



Iván Argüelles

**diario lii**

**heaven in a fist full of worm meal  
cyanide and blossoming hyacinth  
the labors of light to bring forth breath  
a rendering of clouds nil abstract floating  
a sleep without purpose dived deep  
into the inky chasm recollection of hands  
skin and mind and the thin carapace of thought  
was this the element ? using ampersand  
and vowel loosened from the cataract  
of sound the verse begins in its middle  
wave upon wave of undefined waters  
the shoreline itself the last thing seen  
before going under in a torment of syllables  
rounding the cape and the helmsman drunk  
with vision of the starry void above  
and how it all comes together just once  
a design taken from the blackboard where  
conjugated verbs seem to take flight  
from their chalky afternoon exercise  
and into the deep gloaming the chaotic  
tangle of consonant and question mark**

the raveling of metaphor and simile and  
celestial interjections as if to inform the *Poem*  
of its essence its swarming luster quivering  
just inches from the surface of sky  
and being written and erased and  
brought to the margins and employed  
a lexicon of archaic stone of grass and seed  
and number which is rhythm and meter  
and aloft the crazy directionless words  
a goddess describe her dazzling raiment  
stepping as she does from rock to rill  
and the suspense of her eyes darting  
to the branch where the hive hangs  
a thing waiting for night the infused  
and inspired dream talking as statues  
in the noon of their creation blazing  
alabaster and marble and the final  
epoch of dust when history has been  
forgotten and clambering over temple ruins  
goat and satyr stir the air for a volume  
of enigma opening vast pages of formulae  
mysterious as the rhetoric of leaves  
in the puzzling literature of memory

diario liii

sun blossoms imported from the continent of light  
valleys deep and capacious and hills where mysteries  
evolve their vowels so much like distant glass and sorrows  
woven between the vast conjunctions of time and  
the ever circling sky with its layers of ether and flame  
so much that cannot be comprehended the slender  
moons that slide through the crevices of night slowly  
opening their argent wounds and disappearing  
amongst the myriad alphabets of the galaxies  
and grief and the patient leaves that shake aloud  
in the hive's somnolent ear and the language of statues  
and the quarries that lie beneath the seas of memory  
how much light has given and for us to breathe  
in its only summer phantomatic conjectures of  
person and soul and the give-and-take of masks  
the tiny accidents of writing that number the grass  
a fiction of seasons in the warehouse of dreams  
the impotence of still another hour turning on the wheel  
how many bodhisattvas how many bodies that come  
into being and pass away into the enormous silence  
what are the things that lean against the wall and cry  
where will it go when it is put out at last the light ?

shadows of mind uncertainties imperfections *thought*  
the error of ascribing eternity to the missing finger  
of going round and round in the pit where a city was  
and erecting stone effigies and pouring libations  
to the already dead and the boats hauled from sleep  
and the sands that travel with the figures of youth  
girls like fireflies dancing with silhouettes on the porch  
and the lads in their gravel and ropes and pools learning  
to die when the water fills its inch and the clouds  
go rushing through the green infinity of echo BANG !  
we are each in the uncounted graph of the missing and  
disappeared tongues and syllables and lapses of sound  
bewilderment of waking on a planet secretly burning  
the phases of a lamp slopes and flickering distances  
sun blossoms lowering their brief heads and hands  
from nowhere come to pluck their anthology  
a darkness of pre-history and stone a mythology  
the ineffable sequences of a long unremembered past

#### diario lix

works of art of the imagination great works  
established for all time as masterpieces when  
shepherds cloaked as civilization and walked  
in umbratile groves spreading discourse to  
memorize other fragments like stone effigies  
learning to speak as if it were possible for marble  
quarried from islands of the imagination great  
islands masterworks for all time with cypresses  
that touch heaven and fabric and silk and gold  
interwoven in the fine stuff and images drawn  
and sewn and creations of the mind vast and  
speaking to the heart the deep rivers the subtle  
hierarchies of idea and touch and still the hand  
looking for its shape and sleeping repose leaf  
upon leaf dreaming darkest the interior of  
man's finest like silhouettes of ink stretched  
against the sky wings beating faint at first  
then louder in the ear a music to wonder at  
great compositions for timbrel and rebec and  
shapes of notes ascending seraphic beams aimed  
at the most of memory the part that has shorelines  
an abundance of rock and high resounding surf  
waves that take up the history of time and such  
a brief respite when the body needs must lie down  
and seek shelter from the scourges the illumined  
manuscripts the borderline figments and fictions  
a person has to read these things and report

afterwards and ascribe to others what is his own  
how can it be these odes epics Levantine scripts  
these in fact biblical tomes and prophecies are  
to be mastered in a day and lie the head down  
in its own abyss trying to recall in desperation  
the first few lines the invocations to the Muse  
the lives of heroes too short lived the end of things  
in a blast of sand and high octane flame moon  
and sun and pyramid and understanding nothing  
of what has happened living a twilight life sad  
wondering what is the size of light or where  
night goes when the hills disappear and writing  
over and over the same word in a thousand  
tongues language itself an appendix to breath  
a threat to organization eking out from shelves  
of discarded libraries evolutionary drifts of mind  
the orient capsized in a birthright and mendicants  
door to door begging for just a page a single page  
of all that has been jotted down considered too late  
for the afternoon and put to bed and given waste  
to dream apart from the planet's collision course  
hermeneutics and translations and always error  
misunderstanding of what was meant and intended  
in the great works of art the imagination frayed  
consequences of interpretation a mountain or cliff  
scribbled like calligraphy on the horizon setting  
lamps dotted acres of stubble leftover suffixes  
to a lexicon of pre-historic poetry unwritten  
and devoured by miasma and sand reddening  
in the galactic scripture of midnight a billion  
asterisks going *ping!*

---

Iván Argüelles, innovative Mexican-American poet, just celebrated his 80th birthday. The author of many poetry books and recipient of several awards, and a retired academic librarian, he has resided in Berkeley since 1978. Long considered one of the major West Coast surrealists, his poetic energy derives also from a serious study of the Greek and Latin classics. His poetry collections include *"That" Goddess; Madonna Septet; Comedy, Divine, The; Orphic Cantos;* and *Fragments from a Gone World. HOIL*, an elegiac collection of poems in memory of his younger son Max, who died in 2018, is forthcoming in 2019.

*Image from The Kid Should See This*