

**Memories of the Southern war**

Little boys and little girls  
 That fly away  
 Because the days are milky and the earth so small

Little boy, girls that invent painful frog games  
 Because where they live  
 Toys are built from pure love  
 For life

Running around  
 Faraway running  
 Corncobs in their spring maturity  
 Becoming enchanting Barbies with blond hairs too  
 And blue lullabies are sung softly very softly  
 To their ears  
 Hear this little boys, little girls  
 Songs built from scratch from the lowest of loves

Boys and girls born during the southern wars  
 When big brothers were sent away  
 And mother cried every night  
 As she faced the southern skies  
 As she cooked small loving meals for little boys and girls  
 As the letter A and the letter Z were caressed by her inner and  
 tired fingers

And then one day brother A comes in  
 From down there, where bad bloods are running  
 Between bothers B and brother P (or bother P and P as mom  
 says)  
 Little boy little, girls don't know  
 For them the world is only the small white egg (or brown)  
 Laid by lady Hen in the morning  
 Is the village where they build toys from the tender grass  
 Where they talk to the goats when milking them

As if milking love is all there is to do  
Where bother G and brother C  
Are just like little boy and little girl just like B and P  
(or P and P as mother says)

And then little boy asks brother A:  
*Eh Pá* did you see my brother Zé there?  
Bother A is big very big and little boy  
Is highly enchanted by the green brown earthy colours that he  
bares  
And sharp boots built to un-build the Mayombes

Brother A picks him up  
Taking him close to the sky  
Where loves are said to be tender and gods fair  
And hugs him so, so very closely  
So, so very tightly

No *meu amor* no  
I came from Angola  
Where the sun is unfriendly  
But the trees can sometimes kiss you

Little boys, little girls  
For whom the world is a white beautiful egg or brown  
Offered by lady Hen Just that morning

Down there in the Southern war  
The dance is another  
So very cruel  
So very sad  
Brown eggs and white eggs are not soft:  
Full of rough edges  
And cracks  
Giving away premature vitamins  
For the earth to engulf And brother Z is away  
Away in Guine

Is he thinking about little boy and little girl too?

When is he coming back brother A  
When is my brother Z coming back  
I want to go and fish birds with him  
Come and see I just made a figa

Soon my love very soon

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### **The war Godmother**

Madrinha de guerra  
They call it In the language where it came from

But it is all the same

For it is the need to hang on  
To faraway ropes and misty risky warmth-s  
That always gives rise to such Godmothers

The boys had left their tiny countries  
As the rude ruler had very clearly requested  
They all went down  
Down there  
To kill  
And preserve the lands that were never theirs  
And which their parents  
Had only heard about  
Through inaudible whispers  
Never seeing the colours of its gold  
Or coffees or blue emeralds

But they were only young  
Young boys  
Who had been taught how to walk on eggshells

Like their parents  
Boys who also knew that God, yes God  
Had much suffered  
And so must they  
In the name of Thee

When they arrived in the down lands  
The suns were brutal  
And the Mayombes  
Played deadly secrets  
On their tall young legs

They were young  
Very young  
Placed in places that were never theirs  
And that's when the war Godmother really seemed  
To be the only ultramarine scent  
That could keep them going  
Running  
Trying to ruin the rude Mayombes  
Inside savage lands  
Trying to contain the savages  
Who also loved their lands so very much  
And so, much bad blood was indeed running

In the central and southern upper lands  
In the west and east  
In the orient and occident  
Of mystical people  
For whom the Frangipani  
Was only their tallest and eldest brother

In their home lands  
The young girls were also crying  
For their future lovers  
Had all run down

So what to do what to do?  
 Lonely boys and lonely girls  
 Where will our tangerine juices come from?  
 Where will we find the arms to draw the roundness  
 Of our beautiful lady-bugs?  
 And to furrow our inner leaner lands?  
 The girls kept asking...  
 And where will we find the thighs of Eva Maria and Maria Eva?  
 Where will we eat?  
 What will we drink?  
 What what what?  
 Where where where?  
 Without thin needles stinging and stinging?  
 The boys would moan...

