

**MARÍA NEGRONI**

**FROM BERLIN INTERLUDE**

**TRANSLATED BY MICHELLE GIL-MONTERO**

Who's afraid of an artist's self-portrait? The thought assaulted me when I was half-asleep, and I had no answer. No elitist retorts, I told myself, no jargon that leaves the reader dazzled and devoid of faith. Then I found a method and applied it: I jailed myself in a play pen, to explore theories of malice, the hazards of harmony, the desires that linger when desire wilts. I stopped peeping out at the world. Every author in transit ends in herself, in her resultant syllogisms.

“Poor but sexy” would apply to this city if I didn’t happen to be here, like a queen, her melancholy wafting through museums with precious little sun and smoldering cold. But the clocks of the world aren’t urban, and no one’s free from the prosodies of what they need. Here, east and west and the shaded area, there’s plenty more to come. Shit and gold splatter. That blind music where one thing gets lost inside another, until no one has a home, not even a home in language.

Dear author: What do you get from an imported item, other than lessons edging on trauma? Never trauma itself, which is the stuff of confusion and the poem. Don't write what they expect of you, even if you're drawn to deception in its many forms, soaring as whims. There must be some abstraction somewhere that isn't abstract. Some autumn. A kiss with no translation, to polish your astonishment, now and at the linguistic hours to come.

Today I wrote eleven words. I tossed ten. That left the word *music*. Wiggly like a child who, unable to sit still, rolls cherries across the table cloth. I look at it without understanding. I don't know what catastrophe it's announcing, what night of visions, what sound of gushing water, all lost causes like me. Levity and the luxury of shutting up. That music in the life of life, which always falls and rises, to attain grace in all its senselessness.

Hours staring at the wall, all the loftier for having fallen. Brief theater travelling for a cold you can't see. In what, not where, am I? I make it precariously from the shade to the sun, from arrival to departure, from a gashed landscape to a gash with suffixes. Don't even say that I can't conjugate pain. Or that I can't martyr myself. It's not easy to embark on the scandal of creation, on the luxury of living like a hungry, skittish little animal. Listen well to what I'm not going to say.