

RINCÓN DE HAIKUS: AN ITALIAN TRANSLATION OF
MARIO BENEDETTI'S 224 HAIKUS

by

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This thesis is an Italian translation of the full collection of haikus composed in Spanish by the late Uruguayan author Mario Benedetti (1920-2009) originally published in January 1999 in Madrid. The collection is one of Benedetti's least known works, and exhibits in a unique fashion his satirical views on society as a whole during the 20th century. Benedetti used traditional methods, of three phrases with juxtaposing imagery generally relating to nature, to make a contemporary collection of haikus. I have introduced this translation with an English introduction explaining the importance of Benedetti and these haikus, a detailed explanation of chosen poems and their relation to traditional haiku overarching themes, and lastly my translation method.

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Table of Contents

Preface	1
Introduction	5
Traditional Haikus in a Modern World	7
Importance of the Haikus	11
My Enjoyment	17
Translation Method	20
Translation	26
Bibliography	54

Preface

When thinking about my thesis and what exactly I wanted to do, I thought back to my senior year in high school and the first time I came into contact with the field of translation. I had been studying Spanish for five years and Latin for two before having the opportunity to delve into translation. Even before my first contact with translation, I already had a passion for the study of languages after beginning the process of learning my second foreign language. As a sophomore in high school I decided to start taking Latin to further my vocabulary skills in preparation for the SAT, but I actually gained much more. I had been studying Spanish for three years at this time, but due to the combination of an adolescent mind, and subpar teachers, I never thought of Spanish as more than just a school requirement. Learning Latin allowed me to see the beauty in studying foreign languages as more than just a form of communication, but as a path to cultural enlightenment. This established my passion for the field that eventually became my college career.

The first, and main work I translated before beginning this thesis process was the *Aeneid* by Virgil. While translating the *Aeneid* I realized that studying a language not only allows you to fully connect with people from around the world, but also strengthens one's understanding of a completely different culture. Being able to understand the original Latin text of the *Aeneid* allowed further insight into epic. What I learned over the course of my translation studies is that meaning exceeds story. The *Aeneid* is a great example of a text that tells a story while encapsulating the religious beliefs and history of the society. Moreover, Virgil's role in composing the *Aeneid* is central to understanding it. The issue with the *Aeneid* is the importance of the specific

construction of the original text. Virgil was very meticulous with his word order in Latin. He was able to reorder the sentences due to the syntactic freedom of this declined language in order to create imagery with the word placement. For example, when two of the main characters become surrounded by a cloud, he is able to put the characters' names between the words "in" and "cloud" reading 'in Aeneas Dido cloud' which visually shows they are within the cloud.¹ The meaning of the text can be translated to all languages, but the visual representation and syntax², cannot. He also used very specific vocabulary for which most other languages do not have an equivalent. Thus I truly believe the only way to really be able to appreciate the greatness of the work and feel invested in the text is to read it in the original language.

Thinking back on this process I wanted to ensure that whichever work I chose to translate, the original meaning and power could be expressed in the foreign language. I also wanted to choose a piece that is more than an artistic statement, but encompasses a society, describes a culture, and explains a moment in history. When I came across *Rincón de Haikus* by Mario Benedetti I was immediately intrigued. His collection of 224 haikus not only satirically sheds light on hard subjects, but it delves into the issues South America, and the world were facing as of the twentieth century. By fully studying his haikus one learns not only about Benedetti's life, but Uruguayan culture and the endurance required for society in the prior century.

¹ Virgil, and J.W. Mackail. "Book IV," in *The Aeneid*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1930. 131-254. Print.

² Syntax: arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences
"Syntax," In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2016.
<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us> (accessed May 1, 2016).

Benedetti's Spanish poems and my own native language of English got me thinking about how to translate the poems to English. Again I came across a similar issue that I had had four years ago. Since English and Spanish aren't of the same root language, the poems did not have the same cadence. I also realized many of the words didn't have an English cognate.³ Since I was invested in the haikus I did not want to give up hope. I started researching Benedetti to see if he had any other similar works that might be better translated. I then found out about his Italian descent and flirted with the idea of translating the haikus to Italian. Although I knew Italian would have its own set of obstacles I was confident that the similar root language would allow for a more faithful translation with better parallels between the two.

The last and possibly most important factor that went into my decision for translating *Rincón de Haikus*, not into English but into Italian, was the popularity of the collection as a whole. Mario Benedetti is a well-regarded author amongst the Spanish speaking community and through the work of translation he is known world round. I needed to pick a work that was less well known to ensure that there were no other translations available in Italian.

My main goal in translating his collection is to permit another society to read and also enjoy his work without a language barrier recognizing, as I did with the *Aeneid*, that the cultural context underpins the translator's work. Although I am unsure how these poems slipped through the cracks, they seem to be one of his least studied

³ Cognate: words having the same linguistic derivation as another both stemming from the Latin etymology" "Cognate," In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2016. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us> (accessed May 1, 2016).

and therefore least known works. I hope to change this oversight through my work in translating the full collection of 224 haikus.

Introduction

The Author Behind the Haikus

Mario Benedetti began his writing career heavily influenced by Uruguayan and Argentinian politics⁴. Born in Paso de los Toros, Uruguay in 1920 to Brenno Benedetti, of Italian descent, and Matilde Farrugia he began his schooling in Montevideo and considers this city to be his hometown⁵. He was well educated learning German alongside Spanish in his elementary school, but he never completed high school and moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1938 at the age of seventeen. He remained in Buenos Aires for three years where he met and later married his wife Luz López Alegre. He had many jobs throughout his youth, but continuously trained, mostly on his own, to be a writer until he became a member of Generación del 45 (Generation of 45).⁶ This movement had a notable influence in the cultural life of Uruguay and surrounding areas through their literary accomplishments. This group began because there was an underwhelming amount of professional writers at this time. They would edit their own work, and meet frequently to discuss each other's art. Due to the dictatorship and struggling economy in Uruguay, most writers' work criticized the current political and social situation. At this time Benedetti wrote in the newspaper *Marcha* starting in 1945

⁴ Copérnico, Nicolás. "Mario Benedetti", *Biografías y Vidas*.

<http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/b/benedetti.htm> (accessed May 9, 2016).

⁵ Rother, Larry. "Mario Benedetti, Writer Revered in Latin America, Dies at 88." *New York Times*. N.p., 19 May 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/20/arts/20benedetti.html?_r=0. (accessed April 25, 2016).

⁶ Blanco, Elvira. "Los Fragmentos del 45 Uruguayo," *SciELO.br*.

http://www.proceedings.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=MSC0000000012002000300018&script=sci_arttext (accessed May 10, 2016).

until the military government shut down the newspaper in 1973⁷. Benedetti moved back to Buenos Aires in exile from Uruguay under the rule of Juan María Bordaberry. He eventually made his way to Madrid, Spain, while his wife stayed in Montevideo.⁸

In 1983 when Uruguay restored its democracy, he returned to Montevideo, but kept his house in Madrid and frequently travelled between the two cities. Benedetti had difficulties adjusting to each move (Madrid, and then his return to Montevideo) stating that “once you're an exile, you're always an exile because during your time away, obviously you start up a life elsewhere and make close friendships, and then those ties are severed when one returns”.⁹ His haikus reflect his profound realizations of humanity stemming from his time spent in multiple societies. Before his exile, Benedetti’s writings were mostly political and controversial specifically with his work in *Marcha*. After his return he still critiqued society, but was “less political, more existential, in keeping with a growing awareness of [his] mortality”¹⁰. Benedetti said this in reference to his upcoming works to be published in 1998. He continued these ideals of tamer criticism and instead focused on “the small tragedies and ironies that define quotidian life in the city” throughout the rest of his work until his death in 2009 three years after his wife’s passing.¹¹

⁷ Blanco “Los fragmentos del 45 uruguayo”.

⁸ Bach, Caleb. "Urban Chronicler with a Poetic Sting." *Americas*, Aug. 1998: 38. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 11 May 2016.

⁹ Bach “Urban Chronicler with a Poetic Sting” 38.

¹⁰ Bach “Urban Chronicler with a Poetic Sting” 38.

¹¹ Bach “Urban Chronicler with a Poetic Sting” 38.

