que un adiós.

YELLOWED VOICES

AND NO MORE DRY LEAVES ...

(The romantic morning, like a bubbly noise,
spills out into the street of this colorless neighborhood
where sometimes programs are posted,
and the clear music that you hear with your eyes
is the infirm paleness of the super-beloved.)

(While a poet,
hanging out the window,
dies gargling
electrified
silver,
high up on the steps of the chromatic
scale,
I varnish her ailments with charming words,
and anchored in a lethargy of panoramic things,
her life evaporates like a perfume.)

—My sadness from before is the same today.

—It's always the same old thing with you.

—Oh poet, sorry!

(In the purple garden
the fragrant balance of a flower breaks.)

—Sunshine, whiteness, etc. and no more dry leaves.

—Life is only a cry that hangs around my neck
like a goodbye.

—Hablemos de otra cosa,
te lo ruego.

(Su voz
tiene dobleces románticos de felpa
que estuvo mucho tiempo guardada en naftalina,
y duerme en sus cansancios ingravidos de enferma,
la elegancia de todas las cosas amarillas.)

(Y mientras la mañana, atónita de espejos,
estalla en el alféizar de la hora vulgar,
el dolor se derrama, lo mismo que un tintero,
sobre la partitura de su alma musical.)

—Let's talk about something else,
I beg you.

(Her voice
has romantic plushy folds like velvet
long kept in mothballs,
and sleeping in her weightless invalid fatigue
is the elegance of all things yellowed.)

(And while morning, astonished by mirrors,
shatters on the windowsill of the common hour,
the pain spills, like an inkwell,
onto the score of her musical soul.)

EN LA DOLENCIA ESTÁTICA ... *

(En la dolencia estática de este jardín mecánico,
el olor de las horas huele a convalecencia,
y el pentagrama eléctrico de todos los tejados
se muere en el alero del último almanaque.

Extasiada en maneras musicales de enferma
inmoviliza un sueño su vertical blancura,
en tanto que un oscuro violín de quinto piso
se deshoja a lo largo de un poema de Schumann,
y en todos los periódicos se ha suicidado un tísico.)
—Hoy pasan los entierros
lo mismo que en otoño.

—Ese tema no es tema
de primavera.

(En el jardín hay cinco centavos de silencio.)

—Quiero un poco de sol azucarado.

—Tú pides imposibles.

—Mira mis manos mustias,
mis dedos casi yertos ...

(Mientras medito un lento compás de 3 X 4)

—¡Oh virgen supertónica!

—Soy sólo una quimera,
se dijo murmurando.

(Y en esta tarde lírica

* versión publicada en *Las semillas del tiempo* (1981).

IN THE STATIC MALADY ...*

(In the static malady of this mechanical garden,
the scent of the hours smells of convalescence,
and the electric music staff of all the roofs
dies in the eaves of the last calendar.

Lost in infirm musical ways
her vertical whiteness immobilizes a dream,
while an obscure fifth-floor violin
sheds its leaves onto a poem by Schumann,
and in all the newspapers a consumptive has committed suicide.)
—Today the funerals go by
the same as in autumn.
—That theme is not a theme
of springtime.

(In the garden there are five cents of silence.)

—I want a little sugared sun.
—You ask the impossible.
—Look at my withered hands,
my rigid fingers ...
(While I meditate on a slow $\frac{3}{4}$ beat)

—Oh supertonic virgin!
—I am only a chimera,
she murmured to herself.
(And in this lyrical afternoon

* Version printed in *Las semillas del tiempo* (1981). Original follows.

85-74, señorita ...

la primavera pasa en motocicleta,
y al oro moribundo, historiada de cintas,
lo mismo que un refajo se seca mi tristeza.)

85-74, mademoiselle ...

spring goes by on a motorcycle,
and in the dying sun, adorned with ribbons,
like bubbles on foam my sadness fades away.)

EN LA DOLENCIA ESTÁTICA ... **

(En la dolencia estática de este jardín mecánico,
el olor de las horas huele a convalecencia,
y el pentagrama eléctrico de todos los tejados
se muere en el alero del último almanaque.

Extraviada en maneras musicales de enferma
inmoviliza un sueño su vertical blancura,
en tanto que un oscuro violín de quinto piso
se deshoja a lo largo de un poema de Schumann,
y en todos los periódicos se ha suicidado un tísico.)

—Hoy pasan los entierros, como un cuento de ojeras,
lo mismo que en otoño.

—Ese tema, no es tema
de primavera. Ya ves lo que dice el médico!

(En el jardín hay 5 centavos de silencio.)

—Entonces, quiero un poco de sol azucarado.

—Ya vuelves con tu acústica.

—Pues mírame las manos.
Mis dedos caligráficos se han vuelto endecasílabos.

(Y meditando un lento compás de 3 por 4:)

—¡Oh tus cosas melódicas!

—¡Soy un frasco de música!

** versión publicada en *Andamios Interiores* (1922).

IN THE STATIC MALADY . . . **

(In the static malady of this mechanical garden,
the scent of the hours smells of convalescence,
and the electric music staff of all the roofs
dies in the eaves of the last calendar.

