

ANTHOLOGY OF FEMINIST POETRY

Juana Adcock: This body of a woman I inhabit

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“It is starting from the works of feminist thinkers like Donna Haraway, bell hooks and Silvia Federici that I find the theoretical framework to channel my writing and my vision of the world: it is urgent for our survival to repair the harm that the heteropatriarchy has done to men and women, and to the planet itself”.

THE GUITAR'S LAMENT

I recently reached the conclusion that I am a guitar.
There were numerous clues that suggested the above, but until now
I had lived blinded to them.

Firstly there are of course my handsome curves,
the resonant hollow in my chest,
my stiff arms,
the tension of strings that keep me tied
to who knows what hair-raising notes of the past.

To that we must add my ability to align my body
against that of a musician,
my fondness for the numbers five and twelve,
my being able to sound only when strummed,
my inevitable position as an object
my connection to balconies and bad poets

my repeatability in simple chords
 my dusty fretboard
 my fixed form
 my frustration at not being a hat,
 or a bird,
 or a tree,
 or a violin at least.

Every day I rise early for work,
 hang from a wall,
 or a shoulder,
 or sit on a knee,
 and repeat the phrases of the dead,
 phrases that are not mine,
 lever of the histrionic,
 ancient shell.

One thought and only one
 brings me solace: that endings are mere artifice.
 Nothing starts or ends. Not even I
 started at my navel or end at my skin.

This poem will be published in *Split* (Blue Diode Press, press format) and *Manca y más poemas* (EOLAS, press format). Translated into English by the author.

THE OVERBURDEN

To Sergio González Rodríguez

We watched as they flayed the earth
 muscles pulsating under topsoil
 topsoil bunched up under the scraping tool

*We had loved the mountain's beauty as the creases
 around our mother's smile*

We called it 'the overburden'
 and in full swing unpaired we indexed earnings
 invited ourselves to walk the bloodred carpet
 up the staircase amidst flashing successes

We said "the surface material
 covering the valuable deposit"

Because it is running out, we must steal faster
 because we were taught
 because the law of money is greater
 because

It is winter still and the earth is thawing.
 We erect barriers of dry branches like the pagans
 the water is dragged here in wheelbarrows

*And we allow the torn mountains
 to wrap themselves again around the silver*

To place the body between the cogs
 to dig in the body for the valuable deposit
 to open the body
 to make a triangular incision in the body

To cross the border of the body
 to be the midwife of the body
 to pull out with pliers from the body
 to pull the braids of the body
 to distinguish the body
 to feel with the body's fingers
 to forget the weight of the body
 to structure the body
 to flee from the body
 to cross the line dividing the body

To hear the sand sing
 the lizards scuttle between the rocks
 the routes traced by bison across

The body with most traffic
 the body enjoying a moment of solitude
 the body unknotted
 the florid body
 the body that frequents night clubs
 the broken body
 the tamed body
 the body found in Lote Bravo
 the body that does not demand respect
 the body on the edge of the bed, throat half slit
 the pitcher body
 the body that rises for work when it's still night
 the body painted with sheet creases
 the body arm of the industry
 the cyborg body
 the body with hands tied with the laces of its own shoes
 the body that needs to be accompanied by a man
 the body in black plastic bags
 the body that is the temple of god
 the body from whose nipples nourishment flows
 the body that does not belong to the body
 the colonized body
 the body folded between seat and steering wheel
 mind body
 abaseable body
 dishonored body

intoxicated body
brown body
long-haired body
the body found in Lomas de Poleo
the body so filthy it is not a person
the body with sleeves open like fuchsias
the body astray
the body dumped alive
the body left unrecognizable
the body lacking sufficient information
the body with no marks of strangulation
the body with the full force of the law
the effaced body
the body that drew circles with the pelvis
the body in search of opportunities
the migrated body
the self-improved body
the rebellious body
the bone remains of a body
the teeth of a body memorized by a mother
the body separated from the soul
the body recognised by its tattoos
the body in found Cerro Bola
the body planted like a message
the body with a voice ignored
the pillaged body
the looted body

As Joshua Whitehead said,
“the best part
about having
no body
is that we cannot be shamed”

That’s why we got rid of our body
that’s why we took off our body like giftwrap

The body that knew
the body that desired

The body in a dorsal decubitus position

The now deceased woman
moved like a serpent in bed
allegedly

LINES OF ALGEBRA

His sleep was dark.

