
Medbh McGuckian and Ecofeminist Anxiety: “The Contingency of Befalling”¹

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Abstract. The present article analyses Medbh McGuckian’s “The Contingency of Befalling”, an unpublished poem dealing with present-day climate crisis from an ecofeminist stance. Arguably, the poet is part of the Northern Irish elegiac trend in dealing with issues of her country, but she departs from a male-dominated tradition and connects lament with ethical, political, national, ecological and women’s issues. This poem is related to those in her recent book *Marine Cloud Brightening* (2019), in which she included mournful poems for both her brother and other Irish poets who passed away in recent times, with special attention to Seamus Heaney. McGuckian’s vision of the situation of the earth and of those living in it is gloomy, and she connects it with hardship, should rulers’ policies remain unchanged.

Keywords. Medbh McGuckian, “The Contingency of Befalling”, Elegy, Poetry, Northern Ireland, Ecofeminism, Climate Crisis

Resumen. El presente artículo analiza el poema inédito de Medbh McGuckian “The Contingency of Befalling”, que aborda la actual crisis climática desde una posición ecofeminista. Podría decirse que la poeta forma parte de la tendencia elegíaca de Irlanda del Norte al tratar cuestiones de su país, pero se aparta de una tradición dominada por los hombres y conecta el lamento con cuestiones éticas, políticas, nacionales, ecológicas y relacionadas con las mujeres. Este poema está conectado con los de su reciente libro *Marine Cloud Brightening* (2019), en el que se incluyen poemas de duelo tanto por su hermano como por otros poetas irlandeses fallecidos recientemente, con especial atención a Seamus Heaney. La perspectiva de McGuckian sobre la situación de la tierra y de los que viven en ella es sombría y la vincula con las penurias, si las políticas de los gobernantes no cambian.

Palabras Clave. Medbh McGuckian, “The Contingency of Befalling”, elegía, poesía, Irlanda del Norte, ecofeminismo, crisis climática

The relationship between women and nature has been established by the Irish poet Medbh McGuckian from the beginning of her career. It is particularly focused on the representation of women as creators of life. This is a pervasive aspect in her poetry from her early books onwards such as *The Flower Master* (1980), *Venus and the Rain* (1984) or *On Ballycastle Beach* (1988). Other characteristic features of this poet are her interest in the history of Ireland and in religion as shown in *Shelmalier* (1998) and *Blaris Moor* (2015), on the one hand, and *The Book of the Angel* (2004), on the other. In recent poems, such as “Chalice Orchard” or “The Feather Shop” she expresses an anxiety regarding the break of the link between women and nature due to the fact that humans are not respecting natural life and, as a consequence, have provoked a climate crisis (Lorenzo-Modia, “A ollada empática” and “Medbh McGuckian and Eco-feminism(s)”).

In the year of the commemoration of her 70th anniversary Medbh McGuckian is widely acclaimed as one of the most prominent contemporary poets in Ireland, and her intertextual and inter-artistic references have been generally noted (Alcobia-Murphy, Flynn, Faragó, and Carvalho Homem). While the topics of her poetry have evolved from family life and nature to a general glance at the history of Ireland and to its literary relationship with other cultures in the world, lately she has paid special attention to death and its connection with the climate crisis and to the situation of Ulster. Although James Elroy does not deal specifically with Medbh McGuckian, he conceptualises Northern Ireland as “the double global south” in an illuminating approach to ecocriticism (151-160), since this is a marginal territory both in Ireland and in the United Kingdom, which hold the centrality of their respective states. Elroy states that Northern Irish poets use a poetics of obliquity (156), by means of which – when dealing with nature in their poems – they refer to a place with “limited means and neglected holdings” (157).

In 2018 McGuckian published *Love, the Magician*, in which she is interested in animals, including human animals, thus indicating how human beings should look back to nature. Caitríona O’Reilly defines this book in the following terms:

Medbh McGuckian’s has always been an elusive, continually self-masking aesthetic ... the strength of her poetry lies in her capacity for phrase-making, her prosody has the ring of a complete conviction even when it deals in gorgeous abstraction ... her historical ventriloquism is simply another layer in the multi-layered, self-conscious, and simmeringly symphonic work.

