

As palavras que não cabem na boca*

Words that don't fit in the mouth

Stuart Blazer

An Azorean in Bermuda
Shipwrecked on land, a
Terceirense in Sacramento, slave
To cows who milk his blood,
Lucky to have one stomach
To be hungry in instead of four.

*Um açoriano na Bermuda
Náufrago na terra, um
Rabo torto em Sacramento, escravo
Das vacas que mungem o seu sangue,
Afortunado em ter um só estômago
Faminto em vez de quatro.*

An Azorean aboard the “Autonomia”,
Francisco Barreto Côrte-Real
Set sail at dawn in May, 1895
From the bay of Angra bound for
Ponta Delgada, doing his hometown
Justice: Praia de Vitória, Victory Beach.
He brought with him bread, water,
Aguardente. A heroic arrival,
Celebrated by *90 Milhas Num Barco de Papel*,
A book charting his triumphant solo voyage
From Terceira to S. Miguel.

That paper boat (newsprint pressed then glued
Onto a canvas-sheathed wooden frame) is now
Afloat in Angra’s museum, sparking a memory
Of a Russian poet, among other things:
“The ship of love has crashed
against the shores of daily life.”

* Courtesy of the Azorean theatre company Cães do Mar, based in Terceira

*O barco de amor naufragou
contra os baixios da vida quotidiana.*

...

Domingos Rebelo's painting *Os Emigrantes*
Done in 1926 presents such a complete
Picture of departure, so much world
Condensed into so little space.
A tenderness that can be felt.
As can the weight, the textures
Of farewell.
And the mystery
Of arrival.
Since *photography* has its root in
Writing with light I had to look up
The Latin for *dark*: passing by *obscurum*,
Tenebris, before settling upon *caligo*,
Which offered *caligraphy*, writing with,
Into, the darkness.
Emigration is a kind of writing
With a spastic hand, the stressed body
Repeating *I am the man, I suffered*,
I was there until it makes its way
In a new world, a home
Built from earth and water and fire and air.

...

I don't know but I been told
The streets of heaven are paved with gold...
American sky, not its land.
Note the frequent signage: *Merdadouro*.
So much depends upon...which movie we're watching.
When you wish upon a starfish...
Does hope grow back?
So many faces become coins, worn
By resigned disappointment.

We leave war and poverty and hunger
To discover a new language
Saying the same things in *Pinglish*
As we chew words like hard bread,
Crumbs of Portuguese dangling
From American lips.

...

I'm here, meaning still
 There, wandering Jew
 Though Catholic for generations.
 Sometimes even at home
 I felt a stranger
 On this earth, so alone
 —only me and God.

Só eu e Deus.

Caught in the net of being
 While longing
 Asking *where do I belong?*
 To be is to long: for the past
 That's never past, the struggling now,
 The not yet.

Hei careca!

Caressing a bald man's dome
 From the inside—with ideas—
 Now that's *saudade*,
 thoughts that no longer fit in the head,

os pensamentos que já não cabem na cabeça.

And love?

Desamorfizado.

...

Deportagees sent back
 From where they came, island
 Or continent, an enzyme
 For local crime to flourish,
 A kind of human phylloxera
 That thrives like sourdough
 In any atmosphere.

In S. Miguel I had to use a corncob
 To wipe my ass—we slept on straw—
 No one could afford a mattress.
 Now I live in a mansion
 Nearly the size of my loneliness.
 When I look in the mirror
 I can't tell if it's tears or laughter,
 The way cold from hot
 Can be hard at first
 To distinguish in the shower.

The South has things to teach the North.
An Indian word for money, *takiin*,
Means *shit of the sun*.
And “when shit used for money
the poor will be born without assholes.”

*Quando a merda for usada como dinheiro
o pobre nasce sem cu.*

No matter where we land
We’re left with the immensity
Of the sea—just little me—
Alone in boat or car or plane or house
So alone that the Bible gets turned
Inside out (only the faithful explore
sacred doubt)
—*só eu e Deus*—

The whale inside Jonah.

A baleia dentro de Jonas.