

Hymn to Moyocoyáztin*

I

Translations being impossible
You have come here before the princes, ...
O, sweet, delectable woman, ...
all objectivity chimerical,
Like a red peacock, with your glamorous garland...
You are disposed to carnal union
all standards ephemeral,
on my mat of bluebird, yellow parrot,
values volatile,
and quetzal feathers.

II

There you are standing,
Precious perfumed flower.
a prophet's jaded vision of agon
You offer yourself to another.
You will be abandoned...
and his mad transplant of Manu's laws
you will go away. into modernity,
Thus will be the general
disembodiment.
fail utterly.

III

But one brief moment in this form.
It is the mansion of the flowers of song.
For one can no longer make a stand
With the colours of golden hummingbird,
you tinge your songs
naked but fully armed
of glowing scarlet and rouge,
with quetzal feathers
before the walls of Ilion
you ennoble your friends,
nor understand their game rules.
the Eagles and the Jaquars.

IV

*Now the heart of the author of life
wants to break
Resigned before despair
quetzal necklaces and plumed robes
there... He shall terminate them,
at the futility of records
shall enslave them
to the Eagles and the Jaguars.
of signs dismembered,
Only for a brief moment
are we lent to one another.
remembered, refined,*

V

*And those songs of ours
are already our shroud
the learned interpreters of late
Enjoy,
with them are woven
civilization claw at
the guild of Eagles and Jaguars:
concrete-covered gardens
with them will we all go there
with knuckles bloodied raw to try
all the same.
They have smoked up their heads,
to find some fertile ground
your flowers,
flowers of war,
to plant a pastoral idyll or hypothesis
flowers of the Jaguar,
there they are, in the center of the battlefield.*

VI

*Inside you lives,
inside you writes,
unearthing hidden wisdom
and creates the author of life,
O,...prince...Nezahualcóyotl!
among the withered tomes of exegetes
In this way you cross out and cripple
the society of poets...
commenting on the commentaries
the confederation of princes...
you tinge with colors
of forgotten hagiographers
all that shall live on earth.
Afterwards,
the Order of Eagles and Jaguars
and yarrow stalks throwers.
lays broken.*

VII

*Like a mural
we shall fade.
Like a flower
we shall turn to dust
upon the earth.
O, rise and look
Like a robe of bluebird,
quetzal and zacuan feathers
at your bloodied hands
we shall all fade away.
We shall go to his house.*

VIII

tainted with the mulched remains of
Emeralds, gold
your flowers, O god!
Only your wealth is--
lovers' journals and bookies' ledgers
O, for whom one lives--
death at the obsidian blade,
that were once upon a time
death in battle.
At the brink of war,
long ago
near the pyre
called forests.
you reveal yourself.
A fog of arrowheads falls.

* © /cual (May 2004, revised June 2005). All texts in italics are from *Romances de los Señores de la Nueva España*. [*Romances of the Lords of New Spain*.] Translated from the Náhuatl by Juan Bautista de Pomar in 1582, including excerpts from a Hymn attributed to Nezahualcōyotl. Translated to English by /cual.