

## Writing Finger

*Translations of Poetry from Galician and Spanish into English*

### Lucía Novas- Neve, Snow

Posted on November 12, 2011



Pomades, southern latitudes, vapours, caresses,  
 The warmth of the weather (and January that opens  
 Like an October chrysanthemum), perfumed candles,  
 The torment of incense (water that gurgles  
 Between nettles and hops), the tea rose in  
 A metal container, salts  
 Scattered, abandoned ponds,  
 Petals in pots (acidity of  
 Kisses), pores which dilate  
 And purify the crime, the tranquillity of rice, the water meadow  
 Of hot springs, bridges in bubbles, comforting soups,  
 Strong oils, the trembling  
 Of buttocks, fermented palm  
 In ginger and in the earth, a breach in the fence, the  
 tiger  
 Sinuous, contrast of light, the hole that takes in  
 Treacherous filings, the sponge so warm,  
 Jellyfish in the placenta, the blurred mirror with steam  
 Protective cotton, the illusion

Of stones, the worm that devours  
 The faded orchids, resurrection in self-analysis,  
 The blessed tragedy, the force that surges  
 And ennobles the hair, imperfections of  
 The skin  
 (and glass transparencies  
 Reappear), the belly's expanse,  
 Smell of terracotta, blossoming of screams  
 That defeat pain, kisses' clay (filth  
 Of earth  
 In the vulva  
 Which opens up), the pubis decked out  
 With bygone flowers (exquisite garden), bread  
 So white, the softness of milk, that flower  
 Of flour, that tremor in the midriff, that circle  
 That closes.

I am following my desire to read more contemporary women poets with the collection *Neve* (Snow) by Lucía Novas (A Coruña: Espiral Maior, 2010). Novas (Bueu, 1979) is a secondary school teacher who has won several poetry prizes and been anthologised in many collections as well as publishing numerous books of her own.

As you can see from this example, which comes from section IV- Balsam, her principle poetic strategy is to make accretive lists of images that roll onwards with the force of an incantation. She uses all the senses but the visual is primary. At times the collection is like some of the more hallucinogenic advertisements one sees on the television: I can easily imagine it as a short movie.

There is a trajectory. It almost becomes a narrative in the section about the hunter, where many of the images come together in their clearest and most violent formulation with repeated conjunctions of white and red: snow, body, marble, salt; roses, blood, sex. There is something ornate and baroque about the poetry: the poet filling her verse's space with more and more images like an elaborate carpet design; the images themselves drawn from a collective repertory or image-bank as conventional as the curves on a baroque altarpiece; and then the emphasis on blood, bodies and their fluids like a bleeding statue in its niche.

It is interesting and innovative in the way it refuses to be confined by the parameters of Galician poetry with those canonical preoccupations laid down by Castelao and company. I find this refreshing.

Following this link you can see the poet explaining her opinion of literary prizes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIY234m0s-g>. Neve won the XIII Johán Carballera poetry prize.

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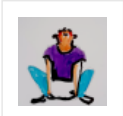
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