

*A Poetry Collection*¹

Michael Garcia Spring
translated into Portuguese by Maria João Marques

*beneath the plum tree*²

I play dead
beneath a plum tree
as a breeze begins to bury me
with blossoms

crows in other trees—raucous
and weary—
are not fooled

a dog
shoves its nose against my cheek
bone and licks my face
I almost crack
a smile—I'm not sure
if I can stay dead like this
much longer

I want someone
to touch my shoulders to see
if I move—put an ear
to my chest—shake me!
slap me! jab me in the ribs!

I want someone to gasp—
take hold of my wrists
and pull me out

sob a ameixoeira

faço de morto
sob uma ameixoeira
uma brisa começa a enterrar-me
por entre as flores

os corvos nas outras árvores – ruidosos
e exaustos –
não se deixam enganar

um cão
empurra o focinho contra a minha bochecha
e lambe-me a cara
quase deixo escapar
um sorriso – não sei
se consigo fazer de morto
por muito mais tempo

quero alguém
que me toque nos ombros para ver
se me movo – que encoste o ouvido
ao meu peito – me sacuda!
me bata! me golpeie as costelas!

quero alguém que se sobressalte –
que me segure nos pulsos
e me tire daqui

¹ All of the featured poems in this collection will appear in Spring's forthcoming book (with translations by Marques), *dentro do som/inside the sound* (2021), Companhia das Ilhas, Azores, Portugal.

² The English version of "beneath the plum tree" first appeared in *West Wind Review* and was later published in Spring's book *blue crow*, published by LitPot Press in 2003.

*indecision*³

I've walked most of the way
to my car but now

I'm stuck in the middle
of the street watching
a leaf the size of my hand
fall as it holds
an answer for me

my car is full of sun
and the idea
of a room of people
I'll have to greet with
scrap apologies and excuses
as to why I'm late

no doubt I'll be pulled
into a small group of people
and conversation will come to be
jewelry around throats and wrists

it's the suicide of the day
for me to consider anything

more than my friend
behind me in the park
sitting in his shadow
as if it were a boat

I'm interested in his fingers
hooking into the sounds
between brain and guitar

and the simple
act of watching
leaves fall

indecisão

agora que percorri a maior parte do caminho
até ao carro

dou comigo parado no meio
da rua observando
uma folha do tamanho da minha mão
caindo com
uma resposta

o meu carro está cheio de sol
e a ideia
de uma sala repleta de pessoas
que terei de cumprimentar com
desculpas esfarrapadas e pretextos
para o meu atraso

sem dúvida serei arrastado
para um pequeno grupo de pessoas
e a conversa girará como
jóias envoltas em gargantas e pulsos

é o suicídio do dia
impedindo-me de pensar em algo

mais do que o meu amigo
atrás de mim no parque
sentado na sua sombra
como se fosse um barco

interessam-me os seus dedos
enganchados nos sons
entre cérebro e guitarra

e o simples
acto de ver
as folhas cair

³ The English version of "indecision" first appeared in *Raintown Review* and was later published in Spring's *blue crow*, published by LitPot Press in 2003.

*lust*⁴

a blue wind
 lifts the cat's head
 to watch the revolving
 doors the maple leaves
 have become—wondering
 how many birds
 are inside and what
 they'd taste like

desejo

um vento azul
 ergue a cabeça do gato
 para ver as folhas de ácer
 transfiguradas em portas
 giratórias – imaginando
 quantos pássaros
 estariam lá dentro e a que
 saberiam

*saudade*⁵

twelve strings
 from the roots

of anguish
 stir the ocean

making a nest
 for the moon

saudade

doze cordas
 brotam da raiz

da dor
 e agitam o mar

fazendo um ninho
 para a lua

⁴ The English version of “lust” first appeared in *The New Imagist* and was later published in Spring’s *blue crown*, published by LitPot Press in 2003.

