

Twenty-two New Translations: English renditions of Pessoa's heteronymous Portuguese poems

George Monteiro*

Keywords

Fernando Pessoa, heteronymism, heteronymous poems, English translation, Alberto Caeiro, *The Keeper of Sheep*, loose poems and sonnets of Álvaro de Campos, odes of Ricardo Reis.

Abstract

Here we present twenty-two Pessoan poems rendered in English by George Monteiro. These poems are attributed to three heteronyms of Fernando Pessoa: two numbered texts from *O Guardador de Rebanhos* (*The Keeper of Sheep*) of Alberto Caeiro; ten loose poems and a cycle of five sonnets by Álvaro de Campos; and five odes of Ricardo Reis. Each translation contains three elements, respectively: the English recreation by Monteiro; the facsimile of the Portuguese original by Fernando Pessoa (or of the last Portuguese version, if there exist more than one Pessoan document concerning the poem); and a transcription of the Portuguese text, in the case of a manuscript (solely notes in the case of a legible typescript prepared by Pessoa).

Palavras-chave

Fernando Pessoa, heteronimismo, heteronímia, tradução para o Inglês, Alberto Caeiro, *O Guardador de Rebanhos*, poemas soltos e sonetos de Álvaro de Campos, odes de Ricardo Reis.

Resumo

Publicam-se aqui vinte-e-dois poemas pessoanos vertidos para o inglês por George Monteiro. Esses poemas são atribuídos a três heterônimos de Fernando Pessoa: dois textos numerados de *O Guardador de Rebanhos* de Alberto Caeiro; dez poemas soltos e um ciclo de cinco sonetos de Álvaro de Campos; e cinco odes de Ricardo Reis. Cada uma das traduções contém três elementos, respectivamente: a recriação em inglês feita por Monteiro; o facsímile do original português de Fernando Pessoa (ou da última versão em português, se existir mais de um documento pessoano relativo ao poema); e uma transcrição do português no caso de manuscrito (apenas notas no caso de um datiloscrito legível preparado por Pessoa).

* Brown University, Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies.

A well-known poet once asked me if I would do him the favor of translating his work into Portuguese. My colleague hoped to get his poems published in Brazil and, being acquainted with my translations of Pessoa into English, he thought I could do the job. I had to tell him “no”—explaining that I would never try to translate any English-language text into Portuguese. Others might do that, but I would not even try. No, whatever my competence, it lay in rendering Portuguese originals into my native language, not the other way around.

Over the years I have translated poems and some prose, but never have I considered myself a practicing translator, professional or otherwise. My translations were done, usually, out of necessity for professional reasons. I needed to quote poems in essays or articles. I no longer recall that it was exactly for a scholarly reason, but the first Azorean poem I remember translating, just for the sake of doing it, is Pedro da Silveira’s canonical poem “Ilha.” It was just about that time that, at the behest of my friend and colleague Onésimo Teotónio Almeida, and with the encouragement and counsel of Carolina Matos, I translated the poems issued in 1983 as *The Sea Within: A Selection of Azorean Poems*. Also in 1983, at the international Pessoa symposium in Nashville, Tennessee, I presented a paper I rather archly entitled “Fernando, Old Artificer,” in which I discussed my adventures—problems and solutions—as an amateur translator of the Master’s poetry. It was on the basis of this talk, if I recall correctly, that José Blanco suggested that I do a few more Pessoa translations, enough to make up a little book. Thus I began the book that would be published in Lisbon, in 1988, as *Fernando Pessoa: Self-Analysis and Thirty Other Poems*.

Several of the translations published here were once scheduled for publication in a Portuguese issue of an American journal devoted to translation. The issue appeared in due course, but the number of Portuguese texts included was sharply reduced, and these translations, although they had been copy-edited for publication, were cut. I filed them away, and joined by a handful of subsequent translations, there they remained. It has been my good fortune to have this opportunity to publish these fugitive translations in *Pessoa Plural*.

Bibliography

- ALMEIDA, Onésimo T. [ed.] (1983). *The Sea Within: A Selection of Azorean Poems*. Selection, introduction and notes by Onésimo T. Almeida; translations by George Monteiro. Providence: Gávea-Brown.
- MONTEIRO, George (2013). "O Antigo Artífice", in *As Paixões de Pessoa*. Translation by Margarida Vale de Gato. Lisbon: Ática/Babel.*
- PESSOA, Fernando (2014). *Álvaro de Campos—Obra Completa*. Edition by Jerónimo Pizarro and Antonio Cardiello; collaboration by Jorge Uribe and Filipa Freitas. Lisbon: Tinta-da-China.
- ____ (1988) *Self-Analysis and Thirty Other Poems*. Translations by George Monteiro. Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
- ____ (1931) "Trapo," in *Presença: revista de arte e crítica; n. 31-32*. Coimbra; p. 9.
- ____ (1928) "Escripto num livro abandonado em viagem," in *Presença: revista de arte e crítica; n. 10*. Coimbra; p. 2.

* This is a Portuguese version of the paper "Fernando, Old Artificer," mentioned by George Monteiro in the introduction to his translations.

English Translations and Original Portuguese Documents

1. Poems of Alberto Caeiro, from *The Keeper of Sheep*

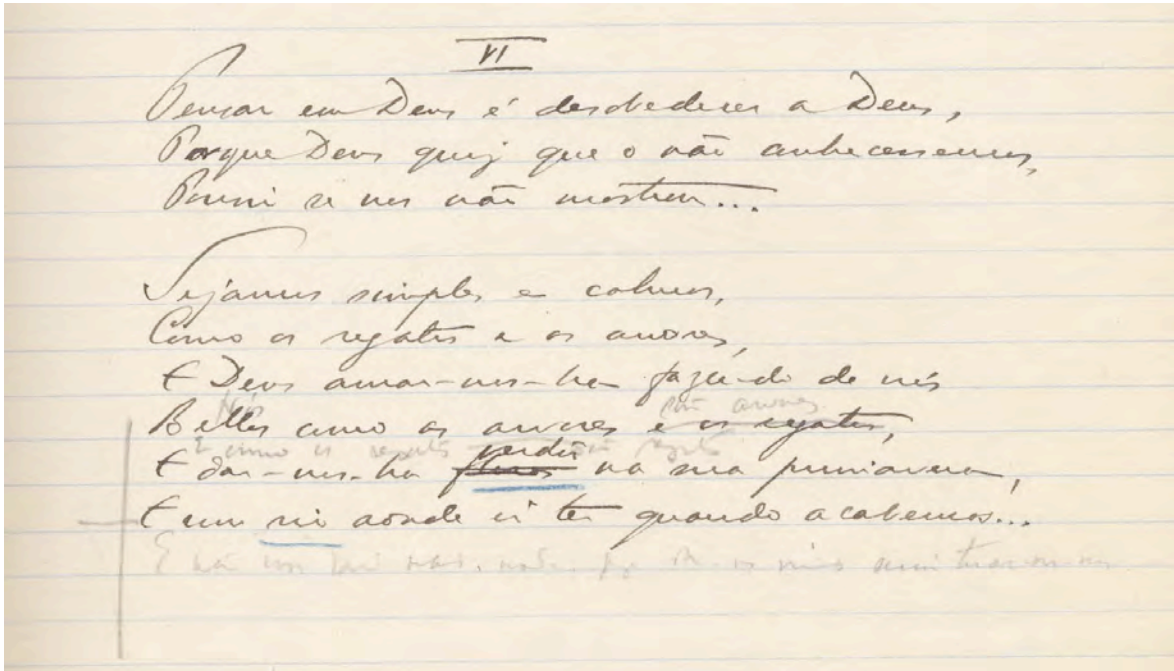
[Translation I]

VI

To ponder God is to disobey him
Because God did not want us to know him,
That's why he has not shown himself to us.

Let us be calm and simple,
5 Like trees and streams,
And God will love us and make us
Us, like trees are trees,
And like streams are streams,
He will give to us the greenness of his spring
10 And a river to go to when we have concluded...
And will give us nothing more, for to give us more would be to take it from us.

[Document I: BNP/E3, 145-9^r] Besides the original Portuguese document reproduced and transcribed below, there exist two other documents containing previous versions of poem VI from O Guardador de Rebanhos: 67-13^r and 67-22a^r.



[BNP/E3, 145-9^r, detail]

VI

Pensar em Deus é desobedecer a Deus,
Porque Deus quiz que o não conhecessemos,
Porisso se nos não mostrou...

- Sejamos simples e calmos,
5 Como os regatos e as arvovs,
E Deus amar-nos-ha fazendo de nós
Bellos [↑ Nós] como as arvovs <e os regatos>[↑ são arvovs],
E como os regatos são regatos,
E dar-nos-ha <fiores> [↑ verdôr] na sua primavera,
10 E um rio aonde ir ter quando acabemos...
E não nos dará mais nada, porque dar-nos mais seria tirar-no-nos.

Note: Pessoa doubted vs. 7 to 11 with a cross on the left margin visible in the manuscript.

