

Andalusia

poems

michael santiago pagan

for the Generation of 1927

Poeta

did
she
sneak up
on
you
one
day,
as she
did
with
me,
or
was she
always
with
you,
there,
by
your
side,
from
the
beginning

or Beauty

without ever having seen the
colours arrange themselves
into a pattern I came
to tell where I was
by the absence that leaves
me alone, of being what
I am and what I have
not been, caressing the
silence of the night with
a familiar landscape who
walks between the living
and the dead, saying
what needs to be said
and dreaming what must
be dreamt

Primrose

the foundation
the fragile beauty
the leaves of autumn
the intricate shape
the dry landscape
the undrawn
the manifold
the symmetry of skin
the doubt
the softness
the evening sun
the cover of darkness
the sky taking on colour
the doubts of yesterday
the alcove
the sand, rising
the decay
the nakedness
the innate spirit
the mind of the young
the sadness at the end of crying
the procession of an eye
the living memory
the disparity of rhythm
the inconstant
the clear
the surrounding
the colors
the same

Marseilles

for arlene batista

remembering
the white
on the water
of Marseilles
i return
through the
body to the
beginning, into
a ring of
unrecognized
dreams, ineffable
beauty, where
one long night
with you
is a lifetime

my share

my share of pain
my share of crying
my share of lovers
my share of disappointment
my share of death
my share of absence
my share of repose
my share of breaking

When.

When.

You.

Said.

You.

Loved.

Me.

hey Mister

By its side,
outside myself,
his name,
in mine,
draws itself
around
my body,
slowly
setting
the
sceptre of
a pause that
consumes the
distance between us.

To the touch,
of another,
I lift my
hands, and
fold.

Open, to you.

Warm.

Unexpressed.

Wanton eyes.

Thin.

I
am
but
a shadow
of a man

I
can
never
become.

the

girl

I

am

writing

this

verse

for

will

know

it

is

for

her

petals

in a pause between two words
where it is everywhere
and where it is nowhere
I sit between seeing and making
inventing and erasing
the ghost of you
again passing

x

she
strips
while
heralded
atop
the
bed

Tempest

your pain
turns slowly
into mine,
with eyes
on death,
dreaming aloud,
hiding, distinct,
unconscious of
the silence,
the poetry,
the whispers

V

Despite
what they
think,
or say,
I
still
believe
in
love

before painting

I know not how
so I again, by
chance, ask that
same question
I have asked
since childhood –
where does it
come from

nobody's wall

in all of this,
deluged, I
take refuge
in the aban
doned voices
of women
I no lon
ger know,
guessing at
everything
that ends

Heroin

Heroin becomes
your only friend,
your only family,
your only lover,
your only God.
You will hate her,
but she will love
you.

author unknown

j

*standing at an edge
I look down and anticipate
what it would feel
like to fall*

k

*I woke one day to see you
there, by my side, above me,
praying*

l

*my arabesque
as itself
avoids me by moving with the words
passing into the dense grass
beyond reach
where that which is
and that which was
ends*

an evening in my mind

wandering between two nothings --
the mind in its own reflection
and instant after instant --
I defy a thought
without thought, using
my imagination to
envelop everything
that is not
a dream

reaching a profound solitude
as I watch the walls
of my mind being painted,
against emptiness itself
blindly lost and going unseen
denying myself another escape
from the forgotten dreams
I use to keep myself
warm with

night flowers

a wall
of scent
almost too
dense to
breathe in
circles upon
me, dissolving
at every
turn, imagining
me perfected,
as someone,
something, I
can never
become

Sevilla

the
city

I
talk

to
when

I
talk

to
nobody

Pieces

only you
can understand
the pain that
isolates me

only you
can understand
that I retire
into myself

only you
can recognize
the dreams
I dream

only you
can remember
what it was like
when we were children

only you
can explore
my secrets

Astray

my heart, dressed
as the dead, withdraws
into itself without
alternative, withholding
night's close with a
precision only Heaven
can know. beautiful
in appearance, my life
opens before its close,
dividing briefly between
the pause and the isolation,
against your breast. at
you, and I, a clearing,
at the end, separates by
remaining still, in her display.
the saddest sound.
the slow pain.
solemn vows.
inconsolable eyes.
a solitude of peace.