As so the solution was easily found  
 The girls in the upper land  
 Became the blessed Godmothers  
 Of the boys in the down land

Many sweets they would exchange  
 And with words that have ceased to exist  
 For they have been rudely discarded  
 By the rudeness of those who  
 Became slaves of disgraceful dictionaries  
 Inventors of practical refrigerators and fishes gone  
 Convinced that real reason can be achieved  
 By writing without spelling mistakes

In these blessed letters  
 Kindly extended between upper girls and down boys  
 Many many things were discovered  
 Of eyes that never even met  
 Or ways that never even encountered  
 But it was all there  
 Because loneliness and fear  
 Are the blessed brothers

That make us all fall  
In deep love for the Magna Carta

And so when the bad bloods  
Stopped running  
And some escaped the deadly Mayombes  
Marry marriages were made  
Between boys and girls  
Boys and girls  
Who fell in love in the times  
Of the southern wars

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### **The rose mark**

It stands there  
On the left part of by bottom  
Just where my outer back thigh ends its beautiful curve  
And then travels down  
To become my robust leg  
Which has the colour of satin olive

It's a rose mark  
The rose mark  
My once great lover  
Told me it was a piece of him  
'A piece of me you have there,  
A piece that I have been long dying for  
And now I can live

The rose mark is pitch black  
Like him, whom I adore  
(and inhale to drink from the oxygen that nourishes his skin)  
It has the shape of a flower  
Some say even a carnation  
Sacred symbol of liberation in some lands  
When the *povo* fed its red petals to the guns

And started singing *viva a liberdade*

The rose my mother held close to her womb  
 When I was still in her and her in me  
 As if telling me that the solstice had been signed  
 Between brother P and brother P  
 Who after many years of running bad bloods  
 Decided to look into each other's irises  
 And were able to finally find  
 Staring at themselves  
 Real glasses  
 Showing fine crafted wares  
 Staring beyond

The rose held close to my mother's womb  
 When I was still in her and her in me  
 As if telling me  
 Not be afraid to leave her valley  
 When the time was to come  
 Because the world was at peace  
 And brothers A and Z  
 Would be there  
 Waiting  
 And eager to hold me  
 My tender and fresh flesh  
 Still warm and meek  
 Perhaps in the unconscious hopes they themselves  
 Would be able to recall the feeling  
 Of when they were inside  
 A well deserved trip to the motherland  
 After the long years  
 Lost in strange Mayombes

But HE says,  
 'It's a wild butterfly  
 Who flew from my African continent  
 Just to kiss the beginning of your round bottom'

I would become numb with love then  
I would stare at the large intricateness of his eyes  
And then we would love each other  
With the ferocity of big ocean waves  
Travelling fast and deep  
Fast and deep  
To touch all the marine beauties  
Lying underneath  
Staring at the bottom of our soul  
Just like centres of un-centred alabaster(s)

'A piece of me' he would repeat  
While anointing it with his darker oils  
So that it would not die from loneliness  
Lost in a body full of Mediterranean light olive  
After a while it became so black and so live  
That its light took over my entire body  
Leaving it constantly in fluorescent full moons  
Like the earth at night underneath the constellations  
And then one day my lover said  
He had to return to his land  
Where most of his self was  
He said he had to follow the call of nature  
What will happen with my black butterfly?  
What will happen to the piece of you I have in my body?  
Will you take it with you so that you can live?  
Or do you leave it with me so that I can keep you alive?  
What will we do? What will we do with this rose?