⁵ The English version of “saudade” first appeared in *Poetry Now* and was also later published in Spring’s book *Mudsong*, published by Pygmy Forest Press in 2005.

*approaching the Azores*⁶

finally the gulls like fat moths
float from the basalt cliffs

I stand in the whiplash winds full of salt and sting

one hand shields my eyes
and the other grips the schooner's railing

I'm finally looking at Pico Island
and its mountain peak
rising out of the mists and clouds

and below the mountain the clusters of houses
the *freguesias* the *adegas* the rocky ledges
the harbors the colorful fishing boats
my ancestral home

I'm standing on a surging deck
in the smell of grease and fish
where the slick boards below my feet
creak as I shift my weight
under a flapping sail

I'm leaning toward the island
squinting for perspective
over the blue-green map of water

*chegando aos Açores*⁷

finalmente as gaivotas como traças gordas
flutuam das falésias de basalto

enfrento o golpe dos ventos salgados e ardentes

com uma mão protejo os olhos
com a outra apoio-me na balastrada da escuna

vejo finalmente a ilha do Pico
e o cume da montanha
elevando-se para além de neblinas e nuvens

e sob a montanha o amontoado de casas
as “freguesias” as “adegas” as rochas à beira-mar
os portos os barcos de pesca coloridos
a minha morada ancestral

estou no convés sinuoso
por entre o cheiro de gordura e peixe
onde por baixo dos meus pés as pranchas
rangem ao deslocar o meu peso
sob uma vela ondulante

inclino-me em direcção à ilha
semicerrando os olhos para ganhar perspectiva
sobre o mapa de água azul-turquesa

⁶ The English version of “approaching the Azores” first appeared in *The Pedestal Magazine* and was later published in Spring's *blue crown*, published by LitPot Press in 2003.

⁷ This translation (“chegando aos Açores”) first appeared in *Açoriano Oriental Arts & Letras* on April 10, 2017.

*fado*⁸

with lost love the Portuguese guitarist
soaks in a bathtub on a rooftop
pours himself another glass
of vinho verde

then salutes twilight's last bawling gull
in a sky heavy with clouds

orange earth tones of rooftop tiles
give way to the darkening blues
of cobbled streets

the guitarist can hear café chairs
scuffling, the alley below
with laughter and voices
and ice clanking in glasses

garlic and salt rise into the belly of air
octopus sizzles on the grill

the guitarist knows it's time
to climb out
of this bathwater and tune the strings

tonight Severa will sing fado: a moon
will emerge
from the haze of the Tagus river
and because of fado

because it embraces fate and despair
the guitarist will sink
into sound

he'll become the enchanted
fisherman, once again, casting
his interpretations of nets
and hooks into her songs

*fado*⁹

de amor perdido o guitarrista português
mergulha numa banheira no terraço
serve-se de mais um copo
de vinho verde

e saúda o guincho da última gaivota do crepúsculo
num céu carregado de nuvens

os tons alaranjados de terra das telhas cimeiras
dão lugar à escura melancolia
das calçadas

o guitarrista ouve as cadeiras dos cafés
inquietando-se, a viela lá em baixo
o som das gargalhadas e das vozes
e o gelo tinindo nos copos

alho e sal sobem ao ventre do ar
o polvo sibila na brasa

o guitarrista sabe que chegou a hora
de sair
da água do banho e afinar as cordas

esta noite a Severa vai cantar o fado: a lua
surgirá
da neblina do Tejo
e pelo fado,

que abraça o destino e o desespero,
o guitarrista irá afundar-se
na melodia

e uma vez mais tornar-se pescador
encantado, lançando
os seus acordes de redes
e anzóis à voz da Severa

⁸ The English version of "fado" first appeared in the magazine *Crannóg*, issue 46 (2017), out of Galway, Ireland.

⁹ This translation ("fado") first appeared in *Açoriano Oriental Arts & Letras* on September 25, 2017.