

JORGENRIQUE ADOUM

**ECUADOR
HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR
TASK AND VACATIONS
THE MAJARAJAH AND THE SALAMANDERS
COINCIOBEDIENCE
PASTOLOGY
HOTEL SAINT-JACQUES**

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ECUADOR

1. THE GEOGRAPHY

It is an unreal country bordered by itself,
split by an imaginary line
and still sunk in the cement at the pyramid foot.
If not, how could the foreigner have her picture taken
openlegged over my homeland as if above a mirror,
the line right below her sex
and on the back: "Greetings from la mitad del mundo."
(Children, great eyes surrounded
by skeleton, and an Indian crying
century mountains behind a burro.)

2. THE MEMORY

The soul decayed, the pasillo aches in the rootnerve,
and I, a Pavlov dog, in one jump
sit down at the door of the tinsmith's
(it was always daytime there) to sniff around the street
I went down to go back and they keep on hitting me.
When you still don't have a homeland but for
this irremediable sadness underneath the pride,
homeland is the memory pocket where I
take this out: corncobbed Indians in Catholic mass
drunkenness and kickshelled on Sunday afternoon,
the cemetery where I was a mate to so many classmates
to review the law tables: this,
bits of an ancient animal, this is enough for me, I rebuild
the torrid patriotic paleolithic folkloric completely,
the republic cracks, the commonlaw clay
where we slip to our liking. (You too, tiny dinosaur
bone, your ankle where you're tied
to me, great quartered girl, and your other ankle
where you're tied, because I am your banishment.)
And the song lulling the murdered man
so he'll die without saying a thing
and making the dog suffer
to see how its gland fills up.
Gladly. Just to experiment.

3. HISTORY

No one chose the iguana: Saurian
military periods: first Monday
on earth where the Pleistocene is still
the future the Bolshevik talks about.
When the *Beagle* docks, the autochthonous quadruman
still doesn't know he's defeated God
and gets scared, crosses himself with salt, repentant:
"Only the vulture is right." (The turtle,
with its historical sadness, still dragging
its laziness shell on its back.)

Volcano islands
and beast, Darwin data.

A slow
hungry fauna follows him in the hungry
landscape: only the vulture rules.

"Harassed
for spreading false rumors about natural
selection and survival of the fittest."

I was talking about the banished comrades.

HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR*

1. THE CENOTAPH INSCRIPTION

Around the second night of that day I gathered my family in the hollow of my hand
caressed dry sediment until the verge
shoulders in dust crushed hair
not even pieces of the bride or half a child
not even skeleton checked for teeth and shoes
recognizing the name only from the flavor
divining in which street

I'm sorry

I don't know why the burning didn't reach me
why my shadow didn't incrust the splendor along with yours
in the stone letter to the happiest generations
and I can't ask you Perch settle deposit
mill sawdust ferocious explosion
only for the wind to scatter your bone syllables
and even the greeting even the voice even the breath
and the cough pushing you down the roads
and the cry dissolving you with the years and the river cry
openmouthed fear lye
Peaceless for the last time Maybe this way the error maybe
maybe it won't need to be repeated

2. ROBERT JUNK'S HORSE

It ran up against bones and metals in the walls
against stones and unread deaths statue water
cursed the cranium rehearsing the whinny it learned for this century
searching for the eyes it had until the temperature seized its gallop tempering its mane
and treading on the whips that hung from its very hide
it smelled of sadstep helmet grass or stable
no longer on the earth

You'd have to kill it so it wouldn't suffer but who can
kill now so sick of death it makes you want to throw up
and we who said we'd suffered so much
so our shape would be wiped out with just one blow before time
so the hero with his compassionate helixes would come
what bird more human than the American would devour us
Today the murderer and even more the soldier loved
because it's easier than forgetting
I rummaged beneath the rubble and there's nothing but rubble
remains of swearwords like humanism god see you later I love you
that we played with in childhood (Where is tenderness? It's turned to ash
And love? It disappeared in the water. Where is my brother? He dried out)
Nothing's left but this coagulation of surprise trotting
exterminated frantically
not knowing which spine where it chose the wrong hell
it went back to the future
hitting up against today against the fears

