

Memories of the Southern war

Little boys and little girls
 That fly away
 Because the days are milky and the earth so small

Little boy, girls that invent painful frog games
 Because where they live
 Toys are built from pure love
 For life

Running around
 Faraway running
 Corncobs in their spring maturity
 Becoming enchanting Barbies with blond hairs too
 And blue lullabies are sung softly very softly
 To their ears
 Hear this little boys, little girls
 Songs built from scratch from the lowest of loves

Boys and girls born during the southern wars
 When big brothers were sent away
 And mother cried every night
 As she faced the southern skies
 As she cooked small loving meals for little boys and girls
 As the letter A and the letter Z were caressed by her inner and
 tired fingers

And then one day brother A comes in
 From down there, where bad bloods are running
 Between bothers B and brother P (or bother P and P as mom
 says)
 Little boy little, girls don't know
 For them the world is only the small white egg (or brown)
 Laid by lady Hen in the morning
 Is the village where they build toys from the tender grass
 Where they talk to the goats when milking them

As if milking love is all there is to do
Where bother G and brother C
Are just like little boy and little girl just like B and P
(or P and P as mother says)

And then little boy asks brother A:
Eh Pá did you see my brother *Zé* there?
Bother A is big very big and little boy
Is highly enchanted by the green brown earthy colours that he
bares
And sharp boots built to un-build the Mayombes

Brother A picks him up
Taking him close to the sky
Where loves are said to be tender and gods fair
And hugs him so, so very closely
So, so very tightly

No *meu amor* no
I came from Angola
Where the sun is unfriendly
But the trees can sometimes kiss you

Little boys, little girls
For whom the world is a white beautiful egg or brown
Offered by lady Hen Just that morning

Down there in the Southern war
The dance is another
So very cruel
So very sad
Brown eggs and white eggs are not soft:
Full of rough edges
And cracks
Giving away premature vitamins
For the earth to engulf And brother Z is away
Away in Guine

Is he thinking about little boy and little girl too?

When is he coming back brother A
When is my brother Z coming back
I want to go and fish birds with him
Come and see I just made a figa

Soon my love very soon

The war Godmother

Madrinha de guerra
They call it In the language where it came from

But it is all the same

For it is the need to hang on
To faraway ropes and misty risky warmth-s
That always gives rise to such Godmothers

The boys had left their tiny countries
As the rude ruler had very clearly requested
They all went down
Down there
To kill
And preserve the lands that were never theirs
And which their parents
Had only heard about
Through inaudible whispers
Never seeing the colours of its gold
Or coffees or blue emeralds

But they were only young
Young boys
Who had been taught how to walk on eggshells

Like their parents
Boys who also knew that God, yes God
Had much suffered
And so must they
In the name of Thee

When they arrived in the down lands
The suns were brutal
And the Mayombes
Played deadly secrets
On their tall young legs

They were young
Very young
Placed in places that were never theirs
And that's when the war Godmother really seemed
To be the only ultramarine scent
That could keep them going
Running
Trying to ruin the rude Mayombes
Inside savage lands
Trying to contain the savages
Who also loved their lands so very much
And so, much bad blood was indeed running

In the central and southern upper lands
In the west and east
In the orient and occident
Of mystical people
For whom the Frangipani
Was only their tallest and eldest brother

In their home lands
The young girls were also crying
For their future lovers
Had all run down

So what to do what to do?
 Lonely boys and lonely girls
 Where will our tangerine juices come from?
 Where will we find the arms to draw the roundness
 Of our beautiful lady-bugs?
 And to furrow our inner leaner lands?
 The girls kept asking...
 And where will we find the thighs of Eva Maria and Maria Eva?
 Where will we eat?
 What will we drink?
 What what what?
 Where where where?
 Without thin needles stinging and stinging?
 The boys would moan...

As so the solution was easily found
 The girls in the upper land
 Became the blessed Godmothers
 Of the boys in the down land

Many sweets they would exchange
 And with words that have ceased to exist
 For they have been rudely discarded
 By the rudeness of those who
 Became slaves of disgraceful dictionaries
 Inventors of practical refrigerators and fishes gone
 Convinced that real reason can be achieved
 By writing without spelling mistakes

In these blessed letters
 Kindly extended between upper girls and down boys
 Many many things were discovered
 Of eyes that never even met
 Or ways that never even encountered
 But it was all there
 Because loneliness and fear
 Are the blessed brothers

That make us all fall
In deep love for the Magna Carta

And so when the bad bloods
Stopped running
And some escaped the deadly Mayombes
Marry marriages were made
Between boys and girls
Boys and girls
Who fell in love in the times
Of the southern wars

The rose mark

It stands there
On the left part of by bottom
Just where my outer back thigh ends its beautiful curve
And then travels down
To become my robust leg
Which has the colour of satin olive

It's a rose mark
The rose mark
My once great lover
Told me it was a piece of him
'A piece of me you have there,
A piece that I have been long dying for
And now I can live