'I will give you a special cream  
(made with chestnuts from your land)  
That you must keep with you at all times,  
Bathe in it

So that it will forever maintain its shining blackness'  
But I need your skill, I need your skill

I need your circular motion to make it dance to make it sing  
To make it bright to make it black to make it live to make it light

But he had to go  
The rose did not keep its shine  
Despite my efforts to feed it light  
After a while it became the colour of dead black  
I mourned it and mourned it  
But it didn't do  
And the colour was receding and receding into my other part  
Travelling down south to meet its other self  
It's almost white now  
Almost light olive like the rest of my lonely body

In my hungry moments I scratch it violently  
Until it bleeds  
Until I can dream the profound dark shades that might still be  
lying underneath  
In the moistened loam that waters the other masses  
But then all I get is open sores  
The colour of red blood gargling away  
Or even fading away scars  
Leaving my rose mark  
And my butterfly dead

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**Without my consent**

Without my consent  
He started to pick through  
Slowly very slowly  
Through the many doors of my body  
The many windows of my souls

At first I would pretend to un-see it  
I would speak to my body

And to the centres of my souls  
Pointing to all the reasons why it should not be so impatient  
And how running too fast can break your legs  
But it would not listen  
It had a reason of its own  
That had its own yes-es its own no-es  
Without my consent

And after many, many conversations  
That did not clarify any issues I gave away  
And allowed his beautiful black eyes  
To finally enter my swimming river

There were so many fishes  
And so many colours  
That sometimes we got lost together  
But would sooner or later find the serenity of  
The calming surface

And without my consent  
We started swimming deeper and deeper  
And one day, we could not even find the surface  
And lost our breaths for a while  
But then things appeared to resolve themselves

And another day, during one of our best trips  
I heard a distant and blue song  
Calling him from the other river  
As we descended, the voice would become louder and more  
urgent  
As if the time was afraid to forget  
As if the Voyage had to be re-voyaged  
And this time with the guiding mother

I would try to hold on to him with all the forces that I could  
gather  
But the current was powerful and I had to let it go

He kept insisting that there was no voice  
That it was all my imagination

And then without my consent  
The trips started to slow down  
Until they finally disappeared  
Leaving me stranded by she shore side

And then I would roll on the floor  
Like the unspoiled child who wants to regain her mother's  
silicone valley  
Through a non-returning ticket  
I would scream so loud that my inner cords were broken  
And the river birds would fly away  
I would stay there for days  
Staring at the empty river  
Alone by the shore side  
Trying to learn the voice that stole him away

I wanted to become like her  
The African princess who swam him away  
Without my consent

But I was LUCINDA  
And that I could not change  
So I started to kiss myself alone  
Little by little  
Little by little  
Until I adored  
From the tip of my fingers  
To the top of my toes

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**Terra Nullius**

Terra de ninguém,  
They stated when arriving in Brazil  
De ninguém ninguém ninguém

Then they whispered to the dark large forests  
To hear their own voices just being thrown back at them  
Like wild(less) echoes of non-staring wolves  
Or river murmurs  
Which only reflect your own image when you try to look into the  
waters

In a fashion similar to that of Ricardo Reis and his lady Lídia  
Lídia Martins, says Saramago after  
Saramago,  
That man who seemingly has a wider and smaller vision  
Surely not expecting everyone to hear his own voice  
When he throws it savagely and with brute human force at the  
foresting shadows

Terra de ninguém,  
They whispered at the deep valleys and planes  
In the Africa of the South and the Angola and the *Moçambique*  
And Namibia too perhaps  
They missed the mistiness and crispiness of the many men and  
women who fully lived there  
Their shooting eyes, and sophisticated innocence(s) or  
cunningness(es)  
Up there, in the Congo river, Kurtz and Conrad  
Saw and heard nothing that could sound equally tranquilizing

There was a princess: grave and tall and profound perhaps  
Was she a mystical lady?  
Was she the one who took my love away  
And guided him above the roofs with read tiles

Or above ground close to the shooting stars?  
Was she the Andrómeda whom I often pretend to have nothing  
against?

Terra nullius, nullius, nullius  
Or *terra nuestra*,  
Like the Italians said when arriving in Brazil much later on  
*Nuestra, nuestra*, because we had none where we came from

*Terra nullius, terra nullius*  
*Terra nuestra, nuestra*  
Mine, mine...