Traditional Haikus in a Modern World

Rincón de Haikus published in 1999 is a collection of 224 ‘traditional’ haikus commentating on daily ponderings while using juxtaposition to show irony in everyday life o *vida cotidiana*. This collection is a great, yet rare, example of contemporary haikus written in non-Japanese that possess the themes that make up traditional haikus. The origination of the haiku came in the seventeenth century when Matsuo Basho and Ueshima Onitsura promoted the hokku, or first verse of a longer poem, renku, to stand-alone.¹² The hokku eventually became known, as it is today, as a haiku. This poem contains 17 syllables spread throughout three phrases in a pattern of 5-7-5. However, not all traditional haiku masters constrained themselves to this regulation of syllables in every poem and instead focused on the lesser known, but more important and principal theme amongst haikus; the juxtaposition of images. Steven Carter, a professor of Japanese literature explains the overall purpose of writing a hokku, or in today’s terms a haiku:

The most direct way to approach the matter is to say that the author of a first verse [hokku] was always presented with a very specific challenge: to compose a verse appropriate to an occasion and to do so in a way that always involved a seasonal reference expressed *as the treatment of an idea*.¹³ Most haikus concentrate on nature while comparing everyday objects. Although poets have drifted from the strict syllable rule, the theme of analyzing nature through juxtaposing two opposing objects has endured throughout the centuries.

The original and possibly most faithful haikus are in Japanese, but starting in the early nineteenth century this short poem spread west. Hendrick Doeff (1764-1837) was

¹² Carter, Steven D, *Haiku Before Haiku : From the Renga Masters to Basho*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011. 8-11. Print.

¹³ Carter, Steven D, *Haiku Before Haiku : From the Renga Masters to Basho*, 12-13.

the first man of non-Japanese descent to write a haiku.¹⁴ Due to western expansion it was increasingly popular to travel to the East and study the cultures, which led to Doeff's arrival in Japan. Born in Amsterdam, he sailed to Japan, and there while learning the language wrote a few haikus. Doeff, along with others, helped spread the haiku from the Japanese culture to other parts of the world. In the early twentieth century the popularity of haikus in other languages began.

It wasn't until these first non-Japanese poems were written that the idea of the haiku containing three lines became a 'rule'. In Japanese the poem was made up of one line with notations to represent when the next block of syllables would begin. The transition from one to three lines doesn't take away from the initial focus of a haiku, but permits Latin script languages to show the division of the three different phrases. Since Japanese is not an alphabet language, the other difference comes from the ideographs. Japanese ideographs, or kanji are actually adopted Chinese characters.¹⁵ Besides the change to an alphabet and three lines, according to many scholars, contemporary haikus written in Latin-script languages can be considered traditional, but many stray away from the themes and formats of the traditional haikus.

The reason many contemporary poems are considered to be modern haikus is not due to the syllable count, but in fact the separation from nature as a predominant theme. Since this drift is more common in non-Japanese haikus it is harder to encounter and therefore study traditional haikus for non-Japanese speaking people. Japanese is very different than many other languages so the translation process loses a lot of the

¹⁴ Baty, Thomas. "The Literary Introduction of Japan to Europe", vol 7 of *Monumenta Nipponica* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1951), 32-35.

¹⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*. "Kanji", "Japanese", "Chinese Characters".

original power and meaning. Thus when a writer creates traditional haikus in a non-Japanese language, it is important to make the work more widely accessible by removing the language barrier while still aiming at his audience's recognition of the haiku form and what it means.

In general, translations from one language to a similar foreign language maintain more of the original work. Therefore translating amongst languages with the same root like Romance languages or Germanic languages can be not only much easier because of etymology but also lead to an audience being able to more faithfully interpret the author's meaning. Translating the 224 traditional style haikus of Mario Benedetti from Spanish to Italian meets these criteria. The effort can help spread his work to other societies and continue audience's encounters with, and interest in traditional haikus as well as honor Benedetti's legacy while not changing and possibly losing the original.

Appeal to Nature

Allow me to introduce the concept of nature Benedetti uses in his haikus. The traditional theme of nature dominates his haikus, with many of them directly referring to nature, or natural elements. As Gabriel Rosenstock explained in his book *Haiku: The Gentle Art of Disappearing*, a "haiku is an ardent, inspired and inspiring engagement with everyday life, an intercourse with nature-centred events, mainly, events that are happening around us all of the time but which we perceive more keenly on the haiku path"¹⁶. Rosenstock, a Founding Associate of The Haiku Foundation encapsulates all that Benedetti achieved in his collection. The first instance of this begins in the first

¹⁶ Rosenstock Gabriel, *Haiku: The Gentle Art of Disappearing*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. 1. Print.

haiku of the collection and is within four of the first five haikus. Since the haikus are not titled and instead are numbered I will continue to refer to them by their number.

Haiku 1 uses one of the most popular natural elements referenced by poets, the sun. “Si en el crepúsculo/ el sol era memoria/ ya no me acuerdo”¹⁷ or in English ‘if in the twilight/ the sun was a memory/ I already do not remember’. Even though the sun has only recently set at this time of the night, Benedetti explains how he has already forgot about it. He uses the sunset, and the predetermined knowledge that the sun sets within a short couple of hours to describe how quickly one can forget. Benedetti only uses simple or common natural elements in his poetry to permit everyone to understand his references.

Haiku 5 is the best first instance of not only nature, but also the juxtaposition between two opposing images. Haiku 5 reads in Spanish “invierno invierno/ el invierno me gusta/ si hace calor”.¹⁸ This poem exemplifies the two main points to traditional haikus. The first and most obvious reason is the nature theme. This poem translates to, ‘winter winter/ the winter I like/ if it is warm’ being one of the four seasons, there is a clear connection to nature and similarly to the sun, poets *really* like to talk about the seasons. The other reason this is in the traditional style is that the first and last lines have a juxtaposition of two contradicting ideas. Winter is related to colder weather, so the first and last line referencing winter and warmth demonstrate this opposition. This contradiction generally happens between line one and three of each haiku to embellish the contrast which is also traditional in haikus.

¹⁷ Benedetti, Mario *Rincón de Haikus*. Madrid: Visor 2009. 1. Print.

¹⁸ Benedetti *Rincón de Haikus*, 5.

Another example of nature in his haikus is number 97. “onda per onda/ il mare sa tutto/ ma si dimentica”.¹⁹ This roughly translates to wave for wave/ the ocean knows everything/ but it forgets. The ocean imagery is a very strong nature element that reoccurs in many other of his haikus. This haiku also exemplifies the use of satire Benedetti employs. The juxtaposition between the ocean knowing all, in line two, but that it forgets in line three creates irony. This theme of forgetfulness haunts Benedetti’s work and quite possibly relates to *politics* in Uruguay in the twentieth century with the reoccurring theme of dictatorships in South America.

Importance of the Haikus

As I explained in the preface, I wanted to find a work that incorporates the culture of the societies where he lived, while illustrating the history of the countries. When writing these haikus Benedetti was back in Uruguay, but through his exile he had influence from his time overseas allowing the poems to reflect on more than just his hometown of Montevideo. He has three main cultures and histories presented in his haikus: Uruguay, his native country, Argentina, where he spent his young adulthood, and Spain, the country where he was exiled. Since each haiku is a separate thought and not a continuous entity, each poem has a different topic. Not every single one pertains to the societies in which he resided, but most give contextual clues to the cultures of each country. One example of this is the repetitive theme of the ocean with six haikus specifically using the word ‘mar’ or ocean. All three countries, especially Spain and Argentina have a huge coastal presence with half or more of the land bordering the

¹⁹ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 97.

ocean. His continual reference to the ocean explains the importance of the sea to the cultures. By saying ‘the ocean of everyone/ is not like my ocean/ he knows me’,²⁰ he shows not only his love for the ocean, but demonstrates the pride towards *his* ocean leaving the audience assuming it is better than everyone else’s. The irony of owning part of the ocean could pertain to his lack of a constant home. He could be explaining that through his exile and loss of a permanent home, the ocean, his ocean, has been the only continuous aspect in his life.

