

4 Poems

Irene Marques

Churches, Cathedrals, and Us

Taken by the magnificence of the moment, we visited churches and chapels, sanctuaries and cathedrals. Roamed the city aimlessly trying to connect with the thing in us that yearns to get out of the straight jacket that the corporations have put us in. We stared at the ceilings of St. Helen's, its curves and intertwined colors, and dwelt in bliss and sorrow: imagining the pains and the loves of the world, the baptisms and the weddings, the masses on Sunday, women in veils and men serenely looking at the altar with eyes candid, in expectation of that which is higher than them. Then we knelt on the cold floor, our hands elevated in a silence that spoke. I held your hand, you held mine, and in that moment we felt less alone, less small, the corporations bounding our beautiful earth disintegrated into nothingness, and the children of the future appeared to us: free, boisterous, enveloped in clandestine clothes brought from faraway places where there is no border and no frontiers and where we are all migrants, sons and daughters of gods, beings in their full right, fulfilling a destiny that always calls. I slept well that night: entered the void of the cosmos and then reached for the air and the clouds, that hollowness that gives and gives, bathing my soul into a mellow light—the spectacle came and it was stunning. The transcendent walls of Don Quixote that feed upon wonder and the dark mines of South Africa and Ghana, where children-men labor endlessly—all became the same wells of love, white luminous teeth opening in a smile, the darkness suspended by the rainbows, those circles of life that are the magic of enlightened theologians. We were saints and the world was saved. I kissed you on the forehead: that center without equal where the third eye resides, where we lose bone and gain marrow.

My Toenails

My toenails are growing, too rapidly
I cut them every day: I want to walk unimpeded
By my own clumsiness
To look self-assured, neat—easy to the eye
Of men I am (still) trying to impress

My sandals are sexy: they have holes and straps
I dance with them, bouncing to the rhythm of my body
This cave that holds me down
Even when I want to suppress the jargon of everyday rubbish
And scribble a new clean alphabet
Through the spectacular ink that rivers my starved lymph nodes

There Are No Words

There are no words. If there were words, I would see their salt and light and bright yellow cooper temper me with the eternal lingering of a scintillating life. There are no words: you babble them out in a semi-awaken state putting your feet where your mouth is, playing dangerous, deadly games with the soul. Not just yours, but ours too, for how can the eagle fly alone and build a mansion in the faraway land without the aiding rope that you put out? There are no words: you babble them out, entangled as you are in the corporate game of the land whose rhetoric Socrates and Aristotle had warned us about a long time ago—and before them, many others. There are no words: the ears have gone blind. And then you go to sleep and the flying dreams don't come: you are stuck to the piercing fence by the lowland, your body incarcerated, incapable of dancing through the universe, unable to fulfill its destiny, your destiny, our destiny. There are no words. What saves you then?

I Do Not Speak

I do not speak in the original
 I speak an adulterated language
 That you passed on to me
 You—who are also a fake,
 Mumbling syllables that do not tell the truth,
 The whole truth and nothing but the truth

I speak things that you and the world passed on to me
 Scrappers that you all are
 But I am not content with this charitable language
 I dream and search for the tongue before I took in yours
 Allowing it to ravage my insides and break the vines of my heart
 Before you stole it from me when you gave me a hand and
 Thought me your alphabet
 And then syllables and words and sentences...

Before I knew, I was mastering entire texts
 Elaborate rhetorical schemes
 Laws about the eternal and the universal
 The earthly, the worthy and non-worthy
 What a rose is what it is not
 Why dogs are on the street
 The local and the transnational
 The Mexican and the Russian and the Nigerian
 And the hypothetical creature on the Moon

I do not speak in the original
 I spew a tongue infected by melanomas
 Scientific and objective shortcomings that codify the mystery

I do not speak the original
 Though I may occasionally, in distraction, enter the terrain
 Of my *língua pura*
 And babble ad infinitum

Until you wake me up

It is the night that saves me