One of these layers of meaning is the use of citations by borrowing excerpts from many different sources. This is a fully conscious procedure since she feels that she is speaking in a borrowed language, as made explicit in line 25 of the poem “The Marcella Quilt”: “we are what we borrow” (Lorenzo-Modia, “On Not Leaving” 150). In Ireland most speakers use the English tongue due to the historic destruction of their original, native language. Therefore, as a symbol of resistance for not having her own ‘voice’, she feels entitled to use that of others and puts it in the following way:

Because it’s an imposed language [English], you see, and although it’s my mother tongue and my own way of communicating, I’m fighting with it all the time. I mean even the words “Shakespeare” and “Wordsworth” – at some level I am rejecting them, at some level I’m saying get out of my country, or get out of my ... Get out of me. Get away, and give me these Ó Rathailles and all these people that I’ve no immediate intercourse with. (McGuckian & Ní Dhomhnaill, “Combrá” 605-606)

In this, McGuckian seems to echo the feeling expressed by Jacques Derrida in *The Monolingualism of the Other* in which he says “I have only one language and it is not mine”

(52). As a consequence, she feels that – in the same way that the Irish culture has been deprived of its wealth and language, and is condemned to historic silence – the world is nowadays being deprived of its natural balance due to the lack of care for the living beings in the planet. Therefore, as a poet she aspires, on the one hand, to translate English into Irish (Fadem 63), and to reconnect with the history of her country being herself the voice of the missing link in the chain; and, on the other, to be the spokesperson for the lack of future if her culture and the environment are destroyed.

The present article analyses Medbh McGuckian's "The Contingency of Befalling", an unpublished poem that deals with the present-day ecological crisis as seen by women.² Thence, the theoretical framework used for the analysis of the poem is intersectional and will describe the sources used by the poet, together with that of critical ecofeminism as presented by Val Plumwood, who coined the word, and by Greta Gaard in the monograph entitled *Critical Feminism*. The poem refers to the idea that human beings, due to industrialization, are using fossil raw materials to a point in which the extinction of our era is at stake, an era that has been named the geological epoch of the Anthropocene (Glotfelty xx), a term "invented by Eugene F. Stoermer and popularized by Paul Crutzen" (Gaard 91). This approach is directly connected to "human politics" and the marginal situation of women (Gaard 147), and particularly so in Northern Ireland since they generally feel politically and economically abandoned both by the Republic and by the metropolis, particularly in the Brexit period. The Anthropocene viewpoint is also related to the means of production and the decline of their main industries due to toxic waste and to their lack of sovereignty. Arguably, in a posthumanist age, attention should be paid to the effects of human actions, not only on our own health and on that of other species, but also on the planet itself.

The title of the poem, "The Contingency of Befalling", seems to call attention to the fact that our existence and daily lives are hazardous, but the whole poem contradicts the misguided idea that the climatic emergency may occur without human intervention. In fact, the inevitability of climate change is simply one of the possible readings of the poem title, since there is no unanimous consensus in the perception of the meaning of the word "contingency". While both the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Concise OED* do not give the word any negative nuance or any feature of inevitability (e. g. *Concise OED*: "A future event or circumstance which is possible but cannot be predicted with certainty"), both the *Merriam-Webster* and the *Cambridge Dictionary* indicate that it refers to something undesirable and even quite possible: "Something that *might possibly happen* in the future, usually causing *problems* or making future arrangements necessary" (*Cambridge*), "An event (such as an *emergency*) that may but is not certain to occur" (*Merriam*) (emphasis added). In fact, my contention is that the purpose of the whole composition is to disambiguate the meaning of the word contingency concerning the climate crisis and to raise consciousness regarding our decisive role in what occurs in the world in terms of preserving and/or destroying the planet.

As mentioned above, the poetic praxis of Medbh McGuckian is that of using a collage of phrases and expressions taken from various sources, quite often paradoxical, that give her compositions a complex hypertextual postmodern flavour. In accordance with this technique the opening line of the poem reminds us that we are faced with the "galloping melt" of the Arctic (and Antarctic) glaciers, which were acting as sanctuaries in the past, but nowadays – due to global warming – become lethal for the world. The expression "galloping melt" may have been taken from an article entitled "Arctic Glacier's Galloping Melt Baffles Scientists" (Kirby). The piece deals with the effects of the current rise in sea levels, which will affect all living beings, since floating icebergs can be both physically dangerous for navigation and, at the same time, an open deposit of illnesses considered extinguished that would affect humankind again. In this way the ice in the earth, our former sanctuaries or reservoirs of life, now become lethal, as can be read in the paradoxical phrase of line 1: "In the galloping melt of

