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# THE POEMS AND APHORISMS OF MÁRIO QUINTANA

Selected, translated & introduced by GIOVANNI PONTIERO $^{\dagger}$ 

Edited, with a Foreword, by Ceri Byrne, Ann L. Mackenzie & Felipe Botelho Correa

# Acknowledgements

The Editors of Mário Quintana, *Poems and Aphorisms*, selected, translated and introduced by Giovanni Pontiero<sup>†</sup>, are most grateful to Elena Quintana de Oliveira, the niece of the poet Mário Quintana and copyright holder of his writings, for giving permission to publish in the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* Quintana's original poems and aphorisms as selected for inclusion here, alongside Dr Pontiero's translations of them into English. For arranging the necessary authorization, the Editors are also grateful to the Agência Literária Riff Ltda, Rio de Janeiro, and to the Casa de Cultura Mário Quintana, Porto Alegre, Brazil for advice and assistance.

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# **Contents**

# Acknowledgements

Foreword Ann L. Mackenzie

Introduction: Mário Quintana, the Sorcerer's Apprentice Giovanni Pontiero

Quintana's Bar, by Carlos Drummond de Andrade, trans. Giovanni Pontiero

Texto do autor: 'a Poesia' (The Poet's Testimony), by Mário Quintana, trans. Giovanni Pontiero

The Poems and Aphorisms of Mário Quintana, selected & translated by Giovanni Pontiero

List of Translated Poems and Aphorisms by Mário Quintana

Mário Quintana: Selected Bibliography

# Foreword

Brought up in Scotland by Italian parents, Giovanni Pontiero (1932–1996) was a cultured and cosmopolitan 'Italian Scot'. Fluent in several European languages, he had already travelled widely, had lived in diverse countries, and had spent several years in a seminary in Rome, before, in 1956, as a mature student, he began his undergraduate studies at Glasgow University, where the Department of Hispanic Studies was under the headship of the scholar now being honoured through this Double Issue of the Bulletin of Spanish Studies dedicated to Studies on Spain, Portugal and Latin America in Memory of William C. Atkinson.

After graduating in 1960 with a Double Honours MA in Hispanic Studies and Italian, Giovanni went to Brazil, where for two years he conducted research for his doctoral thesis, while supporting himself by teaching English in the Department of English Studies, which he also headed, at Paraíba University, João Pessoa. Simultaneously, he was Director of one of the British Institutes in Brazil. By the time he returned to the UK, he had completed his thesis on 'The Poetry of Manuel Bandeira' in record time, for which, in 1962, he was awarded his PhD by Glasgow University. Supported by references from his former professor and research supervisor, for which he was enduringly grateful, Giovanni embarked on a distinguished career as a Latin Americanist, initially through a lectureship at Manchester University (1962–1966) and then at the University of Liverpool. He returned to Manchester University in 1970, where he remained in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies until his retirement through ill-health in June 1995.

At Manchester, still specializing in Portuguese and Latin-American literature, he was a dedicated and influential teacher. Despite a consistent overload of teaching and administration, he maintained an enviable record of research and publication which

<sup>1</sup> In the obituary he wrote about 'Professor William Atkinson' in *The Independent*, 30 September 1992, p. 23, Giovanni put on record his high opinion of his old professor, 'many of [whose] former students hold academic posts throughout the United Kingdom and the Americas and they owe much to his encouragement, guidance and material assistance in securing scholarships and travel grants'.

brought him promotion, first to Senior Lecturer then to Reader (1986) in Latin-American Studies. His numerous books, articles. critical editions and translations included his monograph on Manuel Bandeira, a biography of Eleonora Duse, and an edition of Gabriel García Márquez's El coronel no tiene quien le escribe.<sup>2</sup> His first translations of prominent Portuguese and Brazilian writers began to appear in the late 1960s and many more followed. His total number of translated books amounted to nineteen, of which six were works by Clarice Lispector and seven by José Saramago. During the last year of his illness, he had completed translations of two of Saramago's novels. In addition, there were his many translations of short stories and poems by a rich diversity of writers. There is no doubt that as a translator Giovanni is best remembered for his English versions of the works of Lispector and of Saramago, which did much to establish the reputation of these two outstanding writers within Englishspeaking countries throughout the world. Among the many other writers from Portugal and Brazil whose works he studied and translated were: Manuel Bandeira, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Cecília Meireles, Nélida Piñón, José Cardoso Pires, Lya Luft, Ana Miranda, António Osório and, of course, Mário Quintana.

Regrettably, his numerous, internationally respected studies and translations did not bring him the promotion to professor which he so richly deserved. But if the chair at Manchester University was not forthcoming, there were many other illustrious awards bestowed on him nationally and internationally. Among these proofs of his scholarship, reputation and influence were the prizes he gained for his inspired literary translations, notably of the novels of Saramago: He received the Texeira-Gomes Prize (1995), for his translation of Saramago's The Gospel according to Jesus Christ; the year before he had obtained the Outstanding Translation Award from the American Literary Translators' Association, for the same work (1994); in the UK in 1993 he had been awarded the Foreign Fiction Award by The Independent for his translation of Saramago's The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis. He was particularly honoured when his English version of Saramago's Memorial do Convento (Baltasar and

<sup>2</sup> See Giovanni Pontiero, Manuel Bandeira (visão geral de sua obra), trad. Terezinha Prado Galante, prefácio de Antônio Cândido (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1986); Giovanni Pontiero, Eleonora Duse: In Life and Art (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Peter Lang, 1986); Gabriel García Márquez, El coronel no tiene quien le escriba, ed., with intro., notes & vocabulary, by Giovanni Pontiero (Manchester: Manchester U. P., 1981).

Blimunda) was used to provide the libretto for The Apotheosis of Blimunda, an opera by Azio Corghi.<sup>3</sup>

Giovanni's versions of the poems and aphorisms of Mário Quintana (1906-1994) are among the least known and least accessible of his translations of Luso-Brazilian writers. these translations have appeared previously in different literary magazines such as the British-based PN Review, 17:3 (1991) and News from Brazil: Literary Supplement (1994; in commemoration of Quintana's eightieth birthday). Subsequently, in 1999, John Milton with an appreciative introduction, a number translations, with the texts of the original poems, in an article titled 'Giovanni Pontiero: Translations of Mário Quintana', published in Cadernos de Literatura em Tradução. But, thanks to the previously unpublished typescript kindly made available to us by Professor Juan Sager, we are able to publish here Giovanni's collected translations of Quintana's *Poems and Aphorisms*, together with the poet's original texts and preceded by an essay on Quintana not previously available in this amplified and annotated form.<sup>5</sup> We have here merged the essay, which Giovanni had originally titled 'Afterword', with a biographical note he had written on Quintana, to provide what is now the 'Introduction', to which we have added explanatory footnotes; and, to end the edition, we have also supplied a 'Selected Bibliography'.

Given his grateful memories of his professor and of his *alma* mater, Giovanni Pontiero would have been delighted, we can feel certain, that his essay and translations of Mário Quintana figure posthumously in the Bulletin's Festschrift of Studies on Spain, Portugal and Latin America in Memory of William C. Atkinson. In making his final contribution to Luso-Brazilian Studies accessible through the BSS to Latin Americanists worldwide, we agree wholeheartedly with the judgment of John Milton, and of many other specialists and academics, that as a scholar, critic and translator, Giovanni Pontiero 'occupies a central position in the definition and

<sup>3</sup> On this work, see Giovanni Pontiero, 'The Apotheosis of Blimunda: An Opera by Azio Corghi Based on Saramago's Memorial do Convento', in Hispanic Studies in Honour of Geoffrey Ribbans, ed., with an intro., by Ann L. Mackenzie & Dorothy Severin, BHS Special Homage Volume (Liverpool: Liverpool U. P., 1992), 335–43.

<sup>4</sup> For this article by John Milton, see  $Cadernos\ de\ Literatura\ em\ Tradução,\ 3$  (1999), 129–62.

<sup>5</sup> A shorter version of the essay, devoid of notes, accompanied the translated poems which appeared in *News from Brazil: Literary Supplement* (1994).

spread of Brazilian [and] Portuguese literature in the English-speaking world'.6

Ann L. Mackenzie

University of Glasgow, November 2017.

<sup>6</sup> John Milton, 'Giovanni Pontiero: Translations of Mário Quintana', 129. For more detailed information on Giovanni's career and achievements, see *The Translator's Dialogue*, ed. & intro. by Pilar Orero & Juan C. Sager (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997, ix—xiii; see especially, in the same book, Chapter 4, 'Literary Critics' and Translators' Comments on the Translations', 115–60, and Chapter 5, 'Giovanni Pontiero, 1932–1996', 161–86. See also A. Gordon Kinder, 'Giovanni Pontiero (1932–1996)', *BHS* (Glasgow), LXXIII:3 (1996), 333–35; Ann L. Mackenzie, 'Giovanni Pontiero', *The Herald*, 14 March 1996, p. 22.

<sup>\*</sup> Disclosure Statement: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the editors.

# Introduction Mário Quintana, the Sorcerer's Apprentice\*

# GIOVANNI PONTIERO<sup>†</sup>

University of Manchester

Amidst madmen, the Dead, the Children There I sing, in an eternal circle, Our common desires and hopes ...<sup>1</sup>

Mário Quintana was born on 30 July 1906 in Alegrete, in the deep south of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Poet, writer, translator and journalist, he spent most of his life in the state capital, Porto Alegre, writing there mainly for the newspaper, *Correio do Povo* and translating a wide range of European authors for the publishing house, Livraria do Globo. His translations of Maupassant, Proust, Voltaire, Prosper Merimée, Charles Morgan, Virginia Woolf and Rosamond Lehmann have become classics in their own right and

<sup>\*</sup> This essay (finished May 1989) was originally placed at the end of this edition and translation of Quintana's selected poems and aphorisms and given the title of 'Afterword: Mário Quintana, the Sorcere's Apprentice'. But the editors have considered it to serve more logically as an Introduction, into which they have merged the author's original 'Biographical Note' on Quintana. To assist readers, the editors have also added the footnotes, because the original 'Afterword' had no such references. They have also contributed a 'Selected Bibliography'. A list of the poems and aphorisms by Quintana selected for translation, indicating which collections and editions have been used to verify the texts, is also provided. Apart from these changes and additions, the editors have adhered to the author's original typescript as closely as was consistent with the BSS's house style rules.

