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Trad. Sarah J.T.- Iñaki Mendiguren

THIS IS A FIRST PAGE¹, a door, perhaps.

But since the door separates the inside from the outside
or this first page separates the closed from the open book
either because the door positions us on one side or the other
or because this first page
represents you reading now and me having written in advance,

the door may not know how to show the beginning:
or the closing.

Yet the beginning, wherever it may be,
must be something gathered -together-,
like a seed
and the seed is always the core,

so it seems that the beginning will always be in the seed
in an apple core, for example,
or in the core

in the core of the mind.

So this is a first page:
the front cover, if you like, the jacket.

¹ *Eta orain badakit* . I now I know

Izen gabe direnak. Haurdunaldiko beteko khantoriak. Pamiela.

"Those who are... unnamed - Songs at the height of pregnancy"

Trad. Iñaki Mendiguren

LAST CLAUSE OF THE TESTAMENT

ONLY what is not said is
what should have been said
and what is kept silent
is what is continually fertilised
in the memory,
for ever eternalised.

I say all this -they said-
knowing that only
what has not been mentioned here
is what will live on,
what will retain fearful, nameless memory.

As the bone is carried in the seed,
so the flaw comes in the word,
but the only thing that satisfies
is the memory's serum.

CREATE you are created
(but inside me).
There are no creators
(whatever all the writers might say)
there are no creators

only space which
is not closed to the unknown.

INTIMACY isn't a question of one person
either:
your kicks express it well
while I am alone.

YOU know me because I have you inside me,
And you are no more than my hope.
You know me, and you distinguish me
from the gardener who is pruning the evening,
from the southerly wind that is sucking the mountain snows,
even though I cannot distinguish you
from my loneliness.

CITIES are the labyrinths and maps
of the nightmares of the authorities:
I won't leave you alone
while you are learning to conceal yourself.

THE UMBILICAL CORD will separate us:
you'll live in another house across the street,
you will be the daughter of another time, across time.

And right there, at that very time, you will have me inside you
behind all the streets, times and manners of speaking.

NOT EVEN an island for innocence
in the hot-cold parallels
and in all the latitudes which squeeze the world.

But wait for me
in the trap of memory:
where the joining of extreme forgetfulness
with swollen dreams
will not obstruct.
Wait for me
in the only oasis I know,
and when you feel the waiting is too long, count
with the rungs of the rope ladder between earth and heaven,
the words spoken in vain:
the only oasis I know.

Eta orain badakit. Pamiela.2011.

And now I know.
Trad. Sarah J. Turtle

II

You've spread silence all over the table,
like a scruffy, old tablecloth.
As if you mean
this is not a pleasant place
even if you are there,
this is not a pleasant moment,
there's nothing to celebrate
and very little to offer you,
even though you've turned up.

The rest of us have brushed the crumbs to one side of the table,
neatly organised the words uttered,
and arranged the seating order.

-- "No one's missing,"
meaning,
"no one is superfluous here,
we are in the company of everyone,
look at me,
and I'll give you my hand
under the table.
And later on we'll fold up this worn tablecloth;
It's perfectly clean,
made of silent patches of scruffiness".--

--"Silence," let us remember, "is no frontier,
it is a crossing place".--

IN OTHER WORDS

ever since we learnt to walk upright rather than drag ourselves along
our bodies have resembled boxes

that we have locked up, leaving the key inside.

And there would appear to have been no other alternative
but to lock the body with a key inside,
or to agree to live as if there were no key,
-- unless, forgetting that there had ever been a key,
we were to start seeking our bodies in other bodies
in soundproofed musical boxes, at least.--

OUR CHILDREN

You who were fertilized and attached to our wombs
You who emerged from inside us and made us women

breathing in
—they gave us breath—
light at daybreak and rest at nightfall
life in words and seed in silence

don't leave us without insides
don't deny us before anyone

liberate us from eternal death
by fertilizing our flesh
by awakening our being
in our descendants

from century to century
here
from one time to the next
verve.

I am in my skin
and you are in my skin
and he is in my skin:
the world is under the skin.

And sometimes we'd like to moult,
just as snakes moult,
just to change

We creep along
to see how our skins get scratched
to see how to lose our way.

I am in my skin
and I am in your skin
and I am in his skin:
the world is under our skin.

And other times we have to moult,
like snakes,
in order to be.

Because I, you, he, and the World
want to be under the same skin

turned into flesh enveloped by the skin.