Another cultural reference, that refers specifically to Spain, and furthermore to one holiday in particular is in haiku 127 when Benedetti says, “no more *matracas*”.²¹ There isn’t exactly a word for this instrument in English since it is not used in any English or American traditions. *Matraca* is a type of rattle made of wood or metal that came to Spain from Arabs back in the tenth century. Nowadays this instrument is used in a weeklong celebration called *Semana Santa* or holy week. This week begins the Sunday preceding Easter and is a festival containing parades commemorating the Virgin Mary and the resurrection of Jesus. The full haiku continues on to say ‘no more celebrations/ the crying has already come’.²² By reading this poem one gains a further understanding of one of Spain’s most important festivals. Moreover his connection between the celebrations in general and *matracas* shows how integral this instrument is to Spanish society.

²⁰ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 160.

²¹ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 127.

²² Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 127.

In haiku 101 Benedetti says ‘it is not crucial/ but insomnia in a nap/ does not have a cure’.²³ The original Spanish haiku uses the word ‘siesta’ or nap, in English. This refers to the nap Spaniards take in the afternoon after lunch to cope with the immense heat in southern Spain. People are even offered roughly three hours off of work for their lunch break to include this *siesta*, forcing the workday to end much later to account for this. The importance here is that Benedetti does not explain the issue with insomnia during a normal nights sleep, but instead refers specifically to a *siesta* indicating the importance of this nap to Spanish culture.

One haiku which goes farther than just mentioning specifics about the countries’ societies and cultures, but actually touches on the history of the country is when Benedetti references exile. He never mentions that he himself was exiled within the haikus, but instead explains what happens to those who are. In haiku 139 he says “an exile/ will be one for all his life/ and for his death”²⁴ and in haiku 41, “an exile/ has adopted to the tediousness/ of the nostalgia”²⁵. Mario Benedetti also does not say that any other Uruguayan and Argentinian artists were exiled, but his explanation of the pain and suffering shows that there was in fact this issue somewhere. Like many other works it does take outside research to understand that under the dictatorship in Uruguay during the twentieth century, people were exiled due to their ‘controversial’ work. By reading these haikus and understanding that his themes connect directly back to his own life one can understand the sorrow Benedetti endured being separated not only from his home

²³ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 101.

²⁴ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 139.

²⁵ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 41.

country, but also from his wife. The pain many artists had to face emphasizes the history of Uruguay by encapsulating the suffering of the people.

The ability of gaining awareness into Mario Benedetti's societies and histories is why it is such an important text to translate especially so non-Spanish speaking peoples can learn about another culture through an artistic work. However, this collection does more than give insight on South American and Spanish cultures, it delves into the history of the world during the twentieth century. Although he primarily resided in Madrid and Montevideo, his opinions cross all cultural boundaries. His themes aren't always Latin American specific, but can relate to everyone regardless of societal factors. One haiku that expressed twentieth century world-wide the issues is haiku number 209, "bloque / alzheimer // hiroshima / otan / sida // no fue un buen siglo".²⁶ This translates to, 'bloc / Alzheimer's // Hiroshima / NATO / AIDS// it has not been a good century'. Besides Alzheimer's, which affects individuals rather than countries as a whole, these events relate to modern world-wide economies and history. The bloc refers to the trade bloc created in Uruguay and Argentina that left both countries bankrupt leading to political instability that ultimately caused the exile of many people.²⁷ Hiroshima refers to the United States' 1945 atomic bombing in the town of Hiroshima, Japan during World War II.²⁸ This tragedy was a huge part of the twentieth century and its influence in this haiku demonstrates the poem as a commentary on more than just Uruguayan, Argentinian and Spanish culture. His reference to AIDS, like

²⁶ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 209.

²⁷ Bach "Urban Chronicler with a Poetic Sting" 38.

²⁸ Yust, Walter, "Atomic Bomb" in *Britannica Book of the Year: 1946*. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 79-86. Print.

Alzheimer's, is also a global-wide concern and again exemplifies the issues the world was facing at the time. This connects his haikus to everyone regardless of where one comes from.

Besides specific historical events, Benedetti writes about everyday occurrences that anyone can understand and relate to. Haiku 96 touches upon the universal subject of love saying, "si el corazón/ se aburre de querer/ para qué sirve"²⁹ or, 'if the heart/ becomes bored of loving/ what is it good for'. Benedetti was happily married and knew his wife since the age of twenty with a marriage lasting over six decades. He understood the act of loving and being loved by another. Benedetti believed the ability to love is the greatest accomplishment of the heart, and without love what is the point of the existence of the heart. Furthermore what is the point of life without love? One important note is that he does not specify which kind of love and instead allows the reader to decide whether it is familial, sexual, amicable, or a combination. This theme of general desire is something that everyone can understand and have experienced in their lifetime.

Benedetti uses many metaphors that leave the messages behind his haikus very open ended, and thus the interpretations lie in the hands of the reader, as well as the translator. Generally, there are many layers or levels of meaning to each haiku that lie deeper within the text. For example, haiku 15 "la mariposa/ recordará por siempre que fue gusano"³⁰ or 'the butterfly/ will remember forever/ that it was a caterpillar' at the surface is referring to the natural event of metamorphosis of a caterpillar, but this poem

²⁹ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 96.

³⁰ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 15.

can mean more than just the life cycle of butterflies. It relates to the events people can face throughout their lifetime. The obstacle or experience that forever changes the life course. Unlike the caterpillar, this experience can happen whenever and often when least expected. This poem explains, that although this experience produces a complete life transformation, mentally, physically, or geographically, it is important to never forget what happened before, and more importantly, not to disregard who one was before.

Furthermore I believe Benedetti is saying that similar to the butterfly that cannot forget that he/she was a caterpillar, human beings *should* not forget their past because it is always essential to know how and why we have gotten to the point we are at today. Benedetti's inspiration behind the haiku can either relate to his exile, or another change in his life, but the most important takeaway is that anyone can relate since everyone has gone through some life-altering event throughout their lifetime. This specific haiku demonstrates the importance of the collection as a whole. From this single poem, one can understand the issue in the Uruguayan government forcing citizens into exile, but also how this affected each individual citizen.

This collection of haikus is one of Benedetti's last works and differs greatly from his earlier work that was much more openly critical of society. He has made the subtle change away from critiquing towards a general commentary. Haiku 139 demonstrates this transition away from the work that got him exiled, towards a more reflective point of view. The haiku refers to the general slowing down one does "with a

growing awareness of my mortality”.³¹ He juxtaposes the extreme difference in his life from his youth to his old age, ‘songs of protest/ after sixty years/ songs about prostate’.³² What adds to the power of this particular haiku is the parallel between the first and third line. Repeating the word ‘songs’ exemplifies that although he has aged, his viewpoints are unchanged and he is the same person, but with different priorities. His ‘songs’ refer to his career as a writer. While he is aware of his age, his passion for writing hasn’t slowed and the only changes are his topics.

The second parallel between the first and third line are the words protest and prostate, which are phonetically and visually similar (in Spanish, Italian, and English) but differ significantly in meaning. This contrast also leads to the power of the poem. These two words establish very distinctive urgencies. Before, he was willing to leave the country in order to speak his mind in protest and although I do not think that has changed, his priority seems to be more focused on his health or really his aging in reference to ‘prostate’. The last aspect to this poem is the humor. His constant satirical take on normally painful topics (in this case his mortality) allows the reader to see the subject in an ever so slightly entertaining way.

My Enjoyment

Benedetti’s ability to make sad or morbid topics humorous is one of my draws to the collection. He accomplishes the impossible by shedding light on generally gloomy topics, while also having uplifting commentaries on the good that humanity can

³¹ Bach “Urban Chronicler with a Poetic Sting” 38.

³² Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 139.

achieve, and on nature's beauty as well. While commenting on society, they actually quite humorously give insight on common day occurrences. My favorite aspect of this collection is his use of humor, which can take on the form of pure irony, or satire through subtle pokes at society as a whole. In an interview Benedetti stated "stories without humor are intolerable for me. Humor has another virtue. I think a touch of ironic humor helps the reader capture a profound moment better than an unbroken dose of tragedy or pessimism".³³

One poem that uses humor to appeal to the awkward in everyone is haiku 150, which refers to the mockery one feels when doing something they are not good at. 'If I am rowing/ I feel that the river roars/ with laughter'.³⁴ I am unsure if Benedetti was actually bad at rowing, but in this case his rowing exemplifies the action, when done publically, that makes someone uncomfortable. He is explaining his disdain for publicly doing something that he is either not comfortable with, or does not do well. The personification of the river roaring with laughter represents either the thoughts and actions of the general public, or solely what he assumes people are thinking about him.