Parts of the introductory study and the translations of Quintana's poems which follow have been previously and separately published in the following journals: News from Brazil: Literary Supplement (1994) (in commemoration of Quintana's eightieth birthday); PN Review (Manchester) 17:3 (1991), <a href="http://www.pnreview.co.uk/cgi-bin/scribe?item\_id=4360">http://www.pnreview.co.uk/cgi-bin/scribe?item\_id=4360</a> (accessed 28 March 2017); and in John Milton, 'Giovanni Pontiero: Translations of Mário Quintana', Cadernos de Literatura em Tradução, 3 (1999), 129–62.

<sup>1 &#</sup>x27;Entre os Loucos, os Mortos e as Crianças, / É lá que eu canto, numa eterna ronda, / Nossos comuns desejos e esperanças! ...'. (A Rua dos Cata-Ventos). See Mário Quintana, Poesia completa, organização, preparação do texto, prefácio e notas de Tania Franco Carvalhal (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Aguilar, 2006 [1ª ed. 2005]), 89, <a href="https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA\_COMPLETA\_MARIO\_QUINTANA">https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA\_COMPLETA\_MARIO\_QUINTANA</a> (accessed 18 April 2017). Unless otherwise stated, all references have been verified using this edition.

have justly been admired for their fidelity and impeccable sense of style. He died on 5 May 1994.

Quintana made his literary debut as a writer of short stories but soon came to realize that he possessed a more natural flair for verse. His individual qualities as a poet became apparent with the publication of his first collection of sonnets, A Rua dos Cata-Ventos (Weather-Vane Street), published in 1940. Tradition and modernity are reconciled in his innovative approach to metre and rhythm, and in his disregard for rhetoric and artifice. His sonnets combine an innate lyricism with a colloquial intimacy that became his hallmark. Subsequent collections of verse, Canções (Songs) (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1946), Sapato Florido (Floral Slipper) (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1948), O Aprendiz de Feiticeiro (The Sorcerer's Apprentice) (Porto Alegre: Editora Fronteira, 1950), Espelho Mágico (The Magic Mirror) (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1951), Antologia poética (Poetic Anthology) (Rio de Janeiro: Editora do Autor, 1966), Caderno H (Notebook H) (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1973) and Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural (Notes on Supernatural History) (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo/Instituto Estadual do Livro, 1976), consolidated his reputation. In his native Rio Grande do Sul, Quintana's poetry made him something of a guru. His poems convey truth and humanity, pungent wit and compassion. A poet for all seasons, he was, as one distinguished Brazilian writer memorably described him: 'an angel disguised as a man'.<sup>2</sup>

An incorrigible bohemian who lived a solitary life, travelled little, and guarded his privacy from critics and admirers alike, he was nevertheless a provincial with wide horizons and is considered to be one of the most influential Brazilian poets of modern times. He accompanied successive phases of Post-Modernism and outlived the major poets with whom he felt a close affinity: most notable of all, Augusto Meyer, Manuel Bandeira, Cecília Meireles and Carlos Drummond de Andrade. Quintana was the last great personality of that generation of poets and the natural heir to the values they upheld, and the spontaneous lyricism they pursued and perfected. The poems and aphorisms he steadily produced over the last fifty years of his career were inspired by the simple realities of everyday life, were characterized by a lyricism adjusted to contemporary taste and embodied the authentic voice and soul of Brazil.

Like most of the poets of his generation, Quintana wrote his first verses under the influence of the Symbolist movement with its pronounced musicality and preoccupation with form. Then came Surrealism, Futurism and the explosive manifesto of Brazilian Modernism which moved away from dogmatic theories towards bold individuality, from self-conscious eloquence to droll colloquialism. Proud to be provincial and deeply attached

<sup>2 &#</sup>x27;[U]m anjo disfarçado de homem' (Érico Veríssimo, 'Prefácio', in *Pé de pilão*, ilustrações de Edgar Koetz & prefácio de Érico Veríssimo [Porto Alegre: Editora Garatuja e do Instituto Estadual do Livro, 1975]).

to his native Rio Grande do Sul, Quintana readily identified with the freedom and versatility of those radical movements. Their insistence upon the poet's need to forge his own language and establish his own set of rules helped Quintana to find his inimitable voice. Reflecting on the contribution made by those movements, he sees them as a process of confluence rather than influence in his own output. Quintana's perception of the world and its concern stems from a close examination of people and things around him. The mysteries he unfolds in the ordinary events of daily life are just as intriguing as any speculations about the vast world beyond his immediate reality, a world which he has only ever known through books and the eyes of others.

The poet's imaginative appraisal of the pleasures and disappointments of life is conveyed with grace and wit. In old age, he describes himself as a child who has suddenly grown old but who also chooses to think each passing moment is life renewing itself. In this sense many of Quintana's poems are instantaneous reflections of cyclical time and experience. As a sick and lonely child, he would watch the world from his bedroom window. In adolescence, he discovered the social thrill of the Belle Epoque, an age in which Porto Alegre's cafés and nightclubs were frequented by famous European actors and opera singers, while in the city's cinemas he discovered the glamour of Hollywood. The awkward inhibitions of adolescence soon gave way to bohemian excess but 'the solitary vice' of poetry had already taken root.3 Mistrustful of 'false memories', the poet evokes his youth without any hint of remorse or mawkish sentimentality.<sup>4</sup> It was fun time and there was enough excitement to fire his imagination in the provinces without aspiring to things remote and unattainable or indulging in vague abstractions.

His enthusiasm for life, whatever its ups and down, is one of the poet's most appealing traits. Quintana is convinced that just to have been born is reason enough for being happy. Man may age but life remains 'young, naked ... and clothed only in desire'. Besides, life must not simply be lived,

Eu sou um homem fechado.

O mundo me tornou egoísta e mau.

E a minha poesia é um vício triste,

Desesperado e solitário

Que eu faço tudo por abafar. (Canções [1946], Poesia completa, 158)

Adolescente, olha! A vida é nova ...

A vida é nova e anda nua

-vestida apenas com o teu desejo!

<sup>3</sup> There is a poem by Quintana titled 'Cançao do Amor Imprevisto' which Pontiero might well have had in his thoughts here:

<sup>4</sup> Pontiero has in mind a poem titled 'As falsas recordações', one of the poems he translates here (see the collection, *Sapato Florido*, in *Poesia completa*, 183).

<sup>5</sup> Pontiero refers here to the poem 'O Adolescente', with the lines:

it must also be dreamed. The sheer contentment of this frail old man who the poet has become, who has never possessed a home, wife, family, security, or wealth, is altogether reassuring. He is confident that the nice things in life outweigh its reversals, that the congenitally indolent can get used to work, and that even the most incorrigible bohemian (alias Quintana) can learn to channel libertinism into creative energy. The poet attributes this survival to his unshaken belief that happiness consists in getting on with life. Friends and contemporaries have inevitably died off once they stopped believing in existence. And while recognizing that progress has scarcely promoted civilization, there is an air of nonconformity about modern society that suits him admirable. As someone who spent his entire life moving from one hotel to another, he learned the virtues of being adaptable. He became convinced that human nature does not change, only the political and social factors which influence our lives change. When prodded about his views on religion, Quintana would wryly confess that his faith could be described as being 'totally infantile'. He openly admits that he has no clear image of God as a spiritual abstraction, yet feels a certain sympathy for the second person of the Holy Trinity, because there is historical evidence that Christ walked among men. With tongue in cheek, he suggests that God genuinely needs humanity. He playfully enquires: 'What would God do without men? He would be reduced to being the God of spiders and scorpions ...'.6

The celebrations throughout Brazil to mark Quintana's eightieth birthday aroused nationwide interest in this solitary figure who had survived against all the odds. Poverty, illness, mishaps and disappointments had scarcely ruffled his quiet optimism about the present or the future. In a rare interview, he remarked:

When I became sixty, people asked me how I felt. At seventy they continued to ask me the same question. I feel like a ship crossing the Equator. It doesn't make the slightest impression. I simply feel alive.<sup>7</sup>

And then when he was in his eighties, Quintana confessed to feeling 'more stupid and inexperienced than before' but ever hopeful. His greatest dream, he reminds his readers is to see tomorrow, to keep his brain cells oiled and fight off the rust. The master of self-parody, he tells his readers that it wasn't for any lack of neglect that he lived to see eighty. He survived the excesses of his rakish youth and discovered to his surprise and

<sup>(</sup>in Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, Poesia completa, 387)

<sup>6</sup> Compare 'Modus Vivendi': 'Deus nos promete a vida eterna, mesmo porque, se não fôssemos nós, o que seria dele? Um Deus dos hipopótamos, das aranhas, das lagartixas?' (from *Caderno H, Poesia completa*, 360).

<sup>7</sup> The editors have been unable to trace this interview which Pontiero quotes from here. It is always possible that the interviewer was Giovanni Pontiero himself and that his notes of it taken at the time were never published.

consolation that '[h]ard work is the one great binge old men can still enjoy'.<sup>8</sup> At heart, he remained essentially the same, while recognizing that the circle has tightened and death continues to stalk him:

Minha morte nasceu quando eu nasci. Despertou, balbuciou, cresceu comigo ... E dançamos de roda ao luar amigo Na pequenina rua em que vivi.

My death was born with me Awoke, babbled, and grew with me... We dance in a ring beneath the friendly moon In the little alleyway where once I lived.<sup>9</sup>

Death is a constant theme in his poetry but its inevitability is treated with composure. The shadow of death ironically helps to focus the sensation of being alive. Dying, he reassures us, is nothing, the really annoying thing is to stop living. He invites us to think of death as one last surprise and novelty, and if he's in no great hurry to see what the next world has to offer, there's one little satisfaction he anticipates with pleasure:

A morte é a libertação total: a morte é quando a gente pode, afinal, estar deitado de sapatos ...

