

PERHAPPINESS

Paulo Leminski

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Paulo Leminski (1944-1989): prolific poet, experimental proseer, essayist, translator, occasional songwriter, cultural agitator, polyglot martial artist. A leading voice of his generation, Leminski follows different paths attempted in Brazil from the early 1960s through the late 1980s. He contributed to the journal of concretism, *Invenção*, at eighteen and maintained a characteristically acute sense of visuality and typographic space in his poetic output. Much of Leminski's poetry of the late 1970s/early 1980s can be read under the contested rubric of *poesia marginal*, though his detached irony and language-based mini-lyrics set him apart. The best poems from his numerous small-press books are collected in *Caprichos & Relaxos* (1983) and *Distraídos venceremos* (1987). In the latter, renewed desires for rigor and dialogue with literary traditions are evident. The author's experiment in New World baroque narrative, *Catatau* (1975), was a kind of cult book; it was complemented by the ludically Proppian *Agora é que são elas* (1984). A multi-media cultural event and academic program (with such participants as Haroldo de Campos, José Miguel Wisnik and Leyla Perrone-Moisés) was sponsored by the poet's home municipality of Curitiba in the quarter following his untimely death. His eventually adverse existential state and cosmopolitan poetic awareness best crystallize in a paronomasiastic one-liner he left as verse: PERHAPPINESS.

FULL PAUSE

A place where's done
what's already be done,
the blank of the page,
sum of all texts,
time departed
when, in writing,
an exempt leaf
was needed.

No page
was ever clean.
Even the most Saharan,
arctic one, signifies.
That there never was,
a blank page.
In the depths, they all shout,
pallid from so much.

* * *

we were born in diverse poems
it was fate's wish that we find each other
in the same strophe sister and brother
in the same verse the same phrases

rhyme at first sight we saw each other
trading what was synonymous
our gazes no longer anonymous

having read this far along
the same track and lines
of mine of yours of ours blended

PLENA PAUSA

Lugar onde se faz
o que já foi feito,
branco da página,
soma de todos os textos,
foi-se o tempo
quando, escrevendo,
era preciso
uma folha isenta.

Nenhuma página
jamais foi limpa.
Mesmo a mais Saara,
ártica, significa.
Nunca houve isso,
uma página em branco.
No fundo, todas gritam,
pálidas de tanto.

* * *

nascemos em poemas diversos
destino quis que a gente se achasse
na mesma estrofe e na mesma classe
no mesmo verso e na mesma frase

rima à primeira vista nos vimos
trocamos nossos sinônimos
olhares não mais anônimos

nesta altura da leitura
nas mesmas pistas
mistas a minha a tua a nossa linha

life is the cows
you put in the river
to distract the piranhas
while the cattle pass

* * *

one day
we were going to be homer
a work no less than an iliad

then later
the going got rougher
maybe you could be a rimbaud
an ungaretti some fernando pessoa
a lorca an éluard a ginsberg

finally
we ended up the little provincial poet
we'd always been
behind so many masks
that time treated like flowers

a vida é as vacas
que você põe no rio
para atrair as piranhas
enquanto a boiada passa

* * *

um dia
a gente ia ser homero
a obra nada menos que uma ilíada

depois
a barra pesando
dava pra ser aí um rimbaud
um ungaretti um fernando pessoa qualquer
um lorca um éluard um ginsberg

por fim
acabamos o pequeno poeta de província
que sempre fomos
por trás de tantas máscaras
que o tempo tratou como a flores

I'm not the silence
that means to say words
or clap its hands
for performances of chance

I'm a river of words
I request a moment of silences
pauses waltzes calms penchants
and a touch of oblivion

just one and I can leave space
and beset with stars this theater
that's called time

* * *

PARALYZING GAZE 91

the gaze of the cobra lies
 belays
 paralyzes the plumed bird

my gaze
falls from me
lunar
laser

my awakening
my disarming love
my evil eye

my gaze
reader

to arouse
from my alarming
gaze

não sou o silêncio
que quer dizer palavras
ou bater palmas
pras performances do acaso

sou um rio de palavras
peço um minuto de silêncios
pausas valsas calmas penadas
e um pouco de esquecimento

apenas um e eu posso deixar o espaço
e estrelar este teatro
que se chama tempo

* * *

OLHAR PARALISADOR nº 91

o olhar da cobra pára
dispara
paralisa o pássaro

meu olhar
cai de mim
laser
luar

meu despertar
meu amor desesperado
meu mau olhado

meu olhar
leitor

despertar
do meu olhar
despertador

VERDURE

(music and words by Paulo Leminski)

all of a sudden
i remember the greenness
green the color
the greenest that may exist
the happiest color
saddest on the list
the green that you're wearing
the green you wore you insist
the day i couldn't miss you
the day you couldn't be missed

all of a sudden
i sold my sons and daughters
to a family of americans
they've got the autos
they've got the money
they've got a house, see
and money's not funny
that's the only way they can
[go back
and catch Rio rays, get sandy
[and sunny

de repente
me lembro do verde
da cor verde
a mais verde que existe
a cor mais alegre
a cor mais triste
o verde que vestes
o verde que vestiste
o dia em que eu te vi
o dia em que me viste

de repente
vendi meus filhos
a uma família americana
eles têm carro
eles têm grana
eles têm casa
a grama é bacana
só assim eles podem
[voltar
e pegar um sol em
[copacabana

LEMINSKI, Paulo. *Caprichos & relaxos*.
São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1983.

—, *Distraídos venceremos*. São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1987.