(8)

--PAIN remains silent for some time. It is protected by that very silence. And also by the will to live. And then all of a sudden it comes. So suddenly that we think it is an attack from outside, so penetratingly that we realize it has been stalking around inside us--.

PAIN, again, impassively it has come to you
in the night.

I reply as if being the witness of your pain made me
aware of nothing,
as if with the mere knowledge I could release you from it.

And I can only reply from the ignorance of knowing,
and with all the tenderness of loving,
sometimes for fear that another time, when the pain once again
penetrates the night impassively,
I will be curled up, keeping silence,
on occasions.

II

Whenever pain comes in bouts it is fragmentary.
Whether it is because the pain has withdrawn
and has left some time rags in our hands,
whether it is because the time cloth to stand up to the pain

has been torn.

And then, even though this time of ours has been repaired
with the patches

we sew onto it in order to mend it,

time barely satisfies after the bouts of pain.

III

And so, when I don't know what to do, I read aloud:
as if having to listen to the things I couldn't bear to hear,
or to liberate the ones that I have bolted
into the lobe of dreams,
or to remember the ones I haven't succeeded in uttering.

I read slowly and aloud,
most likely to divide up the pain that is left into syllables
even though time has passed,
or because somehow the pain is like
the stripped aspect of time.

But in a low voice I plead
that those bits of time
should not be broken times,
-- because time barely satisfies
after that.--

JUST ONE QUESTION,
I know, but

what is the only thing that matters

when we don't love or
when we aren't loved

what is the only thing that doesn't matter
when we love or
when we are loved.

Glosak. Esana zetorrenaz.

Glosses. On what had already been said.

Pamiela, 2003[TI1]

DAYBREAK

Let's assume you find me with my soul
between my teeth
and that the chiaroscuro of that hoopoe
with the muddy-brown, reddish plumage
still makes you recall
the warmth of long-past happiness.

Let's assume that my eyes still resemble
holes of light;

by that time I think, when everything has turned into illusion,
it will be no use wanting to go back:
because the vector expressed
by the complex number of our plane
will have completed
the angle –angle or argument– with the X-axes
and this way the general lines
of the indispensable trajectory
of our lives will be known.

So, given the choice, I think
it would be better,
like the death-knell, to fly and be silent
as day breaks.

*As day breaks
if only for 20 seconds*

IN 20 SECONDS

In less time than it takes
to look at the diagram
on the functioning of the dual effect steam engine
appearing on page 2143,
an earthquake of 7.2 on the Richter scale
destroyed the city of Kobe in January 1995
in 20 seconds:
in those 20 seconds in which many
could not even shed tears.

In those 20 seconds in which
headlands prefer the sea's
most violent embrace,
in those 20 seconds in which
the eclipse of hope becomes that of long ago

THE ECLIPSE

When entering the shadow projected by Earth
—as when the moon is hidden for a time—

I feel I haven't resembled you for ages,

neither have I even found any resemblance with myself.
I had your panting mixed with my words
long ago
that is why your look did not expand
my nostalgia for silence.

I can't see I've resembled you,
for ages
and already —as your anxiety oppresses me —
the eclipse is total.

ABOUT THE ROAD ISSUE (1)

I can't say anything else about the roads: *walking makes us tired,*
but simply walking can take us anywhere.

And something else as well: *we feel foreign on*
unknown roads.

For that reason, these comments:

On the lap of a twisted tree
a smooth stone,
and in the refuge of a mossy rock
a twisted twig.

Leaving tracks on the road
is tantamount to not hating the return trip.
The old tracks of the shepherds and carts
no longer take us anywhere,
if not to the instinct of things, literally,
if not inside ourselves.

On the lap of a twisted tree
a smooth stone,
and in the refuge of a mossy rock
a twisted twig.

And in the end:

She who goes with the shadow before her believes she is going along the road.
When the shadow follows behind, she thinks the road is carrying her along.

ABOUT THE ROAD ISSUE (2)

Unlike the Lareo reservoir,
the light reflects the sky in the still waters of the mud,

in the eternally frozen mirror.
So, at least forgive me
if you frighten me
when you resemble the sky:
I want living waters
I'd rather
they didn't not stop against the edges
and satisfy the absorbing lands.
So forgive me,
if I want to jump across the mud
where the light reflects the sky.

etcetera

Before Caillet and Pictet²

managed to liquefy air in 1877,

they used to say women had been turning sighs

into tears

ever since the Palaeolithic

-if not earlier- :

what is more, before enriching liquid air with oxygen

and using it to make explosives,

--we women--

had already invented

bursting into tears;

yet

no one was killed.