Death means total freedom: We can lie down With our shoes on ...<sup>10</sup>

And the next world must surely be preferred to being reduced to matter for, as he warns us, 'Should we turn to stone, we'd no longer be able to scratch ourselves'.<sup>11</sup>

As one of Brazil's most evasive poets, Quintana shunned publicity and promotion all his life. Averse to travel and reluctant to stir from Porto Alegre where he had lived and worked for most of his adult life, the poet insists that the centre of the universe is to be found in his poems. Avid journalists and critics pressing for interviews were all given the same answer: 'I want my poems to speak for me, for if I were to speak for myself,

<sup>8</sup> See 'Do Trabalho': 'O trabalho é a farra dos velhos' ( $\it Caderno~H,~Poesia~completa,~309).$ 

<sup>9</sup> The stanza is from 'XIX. Para Moysés Vellinho', in  $\it Rua\ de\ Cata\mbox{-}Ventos,\ Poesia\ completa,\ 103.$ 

<sup>10</sup> The stanza is from 'Libertação', in A Vaca e o Hipogrifo, Poesia completa, 511.

<sup>11</sup> See 'Percalços da Posteridade': 'O mais irritante de nos transformarem um dia em estátuas é que a gente não pode coçar-se' (in *Da preguiça como método de trabalho*, *Poesia completa*, 687).

I might appear to be making excuses'. Journalist, poet and a distinguished translator of Proust, Virginia Woolf and Maupassant, amongst others, poetry is the very core of his existence. In Quintana's own words:

To be a poet is not a way of writing. It's a way of existing. Even an illiterate man can become a poet, for poetry is 'a state of being and not a profession'.<sup>12</sup>

His occasional statements on his role as a poet are as unambiguous as they sound. The poet must be true to himself rather than follow fashion, the poet is a solitary writing for another solitary, he must write as if he were the last surviving human being who no longer needs to worry about what others may think. The true poet must incorporate experience and not simply churn out quotations and definitions. He defines poetry as an offshoot of magic and the invention of truth.

Texture and harmony are the two essential features he cultivates in his own verse:

O poeta é belo como o Taj-Mahal feito de renda e mármore e serenidade.

The poet is as handsome as the Taj-Mahal made of lace, marble and serenity.<sup>13</sup>

As a miniaturist, he is sensitive to details and systematically pares and prunes his poems until the balance seems right. He recalls the legend of King Midas who was so unfortunate that everything he touched turned to gold. Everything the poet touches, he insists, must become an integral part of the poet himself; it might be a shoe, an ashtray, a tie, or a scrubbing brush. For if poets once sang of swans and hippogryphs and nightingales, they now speak of ducks and parrots and cows. The commonplace, awkward, even ugly things of life, for so long forgotten by poets, have now come into their own. Quintana finds comfort in this small-scale world of familiar, intimate things, which he explores with avid curiosity. Inspiration springs from the most unexpected corners of experience, and when Quintana, citing Oswald de Andrade, tells us that 'Poetry is the discovery of things I've never seen', he is also inviting us to take a closer look at our surroundings. Poetry, he assures us, can only bring

<sup>12</sup> See, for a comparison, from 'De uma entrevista concedida a Edla Von Steen': 'Ser poeta não é uma maneira de escrever. É uma maneira de ser. O leitor de poesia é também um poeta. Para mim o poeta não é essa espécie saltitante que chamam de Relações Públicas, O poeta é Relações Intimas' (in *Da preguiça como método de trabalho*, *Poesia completa*, 742).

 $<sup>13\,</sup>$  See 'O Poeta é Belo', originally published in  $\it Esconderijos\ do\ Tempo,\ Poesia\ completa,\ 488.$ 

<sup>14</sup> Compare 'Que a poesia é a descoberta / Das coisas que eu nunca vi' (from Oswald de Andrade, '3 de maio', in *Poesia reunida* [São Paulo: Difusão FLI ropéia do Livro, 1966], 96).

happiness, that creative happiness which extinguishes all else. He sees no salvation outside poetry and sincerely believes that anybody who likes poetry cannot be all that bad.

Quintana's enduring popularity as a poet in Brazil is easy to explain. With Quintana, poetry is restored to people at large. And key statements confirm that this is intentional. Quintana believes that 'it isn't the reader who discovers the poet. It's the poet who discovers the reader. The reader reads something, feels something and says to himself, that's me!'15 Elsewhere he enlarges on this statement:

People are poetry. And vice-versa. It's important to note that song and verse, like drink and religion, are to be found from the outset in all civilisations. Poetry is inherent in human nature. When the man on the street reads a poem, he discovers to his amazement that the poet has expressed things that he himself wasn't even aware of thinking and feeling. So the poet is simply someone who expresses things first. <sup>16</sup>

Quintana's frankness and wit, his questioning attitude to conventional clichés, and his warmth and understanding make him the most Brazilian and at the same time the most universal of poets. His poems cling to life, preach neither escape nor evasion. He frequently referred to Carlos Drummond de Andrade as the 'poet's poet'. Quintana made Drummond's precepts about poetry his own. He, too, believed in a poetic vision that charts life 'without mystification', and that the poet's mandate is 'time, time here and now, man here and now, life here and now'. Like Drummond de Andrade he offers a deeper vision of existence and advocates a life lived with increasing intensity.

In Quintana's poems, however, the humour is more expansive than in Drummond de Andrade, and the mood invariably lighter. He delights in being provocative to the point of irreverence. Books of verse are defined as 'pornography fit for angels'. Mischief and ribaldry weave in and out of his poems. After all, he would declare, the art of writing is essentially disrespectful and should always have a touch of the prohibited about it. His

<sup>15</sup> See, for comparison: 'E não é o leitor que descobre o poeta, mas o poeta é que descobre o leitor, que o revela a si mesmo', from 'De uma entrevista concedida a Edla von Steen', in *Da preguiça como método de trabalho, Poesia completa*, 742; 'não é o leitor que descobre o seu poeta, mas o poeta que descobre o seu leitor' ('A Poesia', in *Porta Giratoria, Poesia completa*, 779).

<sup>16</sup> The editors have been unable to trace the original quotation from Quintana which Pontiero translates or paraphrases here.

<sup>17</sup> Compare Drummond de Andrade's poem 'Os Ombros Suportam o Mundo', which has the line: 'A vida apenas, sem mistificação' (in *Sentimento do Mundo* [Rio de Janeiro: Irmãos Pongetti, 1940]; extracted from Carlos Drummond de Andrade, *Nova Reunião* [Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editora, 1985], 78).

<sup>18 &#</sup>x27;Os livros de poemas são os livros pornográficos dos anjos', from 'Leituras Secretas', in *A Vaca e o Hipogrifo, Poesia completa*, 560.

jibes are largely reserved for human foibles. Political chicanery and social injustices, on the other hand, are treated with scorn rather than invective. Poetry of commitment, he confides, is not his forte. Political and social realities are not entirely ignored, but they are subordinated to more vital aspects of human experience.

In his time, Quintana experimented with a wide variety of poetic genres and techniques according to the circumstances and their requirements. He believed that 'every poem exacts its own poetic art'.<sup>19</sup> There is a marked preference for short, concise poems. His stark, unadorned statements bring to mind the anti-poets of the sixties, with their contempt for rhetoric and verbosity. Prose poems abound, the perfect medium for his idiosyncratic appraisal of life's banalities:

Desconfia dos que não fumam: esses não têm vida interior, não tem sentimentos. O cigarro é uma maneira sutil, e disfarcada de suspirar.

I distrust people who don't smoke: they have no inner life, no feelings. The cigarette is a disguised form of sighing.<sup>20</sup>

The poet tells us that his poems develop from incidents and perceptions that are not subjects for conversations. To capture them in poetry is like speaking to oneself, in a new kind of language. He describes his poetry as being nocturnal, for 'the night is millennial ... night comes from the depths of time, from the depth of all eras ... night is when things happen ... when silence reigns'. For the poet there is nothing more precious than silence and solitude, the essential conditions for the creative mind.

Quintana's powers of communication are such that he gives the impression of having been in constant dialogue with the reader over many years. This may be explained by the fact that most of his poetry was published regularly in the columns of Porto Alegre's leading newspapers. This clearly gave him a sense of day-to-day contact with readers who became close friends in whom he felt he could confide his joys and fears. His first collection of sonnets, *A Rua dos Cata-Ventos* (Weather-Vane Street), appeared in 1940 when Quintana was already in his thirties. When asked why he had taken so long to publish, his laconic reply was predictable:

Preguiça e consciência. Tudo o que prejudica a minha preguiça prejudica o meu trabalho. Consciencia, porque eu sempre quis fazer uma Coisa muito conscienciosa.

<sup>19</sup> Compare 'Verás com o tempo que cada poema, aliás, impõe a sua forma', from 'Carta', in *Caderno H, Poesia completa*, 342–44 (p. 344).

<sup>20 &#</sup>x27;Arte de fumar', in Sapato Florido, Poesia completa, 168.

<sup>21</sup> The editors have been unable to trace the source of this reference taken from Quintana.

Laziness and conscience. Everything that prejudices my laziness, prejudices my work. Conscience, because I had always hoped to achieve something worthwhile.<sup>22</sup>

Laziness as a method of work, he explains, means not forcing one's hand. Conversely, it doesn't mean sitting around forever waiting for the muse to descend. This process, he assures us, is laborious, but the final results are more durable. He invariably writes out the poems by hand and then types them with one finger. Days of listless waiting are followed by days of frenzied activity. The poet has no fixed timetable, he tells us, he is on call twenty-four hours each day. His poems grew shorter over the years. Adjectives and metaphors became more infrequent. Images, no matter how ingenious, he is always willing to sacrifice on behalf of overall balance. A declared enemy of the baroque, he compares the ornate poem with a rococo altarpiece where you cannot see the saint for the angels.

Sentiment is curbed with the same determination. All too aware that he belonged to a race much given to 'saudade', Quintana explained the importance of humour in his verse as a means of controlling and reducing the sentiment and emotion in it. He liked to say that like all his friends who were deeply sentimental, he felt ashamed of showing so much feeling. So he would disguise his sentimentality by means of humour.<sup>23</sup> Like those other notable humourists from whom he learned so much, Augusto Meyer, Manuel Bandeira and Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Quintana's self-conscious outbursts of wit and humour can be teasing, waspish or even bitter.