[Translation II]

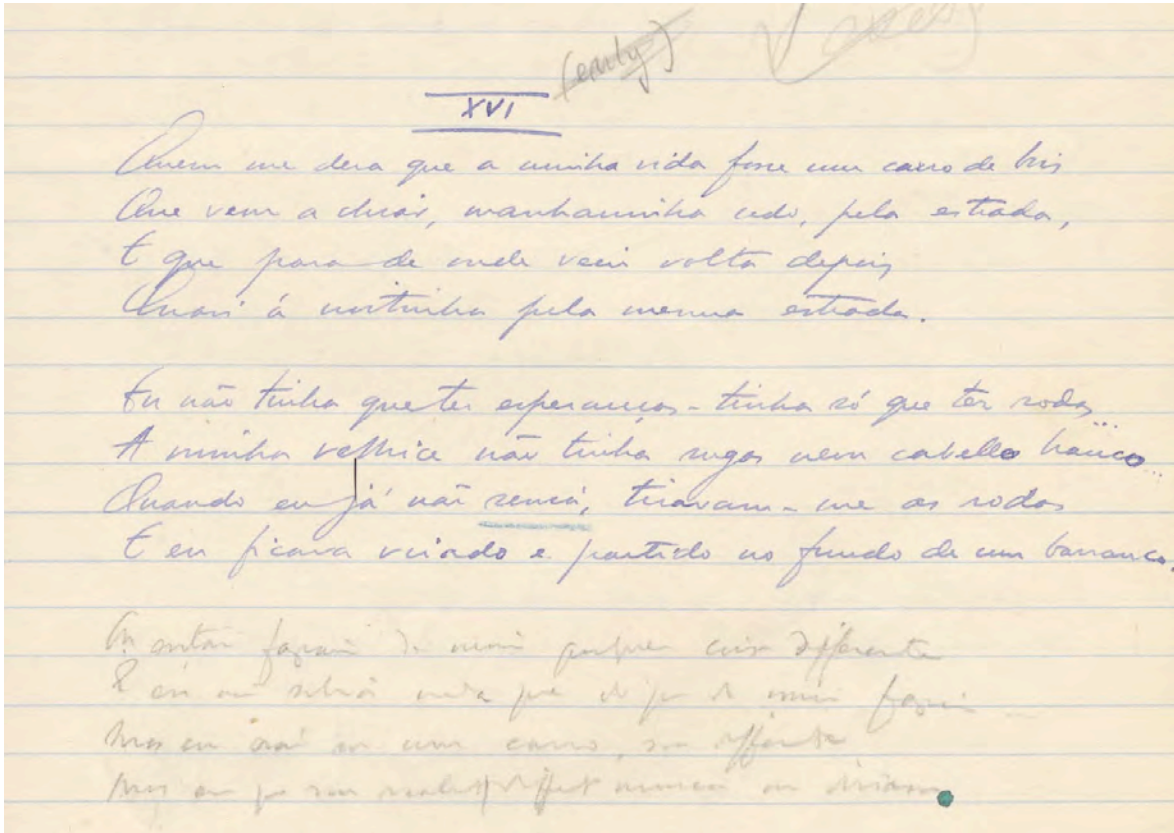
XVI

If only my life were an ox-cart
Squeaking down the road, bright
And early, and which at nightfall
Moves back over the same road.

5 I'd have no use for hope—
I'd need only wheels. Though
Growing old, I'd neither wrinkle
Nor would my hair go white.

10 When I was used up,
They'd remove my wheels
And I'd lie in a gully,
Broken, on my side.

[Document II: BNP/E3, 145-18^r] Besides the original Portuguese document reproduced and transcribed below, there exists another document containing a previous version of poem XVI from O Guardador de Rebanhos: 67-38a^v.



[BNP/E3, 145-9^r, detail]

XVI

Quem me dera que a minha vida fosse um carro de bois
 Que vem a chiar, manhaninha cedo, pela estrada,
 E que para de onde veio volta depois
 Quasi á noitinha pela mesma estrada.

- 5 Eu não tinha que ter esperanças — tinha só que ter rodas...
 A minha velhice não tinha rugas nem cabelo branco...
 Quando eu já não servia, tiravam-me as rodas
 E eu ficava virado e partido no fundo de um barranco.

- 10 Ou então faziam de mim qualquer coisa diferente
 E eu não sabia nada do que de mim faziam...
 Mas eu não sou um carro, sou diferente,
 Mas em que sou realmente diferente nunca me diriam.

Notes:

- 10 “nada que do que” in the original document, probably as an unnoticed repetition of “que”.

2. Loose Poems of Álvaro de Campos

[Translation III]

Original Sin

Ah, who will write the story of what he could have been?
 Will that story, if anyone writes it,
 Be the true story of Humanity?

5 The only thing there is is the real world; it is not us, just the world;
 What is not is us, and there the truth lies.

I am the one I failed to be.
 We are all what we supposed ourselves to be.
 It is our reality that we never achieve.

10 What has become of our truth—the dream at the childhood’s window?
 What has become of our sureness—the purpose at the afterward’s table?

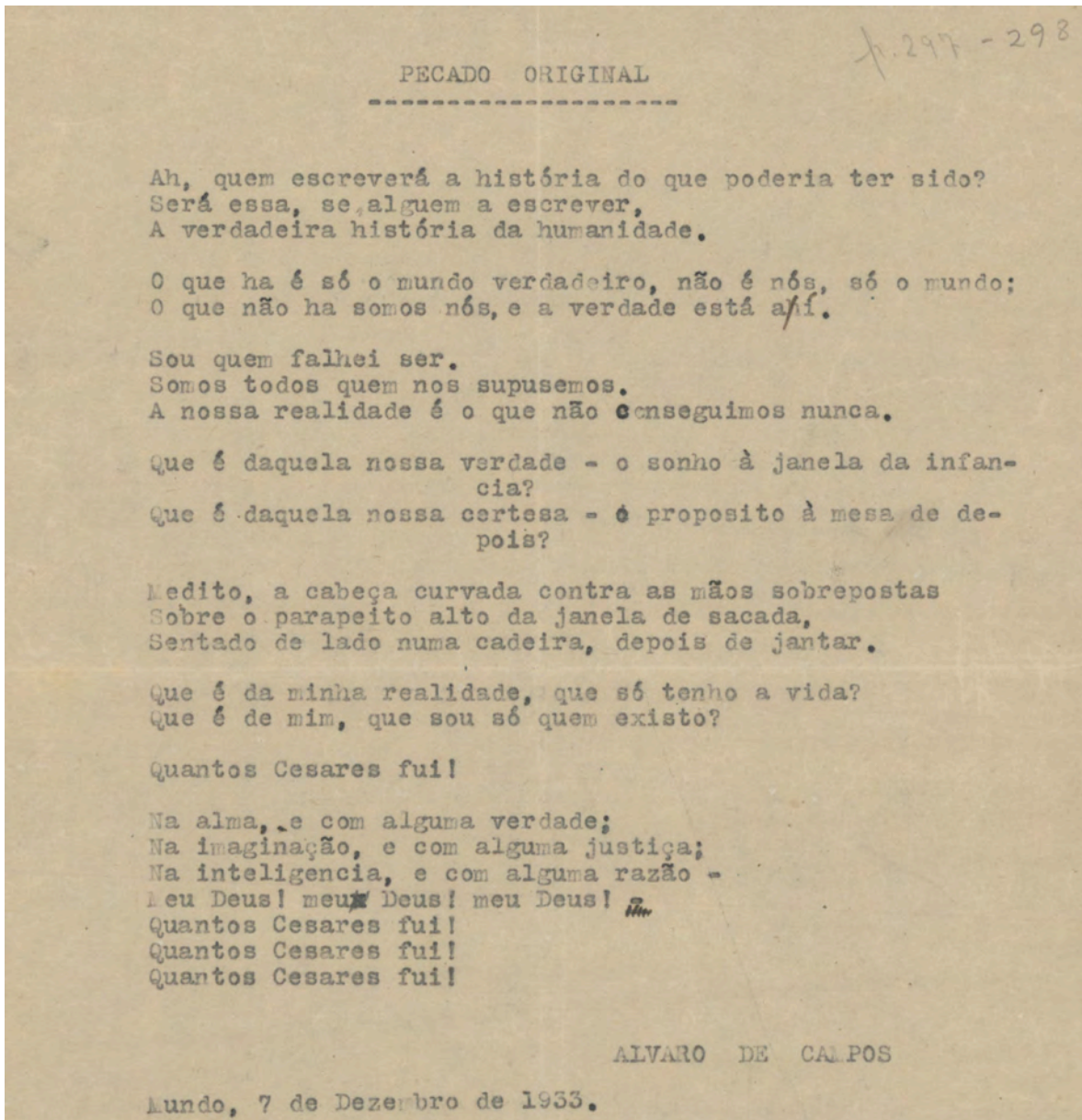
I meditate, my head bent over against hands placed
 On the high windowsill on the balcony windows
 Sitting sideways on a chair, after dinner.

15 What has happened to my reality, that I possess only my life?
 What has happened to me, I who am the only I that exists?

So many Caesars have I been!