Lost in infirm musical ways
her vertical whiteness immobilizes a dream,
while an obscure fifth-floor violin
sheds its leaves onto a poem by Schumann,
and in all the newspapers a consumptive has committed suicide.)

—Today the funerals go by, like a ghost story,
the same as in autumn.

—That theme, is not a theme
of springtime. You see what the doctor says!

(In the garden there are 5 cents of silence.)

—Then, I want a little sugared sun.

—There you go again with your acoustics.

—Well, look at my hands.

My calligraphic fingers have become hendecasyllables.

(And meditating a slow $\frac{3}{4}$: beat)

—Oh your melodic bunk!

—I am a flask of music!-

** Original version printed in *Andamios Interiores* (1922).

(Y en esta tarde lírica

85-74, señorita ...

la primavera pasa como en motocicleta,
y al oro moribundo, historiada de cintas,
lo mismo que un refajo se seca mi tristeza.)

(And in this lyrical afternoon

85-74, mademoiselle...

spring goes by like on a motorcycle,
and in the dying sun, adorned with ribbons,
like bubbles on foam my sadness fades away.)

POR LAS HORAS DE CUENTO ...

Por las horas de cuento de estos parques sin rosas,
ambulan, un diptongo de ensueño, nuestras sombras.

Y en tanto que algún piano fantástico, desvela
los bemoles románticos de un estudio sin luna,
sus ojos se adormecen en un cansancio de felpa,
como si estuviera muriendo de blancura.

(Y después, quedamente:)

—¿Amor, oyes las hojas?

—¿Si no es eso!

—¿Entonces?

—Tal vez es una enferma

que llora con Beethoven ...

(Y seguimos del brazo nuestro obscuro diptongo,
por los parques afónicos,
lacrimantes de oro ...)

—¿Me quisiera morir!

—¿No digas esas cosas

que me hacen tanto mal!

—Si la vida es tan triste!

—Pero no pienses eso.

—Si la vida es tan triste!

—Me duele el corazón cuando tú estás así.

Doblabamos la hoja.

(Y sobre el mismo tema,

AT STORY-TELLING TIME ...

At story-telling time in these roseless parks,
our shadows, a dreamy diphthong, stroll.

And while some ghostly piano keeps
the romantic flat notes of a moonless etude awake,
her eyes get drowsy in a velvet tiredness,
as if she were dying of whiteness.

(And later, quietly:)

—Darling, do you hear the leaves?

—That's not what it is!

—Then what?

—Maybe it's someone sickly

who's crying over Beethoven ...

(And we continue arm in arm our dark diphthong,
through the voiceless parks
of golden tears ...)

—I want to die!

—Don't say those things,
they bother me so much!

—Life is so sad!

—But don't think that.

—Life is so sad!

—My heart aches when you're like that.

Let's change the subject.

(Still on the same topic,

su voz, casi ojerosa:)

—¡Me quisiera morir!

¡Me quisiera morir!

(Y en el cloroformado cansancio de la sombra,
nuestras 2 vidas juntas, por el parque sin rosas,
se pierden en la noche romántica de otoño
ambulando en silencio la teoría de un diptongo.)

her voice, almost exhausted:)

—I want to die!

I want to die!

(And in the chloroformed fatigue of the shadows,
our 2 lives together, through the roseless park,
disappear in the romantic autumn night,
strolling in silence the theory of a diphthong.)

PERFUMES APAGADOS

AL MARGEN DE LA LLUVIA ...

Al margen de la lluvia en los cafés insomnes,
los perfiles se duermen en las láminas sordas.
Y es ahora que todo coincide en los relojes:
mi corazón nostálgico ardiéndose en la sombra.

Después de los vulgares asombros del periódico
en que sólo se oye el humo de las pipas,
florece a intervalos las actitudes lívidas
retropróximamente de los paraguas cónicos.

Deduzco de la lluvia que esto es definitivo.
¿Quién está en el manubrio? Hay un corto circuito.

La trama es complicado siniestro de oficina,
y algunas señoritas,
literalmente teóricas,
se han vuelto perifrásticas, ahora en re bemol,
con abandonos táctiles sobre el papel de lija.

Explotan las estrellas
eléctricas en flor.
Pero más que todo esto, en el sintaxicidio
de unos cuantos renglones desgarrados de adioses:
¡oh su carne amarilla!
¡mis dedos retroactivos!

(En el piano automático
se va haciendo de noche.)

FADED PERFUMES

INSIDE FROM THE RAIN ...

Inside from the rain in the insomniac cafés,
silhouettes nod off in the windows' muffled torrents.
And it is now that everything coincides in the clocks:
my nostalgic heart smoldering in the shadows.

After the tabloid newspaper scandals
in which you hear only pipe smoke,
the livid attitudes of conical umbrellas
retrosoon blossom at intervals.

I deduce from the rain that this is permanent.
Who is at the wheel? There's a short circuit.

The plot is a sinister office complication,
and some young ladies,
literally theoretical,
have become periphrastic, now in D flat,
with tactile abandon on emery boards.

