

ANNE SEXTON: POESÍA COMPLETA.
ED Y TRAD. JOSÉ LUIS REINA PALAZÓN
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“...and fasten a new skin around it / as if I were dressing an orange / or a strange sun...”
Anne Sexton

One feels privileged to have had the opportunity of reading Anne Sexton’s *The Complete Poems* as a singular *magnum opus*, a term worthy of use here from the standpoint of both Literary Criticism and Translation Studies, thanks, to a large extent, to the translation into European Spanish, entitled *Poesía Completa* (Ourense, 2013), painstakingly and sensitively undertaken by José Luis Reina Palazón, and brought to light in this exquisitely produced, clean-cut parallel-text edition prepared by Ediciones Linteo. As generally occurs in the case of the most challenging examples of those poetic compositions which are mediated through *ekphrasis*, for example, out of which a fascinating hybrid form emerges, involving always, from that moment on, the unique synthesis of poem and painting, the source text in English which concerns us here, composed by Sexton, and the target text in Spanish, the translation prepared by Reina Palazón, will, henceforward, in this reviewer’s opinion, always be conceivable as an approximately 950-page literary and linguistic interchange, a unique cultural document, cultural product even, of accumulative value, which enables the magnetism projected by Sexton’s art, as well as by her personality, to emerge in a tantalizing way, while also constituting a challenge to anyone wishing to explore the intricate labor involved in the scientific art of the translation of poetry. In both these senses, it is a *magnum opus* that is being dealt with here.

The aforementioned term “cultural product” has been deliberately chosen since *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems*, from within a postmodern cultural framework, emerges as a life-work, as well as a life’s work, to the extent that the impression the reader of Sexton’s poetic *corpus* gradually acquires over time, whether or not completely verifiable in biographical terms, is that it is the figure of a poetry star (the equivalent of a movie star) which the reader is impacted by (is being challenged intellectually and emotionally by, is being fascinated by, is becoming

immersed in): the artistic and human equivalent of a Mae West, a Gloria Swanson, a Bette Davis, a Marilyn Monroe, a Whitney Houston, or an Amy Winehouse, cultural icons which are interactively identifiable with the figure of the immensely successful new woman of post-modernity, on the one hand, and with that of the archetype of the *femme fatale*, in terms of emotionally disturbing instability, on the other hand. Although it may be considered as a matter open to debate (in another place and in other circumstances, though), it would seem possible to affirm that not since Alexander Pope has a poet been involved so single-mindedly in the construction of the exploration of his (or her) total identity: in artistic, scribal, psychological, emotional, social, as well as commercial and media-based terms. The figure of Anne Sexton may even be conceivable as poet super-star, perhaps.

Equally debatable (again, in another place and at another time), although worthy of consideration as a hypothesis, is the way in which Anne Sexton may be distinguished from both Emily Dickinson and Sylvia Plath in that the poetic voice that is heard at all times, throughout each composition within the *corpus*, is derived from the interaction of the implicit narrator, on the one hand, and of the implied author, on the other, a voice which is consciously (self-consciously), and constantly, aware of the overall creative and psychological configuration within which it is immersed. In that sense, Anne Sexton's artistic production may be compared with that of Marianne Moore and Anne Bradstreet. Meta-poetically, then, even though the *persona* of the poems is often suffering tremendously, something which cannot be denied, and which is heartbreaking to witness, the triumph of Sexton's verse lies in how it ceaselessly transmits the ongoing struggle of that same *persona* concerned to bring into alignment, seamlessly, artistic achievement, on the one hand, and subject-matter as poetic open-heart/mind surgery, on the other.

The making of demands upon itself as poetic material, worthy of twentieth-century letters, and worthy of the wider ideological and socio-cultural aspirations of women in general, i.e. of womankind, in late modernity, is a constant in *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems*. At the same time, this transcendent altruism is often obscured by the startling and disconcerting representation of the nature of human anxiety in almost every composition, the vast majority of which tending, inevitably, to foreground the unspeakable aspects of the human psyche, thus dimensionalizing postmodern poetic art so that it is sensed as actually, and literally, providing both the poetic *persona*, and the reader, with access to the aesthetic equivalent of a black hole, densely packed with what is, supposedly, unutterable, as far as human sensibility is concerned, and for which the aesthetics of naturalism is

totally inadequate. Such deeply disturbing language, often the product of surrealistically constituted nightmare scenarios, represents a challenge to any translator, a challenge to which José Luis Reina Palazón proves himself to be equal at all times, especially since, as in the case of the poetic voice, to which reference has already been made, he is also aware of the total configuration with which he is dealing at every twist and turn of the *persona*'s experiences. He faces every gust, every blast, of the Sexton poetic hurricane, full on, precisely because he is conscious of the challenge of simultaneously translating a total *corpus*, as well as dealing with each and every local detail that contributes to that same totality.