In my soul, and with some truth;
 In my imagination, and with some justice;
 In my intelligence, and with some reason—
 20 My God! my God! my God!
 So many Caesars have I been!
 So many Caesars!
 So many Caesars!

[Document III: BNP/E3, 70-59^r] Besides the original Portuguese document reproduced and transcribed below, there exists another document containing a previous manuscript version of this poem: 70-58. The last version of the poem—the typescript facsimiled below—presents the following location-date indication: “Mundo, 7 de Dezembro de 1933” (World, 7 Dec. 1933).



[BNP/E3, 70-59^r, detail]

[Translation IV]

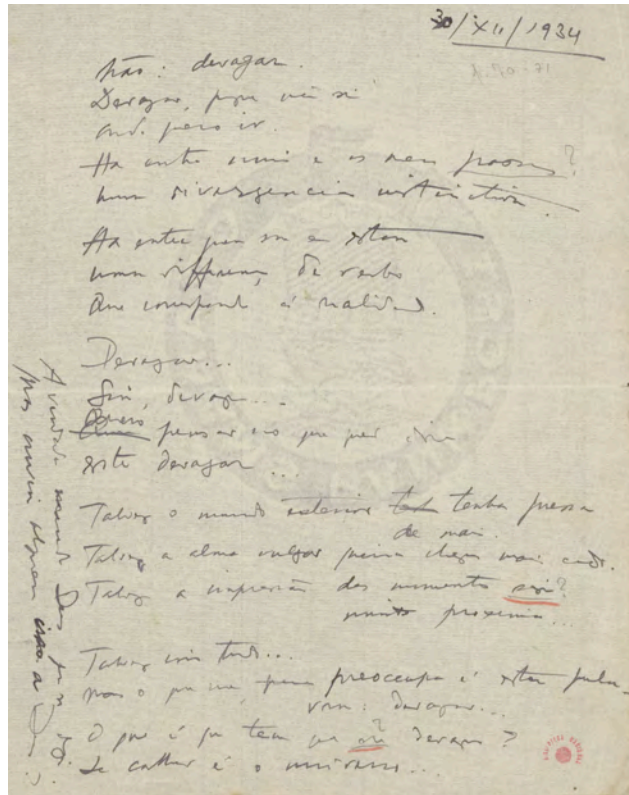
No: slowly.
Slowly, because I do not know
Where I want to go.
There is between me and my steps
5 An instinctive divergence.

There is between my being and what I am
A difference in verb
That corresponds with reality.

Slowly
10 Yes, slowly
I want to think about the meaning
Of this slowness
Maybe the external world is in too much of a hurry
Maybe the common soul wants to arrive earlier
15 Maybe the moments' impressions are too close.

Maybe all of this
But what worries me is this word slowly
What has to be done slowly?
Perhaps it is the universe
20 God commands that the truth be told.
But has anyone heard God say this?

[Document IV: BNP/E3, 69-32^r] Dated "30/XII/1934" (30 Dec. 1934).



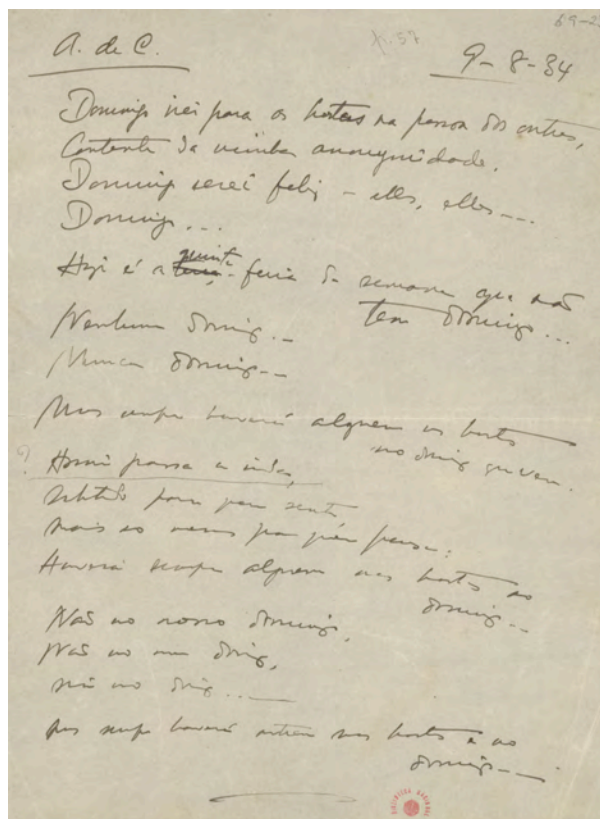
[BNP/E3, 69-32^r]

- 5 Não: devagar.
 Devagar, porque não sei
 Onde quero ir.
 Ha entre mim e os meus passos
 Uma divergencia instinctiva.
- Ha entre quem sou e estou
 Uma differença de verbo
 Que corresponde á realidade.
- 10 Devagar...
 Sim, devagar...
 Quero pensar no que quer dizer
 Este devagar...
- 15 Talvez o mundo exterior tenha pressa
 de mais.
 Talvez a alma vulgar queira chegar mais cedo.
 Talvez a impressão dos momentos seja muito proxima...
 Talvez isso tudo...
 Mas o que me preocupa é esta palavra: devagar...
 O que é que tem que ser devagar?
 Se calhar é o universo...
- 20 A verdade manda Deus que se diga.
 Mas ouviu alguém isso a Deus?

[Translation V]

Sunday I shall go to the farms in the person of others,
Contented in my anonymity.
Sunday will be a happy day — they, they
Sunday
5 Today is Thursday in the week that has no Sunday
No Sunday.
Never a Sunday.
But there will always be someone at the farms on Sunday next.
That's how life goes,
10 Especially for those who feel,
More or less for those who think:
There will always be someone at the farms on Sundays,
Not on our Sunday.
Not on my Sunday
15 Not on Sunday
But there will always be others at the farms and on Sundays!

[Document V: BNP/E3, 69-23r] Dated "9-8-34" (9 Aug. 1934).



[BNP/E3, 69-23r]

- Domingo irei para as hortas na pessoa dos outros,
 Contento da minha anonymidade.
 Domingo serei feliz — elles, elles...
 Domingo...
 5 Hoje, é a quinta-feira da semana que não tem domingo...
 Nenhum domingo...
 Nunca domingo...
 Mas sempre haverá alguém nas hortas no domingo que vem.
 Assim passa a vida,
 10 Sobretudo para quem sente,
 Mais ou menos para quem pensa:
 Haverá sempre alguém nas hortas ao domingo...
 Não no nosso domingo,
 Não no meu domingo,
 15 Não no domingo...
 Mas sempre haverá outrem nas hortas e ao domingo...

[Translation VI]

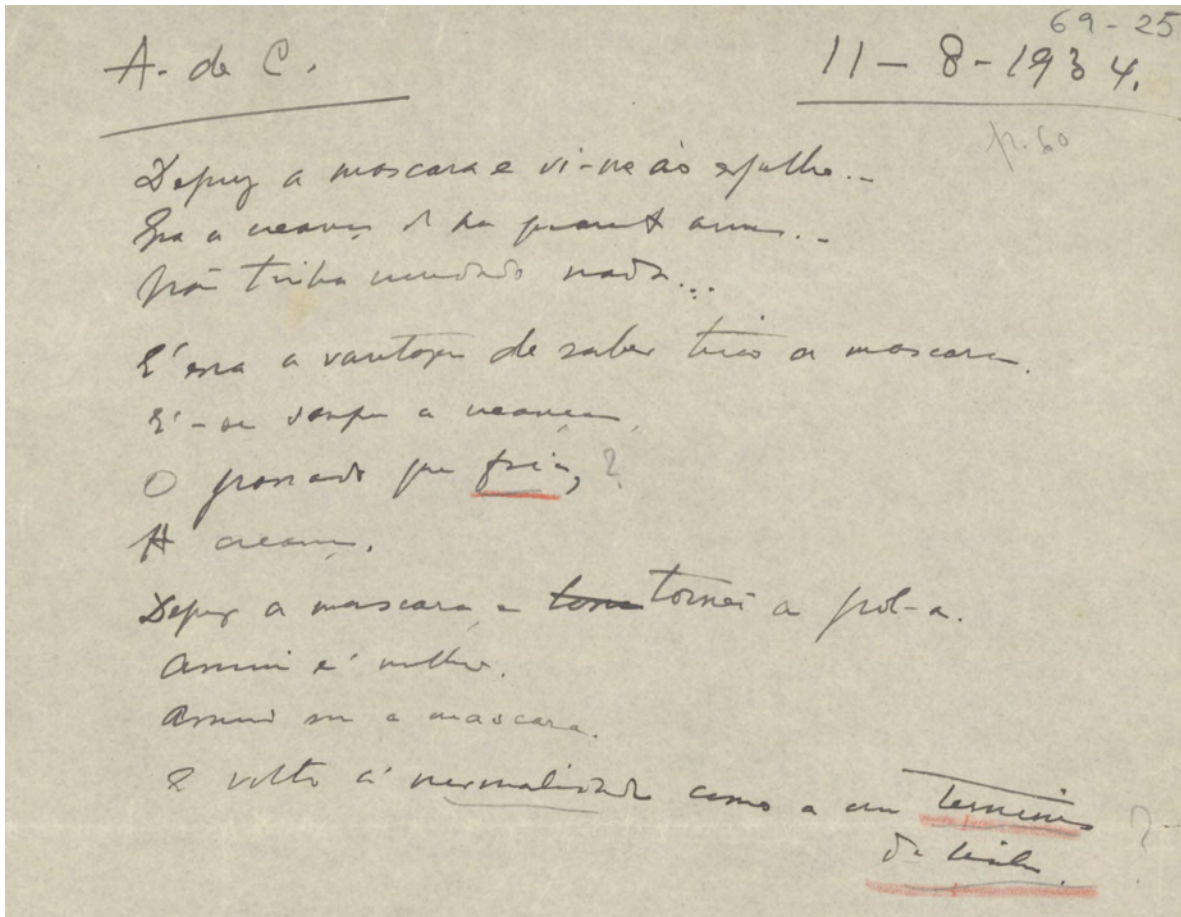
I took off my mask and looked in the mirror
At the child of so many years ago.
He hadn't changed a bit

5 That's the advantage in knowing how to remove one's mask.
One is always a child,
The past that was
The child.

I took off my mask and then put it on again
This is better,
10 Without the mask.

