

Raúl Zurita

‘Green Areas’ From *Purgatory*

Translated by William Rowe

Green Areas

NOT THE HUGE REPOSE OF THE COW
underneath the stars its head forages upon the field
its tail whistles in the air its mooing
does not cover the pampas of its silence

Have they seen those infinite pastures stretching out?

- I. Have they seen those infinite pastures stretching out
where the cows escaping disappear
gathered weightless in front of them?
- II. There are no Sundays for the cow:
mooing it wakes up in an empty space
slobbering fat on those imaginary pastures

Understand the funereal patches on the cow
the cowherds
cry in front of those niches

- I. This cow is an insoluble paradox
 it spends the night under the stars
 but it feeds on logos
 and its finite patches are symbols
- II. This other one hates colours:
 it went to feed for a time
 where the only colour that exists is black

Now the cowherds do not know what to do with that cow
because its patches are nothing other
than the shadow of its own pursuers

Had you seen them feeding on the radiant λογος

- I. Some cows got lost in logic
- II. Others fled into a subspace
 where only biologies exist
- III. Those others finally have been wandering
 for around a million years
 but can never be seen by their cowherds
 as they live in non-euclidean geometries

Come on the incredible pursuit of the cow
Death
does not disturb its gaze

- I. Its patches finally
get lost in other worlds
- II. This cow moos but it will die and its mooing will be
'Eli Eli / lamma sabacthani' for the
cowherd to give it a spearing in the side and that
spear reach the beyond
- III. Did you know that the patches on those cows will be
empty and that the cowherds will then be in the other
world seers lassoing in those cursed holes?

Did you know anything about the ruled green areas?

Did you know anything about the green areas ruled by the cowherds and the non-ruled white areas that the cows as they flee leave compact closed behind them?

- I. That ruled green area intersects with the first non-ruled white area
- II. This crossing of green and white areas intersects with the second non-ruled white area
- III. The ruled green areas and the white non-ruled areas keep intersecting until the non-ruled white areas come to an end

Did you know that with no areas left to intersect all the symbols start to cross each other and that you are now the white area that the fleeing cows leave to the mercy of the area of the beyond you green ruled by the same mad cowboys?

Who would give anything for those stained auras?

Who would give anything for those stained auras that the
cows mooing leave free in the white non-
ruled spaces of the death of their pursuers?

- I. The flight of those cows is inside the non-ruled death of
 the cowherd That's why they don't moo and are symbolic
- II. Illuminated in the death of their pursuers
 Gathering symbols
- III. Coming back from those white ungoverned spaces
 across the white spaces of your death
 who are mad inside out in front of the cows

Would you give anything for those blue auras that the cows
mooing leave free closed and where you are in
your own beyond dead imaginary returning from
those persecutions?

EPILOGUE

Today we lasso that imaginary animal
that was running around in the colour white

Purgatory (Purgatorio) is Raúl Zurita's first book. It was published in 1979, during the Pinochet dictatorship. There have been two complete translations into English, the first, by Jeremy Jacobson, published by Latin American Literary Review Press in 1985 and now out of print. The second and superior one was translated by Anna Deeny and published by the University of California Press in 2009.

The section titled 'Green areas' (Áreas verdes) is of crucial importance to the whole work. It combines topological mathematics with a suspension of the symbolic and via that stance presents space as the real which politics seeks to colonise and therefore as a resource for resistance. The present translation differs from Anna Deeny's in that it seeks to be more responsive to the mathematical rigour of Zurita's text and also to bring into English the embeddedness of the Spanish in speech.