In this latter sense, the fury let loose in these collections of verse that make up *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems*, the deep states of anguish explored, the stark facts that alarm, the emotional pain exposed, the sensitiveness that makes vulnerability available for examination, thus, paradoxically, contributing to the meta-poetic celebration of its capacity to achieve such an apparently daunting and unnerving feat, all contribute to setting the *corpus* on a Whitmanesque and Ginsbergian scale.

What contributes to the degree of intensity of the emotional and psychological turmoil being experienced by the poetic *persona* is its inevitability, given that confronting such turmoil, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, exercising the office of poet, are sensed as being indistinguishable the one from the other. In this regard, the figure of *persona* within the Sexton *corpus*, in relation to its equivalent in Plath and Dickinson, is identifiable with the phenomenon of burden, a relentlessly demanding burden which consists of literally being a poet, while also being a woman poet, at each and every instant of existence. It is the phenomenological experience of what an instant consists of that the final lines of Dickinson's "There's a certain slant light..." give access to, keeping in mind that one of the meanings of "certain," as generated by the poem, is expressible in terms of the burden of inevitability: "When it goes, 'tis like the Distance / On the look of Death". The fleetingly tantalizing sensation of seemingly, for a brief moment at least, being able to conceive of what is being described here constitutes *per se* the very experience of an instant. If the instant be raised to the power of ⁿ, it is to be supposed that the scenario of turmoil generated by the burden concerned, in the case of Sylvia Plath or Anne Sexton, would become intolerable, the ultimate consequence being suicide: the result of the existence of a poetic voice that is in a constant and ceaseless state of alert, unable to rest from its identification with what it recognizes as its destiny.

This phenomenon is made manifest in the art of poets such as Bradstreet, Dickinson, and Plath, together with Sexton, through a furiously dynamic verbal tapestry in the case of the latter two artists, in which, in terms of psychological discourse, frustration and anger, paranoia and hyperbolic self-aggrandizement, are projected, while explicit naturalism, as well as surrealist creativity, in aesthetic terms, contribute to the impact of such psychological and emotional turmoil upon the reader. It is the poetic tapestry as “blasted heath”. Moreover, the self-conscious, and, therefore, meta-poetic awareness, of the incessant character, and inevitable nature, of this verbal fury, which is transmitted in each poem, would seem to be a discursive factor that lends the poetry of Sexton and Plath its Schopenhauer-like slant, in that it comes to be sensed as an ongoing struggle, inevitably leading nowhere. Contrastively speaking, this state of affairs generates the possibility of detecting the presence of the Hegelian-like character of the poetic discourse of these four poets, as alluded to above, in which what is uppermost is struggle, as related to issues of faith and spirituality, in the case of Bradstreet and Dickinson, or to gender-based vindication, as far as Plath and Sexton are concerned. The challenge faced by the translator of *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems* would consist of finding ways of transmitting this dialectical essentialism, in which defeatism and paranoia, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the dynamism associated with personal and artistic pride, play key roles. As already stated, Reina rises to the occasion in this philologically scrupulous and highly effective translation.

One of the most fundamental ways in which simultaneous psychological and artistic struggle manifests itself, in the case of the persona of Sexton’s poetic *corpus*, is via the stylistic device of simile and its constant use in numerous instances. José Luis Reina Palazón renders each and every one in Spanish with clarity and aptness, given that what needs to be understood is how simile, in the *corpus* as a whole, functions as the way in which the poetic voice fixes, or strives to fix, thoughts and emotions both spatially and temporally, either in terms of the particular circumstances of each *persona* as donned by the principal *persona*, or in terms of degrees of mental stress and obsessions as experienced at each instant, it also being possible to calibrate the degree of surrealist impact each example carries, a way of shedding light upon the different phases and degrees of emotional stability-instability that reveal the evolution (never linear, nor recognizably progressive in any simple way) of the central *persona*: “You, Doctor Martin,” *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*, 1960: “We chew in rows, our plates / scratch and whine like chalk // in school” (55); “Usted, Doctor Martín,” *Al manicomio y casi de vuelta*,