And I turn to normality as to an end of the line.

[Document VI: BNP/E3, 69-25^r] Dated "11-8-1934" (11 Aug. 1934).



[BNP/E3, 69-25^r, detail]

Depuz a mascara e vi-me ao espelho...
 Era a creança de ha quantos anos...
 Não tinha mudado nada...

5 É essa a vantagem de saber tirar a mascara.
 É-se sempre a creança,
 O passado que fica,
 A creança.

Depuz a mascara, e tornei a pol-a.
 Assim é melhor.
 10 Assim sou a mascara.

E volto á normalidade como a um terminus de linha.

[Translation VII]

De la Musique*

Ah, little by little, among the ancient trees
There emerges her form and I leave off thinking

Little by little, out of my own anguish I myself am emerging

The two forms meet in the clearing at the foot of the lake.

5 The two dream forms
Because this was just a moonbeam and my sadness
And the supposition of another thing
And the consequence of existing.

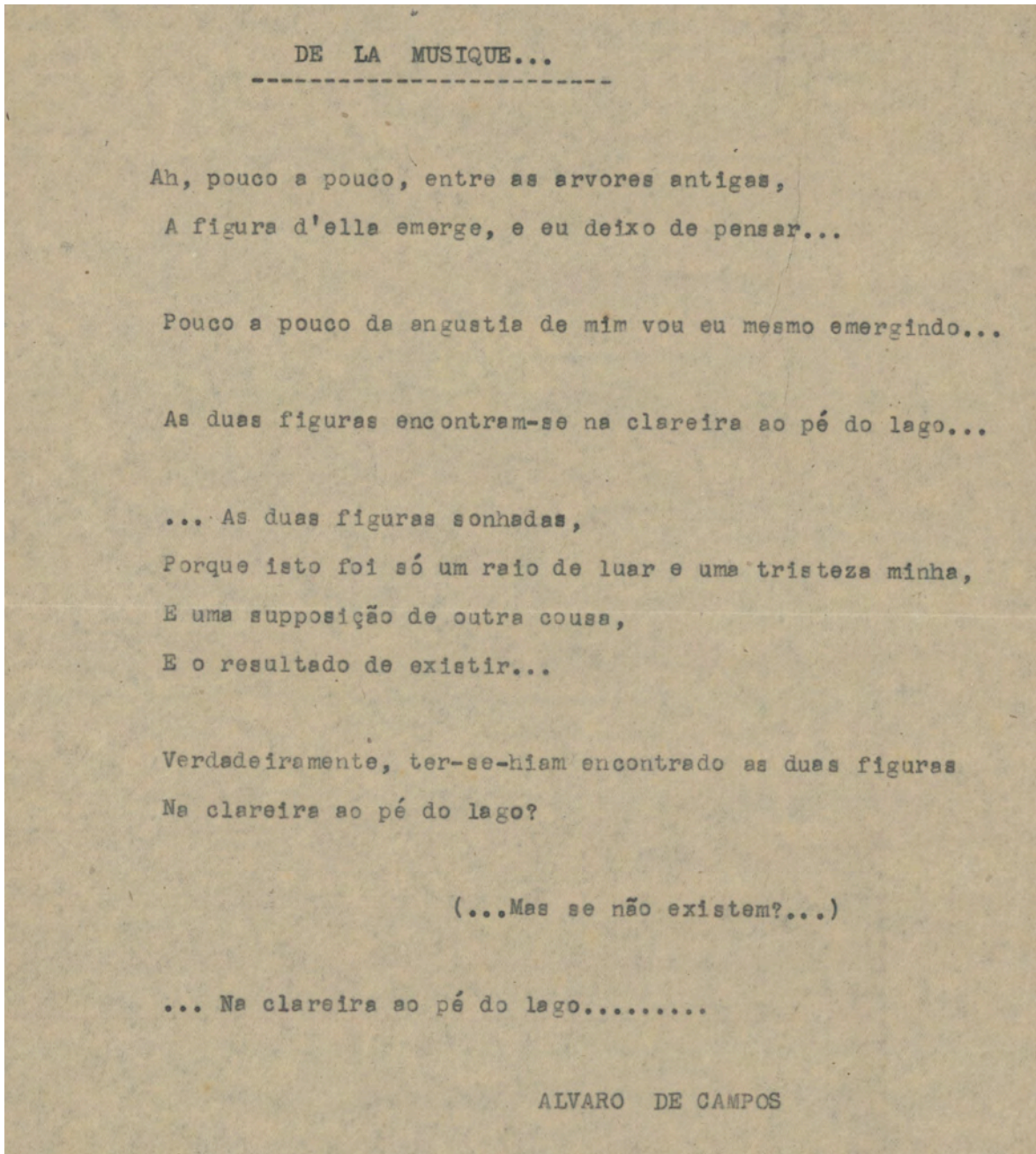
10 Truly, would those two forms have encountered each other
In the clearing at the foot of the lake?

(...But if they do not exist? ...)

...In the clearing by the lake.....

* Note: title originally in French.

[Document VII: BNP/E3, 70-48^r] *The document 70-47^r presents an identical poem, differing from 70-48^r solely in which it presents in manuscript the title, the attribution and a few ellipses which, in 70-48^r, appear as typescript; it also gives us the date, not present in the final version of the text: "17-9-1929" (17 Sep. 1929).*



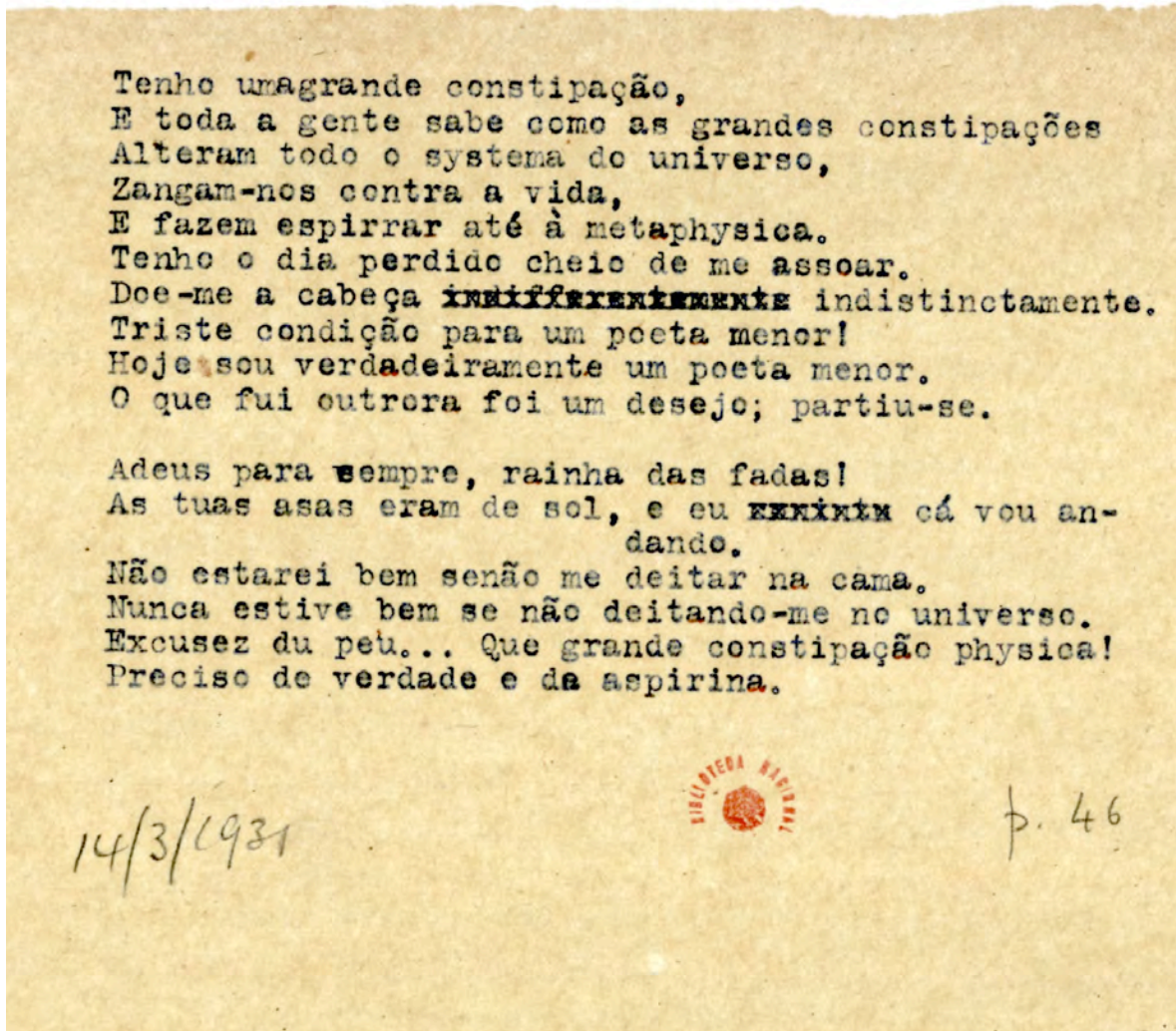
[BNP/E3, 70-48^r, detail]