One poem that has a more obvious appeal to humor is haiku 130. "Me gustaría/ ser noble y elegante/ como un pingüino"³⁵ which translates roughly to "I would like/ to be noble and elegant/ like a penguin". The word penguin coming at the very end of the haiku allows the reader to think of other entities that could be 'noble and elegant' before coming across what Benedetti is actually referring to. A penguin is infrequently thought of as elegant or noble, yet the appearance of the animal resembles a tuxedo or suit.

³³ Bach "Urban Chronicler with a Poetic Sting" 38.

³⁴ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 150.

³⁵ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 130.

Herein lies the humor, the contrast between the rather ungracefully moving penguin and the outward facade of a suit. It is clear a penguin isn't actually Benedetti's measuring stick of elegance, which juxtaposes the upfront seriousness of the first two lines with the witty reference to a penguin in the third.

The last and final attraction I had towards this collection was from two specific haikus. I really appreciated the message behind these two short poems, because the few words seem to create an even more powerful meaning. The first haiku refers to different perspectives by discussing the age-old tale of a boat being surrounded by sharks. In the haiku he plays on the idea of perception, "parece cuento/ al barco lo defienden/ los tiburones"³⁶ or 'it seems fiction/ that the boat is defended/ by sharks'. From above, a boat being surrounded by sharks could be perceived as though the sharks are guarding it by not permitting any other dangers near. He is playing with this well-known story, by seeing it in a different light. One perspective could make it look like the sharks are defending the ship, while another could see the sharks as attacking the ship. Benedetti, although he doubts that the sharks are helping the ship, portrays this other, less common, viewpoint. No one ever thinks sharks are helping the ship when this could be their intent. The haiku, like many others, relates to much more. I believe it advises people to look for other sides of the story and be wary about other people's opinions. Although it may 'seem fiction', there is always a chance that either side is correct, and therefore everyone should be a little more open-minded to other possibilities and opinions.

³⁶ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 105.

The second haiku is about the value of travel. Haiku 94 says “cuando uno viaja/ también viaja con uno/ el universo”³⁷ or ‘when one travels/ they also travel with someone/ the universe’. For me, the most prominent take away is that we are never alone. Regardless of where we are there is someone there with you either physically or mentally. For the wander lusters, this draws us to want to start or continue travelling. The entire world is available to us at our expense.

Translation Method

Due to my minimal experience in this field save for my *Aeneid* translation, I was unsure where and how to begin translating the 224 haikus from Spanish to Italian. Because of the complexity of the *Aeneid* and the extreme artistic freedom allowed by the Latin language, I knew I would be going about this translation in a very different way than I had four years ago. I wanted to preserve the original piece as much as one can when translating to a new language so I assumed I would adhere to a literal method. Since the two languages share a similar root I knew the word order would not be the major issue it would have been if translated to English. I also knew that these two languages have many similar cognates. These two factors led me to believe in this idea of a literal translation. After researching translation theories I came across a scary realization. What I came to quickly realize, is that there is no possibility of a literal or exact translation as I had hoped to create. The text will be forever changed after the transition from the native to foreign language. The importance instead is on keeping the original as intact as possible.

³⁷ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 94.

From this point I realized that my work was less of a translation and more of an interpretation. As Susan Bassnett explains in the preface of André Lefevere's book *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* "translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewriting, whatever their intention, reflects a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way".³⁸ This profound realization allowed me to delve deeper into the process because I now knew that I actually was changing or rewriting a text to be understood by a different audience. I needed to manipulate the haikus so that Italian society could understand them. From then on I took the approach less of one idealistic translation method and continued with the theme of rewriting the text so that it functions in an Italian speaking society and culture, but reflects the same views and opinions of the original.

In order to create the most authentic rewrite I decided to combine multiple different methods. The literal technique approach of translating word-for-word "can often render the translation pallid and ineffective"³⁹ so in these instances I allowed a more free or interpretive approach. A literal or direct translation can often create an incomprehensible text for the foreign reader by not changing word order or colloquial phrases. This method became an issue for this particular work due to the informality of Benedetti's writing. In haiku number 4, line one reads "por si las moscas"⁴⁰ which directly, or word-for-word, translates to 'for if the flies'. In English and in Italian this

³⁸ Bassnett Susan, preface to *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, by André Lefevere. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education, 2004. vii. Print.

³⁹ Rabassa Gregory, "No Two Snowflakes are Alike: Translation as Metaphor." *The Craft of Translation*. ed. John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte. Chicago: University of Chicago. 11. Print.

⁴⁰ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 4.

phrase has no meaning, but in Spanish this is a saying that freely translates to ‘just in case’. In this instance I was unable to keep the word order or the vocabulary and instead had to rewrite the line reading closer to the above translation of ‘just in case’. Although this denies the reader an insight into the casualness of how Benedetti writes, it permits the new audience to understand the meaning of the haiku, which is more important.

In fact, one of the only haikus I was able to translate word-for-word while keep the syntax was haiku number 1.

si en el crepúsculo
el sol era memoria
ya no me acuerdo

se nel crepuscolo
il sole era memoria
già non mi ricordo

By seeing the Spanish and Italian side by side (Spanish on the left) it is clear how similar they are even without any understanding of the two languages. Each word from both versions is in the same exact place within the line and remains on the same line. (I continued this guideline of all words staying on their original lines throughout the other haiku translations). The only difference with word order is in line one where “en el” is replaced with the Italian “nel” which is the combination of ‘in il’ or ‘in the’ in English. There is no difference in meaning between the two, except that Italian grammar combines the word ‘in’ with the following article, or form of ‘the’. Along with the order, each word is an exact translation of the original allowing for a literal translation.

Unlike the first haiku, which turned out to be the easiest to translate, there were many that shed light on the true idea of ‘rewriting the original text’. Haiku 147 says ‘I do not know if I am coming / or if I am going / down the drain’, “no sé si vengo/

tampoco sé si voy/ ando al garete”.⁴¹ The last two lines reading ‘going down the drain’ is surprisingly a literal translation of the Spanish. This is one of the only instances where it was more faithful to translate to English rather than Italian. Unfortunately the phrase ‘going down the drain’ does not directly translate over to Italian. The genius of playing with the idea of things going down the gutter in a bad situation along with the juxtaposition of ‘coming’ and ‘going’ between lines 1 and 2 cannot be replicated in the Italian rewrite. I was able to keep the opposition of ‘coming and going’ by keeping the informal future verb tense. This tense is similar in English when one says ‘I am going to go’. It implies future by using the gerund⁴² form (going) plus the infinitive⁴³ (to go). By translating “voy ando” as ‘vado a (plus infinitive)’ I was able to maintain one crucial part of the haiku by keeping the conflict between coming and going. I unfortunately was not able to find a saying with the same meaning as ‘going down the drain’ and instead had to replace this with the infinitive for ‘to crumble’ or ‘fall into’ maintaining the idea of someone going awry or failing. This instance a literal translation would have left the Italian reader confused and forced me to create an interpretation in order to portray the original message.

In some instances I found it impossible to change the original text of the haiku and instead italicized the words to show they are from the original piece while adding footnotes to clarify for the reader. I first ran across this issue in haiku 23. The last line

⁴¹ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 147.

⁴² “Gerund: A form that is derived from a verb but that functions as a noun, in English ending in *-ing*” “Gerund,” In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2016 Web. 13 May 2016.