The rose mark is pitch black
Like him, whom I adore
(and inhale to drink from the oxygen that nourishes his skin)
It has the shape of a flower
Some say even a carnation
Sacred symbol of liberation in some lands
When the *povo* fed its red petals to the guns

And started singing *viva a liberdade*

The rose my mother held close to her womb
 When I was still in her and her in me
 As if telling me that the solstice had been signed
 Between brother P and brother P
 Who after many years of running bad bloods
 Decided to look into each other's irises
 And were able to finally find
 Staring at themselves
 Real glasses
 Showing fine crafted wares
 Staring beyond

The rose held close to my mother's womb
 When I was still in her and her in me
 As if telling me
 Not be afraid to leave her valley
 When the time was to come
 Because the world was at peace
 And brothers A and Z
 Would be there
 Waiting
 And eager to hold me
 My tender and fresh flesh
 Still warm and meek
 Perhaps in the unconscious hopes they themselves
 Would be able to recall the feeling
 Of when they were inside
 A well deserved trip to the motherland
 After the long years
 Lost in strange Mayombes

But HE says,
 'It's a wild butterfly
 Who flew from my African continent
 Just to kiss the beginning of your round bottom'

I would become numb with love then
I would stare at the large intricateness of his eyes
And then we would love each other
With the ferocity of big ocean waves
Travelling fast and deep
Fast and deep
To touch all the marine beauties
Lying underneath
Staring at the bottom of our soul
Just like centres of un-centred alabaster(s)

'A piece of me' he would repeat
While anointing it with his darker oils
So that it would not die from loneliness
Lost in a body full of Mediterranean light olive
After a while it became so black and so live
That its light took over my entire body
Leaving it constantly in fluorescent full moons
Like the earth at night underneath the constellations
And then one day my lover said
He had to return to his land
Where most of his self was
He said he had to follow the call of nature
What will happen with my black butterfly?
What will happen to the piece of you I have in my body?
Will you take it with you so that you can live?
Or do you leave it with me so that I can keep you alive?
What will we do? What will we do with this rose?

'I will give you a special cream
(made with chestnuts from your land)
That you must keep with you at all times,
Bathe in it

So that it will forever maintain its shining blackness'
But I need your skill, I need your skill

I need your circular motion to make it dance to make it sing
To make it bright to make it black to make it live to make it light

But he had to go
The rose did not keep its shine
Despite my efforts to feed it light
After a while it became the colour of dead black
I mourned it and mourned it
But it didn't do
And the colour was receding and receding into my other part
Travelling down south to meet its other self
It's almost white now
Almost light olive like the rest of my lonely body

In my hungry moments I scratch it violently
Until it bleeds
Until I can dream the profound dark shades that might still be
lying underneath
In the moistened loam that waters the other masses
But then all I get is open sores
The colour of red blood gargling away
Or even fading away scars
Leaving my rose mark
And my butterfly dead

Without my consent

Without my consent
He started to pick through
Slowly very slowly
Through the many doors of my body
The many windows of my souls

At first I would pretend to un-see it
I would speak to my body

And to the centres of my souls
Pointing to all the reasons why it should not be so impatient
And how running too fast can break your legs
But it would not listen
It had a reason of its own
That had its own yes-es its own no-es
Without my consent

And after many, many conversations
That did not clarify any issues I gave away
And allowed his beautiful black eyes
To finally enter my swimming river

There were so many fishes
And so many colours
That sometimes we got lost together
But would sooner or later find the serenity of
The calming surface

And without my consent
We started swimming deeper and deeper
And one day, we could not even find the surface
And lost our breaths for a while
But then things appeared to resolve themselves

And another day, during one of our best trips
I heard a distant and blue song
Calling him from the other river
As we descended, the voice would become louder and more
urgent
As if the time was afraid to forget
As if the Voyage had to be re-voyaged
And this time with the guiding mother

I would try to hold on to him with all the forces that I could
gather
But the current was powerful and I had to let it go

He kept insisting that there was no voice
That it was all my imagination

And then without my consent
The trips started to slow down
Until they finally disappeared
Leaving me stranded by she shore side

And then I would roll on the floor
Like the unspoiled child who wants to regain her mother's
silicone valley
Through a non-returning ticket
I would scream so loud that my inner cords were broken
And the river birds would fly away
I would stay there for days
Staring at the empty river
Alone by the shore side
Trying to learn the voice that stole him away

I wanted to become like her
The African princess who swam him away
Without my consent

But I was LUCINDA
And that I could not change
So I started to kiss myself alone
Little by little
Little by little
Until I adored
From the tip of my fingers
To the top of my toes

Terra Nullius

Terra de ninguém,
They stated when arriving in Brazil
De ninguém ninguém ninguém

Then they whispered to the dark large forests
To hear their own voices just being thrown back at them
Like wild(less) echoes of non-staring wolves
Or river murmurs
Which only reflect your own image when you try to look into the
waters