at Midnight

and at midnight you appear,
beautiful, serene, trembling
with the murmur of the perfect
beauty of another dreaming
body, inlaying that nothingness
as it opens out over a dream
i can not remember, distinct,
and clear, submerged, and unmoving,
waiting to define the child
that knows it is about to be
born

Lady Blue

in memory,
in swarms of rain,
I look back and
recreate the pain
of dying by turning
to face a bed of
mirrors I have created
for myself, hoping that at
me, at you, there
will be a sense of relief, a
sense of silence that will
take the pain away with
what left me for
dead.....your
sick sense
of love

Father n' Law

*you,
unsuspecting,
reach for her
and find
me, there, by
your side,
unknowing*

u

*There
is
something
dying
slowly
inside
of
me.*

Lauren

Dark hair.
Broad eyes.
Long eyelashes.
Fair skin.
Full lips.
Narrow form.
Displacing calm.

that first night

soft in texture and colour
a virgin who talks in her sleep
opens a secret with nothing inside
walking through its layers, lost
undoing the portraits of black
indecisively discovering sex for the first time
beginning with the body, inhabiting space
becoming someone taught to see with eyes closed
speaking to my body in ways of discourse
telling me everything is being
and has never been
where identity reveals itself in its own likeness
seeing the world as it is
where i was
touching to see my own mirror of words
talking with both the living, and the dead
until becoming a reflection of both

Dimples

looking at you,
 past staring into your eyes,
I come undone,
 realizing how much I
admire you
cherish you
care for you
pray for you
dream for you
love you

the same self unfolds

that landscape of imperfections
the rhythm of my writing
a ghost of myself
the point of the needle
sensing this
its stillness
its questions
the soft anonymous

Scenes of a Broken Woman

through the beautiful red
your dissatisfactions
full of God
dance over me
with words that disappear
with what lies are for
without reflection
delicately taking me to the nearest point of departure
at the very centre of you
with the body of this woman
in the sound of absence
having no reflection
remembering
even in sleep
how we met in a past life
distant
and gentle

by threes and fours

her lover

watching her

as I do

what I do

when I make

love to a woman

n

there was
a time
when I
would have
done anything
for you

paseos de los tristes

for Steve Fong

Grey, merging.
Moist, and desolate.
Calm, unseen.
Blank, and unchanging.
Hand, in hand.
Side, by side.
Thin body, heavy hair.
Narrow, and motionless.
Near, yielding.
Soft, and folding.
Low, and undying.
Laden, and undefined.
Close, and waiting.
Leaning, deep.
Shaping.
Concealing.
Adjusting.
Slight.
The corners of his eyes.

Andalusia

laughing at himself laughing he comes to understand
for the very first time that he has found himself,
his home, his love, here, in Espana

mine

the world is mine to forget
mine to remember
mine to defy

our ways

and you, love, I
complete with a
kiss, a light
sigh, as water
in the dawn,
redressing every
gesture you make
with an agitation
of hands, loose,
plum, & exact

A song for him

from a quiet corner the
the map of your body, warm, becomes
another as I see by my own
light of the moon's vast from the
letters of a virgin, at random
returning through the prayers
of a God I have come to know
through the dress of heroin,
telling me my name in a broken
language of Arabic descent

a better place to play

in their dying
calm, fitted eyes
I, love, move
with soft petals of
skin past the incoherencies
at the very centre of
everything we know
into a beginning of my
own, knowing that at the
end, my end, the little
boy inside this body
will finally get his
chance to fly

the woman who is my life

Kissing deeply,
I pull you closer,
falling across your
body, half asleep,
half awake, between
the walls of your
flesh, breached,
as you are, culminating
shadow, carrying
the image of your
movement without
remedy into a
slight trace of
your body, on
mine, in love,
losing itself
somewhere beyond
the place where
lovers dream, and
dreams die...listening,
to the sound of
your breathing, hearing,
whispers of your
name, by itself,
by your colour,
greeting me with
songs of absence,
rivers of pain,
decisions of silence,
softly playing with
the idea of me, and
you, in love,
beside a
child.