⁴³ Infinitive: The basic form of a verb, without an inflection binding it to a particular subject or tense “Infinitive,” In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2016 Web. 13May 2016.

of the poem reads “falla y onetti”.⁴⁴ At first I was confused with the vocabulary. ‘Falla’ can mean a mistake or fault, but I was unable to come up with a definition for ‘onetti’. It wasn’t until I searched the words that I realized falla and onetti are in fact the last names of two famous artists the former, a famous Spanish composer, and the latter, an author with whom Benedetti was exiled. Benedetti is in fact referencing two specific works, one by the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla, and the other by the Uruguayan author, Juan Carlos Onetti when he says ‘life is short/ they have confirmed it/ falla and onetti’. Both artists created works titled *La Vida Breve* (or life is short in English) one being an opera and the second a novel⁴⁵. These duplicate titles relate back to the first line of the haiku since the titles are both ‘life is short’. The issue with these two artists, is that their work, both originally in Spanish, are less known in Italian societies. In this instance I had to leave the last names as they are in order to not change the original content of the haiku. The footnotes relating to this haiku explain in further detail who these artists are, and the titles of their work. Although the original meaning behind the text will be less obvious at first, by not changing the artists I am ensuring as little of a cultural shift as possible.

In general I tried to keep the original meaning of each word without adding in my own cultural views or opinions on the text. Since I am translating from Spanish to Italian it is crucial to not allow my American culture or English language culture influence the translation. By having as little translator interference as possible I hope to create a text that truly encompasses the original culture. It is not only important, but

⁴⁴ Benedetti, *Rincón de Haikus*, 23.

⁴⁵ Blanco, “Los fragmentos del 45 uruguayo”.

also relevant for more than just Spanish speakers to read his work. The haiku collection is a great way to study and appreciate ‘traditional’ examples of this type of poetry, while gaining a surprisingly upbeat understanding of pessimistic topics. Since Spanish and Italian both come from the same root language, Latin, their grammar and vocabulary are very similar. This allows the translation between the two languages to be more accurate. By translating *Rincón de Haikus* by Mario Benedetti from Spanish directly to Italian, I hope to spread his work to other cultures besides Spanish speaking countries that can still fully appreciate his work without a language barrier.

Translation

Rincón de Haikus

Including the original Spanish 224 haikus by author Mario Benedetti

Italiano

1

se nel crepuscolo
il sole era memoria
già non mi ricordo

2

la morte invade
di quando in quando il sogno
e fa i suoi calcoli

3

i piedi della pioggia
ci restituiscono il freddo
della sfortuna

4

se per caso
ci sono profeti che tacciano
la loro profezia

5

inverno inverno
l'inverno mi piace
se fa caldo

6

i premi postumi
si assegnano con riluttanza
ed un po' di pena

7

e all'insigne
non si può dire niente
là nella sua nicchia

8

le religioni
non salvano / sono appena
un contrattempo

Spagnolo

1

si en el crepúsculo
el sol era memoria
ya no me acuerdo

2

la muerte invade
de vez en cuando el sueño
y hace sus cálculos

3

los pies de lluvia
nos desvuelven el frío
de la desdicha

4

por si las moscas
hay profetas que callan
su profecía

5

invierno invierno
el invierno me gusta
si hace calor

6

los premios póstumos
se otorgan con desgana
y algo de lástima

7

y al laureado
no se le mueve un pelo
allá en su nicho

8

las religiones
no salvan / son apenas
un contratiempo

9
passano missili
pieni di barbarie
globalizzati

10
dopo tutto
la morte è solo un sintomo
di quello che la vita è stata

11
le foglie secche
sono come il testamento
delle castagne

12
il peggio dell'oro
è che dice le stesse
sciocchezze

13
la nostra morte
non conviene dimenticarla
né ricordala

14
i sentimenti
sono innocenti come
le armi bianche

15
la farfalla
ricorderà per sempre
che è stato un bruco

16
ci sono poche cose
così assordanti
come il silenzio

17
sono mani pazze
di pianista o di fabbro
quelle che ci parlano

9
pasan misiles
ahíitos de barbarie
globalizados

10
después de todo
la muerte es sólo un síntoma
de que hubo vida

11
las hojas secas
son como el testamento
de los castaños

12
lo peor del oro
es que dice las mismas
barbaridades

13
a nuestra muerte
no conviene olvidarla
ni recordarla

14
los sentimientos
son inocentes como
las armas blancas

15
la mariposa
recordará por siempre
que fue gusano

16
hay pocas cosas
tan ensordecedoras
como el silencio

17
son manos locas
de pianista o de herrero
las que nos habla

18
gli uomini odiano
presumono sognano ma
gli uccelli volano

19
tutti e due ladri
hanno guardato a gesù⁴⁶
e si sono guardati

20
ogni suicida
sa dovè lo spinge
l'incertezza

21
ascoltami ascolta
ragazza passante
baciami l'anima

22
non c'è felicità
più felice del prologo
della felicità

23
la vita è breve
l'hanno affermato a una
*falla*⁴⁷ e *onetti*⁴⁸

24
se non si sfumano
si deve stare attenti
con i fantasmi

25
mi piacerebbe
guardare tutto da lontano
ma con te

18
los hombres odian
presumen sueñan pero
las aves vuelan

19
los dos ladrones
miraron a jesús
y se miraron

20
cada suicida
sabe dónde le aprieta
la incertidumbre

21
óyeme oye
muchacha transeúnte
bésame el alma

22
no hay alegría
más alegre que el prólogo
de la alegría

23
la vida es breve
lo afirmaron a una
falla y onetti

24
si no esfuman
hay que tener cuidado
con los fantasmas

25
me gustaría
mirar todo de lejos
pero contigo

⁴⁶ Tutti i nomi sono in minuscolo negli originali poemi di Benedetti.

⁴⁷ Falla si riferisce al compositore spagnolo Manuel de Falla che ha composto un'opera *La Vida Breve* in spagnolo o *La vita breve* in italiano.

⁴⁸ Onetti si riferisce allo scrittore uruguayano Juan Carlos Onetti che ha scritto un libro *La Vida Breve* nel 1950.