*gamma rays
would be needed for that of course*

² Glosak. Esana zetorrenaz

ON HATING-LOVING³

**-When matter and antimatter meet, they destroy each other
and become energy turned into gamma rays-**

You and I will turn into
gamma rays
one of these days:
because we are destined to fight each other
doggedly;
gamma rays,
as when matter and antimatter meet,
turn into energy
only by destroying each other

ad libitum...

*Some say language and country are body and soul
-Oh! my Basque Country-.
Anyway, love must be very
close to hate –between them–,
But hate⁴ has never been seen
catching up with love –in our country–.*

Da capo...

We decided that
loathing each other was unthinkable.
We still walked together even in the raw cold,
at dusk,
in the twilight of bodies and souls
as thoughts evaporated.
*Even though hate is born
in the garden of love,*

⁴ Hate that is always ready to attack and flee, it always goes a little too far.

we used to say
while in the attic of the house
on the cloudiest of nights
as we set about looking for stars.

In the reflecting of mirrors of loathing-loving and their antonyms
by the time we stopped dreaming of what we were not
we had already guessed
*That the weed
could not be dug up.*
We knew very well what remained from that passionate love
is obsession, *call it loathing,*
if you prefer.

*When the lack of struggle is total resignation
matter and antimatter can't even be joined,*
you told me.
I felt my breath stiffen
in each drawing of breath,
and the tears that could be the first drops of rain,
like icicles,
if they don't melt in the sun,
they couldn't find any way out⁵.

Of course

⁵ In the end, he who decides to inhabit the land of loathing.
knows very well
in that desert
that the land of loathing is only delimited by the void.
In the end, what the path of loathing causes,
believing it goes one way or another,
is the need to walk without heading anywhere,
Of course.

The lines of poetry⁶ which live outside us
are graves.
Like bones piled upon bones
words upon words: with no hope of flourishing.

Words are the furrow of obsession.
And the depth taken by
the furrow of obsession
is that of the grave:
the hardest stone,
the harshest mine.

⁶ So, when poetry? –is the question we are bound to ask–.
When we need words we haven't learnt, for example;
when facing love and death, for instance –they told me–.
When poetry?
When questions are formed and no answer is valid,
or else, you can answer
at least, as long as there's no poetry, whenever a shiver can frighten us.

SCHOPENHAUER AND THE SEA

The aim of reason is convenience.
It has desperation close at hand.
A different will is needed
not to become desperate,
to hang on to the past,
without worrying about existence:
as much will as the sea has to lie down
on the beach.

ENCYCLOPAEDIC EVENTS ABOUT CHAIRS

There was once a special chair in Itsasondo, if I'm not mistaken;
So special that on many farms
to give birth, women had to push on this chair,
so ordinary that ethnologists had to list it.

There was once a writer born in Barneville, if the Encyclopaedia is not mistaken,
Countess Marie Catherine Aulnay, who used her recollections,
to write historical novels and stories,
around the 1690s.

There is a systematic encyclopaedia, the Auñamendi,
if the Encyclopaedia is not mistaken,
it is unbalanced in terms of subject matter, but
a treasure trove of obsolete information

and there will be, if I'm not mistaken,
many Basque encyclopaedic dictionaries
which after the word CHAIR
before "Dock" or "Team bench"
maybe after "Holy See" or "Electric Chair"
-and perhaps for the second edition- will give information about
a BIRTHING Chair or something similar.

AN INTERVAL FOR SILENCE: DOLBY SYSTEM⁷

Because we have no more to say, we write:

⁷ *Eta orain badakit*

How are you? or Lovely day! for example.

And we force ourselves to write using the Dolby System
to ensure we listen to silence
with the same precision as we listen to sound,
without reducing
without reducing anything.

And basically everything, including nothing,
remains said even if it is left unsaid,
for basically, silence can also be contained in words,
without reducing,
thanks to the Dolby System,
because we have little to say,
especially, when we want to say something.

Very little time has passed
and this is ,already, another place
and this is another notebook
and this is another language
and the hand that is writing
and obeying instinct
has its body to hand
and has learnt to open the way to the body.

Very little time has passed
and this is no longer a new situation
and by now this is a life-word: a living word
and this is, already, something that will always be
which will change and
transform us
born incomplete, it will work out how to complete itself,
it will start and from the start
will gropingly work out
who we are.