1960: "...nuestros platos / chirrían y gimen como la tiza / en la escuela" (55-56). "Song for a Lady," *Love Poems* (1969): "We lay like spoons while the sinister / rain dropped like flies on our lips / and our glad eyes and our small hips" (346); "Canción para una dama," *Poemas de amor*, 1969: "Tendidas tal cucharas mientras la lluvia de horror / como moscas en nuestros labios dejaba goteras, / sobre nuestros ojos felices y las estrechas caderas" (346). "The Book of Folly," *The Author of the Jesus Papers Speaks* 1972: "In my dream / I milked a cow, / the terrible udder / like a great rubber lily / sweated in my fingers..." (538); "El autor de los escritos de Jesús habla," *El libro de la locura*, 1972: "En mi sueño / ordeñé una vaca, / la terrible ubre / como un gran lirio de goma / sudaba entre mis dedos..." (538).

The presence of the idiosyncratic symbol of the "spoon," as exemplified above, recurrent in the *corpus*, confirms, in a metonymically representative way, how the simile as a phenomenon, although often suggesting psychological desperation, functioning in this same sense as the equivalent of an emotional defence mechanism aimed at providing a brief moment of relief from anxiety, also projects a sense of idealistic striving. Thus, from a meta-poetic standpoint, it becomes, in this specific, and simultaneous way, the equivalent of Don Quixote's barber's bowl turned errant knight's helmet. Its relatively frequent use, together with that of the symbol of the bowl itself, confirms the Hegelian-like striving after some sort of confirmation of the existence of an overall purpose regarding the dramatic, and phenomenological, rendering of real (in the Lacanian sense of the term) experience that goes on in each of the compositions that make up the *corpus*. In feminist and post-modern terms, this striving would be the equivalent of the superstar trying to find a momentary breathing space within the flux of her meteoric rise so as to enable her to take stock and try to discover just what has happened to her.

The stock of idiosyncratic symbols (which cannot be explored in a review piece such as this one), including leather, the color orange, snow, the phenomenon of cancer, amongst others, is always seen to be coherently and rigorously under control in the translation, a further confirmation of how José Luis Reina has assimilated as his this poetic *corpus* in overall terms. A fundamental aspect of this overall appreciation is the way in which the target text, derived from the source text, takes into consideration the significantly relevant generation of a doppelgänger effect, involving the simultaneous interaction of Hegelian-like and Schopenhauerian-like tendencies, at many moments throughout the *corpus*. Often this simultaneity is not discernible in any simple sense.

The similes that are associated with the phenomenon of ‘sagging,’ also statistically relevant in the *corpus*, are another case in point, as exemplified by the reference to the term “udder” in one of the quotations indicated above. The network of terms and phrases that conglomerates throughout the different collections of verse in this regard, as is well-known in relation to the biographical dimension of the *corpus*, includes those which refer to the figure of the mother’s breast and the cancer that attacks it, associated likewise with the sense of guilt experienced by the poetic *persona* as a result of having been accused of being the cause of the cancer due to the effect upon the mother of her daughter’s attempted suicide. What becomes relevant, however, in terms of the totality of the *corpus*, as well as in Hegelian-like ideational terms, is that the issue of guilt is examined and faced up to from multiple perspectives, while the abundance of phrases and terms which revolve around the phenomenon of ‘sagging’ confirms this. To a certain extent the term concerned brings to mind the well-known description Henry James gives, in his “Preface” to one of the volumes of the New York Edition of his writings (1908), of novels as “large loose baggy monsters.”

As the example cited above reveals, the one that involves a metaphoric chain, the vehicle of which is snow--topographical disturbance, the disintegration of an iceberg, the completion of the natural metaphoric sequence is short-circuited so that the block of ice is transformed into a melanoma. In a Dickinsonian sense, what becomes relevant at such a moment of change is the phenomenon of suddenness, or unpredictability, itself, given that it is in this way that the fundamental Schopenhauerian-like pessimism associated with the metaphor is sensed as co-existing with a more Hegelian-like current associated with creative capability as a form of resistance against emotional defeat and depression: a negative capability, in fact. Moreover, the unique character of the Sexton *corpus* is based on how, taken as a whole, it can be understood as a vast scenario of negative capability, in meta-poetic terms. For this reason, it becomes, upon reading it, and has become, in cultural terms, incisively iconic, while the simile functions, stylistically and statistically, as an iconic *mise-en-abîme* which confirms the character of the whole.