26
non so il tuo nome
solo lo sguardo
con cui lo dici

27
dopo tutto
il manichino non sa
che è libertino

28
ogni trapianto
incorpora i resti
dell'ex proprietario

29
anime in pena
anime che prende il diavolo
tutte sono anime

30
ogni regione
ha i fantasmi
che si merita

31
quelli che camminano
sopra fiumi di vino
a volte galleggiano

32
posso spegnermi
ma non accetto che muoia
l'umanità

33
se ci fossero dèi
nessuno li pregherebbe
per non abborrirli

34
quando la pena
proviene dal candore
può essere dolce

26
no sé tu nombre
sólo sé la mirada
con que lo dices

27
después de todo
la maniquí no sabe
que es libertina

28
cada trasplante
incorpora los flecos
del dueño antiguo

29
almas en pena
almas que lleva el diablo
todas son almas

30
cada comarca
tiene los fanatismos
que se merece

31
los que caminan
sobre ríos de vino
a veces flotan

32
puedo morirme
mas no acepto que muera
la humanidad

33
si hubiera dios
nadie le rezaría
por no aburrirle

34
cuando la pena
proviene del candor
puede ser dulce

35
dammi il rifugio
con tutta la tenerezza
che ti ho prestato

36
quando ridi
i miei occhi ti accompagnano
con lacrime

37
durante il sogno
gli amanti sono fedeli
come animali

38
in ogni storia
il perdono e la repulsione
sono parti

39
vecchio conciato
già non voglio passare
per altro spavento

40
in piena notte
se le mie mani ti chiamano
i tuoi seni vengono

41
l'esiliato
si è adattato al tedio
della nostalgia

42
la rondine
si rivolge al suo passato
non incontra il nido

43
la conchiglia
mi manda nel rumore
vecchi annunci

35
dame cobijo
con toda la ternura
que te he prestado

36
cuando te ríes
mis ojos te acompañan
con lagrimones

37
durante el sueño
los amantes son fieles
como animales

38
en cada historia
el perdón y la inquina
son estaciones

39
viejo curtido
ya no quiero pasar
por otro espanto

40
en plena noche
si mis manos te llaman
tus pechos vienen

41
el exiliado
se fue adaptando al tedio
de la nostalgia

42
la golondrina
da vuelta a su pasado
no encuentra el nido

43
la caracola
me deja en el oído
viejos pregones

44
non voglio vederti
per il resto dell'anno
cioè fino a martedì

45
dieci di settembre
non ricordo altri venti
così scatenati

46
passano le nubi
ed il cielo rimane pulito
di ogni colpa

47
il fiume avanza
con i cigni estatici
e vanitosi

48
non so mentire
mai ho mentito eccetto
quando ho saputo

49
dalla bibbia
il cielo ed il nudo
hanno peccato insieme

50
voglio vivere
fino all'ultimo istante
dell'oscurità

51
le piante odono
se uno le lusinga
si riempiono di verde

52
se mi stordisco
forse sono ubriaco
del tuo sguardo

44
no quiero verte
por el resto del año
o sea hasta el martes

45
diez de septiembre
no recuerdo otros vientos
tan desbocados

46
pasan las nubes
y el cielo queda limpio
de toda culpa

47
el río avanza
con los cisnes estáticos
y vanidosos

48
no sé mentir
nunca he mentido salvo
cuando he sabido

49
desde la biblia
el cielo y el desnudo
pecaron juntos

50
quiero vivir
hasta el último instante
de la tiniebla

51
las plantas oyen
si uno las lisonjea
se hinchan de verde

52
si me mareo
puede que esté borracho
de tu mirada

53
le persone sole
è superfluo dirlo
sempre vanno sole

54
il cocodrillo
ed il salice piangente piangono
di puro vizio

55
quando diluvia
penso che sta cadendo
il mare da sopra

56
all'amore semplice
la pace dei bordelli
non fa danno

57
dramma cromatico
il verde è un color
che non matura

58
le nostalgie
sono meno nostalgie
vicino al fiume

59
quando i miei occhi
si chiudono e si aprono
tutto è cambiato

60
chi lo direbbe
i deboli veramente
mai si confessano

61
mi sento vecchio
ma la sagacia è giovane
e mi provoca

53
las soledades
está de más decirlo
siempre andan solas

54
el cocodrilo
y el sauce llorón lloran
de puro vicio

55
cuando diluvia
pienso que está cayendo
el mar de arriba

56
al amor simple
la paz de los burdeles
no le hace daño

57
drama cromático
el verde es un color
que no madura

58
las añoranzas
son menos añoranzas
cerca del río

59
cuando mis ojos
se cierran y se abren
todo ha cambiado

60
quién lo diría
los débiles de veras
nunca se rinden

61
me siento viejo
pero el zorzal es joven
y me provoca

62
oscuro unanime /
solo rimane una luce
che chiede ausilio

63
quando imbrunisce
si scuotono i pini
e non è per il freddo

64
non mi seduce
il bordello del potere
preferisco l'altro

65
a quanto pare il trifoglio
se ha quattro foglie
non c'è chi lo trattiene

66
in ogni idillio
una bocca deve baciare
e l'altra è baciata

67
i blackout
permettono che uno stia
con se stesso

68
come piacciono
in un annuncio ed in altro
gli assassini

69
nella laguna
l'acqua è un specchio
senza richieste

70
mentre rivivo
ricorrono primavere
alla mia memoria

62
oscuro unánime /
sólo queda un farol
que pide auxilio

63
cuando anochece
se estremecen los pinos
y no es de frío

64
no me seduce
el burdel del poder /
prefiero el otro

65
pasa que al trébol
si tiene cuatro hojas
no hay quién lo aguante

66
en todo idilio
una boca hay que besa
y otra es besada

67
los apagones
permiten que uno trate
consigo mismo

68
cómo disfrutan
en un bando y en otro
los asesinos

69
en la laguna
el agua es un espejo
sin exigencias

70
mientras revivo
acuden primaveras
a mi memoria

71
ma se agonizzo
gli inverni si stabiliscono
come ispettori

72
i grilli pregano
ma sono orazioni
iconoclastiche

73
in baule nuovo
ho protetto i sentimenti /
ho perso la chiave

74
le epigrafi
diventano la grazia
del cimitero

75
mi piacciono cristo /
santo tommaso d'aquino⁴⁹ /
la sulamita

76
per questo ponte
passano illusioni
e contrabbandi

77
pioggia senza rumore
ma sotto l'ombrello
funziona il bacio

78
con l'alba
rinascono i migliori
rimorsi

71
mas si agonizo
los inviernos se instalan
como sabuesos

72
los grillos rezan
pero son oraciones
iconoclastas

73
en cofre nuevo
guardé los sentimientos /
perdí la llave

74
los epitafios
vienen a ser la gracia
del cementerio

75
me gustan cristo /
santo tomás de aquino /
la sulamita

76
por este puente
transcurren ilusiones
y contrabandos

77
llueve sin ruido
pero bajo el paraguas
funciona el beso

78
con la alborada
renacen los mejores
remordimientos

⁴⁹ Vedi nota1

79
la promessa sposa pensa
nelle lenzuola nei *tules*⁵⁰
e in altro debutto

80
febbre dell'oro
e nelle strade e campi
fango e mendicanti

81
conforme tuono
i rumori del bosco
si coprono di foglie

82
vanno le ragazze
ogni passo più carine
ed io più vecchio

83
con la pietà
a volte si organizzano
belle collezioni

84
vorrei vederti
nell'insonnia o nei sogni
o dovunque

85
solo più solo
di un mucchio di foglie sole
prossime lontane

86
con tre rancori
qualcuno ammassa odii
per tutto il resto

79
la novia piensa
en sábanas en tules
y en otro estreno

80
fiebre de oro
y en las calles y campos
barro y mendigos

81
conforme trueno
los oídos del bosque
se cubren de hojas

82
van las muchachas
cada paso más lindas
y yo más viejo

83
con la piedad
a veces se organizan
lindas colectas

84
quisiera verte
en vigilia o en sueños
o dondequiera

85
solo más solo
qué hojarasca de solos
prójimos léjimos

86
con tres rencores
hay quien amasa odios
por todo el resto

⁵⁰ Un tipo di tessuto che crea il velo della sposa.

87
già non ci sono segreti
per i tuoi occhi spio
nuove congiure

88
solo un miracolo
può fare una veglia
due carnevali

89
mi piacerebbe
che l'anno cominciasse
tutti i sabati

90
la donna pubblica
mi ispira più rispetto
dell'uomo pubblico

91
non spaventarti
sono grigiori del crepuscolo
ombre di stupore

92
le grande città
non sanno quello che sanno
né quello che ignorano

93
la via lattea
solo ci protegge
quando non ci sono nubi

94
quando uno viaggia
anche viaggia con lui
l'universo

95
solo il pipistrello
si intende con il mondo
ma al rovescio

87
ya no hay secretos
por tus ojos espío
nuevas conjuras

88
sólo un milagro
puede hacer de un velorio
dos carnavales

89
me gustaría
que el año comenzara
todos los sábados

90
la mujer pública
me inspira más respeto
que el hombre público

91
no te acobardes
son grises del crepúsculo
sombras de asombro

92
las grandes urbes
no saben lo que saben
ni lo que ignoran

93
la vía láctea
tan sólo nos protege
cuando no hay nubes

94
cuando uno viaja
también viaja con uno
el universo

95
sólo el murciélago
se entiende con el mundo
pero al revés

96
se il cuore
aborrisce di volere
per quello che riesce

97
onda per onda
il mare sa tutto
ma si dimentica

98
amore instabile
il sospetto schiude
la sua gelosia

99
come riderebbero
i punti cardinali
se fossero cinque

100
nella ragione
entrano solo i dubbi
che abbiano una chiave

101
non è grave ma
la insonnia nella *siesta*⁵¹
non ha cura

102
se colpisce un fulmine
i valorosi si abbracciano
ai codardi

103
solo arroganza
la mia valigia è enorme
ed è vuota

96
si el corazón
se aburre de querer
para qué sirve

97
ola por ola
el mar lo sabe todo
pero se olvida

98
amor en vilo
la sospecha entreabre
se celosía

99
cómo reirían
los puntos cardinales
si fueran cinco

100
en la razón
sólo entran las dudas
que tengan llave

101
no es grave pero
el insomnio en la siesta
no tiene cura

102
si cae un rayo
los valientes se abrazan
a los cobardes

103
sólo jactancia
mi maleta es enorme
y está vacía

⁵¹ Una parola spagnola dell'haiku originale che significa un pisolino specificamente dopo di pranzo.