We who were two just now
are in pairs already.
Very little time has passed or else...
time has settled down in us.

And then, you see, yesterday, after discussing
the past and the future with friends,
what I already knew occurred to me as I stood in front of the Belauntza mill:
if happiness is lost
or at one time
you've learnt to live without happiness,
you're not unhappy;
that is the truth.

Sometimes torrents and
sometimes only a trickle flows down the river,
and the trees on the riverbank
accompany the water
no matter whether it flows quickly or slowly.

But then, you see,
when the snow from the mountains swells the rivers,
and when the snow in the mountains cools the wind
and when it causes you to breathe happiness

That is when we , really, know,

how unhappy we have been,
what shortcoming has inhabited our hardened womb,
how little progress breath has made
down one's throat,
that's when we really know
we were not unhappy
because we were not,
that's when we really know
we will not be happy

until we manage to exist once again.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT FEAR

My fear is white
not made of snow or milk,
or frothy waves
or of beaten egg white.
My fear is a white ceiling
and I look down
and see four white walls
without a crack
and my pain is suffocated and unable to leave.

I'd like to do as they say:
put it in my hands
work it and knead it,
but by the time I try,
so far,
the veins in my arms harden
my arms fall,
I become stiff
and I cannot close my eyes.

II

Just as well you know
that only when your whisperings start
does the wind enter my eyelids,
that your breath opens windows in the walls
and a big door,
and turns the sky blue
when it is formed against the palate.

Just as well you know how to tell me
that my strength turns me blue
and that my hope is to fly
until I am reminded of all your strength
through the whisperings,

then I realise
how these limits can be like nothing
by the time a gaze manages to get through,
how evanescent are these walls of fear
by the time a caress manages to tear them down.

And again, white knows no fear
but the milk of snow, the egg white of the frothy waves.

-- Lamias dressed in blue. In room 209.--

I

Not in rivers but in river sources and springs
do the lamias live,
and they can dive deep holding their breath at length
to find their homes in the caves under the mountains,

it seems to us they only exist
when we see them under bridges,
because we only wade into the river
up to our knees.

Sleeping and dreaming,
awake and dreaming,
we are for each other alone,
from the nightie to the blue of the sky,
from one side to another.

And the truth,
Lamias are half-ducks, too:
because they come from all the worlds and
because they can fly and
because they can dive all the way to the sources and
and because they can walk on land.

And look, it seems to us they can't live on the land
even in dreams
because we don't know how to recognise their footprints.

II

Had I been born on a tropical island, perhaps,
I would have dreamt of whales,
of a large cetacean
able to dive in the deep waters of seas and oceans.

Beside this bed,

because the tears of the mountains outside the window may turn to streams,
wanting to be trout in search of the source,
I dream of the lamias, of their ways to the ponds

while two tears
trickle down my cheek.

III

I write down
that I want to be the prince who manages to place a kiss
on the lips of his loved one in the blue dress,
and even Prince Charming,
but I'm scared,
I don't know how to do it.

In the meantime, I wonder
how birds and bees
breathe,
how deep-sea divers and mammals breathe.

I know I have to wait.
I know she has to open her eyes first.
I know that later
when he chooses me
a kiss will free the two of us.

It's all the same, let us assume
you don't feel the need to ask what two plus two is,
or to talk about the French capital.

You don't say and it isn't because you don't know,
but because you *do* know.

It's all the same, if you ask what meat and two veg are,
it wouldn't be nice
or it would seem you'd prefer not to talk
than to talk.
It would seem you'd rather
be elsewhere.

It's all the same, neither do I feel the need to answer
who I am or who you are,
as if I were in everything
or as if it would not be me alone
in everything.

**-On how one can start walking round the Prado and unexpectedly come across at a poem
by Szymborska.-**

Take the train and enter the Prado,
Rubens under the skin and Sorolla before the eyes

And dine in a Japanese restaurant,
and connect the day with the night,
and we began to walk down the street and spotted a bookshop,
and down the street later we dribble when trying
in vain to pronounce the impossibilities of Tsvetáyeva in Rilke's elegies
or Akhmatova and Szymborska.

And If I am Cassandra, who is Cassandra?
And if I am you, who is it, in what is it myself?
Unless... I am us
from the eyes to what is under the skin.

SNOW DAYS

**-- Night unable to get dark,
And if they are, winter naked and bare.--**

I

Lapwings can cross the sky
and vultures vanish from here,
and the city's benches remain empty
in the depths of winter.