Another key discursive feature, besides that of the iconic simile, that acts directly as the generator of the expressive power of the Sexton *corpus* is the impact-laden language that projects itself at any and every moment, representing a major challenge to the translator. What transcends when Reina Palazón’s brilliant rendering in Spanish of this constant hurricane of language is taken into account, in relation to the English original, is the extent to which *Poesía Completa / The*

Complete Poems becomes conceivable in terms of the different categories of discourse with which they interact: for instance, that which is associated with the tradition of the exemplary life, together with that of the advertisement tradition, key aspects of American letters since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even reaching back to the presence of the Vikings on North American soil and their spreading of the news concerning the existence of a Vineland in the North Atlantic.

Likewise, from the standpoint of intertextuality, the *corpus* is sensed to be woven from other discursive strands: the encyclopaedic tradition, projected into modernity, and post-modernity, respectively, by Whitman and Ginsberg, together with the prophetic, esoteric strand of discourse represented by the literature of William Blake. At those moments when the Whitmanesque-Blakean strand becomes more enigmatic in nature, it is the poetic voice heard in John Ashbery's verse that is sensed in the offing. Moreover, in equally inter-textual terms, it is the mixture of quasi-surrealistic imagery, on the one hand, and confessional directness, on the other, that, inevitably and meaningfully, links the poetic voices central to both Sylvia Plath's and Anne Sexton's work. What is being suggested, then, is that the reading in parallel of the source-language text, together with the target-language text (i.e., what has been termed in this review the *magnum opus* entitled *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems*), confirms how José Luis Reina's expertise is the direct result of his own alert reading of inter-textual currents that give significance to Sexton's art. Moreover, for this reason it also becomes clear that the translation has benefited from the translator's overall understanding and appreciation of the *corpus* in its totality.

Thus, an inevitable factor that is dynamically present in any reading of the *corpus* is the awareness the reader (and the translator) acquires of how the generation of impact is a discursively constant feature of the poetry, the already-mentioned stylistic feature of the simile being the confirmation of this. Thus, it is possible to sense how the corpus is participating in the advertisement tradition, not only from a diachronic perspective, but also from a synchronic standpoint. In this way, the reader often becomes aware of how what is being projected, discursively speaking, is the content of a kind of one-woman show, within the cabaret and stand-up *comédienne* traditions: "I am the only actor. / It is difficult for one woman / to act out a whole play" (688). This observation also has consequences for the generation of a meta-poetic aesthetics of striving, as mentioned earlier, such an aesthetic being simultaneously affected by a kind of solipsistic compensatory mechanism which acts

as a counterweight to the presence of paranoia and trauma within the psychological dimension of the poetic discourse.

It is this tendency, detected at all times by Reina Palazón, in the opinion of this reviewer, that may be encapsulated in the term ‘impact’:

“The surf’s a narcotic, calling out, / *I am, I am, I am* / all night long”: “El oleaje es un narcótico bramando / *yo soy, yo soy, yo soy* / toda la noche” (339);

Fire woman, you of the ancient flame, you / of the Bunsen burner, you of the candle, / you of the blast furnace, you of the barbecue, / you of the fierce solar energy, Mademoiselle, / take some ice, take some snow, take a month of rain / and you would gutter in the dark, cracking up your brain: *Mujer de fuego, tú de la antigua llama, tú / con el mechero Bunsen, tú con el cirio aquel, / tú con tu alto horno, con la barbacoa tú, / tú con la fuerza indomable del sol, Madamoiselle, / si hielo, nieve o un mes de lluvia un día viniera / brillarías en lo oscuro, tu cerebro tal vez crujiera*” (523);

“You have worn my underwear. / You have read my newspaper. / You have seen my father whip me. / You have seen me stroke my father’s whip”: “Has usado mi ropa interior. / Has leído mi periódico. Has visto a mi padre azotarme. / Me has visto acariciar la fusta de mi padre” (556) “On this island, Grandfather, made of your stuff, / a rubber squirrel sits on the kitchen table / coughing up mica like phlegm” (560): “En esta isla, Abuelo, hecha con tus cosas, / una ardilla de goma sentada en la mesa de la cocina / escupe mica como flema” (560). It is as if each phrase, or each line, were at least epigrammatic in character, while, at the same time, striving to acquire the discursive status of a headline.