104
quando te ne vai
non scordare di prendere
i tuoi disprezzi

105
sembra una storia
che la nave la difendono
gli squali

106
ti aspetto sulla terra
mi ha detto la hostess
ma non è venuta

107
una campana
solo una campana
si oppone al vento

108
lì nella tua anima
lì nel tuo cuore
lì non c'è nessuno

109
si salutarono
e nell'addio già era
il benvenuto

110
già tutto è rosso
gerani rose vino
bandiere sangue

111
qui seguiamo
i bambini e gli anziani
irresponsabili

112
tanti amici
tra un inverno ed altro
ci stanno lasciando

104
cuando te vayas
no olvides de llevarte
tus menosprecios

105
parece cuento
al barco lo defienden
los tiburones

106
te espero en tierra
me dijo la azafata
pero no vino

107
una campana
tan sólo una campana
se opone al viento

108
allí en tu alma
allí en tu corazón
allí no hay nadie

109
se despidieron
y en el adiós ya estaba
la bienvenida

110
ya todo es rojo
geranios rosas vino
banderas sangre

111
aquí seguimos
los niños y los viejos
irresponsables

112
tantos amigos
entre un invierno y otro
nos van dejando

113
sarebbe bene
che le mafie se ne andassero
in un altro pianeta

114
le gambe di lei
ci lasciavano senza parola
e rughe

115
quando mi seppellite
per favore non dimenticate
la mia penna

116
patrie di nylon
non mi piacciono gli inni
né le bandiere

117
quando promettono
i politici ridono
con i supplenti

118
parole che bruciano
parole che si appagano
verbosità

119
quando piangiamo
le tossine allegre
ci abbandonano

120
giacente e *hurras*⁵²
gli eredi ballano
dopo del requiem

113
bueno sería
que las mafias se fueran
a otro planeta

114
las piernas de ella
nos dejaban sin habla
y arrugaditos

115
cuando me entierren
por favor no se olviden
de mi bolígrafo

116
patrias de nailon
no me gustan los himnos
ni las banderas

117
cuando prometen
los políticos ríen
con los suplentes

118
palabras que arden
palabras que se apagan
palabrerío

119
cuando lloramos
las alegres toxinas
nos abandonan

120
yacente y *hurras*
los legatarios bailan
después del réquiem

⁵² Una parola spagnola dal testo originale che significa lode o gioia, è usata al plurale.

121
quando non siamo
la grazia del dubbio
si sarà persa

122
ci stanno lasciando
senza alberi senza nubi
senza fede senza fiumi

123
bambino sta attento
prestali un telo
al pesce fradicio

124
dedica /
a lei senza sconti
lei spoglia

125
come avventura
solo ci avvicina
all'orizzonte

126
trema la rugiada
e le foglie bagnate
ed il colibrì

127
non più *matracas*⁵³
non più celebrazioni
già venne il pianto

128
quando era bambino
le canzoni di culla
mi tenevano sveglio

121
cuando no estemos
la gracia de la duda
se habrá perdido

122
nos van dejando
sin árboles sin nubes
sin fe sin ríos

123
hijo sé atento
préstale una toalla
al pez mojado

124
dedicatoria /
a ella sin descuentos
ella desnuda

125
como aventura
sólo queda arrimarnos
al horizonte

126
tiembla el rocío
y las hojas moradas
y un colibrí

127
no más *matracas*
no más celebraciones
ya vino el llanto

128
cuando era niño
las canciones de cuna
me desvelaban

⁵³ Uno strumento usato molto in Spagna durante le feste di Pasqua. Questo strumento crea molto rumore senza molto sforzo o talento.

129
tempio vuoto
i vecchi santi giocano
un solitario

130
mi piacerebbe
essere nobile ed elegante
come un pinguino

131
passano l'ore
e già ci rimane un po'
meno di vita

132
bottiglia al mare
quella che aspettano tutti
ed è vuoto

133
siamo tristezza
per quello la felicità
è una prodezza

134
con sogni oscuri
si monta e si smonta
l'incubo

135
al sud al sud
sta ferma aspettando
montevideo

136
sempre torna
con i vecchi amori
o con i nuovi

137
canzone protesta
dopo dei sessanta
canzone della prostata

129
templo vacío
los viejos santos juegan
un solitario

130
me gustaría
ser noble y elegante
como un pingüino

131
pasan las horas
y ya nos queda un poco
menos de vida

132
botella al mar
esa que esperan todos
y está vacía

133
somos tristeza
por eso la alegría
es una hazaña

134
con sueños turbios
se arma y se desarma
la pesadilla

135
al sur al sur
está quieta esperando
montevideo

136
siempre se vuelve
con los viejos amores
o con los nuevos

137
canción protesta
después de los sesenta
canción de próstata

138
vedovo del cinema
margaret greta ingrid⁵⁴
morirono

139
un esiliato
lo sarà la vita
e per la morte

140
suona il flauto
nella notte sveglia
ed io nella mia nube

141
quando appanna
il vetro copre il paesaggio
che a me mi piace

142
il bosco crea
nidi giunchi in fine
vocabolario

143
il detenuto sogna
qualcosa che sempre ha
forma di chiave

144
in ogni infanzia
c'è una canzone stupida
che lì si ferma

145
ogni sobborgo
ha lussi di povero
miserie ricche

138
viudo de cine
margaret greta Ingrid
se me murieron

139
un exiliado
lo será de por vida
y de por muerte

140
suen a una flauta
en la noche despierta
y yo en mi nube

141
cuando se empaña
el vidrio arma el paisaje
que a mí me gusta

142
el bosque crea
nidos juncos en fin
vocabulario

143
el preso sueña
algo que siempre tiene
forma de llave

144
en cada infancia
hay una canción tonta
que allí se queda

145
todo arrabal
tiene lujos de pobre
miserias ricas

⁵⁴ Margaret Lockwood, Ingrid Bergman, e Greta Garbo sono state famose attrici degli anni Quaranta e Cinquanta del Novecento.

