

[2] ...FROM THE DEPTH OF DISTANCE (2008)

To the memory of Bill Collieran

Texts by Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

and Álvaro de Campos (Fernando Pessoa) (1888-1935)

Co-commissioned by the Albany Symphony Orchestra, New York, and the Algarve Orchestra

(...)

O, vast Rondure, swimming in space!
Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty!
Alternate light and day, and the teeming, spiritual darkness;
Unspeakable, high processions of sun and moon,
and countless stars, above;

(...)

Os paquetes que entram de manhã na barra
Trazem aos meus olhos consigo
O mistério alegre e triste de quem chega e parte.
Trazem memórias de cais afastados e doutros momentos
Doutro modo da mesma humanidade noutros pontos.

(...)

Chamam por mim as águas,
Chamam por mim os mares,
Chamam por mim, levantando uma voz corpórea, os longes,
As épocas Marítimas todas sentidas no passado, a chamar.

(...)

No mar, no mar, no mar, no mar,
Eh! pôr no mar, ao vento, às vagas,
A minha vida!
Salgar de espuma arremessada pelos ventos
Meu paladar das grandes viagens.

(...)

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already cross'd,)
After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd their work,
After the noble inventors—after the scientists, the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the Poet, worthy that name;
The true Son of God shall come, singing his songs.

Then, not your deeds only, O voyagers, O scientists and inventors, shall be justified,
All these hearts, as of fretted children, shall be sooth'd,
All affection shall be fully responded to—the secret shall be told;
All these separations and gaps shall be taken up, and hook'd and link'd together;
The whole Earth—this cold, impassive, voiceless Earth, shall be completely justified;
(...)

(...)

As viagens agora são tão belas como eram dantes
E um navio será sempre belo, só porque é um navio.
Viajar ainda é viajar e o longe está sempre onde esteve
Em parte nenhuma, graças a Deus!

Fragments of “Ode Marítima”, Álvaro de Campos, 1915; and “Passage to India”, Walt Whitman, 1869.

SEARCH SONGS (2007)

Texts by Alexander Search (Fernando Pessoa)

Commissioned by the Estoril Music Festival

[3] I. Towards the End

To-day I sought to write, and found I had
With expectation my worn mind abused;
Yet deemed I not so choked and so confused
My thoughts already should be. I grow mad.

Bare of ideas, lame in my o'er-used
Uselessly tired reason, feeling bad
Before the light Sun, I stand lone and sad,
Friendship and kinship by mankind refused.

I labour but to think. I cannot think.

My thinking raves or sickens into dream
As I of some deep-witchèd brew did drink

That did strange horrors in my soul reveal.
A storm approaches. All grows dark. I feel
My reason leave me like a last sunbeam.

[4] II. Justice

There was a land, which I suppose,
Where everyone had a crooked nose;

And the crooked nose that everyone had
In no manner did make them sad.

But in that land a man was born
Whose nose more straight and clean was worn;

And the man of that land with a public hate
Killed the man whose nose was straight.

[5] III. Sunset Song

Leaning my chin on my hands,
I looked far away to sea
Where the dying sunset a sense commands
Of half-mystical majesty.
And I felt a strange sorrow, a fear,
A desire like a sudden love
For something that is not here
And that I can never have.

[6] IV. The Lip

One day in half-slumbrous raving
Where I saw strange fancies skip,
I saw a dream, by no light's gleam,
A man with only one lip –
Absolutely, absolutely, absolutely,
Absolutely with only one lip.

I remember well that he had no face
Nor a nose with a usual tip;
He had nor eyes, nor cheeks, nor hair
But only, only *one* lip –
Only one, only one, only one,
Only one, one, *one* lip.

Can ye think of it without terror?
No other lip did slip
Into the vision, nor was it a lack:
There was only, only one lip.
Could you see him as I you would grow mad –
That man with *only one* lip.

V. Early Fragments

[...]
The blackest clouds are never packed so tight
That we see not some blue,
The sky is ne'er so dark some ray of light
May not break through.

[...]
Nought is more cold than ashes are,
Yet there a fire hath been;
The night around a lonely star
More dark than all is seen.

CANÇÕES DO SONHADOR SOLITÁRIO (2011)

Texts by Almeida Faria (b. 1943)
Commissioned by Casa da Música

[7] I. Um livro

É um livro capaz de ensinar a viver
Capaz de ensinar a morrer
Capaz de ensinar que viver
E morrer são momentos do mesmo

Um livro que me salva dos perigos
E me ajuda na dura travessia
Dos dias mais sombrios
Um livro que me faz companhia

Um livro sábio a que recorro
Quando me assalta a nostalgia
Da nua luz do dia
Do canto eléctrico das cigarras
Da leveza leve das névoas matinais
Das nuvens claras, das bruscas chuvadas
Da chuva nas vidraças, da neve azulada
Do vento despenteando as árvores
Da declinação das sombras na tarde, na tarde
Da foz do Hudson, do mar metálico
Dos infinitos sons da água
Dos dons musicais das aves
Da torrente de carros e ruídos
Lá de cima

Um livro curativo
De cada vez que me atormenta
Não ser como as pessoas lá de cima
Que se zangam e suspiram e correm
E desejam e sorriem e choram
E murmuram, sussurram, devoram
As suas vidas velozes
Não ser como essa gente
Contente, infeliz, eufórica
Persistente, desistente, meteórica
Que deambula, adormece e acorda
Arrastando consigo assombrações
Paixões, remorsos