Electric stars
explode in flower.
But more than all this, in the syntaxicide
of a few lines torn apart by goodbyes:
oh her pale flesh!
my retroactive fingers!

(On the automatic piano
night is falling.)

Y en el mismo declive del interior romántico,
me interrumpo en un faro de automóvil, en tanto,

—bohemios romboidales—mi corazón se llueve;
la tarde en las vidrieras traquetea como un tren,
y mi dolor naufraga, definitivamente,
en la literatura de todos los “ayer.”

And waning like the romantic interior,
I am interrupted in the headlight of a motorcar, as

–rhomboidal bohemians—my heart springs a leak;
the afternoon in the windows rattles like a train,
and my pain sinks, finally,
into the literature of all the “yesterdays”.

TRAS LOS ADIOSES ÚLTIMOS ...

Tardes alcanforadas en vidrieras de enfermo,
tras los adioses últimos de las locomotoras,
y en las palpitations cardíacas del pañuelo
hay un desgarramiento de frases espasmódicas.

El ascensor eléctrico y un piano intermitente
complican el sistema de la casa de “apartments”,
y en el grito morado de los últimos trenes
intuyo la distancia.

A espaldas de la ausencia se demuda el telégrafo.
Despachos emotivos desangran mi interior.

Sugerencia, L-10 y recortes de periódicos;
¡oh dolorosa mía,
tú estás lejos de todo,
y estas horas que caen amarillean la vida!

En el fru-fru inalámbrico del vestido automático
que enreda por la casa su pauta seccional,
incido sobre un éxtasis de sol a las vidrieras,
y la ciudad es una ferretería espectral.

Las canciones domésticas
de codos a la calle.

(¡Ella era un desmayo de prestigios supremos
y dolencias católicas de perfumes envueltos

AFTER THE LAST GOODBYES ...

Afternoons camphorated in invalid windows,
by the locomotives' last goodbyes,
in the cardiac palpitations of a handkerchief
there is a rending of spasmodic expressions.

The electric elevator and an intermittent piano
clutter the apartment house system,
and in the purple cry of the last trains
I sense the distance.

With its back turned to absence a telegraph goes mute.
Emotional dispatches drain the blood out of me.

Advice, L-10 and newspaper clippings;
oh my heartbreak,
you are far away from everything,
and these falling hours sadden life.

In the wireless rustle of her automatic dress
which winds its pattern through the house,
I happen upon an ecstasy of sun in the windows,
and the city is a ghostly hardware store.

Domestic songs
on elbows toward the street.

(She was a swoon of supreme prestige
and catholic ailments of perfumes wrapped

a través de mis dedos!)

Accidente de lágrimas. Locomotoras últimas
renegridas a fuerza de gritarnos adiós,
y ella en 3 latitudes, ácida de blancura,
derramada en silencio sobre mi corazón.

around my fingers!)

Accidental tears. Last locomotives
blackened from shouting goodbye to us,
and she in 3 latitudes, whiteness acid
spilled in silence over my heart.

COMO UNA GOTERA ...

Como una gotera de cristal, su recuerdo,
agujera el silencio
de mis días amarillos.

Tramitamos palabras
por sellos de correo,
y la vida automática
se asolea en los andamios de un vulgar rotativo.

Las canciones florecen
a través de la lluvia,
en la tarde vacía, sin teclado y sin lágrimas.

Los tranvías se llevaron las calles cinemáticas
empapeladas de ventanas.

Mis besos apretados
floreían en su carne.

Aquel adiós, el último,
fue un grito sin salida.

La ciudad paroxista
nos llegaba hasta el cuello,
y un final de kilómetros subrayó sus congojas.

¡Oh el camino de hierro!
Un incendio de alas

LIKE RAINDROPS ...

Like raindrops on a window, her memory
perforates the silence
of my yellowed days.

We relay words
via postage stamps,
and automatic life
sunbathes on the scaffolds of a tabloid newspaper.

Songs blossom
through the rain,
in the empty afternoon, without keyboard and without tears.

Streetcars carried away cinematic streets
wallpapered with windows.

My ardent kisses
blossomed on her skin.

That goodbye, the last one,
was a dead-end cry.

We were up to our necks
in the convulsive city,
and a finale of kilometers accented her distress.

Oh road of iron!

A blaze of wings

a través del telégrafo.
Trágicas chimeneas
agujeran el cielo.
¡Y el humo de las fábricas!

(Así, todo, de lejos, se me dice como algo
imposible que nunca he tenido en las manos.)

Un piano tangencial se acomoda en la sombra
del jardín inconcreto; los interiores todos
se exponen a la lluvia —selecciones de ópera—.
En las esquinas nórdicas hay manifiestos rojos.

through telegraph wires.
Tragic chimneys
pierce the sky.
And the factory smoke!

(So, everything, from a distance, seems like something
impossible that I've never held in my hands.)

A tangential piano settles down in the shade
of the misty garden; its insides
are exposed to the rain—opera selections—.
On the northern corners there are red manifestos.