

**Terriloquis Victus Dictis :: Species Patefactast Verbis**

*Rodrigo Toscano*

(overborne by terrific utterances, the face of the words made manifest)

The date I don't really remember, but not long after 9-11 (2001). A gallery somewhere in Northern Brooklyn. Laura (Elrick) is with me, Monica de la Torre is there, as is Bruce Andrews, Odile Cisneros, Alan Gilbert, Kristin Prevallet, and others. Poets, essayists, translators, artists, "interested parties."

Bright floodlights (to be dimmed later), the customary red wines flowing, crackers crackling between gleaming teeth. And if memory "serves me"—"correctly," on the walls were sculptures made of rusty wire, squiggly figurative forms I can't make out now.

The typical schmoozy inattention to any one thing and everything all around.

A couple of cultural-scene "lurkers," a handful of just-happened-to-pop-ins from the curbside.

Proprietors, I imagine, one or two might have been present.

The dinkiest utility toilet, typical of galleries like this; you step into it, attempt to gather yourself...*if only for a moment.*

\*

Bodies that make up our solidity as a singular organ, but as lone whales suddenly by twos and threes we assemble into chairs.

Thirty or forty of them.

Paradox:

Before the assembly—is assembledness.  
Before the assembly—is disassembledness.

*mantén esa contradicción entre tus dientes,  
y si la sueltas, te diremos, "mejor...para ti"  
y si la muerdes como perro rabioso  
—nos da igual...en decir... "mejor...para ti"*

\*

To say,

"I remember (it)" or  
"I don't remember (it)"

—both equally romantic—

Is there a better way to describe "it" and its remembrance?

That is, outside of the *pitiable* postmodern present-continuous (capitalist) space?

\*

The skin is relentless in its contiguity, as much as a rock face of a mountain, even in its dissolution.

There's no such thing as a "hole" in it (the skin).

For where there might be a singular "hole"—there's still the very non-edges of skin, contiguous until a final dissipation.

Faces.

Familiar or unfamiliar.

Familiarly composed.

Thirty or Forty of them.

\*

It must have been Regis, or his young protégé whose name I can't recall, or maybe Raoul Sentenat who read before Cecilia. "Must have" because people were applauding...that light after-a-reading (appreciative) patter.

And as it progressed toward its dying-down—assembled there, taut skin of the evening, moist, pored & breathing,

*enter* Cecilia—

of the audience *as* an audience, rises...as the applause dies down, one lone clap continues—hers...at a certain tempo, not of the fastest present there (of those perhaps more agitated than the rest) nor at the tempo of the slowest (of the fatigued perhaps, those feeling a sense of perfunctoriness toward the event, or maybe as an overt expression of the furiously-agnostic cultural critic).

Cecilia's clap, then, begun at the same time as everyone else's, grows slightly louder as the applause dwindles...narrows into the mid-tempo of the audience itself...louder and louder, more pronounced it becomes...

pk' pk' pk' pk'

and steadies there (in volume and pulse)...

pk' pk' pk' pk'

"just *what* is this woman doing?" (no doubt, several are thinking...me too)

and just when the discomfort begins to turn into a strange kind of comfort <tempo>

—s i l e n c e—

she stands up and walks toward the podium...never actually arriving there, come to think of it...and perambulates among the audience...

then suddenly, from her lips, a single word, whispered...

we strain to hear it, though the strain seems effortless...

“concha” <silence again>

then a soft flurry of the same word, like leaf stems losing their grip to a sudden gust...

“cooncha cooncha cooncha”

In the English Tongue, conjuring, first of all, a conch shell.  
In the Spanish Tongue, that same conjuring, though with the added Chilean demotic tone, denoting “pussy”...also a way of saying “damn.”

“cooncha cooncha cooncha”

strangely intimate in our ears, the word swirls and settles there...

(the human ear, it’s been noted, is curiously shaped like a conch shell)

did I forget to mention that everyone *quivers* inside during war-time?

ceaseless  
insides  
quivering  
we were  
*are*

[Fall, 2003]

“Con cha  
cunt má

Madre del tiempo...”

\*

The wine, the hubbub, the cultural trappings, the fleeting ambitions, are, for now, distant from our thoughts...now’s an all-for-listening...an inside-as-outside / outside-as-inside

assembles us.

A Bruce and a Regis, a Kristin and an Odile, a Cecilia and a me...our social differences, in this not-now now, feel eerily

*leveled*

“concha!”

\*

Who is it?  
What is it?

We move in the world...hard-shelled to so much [NYC, USA], borne of so much commonality, and somnambulistically trap it out?

That people gathered here reach toward “it”

commonality? leveling?

\*

A question I don’t seem to be able to answer,

Is / was the “reading” assembled *before* the event? Or *after* the event?

(me, Mr. Railer, against so many a meta- and pata- physic)

I remember thinking, there, at the reading

“how did we *avoid* this before?”

And the others? In the same not-now now, were they thinking similarly?

\*

*quivering* “what’s gonna’ happen to me?”

*quivering* inside, it slowly dwindles

is this fear or serenity?

or both at once?

...

Cecilia then whispers something...but this time a little louder than before:

“they say there’s going to be a...

wawawawawa

**war”**

barely audible, yet the trunk slams down kicking up a cloud of...

And as to whether that was the *exact* phrase or not, I don’t really remember—not long after 9-11 (2001), but the import of it I do...from that not-now now to this.

After the ceaseless ruminating on “it”—the impending strife, horrid conjurer *ceaseless*, whether as protestors “we,” or as lovers late at night snuggling remorse over the state of things...

quivering’s

at a standstill

*if only for a moment.*

As if for the first time...hearing it “they”  
“say”  
“there-is-going-to-be”  
“a”

how did we not *hear* this before?

“concha”

\*

Whatever it is, it makes non-poets feel suddenly poetically able-to.

Whatever it is, it makes poets supremely post-‘poetically’ able-to.

Whatever *name* befits Cecilia’s poetry

I don’t know, or rather don’t remember...

But somehow I *remember* something that’s (if only slightly) *ahead* of me...

“but that’s impossible!” I say...

(me, Mr. Railer, against so many a meta- and pata- physic)

*assembled / disassembled*