II

We've never taken all the time we want
for ourselves,
because our time, that of us plants,
is the time our petals take to open when flowering.

We've never taken all the time we want
and that's why the time we've taken
is all the more ours.

III

Time upon time,
and I still don't know
what the future holds;
and if I don't know,
it may be because
I still can't remember
what has been before us
time so devoted to time.

**-You've given me some earrings. I look into your eyes. And as the silence melts, a tear
seeps out of the corner of your eye-.**

IN THE ANTARCTIC

They say there are no land flora and fauna in the Antarctic,
only animals that live in and off the sea:
seals and penguins and such like.

They say there is no one in the Antarctic,
except the one who takes the photo or doesn't look at it
and he will only see whiteness,
among the blues of the sea and sky,
unable to leave the edges of the frame
and only the ice will be heard under the sky.

Or maybe something else.
Because under the permanent sea ice and the platforms
(of the Wedell and Ross seas)
the coastal water moves westwards,
pushed by the continental easterly wind.

But how would we know about that,
if the lamias had not built the way to us
under those frozen mountains all the way to us,
how, if the tears had been unable to find their way either
from the broken heart to the eyes!

--We consider the doubts we have and we wait until Tuesday. Instead of facing up to the fears we have, we ask on Tuesday. Before taking pride in the joys we have, we wonder whether it would be better to wait. And so, in one way or another, our week begins on Tuesday.--

Our weeks began on Tuesday
long ago.

Then the next day
and the day after.

We write down all the details:

Temperature, anxiety, discomfort.

Then *last week must have been like that*

Or *this is new*

are the most important utterances.

And a week on Tuesday before coming back we say

we are no worse than a week ago,

in a week's time we'll be better

and the remains of the drugs set off along our veins

and our saliva goes down our throats,

while our free hand

tries to gather the tears.

IT SEEMS to you that time has thickened.
It seems to want to go down your throat.
Breath is there, and you think that
water won't need much space, nor will saliva.
But time seems to have narrowed some blood vessel
inside your head.

Despite opening the window, no air enters
these hospitals.
The operator seems to be lying in wait
and needs the slightest crack,
including that for the air, to enter the room.
And we are reminded
that
we are here alone,
now, still, abiding, waiting.

TERE IRASTORTZA GARMENDIA

Tere Irastortza was born in Zaldibia in 1961. She realized basque and spanish filology studies. She worked along many years in UNED Bergara, where, actually, from 2002 manage the IDAZLE ESKOLA (WRITER SCHOOL) In this postgrado she teaches lengthwise two years to write in 1st, 2nd and 3rd , to write poetry and to correct their own texts.

She is the headmaster of the Ikastola of Beasain. The Ikastolas are ededucational centers DE PROMOCION SOCIAL (COOPERATIVAS) which objective is to teach euskera (basque), promoting and spreading the basquue culture. She has been the president of EIE (2002-2006), the writers association in the basque language and during this period she drave the PEN CLUB of the basque country.

She has published ten books starting from *Gabeziak* (Shortages) (1980) , which had been the winner of the prize of the National Criticism, to *Eta orain badakit* (And now I know) (2011), passing from *Manual devotio gabecoa*, *Izena gabe direnak* (the ones who are without name), *Glosak. Esana zetorrenaz* (Gloss of poem. About what it was said) (also the Prize of the national Criticism and finalist of the national literature prize). She has also published a book of rehearsal. *Izendaezinaz* (About the unmentionable) (2010). Almost all of her works have been published by Pamiela. The poems that today are going to be readed belong to these three books.

She has participated actively in the cration of magazines and proyects and she also has colaborated in many magazines and press (*Argia*, *Nabarra*, *Gara*, *Hegats...*). Actually she is the responsable of some information officers, as well as, www.idazten.com which contains the text of some new authors in the basque language, which are students of the writers association in the basque language, and www.iztueta.com, which contains all the bibliography about **this basque author** who is the one that coordinates the work to pick up all the inmaterial memory of her origin town, Zaldibia.

She has translate some of her favourite authors (Edmond Jabés, Marina Tsvetaieva, Maria Manent...). The work of Karmele Igartua, has been the one that she has last translated, and the translation she has done is from basque to spanish. This work has also been the finalist of the national poetry prize. This work has also been translated to english, italian, catalonian, spanish, galician and french.

The poems that today are going to be readed have been translated by Sarah Trutler. Also Iñaki Mendiguren has translated poems to english. Most of the poems that are translated to spanish language have been by the author.

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