Preludes

I press my hands
together, under cover
as for you, love,
mine, not saying a
word, to become,
once again, you,
afraid, as if lost,
with thoughts
of what time
should be

the child & the dove

as it opens out
I release what
I want to give,
by the solace that
is her voice, the
desire that is
youth, the name
that is my beloved,
the pain that is mine

daffodils

its body was interred
on my bed of words,
giving me its hand in
redemption, secretly
crossing itself
on all sides,
teaching
me
once
again
how
to
die

a second birth

Walking toward
you I deny
myself your love
by failing to acknowledge
the child that grows
between us, in you, for me.
Dissolving. Laden.
Retracing. Not spoken.

Emily

She
wakes,
and
asks
what
time
it
is.

w

What I unlive.
What I unsee.
What I know.
What I deny.

e

*the
pain
I
wake
to
is
not
my
own*

f

three daughters
two sons

g

I
feel
the
dampness
of
your
body
go
through
me

Belfast

the recess between where
it begins and ends comes
and goes in rows of shade
and light, silent, and forgotten
white, and rose, familiar to itself
and that which sets us free....
on the terrace of what I am....
and what I could have been

everything

asleep on a bed of glass
memory weaves and unweaves through echoes
incoherent fragments of words
gardens of reflection
an amphitheater of spirits
a lens of escape
an apparition
a black rose
at every movement
with no beginning
and no end

Z

*the
boy
who
walks
through
this
poem*

First Song

the small of your back
the sound of your voice
the comfort of your touch
the brief pause when you
walk into a room

On Memories

Of God, I
ask a favor.
Tell me, please,
with all the
honesty you know,
is there a love
for me in
this world.

From Brussels to Luxembourg

One wet
summer,
by the
side
of an
anonymous
dream, a swarm
of bodies,
uncertain
in manner,
came to life
in a
wasp's nest,
sullenly
passing into
a procession of
dates,
and names.....wanting
to escape, but knowing
they could not.
Night, and body.
Sense, and touch.
Damp, and near.
You, beside me.

house of flowers

in its sight,
confined to silence,
the tenderness of your touch, painted,
moves through the dark
only to grow quiet
upon reaching the end,
in the very paradise
it has cast upon itself, serene,
and unforgotten, taken underneath
your folds, where by where our
senses live, hiding, from
what we see, and what
we say, still, as the blind
know, where we forget our nearness
and take hold of the dreams
we cast

Hummingbird

like something dreamed
I meet you for the
first time, you, not
knowing but being kind
enough to smile, quickly
glancing away but
turning back for a
reason you can not
explain, taking me
into your eyes
for the first
time

t

near the living depths
of my pain I find
you, half to half,
open to another,
arrayed, stolen
from sleep

b

dark eyes
that betray
me with
a lie, and
my still
being in
love with
her

Pamplona 2003

*a bull,
dying in the afternoon,
raising its eyes, astonished*

27

Confession

I
was once
lost, but am
now found, through
you, through this,
through God

Say

disoriented, I
follow it without
following, hiding
from the light
as the voices of
people I never
knew move from
eye, to image, to
language, beneath
the noon sun
and onto the
evening moon by a
point of balance
that divides
the world with
stained images
of what should
never be, come
to live, or die

translations

she slowly withdraws into the shadows
practicing the songs that come with death
imagining what it was like to live

wandering

silver needles
extending
retracting
through
and into
my skin,
with you

absinthe

blind to the world
you, incessant
unfold inside a vase of flowers
falling with the petals
reinventing yourself at the turn
covering me with a love I have never known

