

1. **Thaís Espailat**, “Invadirnos sería perder el tiempo”

No creo que los extraterrestres se parezcan a
mis vecinos
o a los tuyos,
que tengan cabeza gigante,
piel morada,
ojos en la nuca.

Seguro se parecen más
a las medusas invisibles,
al polvo que flota en la luz,
a las manchas de aceite.

Y no nos hablan porque somos aburridos.

Seguimos
caminando,
corriendo,
volando en círculos
y paralelogramos.
Y ellos existen en las grietas de los relojes,
las venas de los planetas que le huyen a los
telescopios.

O quizás sepan tanto que ya ni hablan,
y sólo mueren lento y sin sentirlo
o sintiéndolo tanto,
en camas que viajan entre nuestros satélites
y salen en algunas fotos
sacándonos sus mil lenguas,
con baba que despierta un volcán a los lejos.

Los extraterrestres seguro no escriben poesía,
ni hacen películas,
ni cocinan en televisión,
pero estoy casi segura de que tienen internet
y usan Tor para espiarnos.
Ahí es cuando se dan cuenta
de que no valemos la pena,
y nos dejan con nuestras drogas
y nuestro porno
y se alejan con sus tentáculos
o sus cosas sin nombre todavía,
temblando de lo estúpidos
que hemos sido siempre

mientras apagan la regleta
y de este lado todo se vuelve
color morgue,
fosa común,
suela de bota.

Los niños miran al cielo
y se dan cuenta
de que ya no hay más deseos.
Los astronautas se quitan sus cascos en
protesta,
no llegaron a la NASA mordiendo la capa de
ozono
para ser mineros.

La gente común en los supermercados y las
oficinas rodando y tecleando
con latas de garbanzo y plantas de plástico
como último paisaje,
gritan uno encima de otro, piden ayuda,
ayuda-por-favor-botella-vino-roto-jefe-
renuncio-mamá-te-odio

Y los extraterrestres cada vez más lejos
y más grandes
y más pequeños
y más con formas ajenas,
sus alas de fuego,
sus dientes de nitrógeno,
sus partes que no sé armar,
ahogándose
o respirando
o abriéndose
entre la basura
y la escarcha,
sonriéndole a los millones de bebés tragones
que han parido las estrellas muertas.

2. **Yaissa Jiménez**, “Puerto de la muerte”

Puerto de la muerte,
así bautizarán a Sansoucí a partir del día cero.
Cuando el tiempo se paralice,
de las lágrimas de Yemayá
nacerá un hechizo aterrador.
Del fondo de la mar
saldrán flotando los cuerpos,
todas las hijas de la luna
volverán a reclamar justicia,
flotarán en las aguas
y encallarán directo en el ferry
y en los pesqueros.
Que la cúpula de turistas sea testigo,
que se espanten, que vomiten,
que se les encoja el alma.
Que este mar de cuerpos muertos
avise que en la isla encantada
la inquisición no ha terminado,
que aquí las brujas aún son asesinadas.

3. Ann-Margaret Lim, “On Reading Thistlewood’s Diary”

The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears.

— Frederick Douglass

III

Dear Phibbah,

Your name half-rhymes with Syvah –
the dance move that’s in.
So when I think of you, I say,
Syvah, syvah, syvah, like in the song,
and you know, Phibbah, it’s not a bad comparison,
for when women syvah, they squat for takeoff,
spread wings and fly.

When they syvah, Phibbah,
their feet remember
the wheels and turns you did
at fellow slaves’ wakes,
singing, *When I die hallelujah bye, bye*
I’ll fly away.

And the takeoff,
when the body comes fully into play,
is the throwing off of shackles,
and I sing: *Syvah, syvah, syvah*,
and think of you, Phibbah,
in miserable slavery.

How you suffered through each infection
Thistlewood gave you
as he cummed every skirt it crossed his mind to fuck;
how you must have wailed when his son –
your mulatto child died.
This wasn’t in the diary. He kept it ‘dignified’.
And as the women release in
syvah, syvah, syvah,
their hands like albatross’ wings,
I think: *Phibbah, in what moment*
did you hatch your freedom plan
on this confounded man?

4. **Canisia Lubrin**, “Turn Right at the Darkness”

after Afua Cooper

Not a single cloud at summer’s centre,
So vapours rise having run out of country,
of pavement to disappear in. Here,
this beginning season of straw hats: the basic bronze
of semi-nude tourists was like the dead, awaken

to walk through the wooden city blocks.
Montreal – what have you begun here?
Are these your Nouvelle-France remains
of an aboriginal dark? The place of here
that had died unfolding in creek, wood, totem?

But me. I am here for Marie-Joseph Angélique,
whose story pains still the boundaries of Old Montreal.
Not yet canonized with folk songs, with metonymy
of air tornado’d in the throat: hear me full of the tragedy of her life,
the black rubber keeping silent the exploding atoms in the power lines

that here still bespeaks the province. What still forms
the northern edge of the St. Lawrence? Holy Notre-Dame
singled in the high-priced art. Rue Berri burning what axis
levels through Saint-Laurent. Saint-Paul, how you bow
even lower at the parallel run of Notre-Dame.
None of you
ever touching.

But what brave cold scars the maker of repair I seek,
whether witness or destroyer in the tested language
of sunlight forming in the permalink of the savage child,
the shaman’s shaman yet, the brass of forgetting still here speaks:
 unbury your vex, oh, glossed maple flame
 in the amphetamine glass, the jaded plane,
 mimic of Oort cloud, still an interstellar show
of how radical the water under pressure.

Like I seek Angélique, amorphous, disguised,
quantum of that dead man’s cool,
in the rogue geometries of a dumb gallows
talking plain the danger as though it were a simple dip
on a map. A place to turn right
at the darkness
between here and the master’s room.

5. **Jennifer Rahim**, "Return of the Douen"

"You remembered!
I didn't think..."

(I never forget a face.)

"A lot has happened
since I last saw you.
You have been hiding,
haven't you?
What's with the hat?"

(Dew addles the brain)

"Now that I see you..."

(Padon me?)

"You look well
only
you have greyed
like your father."

(Oh!)

"No children I suppose."

(Just words.)

"Sure no children?
Your ...err breasts
are a lot fuller
than I remember."

(I nourish them there.)

"So you're not married.
Still in the country?
Too much bush for me.
Is there electricity?"

(We have grown.)

"I can't stand the darkness.
So what you've been up to?"

Still writing poems?
Are they accepted?"

(You mean blessed?)

"I mean
are they any good."

(They die too quickly
of neglect.)

"You haven't said a word.
Still shy I suppose.
Wait a minute!
When did we move
What happened to your feet? They're on all wrong!
What is this country? Changed?
Everything!"

Take it easy my friend.
Welcome to poetry.

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