[Translation VIII]

I have a bad cold
And everyone knows how a bad cold
Alters the ways of the universe,
A cold turns us against life
5 And forces us to sneeze our way right into metaphysics.
I have spent the day blowing my nose;
My head aches indiscriminately.
A sorry pass, this, for a minor poet.
And today I am surely a minor poet.
10 What I used to be was wishful; that's gone.

Goodbye forever, o faery queen!
Your wings were sunlight, and here I stand
I won't feel right if I don't lie down.
I've never been right unless sprawled out in the universe
15 *Excusez du peu*. . . What a miserable, aching cold.
I could use the truth. . . and some aspirin

[Document VIII: BNP/E3, 69-17r] Dated "14/3/1931" (14 Mar. 1931).



[BNP/E3, 69-17r, detail]

[Translation IX]

Bicarbonate of Soda

Suddenly, anguish
 Ah, what anguish, what nausea from stomach to soul!
 What friends I have had!
 How empty of everything the cities that I have traversed!
 5 What metaphysical dirt all my propositions!

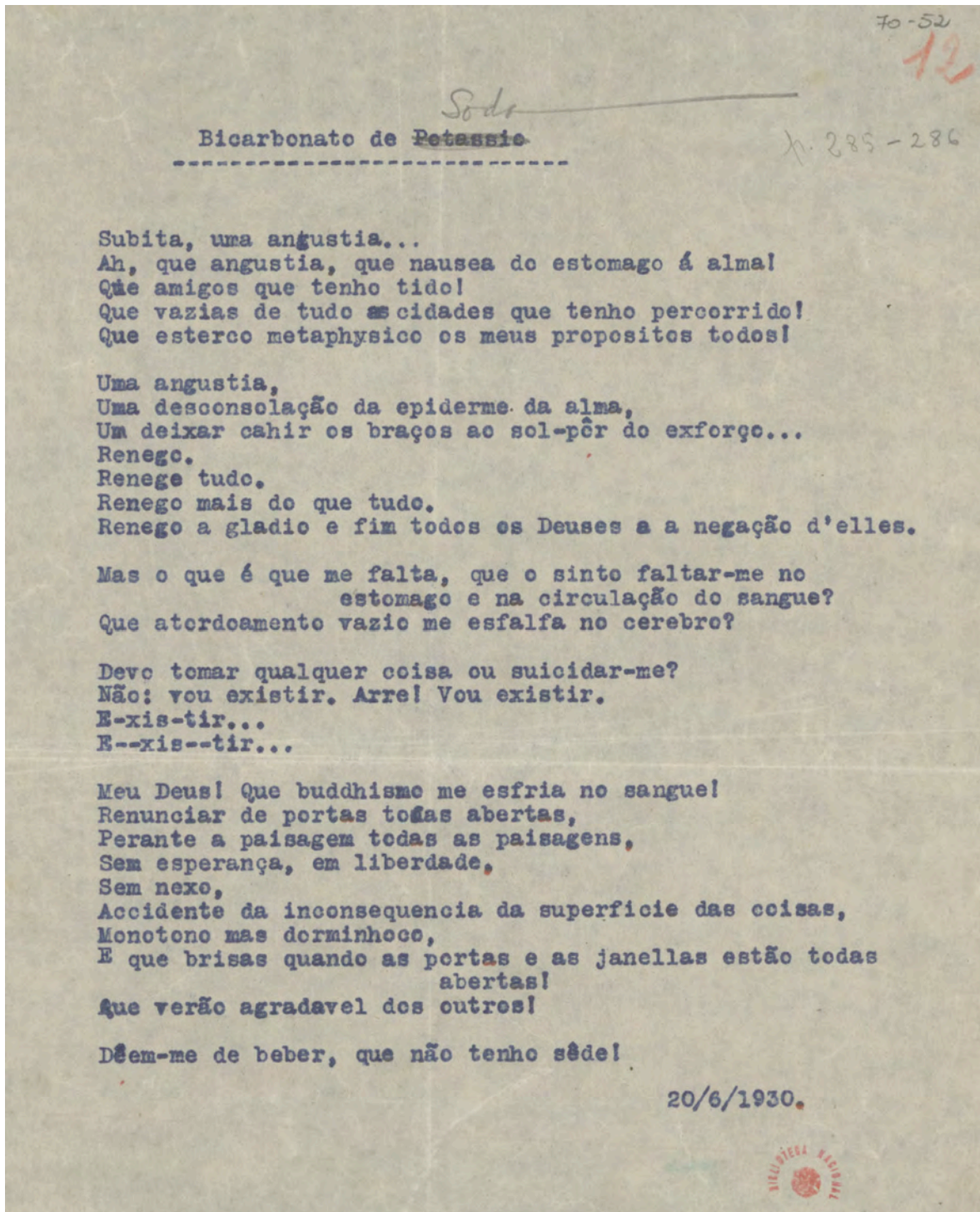
Anguish,
 An uneasiness of the epidermis of the soul
 A dropping of the arms at the sunset of effort
 I renounce.
 10 I renounce everything.
 I renounce more than everything.
 I renounce once and for all the Gods and their negation.

But what am I lacking, that something I sense is missing in my stomach and
 in the circulation of my blood?
 What empty stupefaction is overtaxing my brain?
 15 Should I take something for it or commit suicide?
 No. I shall exist. I shall exist.
 Ex-ist.
 Ex—ist.

My God. What Buddhism chills my blood!
 20 To renounce with doors wide open
 Before the landscape all landscapes
 Without hope, freely,
 Without coherence,
 An accident of the inconsequence of the superficiality of things.
 25 Monotonous but a sleepy-head,
 And what a breeze when the doors and windows are all open
 What a pleasant summer this summer belong to the "others,"

Give me a drink, for I have no thirst.

[Document IX: BNP/E3, 70-52r] Dated "14/3/1931" (26 Jun. 1930). Note the alteration in the title of the poem: "Bicarbonato de <Potassio>[↑ Soda]."



[BNP/E3, 70-52r, detail]

[Translation X]

Rag

The day turned to rain.
 The morning, though, was rather sunny.
 The day turned to rain.
 All morning I was a bit blue.
 5 Anticipation! Sadness? Nothing at all?
 I don't know; from the moment I awoke I was down.
 The day turned to rain.

I know. The rain's penumbra is elegant.
 I know. The sun, being so common, oppresses the elegant.
 10 I know. Susceptibility to changes of light is not elegant
 But who told the sun or the others that I want to be elegant?
 Give me blue skies and a shining sun.
 Fog, rain, darkness—that I have within me.
 Today all I want is quiet.

15 I might even love my place, so long as I don't have one.
 I am even at the verge of sleep from the desire for quiet.
 Let's not exaggerate!
 I am decidedly sleepy, inexplicably so.
 The day turned to rain.

20 Caresses? Endearments? Those are memories...
 That only a child can have...
 My lost break of day, my real skies of blue!
 The day turned to rain.

25 Pretty mouth of the caretaker's daughter,
 Fruit pulp of a heart still unconsumed...
 When did that happen? I don't know...
 In the morning sky of blue. . .

The day turned to rain.

[Document X: *Presença* 31-32, 1931, p. 9] This poem was published during the life of Pessoa (in the journal *Presença*); a previous document (BNP/E3, 70-53) presents a manuscript version of the poem, with two options of titles (“Trapo” or “Farrapo”) and the date “10/9/1930” (10 Sep. 1930).