Like the Sorcerer's apprentice of legendary fame, who gave him the title for one of his best collections of poetry (*O Aprendiz de Feiticero* [1950]), Quintana is constantly trying to perfect his art. He insists that his writing has never really crystallized and is in a permanent state of evolution. Yet, other Brazilian poets have spoken of the perfect synthesis of life and art in his poetry. His innate lyricism and indistinctive grasp of all things essential in nature and art have made him a poet who says all things to all men. Friends have described him as an angel who descended on earth disguised as a man, an angel who adopted the name of Mário Quintana and opted for the ill-paid profession of poet.<sup>24</sup> Grateful for the compliment, he made it clear, nevertheless, that he would rather be a demon than an angel. Unrepentantly provincial and popular, Quintana achieved all his ambitions as a poet and proved his point that

<sup>22</sup> From 'De uma entrevista concedida a Edla von Steen', in Da preguiça como método de trabalho, Poesia completa, 742.

<sup>23</sup> Compare, from 'Acontece que': 'Como todos os indivíduos profundamente sentimentais, acontece que tenho verdadeiro horror ao sentimentalismo verbal. Daí, certos toques de "humour" nos meus poemas. Uns toques de impureza, pois' (in *Caderno H, Poesia completa*, 284).

<sup>24</sup> See the reference given in note 2 above.

[s]er poeta não é dizer grandes coisas, mas ter uma voz reconhecível dentre todas as outras.

to be a poet doesn't mean saying grandiose things, but to have a voice that is immediately recognisable among all the others. $^{25}$ 

<sup>25</sup> From 'A Voz', in Caderno H, Poesia completa, 295.

#### Quintana's Bar\*

In a bar closed down many years ago, and whose metal shutters suddenly opened, I meet the poet Mario Quintana whom I've never seen before.

So easy to recognize him, no need to identify him. The poet raises his body, I raise mine. Somewhere—on some hill? some mountain?—the morning turns to dew.

In the total disintegration of ancient things, there persists an element of magic: the star of the sea—or Aldebaran? Little wooden clogs, a girl chasing her hoop. And she runs light as thistle-down.

Conversing quietly, we understand each other, I with assenting look, he with his talisman. Just as the black maid's voodoo once bewitched me in the soot-filled kitchen.

In the conspiracy of dawn, the poet Quintana—the bar vanished—wanders in solitude. His eye probes the thickening mist, the brume of bygone days.

A web weaving itself, without the spider's labour. I speak of friends who have aged or disappeared into the hazelnut seed.

We now fly over rooftops, clinging to the unearthly witch. To cheat the hunger we do not feel, we paint a pomegranate.

And now that men have no province, the rustic flower drops its petals. The poet shows me the houses: that of Rimbaud, that of Blake, and the grotto of Camoens.

Down below where the river bends, the poet's lovers prepare to dance a slow pavane, and one by one, bitter drops, they vanish into the poem. It has been many years, will it be yesterday, was it tomorrow? Cryptographic signs remain engraved in the eternal sky—or on the table of an extinct bar as the poet Mario Quintana, leaning over its marble top, travels on into silence.

(translated by Giovanni Pontiero from Drummond de Andrade's 'Quintana's Bar')

<sup>\*</sup> Described as 'a poem in prose', the original text of 'Quintana's Bar' is to be found in *Claro Enigma* (1951), in Carlos Drummond de Andrade, *Poesia completa* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Aguilar, 2006), 273.

# Texto do autor: 'A Poesia' \*

Encomendaram-me os editores uma 'suma' de minha poesia, o que me enche de perplexidade. Pois não foi aereamente e sim muito de propósito que dei a um dos meus livros (que por sinal é o predileto de Manuel Bandeira, Augusto Meyer e Carlos Drummond) o título de *O aprendiz de feiticeiro*, tirado de uma lenda alemã. Esse incauto aprendiz, na ausência do seu Mestre, pôs-se a lidar com forças desconhecidas, e o que aconteceu foi uma incontrolável multiplicação de vassouras, no meu caso uma multiplicação de poemas.

Saberá mesmo um poeta em que consiste essa espécie de força oculta que o faz poetar? Ele não tem culpa de ser poeta; portanto, não tem do que se desculpar ou explicar.

Se eu conheço algum segredo é o da sinceridade, não escrevo uma vírgula que não seja confessional. Esse desejo insopitável de expressar o que tem dentro de si é o mesmo que leva o crente ao confessionário e o incréu ao divã do analista. O poeta prescinde de ambas as coisas, e os que não são poetas, mas gostam de poesia, desafogam a si mesmos através dos poemas que lêem: porque na verdade vos digo que não é o leitor que descobre o seu poeta, mas o poeta que descobre o seu leitor.

Mário Quintana

<sup>\* &#</sup>x27;A Poesia', in *Porta giratória*, *Poesia completa*, organização, preparação do texto, prefácio e notas de Tania Franco Carvalhal (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Aguilar, 2006 [1ª ed. 2005]),778–79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA\_COMPLETA\_MARIO\_QUINTANA">https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA\_COMPLETA\_MARIO\_QUINTANA</a>

# The Poet's Testimony

When my publisher asked me to make a brief statement about my poetry, I found myself a little bewildered. For it wasn't out of the blue but quite deliberately that I called one of my books of poetry *O Aprendiz do Feiticeiro* (*The Sorcerer's Apprentice*), a title borrowed from a German fable. That careless apprentice, during his master's absence, began to tangle with unknown forces which resulted in an uncontrollable multiplication of brooms; in my case a multiplication of poems.

Can any poet ever know what hidden force makes him a poet? He is not to blame for being a poet; therefore, he has no reason to apologise or explain himself.

If I have any secret to impart, it's that of sincerity. I don't write a single line which is not a confession. This restless desire to express an inner self takes the believer to the confessional and the non-believer to the analyst's couch. The poet dispenses with both, and lets those who are not poets, but like poetry, unburden themselves through the poems they read. For I can tell you in all frankness that it is not the reader who discovers the poet, but the poet who discovers his reader.

(translated by Giovanni Pontiero)

# The Poems and Aphorisms of Mário Quintana\* translated by Giovanni Pontiero

#### O Poema

Um poema como um gole d'água bebido no escuro.

Como um pobre animal palpitando ferido.

Como pequenina moeda de prata perdida para sempre na floresta noturna.

Um poema sem outra angústia que a sua misteriosa condição de poema.

Triste.

Solitário.

Único.

Ferido de mortal beleza.

(O Aprendiz de Feiticeiro, 197)

## Objetos perdidos

Os guarda-chuvas perdidos ... aonde vão parar os guarda-chuvas perdidos? E os botões que se desprenderam? E as pastas de papéis, os estojos de pince-nez, as maletas esquecidas nas gares, as dentaduras postiças, os pacotes de compras, os lenços com pequenas economias, aonde vão parar todos esses objetos heteróclitos e tristes? Não sabes? Vão parar nos anéis de Saturno, são eles que formam, eternamente girando, os estranhos anéis desse planeta misterioso e amigo.

(Sapato Florido, 167)

# Noturno Arrabaleiro

Aos grilos ... os grilos ... Meu Deus, se a gente

Pudesse

Puxar

Por uma

Perna

Um só

Grilo.

Se desfiariam todas as estrelas!

(A cor do invisível, 888)

<sup>\*</sup> The texts of all poems translated, unless otherwise stated, are taken from Mário Quintana, *Poesia completa*, organização, preparação do texto, prefácio e notas de Tania Franco Carvalhal (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Aguilar, 2006 [1ª ed. 2005]), <a href="https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA COMPLETA MARIO QUINTANA">https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA COMPLETA MARIO QUINTANA</a>.

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#### The Poem

A poem like a drink of water gulped in the dark

Like a poor wounded animal gasping for breath.

Like a tiny silver coin lost forever in a black forest.

A poem with no trauma other than its mysterious condition as a poem.

Morose.

Solitary.

Unique.

Wounded by mortal beauty.

# **Lost Objects**

Lost umbrellas ... where do lost umbrellas end up? And the buttons that come off? And those paper files, cases for pince-nez, suitcases forgotten in railway stations, false teeth, mislaid parcels, those tiny savings wrapped inside a handkerchief, where do all these objects, ridiculous and sad, end up? Don't you know? They end up in the rings of Saturn, where eternally revolving, they form the mysterious rings of that strange and friendly planet.

#### Suburban Nocturne

Crickets ... Crickets ... Dear God, if we

Could

Pull

But one

Cricket

By the

Leg,

All the stars would scatter.

#### Momento

O mundo é frágil E cheio de frémitos Como um aquário ...

Sobre ele desenho Este poema: imagem De imagens!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 428–29)

# Citação

E melhor se poderia dizer dos poetas o que disse dos ventos Machado de Assis: 'A dispersão não lhes tira a unidade, nem a inquietude a constância'.

 $(Caderno\ H, 294)$ 

## Os Degraus

Não desças os degraus do sonho Para não despertar os monstros. Não subas aos sótãos - onde Os deuses, por trás das suas máscaras, Ocultam o próprio enigma. Não desças, não subas, fica. O mistério está é na tua vida! E é um sonho louco este nosso mundo ...

(Baú de Espantos, 601)

#### A Construção

Ele ergueram a torre de Babel Para escalar o céu Mas Deus não estava lá! Estava ali mesmo, entre eles, ajudando a construir a torre.

(A Vaca e o Hipogrifo, 516)

#### Emergência

Quem faz um poema abre uma janela. Respira, tu que estás numa cela abafada, Esse ar que entra por ela. Por isso é que os poemas têm ritmo –para que possas profundamente respirar. Quem faz um poema salva um afogado.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 395)

# Moment

The world is fragile And full of ripples Like an aquarium ...

On top I design This poem: image Of images!

#### Quotation

What Machado de Assis said about the winds could be more aptly said about poets: 'Dispersion doesn't take away unity, nor disquiet rob them of their constancy'.

#### Stairs

Don't go down the stairs of dreams
Lest you awaken the monsters.
Don't climb into attics – where
The gods, behind their masks,
Conceal their own enigma.
Don't go down, don't go up, stay put.
The mystery is your own existence!
And this world of ours is a crazy dream ...

# The Tower of Babel

They raised the Tower of Babel To climb up into Heaven, But God wasn't there! He was down there among them Helping to build the tower.