the lethal church". The phrase "lethal church" suggests a connection with a poem by William Blake entitled "I Saw a Chapel All of Gold". In it there is a mixture of gold and the venom of a serpent and, as a consequence, the church may become lethal due to poison. It must be noted that this image would be highly shocking for McGuckian, who – as an Irish Catholic – gives a very positive meaning to the word church and describes it as follows: "It is more a liberating thing to me because for us the Church was only sanctuary, I felt mothered, mothered. It was always for a reason that it was a place of refuge" (Lorenzo-Modia, "An Interview with Medbh McGuckian" 43). She suggests that, as a poet, she feels like a priest and she connects it with Keats: "I always had a terrible awe of priests, that they were sort of sacred and special, and I always thought of the poet as a priest because of Keats. ... I had a strong relationship with Keats. I liked him because he was small and dainty and had died young. When you say you read Keats, I mean I sort of lived Keats. ... I was the Ancient Mariner. I felt extremely on top of everything." (McGuckian & Ní Dhomhnaill, "Combrá" 606-609). Thus, the convergence among McGuckian and most romantic poets is clear, even if she may reject them somewhat, only because they belong to an imposed culture. As she states, she used motifs from these British writers, and even from the French Romantic poet Alphonse de Lamartine (Lorenzo-Modia, "Invalids" 25).

Even our safer and distant places, such as glaciers, are being destroyed, and the poem gives the impression that there is no remedy for it. This might refer to Seamus Heaney's "North", where there is another allusion to Borealism. However, in line two of "The Contingency of Befalling", McGuckian mentions the position of a different intellectual, Chris D. Thomas, who argues that nature is answering back, and recovering from aggressions. That is the reason why plants have evolved in many different ways in order to adapt themselves to the various environments in which they lived: "there are eighty species of lupin" (l. 2), referring to the nuts that came from Northern America to the Andean mountain range, where these seeds "evolved in the Andes in the last one and a half million years" (Thomas 248). These ornamental flowering plants belonging to the legume family have some varieties of edible seeds, although others can be toxic. Nevertheless, the very title of Thomas' essay, *Inheritors of the Earth: How Nature Is Thriving in an Age of Extinction* (2017), is contradictory and indicates that, even if the earth tries to defend itself, we are in an age of annihilation, that is, the Age of the Anthropocene, a period considered as starting around the year 1800 in which human beings as a whole are not taking care of the earth and they are producing a massive harmful impact on the ecosystem.

In the first line of the poem we have a suggestion of being in a church, in which candles are usually lighted as offerings to saints in order to heal human illnesses and anxieties. The church seems to have an orchard and, instead of having plants or trees, is "a grove of candles" (l. 3), which may be equated both to trees on fire, due to the lack of care for nature, and to climate change. However, there are always individual, isolated attitudes of people who may decide to plant anew in the orchard: "Mary plants" (l. 3), even to forget about what is really occurring on earth. This may refer, firstly, to an ordinary woman taking care of her orchard in an individual activist action or, secondly, to a woman (even the Virgin Mary, connecting it to the church in line one) standing for all women. Nevertheless, and thirdly, this excerpt may be either a sentence or a phrase, or both, in a polysemic poem, i.e., it may also refer to plants or herbs cultivated in medieval Marian special orchards in order to venerate the mother of Jesus, being "Mary" in adjectival function to the noun "plants". In the Middle Ages there were many lilies and bluebells that had designations including the name of Our Lady, only remaining in present-day English 'rosemary' and 'Marigold'. Therefore, "Mary plants" may also allude to the herbs and plants grown in honour of the Virgin Mary. Fourthly, this expression may also refer to the plant of cannabis, also known as Mary, or Mary Jane. As is well known, these plants have been grown from Antiquity in many places in the world, particularly in Europe and Asia,

although since the discovery of America they have also been cultivated in that continent. These floras may be used as smoking recreational drugs in order to escape from a disagreeable reality. Their smell and effects can be easily recognized and affect the behaviour and conscience of consumers. In developed countries they were popularized in the 1960s, particularly among members of the hippie countercultural movement. This interpretation may be supported by the inclusion of the term “psychedelic” (l. 8), suggesting an escapist behaviour of human beings. Within this interpretation of the term “Mary”, this plant is also used for therapeutic purposes, in cases of cancer pain, which is referred to in the poem in line 21, suggesting women’s lymphatic illness: “t-celled wombs”.