ab

a girl whose thighs
know my every
movement

bc

inside the
way she moves
she shows me
how deep
love can
be

ad

the
sad
vanity
of
being
alive

Little London Girl

Dancing in shadow
I come upon you,
there, inside the
outside of my
body, sensing
every movement
with the
point of a
touch, alone,
with
my
pain

with no

*a man with no home
a man with no dreams
a man with no love
a man with no children
a man with no siblings
a man with nothing to talk of*

a

its
beauty
lies
in its
secrecy

into that solitary being

Breathing hard,
I ease inside
you, sensing your
every movement, your
every motion. Slowly,
as I release you, you
draw beyond myself
with a definitive
setting, balancing
the scenery with
a sketch of thought,
sensing the dark
as I fall
away, night,
after night,
with you,
here, in
love.

your hands

I place
my trust
in your
suicide,
expecting
nothing in
return but
you, yourself,
and my death

Where Everything Ends

she separates the
sinners from the
saved with the
corners of a
letter,

playing at
death with a
dream that can
not be remembered,

descending into
the abyss of
a slow September
suicide,

into what no one sees

Songs Never Heard

I lose myself in the depth
of your body, looking at
what is and thinking of
what is not, dreaming
a dream of a poem
that sings

my white midnight sun

by love and dislike
a part of my heart
slowly carries itself
off, trying to hide
from what is about
to take place, in its
departure leaving a
trace of my being
dead tomorrow behind

self accused

the pain I knew as a child
loses itself inside a picture
book, through that love,
that dream, that place where
children play and forget
their abuse

El Sol de Sols

I look into the emptiness
that is my reflection, guessing
as they guess, writing what I
write....playing at ghosts

bedbugs

I sit and watch
as you cry in
your sleep,

knowing there is no
pain as great as
being alive

featureless, and asking
myself
what I might
have not been

without you

without the dawning sun

without the heartbeat of the night

silent, and forgotten

as the horror of
knowing what I am
as I move toward you

moves between the dead
and tomorrow, through
the darkness

that has become my life

my dreams

my sorrow

b

*She
Lives,
So I
Can
Die*

laudanum

you divide yourself
over me, inhabiting my
body with yours, knowing
full well how inward
I grow, sense, feel, live,
speak, write.....die

c

i
can
tell you,
but you
already
feel
it

d

four steps, and the dead
four steps, and the living

Standing Open

by the course of poetry
as it opens out
the imagination
and the understanding
come together
in a portrait of the mind,
naked, anticipating
you as you fall to your beginning
on your thighs
on your back
into a soul among sensations
from silence, to silence
spreading before my eyes
where writing, and reading begin
where confronting eyes
at the sight of her
fall from body, to shadow

from a dream

the deaf murmur of the night surrounds me
like a wall of poetry, and so I awake, as
always, carefully, withdrawing into the absence
of the light, treading the point of a needle

that

could you be that dream?
 that happiness
 that name
 that treasure
 that love
that sense of relief?

Valentina

withdrawn into the silence
between the sun and the mind
I dream myself into view,
with you, detached from almost
everything as we walk down
an aisle of cut lilies

llosa

to you, tonight
from me, the hiding soul
in a question, in narrow pain
returns, paralyzed
unadorned, ashamed
too dim to see the light at day's close
driven through, renown to ease
farther than you, farther than me
as quiet as the day I was born

letter

half told, my life
unfolds before its eyes,
silent, and sad, treading
the path of blindness,
letting the dead live
past its point of self
departure, as always,
wanting more than I
can give it

You're

traced by someone not
known to you nor I i move
into the profile of a shadow,
trying to make out the words
in her crying

That she'll kiss me back

the cry of a child
the colour of pearl
the centre
the dry rose
the incense of death
the soft anonymous
the circles
the tending
the sewn
the questions
the lintel
the bends
the chapels
the echoes
the walls
the ties
the features
the words
the unaltered
the lapse
the silence
the collapse
the streams
the unmasked
the touch
the stillbirth
us

