

Unpublished Poems by Ana Merino, Translated by Elizabeth Polli

LIFE OF A LIZARD

I wanted to be a house pet
with a view of the beach
but I'm a wall lizard and I live in the cracks
of a volcanic rock in the middle of the desert.

Sometimes someone cuts the end of my tail off
and there, my dreams remain, moving around nervously
thinking they are alive.

I am like the lost hours on Sundays
I embrace time off tucked in between the sheets
and I wait for the weekdays to dawn.

Life is an enigma from which I decipher just
a bit of hope,
I look at it out of the corner of my eye and I never stop
because I fear the aim of slingshots
or the shadow of a cat.

SURVIVING EVERYDAY LIFE

When I went down to the cellar with my dirty clothes
I forgot that I had stored a handful of ideas
in the back pocket of my jeans,
and when I took the clean clothes out of the washing machine
I discovered these ideas scattered
on bits of paper, totally illegible.

From that moment on
the soul of things whispers that I'm crazy
because I pray in reverse to a god that no longer exists,
and stigmata appear on my hands
and unknown people come to see me
and they stay with me at night.

My words were drowned in soapy water
and I couldn't find a trace of them in my head.

The letters that sprang forth from my fingers
that I wrote on the papers that I stored in my pocket
were my address, my name,
the title of a book,
the languages I speak, the things I never say.

They were magic formulas for surviving everyday life,
how to open the mailbox and say good morning,
how not to open the door to that seductive man
who is never reflected in mirrors.

Everything I used to write down were little clues that I followed
to put the pieces of my body back together again,
so I won't be mistaken and know who I am
without having to think about it twice.

PROBLEMS OF ILLUSIONS

Señorita K.
magician's helper
and expert in psycholanalysis
has disappeared.

They lost all trace of her
in the mirrors
and swords act.
They called her three times,
they tapped the box
and in her place
things appeared
that not even the magician expected:
a lunar crater,
a bottle of water
and a hair dryer.

Señorita K.
magician's helper
suffered from depression
during those last days.

From what I could read
in her diary,
she had the courage to enumerate
a series of symptoms,
and then concluded
that they were only problems
of extinguished illusions.

Problems of illusions
where reality
was detached from her life
and it made her doubt
her own existence.

Problems of illusions
where all the dreams
were nightmares
about a series of monsters
that no legend
has been able to invent.

Problems of illusions
that made a martyr of her
where salvation
was a white death
in the form of floor tiles
and the smell of glycerine.

Señorita K.
is no longer with us,
we pray for her soul
in case God
can't take care of it,
in case she has to wait
in hell
for suicide to stop
being a crime.