This polyphony of voices extant in McGuckian’s poems is completed on this occasion with a fresco of still life and smells, which are in operation at least in the first three stanzas

their *perfume* becomes a ghost itself,
unrewindable as a woman’s sense of *smell*.

The formerly esteemed *fragrances*
of nature’s good intentions photographed
lips in that psychedelic year, *scented*
the signature, that fallen god of our *senses*.

I obey the freshness of water, *perfume*’s. (emphasis added) (ll. 2-10)

Still, the scents of these plants are not what they used to be, and it seems that they will never have the perfumes that women would smell in the past. This is represented in the appearance of a reference to death that occurs early in the poem: “their perfume becomes a ghost of itself” (l. 4), which is connected with the powerful death reference in the first line: “lethal”. In the second stanza we have images of having lost our senses and being unable to perceive the agreeable scents that nature offers us. The poem contains, on the one hand, many metaphors of flora that appear in a positive light, for example: “perfume” (l. 10), and, on the other, many negative references that end up with a disheartening final line that includes a culture already dead: “a tongue now dust” (l. 26). In this atmosphere the good intentions of nature are not taken care of, although there were movements that advocated natural life, for instance the hippie movement of the 1960s, represented by “that psychedelic year” (l. 8). Members of this underground countercultural movement used different types of drugs, among them cannabis, mentioned above, but also other psychedelic drugs that alter the state of conscience. One of these drugs was synthesized by Humphry Fortescue Osmond and presented to the British Academy of Science in 1957. It was considered as a facilitator to open conscience and a manifestation of the soul. In fact, Aldous Huxley, influenced by this type of preparation, composed *The Doors of Perception* (1954) emulating the visionary poet William Blake. In the same way, McGuckian’s visionary poetry has been connected with the nocturnal side of speech (Fedem 49), in which ideas, that would be usually seen as *non sequitor*, or even impossible in a straightforward cause versus effect relationship during day time, serve well her more complex approach to verse, a sort of nocturnal language of dark, semi-impenetrable meaning.

The female poetic voice in the poem is thus devoted to self-escape dreams, in order to circumvent the female plight, although this proves somewhat impossible. In fact, she is represented as “subfeminine” (l. 12). This word seems to be directly connected to the image provided by Simone de Beauvoir in her essay *The Second Sex*, since “half of the population” – in Mary Wollstonecraft’s terms – are deemed secondary, and those perceived as subaltern may not be allowed to have a say in their lives, as Gayatri Spivak showed in “Can the Subaltern Speak?”. The subaltern situation of women may also be connected to female slavery, as shown

in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. There are some words connected to tasks usually assigned to females, such as doing the laundry and drying or bleaching out, "laundry drying on the outside of the room" (l. 13). On this occasion, the status quo concerning women is unchanged, and the result is the feminization of poverty, since women do not have full access to power or to the means of production. But at times the subaltern may act, even if they are not allowed to speak or, if they do speak, it is with a borrowed tongue or concepts. It seems that the poet may refer to the fertility deficit extant in Europe from the 1960s onwards. This is not necessarily connected with conscious neo-Malthusian theories concerning the limitation of children among the lower classes. On the contrary, although it may have the same effects, it seems to be disconnected from well-delineated theories and be the consequence of individual decisions taken by women and families to such an extent that it has been labelled as a uterus strike (Colney) or baby strike. It has become a demographic problem in Western countries, even labelled demographic suicide, according to whistleblowers such as the Robert Schuman Foundation Report. Demography experts have also dealt with it extensively (Pritchett and Viarengo), but it seems that – as with the climatic emergency – society is not paying attention to this demographic winter. In McGuckian's poem this interpretation may be derived from the following lines: "Witches who don't have a library/ stole my symptoms, my monthsick/ hands in some pattern of dangerous prayer" (ll. 18-20), in which a female voice is deprived of her usual symptoms by a destructive woman, to whom all evil things are attributed.

