



MATTERS TO NO ONE
SOME POEMS OF MIYÓ VESTRINI



THE NEW ORDER OF ST AGATHA

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Miyó Vestrini



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published in anticipation

of the resurrection

of Kathy Acker

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*The society in which I'm living
is totally fucked-up. I don't know
what to do. I'm just one person and
I'm not very good at anything. I
don't want to live in hell my whole
life. If I knew how this society got
so fucked-up, if we all knew, maybe
we'd have a way of destroying hell.*

-Kathy Acker

OF LITANIES AND LITTLE VIRTUE

There are many
who have to jump into battle
and hurt me
to death

death of the grandest cities
and littlest virtues
adrift on seven continents
your dismal peace from last october
your sweet elastic flesh
and whiny passion

choleric sand flung about Ostia
scuffing crystal globes in the windows
a lifeless eye
the other open
to the avenue

avenue where it arrives
the water

water of all the days
approached
my mouth

sad mouths with big words
hard language on the tongue like freshly cut wood
involved
with me

my crime
crime of long and deep nights

when the rain takes forever to fall
and everything makes me think
my father
my mother
the earth
not closed

closed for for criminals
no identities
identities, your name, mine
the others
the people

loved people
absent
present
leaving

leaving
like my aunt
with her red hair in a red place
in Bordeaux
in the house

house of hard knocks
where you try not to cry over stupidity
while, just above you,
countryside and its little monsters
celebrate
a greeting
written daily as
vilification

vilification:
he that has written it among you may

throw the first
stone

stone from no place other than my dwelling
when tenacious arms teach me disaffection
a pawnshop
uncertainty

the return

return to the last act

act of being so sad and so dead
like the solitudes of others
countries

countries that have not left me
to go

to go with amazement
for one or two
words

words
a wait
is going to teach you
lying or homesickness or petulant melancholy
or boldness

boldness is
of bars
of beloved places
to find the man of your life
to mistreat that which was
your mother
mother

once dead
there was not loneliness
nor rigorous exercises
to forget

forget that the miserable people
alien

to love

love

WHAT TO SAY TO YOU TODAY?

What to say to you today
yes the morning was very difficult
dawn of stigmas and last gasps
out of space
 for you
 for me.

At last we have found love
 and we are exactly as they made us:

hurt
magnificent
discouraged
comic
furtive
hazy
wild

THE POWERFUL

Without sentimentality
the powerful
Without friendliness
 the powerful
Without sincerity
 the powerful
Without sense
 the powerful
Yes, it's true
 the rancid
 posturing
 vivisectors
 asskissers
 oysters
the powerful

IN THE COURTYARD OF ANAIS NIN

In the courtyard of Anais Nin
I waste my mortality

ruined but obstinate, I fill the vase with water for the sweat of
the morning and I straighten the quilt I see the little spiders
frozen on the roof, always with the cold of the night before,
always the same

and in this courtyard, I remember especially the smell,
that meeting nobody took down,
because the day was very gray
and we feared
that people would dawn with sadness.

And how unbelievable the courtyard.
The statue of the unshakeable child,
dashes of sky, rain and doves
A traveler that would lie to avoid their destination
April's strange transients
A murderer unaffected by the breeze

what used to say "you don't scare me," they are wooden
noises of some neighbor's melancholy,
of someone's ghost. And they used to follow prowlingly,
watch and plot against the fog, almost abandoning
their own time, but with no time
to start something new.

In the courtyard of Anais Nin,
awakening sometimes on bad days

wake up the water and the bells and the
rigorous words and the blind fury of those
kept alone and hit about the eyes and those
who see you like nothing has happened. A whole
squawking anger, boiling, uneasiness,
confusion, monotony, until the stillness
of death, when agitation renders you useless.

In the courtyard of Anais Nin,
drinks are sweet and demonic

round and round

applaud my beloved,

the more loved of the lunatics.

In the courtyard of Anais Nin
they don't accept strangers

or those that come from choleric countries.

In the high ceiling, there will be time for your body and mine

without talk about your bliss, about your
jasmine mornings, your unbearable
disasters. you will run under the fast pace
of the clouds and you will join lock
and key.

In the courtyard of Anais Nin,
when you sleep and you love me,
now is the day of all the furies together.