3. LETTER FROM THE REVEREND KIYOSHI TANIMOTO, METHODIST PASTOR

Yesterday, August 15, was the happiest day in our history
We were told that we were to hear important news.
We were the ruins off to the station in ruins where a loudspeaker had been placed.
Cemetery marching fellow mummies whose bandages opened
the animal necessity to know what's going on, why it's resuscitated.
Those who ended up eyeless leaning on their daughters
on crutches those daughterless.
Then we listened.
It was the voice of the Emperor himself speaking to us
to men as common as us
so incredibly common that we'd never listened to him.
We could hear him in person voice for the first time in four dynasties.
When we realized it we were crying
I don't think we'll ever feel so happy again.
He spoke of what had happened to us and we already knew
but thanks to so much destruction we were listening to him.
Oh wonderful blessing to have deserved it.
We are satisfied with such a voracious sacrifice.

4. MONUMENT TO THE CHILDREN

“It weighs” said the girl holding the bit of paper between her fingers “too much”
If you make a thousand tiny birds you’ll get better (empiricism of someone who
 had nothing but measles or tonsillitis)
It’s so hard to fold it wooden bird tin bird bad little bird
Surrounding her kneeled down addition tables gathered
adding units to certainty I put down five and take twenty to the column of gullibility
In a corner someone made a dove and threw it on the pile where the flock grew
to make it live even if it was a hoax
helping the woman project to know what it’s like to be a grown up
running down figures like in school years ages
When the choir was going to sing “five hundred eight” they swallowed the number with a
 fear sip
She couldn’t finish the other wing
Then the children who were left went to knock on the doors’ extinguished coals
they went into the undone room stones
cleaning their first doubt with the backs of their hands
they stirred bones collected papers ruin wrappers
newspapers where nothing had happened yet
and on the stifled city streets along the walls where the shadow of a man on his way to
 work lingered
the tiny hands folded day and night
as they cried they folded as they grew
tiny birds pink yellow green blue white
so no one dies that way before dying goodly
so each one has their quota secured various times a thousand doves various times a thousand
 days
Because the murderer moves everywhere *tourist tour* selling his carrot with gunshots
returns to the site kicking the cat so the ghosts don’t recognize him
brains marrow lights lilacs in the bar among the timid Japanese survivor breasts
 how many dollars
to admire the monument the ashes
to place his author signature at the foot of the fortythousand identified and the
 eightythousand who were never named a thing
to photograph *smile* disfigured girls

as if we could forget as if we could sleep yes
Souvenirs from Hiroshima Souvenirs from the wonderful world of childhood
Who gives a fuck about love or poetry now if we don't use them anymore
Goodbye Greek statue sciences of man golden proportion
Goodbye God

TASK AND VACATIONS

to be being –but deeprooted– and find the trace
of our own toes from our own steps
and not hiding in the other made for us
in parts with signs ID card 251/99/7
anobody voting
the whodoeshethinkheis
guy poorguy
the one who's changed so much

to be able to be –if you could– honest intact like an animal
or at least not fall into respectable citizen
the one who has it all figured out (the heartjunk
in the bottom drawer)
or the one who only demands what he's given
or the one who only loves what he should
or the one who with all his halves has never been alone
and to take a break from yourself wake up all at once
occupying your nothingness stuck in your deman
as if you were Hindu and died and it was true
you come back lizard spider dwarf
normallikeeveryoneelse wellbehaved oddball
cadaver burglars by phone
talking about some bones sent in the mail
and to be the addressee get them back whole like you had them
with all my musing splinters
with my dear problematic nails
and then to forgive me (even if I laughed so much)
for having gone and left me waiting