Elysian

built with words, and shadow
I come to you in a dream
thinking me as I think them
appearing in every form
as I inhabit the names that deny it
pausing inside the letters of my broken name
unrhymed and free in verse
unmaking and rebuilding the perfect pain
the pure emotion
echo, by echo
birth, by birth

storm petrel

her eyes, deep,
glance at your silence
and advance into the
loneliness of its
eye, softly imposing
itself on the evening,
telling me I'll see you
when I get there

desolada

The pain in the way she moves
compels me to kneel down,
forward, into the madness.
There, surrounded by pain
and strewn with flowers, I
breathe a faint sigh, close
my eyes, tilt my head toward
the sky and whisper your name,
hopelessly begging to be with
you, again, even in death.

Places

she rises, drops down,
again, moving to the
rhythm of my tongue

coffee cigarettes cocaine

*I suffocate myself
in you at midnight,
when what happens
between you and I
happens in darkness*

scarred

*by his hands
by his words
by his thoughts
by his eyes
by his ambers*

b

*the
sheer
visual
beauty
of
his
body*

i

*a bird that
is everywhere,
and nowhere*

Brian

*he, and I
touching
for the
first time,
him, not
knowing my
name or my
past, only
knowing
my love
for him,
and that
I am
his father*

las eras

*blessed,
but unaware, a
bird, shaken,
betrays itself
into
thinking
it
can
not
fly
away*

emotional withdrawal

limited feeling
partial affection
silent thought
painted rivers
dark portraits
laurel leaves
faint sound
distant touch

Tonight

the pain
opens with
another voice,
stepping beside
me with that
which falls
with youth,
reaching to
touch what
I once had,
what I once
believed, what
I once was

aside

looking
at herself in
the mirror she sees
a child that knows it is
about to be born, as water
in the dawn, sleepily trying to get
into a place where the doves bathe in their own
garden of beauty, free from thought, across
pain, silent, and sad

hymns

drawn over her body,
within and without, it
follows itself while
repeating the same lines.
as anything, where
perfection, or nearness
to it, is imagined,
I misremember the words
and come upon you,
there, low, and closed.
listening, I hide my
eyes and open my
hands, looking into
them as you approach
through the darkness,
slowly uncovering yourself
in thin movement with
wet, unreadable eyes.
braced, and laden.
the sound of rain.
hymns
a name
your love

flamenco

into what no one sees,
I adjust into the movement of your body.

long black hair.
pale blue eyes.

sensing through the darkness.
feeling.

for you.

The nearest

It isn't a sound or a colour.
It isn't my image in the water.
It isn't the echo of a voice gone dead.
It isn't the silence that is complete.
It isn't the unassuming name of my unborn child.
It isn't the pain that passes quietly through me.
It isn't that I'm more ready to die now than ever before.
It's where an inconsolable spirit looks for me.
It's where a woman's voice whispers.
It's where a quiet mind speaks to itself.
It's where a disappearance takes place.
It's where a calm unfolds.
It's where they invent dreams.
It's where the silence that sings to us dies.
It's where nothing is needed.

Chinitas

with just enough
 room inside
to fit, a
discreetly sleeping
child, a girl,
 falls into the
 body of a woman

st etienne

between seeing and making,
suspended between two bridges of truth,
you, breathing softly, hang from a thread, barely visible

q

I
will
hold
you
in
my
arms
until
you
can
feel
my
disease

R

*there you are,
in the distance,
more alone than death*

S

between walls,
breached, as
you are, like
a man in
love

“I’ve no ambitions or desires.
My being a poet isn’t an ambition.
It’s my way of being alone.” Pessoa

to my poems

her long body,
opening, looks
without looking,
watching the thought
of you complicate
her features while
a dull pain, remembered,
crosses itself, faithfully
retracting at the
heart of my pain,
breathing less, indifferent
of my cry for help

