

ANTHOLOGY OF FEMINIST POETRY

Laura Wittner: We all have that little red mark somewhere

Laura Wittner



“Looking for poems for this anthology, I realised that I tend to wonder, in my writing, how to be a woman, how I am a woman. I suppose that motherhood erased the few certainties that I thought I had about that, and at the same time it pushed me to look afresh, but this time seriously”.

Why Women Get Burned by the Oven

We all have that little red mark somewhere.
 On my left hand, the one I write with,
 there's my own oven burn.
 If I stare at it awhile, it fans out into a triad
 over the radius:
 my wrist becomes three-dimensional
 and, if I squint hard enough, I can see
 my mother's wrist, my grandmother's
 and, with one twist forward, my daughter's, too,
 covered with mosquito bites and smooth but
 already resigned to the mark of the heated grill.

Translated by Gregary Racz for *Review, Literature and Arts from the Americas*, 96. New York, Routledge, 2018.

Why on bad days we look at pictures from our trips

Not to recall how we walked
 along this street where the green orbs
 of the traffic lights dissolved in the fog
 and in some ancient strata of the sky
 even the moon did a tired song and dance
 but to tell ourselves: once
 we slept facing this window
 beside this patio we had coffee
 in complete silence
 and complete solitude
 chewing this dark foreign bread
 and noting in green ink:
 I am this

 this
 is me
 I
 am
 me.

Translated by Shira Rubenstein

Wind

The wind flung open the balcony doors
 and undammed a river of scraps through the living room,
 anything loose or resting on surfaces:
 Cars playing cards, pencil shavings,
 bills, wads of crepe paper,
 drawings signed and unsigned,
 a sticker, an uncoiled paper clip.
 It roared, the wind, and brought a frenetic rain.
 We went out to scream on the balcony,
 my two children and I, because it was a hard year
 and I figured we deserved it.

Translated by Shira Rubenstein

Plastic moon

We are in a dark living room
 where I want everything except what I have.
 Without shoes, on the floor, drinking wine
 from crystal glasses, they put on loud music
 and I ask myself: why do we
 never play this music?
 The possibility of pleasure is lifting me off the ground
 and the impossibility of pleasure is making me dizzy.
 I lean out of the window to take in some air,
 but there isn't any more, here, than the tight alignment
 of back patios and fire escapes,
 the absence of sound sarcastically shaken
 by the magical music, a darkness of the city's suburbs
 barely known. That's why I need to go out on the street.
 I put on my shoes, leave,
 under the muddy light that the chequered floor sucks in like a sponge,
 and while I think so much, I think.
 Why do we never play this music?
 I stop on the frozen pavement. There are no smells.
 I can't make out the window
 from which I have come. A group of men in the shadows
 take me back to fearfulness. Oh, but thanks.

Translated by Richard Gwyn for *The Other Tiger - Recent Poetry from Latin America*. Wales, Seren Books, 2018.



Laura Wittner

Laura Wittner was born in 1967, in Buenos Aires. A graduate in literature from the University of Buenos Aires, she coordinates poetry and translation workshops as well as working as a translator for different publishing houses. She has published eleven poetry books, the most recent being *The Height* (*La altura*, Buenos Aires, Bajo la Luna, 2016), *Why Do We Still Insist on Travelling?* (*Por qué insistimos con los viajes*, Torrequemada, Spain, Ediciones Liliputienses, 2012/2017) and *Places Where One is Not - Poems 1996-2016* (*Lugares donde una no está - Poemas 1996-2016*, Buenos Aires, Gog y Magog, 2017). She has also published children's books, the most recent being *Tell Me How you Fly* (*Dime cómo vuelas*, Buenos Aires, Tres en Línea, 2019) and *The Enthusiasms* (*Los entusiasmos*, Buenos Aires, Del Naranja, 2019).