THE MAHARAJAH AND THE SALAMANDERS

plaza with the taciturn crowd the sickly sweet of its ancient quadruped open in the drought
the bridge shrine to the river memory
defeated by the last squadrons of the rain

dust wickedness its drifting fabrics
trap young girls shroud the great fly of their bellies
gathering flies it is poverty scratching away at its flies
bodies in exodus in the evening remains of the battle against midday
in search of shade like someone seeking a tomb
easier than the black umbrella palate
market of small sticks pieces petals of things from someday
stones of a country ended never was
wagons of the void dragged along by bovine skeletons from another prophecy
a thousand years rawboned cows a thousand years hides gnawed at the joints of history

(but somewhere on earth I gripe because the beer's lukewarm)

at the market no shoppers or onlookers charcoal food feldspar cereal and mica mucilaginous
drinks
and the birds screaming syllables more human than desert wind instruments
merciful parrots tarnished in their box with predictions of goodluck
charmings of snakes defanged
bitten long ago by friends and disciples

every beggar is a philosophy survivor
every man is untouchable and drones epidemic litanies
in this monastery of sores or pustule terrace
paralysis and scrofula
consumptives gilded by fever from the inside
mangy syphilitics hemiplegics
women with ataxia and gonorrhoea
women with hydrocephalus and cholera
dazed by melanosis

saints twisted by wisdom
tightrope walkers spasmodic cataleptic
rickets hypertrophy emphysema
languid mystical in agony
skeletons lined in brown parchment
skeletons wrapped in mosquito netting
two knees I recall of another leg two teeth
on a cheek old religion relic

and the woman whose forehead was washed by widowhood tries to defend what the dead
man left her of a breast for the new wedding
chews on a betel leaf adorned unsettled by it
her red gob of spit spider swallowing up the scorpion from the floor
and her furious love feet keep the mythological dogs at bay
they brush by her sexual papaver dampen her age beneath her soft hairs

(but in some hotel on earth the English woman asks me how much sugar and I respond
with my room number 32)

near the sky on the hill the maharajah's palace and the maharajah's hunting lodge and the
maharajah's zoo and the maharajah's stables and the maharajah's summer home and
the maharajah's guard barracks and the maharajah's resting place and the maharajah's
guest house

the temple is near I don't know which century
unfinished by architects prophets of ruin
the last gods representatives of the rock content in their sculpture
their bodies clustered from desire the changing baroque flower of their copula
giving audience to the lasting oblivion delegations
procession of summer cripples their stuttering in another tongue their fingers upon a tallow
flame
not burning their antiquity or the crust of the antiquity of their poverty or the bacilli of
their poverty
leaving behind alms price for an ashmark between eyebrows
to be carried away by the wind like a sign of the rubble to follow
and the maharajah's concubines and elephants

(and now somewhere on earth other delegations ungrudgingly gather their coins from
memory
for another less content god solitary in his wood
and another secondrate maharajah on his horse)

one day this too will be the human condition I think

COINCIOBEDIENCE

in my cyclopedic yet even more mathematic ignorance
i've just learned a group can be one
in other words i'm not as alone as i thought
i keep myself company unawares
but my other i's bore me so much
i'm always better off alone
than in bad company
and so once more we're back to square one
and by the way i'm not breaking the rules
of the state of siege we live in

PASTOLOGY

againstthegrain againsttraffic
countercurrent
againsttherain
counterheart and counteroblivion
counterblow of the been
surviving counterspouse
againstdestiny and against governments
which are all that's absurd about destiny
counterclarity and counterlogic
againstgeography (because it was
against passports dictators continents
and against custom
which is badder than our dictators*)
against you and your i'mafraids
against me and my backward certainty
against ourselves
in other words counterall

and all for what

HOTEL SAINT-JACQUES

wakemepearly tomorrow so we can rellove
and redo body pairedup
before the day splits us in two
and slathers your watch your stocking cognac
and hardens the evening wax in your havens
and closes on me your gateways where night burns
and washes your hands that having me so touched
they always wake with a scent of my exsorrowes

NOTES

* Title of a film by Alain Resnais, based on a script by Marguerite Duras.

* Because dictators were already the worst and because that's how it's said in my country and I'm not sorry.