Open Under

to
be alone
with myself,
child, with
body, I realize
the way out, perhaps,
is toward within,
being without
i

lie of rain

between what I see and what I say
the memory of a boy who knows no happiness
lulls near, biting clean the patterns of a matted rain
that gives pause to the shade and light of unborn children,
telling me my name at each touch of the body

the listening wind

without looking at each other
we tremble in the darkness,
for the first time touching

send me

sullenly, I move closer,
that close upon it that
I can taste its moisture,
its walls, its you, its me,
its everything

Songwriter

the colours arrange themselves
against a waterfall of silence,
barely getting by with neither
measure nor balance, arranging
and rearranging its semblance in
a pause of pain, a letter gone
unread, a landscape of childhood,
a departure, an image of myself
as what it was to know you

Remember Lagos

without looking at each other
we move against one another,
just you and i, free from
the sadness that is life,
hiding inside where the soul
is free, slowly playing the part
of lovers in love

lullaby

My body.
In your body.
Kneading through.
Making love.
Unscathed.
Sleepless.
You, me.
Unborn.

for cynthia l. blandino

O

entering your body
as it opens out
the center in you falls
from your name to
your body,
to your beginning

P

identified in pain, the
god that failed me
pauses, slowly mourns
my death, and eases
closer for a final
touch of my body,
my skin, my being,
my writing

aa

her hair was long
her skin was light
her eyes were wild

1199

talking to the dead
it comes while I sleep

La Soledad

fragile and inconstant
I return through the body
to a new beginning, a
wandering asylum,
with no
beginning
and
no end,
as reflection on reflection

not alive, but not dead

the days

arranging and rearranging
its breadth in the rain a deep,
dark blue that does not sleep
kisses the dark that envelops me,
reflecting it faithfully while I
pretend to be alive, unborn
by the absence of love, quiet
as neither measure nor balance
could understand

redWhite

I
live
alone in
a paradise
of solitude
no one can
break through,
by chance, absent
without leave,
lost among equations
that have no answers

lidden places

the silence that sings to me
passes quietly through, damp,
unclear, more breathless than
the dead, born at each moment
with the gift it gives, inherent,
blindly lost by the side that
is God, open to my heart

the name I give it

the appearance of someone inside me
cries for help as my solemn sense of
the word moves close by, in a way of
thinking, between names and dates,
naked, without innocence, with what
becomes of the virgin after sex,
trembling, from the corner of the eye
searching, reflecting half to half,
deep into another's body

ni a la nada

over your body, pulling,
a life, as never before,
moves from the corner of
your womb into a pause,
binding and unbinding the sphere
of everything there is, conscious
of the sleep that hides, three
times coming into where light
finds its sadness pushing under
your skin, breathing in, blossoming,
singing into quiet, delicately
balancing the unguided traces
of you, watching me, ease
slowly into the darkness of
my
own
death

m

because
no
one
can
shake
my
belief
in
death

Body of skin

it weaves and unweaves through your body of skin
between what I see and what I say, silent,
and sad, rereading the traces, the
contours, gently pausing to take a second
look, discerning, as if lost, to see a bird
lying in the grass, forlorn, lost, patterned,
in circles, as dispassionate as consciousness

such was a poet

in the moment of
death, at its beginning,
I sustain myself by
writing one last line,
of you, still anticipating
your return

sanctuary

outside, in the theatre
of open eyes, I reach between
the gardens of the midnight
sun, drawing thread from
colour to sound, pausing, letting
that which waits at the end
of a tunnel suffocate me
underwater

bailas

distant, and gentle, you
high, draw on my imagination
by crying open in a dawn of
colour, moving from one part
of the body to another with
the necessary precision of a
beautiful woman in love, unasking
what needs to be asked, giving
me the benefit of the doubt, as
you would like for me to do for
you, shaping the thoughts of a
boy, a blessing, that trembles with
the image of you, as something
else, there, beside the birthmark
of open love

looking into
your eyes,
pleading,
I ask you
to forgive
me

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