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**FINAL ACT
BOOK FAIR
BONFIRE
AS TIME GOES BY
THIS BONFIRE WILL BE OURS EVEN MORE**

TRANSLATED BY GUILLERMO PARRA

FINAL ACT

Turn off the streetlights
 hurry the last cup,
let's listen to stories in the dark
until the curtain falls.

Because the table is already covered in ashes
and you can't hear the hooves in the square anymore.

They've taken the cauldron away, comrades,
 and the crackling embers
seem to say it's time to go to sleep,
lunatics, mountain critters, moving shades,
the same vampires as ever, dear readers.

BOOK FAIR

Some writers come to follow other writers.
Other writers go to be followed.

Some writers come to compulsively buy books.
Other writers go to buy electro-domestic appliances.
And other writers go to compulsively sell their books.

Some writers come to get drunk.
Other writers brag about being sober.

Some writers come looking for girls.
Other writers go looking for boys.
And other writers are satisfied with a pat on the back
or a discreet grab of the ass from either sex.

Some writers are on the hunt for editors.
Other editors come for the hunt.

Some writers go to rubricate their books.
Other writers wait in line to be rubricated.

Some writers are tenured professors who talk about books.
Other writers talk about what the professors say about their books.
And other books talk about writers who aren't professors.
And they all talk about the same writers.
Or about certain books that some writers always wished they'd written.
Or about how you feel when no one shows up to a book presentation.
Or about how hard it is to write when you don't have anything to say anymore.

Some writers come as representatives of the Poetocracy:
 they write in hotels with pools
about what happens to them when they're alone in their rooms
assailed by books they were given by their authors

and napkins with telephone numbers and directions
or requests and messages for other writers
who couldn't come.

Other writers go as representatives of the Poetariat
protesting because no one paid for their plane tickets
which is why they stared out bus windows
trying to find inspiration
in the Egyptian darkness of nighttime roads:

 they write in hotels with no pools
about what happens to them when they're alone in their rooms
assailed by books they were given by their authors

and napkins with telephone numbers and directions
or requests and messages for other writers who couldn't come
but who might already be on the list of those commissioned
for next year's Book Fair.

BONFIRE

I write in the kitchen.

The night nods off like a dozing sentinel
after all the whirlwinds have passed through
the polar arctic circle.

I write in this kitchen
where your hands find the best herbs,
where your hands find my own hands.

And the fresh, quiet night
like a song by Otilio Galíndez.

I write in this kitchen
where we chop add condiments
simmer this sweetness at a low flame
this joy of being here together and alive.

AS TIME GOES BY

As time goes by
you learn how to make a compass of silence,
we accept the noise of crickets,
we remember our grandfather's jacket.

As time goes by
you don't get mad when you stumble on the same stone,
you decide to sacrifice yourself
 [for anything]
and no one leaves the room
without a lighter in their pocket.

As time goes by
you're not overwhelmed by distance.

And in the darkest night
you're better off whistling low.

THIS BONFIRE WILL BE OURS EVEN MORE

The boats will burn on the shore.

We will wander foreign lands.

Surviving comrades will appear
who will once more pulse
the Lines of the World.

[And of course someone will slap hands
or stamp with joy
when some rabbit
crosses our path].

We will finally reach the promised forest:
the creek will lull us to sleep.

This bonfire will be ours even more.