YOU WILL ONLY SAY, MY FRIEND

I have said of unhappiness
 hasty mornings
 bitter sun
 meridians

I have said of indecision
 drunk on the percal of sheets
 livid mouths
 palms up

I have said of insults
 hands on the table
 exit adolescence
 belly of honey

I have said of the insolent
 laughter
 waste
 bitterness

But in the hills
 others will say
 the lost ones of fate

From the splendors
the fervent and pure desires
secret explosions in our mouths
sweet body curvature awakening
 you will only say
 my friend.

*XII (from NEXT WINTER)
for Luis Camilo*

I get up
I do not get up
I hate
I fuck
I hit a motorcyclist with malice aforethought
I surrender to the Oedipus complex
I wander
I carefully study the differences between dysrhythmia – psychosis –
schizophrenia – neurosis – depression – syndrome – panic
and I'm horny
left alone in the house when everyone is asleep
I buy a magazine that costs six U.S. dollars
they steal my best friend's wallet
they grab me
I push him
I murder him
I remember the umbrella of Amsterdam
and the rain
And the angry gesture
I dedicate myself to drinking to prevent heart attacks
I chew the food fifty times
and I'm bored
and I'm bored
losing weight
gaining weight
losing weight
I give in
I'm not giving in
I sit still and cry
someone takes me in his arms
and tells me "be calm I'm still here"
I stop crying

I hear the wind that blows near the sea, only near
[the sea

I accept that flying cockroaches exist
I find that all my friends treated by psychoanalysts
[have become totally sad totally silly

I read I Ching and predict I'll have a long life

Life of shit, I say

I join the bandwagon

I throw myself under the bandwagon

I understand for a single trip how much gas is in the tank

they tell me to turn off the light

I turn it off

they ask me, "Is this all right?"

I get crazy

I plead for peace

they fuck with me

I fall asleep up against the bar

I hear the voice of Spanish whenever I shit on god

a guy cries beside me again

they hit me

they hit me hard

there's a full moon

I race down the mountain road

plunder the account

Don't leave me

My chest hurts,

the day is done,

the red win

rien ne va plus

FEAR OF DEATH

Fear of death

and look beyond it

as the moon falls

as fresh as your lips cast upon a hand on a

[crazy sunday.

Fear of death

and listen

listen as the water of it runs along-

[side the house

Fear of death

when your face is resplendent under the promise

[of Abraham.

I predict your slow majestic

fall

towards the cold slab of the floor.

But don't fear:

I have learned to feel

to smell you

because when it comes to the fears of the living

I am in charge.

LITTLE THING IN TRUTH

It does not take long so I should tell you:

I tremble when I talk of it.
Little thing,
in truth.

CLOUDS OVER THE CIRCUS

Carolina's morning starts at 11
extravagant punctuality
of the insomniacs.
This new type of waking requires small changes in routine.
Cleaning her sleepy and mascara-stained lids,
until her eyes are enormous and isolated, bare
in the middle of a cover
white and pasty.
Carolina remembers a star on the cheek of a girl
suspended on a trapeze.
Her smile brilliant in the darkness of the bathroom.
The skin becomes transparent again.
Matted and opaque hair flies solo.
Carlos contemplates it while hunched over in the leather chair,
lethargic,
profound.
Carolina has large fingers
and when she lifts her thin arms,
she shows her badly shaved armpits.
Today is Friday,
sweet friday, she recalls.
It is not sweet Friday,
it is Faulkner's tender Thursday, he responds.
Carolina is a fortunate accident
the result of copulating on sunday.
Her mother brought her outrage with regularity:
your father is a s-h-i-t, spelled out.
The maid robs us
the chauffeur is having sex with her.
the roast is burned,
I don't have anything to wear.
Carolina falls asleep,

face under the blanket.
Still missing some steps
that would complete the routine.
A shower, a hairstyle, the dress you choose.
Leaders in Rome, in Leningrad, in Mexico.
A question: Who said that the revolution was in excess?
Trotsky, responded Carlos.
The stars and comets are not free,
who said that?
An actor named Gene Amoroso, in the film
Three Women.
Carolina eats a slice of cheese.
A slice of turkey.
A spoonful of honey.
Both stare, waiting for something for happen.
The old can do what they want,
it's not important to anyone.
Throw out what doesn't work.
Dripping of soup and salsa.
Spitting and burping.
Give me time, says Carlos.
After a huge silence, I am very patient with you,
says Carolina.
All right.
How does a fight between lovers start?
Putting clouds over the circus.
Talking over one another.
Being compassionate.
Eating capers.
They cut,
murmurs Carolina.
He gets up,
light,
in good humor.
Let's go,

I don't want to lose my identity.
Carlos straightens the neck of his wretched shirt
and takes her to eat in a restaurant with no stars.