# **Emergency**

When someone writes a poem they open a window.

Inhale the fresh air penetrating your stuffy cell.

That's why poems have rhythm
—so that you can take a deep breath.

When someone writes a poem, they save a man from suffocation.

#### Tempo Perdido

Havia um tempo de cadeiras na calçada. Era um tempo em que havia mais estrelas. Tempo em que as crianças brincavam sob a claraboia da lua. E o cachorro de casa era um grande personagem. E também o relógio de parede! Ele não media o tempo simplesmente: ele meditava o tempo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 323)$ 

#### Bilhete

Se tu me amas, ama-me baixinho
Não o grites de cima dos telhados
Deixa em paz os passarinhos
Deixa em paz a mim!
Se me queres,
Enfim,
Tem de ser bem devagarinho, Amada,
Que a vida é breve, e o amor mais breve ainda ...
(Esconderijos do Tempo, 474)

#### Envelhecer

Antes, todos os caminhos iam. Agora todos os caminhos vêm. A casa é acolhedora, os livros poucos. E eu mesmo preparo o chá para os fantasmas. (Sapato Florido, 173)

#### Crônica

Ah, essas pequenas coisas, tão quotidianas, tão prosaicas às vezes, de que se compõe meticulosamente a tessitura de um poema ... talvez a poesia não passe de um gênero de crônica, apenas: uma espécie de crônica da eternidade.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 336)$ 

#### O Disfarce

Cansado da sua beleza angélica, o Anjo vivia ensaiando caretas diante do espelho. Até que conseguiu a obra-prima do horror. Veio, assim, dar uma volta pela Terra. E Lilli, a primeira meninazinha que o avistou, põe-se a gritar da porta para dentro de casa: 'Mamãe! Mamãe! Vem ver como o Frankenstein está bonito hoje!'

(Poemas para a Infância, 953)

#### Irretrievable Time

Once upon a time there were chairs on pavements. Once upon a time there were more stars. Once upon a time children played under the skylight of the moon. And the family dog was held in esteem. As for the clock on the wall! It didn't simply measure time: it pondered time.

#### Billet-Doux

If you love me, love me discreetly
Don't shout it from the rooftops
Don't disturb the birds
Don't disturb me!
If you love me,
That's all right,
But take it easy, darling,
For life is short, and love is shorter still ...

#### **Growing Old**

Before, all the roads went. Now all the roads come. The house is welcoming, few books remain. And I myself prepare tea for the ghosts.

#### Chronicle

Ah, these trifling things, so humdrum, sometimes so prosaic, with which the texture of the poem is meticulously composed... poetry may be simply a kind of chronicle and nothing more: a chronicle of eternity.

#### Masquerade

Weary of angelic beauty, the Angel spent its time pulling faces in the mirror. Until it achieved an expression of perfect horror. It then decided to take a stroll on Earth. And Lilli, the first little girl to catch sight of the Angel, shouted into the house: 'Mummy! Mummy! Come and see how pretty Frankenstein is looking today.'

# As Falsas Recordações

Se a gente pudesse escolher a infância que teria vivido, com que enternecimento eu não recordaria agora aquele velho tio de perna de pau, que nunca existiu na família, e aquele arroio que nunca passou aos fundos do quintal, e onde íamos pescar e sestear nas tardes de verão, sob o zumbido inquietante dos besouros ...

(Sapato Florido, 183)

# Carta Desesperada

Para Carlos Drummond de Andrade

Como é difícil, como é difícil, Beatriz, escrever uma carta ...

Antes escrever os *Lusíadas*!

Com uma carta pode acontecer

Que qualquer mentira venha a ser verdade ...

Olha! O melhor é que te descrever, simplesmente,

A paisagem,

Descrever sem nenhuma imagem, nenhuma ...

Cada coisa é ela próprio a sua maravilhosa imagem!

Agora mesmo parou de chover.

Não passa ninguém. Apenas

Um gato

Atravessa a rua

Como nos tempos quase imemoriais

Do cinema silencioso ...

Sabes, Beatriz? Eu vou morrer!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 458)

## Da Cor

Há uma cor que não vem nos dicionários. É essa indefinível cor que tem todos os retratos, os figurinos da última estação, a voz das velhas damas, os primeiros sapatos, certas tabuletas, certas ruazinhas laterais: a cor do tempo ...

(Sapato Florido, 181)

#### Noturno

O relógio costura, meticulosamente, quilômetros do silêncio noturno.

De vez em quando, os velhos armários estalam como ossos.

Na ilha do pátio, o cachorro, ladrando.

(É a lua).

E, á lembrança da lua, Lili arregala os olhos no escuro.

(Sapato Florido, 179; Poemas para a Infância, 940)

#### **False Memories**

If one could have the childhood of one's choice, with what affection I should remember that old uncle with the wooden leg who never existed in my family, and that stream which never passed at the bottom of our garden, where we used to fish and take our siesta on summer afternoons beneath the unnerving drone of bees...

# Letter written in Despair

For Carlos Drummond de Andrade

How difficult, How difficult, Beatrice, to write a letter ...

Much easier to compose the Lusiads!

With a letter it's all too easy

For lies to pass as truths...

Listen! Let me simply describe

The landscape,

A description without images, not even one...

Each thing is its own marvellous image!

The rain has just stopped.

No one is passing. Only

A cat

Crossing the street

As in that almost forgotten age

Of silent films...

Did I tell you, Beatrice? I'm going to die.

# Colour

There's a colour you don't find in dictionaries. It's that indefinable colour all portraits have, last season's fashion models, the voices of old ladies, one's first pair of shoes, certain sign boards, certain side-streets: it's the colour of time...

#### **Nocturne**

The clock stitches, meticulously, kilometre upon kilometre of nocturnal silence. From time to time, the old cupboards creak like bones.

In the island of the courtyard, the dog, barking.

(It's the moon)

And, remembering the moon, Lili opens her eyes wide in the dark.

#### Do Sobrenatural

Vozes ciciando nas frincha s... vozes de afogados soluçando nas ondas ... vozes noturnas, chamando ... pancadas no quarto ao lado, por detrás dos móveis, debaixo da cama ... gritos de assassinados ecoando ainda nos corredores malditos ... Qual nada! O que mais amedronta é o pranto dos recém-nascidos: aí é que está a verdadeira voz do outro mundo.

(Sapato Florido, 187)

#### Anêmona

Não é preciso um verso ... nem Uma oração Basta que digas a palavra anêmona E tudo esquecerás, enredado na sua Fantasmagórica palpitação.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 451)

#### O Morto

Eu estava dormindo e me acordaram E me encontrei, assim num mundo estranho e louco ... E quando eu começava a compreendê-lo Um pouco Já eram horas de dormir de novo!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 452)

#### Chão de Outono

Ao longo das pedras irregulares do calçamento passam ventando umas pobres folhas amarelas em pânico, perseguidas de perto por um convite-deenterro, sinistro, tatalando, aos pulos, cada vez mais perto, as duas asas tarjadas de negro!

(Sapato Florido, 167)

#### Da Paginação

Os livros de poemas devem ter margens largas e muitas páginas em branco e suficientes claros nas páginas impressas, para que as crianças possam enchê-los de desenhos gatos, homens, aviões, casas, chaminés, árvores, luas pontes, automóveis, cachorros, cavalos, bois, tranças, estrelas, que passarão também a fazer parte dos poemas ...

(Sapato Florido, 166)

#### The Supernatural

Voices whispering in the crevices... Voices of drowned men sobbing in the waves... nocturnal voices calling... banging in the next room, behind the furniture, underneath the bed... the cries of murdered men still echoing in cursed passageways... No such thing! Most terrifying of all is the weeping of new-born babes: there is the real voice of the other world.

# Anenome

No need for verse... or
Prayer
Simply say the word anemone
And you will forget everything, entangled in its
Illusive vibrations.

#### The Dead Man

I was sleeping and they woke me up Only to find myself in this strange, mad world... And no sooner had I begun to understand it Just a little. When it was time to sleep again!

#### The Pavement in Autumn

Along the rough paving stones, withered yellow leaves sweep past in panic, closely pursued by a funeral notice, ominous, rustling, leaping, drawing closer, both sides bordered in black!

#### **Pagination**

Books of verse should have wide margins and lots of blank pages and enough space on the printed ones for children to fill it with drawings cats, men, aeroplanes, houses, chimneys, trees, the moon, bridges, motor-cars, dogs, horses, oxen, puzzles, stars which will become part of the poem...

#### Triste época

Em nossa triste época de igualitarismo e vulgaridade, as únicas criaturas que mereceriam entrar numa história de fadas são os mestre-cucas, com os seus invejáveis gorros brancos, e os porteiros dos grandes hotéis, com os seus ademanes, a sua indiscutida majestade.

(Sapato Florido, 168)

#### Pino

Doze touros Arrastam a pedra terrível.

Doze touros. Os músculos vibram Como cordas.

Nenhuma rosa Nos cornos sonoros. Nenhuma.

Nas torres que ficam das nuvens Exausto de azul Boceja o Rei de Ouros.

(O aprendiz de feiticeiro, 195)

#### O Poema

O Poema é uma pedra no abismo, O eco do poema desloca os perfis: Para bem das águas e das almas Assassinemos o poeta.

(O aprendiz de feiticeiro, 203)

## A Carta

Hoje encontrei dentro de um livro uma velha carta amarelecida, Rasguei-a sem procurar ao menos saber de quem seria ...

Eu tenho um medo

Horrível

A essas mares montantes do passado,

Com suas quilhas afundadas, com

Meus sucessivos cadáveres amarrados aos mastros e gáveas ...

Ai de mim.

Ai de ti, ó velho mar profundo,

Eu venho sempre à tona de todos os naufrágios!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 437)

# **Sad Times**

In these sad times of equality and bad taste, the only creatures worthy of appearing in fairy-tales are master-chefs with their enviable white hats and the doormen of grand hotels with their braided uniforms, their gestures and undisputed majesty.

#### Zenith

Twelve bulls
Drag the terrible stone.

Twelve bulls. Their muscles straining Like ropes.

No rose On their sonorous horns. None.

In the lofty towers above the clouds Weary of blue The King of Diamonds yawns.