In a fashion similar to that of Ricardo Reis and his lady Lídia
Lídia Martins, says Saramago after
Saramago,
That man who seemingly has a wider and smaller vision
Surely not expecting everyone to hear his own voice
When he throws it savagely and with brute human force at the
foresting shadows

Terra de ninguém,
They whispered at the deep valleys and planes
In the Africa of the South and the Angola and the *Moçambique*
And Namibia too perhaps
They missed the mistiness and crispiness of the many men and
women who fully lived there
Their shooting eyes, and sophisticated innocence(s) or
cunningness(es)
Up there, in the Congo river, Kurtz and Conrad
Saw and heard nothing that could sound equally tranquilizing

There was a princess: grave and tall and profound perhaps
Was she a mystical lady?
Was she the one who took my love away
And guided him above the roofs with read tiles

Or above ground close to the shooting stars?
Was she the Andrómeda whom I often pretend to have nothing
against?

Terra nullius, nullius, nullius
Or *terra nuestra*,
Like the Italians said when arriving in Brazil much later on
Nuestra, nuestra, because we had none where we came from

Terra nullius, terra nullius
Terra nuestra, nuestra
Mine, mine...

The women from Bunnia

A Canadian well-meaning mid-wife
Went to Bunnia to save the women

She took all the necessary precautions
Necessary and praised in the Good World
So that she could properly save
And understand the overly pregnant and overly used women
from Bunnia

To Bunnia she went,
Where currently there is an abundance of American soldiers
Trying to save the world from territorial acts

The American soldiers are young and enthusiastic
And naïve too perhaps
Sometimes they feel terribly lonely
Terribly lonely, in the many parts of the world, where they are
forced to go
In South Korea for example,
They visit the bars (which are also brothels) at night only to

converse with the starving girls
Who have come from all corners of the world:
From Lithuania and Ukraine
From Brazil and the Philippines
From Thailand and perhaps even Jos or Prague

They all feel lonely
Not just for bread, at least, not the American boys, or not always
The American boys,
Whose wives wait for them at home, praying that they get there
safe and still in love with them
Praying and holding the babies against them
The babies who are reminiscent remembrances of past and soft
love making moments perhaps

The Canadian midwives are indeed well meaning
They cross the world to go to Bunnia
And teach the overly used women and young girls
Many of which have died during childbirth
They have died from anaemia, bleeding and bleeding to death
For their bloods were too white and light
And as everyone knows, such witness and lightness can no
longer sustain fragile lives
For example,
One old husband has lost three of his young wives
He has lost them when they were trying to give him the baby
boys (and perhaps even girls)
That he needed and wanted to continue the line of thought and
blood

Yesterday he performed the wedding ceremony for the fourth
time
With a young woman with the eyes similar to those of the one
we saw
A few years ago on the cover of *National Geographic*
Astonishing fabulous eyes they were, which no one could ever
ignore

For they penetrate the realms of your most recondite corners
And they came at you voracious and wild even when you are
sound asleep
And think you are protected from the sorrows of the world

But the old man is happy to be remarried and experience again
The virgin blood that she will surely have
For tradition and identity are strong and demanding
'Should we keep all the baggage in the name of tradition and
identity?'
A male professor of mine once asked us in class
'Should we, should we?' He reiterated
That man from Inbundia, whom I came to admire at least most of
the time
The question was never properly answered by him or by the
many pupils that were there to learn

But the Canadian woman is very nice
Very nice,
And eager to teach, "to make them understand" as she says
Make them understand they "have resources in their own
communities which they can surely use"
Even though "they can't read and write and will soon forget the
wise instructions"
For as many of us know and believe, lack of a written alphabet is
a recipe for human disaster

She has traveled all this distance to tell them that
Tell it, to the women from Bunnia who have been dying for
centuries
Dying from lack of iron
That red, precious and heavy fundamental element
We all need to continue walking the enmeshed streets of our
small world

But the Canadian woman meant well
And she did more than open her mouth and mind to the locals

She in fact dirtied her hands on the blood and waters that come
from a woman's wound
When it's ready to ejaculate life into this world
Yes, she did that
And she caressed the young bride softly on her forehead when
the baby-girl came out
She caressed her and through the help of a translator, she told her
that 'she would be Ok'
That 'they would be OK'
Does being OK mean the same thing in both languages?
Or was something lost in translation?
But still, the Canadian midwife used what might be considered
an universal language:
That soft caress on the forehead
And she was well appreciated by the locals
Who gave her colourful and ancient gowns
Made by hand and heart
Which she eagerly (and thankfully) accepted and brought back to
show her relatives
I saw some of them
Yesterday on the news
It was all broadcasted as the "Success Story"

'It's all a natural thing really
And it's really no one's fault'
As the Brazilian Menina once said
When referring to her own lifestyle
Which is in fact an old and very stubborn tradition