The city
was swallowing our money
and flashing it at us again
like a coin pusher machine.

I lay awake,
a Tibetan hungry ghost
whispering grains
of sand:

one by
one
they fell
from my lips
to his ear.

I watched the storm roll away, the blue
way the skyline
was coming into view.

The house sighed,
out of breath. How hard
it was working
to keep us
in.

*

One grain
of sand is still stuck
in my throat. I cough,
cough

for an ablution
like the reflection of water
on the side of the boat.

Make me
what I am
(said the boat to the water)
because I've never
been able
to be it alone.
Because I know nothing
else but the print of your hand
where you struck me
(said the boat to the water).

And why is this of note?
That the water in its ways
knew where the ache was.
Where, medicinally,
to put the kiss.

The more you hurt me (said the boat) the less
it hurts.

*

We wake
late and sticky.
The little cough still lodged
in my throat like a crumb or a gruff
repetition of performativity:

"I'm this, I'm this, I'm this"

He offers me water and I barely "mmm"
unsure if this means yes or no.
To him it's a yes.
So I drink.

*

Cold water
down the center
to fold myself in half
and in half again
lift the pleated flaps
till I'm a math paper
boat.

Splay myself out again,
show the folds.

Must smoothe down,
not let the water gather
or slide in straight
lines.

I'm this, cough, I'm this, cough.

*

From my throat I pull a red thread,
almost living.

I pull long, long.

Lanky lines
of red algebra are drawn.

This is my math problem:

one plus one plus one
 does not make a marriage, but listen.
 His voice is hollow
 and wind, like birds' bones.

This poem is displayed in *Manca y más poemas* (EOLAS, press format) and its English translation, by Robin Myers, is published in *Manca* (Argonáutica, 2019).

THIS BODY OF A WOMAN I INHABIT

This body of a woman I inhabit
 from which I've raised a hand to touch the hair on the head of a Moses suddenly moved
 to the inside-out weeping of an entire childhood
 of slicing rabbits upper lip stiffened bearing the world
 having his way with voltmeters brandishing monkey wrenches drilling walls soldiers protecting
 the softness of our angles our wisdom of curtains, from which I've batted eyelashes to seduce three, four
 from which I've traced
 the sinuous "S" of desire
 which Cratylus called "serpent" and Adam called "perception of flux"
 from which I've tired of nursing
 like Teresa and Diana
 the fear they didn't feel when they touched lepers
 with their immaculate hands, the lips
 with which they kissed
 their blessed wounds, from which I've scrubbed the axel grease
 letting fibers soak in a universal river of saliva from which I've bled drops miscarried fertilized the wheat
 the ivy from which I've been all-fat of the land where goats graze

This poem and its English translation by Robin Myers is published in *Manca* (Argonáutica, 2019).

INDIGENOUS BIRTHING POSITION

What really sets me off is when
 the sun digs its dentist hooks into my knees
 and scrapes extracts tubercles

She roams the floorboards
 kneels before her husband hugs him
 his knees pressing into her belly
 there's vomit hurricane howls

she stands on her head in lotus pose
her thighs watch the moon
close its only lid
the neighbors retort but why if the anaesthesia
progress antiseptic lazy
containers

(I remember Diego's greenblue characters in *The Arrival of Cortés*
their swollen knees misshapen)

They named the baby "eye of the storm" and he spoke
on the first day
with the tips of his eyes alone

The snow outside fell faster slipped into mourning
we watched it together

Little boy
little eye of mine I said to him I felt like crying when I saw you

And he knew qué parte de mí was worthless



Juana Adcock

Juana Adcock (Mexico 1982) is a poet and translator. Her texts have been included in publications like *Magma Poetry*, *Shearsman*, *Gutter*, the *Glasgow Review of Books*, *Asymptote* and *Words Without Borders*. Her first collection of poems, *Wanting (Manca, Tierra Adentro*, 2014; *Argonáutica* 2019), explores the anatomy of violence in Mexico and was named as one of the best poetry books published in the country in 2014. In 2016 she was nominated as one of the 'Ten New Voices of Europe' by the Literature Across Frontiers organisation. She has participated in several international festivals, and her work has been translated into more than ten languages. She lives in Glasgow, where she also plays music with the groups Las Mitras and The Raptors.