From the standpoint of the activity of translation as such, José Luis Reina Palazón’s intricately wrought *magnum opus* also has the merit of stimulating debate of a theoretical kind concerning the interaction of translation and critical interpretation, together with its possible consequences when approaching the latter, while operating therein would be the issue of the effect caused by identity of the reviewer in terms of one of the two mother tongues involved in the task undertaken, a related issue being whether the effectiveness of the translation in L2 would be more efficiently gauged by a reviewer partnership, each member of which would have one of the two languages involved as his/her mother tongue. However, while completely avoiding any intention of negativizing this conscientious, punctilious translation, a measure of its positive impact, in cognitive and emotional terms, as that hybrid phenomenon entitled *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems*, is the fact

that the translation's effectiveness acts as a stimulus to the undertaking of such a debate.

What is not debatable, in the opinion of this reviewer, is that the translation being dealt with here is sensitively rigorous, striking a balance at all times between what Toury calls the need to adjust to the language of origin, English, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the need to generate an acceptable rendering of textual content from that same language in the target language, of Spanish, in this case, and all in a highly natural way (56-57). In that same sense, and paraphrasing Eugene A. Nida's seminal theoretical pronouncements regarding translation as a science, neither is there any doubt about this translation being anything other than the result of the thorough application of technical procedures in keeping with, it may be inferred, the need to readjust the forms of the message emitted so that they satisfy the structural requirements of the target language, the need to generate semantically equivalent structures at all times, together with the need to ensure that the textual content that appears in the target language is sensed to be carrying the equivalent communicative load, while producing the same kind of impact, as the source text in the source language (241-251).

In order to undertake a *magnum opus* such as the one that concerns us here, the office of translator-as-artisan has to be one which the specific translator can feel at ease with in a natural, even instinctive way, at all times, and thus it is in the case of José Luis Reina Palazón:

“The rooms down the hall are **calling** / all night long: **Lllaman** de las habitaciones al otro extremo del pasillo / toda la noche” (137); “Antes de que muriera, mi madre y yo tomamos esas ramas / gordas, **encontramos** pezones naranjas: Before she died, my mother and I picked those fat / branches, **finding** orange nipples” (151); “**up through** the mulch: **de** la capa de mantilla” (160); “chained to the **heaving** trees: encadenados a los árboles **que se agitaban**”(226); “where **tongues bloomed over and over**: lleno **por doquier de lenguas floridas**” (226); “Yes...I'll **gather myself in / like cut flowers** and ask you how you are and where you've been: Sí...**como un ramo de flores me habré preparado** / y os preguntaré cómo os va y donde habéis estado” (229); “and the sea **keeps** booming and booming [**sin cesar**]” (231); “**At the moment of entry: en el momento en que entraste**” (233); “**I have been cut** in two: **Estoy partida** en dos” (243); “**watching** my ship / bypass the swell / **miro** cómo mi barco / evita el oleaje” (244); “**I have entered her: Yo me encuentro dentro**” (245); “**nor** a bell **tolling: ni** una campana **que suena**” (249);

“**Waiting to Die: Querer morir**” (257); “We are all earthworms, / **digging** into our wrinkles: Todos somos lombrices, / **excavamos** en nuestras arrugas” (675).

As exemplified here, many more instances of this naturalness also being citable, procedures involving modulations which bridge the two languages being worked with are constantly being applied: explicative modulations for grammatical reasons, modulations based on point of view, or in verb forms, or involving the metaphorization of direct expressions, or redistributive in kind, involving hyperbaton.