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### **The women from Bunnia**

A Canadian well-meaning mid-wife  
Went to Bunnia to save the women

She took all the necessary precautions  
Necessary and praised in the Good World  
So that she could properly save  
And understand the overly pregnant and overly used women  
from Bunnia

To Bunnia she went,  
Where currently there is an abundance of American soldiers  
Trying to save the world from territorial acts

The American soldiers are young and enthusiastic  
And naïve too perhaps  
Sometimes they feel terribly lonely  
Terribly lonely, in the many parts of the world, where they are  
forced to go  
In South Korea for example,  
They visit the bars (which are also brothels) at night only to

converse with the starving girls  
Who have come from all corners of the world:  
From Lithuania and Ukraine  
From Brazil and the Philippines  
From Thailand and perhaps even Jos or Prague

They all feel lonely  
Not just for bread, at least, not the American boys, or not always  
The American boys,  
Whose wives wait for them at home, praying that they get there  
safe and still in love with them  
Praying and holding the babies against them  
The babies who are reminiscent remembrances of past and soft  
love making moments perhaps

The Canadian midwives are indeed well meaning  
They cross the world to go to Bunnia  
And teach the overly used women and young girls  
Many of which have died during childbirth  
They have died from anaemia, bleeding and bleeding to death  
For their bloods were too white and light  
And as everyone knows, such witness and lightness can no  
longer sustain fragile lives  
For example,  
One old husband has lost three of his young wives  
He has lost them when they were trying to give him the baby  
boys (and perhaps even girls)  
That he needed and wanted to continue the line of thought and  
blood

Yesterday he performed the wedding ceremony for the fourth  
time  
With a young woman with the eyes similar to those of the one  
we saw  
A few years ago on the cover of *National Geographic*  
Astonishing fabulous eyes they were, which no one could ever  
ignore

For they penetrate the realms of your most recondite corners  
 And they came at you voracious and wild even when you are  
 sound asleep  
 And think you are protected from the sorrows of the world

But the old man is happy to be remarried and experience again  
 The virgin blood that she will surely have  
 For tradition and identity are strong and demanding  
 'Should we keep all the baggage in the name of tradition and  
 identity?'  
 A male professor of mine once asked us in class  
 'Should we, should we?' He reiterated  
 That man from Inbundia, whom I came to admire at least most of  
 the time  
 The question was never properly answered by him or by the  
 many pupils that were there to learn

But the Canadian woman is very nice  
 Very nice,  
 And eager to teach, "to make them understand" as she says  
 Make them understand they "have resources in their own  
 communities which they can surely use"  
 Even though "they can't read and write and will soon forget the  
 wise instructions"  
 For as many of us know and believe, lack of a written alphabet is  
 a recipe for human disaster

She has traveled all this distance to tell them that  
 Tell it, to the women from Bunnia who have been dying for  
 centuries  
 Dying from lack of iron  
 That red, precious and heavy fundamental element  
 We all need to continue walking the enmeshed streets of our  
 small world

But the Canadian woman meant well  
 And she did more than open her mouth and mind to the locals

She in fact dirtied her hands on the blood and waters that come  
from a woman's wound  
When it's ready to ejaculate life into this world  
Yes, she did that  
And she caressed the young bride softly on her forehead when  
the baby-girl came out  
She caressed her and through the help of a translator, she told her  
that 'she would be Ok'  
That 'they would be OK'  
Does being OK mean the same thing in both languages?  
Or was something lost in translation?  
But still, the Canadian midwife used what might be considered  
an universal language:  
That soft caress on the forehead  
And she was well appreciated by the locals  
Who gave her colourful and ancient gowns  
Made by hand and heart  
Which she eagerly (and thankfully) accepted and brought back to  
show her relatives  
I saw some of them  
Yesterday on the news  
It was all broadcasted as the "Success Story"

'It's all a natural thing really  
And it's really no one's fault'  
As the Brazilian Menina once said  
When referring to her own lifestyle  
Which is in fact an old and very stubborn tradition

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