

Muchacha de las aguas, Gimaní

Pedro Blas Julio Romero
(poemario: *Poemas de Calle Lomba*, 1988)

La Plaza de la Trinidad
no pudo conseguir hacerse santa
Ya la serpiente mamba negra dormía bajo sus pies
que bajo tierra azuzan el festín mayor
de este barrio oculto
Mismísima isla que cierta vez tuvo dueño
donde aquí tiempo tiene que la noche es ruda.
Únicamente santa ha sido Niña Gloria Hoyos de los Albercones
guerrera y delantales su barraca
hirviéndole hielos de cerveza rica
Su tienda con el vino de eclipses que vendía.
De aquella gracia santera
con que al antojo suyo se enmatrimoniaba,
arrastrando tras su velo
ingenuos edecanes
lazarillos de su lecho.
Porque vivía bendita
bajo la rezandona cruda
de sirenas abuelas en la «cáscara sagrada evacuante»
Y santiguadas siempre
tras desahumo de madrugada
mañanas torcidas de arrabal
parda niebla que enmoña lo callado
como alba negra que no aparece en almanaques
¡Antifaz de la vida involucrada!
De todo esto le viene a ella su tez brillante
Cariño mandarino de palo dulce.

Digamos que cómo que cuánto bandumbeo
no bailaba ella
de la baja tarde su dentadura bonita
y qué no bailaba ella
en cisterna mayor Plantón del Pozo
Ladera Getsemaní a la molicie en Baco
con Calle del Pozo
Niña Gloria Hoyos la cruzaba
Temblor de grupa pesarosa, sus lomas de amor y pañoleta
ella retozando fumarola de tambores
O la Gimaní Isla que cierta vez tuvo dueño
barrio como tierna Alejandría en la piedrona entretenida
De Getsemaní a grito de Musanga

también la vieja piedra cose
con Niña Gloria Hoyos del tam-tam
A oscuras, ella siembra su palmera húmeda
entre el rocío cansado.
¡Oh, Condesa almíbar de los albercones!
Estandarte de los mil gritos,
delta atardecer del alma mía
¡No hubo mar Caribe para acobardarla
y desertora de su ombligo
copuló los meridianos!
Diciendo buenos días en Panamá
subienda de su pelo por mi camisa escándalo
hasta la llevamos todos
a dura sangre de tambor,
su cintura y sedas
aguacero bueno de Getsemaní
Finalmente regresaba
sobre Getsemaní como araña multicolor de besos
efluviando la cuclilla danza
y su reclamo de tambores sobre el sueño.

Girl of the waters, Gimaní

Pedro Blas Julio Romero

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La Plaza de la Trinidad¹
did not manage to make itself into a saint
The black mamba serpent was sleeping beneath its feet
which beneath the ground urge on the great festivity
of this hidden neighbourhood
The very same island that once had an owner
where here it has time because the night is rough.
The only saint has ever been Niña Gloria Hoyos de los Albercones²
war-like with aprons for a cabin
boiling up ice-cubes of tasty beer
Her shop with the wine of eclipses she sold.
That saint-like ease
with which she married at her whim,
trailing behind her veil
naïve helpers
guides from her bed.
Because she lived a blessed life
beneath the harsh praying
of siren grandmothers in the “purgative Cascara Sagrada”³
And always neath the sign of the cross
after the clearing of smoke at dawn
crooked slum mornings
grey mist that wreathes around the silence
like a black dawn that does not appear in almanacs
Mask of a tangled life!
From all this comes her shiny complexion
Mandarin caresses of Palo Dulce.

Let's guess how much bandumbeo⁴
did she not dance
in the late afternoon her beautiful teeth
and what she did not dance
at the great water pond of the water-well protests
Getsemaní hill to the soft luxury of Bacchus
with Calle del Pozo
Niña Gloria Hoyos crossed it

Trembling of regretful rump, its slopes of love and shawls
her frolicking with eruptions of drumming
Or Gimaní Island that once had an owner
neighbourhood like tender Alexandria in the big entertaining stone
From Getsemaní to the cry of Musanga⁵
the old stone also stitches
with Niña Gloria Hoyos of the drum
In the dark, she plants her moist palm tree
amid the weary dew
Oh, Countess, sweet syrup of the water ponds!

Banner of a thousand cries,
delta sunset of my soul
There was no Caribbean Sea to cow her
and deserting her navel
she copulated with the meridians!
Saying good morning in Panama
the swimming of her hair up my scandal shirt
until we all took her
accompanied by the hard blood of drums,
her waist and silks
good rainstorm of Getsemaní
Finally she came back
to Getsemaní like a multicoloured spider of kisses
pouring forth a crouching dance
and the claim of her drums upon sleep.

Notes

¹ Place names: La Plaza de la Trinidad (Trinity Square) is a location in the colonial quarter of the city of Cartagena on the Caribbean coast of Colombia; Calle del Pozo (Well Street) is a nearby street. Getsemaní (Gethsemane) is the surrounding neighbourhood, also known as Gimaní; due to the complex waterways intersecting the colonial city, it was originally an island (known as “la isla de los Franciscanos”), which after the Conquest was allocated to one Rodrigo Durán. In colonial times, the neighbourhood housed a heterogenous and mostly poor population, with a reputation for intransigence and protest.

² Niña (roughly, Miss) is a respectful title for a young woman. Gloria Hoyos is a woman who runs a small store in present-day Getsemaní; “de los Albercones” means “of the water ponds”.

³ Cascara Sagrada and, later on, Palo Dulce are both medicinal plants, the first a purgative, the second a diuretic.

⁴ Untranslatable onomatopoeic word evoking an African-influenced dance.

⁵ A name evoking African origins and religiosity.