However, angels – positive key figures in McGuckian's poetry since they are with us when needed – appear in this poem around the corpses of a dying figure in order to prepare the body "wrapped/ in stringy bark" (ll. 16-17), and the grave. Contrariwise, there are also harmful spirits, for instance witches, who are responsible for the lack of symptoms in a bad illness of the poetic voice. These negative spirits are more powerful than all the possible herbs that may be used to cure ailments (ll. 18-21). In these lines, belonging to the fifth stanza, there is a reference to an Anglo-Saxon book of medical prescriptions, known as Bald's *Leechbook* or *Medicinale Anglicum*, which is based on herbal remedies that seem to be useless for a serious illness. In the final stanza it seems that the witches have been equated to the Fates or Moirai, who are not only spinning the destinies of us all but also deciding the future of the earth. "They wrap this earth in black wool" (l. 22) is being used for that purpose, and it anticipates a negative ending for flora and fauna: "tree and branch breakage, / the sympathy of silk" (ll. 24-25), as well as for human beings: "reborn into the world with a tongue now dust" (l. 26). In line 24 the poet probably refers to an essay published in 2017 by Robert Jay Lifton, entitled *The Climate Swerve: Reflections on Mind, Hope, and Survival*, in which the author suggests that an abrupt change of direction concerning the climate problem is mandatory if we intend to avoid the bad presages announced by scientists. The last line of the poem seems to be connected to the book of *Genesis* that includes "For dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3. 19). A possible interpretation is that not only our existence and the planet but also the poem will become simply dust, and art will be useless since human beings are not listening either to the earth or to their bards. The interpretation of the last line is already announced in the first stanza with the presence of the word "lethal" (l. 1), as it was in the Biblical book of the origin of our civilization, *Genesis*, something which should have been known to human animals. It seems that bad or fallen (female) angels are the ones who are now "wrap[ping] this earth in black wool" (l. 22).

In tune with this idea of death is her last book, *Marine Cloud Brightening* (2019). It follows her usual motif of connecting family life and poetry, always imbedded in McGuckian's texts. This book is itself an elegy for the author's younger brother and for fellow Irish poets, among them David Hammond (1928-2008), Dennis O'Driscoll (1954-2012), Bob [Robert Anthony] Welch (1947-2013), Seamus Heaney (1939-2015), and probably John Montague (1929-2016) and Ciaran Carson (1948-2019). McGuckian has written elegies in the past for various purposes. In a classical manner, she uses them to lament, praise and/or console. In this

she is connected not only with the general tradition of the classical and romantic elegies, but also with the Irish poetical mourning, particularly in the North. Many other Irish poets such as Michael Longley, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Paul Muldoon, Eavan Boland, Paula Meehan, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, and Ciaran Carson have dealt with the genre. In a study on Northern Irish elegy Naomi Marklew states that while being “a part of a wider elegiac trend” (15), McGuckian departs from a male-dominated tradition and connects funeral songs with women. According to Jahan Ramazani, elegies “were a central genre in Heaney’s poetic repertoire” (337), and the same occurs with Medbh McGuckian. In that she is also following the Irish tradition present in texts by Maria Edgeworth and James Joyce.

One might remember McGuckian’s poem entitled “Elegy for an Irish Speaker” that appeared in *Captain Lavender* in 1994 (42-43), in which she reveres her father, and at the same time all the Irish speakers who died and who have lost their culture and language. *The High Caul Cap* is again a full elegy for her mother and for all those who lost their voice, even physically, due to the historical suffering of the people of Ireland and to the violence during the Troubles. In 2016, on the first anniversary of the death of Seamus Heaney, she was invited to address the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. On that occasion, she published several poems in memory of this Irish Nobel laureate (McGuckian, *Remembering Seamus Heaney*), and fourteen of them appear in her recent *Marine Cloud Brightening*. In this book McGuckian’s elegies are sad but seminal, and insist on the language spoken by the recently deceased poet in “The O’heighnaigh”. In it Heaney is equated to the salt of the earth as it appears in the Sermon on the Mount on morality and discipleship by Jesus to his followers (*Matthew* 5. 13-16). The opening lines are as follows: “Salt is invisible, the true opposite of decay, / white gold for de-icing roads,” and continues with some verses on the language used by the author of *North*:

He spent a spell learning English,
as long again without an ounce of sense,
but that’s enough about that.
Thinking in Irish, while writing the story
in English, he could say things without
telling them, in the fossilized treaty
language, emotionally enmeshed (“The O’heighnaigh” ll. 25-31)

It is noteworthy that the poem includes also a text in the Irish language: “i láthair Dé go rabhad ag rince” (l. 49) [in the presence of God that we were dancing], in order to be closer to the tongue spoken in the island. This verse connects us to the blissful spirit of the Irish wakes as healing activities for the living that even God would understand and accept, and the final line is a desire that the writer of *Death of a Naturalist* may also present his works and celebrate before God: “in the presence of God may he reel” (l. 50).