Um livro que consola
Quem como eu noite e dia circula
Ao longo destes túneis que se cruzam
Com outros túneis deste labirinto
Em que me perco, me perco do mundo

[8] II. Sonhador Feliz

Sonhador, Sonhador Feliz
Sonhador, Sonhador, Sonhador Feliz
Chamava eu ao meu amado

Sempre que ele cantava, homens e animais
Calavam-se
Escutavam
Provavam-me
Que o canto dele não era mero sonho meu

Sonhar é sempre um risco
Os vivos vivem sujeitos
Ao cego pó dos dias
Sem conseguirem distinguir
Entre o sonho do sono
E o sonho da vigília

Talvez sonho e vigília sejam cúmplices
Como a esperança e a loucura

SONGS FROM THE SOLITARY DREAMER

I. A Book

It's a book that can teach you how to live
How to die
That can teach you that living and dying
Are two moments of the same reality

A book that protects me from dangers
And helps me in the rough crossings
Of the most overcast days
A book that keeps me company

A wise book I turn to
When overwhelmed by a yearning
For the naked light of day
For the electric song of the cicadas
For the light lightness of morning mist
For bright clouds, sudden downpours
Of rain on the windowpanes, for the bluish snow
For the wind that tousles the trees
For the falling of shadows in the afternoon
In the afternoon at the mouth of the Hudson, for the metallic sea
For the infinite sounds of the water
For the musical skill of the birds
For the torrent of cars and noises
There up above

A healing book
Every time I am tormented
For not being like those above
Who get angry and sigh and run
And desire and smile and weep
And murmur, whisper, devour
Their swift lives
For not being like those
Who are happy, unhappy, euphoric
Persistent, resigned, meteoric
Who walk around, fall asleep and wake up
Dragging apparitions along with them
Passions, regrets

A book that soothes
People like me who go around in circles
Night and day through these tunnels that criss-cross
With other tunnels in this labyrinth
Where I am lost, where I am lost to the world.

II. Happy Dreamer

Dreamer, Happy Dreamer
Dreamer, Dreamer, Happy Dreamer
I called to my beloved

Whenever he sang, men and beasts fell silent
Listened
This proved to me
That his song
Was no mere dream of mine

Dreaming is always a danger
The living live in subjection
To the blind dust of days
Unable to distinguish
Between the dream of sleep
And the dream of being awake

Perhaps dreaming and wakefulness are merely accomplices
Like hope and madness

O sonho engana muito, e contudo
Os sonhadores aceitam ser enganados
Em troca do prazer de sonhar, sonhar

Sonhar é perder-se
Sonhar é querer
É querer
Voltar para casa

[9] III. Qualquer encontro

Qualquer encontro pode ser fatal
Felizmente já não tenho encontros

Viajo sem destino, noite e dia
Sem confiar na confiança dos mortais

Tão inclinados à traição, à mentira, à mentira
Nós, mulheres, aprendemos depressa
A ser menos ingênuas

Ainda assim, prefiro
Viajar sozinha, continuar sozinha

[10] IV. O Anjo da Água

O Anjo da Água
É um anjo mulher
De asas abertas
Como se com elas quisesse
Proteger o universo

Um anjo de olhar fluido
Olhar de águas fugidias
Um anjo andante
De vestido ondulante
Um anjo descalço
Correndo, sobrevoando quase
As águas apressadas
Da cascata circular
De onde as águas
Tombam mansas
Na água redonda

Agora vá, e leve consigo
Essa alegria de estar vivo
Vá, e leve consigo
O difícil equilíbrio
Entre a arte de esquecer
E a traiçoeira arte de lembrar
A enganosa arte da memória
Vá sem olhar para trás
Sem olhar para mim
Quando sair

E se aqui voltar
Amanhã ou mais tarde
Amanhã ou noutro dia qualquer
Ao sair não olhe para trás

All copyrighted texts reproduced by kind permission of the owners

Dreaming is a tricky thing, and yet
Dreamers put up with being tricked
In exchange for the pleasure of dreaming, dreaming

To dream is to lose one's self
To dream is to want
It is to want
To go back home.

III. Any Meeting

Any meeting can be fatal
Luckily I no longer have meetings

Night and day, I journey without any destiny
Without believing in mortal beliefs

So inclined to treason, to lying, to lying
We women learn quickly
To be less naive

But even so I prefer
To journey alone to continue on alone

IV. The Angel of Water

The Angel of the Water
Is an angel-woman
With open wings
As if with them she meant
To protect the universe

An angel with liquid glances
Glances from running waters
An angel that moves
With a flowing gown
A barefoot angel
Running, almost flying over
The waters rushing
In a circular cascade
From where the waters
Fall softly
Into the rounding of waters

Now go, and take with you
This bliss of being alive
Go, and take with you
The hard act of balancing
Between the art of forgetting
And the treacherous art of remembering
The deceptive art of memory
Go without looking back
Without looking at me
When you leave

And if you come back
Tomorrow or later
Tomorrow or any other day at all
When you leave, do not look back

English translations by Rip Cohen and Lawrence Flores
Pereira Salaberry. Reproduced by kind permission of the authors