TRAPO

<p>O dia deu em chuvoso. A manhã, contudo, esteve bastante azul. O dia deu em chuvoso. Desde manhã eu estava um pouco triste. Anticipação? tristeza? coisa nenhuma? Não sei: já ao acordar estava triste. O dia deu em chuvoso. Bem sei: a penumbra da chuva é elegante. Bem sei: o sol oprime, por ser tão ordinário, um elegante. Bem sei: ser susceptível às mudanças de luz não é elegante. Mas quem disse ao sol ou aos outros que eu quero ser elegante? Dêem-me o céu azul e o sol visível. Névoa, chuvas, escuros — isso tenho eu em mim.</p>	<p>Hoje quero só sossêgo. Até amaria o lar, desde que o não tivesse. Chego a ter sono de vontade de ter sossêgo. Não exageremos! Tenho efectivamente sono, sem explicação. O dia deu em chuvoso. Carinhos? afectos? São memórias... E' preciso ser-se criança para os ter... Minha madrugada perdida, meu céu azul verdadeiro! O dia deu em chuvoso. Bôca bonita da filha do caseiro, Polpa de fruta de um coração por comer... Quando foi isso? Não sei... No azul da manhã... O dia deu em chuvoso.</p>
---	---

ÁLVARO DE CAMPOS

[*Presença* 31-32, 1931, p.9; detail]

[Translation XI]

Written in a Book Abandoned Along the Way

I am returning from down Beja-way
I am on my way to Lisbon proper.
I bring back nothing and I will find nothing awaiting me.
I can already tell how tired I'll be when I find nothing there.
5 The saudade I feel is not for anything in the past or in the future.
In this book I leave inscribed an image for a failed scheme.

I was like herbs that go unharvested.

[Document XI: *Presença* 10, 1928, p. 2] This poem was published during the life of Pessoa (in the journal *Presença*); two documents (the manuscript BNP/E3, 70-34^v and the typescript 70-33^r) present previous versions of the poem, with two different dates: "25/1/1928" (25 Jan. 1928) and "15-3-1928" (15 Mar. 1928), respectively; the published text presents no date.

escripto num
 livro abando
 nado em
 viagem

VENHO dos lados de Beja.
 Vou para o meio de Lisboa.
 Não trago nada e não acharei nada.
 Tenho o cansaço antecipado do que não
 acharei,
 E a saudade que sinto não é nem no passado
 nem do futuro.
 Deixo escripta neste livro a imagem do
 meu designio morto:
 Fui, como hervas, e não me arrancaram.

Alvaro de Campos.

[Translation XII]

Oxfordshire*

I want what's good, I what' s bad, and finally I want nothing.
 I'm uncomfortable lying on my right side and uncomfortable lying on my left,
 And I'm discomfited by the awareness that I exist.
 I am universally uncomfortable, metaphysically uncomfortable,
 5 But what's worse, my head aches.
 That's more serious than the significance of the universe.

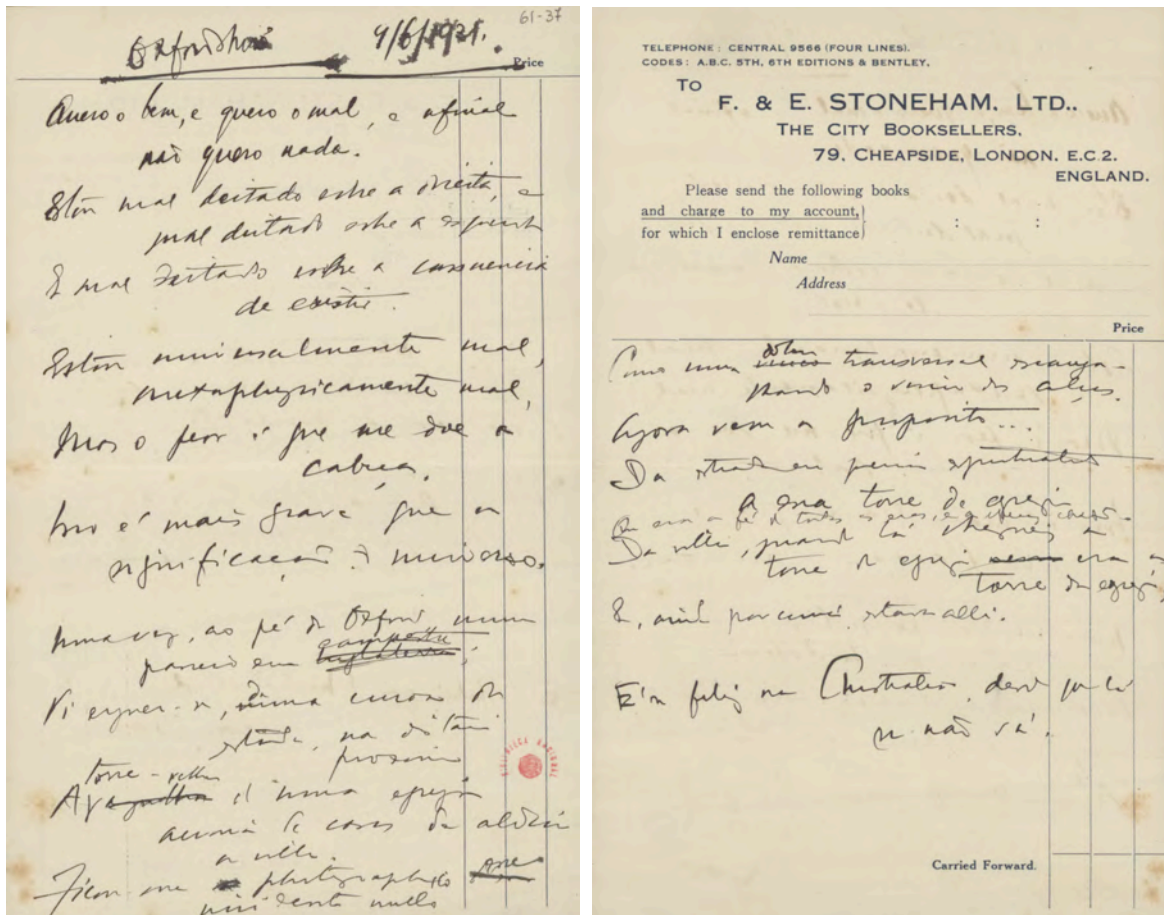
Once, near Oxford, while out on a country walk,
 I saw rising up, at the turn of the road, in the near distance
 And over houses in a village or town, a church steeple.
 10 That negligible incident has remained with me, a photograph.
 Like a cross-fold marring the crease in a pair of pants.
 Now comes the "by the way"

From the road I saw, in that church tower, spirituality,
 The faith of the ages, the efficiency of charity.
 15 Yet from the village, when I got there, the church tower was but a church
 tower,
 And, moreover, it was just there.

You can be happy in Australia, so long as you don't go there.

* Note: title of the poem already originally in English.

[Document XII: BNP/E3, 61-37^r] Dated "9/6/1931" (9 Jun. 1931).



Oxfordshire

- Quero o bem, e quero o mal, e afinal não quero nada.
 Estou mal deitado sobre a direita, e mal deitado sobre a esquerda
 E mal deitado sobre a consciencia de existir.
 Estou universalmente mal, metaphysicamente mal,
 5 Mas o peor é que me doe a cabeça.
 Isso é mais grave que a significação do universo.
- Uma vez, ao pé de Oxford, num passeio campestre,
 Vi erguer-se, da curva da estrada, na distancia proxima,
 A torre-velha duma igreja acima das casas da aldeia ou villa.
 10 Ficou-me photographico esse incidente nullo
 Como uma dobra transversal escangalhando o vinco das calças.
 Agora vem a proposito...
 Da estrada eu previa espiritualidade a essa torre de igreja
 Que era a fé de todas as eras, e a esperança christã.
 15 Da villa, quando lá cheguei, a torre da igreja era a torre da igreja,
 E, ainda por cima, estava alli.
- É-se feliz na Australia, desde que lá se não vá.

[Translation XIII]

Barrow-on-Furness***I**

I'm mean, I'm vile—like everyone else,
 I have no ideals, but then no one else has them.
 Those who claim them are like me, but lie.
 Others seek them since they don't have them

5 In my imagination I love that which is good,
 But my baser self disavows that.
 I stroll along, a ghost of my present being,
 Drunk, intermittently with the Beyond.

10 Like everyone else, I do not believe in my
 Beliefs—maybe that's one ideal I can die for.
 But until my death, I'll talk and I'll read.

Account for myself? I am what everybody else is.
 Change myself? Change into someone just like me?
 An end to all such talk from my heart!

* Note: title of the series of sonnets already originally in English.

[Document XIII: *Ática*, 1944, pp. 316-317] Undated. Since the manuscripts of "Barrow-on-Furness" were lost after their first publication, the *Ática* edition become the primary source for all five sonnets of this cycle.

I

SOU vil, sou reles, como toda a gente,
Não tenho ideais, mas não os tem ninguém.
Quem diz que os tem é como eu, mas mente.
Quem diz que busca é porque não os tem.

É com a imaginação que eu amo o bem.
Meu baixo ser porém não mo consente.
Passo, fantasma do meu ser presente,
Ébrio, por intervalos, de um Além.

Como todos não creio no que creio.
Talvez possa morrer por esse ideal.
Mas, enquanto não morro, falo e leio.

Justificar-me? Sou quem todos são...
Modificar-me? Para meu igual?...
— Acaba lá com isso, ó coração!