DIAGNOSIS

Let's see,
open your mouth.
Say aaaah.
Show me what your mother did when you were a girl.
Was that the secret?
Oral sex?
Manipulation?
Touch?
Manipulation?
Consider your uterus,
broad and outdated.
How many children passed through there?
The doctors said
you hoped for a natural life for them.
But they just died.
And if they lived
some would have been morons
others more or less,
premeditated out of loneliness.
You have problems with your teeth,
with the slow digestion of the indecisive,
with the crunch of the occipital bone.
You're a lot of patient.
Everyone would like to have been born in Kansas City
or in Amsterdam
or in Toronto.
Or at least
twenty years later.
Let me shake this ivory specimen.
verify the mixture's color.
Disgusting,
that bad smell.

ARANJUEZ

Don't be ridiculous.
No one dies from holding their breath.
Think of your brittle bones,
of your sweaty folds,
of your dry vagina
and your receding hairline.
Or of your heart attack when you fake orgasm.
Women die of that.
Why you gotta be so obscene?
Because for twenty years I've not gone to Aranjuez
and that makes me pissed.



MOTHER'S DAY

Today,
Mother's Day,
El Flaco took me to a plumbing store
to buy a stop valve.
And I asked him
You don't plan to buy a gift for your mama?
He approached,
kissed me
and answered,
"I'll think about it on Monday."
We went home,
he cooked for me,
we listened to Luis Alcaraz,
Daniel Santos and Maelo.
We decided that we were test-tube babies
embryos fertilized in pigs.
That prevented further discussion.

SNOW WHITE

Love isn't much
if you don't have anything.
today I saw Snow White
playing with her prince
and asking:
how are your savings?
how is your spirit?
do you want to grab a drink with me?
do you want to ride my wild pony?

THE SORROW

His shirts carefully folded
and the nightstand drawer empty.
Given my sorrow's size,
I read Maguerite Duras,
hostile and saccharine Marguerite Duras,
who is knitting a shawl for her love.
On the fifth day
I opened the curtains.
The light fell on the greasy bedspreads,
the apartment full of trash,
the door frame peeling.
So much pain
from such ugly things.
I looked once more at his rat face
and threw all the trash in the garbage can.
The neighbor
alarmed by how much I'd thrown away,
asked if I was doing all right.
Hurts, I told him.
In my mailbox, an anonymous note:
"One who has love
takes care
takes care
and does not clog the drain of the community."

BEATRIZ

With or without a dick,
there are things that cannot be done
when you start to sweat
or when the prostate hurts.
So Beatriz killed herself
at the age of fifty three.
She did not participate in the grotesque ceremony
of decadent eulogies.
She covered all the mirrors
and put satin sheets on the bed.
She was supposed to die there
neat and fragrant
ignoring the rat who bit her breath away
But she preferred the sofa
where she had fucked the night before
with a professional party boy
rented for the occasion.
She left a list
of mistakes and successes.
Writing is not important, she wrote,
and signed her name in small print,
believing it apocryphal.

ONE DAY OF THE WEEK I

When were you born,
in 1938,
Cesar Vallejo died.
When your little head,
your navel,
your virgin cunt,
entered the world
from between the beautiful legs of your mother,
they placed the poet into a hole
they covered it with dirt
and you,
you covered the memory.
You could not choose.
Because if you choose
you live.
and if you live
you enjoy.
But enjoyment is the horrific part of the dream:
sleep will be forever.
There will be a smell of fried peppers,
thundering voices in the bar.
It will be a day of the week,
when furniture change places during the night
and in the mornings,
only the women will speak.
Your nose will be sealed and the right eyebrow
will fall more than the left.
The leveled hips,
bad hair cut and body lost
in any shift that hides the fat in your waist.
If you had sad lunatics for grandparents,
it will be reflected in the report

of a responsible official.
They crossed the arms over your chest
and this is fatal,
because you can not
use afrin
to breathe better.
It was fake that your hugs were convulsive
and your furies unpredictable.
Fake, the glass you burped into as if you were coating it in bread-
crumbs.
Fake, your nipples, your red freckles.
Last night you decided:
if I cannot sleep,
I'll choose death.
But you could not have expected the leg of lamb to melt in your
mouth,
soft,
milky,
on your tongue .
You could only say:
two childbirths,
ten abortions,
no orgasm.
You took a long sip of wine.
Vallejo also sought a leg of lamb
in the menu of La Coupole.
All watched his stupid eyes,
while he could only think in the deaf ears of Beethoven.
He had asked his companion:
Why do not you love me?
What did I do?
Where did I fail?
The sausage in the casserole left grease stains on his shirt.
Like you,
he felt compassion fatigued his body

and I try to guess who will be born on this night,
while trying to fall asleep.
Dying
requires time and patience.