#### The Poem

The poem is a stone in the abyss The poem's echo dislocates outlines: For the good of waters and souls Let us assassinate the poet.

#### The Letter

Today I found a letter, the paper faded, inside a book, I tore it up without even trying to discover who sent it... I have a fear, A horrible fear Of those rising tides from the past, With their sunken keels, with My successive corpses lashed to the mast and top-sails... Woe is me, Woe is you, old, deep sea, I always surface from every shipwreck!

# Elegia Urbana

Rádios. Tevês.

Goooooooooooooooool!!!

(O domingo é um cachorro escondido debaixo da cama)

 $(O\ Sapo\ Amarelo,\ 964)*$ 

#### Alegria

Não essa alegria fácil dos cabritos monteses

Nem a dos piões regirando

Mas

Uma alegria, a serena alegria que fulge no olhar dos santos

Ante a presença luminosa da morte!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 454)

#### Tableau!

Nunca se deve deixar um defunto sozinho. Ou, se fizermos, é recomendável tossir discretamente antes de entrar do novo na sala. Uma noite em que eu estava a sós com uma dessas desconcertantes criaturas, acabei aborrecendome (pudera!) e fui beber qualquer coisa no bar mais próximo. Pois nem queira saber ... Quando voltei, quando entrei inopinadamente na sala, estava ele sentado no caixão, comendo sofregamente uma das quatro velas que o ladeavam! E só Deus sabe o constrangimento em que nos vimos os dois, os nossos míseros gestos de desculpa e os sorrisos amarelos que trocamos ...

(Sapato Florido, 187)

#### If ...

E até hoje não me esqueci

Do Anjo de Anunciação no quadro de Boticelli:

Como pode alguém

Apresentar-se as mesmo tempo tão humilde e cheio de tamanha dignidade?

Oh! Tão soberanamente inclinado ...

Se pudéssemos ser como ele

Os Anjos dão tudo de si

Sem jamais se despirem de nada.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 443)

#### Algumas variações sobre um mesmo tema (V)

Tenho pena, isto sim, dos que viajam de avião o jacto:

Só conhecem do mundo os aeroportos ...

E todos os aeroportos do mundo são iguais,

Excessivamente sanitários

E com anúncios de Coca-Cola.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 417)

<sup>\*</sup> For a longer form of this poem, see 'Elegia Urbana', Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 402.

# **Urban Elegy**

Radios. Tellies.
Gooooooooooooooooool!!
(Sunday is a dog hiding under the bed)

# **Happiness**

Not that facile happiness of little mountain goats
Nor that of spinning tops
But
A happiness without rattles or tambourines...
That's the happiness I have longed for:
The immortal, serene happiness that shines from the eyes of saints
Before the luminous presence of death!

#### Tableau!

We should never leave a corpse unattended. Or if we do, it's advisable to cough discreetly before re-entering a room. One night when I found myself alone with one of these disconcerting creatures, I eventually got bored (No wonder!) and went to have a drink in the nearest bar. You wouldn't believe it... When I returned and unexpectedly entered the room, there was the corpse sitting up, avidly devouring one of the four candles round the coffin. God alone knows how embarrassed we felt as our eyes met, miserable gestures of apology and the wan smiles we exchanged...

# If...

I shall never forget The Angel in Botticelli's Annunciation: How can someone Appear so humble and dignified at the same time?

Oh! Bowing with such nobility...
If only we could be like him!
The Angels give all they possess
Without stripping themselves of anything.

#### Variation on a Theme

I pity those who travel by jumbo and jet:
They only know the world of airports...
And all airports in the world are the same,
Excessively hygienic
And with advertisements for Coco-Cola.

## O Poeta e a Sereia

Sereiazinha do rio Ibira ...

Feiosa.

Até sardas tem.

Cantar não sabe:

Olha e me quer bem.

Seus ombros têm frio.

Embalo-a nos joelhos,

Ensino-lhe catecismo

E conto histórias que inventei especialmente para o seu espanto.

Um dia ela voltou para o seu elemento!

Sereiazinha,

Eu é que sinto frio agora ...

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 463–64)

#### Poesia Pura

Um lampião de esquina Só pode ser comparado a um lampião de esquina,

De tal maneira ele é ele mesmo

Na sua ardente solidão!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 463)

## Terra

Terra! Um dia comerás meus olhos ...

Eles eram

No entanto

O verde único de tuas folhas

O mais puro cristal de tuas fontes ...

Meus olhos eram os teus pintores!

Mas, afinal, quem precisa do olhos para sonhar?

A gente sonha é de olhos fechados.

Onde quer que esteja ... onde for que seja ...

Na mais densa treva eu sonharei contigo,

Minha terra em flor!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 457)

## O Viajante

Eu sempre que parti, fiquei nas gares

Olhando, triste, para mim ...

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 428)

## The Poet and the Mermaid

Little mermaid from the river Ibira ...

Unprepossessing,

With her freckled face.

Unable to sing:

She sees me and falls in love.

Her shoulders shivering with cold.

I nurse her on my lap,

I teach her catechism

And tell her stories I've invented specially to impress her.

One day she returned to her natural habitat!

Little mermaid,

Now it is me who's feeling cold.

## **Pure Poetry**

A street-lamp on the corner Can only be compared with a street-lamp on the corner, So true is that lamp to itself In its ardent solitude.

#### Earth

Earth! One day you'll devour my eyes ...

Yet

They were

The only green of your leaves

The purest crystal of your fountains ...

My eyes were your painters!

But, after all, who needs eyes to dream?

People dream with their eyes closed.

Wherever you decide... wherever it may be ...

In darkest night, I'll dream of you

My flowering earth!

#### The Traveller

Whenever I departed, I remained in the stations Looking sadly at myself ...

#### **Bem-Aventurados**

Bem-aventurados os pintores escorrendo luz

Que se expressam em verde

Azul

Ocre

Cinza

Zarcão!

Bem-aventurados os músicos ...

E os bailarinos

E os mímicos

E os matemáticos ...

Cada qual na sua expressão!

Só o poeta é que tem de lidar com a ingrata linguagem alheia ...

A impura linguagem dos homens!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 464–65)

# Dogma e Ritual

Os dogmas assustam como trovões

E que medo de errar a sequência dos ritos!

E, compensação,

Deus é ,ais simples do que as religiões.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 420)

# Sempre

Sou o dono dos tesouros perdidos no fundo do mar.

Só o que está perdido é nosso para sempre.

Nós só amamos os amigos mortos

E só amadas mortas amam eternamente ...

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 446)

## Hai-Kai

Rosa suntuosa e simples,

Como podes estar tão vestida

E ao mesmo tempo inteiramente nua?

(A cor do invisível)\*

<sup>\*</sup> Quintana gave several poems the title 'Hai-Kai'. For this poem, see *Mário Quintana*: 80 anos de poesia, ed. Lúcia Rebello & Suzana Kanter, com uma apresentação de Maria do Carmo Campos.

## The Blessed

Blessed are the painters filtering light

Who express themselves in green

Blue

Ochre

Grey

Red!

Blessed are the musicians ...

The dancers

The mimers

The mathematicians ...

Each with his own expression!

Only the poet struggles with thankless, alien language ...

The impure language of men!

## Dogma and Ritual

Dogmas terrify like claps of thunder

And such dread of confusing the sequence of rites!

In recompense,

God is much simpler than any religion.

#### **Forever**

I am master of the lost treasures at the bottom of the sea.

Only what is lost is ours forever.

We only love friends who are dead

And only dead mistresses love eternally...

# Hai-Kai

Sumptuous and simple rose clothed to perfection yet stark naked?

## Biografia

Entre o olhar suspeitoso da tia

E o olhar confiante do cão

O menino inventava a poesia ...

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 463)

## Dois Versos Para Greta Garbo

O teu sorriso é imemorial como as Pirâmides ...

E puro como a flor que abriu na manhã de hoje ...

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 418)

# Terceiro Poema de Muito Longe

Da última vez que atravessei aquele corredor escuro,

Ele estava cheio de passarinhos mortos.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 458)

# Os prisioneiros

Os muros móveis do vento

Compõem minha casa-barco.

Quem foi que me prendeu por dentro

De uma gota d'água?

Tolice matar-se a gente

Só por isso ...

Nem ele mesmo, o Grande Mágico,

Quebra o seu próprio feitiço!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 451)

#### Interrogações

Nenhuma pergunta demanda resposta.

Cada verso é uma pergunta do poeta.

E as estrelas ...

As flores ...

O mundo ...

São perguntas de Deus.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 390)

## 'A Vida é um Sonho'

A vida? Pode ser que seja um sonho. A poesia não. A 'possessão poética' não tem sentido passivo. É o mesmo que no placo: um ator, para bem desempenhar o papel de ébrio, deve estar inteiramente sóbrio.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 327)$ 

## **Biography**

Between his aunts suspicious look And the dog's trusting gaze The little boy invented poetry...

## Two Lines for Greta Garbo

Your smile is as immemorial as the Pyramids And as pure as the flower that opened at dawn...

## Third Poem from Afar

The last time I crossed that dark corridor, It was full of tiny dead birds.

#### **Prisoners**

The wind's restless walls
Form my floating home
Who has trapped me inside

A drop of water?

Foolish to kill oneself

Just for this...

Not even the Great Magician himself, Breaks his own spell!

#### **Interrogations**

No question demands an answer. Each verse is a question from the poet. And the stars... The flowers... The world... Are questions from God.

## 'Life Is a Dream'

Life? It could be a dream. But not poetry. The 'possession of poetry' has no passive meaning. It's the same on the stage: the actor who wants to give a good performance as a drunkard must be completely sober.

## Trecho de diário

Hoje me acordei pensando em uma pedra numa rua de Calcutá.

Numa determinada pedra em certa rua de Calcutá.

Solta. Sozinha. Quem repara nela?

Só eu, que nunca fui lá,

Só eu, deste lado do mundo, te mando agora esse pensamento ...

Minha pedra de Calcutá!

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 442)

## No Princípio

No princípio, era a Poesia. No cérebro do homem só havia imagens ... Depois, vieram os pensamentos ... E por fim, a Filosofia, que é, em última análise, a triste arte de ficar do lado de fora das cosas.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 351)$ 

## **Diary Entry**

Today I woke up thinking about a stone on a street in Calcutta.