Besides such modulations, which are morpho-syntactic in character, those which have a lexical-semantic basis also contribute to the naturalness of the transitional processes that occur as one language becomes another:

“into her **watery** blue fur: en su piel azul **deslavazado**” (130); “Your feet **thump-thump** against my back: Tus pies **pegan-pegan** contra mi espalda” (152); “The dancers come on from the **wings**, / **perfectly mated**: Los bailarines aparecen desde los **laterales**, / **en parejas perfectas** (163); “with no real **forwarding** address: sin dirección real **de reexpido**”(228); “and the sea keeps **booming** and **booming**: y el mar sigue **bramando y bramando** sin cesar” (231); “his toes **curled on** a black wave: sus dedos de pie **clavados en** una ola negra” (233); “**putting** your words **into** my life / **uno** tus palabras a mi vida”(248); “into this **dump-faced** day: en este día **de aspecto tan de mala muerte**” (538).¹

The conclusion which can be reached, then, is that the translation being dealt with here is indeed a *magnum opus*, while constituting a major contribution to Anglo-American letters in the Spanish language. Thanks to the diligent and sensitive labor of José Luis Reina Palazón, and to the revisers to whom he pays tribute at the end of his informative and illuminating “Introduction,” which highlights concisely

¹ Any alternative offered (exemplified parenthetically, below) at any moment, would obviously be ungracious, given the solidity of Reina Palazon’s magnificent labor. Suffice it to say that a translation of quality always generates healthy debate: “jolting toward death under your nameplate: sacudiéndote (a trompicones) hacia la muerte bajo el letrero de tu nombre” (145); “their breasts as limp as killed fish: sus pechos tan flácidos como pescado muerto (como peces muertos)” (148); “Antes de que muriera, mi madre y yo tomamos (alcanzamos) esas ramas / gordas, encontramos pezones naranjas: Before she died, my mother and I picked those fat / branches, finding orange nipples” (151); “stuffing my heart into a shoe box: rellenando (remetiendo) mi corazón en una caja de zapatos” (226); “stands the dwarf: está (se yergue) el enano” (233); “No wonder he grew up to be such a big shot: No es extraño que se convirtiera en un gran tipo (un capo chulesco)” (237); “speaking of womanhood: hablando de feminidad (la Mujer)” (263).

the biographical dimension of the figure of Anne Sexton, new generations of Spanish-speaking readers are being given access to a unique postmodern poetic *corpus* within the history of the literature of the United States. Therefore, it is possible to consider how this translation is purpose-driven, while being functionalist in nature (Yuefang 472-3). Likewise, the professional acumen of Ediciones Linteo is also worthy of praise, since, as a result of this publisher's efforts, a hefty volume has been transformed into a cultural artifact that allows the text to breathe and the reader to feel at ease in what potentially might be considered a daunting task, and a traumatic experience even, that of coming face to face with the figure of a mid-twentieth woman who herself faces personal, emotional and psychological trauma head on and who, consequently, as in the cases of Bradstreet, Dickinson, and Plath, is (literally and autobiographically) transformed into a professional artist "in spite of [her]self" (see the poem entitled "Mushrooms" by Sylvia Plath, 1960). It is the recording and chronicling in writing of the constantly changing personal and creative reactions to this burden, to this inevitability, to this destiny, which constitutes the stuff of what goes into the making of *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems*. The translation, set within its parallel-text format, sharply raises the reader's awareness of how the dramatic-traumatic artistic and psychological processes which evolve throughout the *corpus* of compositions require more than one language in order that they can begin to be fathomed completely. For this reason, "process-oriented" issues that emerge from the reading of this bilingual text are foregrounded at every turn and contribute to the stimulating challenge involved in accessing it at any and every point of entry (Harris 24). In this same challenging way, it is as if the reader were involved in a process which is much more than translational, but is, rather, translational (Harris 21).

In an equally relevant way, the translation also comes to terms with stylistic feature of end-rhyme, when it appears, by facing it directly and ably, resourcefully and naturally, by means of recognizable techniques from within the Spanish literary tradition, such as 'rima consonante':

Angel of fire and genitals, do you know slime, / that green mama who first forced
me to sing, / who put me first in the latrine, that pantomime / of brown where I was
beggar and she was King? : ¿Ángel del fuego y de los genitales, conoces a Slima, /
la mamá verde que me forzó a cantar la primera, / que me puso la primera en el
retrete, la pantomima / en pardo donde yo el mendigo y ella la reina era? (522)

The knock-on effect, in terms of the art of translation, in the case of compositions involving end-rhyme, includes line-length transformations, translational hyperbaton, flexible re-phrasing, lexically, semantically, and morpho-syntactically speaking, as well as, again inevitably, the lexical relocation of the rhyme weight itself:

My darling, the wind falls in like stones / from the whitehearted water and when we touch / we enter touch entirely. No one's alone. / Men kill for this, or for as much: Amor mío, como piedras se desploma el viento / del corazón del agua-hielo; en caricia total / entramos al acariciar. A nadie solo siento. Por eso mata el hombre o por algo casi igual. (125)

The key effect of a conscientious and sensitive attention to rhyme, thus avoiding the mere mechanical manipulation of words in a space slot, is, in functionalist terms, the faithful representation of the tone of voice heard in the source text. In the case of the former of the two examples cited, the voice oscillates between that of the child-as-victim in early infancy, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, that of the witch-like, vengeful mature woman who has acquired the capacity to react against the power of the mother-figure. With regard to line length, both the above translations, and thus it is in other cases within *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems*, skillfully take advantage of the 'alejandrino,' or the so-called 'verso de Berceo' in Spanish poetry, given that in the Sexton *corpus*, many essentially ten-syllable lines strain to go beyond this norm in terms of number of syllables, a further sign of the aesthetics of striving, as already indicated. Meanwhile, for example, in the case of the composition entitled "Mother and Jack and the Rain" / "Madre y Jack y la lluvia," the translator's virtuosity is seen to emerge in how, in this same case, as well as in that of other pieces, two shorter lines in English are fused into a Spanish 'alejandrino':

Rain is a finger on my eyeball. / Rain drills in with its old unnecessary stories... / I went to bed like a horse to its stall. / On my damp summer bed I cradled my salty knees / and heard father kiss me through the wall / and heard mother's heart pump like the tides : La lluvia es un dedo que en mi ojo porfía. / La lluvia penetra con sus viejas historias infundadas.... / Fui a la cama como un caballo a su cuadra iría. / En mi mojada cama de verano mecía mis rodillas saladas, / Que el padre me besaba a través de la pared oía / Y oía latir el corazón de mi madre, bajar y pleamar. (*Live Or Die / Vive o muere*, 211)

What also transcends in functionalist terms is how the meta-poetic dimension of the *corpus* again becomes enhanced since, in the case of extract just cited, the creation of a twelve-line stanza in Spanish interacts, without becoming an obviously traceable imitation, with the monumental traditions of the ‘copla de arte mayor’ and the ‘copla manriqueña.’ It is as if the poetic voice and the confessional voice were converging simultaneously so as to make the irony associated with the child’s innocent reading of the sounds coming from her parents’ bedroom resound with poignant universalism. Such transcendence, in which rhyme, line-type, and stanza shape play a fundamental role, also confirms that the aura of monumentalism projected by the translation is also the result of how the English original is set within a strophic environment linked with traditions involving quintains and septets of different kinds within a range of twelve-line units that link back to the twelve-line compositions of the Elizabethans, as influenced by sixteenth-century French poet, Clément Marot. The final rhyming couplet of the discernible septet (cdecdee), within the translated unit of twelve lines, also links the version in Spanish with the sonnet tradition in English.

In terms of the highly significant transition between strophic sub-units within a complete unit, so typical of the sonnet form, the progression from quintain to couplet, within the septet concerned, also contributes to the consolidation of “Mother and Jack and the Rain” / “Madre y Jack y la lluvia” as a composition in which mere anecdotal memories are transcended in a profound way, an aspect of the poem’s essential quality which also acquires equal weight in the translated version. Meanwhile, the septet as such is also subliminally nourished by that poetic strand, in diachronic terms, which includes Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, Wyatt’s “They Flee From Me,” as well as Wordsworth’s “Resolution and Independence”. Both the Spanish and the English strophic traditions become stimulatingly fused in these examples as cited, as well as in those other translated compositions from *Poesía Completa / The Complete Poems* which are characterized by the employment of the technique of end-rhyme.

In the end, this dynamic, riveting translation, emerging out of the rich interaction of two globally relevant languages in the contemporary era, contributes to a more solidly-based inclusion of the figure of Anne Sexton within the context of the international community of letters in the post-modern age. This hybrid work does indeed post-modernize the figure and the art of Anne Sexton, allowing her to be understood as a writer whose creative output sheds much light upon the phenomenon of self-consciousness, not only in epistemological (biographical,

confessional) terms, but also in ontological (meta-literary, woman-based, cultural) terms. Although in itself an affirmation which may generate trauma, while being totally inadequate, Anne Sexton's tragic disappearance may seem a little less so at least, if set against the reality of her ever-growing universalism.

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