ONE DAY OF THE WEEK II

Shutting the eyelids to block the light of noon
was never the problem for Modigliani.
The truth always waiting for us
at the bottom of the bottle,
it warned,
long before the lengthening of the necks of women,
It is degrading to eat in bed,
but I do,
at the risk of losing the company of El Flaco.
The disheveled bed,
the book of Levi-Strauss and Didier,
the crumpled paper napkin,
how many years wandering around here?
On my belly to watch television,
facing the ceiling to be loved,
elbows folded for sleep.
Life does not form part of the universe's great laws:
I am a solitary fate
in this space's penumbra and rituals.
I now escape the perspective of those who board a bus
or piss behind a tree.
Chimpanzee eating a turkey sandwich and mustard.
We are in April and myopic eyes blink
in delicious successive messages:
postmodernism, cliques, turkeys, gays, the borderline.
Living cells that undress me and recount my memory.
I touch my little thing, tidy with so much iodine soap
washed
and thoroughly relieved.
An island that smells of iodine.
Little thing conducive to the entry of fungi, herpes, bacteria, bugs,
foams, plastics, copper and rubber.

Come here, brat.
El Flaco caresses me with fatherly hand:
don't berate your little thing,
she is much more useful than art.
A child starts to play violin on the roof.
I seem to see it--chubby, overbite,
smelling of polyps and inflamed tonsils,
a huge callus on the chin.
Go ahead with the scale,
nasally
raspy,
sluggish.
Fuck, screams the Spanish of the fifth movement.
My mother told me,
tu me fais grincer les dents,
nothing to do with the
tu me tue, tu me fais du bien,
of Hiroshima Mon Amour.
Anyway, long before
Shakespeare had determined
that every man ends up killing what he loves.
The folds of the sheet hurt my back
as we read the horoscope out loud this morning.
Clean and full refrigerator.
The beer glass with its frosted edges
and ham wrapped in aluminum foil.
A question of values:
walkman, gastronomy, cool zen, humanism,
nobody will be defrauded by manipulation.
I choose beer
and run back to bed.
I wonder if human rights really
are an ideology.
Fernando, the only alcoholic bartender who hasn't retired,
speaks in rhymes:

la noche es tenebrosa
y no tengo a mi osa.
As I understand it, one of the few things left
is human rights upheld like a moral.
I fluff the pillow,
I lick my finger,
I hope you come El Flaco.
There are days like this.

THE CALL

When I asked him why he had not called
he explained to me that he was buried alive
and that he did not have a phone.
In his thin chicken lips,
there is,
or was not,
any daring.
Everything was strictly legal.
Is it because I do not believe in God?
If it wasn't easy,
you wouldn't intend to do it.
Significance,
signifying,
significantly,
sign.
I went to the balcony
and looked at the park,
irritating brotherhood of screaming children
and calibrated birds.
Hear the remote control changing channels,
no sound.
No more fucks to give,
their desire to put on their pants
and leave.
I went to the kitchen to peel potatoes.

LIZARDS

There are men
who open the covers
and enter.

Without fresh turmoil
no heat or melancholy
casting no spell

They are lizards.
Banished.
Miserable.

GRATED CARROT

The first suicide is unique.
They always ask you if it was an accident
or a sincere proposition of death.
They shove a tube up your nose,
it hurts,
and you learn that next time,
you must do it quietly, not disturb the neighbors.
When you begin to explain that
death actually seemed like the only way out
or that you did it
to fuck your husband and your family
they have all turned their backs
and are watching the tube,
its parade retrieving your last supper.
Betting on whether it will be noodles or fried rice.
The doctor on duty coldly shows them
it's grated carrot.
"Disgusting," says the sick bimbo.
They disposed of me furiously
because no one won the bet.
The saline dispersed quickly
and ten minutes later,
I was back at my house.
No space to mourn
nor time to feel cold and tremble.
People are unconcerned with death that comes from loving too
much.
Child's play
they say
as if children kill themselves all the time.
Look in Hammett for this exact page:
never tell a word about your life

in any book,
if you can help it.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