In another poem to the memory of Heaney, “The By-Catch”, McGuckian elaborates again on the idea that their voices are not their own, that they are “living translated lives” (l. 51). She is sometimes incredulous of the recent passing of her friend, a painful loss equated to a climate crisis, to a year without summer, as in the poem “Three Bibles of Light”: “I keep forgetting he’s dead/ for a millisecond at a time,/ mad ghost train out of control/ to look upon the dewy lotus banks/ of Acheron. Year without summer” (41). She also alludes to Heaney as a representative of the soul of a divided country as in “Gold Toad”: “The soul of half of the country/ for more than half of a century”. The memory of the poet is seen now as buried in “The Cemetery for the Ashes of Thought”, which is the title of another elegy for the dead poet. However, in McGuckian’s “Noah’s Ark for Seeds”, Heaney’s work is ground-breaking in that the memory of the poet as a bard for the country reminds us that there is a Noah’s Ark, with new seeds with his words and those of “one of the poems thrown into his grave” (l. 26), which

may flourish in the future. As described by Iain Twiddy in *Pastoral Elegy in Contemporary British and Irish Poetry*, the concerns examined by contemporary pastoral elegists are “aesthetic, ethical, political, national and ecological” (13).

As a conclusion, in Medbh McGuckian’s “The Contingency of Befalling” we are also before another pastoral elegy for both women and the planet, who are ill and who –despite having opportunities of being healed – are ultimately conducted to destruction and death. In fact, it can be read as an ecofeminist warning to those who deny that our physical future depends on both our present actions and omissions. The poem may have two readings in that the title of the poem “The Contingency of Befalling” may be ambiguous. However, the final lines indicate that we are bringing about death for ourselves, and in recent years we are accelerating the death of many other living beings (exemplified by silk worms in line 25). The last line of the poem is also connected to the death of the Irish language: “tree and branch breakage, / the sympathy of silk, her valley finally/ reborn into the world with a tongue now dust” (ll. 24-26). Following Twiddy, McGuckian is thus in tune with contemporary elegists in that she is writing from a standpoint that combines ethical, political, national and ecological issues in an aesthetic composition. Her approach to death includes not only that of family and friends but also of bards and cultural tradition and, ultimately, that of the planet itself.

Notes

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Appendix

“The Contingency of Befalling”

In the galloping melt of the lethal church
 there are eighty species of lupin,
 a grove of candles, Mary plants.
 their perfume becomes a ghost of itself,
 unrewindable as a woman’s sense of smell.

The formerly esteemed fragrances
 of nature’s good intentions photographed
 lips in that psychedelic year, scented
 the signature, the fallen god of our senses.

I obey the freshness of water, perfume's
ally, in my self-scape dream,
as the global bleaches out the subfeminine,
laundry drying on the outside of the room.

It is the thin character of angels,
skimmingly light, to soak graves
with spirit steps, the body wrapped
in stringy bark, fever car just departed.

Witches who don't have a library
stole my symptoms, my monthsick
hands in some pattern of dangerous prayer,
their t-celled wombs wider than leechbook leaves.

They wrap this earth in black wool
and sell it, spine like a railway,
tree and branch breakage,
the sympathy of silk, her valley finally
reborn into the world with a tongue now dust.

“La contingencia del acontecer”

Al derretirse al galope la iglesia letal
Hay ochenta especies de altramuces,
Un huerto de velas, las plantas de María.
Su perfume se convierte en un fantasma de sí mismo,
Irrebobinable como el sentido del olfato de una mujer.

Las fragancias antes estimadas
De las buenas intenciones de la naturaleza retrataban
Labios en aquel año sicodélico, perfumada
La firma, el dios caído de nuestros sentidos.

Obedezco a la frescura del agua, del perfume
Aliada, en mi sueño de autoescape,
Como lo global blanquea lo subfemenino,
La colada secando en la parte exterior de la habitación.

Es el carácter fino de los ángeles,
Superficialmente ligero, para absorber de las tumbas
Con pasos de espíritu, el cuerpo amortajado
Con corteza fibrosa, el coche de la fiebre acaba de partir.

Las brujas que no tienen biblioteca
Robaron mis síntomas, mi regla
presenta una cadencia de rezo peligroso,
Sus matrices de células T más grandes que las hojas del libro de las sanguijuelas.

Envuelven esta tierra en lana negra
Y la venden, con la espina vertebral como la de un ferrocarril,
Rotura de árboles y ramas,
La sintonía de la seda, su valle finalmente
Renacido al mundo con una lengua ahora de polvo.

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