146
come rifletto
ogni volta il chirurgo
mi apre la pancia

147
non so se vengo
neanche so se vado
a sprofondare

148
l'albero sa
di chi è ogni passo
di chi l'accetta

149
so che l'abisso
ha la sua seduzione
io non la cerco

150
se sto remando
sento che il fiume scoppia
a ridere

151
con la tristezza
si può andare lontano
se uno va solo

152
erano le braccia
della venere di milo⁵⁵
quelle che applaudivano

153
gli costò ma
infine trovò il cammino
del camposanto

146
cómo cavilo
siempre que el cirujano
me abre la panza

147
no sé si vengo
tampoco sé si voy
ando al garete

148
el árbol sabe
de quién es cada paso
de quién es cada paso

149
sé que el abismo
tiene su seducción
yo ni me acerco

150
si voy remando
siento que el río ríe
a carcajadas

151
con la tristeza
se puede llegar lejos
si uno va solo

152
eran los brazos
de la venus de milo
los que aplaudían

153
le costó pero
por fin halló el camino
del camposanto

⁵⁵ Vedi nota 1

154
ci sono birbantelli
che mortificano feriscono uccidono
tengono statue

155
la rabbia dolce
non serve / solo vale
la rabbia amara

156
niente è più magico
della via del seme
per cui siamo

157
che terremoto
ruba il rinascimento
rubano le gambe

158
come è noto
gesù⁵⁶ non era cristiano
ma soffriva

159
se mi emoziono
smetterò di essere giusto
ma che importa

160
il mare di tutti
non è come il mio mare
lui mi conosce

161
dallo specchio
i miei occhi non mi guardano
guardano al tempo

154
hay sinvergüenzas
que agravian hieren matan /
tienen estatuas

155
la rabia dulce
no sirve / sólo vale
la rabia amarga

156
nada hay más mágico
que la ruta del semen
por el que somos

157
qué terremoto
cruje el remordimiento
crujen las piedras

158
como es notorio
jesús no era cristiano
pero sufría

159
si me enternezco
dejaré de ser justo
pero qué importa

160
el mar de todos
no es como mi mar
él me conoce

161
desde el espejo
mis ojos no me miran
miran al tiempo

⁵⁶ Vedi nota 1

162
il povero dio
così solo così nessuno
e così senza vergini

163
con la verità
non si gioca / si gioca
con la menzogna

164
rivelò il padre
che non c'è cielo né inferno
che notizia

165
vanno all'unisono
la tarda età le malattie
la ragnatela

166
nella foto seppia
eri tu ed il tempo
se ne andò con te

167
dalla scrittura
solo l'apocalisse
ci accompagna

168
il purgatorio
ha la sala d'attesa
e un bar e servizi

169
testimone scuro
nel luogo del delitto
rimase il ratto

170
negli stracci
suole esserci più storia
che nella etichetta

162
el pobre dios
tan solo tan sin nadie
y tan sin vírgenes

163
con la verdad
no se juega / se juega
con la mentira

164
reveló el papa
que no hay cielo ni infierno
vaya noticia

165
van al unísono
la vejez los achaques
la telaraña

166
en foto sepia
estabas vos y el tiempo
se fue contigo

167
de la escritura
sólo el apocalipsis
nos acompaña

168
el purgatorio
tiene sala de espera
y un bar y aseos

169
testigo lóbrego
en el lugar del crimen
quedó la rata

170
en los harapos
suele haber más historia
que en la etiqueta

171
settantanove
anni / settantanove
anni / e che

172
la poesia
dice le profondità che a volte
la prosa tace

173
quando riunii
le mie insonnie complete
mi addormentai

174
non più tergiversare
preferisce che la bacino
a bruciapelo

175
per ubriacarsi
niente è come un corpo
di questa annata

176
dice il corrotto
che non che non che sì
e lì si ferma

177
quella vigilanza
sbagliava a volte
perché era cieco

178
solo i naufraghi
valutano con giustizia
il nuoto

179
il fuoco è
il secondo della vita
della colonia

171
setenta y nueve
años / setenta y nueve
años / y qué

172
la poesía
dice honduras que a veces
la prosa calla

173
cuando reuní
mis insomnios completos
quedé dormido

174
no más rodeos
prefiere que la besen
a quemarropa

175
para embriagarse
no hay como un cuerpo
de esta cosecha

176
dice el corrupto
que no que no sí
y allí se queda

177
aquel vigía
se equivocaba a veces
porque era ciego

178
sólo los naufragos
valoran con justicia
la natación

179
el zángano es
el segundo de vida
de la colmena

180
il vecchio socrate⁵⁷
fu obbligato a bere
cicuta cola

181
quando seducono
le donne diventano
una chitarra

182
risuscitare
è così difficile come
morire con piacere

183
del cinema muto
il buono era il pianista
bacio ed accordi

184
i bombardamenti
rimediano per sempre
alla sete ed alla fame

185
narciso il bimbo
chiese ai re magi
uno specchietto

186
ogni donna
può essere due donne
datemene una

187
se mi torturano
non dirò niente mai
ha detto il cadavere

180
el viejo sócrates
fue obligado a beber
cicuta cola

181
cuando seducen
las mujeres se vuelven
una guitarra

182
resucitar
es tan difícil como
morir con ganas

183
del cine mudo
lo bueno era el pianista
beso y acordes

184
los bombardeos
remedian para siempre
la sed y el hambre

185
narciso el nene
pidió a los reyes magos
un espejito

186
cada mujer
puede ser dos mujeres
déjenme una

187
si me torturan
no diré nada nunca
dijo el cadáver

⁵⁷ Vedi nota 1

188
so di un ateo
che nelle notti pregava
ma in francese

189
di lontano
si vedono lingue di fuoco
qui c'è rugiada

190
l'amore nubile
può nascere a volte
in un baleno

191
che buona insonnia
se mi sveglio sopra
del tuo corpo unico

192
vola la signora /
dopo la cerimonia del bacio
verrà il discorso

193
nell'amore
è virtuoso essere fedele
ma non fanatico

194
i parlamenti
tengono quattro donne
per femminismo

195
che astuto mare /
se prima ci furono sirene
rimangono le code

196
quello che si impara
nel letto di due
non ha prezzo

188
sé de un ateo
que en las noches rezaba
pero en francés

189
en lontananza
se ven lenguas de fuego /
aquí hay rocío

190
el amor núbil
puede nacer a veces
de un parpadeo

191
qué buen insomnio
si me desvelo sobre
tu cuerpo único

192
vuela la señora /
tras la aduana del beso
vendrá el tuteo

193
en el amor
es virtuoso ser fiel
mas no fanático

194
los parlamentos
tienen cuatro mujeres
por feminismo

195
qué astuto el mar /
si antes hubo sirenas
quedan las colas

196
lo que se aprende
en la cama de dos
no tiene precio

197
nel duemila
terremo sei missili
per ogni corvo

198
che bella epoca
quella in cui dicevamo
rivoluzione

199
per alcuni anni
mi spaventava l'autunno
già sono inverno

200
non eri nessuno
oggi sei il personaggio
della tua veglia

201
quanti semafori
per incontrare la strada
del vecchio crepuscolo

202
mi comprai un tango
nel chiosco degli addii
dell'aeroporto

203
passò la scadenza
la coscienza ti aspetta
con tre querele

204
un sguardo
può tenere la forza
di uno spavento

205
scopare fottere
fornicare chiavare
quanti sinonimi

197
en el dos mil
tendremos seis misiles
por cada cuervo

198
qué linda época
aquella en que decíamos
revolución

199
hace unos años
me asustaba el otoño
ya soy invierno

200
no eras nadie
hoy sos el personaje
de tu velorio

201
cuántos semáforos
para encontrar la senda
del viejo crepúsculo

202
me compré un tango
en el kiosco de adioses
del aeropuerto

203
se venció el plazo
la conciencia te aguarda
con tres querellas

204
una mirada
puede tener la fuerza
de un esperpento

205
follar coger
fornicar aparearse
cuántos sinónimos

206
l'aurora
passa così lentamente
che mi tranquillizza

207
la strada sale
per la finestra aperta /
io la saluto

208
dopo la sfilata
che solitaria viene
la moltitudine

209
blocco / alzheimer /
hiroshima⁵⁸ / nato / aids /
non era un buono secolo

210
mancini o destrorsi?
non sa non contesta
ma starnutisce

211
frantumarsi l'anima?
attento / per l'anime
non ci sono accessori

212
a questo deserto
mancano una oasi
e dieci cannameli

213
una pessimista
è solo un ottimista
ben informato

206
la madrugada
pasa tan lentamente
que me apacigua

207
la calle asciende
por la ventana abierta /
yo la saludo

208
tras el desfile
qué solitaria viene
la muchedumbre

209
bloque / alzheimer /
hiroshima / otan / sida /
no fue un buen siglo

210
¿zurdos o diestros?
no sabe no contesta
pero estornuda

211
¿romperse el alma?
ojo / para las almas
no hay accesorios

212
a este desierto
le hacen falta un oasis
y diez camellos

213
un pesimista
es sólo un optimista
bien informado

⁵⁸ Vedi nota 1

214
i pistoleri
non si pentono / chiedono
migliori complici

215
la tua città segue
con sole e sino arroganza
sempre aspettandoti

216
queste tristezze
me le portò il crepuscolo
e non se ne vanno

217
niente conforta
come una tetta tibia
o meglio due

218
quello che prende
sonno tra allori
sogna tra cardi

219
arrivo sbalordito
a questa fine del secolo
che incontreremo

220
quelli che si fidavano di te
diventano gli agenti
della tua agonia

221
tieni il tuo metodo
acido nella risposta
dolce nella supplica

222
il girasole
non conosce dell'eclissi
sempre ti illumina

214
los pistoleros
no se arrepienten / piden
mejores cómplices

215
tu ciudad sigue
con sol y sin jactancia
siempre esperándote

216
estas tristezas
me las trajo el crepúsculo
y no se fueron

217
nada conforta
como una teta tibia
o mejor dos

218
el que se queda
dormido entre laureles
sueña entre abrojos

219
llego alelado
a este final de siglo
qué encontraremos

220
los que te fían
se vuelven los gestores
de tu calvario

221
tenés tu táctica /
ácido en la respuesta
dulce en el ruego

222
el girasol
no conoce de eclipses
siempre te alumbra

223

la paura è agile
il coraggio è pesante
come una roccia

224

e qui termino
senza mettere in ombra nessuno
né scoraggiarmi

223

el miedo es ágil
el coraje es pesado
como una roca

224

y aquí termino
sin hacer sombra a nadie
ni descuidarme

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