They ask you
To whom will you leave your things when you die?
Then I looked at my house
and its objects.
There used to be nothing to give up,
but my rancid smell
And that rat.
The rat that remained hostile and silent
waiting for it to occur
Useless, give him some food
and soften his bed with blue soap.
She waited for him every night,
anxious to see if his long mustache
would stop hiding the sharp and predatory teeth.
He was there,
looking clever
and silent as a sphinx
hoping that my blood would run
futile waiting
death arrived inside
first, calm and definitive
I wrote your name on the wall
like a final sunburn,
at about ten am
draw a shadow in my will:
“The rat did not allow her to see the spring”
When dead,
I made the list.
Dinner at the best restaurant
for Angeles and Carlos.
My books, my unpublished works for Jose Ignacio.
My dreams for Ibsen.

My credit card for Ybis.
My car for Alberto.
My double bed for Mario.
My memory for Salvador.
My loneliness for Ismael Rivera of the Black.
My poems called “Granada in the mouth” for the Black.
My teenage pain and pain from my mother for Peter.
My ashes for Ernesto.
My laughter for Marina.
Last night,
told Angeles and Carlos
if I cannot sleep,
I will choose death.
The leg of lamb was so tasty
that they ignored me.
I remember that on one corner of Chacao,
a woman
put her arms around me and said,
next friday we will invite you.
His hair cut short
and his happiness to have it that way
made me realize that I was not the silenced mother of Carlos.
I rested my cheek on his shoulder.
It was only seconds,
but I felt that as the scissors cut through his mane,
something had changed.
Something that doesn't go by his name
now haunting the sleepless and drunken nights
in the neighborhood of the family.
To die deliberately,
requires time and patience.
You evoke the free death of a son,
a thing that could never happen to you.
The ferocious finger of an enemy pointing to you
as the ruthless one.

Pass, but it's not mortal.
Two births,
Ten abortions
and no orgasm.
One good reason.
The silence of your partner when you ask them,
Why don't you want me?
What did I do?
Where did I fail?
and then the tour of those silent spaces
and empty,
with you bent over,
awkward.
Validating that there is not soap to clean
nor favor to press out
and at best
these oranges are rotten
Then you remember
being on a terrace at 7 am,
overlooking the sea,
and someone saying to you,
this gives me a fear of heights
but I love you.
and then,
returning to the city
and to the mazucamba of a naked gay man.
You think again about what is deliberate.
It is not fate.
It is not vengeance.
It is your hand
sweaty palm,
touching her thigh.
Going back a little more
and recalling the uneasiness of your partner,

the shadowy stench
of your partner.
There is always a before
before dying.
Before,
I wanted to eat tortellini in cream.
Or take a drink of Tanqueray.
Or be embraced with strange hands.
Or, as he says, Caupolican,
that they put me in the presence of Maiquetia,
the city more beautiful than this whole country.
No one
that I know
has deliberated on his disappearance.

THE WALLS OF SPRING

Do not teach my child to work the land
not to smell the tang of the earth
not to sing hymns.
Know that there are no crystal streams
no clean drinking water
Your world will be hellish downpours
and dark plains.

Of cries and groans.
Of dry eyes and throats.
Of tortured bodies that no longer will be able to see or hear.
Know that it is not good to hear the voices of those who exalt
[the color of the sky.

I'll take him to Hiroshima. To Seveso. To Dachau.
Your skin will fall piece by piece in front of the horror
and you will listen with sorrow to the bird's song,

the laughter of the soldiers
the death squads
the walls in spring.

You will have the memory that we never had
and will believe in the violence
of those who believe in nothing.

About

Miyó Vestrini was born Marie-José Fauvelles Ripert in France to French parents in 1938. She emigrated to Venezuela with her mother and her Italian stepfather, Renzo Vestrini, in 1947 when she was nine years old. She was a rebellious student and after graduating from high school, moved to the city of Maracaibo where she was associated with the literary group Apocalipsis and worked as a journalist. She had ten abortions, two sons, seven suicide attempts, one death by suicide. She published three books and left two others behind after her death in 1991. It has been said of Miyó Vestrini that she wrote the poetry of “militant death.”

From the Translators

Most of these poems are from Miyó Vestrini's posthumous works *Little Virtue* and *Valiant Citizen*. We translated them on the fourth and fifth of October, 2014. We would like to thank Guillermo Parra for introducing us to Vestrini's work. The cover photo is an image of the bed of Marguerite Duras.