About a particular stone on a certain street in Calcutta.

Loose. Solitary. Who notices it?

Only me, who has never been there.

Only me, who from this side of the world, now sends you this thought ...

My stone of Calcutta!

## In the Beginning

In the beginning there was Poetry. There were only images in the human mind ... Then came thoughts ... And finally Philosophy which is, after all, the dismal art of remaining outside things.

## Caderno H

# (Notebook H)

#### Os Farsantes

Desconfia da tristeza de certos poetas. É uma tristeza profissional e tão suspeita como A exuberante alegria das coristas.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 259)$ 

## Arte Engajada

Quanto à arte engajada, eu só te pergunto: —Que significação política o crepúsculo?

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 301)$ 

#### A Voz

Ser poeta não é dizer grandes coisas, mas ter uma voz reconhecível dentre todas as outras.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 295)$ 

#### As Mães e as Guerras

Se dependesse das mães, não haveria guerras? Mas as filhas preferem os soldados ...

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 294)$ 

#### Sinônimos

Confesso que até hoje só conheci dois sinônimos Perfeitos: 'nunca' e 'sempre'.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 292)$ 

#### Fé

Uma das coisas que não consigo absolutamente compreender São os que convertem a outras religiões. Para que mudar de dúvidas?

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 291)$ 

## Ressalva

Poesia não é a gente tentar em vão trepar pelas paredes, como se vê em tanto louco por aí: Poesia é trepar mesmo pelas paredes.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 279)$ 

## Das Indagações

A resposta certa, não importa nada: o essencial é que as perguntas estejam certas.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 278)$ 

## The Role-Players

Distrust the sorrow of certain poets. Their sorrow is professional and as sham as the bouncing frolics of chorus girls.

#### The Art of Commitment

As for committed art, do tell me: What is the political meaning of twilight?

#### The Poetic Voice

Being a poet is not to be able to say profound things, but to possess a voice that stands out from all the others.

#### **Mothers and Wars**

Were it left to mothers, there would be no wars! But their daughters prefer soldiers ...

## **Synonyms**

I must confess that I've only know two perfect synonyms: 'never' and 'always'.

## **Faith**

Converts to other religions leave me completely baffled. Why exchange one's doubts?

## Errata

Poetry is not trying to climb walls in vain, like all those madmen around the place. Poetry is actually climbing walls.

#### Queries

The right answer is not important: the essential thing is to ask the right question.

#### Circo

A verdade é que os bichos, quando imitam pessoas, perdem toda dignidade.  $(Caderno\ H,\ 352)$ 

# Criação & Invenção

Só a Deus é possível criar as coisas: o Diabo as inventa. A mais diabólica das suas invenções foi o rádio portátil.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 363)$ 

#### Branca de Neve e os Tarados

Uma página em branco é a virgindade mais desamparada que existe: Só por isso é que abusam tanto dela, que fazem tudo dela ...

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 267)$ 

## E o que há de mais triste

E o que há de mais triste nesses poetas de equipe é que eles naufraguem todos ao mesmo tempo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 268)$ 

# O Trágico Dilema

Quando alguém pergunta a um autor o que este quis dizer, é porque um do dois é burro.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 265)$ 

## Exame de Consciência

Se eu amo a meu semelhante? Sim. Mas onde encontrar o meu semelhante?

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 248)$ 

#### Seu Verdadeiro Crime

O que eles jamais perdoaram a Oscar Wilde é que ele era profundo sem ser chato.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 246)$ 

#### Homo Batucandis

'Aterroriza-me o silêncio eterno desses espaços infinitos ...'—escreveu Pascal. Será por isso que fazemos tanto barulho?

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 367)$ 

# Pergunta Errada

Se eu acredito em Deus? Mas que valor poderia ter minha resposta, afirmativa ou não? O que importa é saber se Deus acredita em mim.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 367)$ 

## Circus

The truth is that animals, when they imitate human beings, lose all their dignity.

#### **Creation and Invention**

God alone has the power to create things: the devil invents them. The most diabolical of his inventions was the portable radio.

## Snowhite and the Degenerates

A blank page is the most exposed virginity that exists: Which explains why it is so widely abused and exploited ...

## The Saddest Thing

The saddest thing about these groups of poets is that they all go under together.

## The Tragic Dilemma

When someone asks an author what he meant, it's because one of them is an idiot.

## Soul searching

Do I love my fellow man? Certainly. But where do I find him?

#### His Real Crime

What they have never forgiven Oscar Wilde is that he was profound without being a bore.

#### **Homo Batucandis**

'The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me ...'—wrote Pascal. Could this be why we make so much noise?

#### Wrong question

Do I believe in God? My answer would be worthless, affirmative or otherwise. What really matters is knowing whether God believes in me.

#### **Pudor**

Se tua vida não puder ser uma tragédia grega— por amor de Deus! —não faças um tango argentino ...

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 367)$ 

#### Vida

Só a poesia possui as coisas vivas. O resto é necrópsia.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 315)$ 

#### Cá entre nós

Os clássicos escreviam tão bem porque não tinham os clássicos para atrapalhar.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 315)$ 

## Trecho de diário

Sempre fui metafísico. Só penso na morte, em Deus e em como passar uma velhice confortável.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 240)$ 

# E por falar em compensação

Não sabias? As nossas mortes são noticiadas como nascimentos pela imprensa do Outro Mundo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 326)$ 

#### **Vida Interior**

Os romanos tinham pouca vida interior porque não usavam botões.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 371)$ 

#### No Céu

No Céu é sempre domingo. E a gente não tem outra coisa a fazer senão ouvir chatos. E lá ainda é pior que aqui, pois se trata dos chatos de todas as épocas do mundo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 371)$ 

#### Indecência

Na verdade, a coisa mais pornográfica que existe é a palavra pornografia.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 243)$ 

#### Meu trecho predileto

O que mais me comove, em música, são essas notas soltas—pobres notas nicas—que do teclado arranca o afinador de pianos ...

(Sapato Florido, 169)

## **Modesty**

If your life cannot be a Greek tragedy —For the love of God!— don't turn it into an Argentine tango ...

#### Life

Poetry alone possesses living things. The rest is necropsy.

## **Between Ourselves**

The classics wrote so well because they didn't have classics to confuse them.

## **Diary Entry**

I have always been metaphysical. I only think of death, God and of how to spend my old age in comfort.

## **Speaking of Compensation**

Didn't you know? The newspapers announce deaths as births in the other world.

## **Inner Life**

The Romans had scarcely any inner life because they didn't use buttons.

#### In Heaven

In Heaven it is always Sunday. And people have nothing to do except listen to the bores. And there it's even worse than here for one's dealing with bores from every age.

# **Indecency**

Frankly, the most pornographic thing in existence is the word pornography.

## My Favourite Passage

What moves me most are those disconnected notes—poor, unmatched notes—plucked from the keyboard by the piano-tuner.

#### O Poema

O poema essa estranha máscara mais verdadeira do que a própria face ...  $(Caderno\ H,\ 337)$ 

#### O Outro Mundo

Por favor, deixa o Outro Mundo em paz! O mistério está aqui. (*Caderno H*, 376)

## Sinais dos Tempos

Antes, se alguém começava a ouvir vozes, era adorado como um santo ou queimado como um bruxo. Agora, é simplesmente encaminhado ao psiquiatra.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 378)$ 

#### **Texto & Pretexto**

O tema é um ponto de partida para um poema e não um ponto de chegada, da mesma forma que a bem-amada é um pretexto para o amor.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 282)$ 

#### O Preto

O preto tem a vantagem de realçar as cores que o cercam sem nada perder no entanto de sua própria e grave afirmação.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 267)$ 

#### Tristeza de escrever

Cada palavra é um borboleta morta espetada na página: Por isso a palavra escrita é sempre triste ...

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 455)

## Contingências

Pobre se engasga com cuspe.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 279)$ 

#### **Descobertas**

Descobrir Continentes é tão fácil como esbarrar com um elefante: Poeta é o que encontra uma moedinha perdida ...

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural, 402)

#### Surpresa

O mais desconcertante da morte é quando a gente descobre que alma não tem sexo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 354)$ 

## The Poem

The poem this strange mask more authentic than the face itself ...

#### The Other World

Please leave the Other World in peace! The mystery is here.

## Signs of the Times

Once upon a time, when people started to hear voices, they were venerated or burnt at the stake. Nowadays, they are simply sent to a psychiatrist.

#### Text & Pretext

The theme is the point of departure for a poem rather than its point of arrival, just as one's beloved is an excuse for love.

#### **Black**

Black has the virtue of highlighting the surrounding colours without losing anything of its own solemn affirmation.

## The Sadness of Writing

Each word is a dead butterfly stuck to the page: Therefore the written word is invariably sad ...

#### Contingencies

The poor choke on their own spittle.

#### **Discoveries**

Discovering continents is as easy as colliding with an elephant: The poet is the fellow who finds the tiny lost coin ...

## Surprise

The most disconcerting thing about death is to discover that the soul has no sex.

## Mudança

O mais difícil na morte é acomodar-se a gente aos novos hábitos.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 345)$ 

#### O Dificultoso

Le Penseur de Rodin ... coitado ... nunca se viu ninguém fazendo tanta força para pensar!

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 317)$ 

# A grave cerimônia

Nós todos levamos o anel da morte e um diatemos de o trocar com ela.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 330)$ 

## Satyricon

Fui a ver o *Satiricon* de Fellini. Uma coisa espantosa! Aqueles antigos romanos estavam quase como nós ...

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 321)$ 

## Entomologia

A borboleta mais difícil de caçar é o adjetivo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 373)$ 

## Cartaz para uma Feira do Livro

Os verdadeiros analfabetos são os que aprenderam a ler e não leem.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 238)$ 

#### Estranha Curiosidade

O crítico é um camarada que contorna uma tapeçaria e vai olhá-la pelo lado avesso.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 333)$ 

#### Do Sonho

Sonhar é acordar-se para dentro.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 346)$ 

#### Frase para álbum

Preocupar-se com a salvação de próprio alma é indigno de um verdadeiro gentleman.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 356)$ 

#### O Tempo

O tempo é um ponto de vista dos relógios.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 357)$ 

## Moving

The most difficult thing about death is getting used to new habits.