[*Ática*, 1944, pp. 316 & 317; detail]

[Translation XIV]

Barrow-on-Furness

II

Gods, forces, scientific beings or men of faith,
So what ? All explanations explaining nothing.
I sit here on a drum at the docks, understanding
Nothing more than if I were on my feet.

5 Why should I be able to understand it all?
 Well, yes, but then why shouldn't I?
 Oh flowing river, dirty and cold, I drift
 Along, like you, a thing of no greater worth.

10 O universe, tangled ball of yarn,
 What patient fingers of someone thinking
 Of something else unravel you?

What is left to us is no longer a ball of yarn,
To play — to play at what? At love? Indifference?
Me? All I do is pick myself up off the drum.

[Document XIV: *Ática*, 1944, pp. 318-319] Undated. See description of Document XIII.

II

Deuses, forças, almas de ciência ou fé,
Eh! Tanta explicação que nada explica!
Estou sentado no cais, numa barrica,
E não compreendo mais do que de pé.

Porque o havia de compreender?
Pois sim, mas também porque o não havia?
Água do rio, correndo suja e fria,
Eu passo como tu, sem mais valer...

Ó universo, novelo emaranhado,
Que paciência de dedos de quem pensa
Em outra cousa te põe separado?

Deixa de ser novelo o que nos fica...
A que brincar? Ao amor?, à indif'rença?
Por mim, só me levanto da barrica.

[*Ática*, 1944, pp. 318 & 319; detail]

[Translation XV]

Barrow-on-Furness

III

Run on—cursed river—carry out my
Subjective indifference to the sea.
What's this "to the sea"? What does your
Disdainful presence have to do with me and my thinking?

5 Fortunate sluggard! I live out my life
Riding an ass's shadow. A lively life
Lives in giving names to that, and dies
Fixing labels to the great expanse of sky.

10 Oh open, frank Furness, I must put up with
You for three more days, tied as I am, a mere
Engineer, to a long sequence of inspections.

Afterwards, I shall go off somewhere, me and my
Disdain (and you shall carry on in your old way).
Nobody at all, cigarette lit up, at the station.

[Document XV: *Ática*, 1944, pp. 320-321] Undated. See description of Document XIII.

III

Corre, raio de rio, e leva ao mar
A minha indiferença subjectiva!
Qual «leva ao mar»? Tua presença esquiva
Que tem comigo e com o meu pensar?

Lesma de sorte! Vivo a cavalgar
A sombra de um jumento. A vida viva
Vive a dar nomes ao que não se activa,
Morre a pôr etiquetas ao grande ar...

Escancarado Furness, mais três dias
Te aturarei, pobre engenheiro preso
A sucessibilíssimas vistorias...

Depois, ir-me-ei embora, eu e o desprezo
(E tu irás do mesmo modo que ias),
Qualquer, na *gare*, de cigarro aceso...

[*Ática*, 1944, pp. 320 & 321; detail]

[Translation XVI]

Barrow-on-Furness

IV

The scrap heap—finished! Figured it
Out, came out right. Pats on the back.
My heart is an enormous platform
Showing forth a small animalcule.

5 Under disillusion's microscope
I ended up, prolix in futile minutiae,
My practical conclusions useless,
My theoretical conclusions confused.

10 What theories are there for one who
Feels his mind crumbling, like teeth
In the comb of a beggar who has emigrated?

I fold up my notebook and scratch
Out soft gray scribbles on the back
Of the envelope that I am.

[Document XVI: *Ática*, 1944, pp. 322-323] Undated. See description of Document XIII.

IV

Conclusão a sucata!... Fiz o cálculo,
Saiu-me certo, fui elogiado...
Meu coração é um enorme estrado
Onde se expõe um pequeno animálculo...

A microscópio de desilusões
Findei, prolixo nas minúcias fúteis...
Minhas conclusões práticas, inúteis...
Minhas conclusões teóricas, confusões...

Que teorias há para quem sente
O cérebro quebrar-se, como um dente
Dum pente de mendigo que emigrou?

Fecho o caderno dos apontamentos
E faço riscos moles e cinzentos
Nas costas do envelope do que sou...

[*Ática*, 1944, pp. 322 & 323; detail]

[Translation XVII]

Barrow-on-Furness**V**

How long, how long, O Portugal, have we
 Gone our separate ways! Ah, but the soul,
 This equivocal soul, never calm or strong,
 Is not even remotely distracted from you.

5 I, an occult hysteric, dream—an empty niche.
 Ironically, the Furness, the river washing
 These shores, keeps me company, I who stand
 Still while the river runs on at such speed.

10 Rapidly? Yes, rapidly, relatively speaking.
 Damn it, let's put an end to splitting hairs,
 To subtleties, interstices, the in-between,

The metaphysics of sensations—let us put
 An end to this and to everything else. Ah,
 What human yearning to be river or wharf!

[Document XVII: *Ática*, 1944, pp. 324-325] Undated. See description of Document XIII.

V

Há quanto tempo, Portugal, há quanto
Vivemos separados! Ah, mas a alma,
Esta alma incerta, nunca forte ou calma,
Não se distrai de ti, nem bem nem tanto.

Sonho, historico oculto, um vão recanto...
O rio Furness, que é o que aqui banha,
Só irònicamente me acompanha,
Que estou parado e ele correndo tanto...

Tanto? Sim, tanto relativamente...
Arre, acabemos com as distinções,
As subtilezas, o interstício, o entre,
A metafísica das sensações —

Acabemos com isto e tudo mais...
Ah, que ânsia humana de ser rio ou cais!

[*Ática*, 1944, pp. 324 & 325; detail]

3. Poems of Ricardo Reis

[Translation XVIII]

I prefer roses, my love, to my country
And I love magnolias more than I do
Glory and virtue

5 So long as life does not tire me out.
I let life pass me by life pass me by
While I remain unchanged

What can it matter to the one to whom
Nothing any longer matters that one wins
And another loses, so long as the dawn breaks

10 If each year in the Spring
Leaves show forth
That in the Fall cease to be?

As for the rest of it, those other things human beings
Attach to life,
15 What increase can they bring to my soul?

Nothing—save a desire for indifference
And the certain indolence
Of the fugitive hour.

[Document XVIII: BNP/E3, 51-26^r] Dated "1-6-1916" (1 Jun. 1916). The same document presents another ode by Reis, with the same date and the incipit "Ah, sob as sombras que sem qu'rer nos amam."

Prefiro rosas, meu amor, á patria,
 E antes magnolias amo
 Que a gloria e a virtude.

Logo ^{que} a vida me não cañce, deixo
 Que a vida por mim passe
 Logo que eu fique o mesmo.


Que importa áquelle a quem já nada importa
 Que um perca e outro vença,
 Se a aurora ~~sempre~~ raia sempre,

Se cada anno com a primavera
 As folhas apparecem!
 E com o outomno cessam?

E o resto, as outras cousas que os humanos
 Accrescentam á vida,
 Que me augmentam na alma?

Nada, salvo o desejo de indiff'rença
 E a confiança molle
 Na hora fugitiva.

1-6-1916.....