# **Trying Hard**

Rodin's *Penseur* ... poor thing ... whoever saw anyone trying so hard to think!

## **Solemn Ceremony**

All of us wear the ring of death and one day we shall have to exchange it with her.

## Satyricon

I went to see Fellini's *Satyricon*. It's amazing! Those ancient Romans were almost like us ...

## Entomology

The most difficult butterfly of all to chase is the adjective.

## Poster for a Book Fair

The true illiterates are those who have learnt to read but never do.

## A Rare Curiosity

The critic is the fellow who turns over a tapestry to examine it from behind.

#### **Dreaming**

To dream is to waken up inside.

#### **Diary Entry**

Worrying about the salvation of one's own soul is unworthy of a gentleman.

#### Time

Time is a point of view of clocks.

## Amizade

Quando o silêncio a dois não se torna incômodo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 260)$ 

#### Amor

Quando o silêncio a dois se torna cômodo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 260)$ 

## Arquitetura moderna

O mais triste da arquitetura moderna é a resistência do seu material. (*Caderno H*, 332)

#### Da alma

A alma é essa ciosa que nos pergunta se a alma existe.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 315)$ 

## Da indiferença

A indiferença é mais refinada forma de polidez.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 312)$ 

# Da Teologia

A teologia é o caminho mais longo para chegar a Deus.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 305)$ 

#### Meditação

Vício solitário.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 304)$ 

#### Tic-Tac

Esse tic-tac dos relógios é a máquina de costura do Tempo a fabricar mortalhas.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 285)$ 

## Da Preguiça

A preguiça é a mãe do progresso. Se o homem não tivesse preguiça de caminhar, não teria inventado a roda.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 272)$ 

## Mas seja lá com for

Decifrar palavras cruzadas é uma forma tranquila de desespero.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 245)$ 

## **Friendship**

When silence between two people doesn't become awkward.

#### Love

When silence between two people becomes easy.

#### **Modern Architecture**

The worst thing about modern architecture is the durability of its materials.

## The Soul

The soul is that thing which asks us if the soul exists.

#### Indifference

Indifference is the most refined form of courtesy.

## Theology

Theology is the most roundabout way of reaching God.

## Meditation

The solitary vice.

#### Tick-Tock

The ticking of clocks is the sewing-machine of Time making shrouds.

## Laziness

Laziness is the mother of progress. If man hadn't been too lazy to walk, he would never have invented the wheel.

#### Be That As It May

Deciphering crosswords is a tranquil form of despair.

#### Das escolas

Pertencer a uma escola poética é mesmo que ser condenado à prisão perpétua.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 248)$ 

#### Delícia

O que tem de bom uma galinha assada é que ela não cacareja.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 236)$ 

# Barulho & progresso

O progresso é a insidiosa substituição da harmonia pela cacofonia.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 236)$ 

#### Parábola

Os espelhos partidos têm muito mais luas.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 241)$ 

#### Realidade

O fato é um aspecto secundário da realidade.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 333)$ 

# Incorrigível

O fantasma é um exibicionista póstumo.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 236)$ 

#### Mentira?

A mentira é uma verdade que se esquece de acontecer.

(Sapato Florido, 179)

#### O Tempo

O tempo é a insônia da eternidade. (Caderno H, 376)

## De papagaios e de macacos

Os que gostam de papagaios e macacos não devem ter a mínima autocrítica.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 370)$ 

# Imaginação...

A imaginação é a memória que enlouqueceu.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 281)$ 

#### O Guarda-Chuva

Mas o mais infiel dos animais domésticos é o guarda-chuva.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 357)$ 

## **Schools of Poetry**

To belong to a school of poetry is the same as being condemned to life imprisonment.

## Delight

The really nice thing about a roasted chicken is that it doesn't cackle.

## **Noise and Progress**

Progress is the insidious substitution of harmony with cacophony.

## Allegory

Broken mirrors have many more rooms.

## Reality

The fact is a secondary aspect of reality.

## Incorrigible

The ghost is a posthumous exhibitionist.

# Telling a lie?

The lie is a truth which forgot to happen.

#### Time

Time is the insomnia of eternity.

## **Parrots and Monkeys**

Lovers of parrots and monkeys betray a total lack of self-appraisal.

#### Imagination...

Imagination is the memory that has become insane.

## The Umbrella

The umbrella is the most unfaithful of domestic animals.

## Guerra

Os aviões abatidos são cruzes caindo do céu.

(Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural 420)

# Proletário

Sujeito explorado financeiramente pelos patrões a literariamente pelos poetas engajados.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 355)$ 

## Canibalismo

Maneira exagerada de apreciar o seu semelhante.

 $(Caderno\ H,\ 304)$ 

# Warfare

Planes shot down are crosses falling from the sky.

# The Proletariat

The chap exploited financially by the bosses and literarily by committed poets.

# Cannibalism

An exaggerated way of esteeming one's fellow man.

## List of Translated Poems and Aphorisms

The texts of all Mário Quintana's poems published here have been verified from *Poesia completa* published by Nova Aguilar, Rio de Janeiro in 2005 where the poems were originally issued. The dates, places and publisher given below for each collection are those of its first publication.

# Sapato florido (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1948)

© by Elena Quintana

Chão de Outono
Da Cor
Da Paginação
Do Sobrenatural
Envelhecer
As Falsas Recordações
Mentira\*
Meu trecho predileto
Noturno\*\*
Objetos perdidos
Tableau
Triste época

## O Aprendiz de Feiticeiro (Porto Alegre: Editora Fronteira, 1950)

© by Elena Quintana

Pino

O Poema\*\*\*

O Poema\*\*\*

<sup>\*</sup> This poem is also included in the collection *Poemas para a Infância*, 940, but we have consulted it in *Sapato florido*, 179

<sup>\*\*</sup> This poem 'Noturno' occurs in two different collections: Sapato florido, 179, where we have consulted it; and Poemas para a Infância, 940. There are two poems with similar names in A Vaca e o Hipogrifo—'Noturno XVII' and 'Noturno'; but neither of these is the poem listed, reproduced and translated here.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> There are two different poems called 'O Poema'.

## Caderno H (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1973)

© by Elena Quintana

Amizade

Amor

Arquitetura moderna

Arte Engajada

Barulho & progresso

Branca de Neve e os Tarados

Cá entre nós

Canibalismo

Cartaz para uma Feira do Livro

Circo

Citação

Contingências

Criação & Invenção

Crônica

Da alma

Da indiferença

Da Preguiça

Da Teologia

Das escolas

Das Indagações

De papagaios e de macacos

Delícia

O Dificultoso

Do Sonho

E o que há de mais triste

E por falar em compensação

Entomologia

Estranha Curiosidade

Exame de Consciência

Os Farsantes

Fé

Frase para álbum

A grave cerimônia

O Guarda-Chuva

Homo Batucandis

Imaginação...

Incorrigível

Indecência

As Mães e as Guerras

Mas seja lá com for

Meditação

## Caderno H (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1973)

© by Elena Quintana

Mudança

No Céu

No Princípio

O Outro Mundo

Parábola

Pergunta Errada

O Poema

O Preto

Proletário

Pudor

Realidade

Ressalva

Satyricon

Seu Verdadeiro Crime

Sinais dos Tempos

Sinônimos

Surpresa

O Tempo \*

O Tempo \*

Tempo Perdido

Texto & Pretexto

Tic-Tac

O Trágico Dilema

Trecho de diário\*\*

Vida

'A Vida é um Sonho'

Vida Interior

A Voz

# Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo/Instituto Estadual do Livro 1976)

© by Elena Quintana

Alegria

Algumas variações sobre um tema (V)

Anêmona

Bem-Aventurados

\* There are two different poems called 'O Tempo'.

<sup>\*\*</sup> This poem is different from the poem also called Trecho de diário' in the collection Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural.

Biografia

A Carta

Carta Desesperada

Descobertas

Dogma e Ritual

Dois Versos Para Greta Garbo

Emergência

Guerra\*

If ...

Interrogações

Momento

O Morto

Poesia Pura

O Poeta e a Sereia

Os prisioneiros

Sempre

Terceiro Poema de Muito Longe

Terra

Trecho de diário

Tristeza de escrever

O Viajante

# Baú de espantos (Porto Alegre: Editora Globo, 1976)

© by Elena Quintana

Os Degraus

# A Vaca e o Hipogrifo (Porto Alegre: Garatuja, 1977)

© by Elena Quintana

A Construção

# Esconderijos do tempo (Porto Alegre: L&PM, 1980)

© by Elena Quintana

Bilhete

<sup>\*</sup> This item is also included in the collection  $A\ cor\ do\ Invisível;$  but we consulted it here in  $Apontamentos\ de\ História\ Sobrenatural,\ 420.$ 

# O Sapo Amarelo, seleção de Mery Weiss (Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1984)

Elegia Urbana\*

Porta giratória (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Globo, 1988)

A Poesia

A cor do invisível (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Globo, 1989)

© by Elena Quintana

Hai-Kai\*\* Noturno Arrabaleiro

Poemas para a Infância (n/d)

© by Elena Quintana

O Disfarce

<sup>\*</sup> This poem in *O Sapo Amarelo*, 964 also occurs but in a longer form in the collection *Apontamentos de História Sobrenatural*, 402. But it is the shorter form in *O Sapo Amarelo* which is given and translated here.

NB. In Anexo 1 of the Copyright Form this poem is listed as being in the collection *Esconderijos do Tempo*, but this is a mistake.

<sup>\*\*</sup> There are several poems titled 'Hai-Kai'. But the one reproduced and translated here is not included in the *Poesia completa*. It is published in *Mário Quintana: 80 anos de poesia*, ed. Lúcia Rebello & Suzana Kanter, com uma apresentação de Maria do Carmo Campos (São Paulo: Editora Globo, 2008).

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<sup>\*</sup> The Editors have compiled this 'Selected Bibliography' on Mário Quintana. For a much more comprehensive Bibliography, see this edition by Tania Franco Carvalhal, which is available online at <a href="https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA\_COMPLETA\_MARIO\_QUINTANA">https://www.academia.edu/7507309/POESIA\_COMPLETA\_MARIO\_QUINTANA</a> (accessed 18 April 2017).