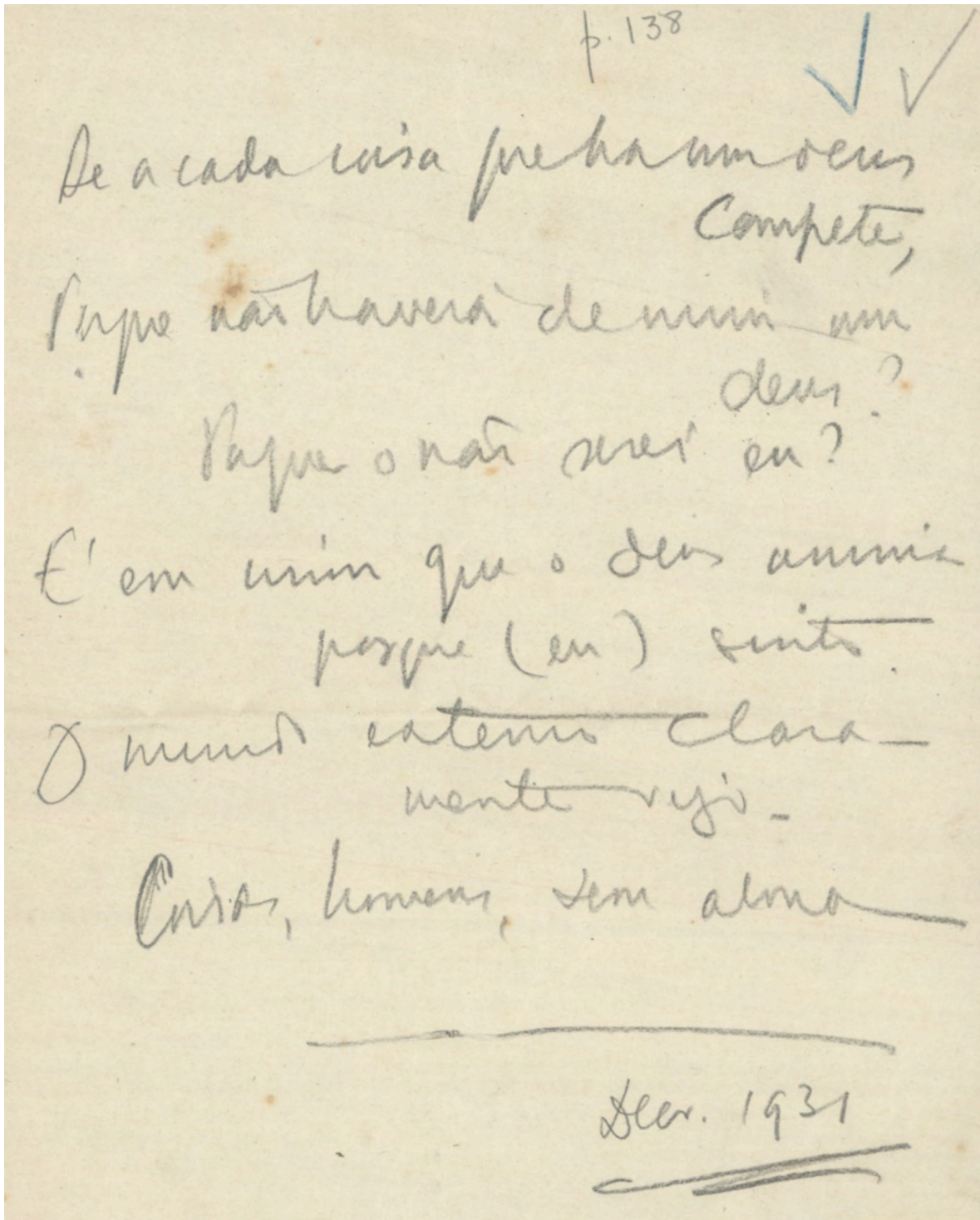


[BNP/E3, 51-26^r, detail]

[Translation XIX]

If for every thing there is a god,
Why then is there no god of me?
 Why am I myself not it?
It's in me that god comes alive because I feel
5 I see the outside world clearly —
 Things, men, soulless.

[Document XIX: BNP/E3, 51-80r] Dated "Dec. 1931".



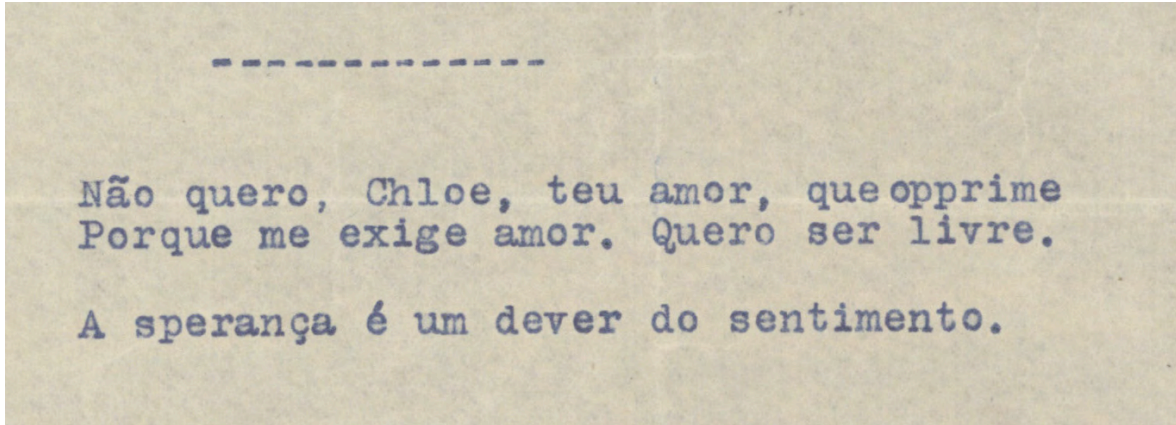
[BNP/E3, 51-80r, detail]

Se a cada coisa que ha um deus, compete,
 Porque não haverá de mim um deus?
 Porque o não serei eu?
 É em mim que o deus anima porque (eu) sinto.
 O mundo externo claramente vejo—
 Coisas, homens, sem alma.

[Translation XX]

I do not want your love, Chloe, which oppresses
Because it exacts love. I want to be free.
Hope is a duty of sentiment.

[Document XX: BNP/E3, 51-71^r] *Undated. The same document presents two other odes by Reis, with the incipits “Quer pouco: terás tudo.” and “ Não só quem nos odía ou nos inveja.”*

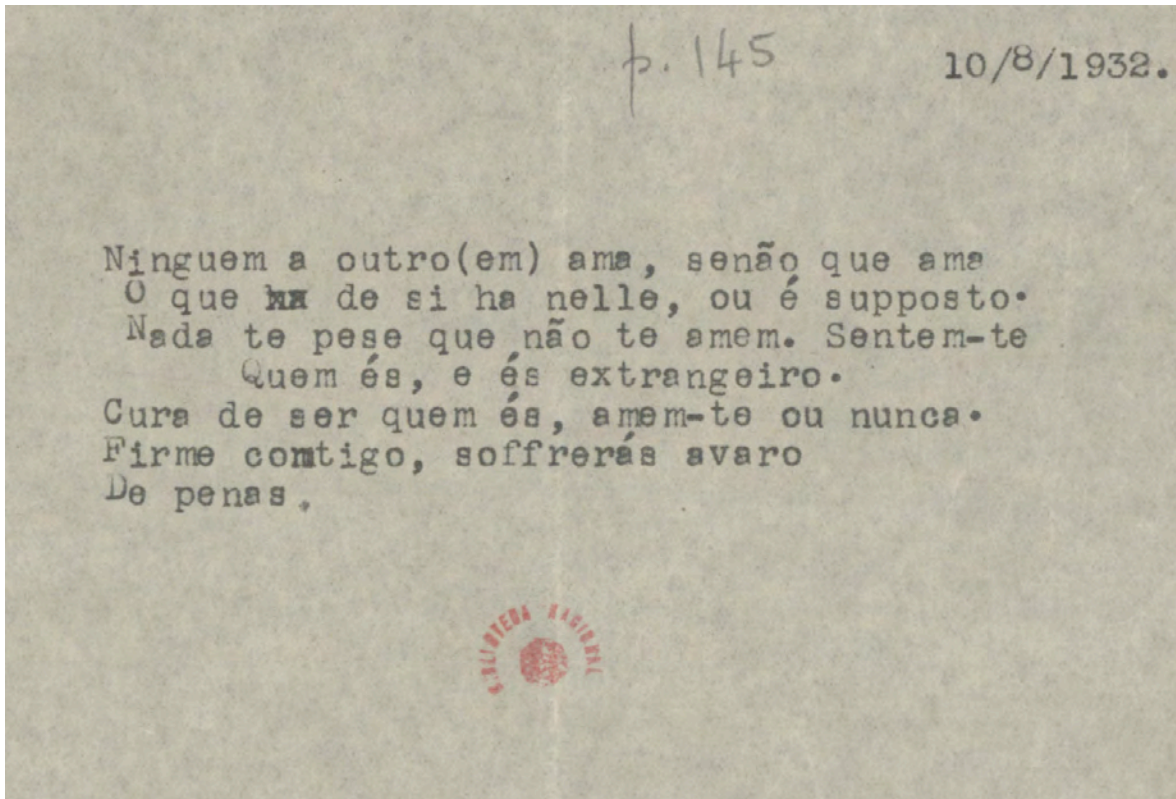


[BNP/E3, 51-71^r, detail]

[Translation XXI]

Nobody loves another, unless he loves
That which is of himself in the other, or he supposes it so.
Don't let it weigh on you that no one loves you. They sense
 Who you are and you are a stranger.
5 Cure yourself of being who you are, they'll never love you.
 Be firm about yourself, you'll suffer avarices of pain.

[Document XXI: BNP/E3, 51-86^r] Dated "10/8/1932" (10 Aug. 1932).



[BNP/E3, 51-86^r, detail]

[Translation XXII]

Mouths purple with wine,
Foreheads white beneath
Roses, forearms, naked
And white, at the table;

Let that be the picture,
Lidia, of the two of us,
Mute, inscribed forever
In the minds of Gods.

Better this life than
The lives lived by men,
Covered with soot that
Swirls up from the road

Godly example helps only
Those who aspire to no
More than to go along
With the flow of things.

[Document XXII: BNP/E3, 51-24r] Dated "10/8/1932" (10 Aug. 1932).

Ode ✓

Boccas roxas de vinho,
 Testas brancas sob rosas,
 Nús, brancos antebraços
 Deixados sobre a mesa :

Tal seja, Lydia, o ~~xxxx~~ quadro
 Em que fiquemos, mudos,
 Eternamente inscriptos
 Na consciencia dos deuses.

Antes ~~que~~ isto que a vida
 Como os homens a vivem,
 Cheia da negra poeira
 Que erguem das estradas.

Só os deuses soccorrem
 Com seu exemplo aquelles
 Que ~~nada~~ mais pretendem
 Que ir no rio da ~~vita~~ cousas.

Ricardo Reis. 29-8-1915

[BNP/E3, 51-24r, detail]