

# Sometimes I Wonder if Fred Was Happy Here

(selections from *Chifre*)

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*translated by Chris Daniels*

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*for Vashti  
and Edjane  
wherever you are*

*“(...) she complained about Joaquim, she complained about inflation.”*  
—Clarice Lispector

0)

i also lose my screams  
Ingeborg Bachmann  
like a person loses  
their keys their composure  
my louder screams  
i lose everywhere,  
in berlin, through the streets and  
at party meetings there  
i often lose my screams  
after a lot of not screaming  
sometimes my brain is coated  
in red hope  
but it's all so male and there's so much  
machismo that however much i fight  
sometimes i think i lose everything  
again  
the only thing i  
don't lose is the sure  
knowledge that a person  
even weary can't  
hand over their screams  
and a feminism flavored syrup  
to take care of our throats  
is what every person needs

1)

how many muscles are needed  
to activate the lips, tongue and glottis  
and i don't know what more it takes  
to give out  
The Scream

what circumstances what ideal conditions  
dark cold hot or bright  
to open your mouth wide and  
from inside of it comes out

The Lightning

but between scream and fact sometimes  
there's no time and i wonder

what happens in the milliseconds  
between the pulling of the trigger  
and the death from the shot

what did Asma bint Marwan scream

Anne Askew

Qiu Jin

before they were murdered and

what would Amílcar Cabral scream

Marighella

Victor Jara

in the nanosecond between the sound of the trigger  
and being struck?

2)

and what if Carmen Soler had failed  
her fundamental task

in the Stroessner dictatorship's dungeons  
of remaining silent?

poets after all are poets because they never shut up  
and Carmen's work that looked like anti-work

was at that time the most constructive  
after all if she had anti-shut up

what would have happened  
to her comrades?

if Camen Soler poet and Paraguayan  
had given up on conceiving her silence

as her scream and given in to the relief  
of catharsis, how many more

besides those who died  
would also have died?

3)

what do i scream when i scream?

but i never scream.

i didn't scream and everyone knows

i was deeply humiliated for that

but i don't care

and i don't care about the category of "poor rhymes"

the lines above make that clear

first of all

because i'm not going to delete a line

that lives up to the idea

just because the rhyme's not "rich"

i mean

spare me

secondly

because "poor" is no adjective

it's what you become when the fruit of your labor

is constantly stolen

and finally as LOPES (Adília) would say

nothing is as sad as a rhyme

in a word rhyme has no social class

but poets do and i know what mine is

the non-scream i give belongs to it

i do my work calmly and diligently

sometimes i feel so much anger but

the little spoon that undermines the foundations remains active

i listen to everyone carefully and take notes

i take my opponents seriously even when they're stupid

i patiently explain all of what little i know and i won't be stingy

i don't have the luxury of fooling around but i demand laughter

and passionately surrender to what others know and

are generous enough to share with me

so that when a scream finally emerges

let it be a unison

collective rehearsed and so beautiful

and let this screamed scream be more than

just commentary and let it emerge  
from the necessity to transform things  
from bottom to top  
not top to bottom.

## 40

every book of poems has a poem about  
what a poem is  
so here's mine

the poem is a product of human labor  
it's written spoken sung looked at or read  
to be made it needs a person-poet  
and things produced by other people  
(who may also be poets  
when they're not producing all the things  
a poet needs to produce poems)  
paper pencil computer table chair books internet electricity  
these are the means of production of the poem  
it's all what a poet needs to write

the poem doesn't exist outside the poet's body  
the poet needs to be alive and have  
among other things like everyone else  
somewhere to live something to wear something to drink and eat  
you need free time for you and yours  
to sleep  
to develop culturally  
and to do base work  
(Frigga Haug)  
the poem is neither the most important thing  
in the world nor the least important  
it is what it is it exists  
because people exist who want  
to read poems when there are no more readers  
of poems there will be no more poetry it's simple  
we don't need to worry so much  
ferreting out our importance we're workers  
like any other

and we respond the same way  
carpenters deliverers astronomers nurses  
respond to a social commission  
(Mayakovsky)  
we respond to a need  
a collective need of either “stomach or imagination”  
(page 1 of *Capital*)

## **Ars Poetica**

hot mouth in the morning  
from smoking too much all night  
with my face  
glued to youtube  
trying to figure out the meter  
and the sample  
of that song by queen latifah  
“ladies first”

i try to be embedded in time  
like queen latifah  
wasting time on things of  
my time while it's time  
while there's time since  
there's no time to kiss all the boys i haven't yet  
and all the boys full of piss and vinegar and water  
on that demo since  
i'm a thousand years old and  
my back hurts so  
there's no time to waste  
writing poems about things  
i don't do anything to change  
when i'm not writing poems  
writing poems is important  
but any poetry that doesn't try to stop  
the galloping anti-horse is fated to be  
trampled under its hard iron shoes  
i mean the only thing that's nice when it's hard  
is a cock  
we all know that

## Guerilla Bitchcraft

*for Maria Felipa de Oliveira*

it is told that in the name of independence  
maria felipa thrashed portuguese  
men with stinging nettles

trying to save salvador  
and other lands from  
white men's ferocity

when they took off all their clothes  
in the belief they'd soon be fornicating  
felipa set the caravels on fire

maria felipa seduced like libras do  
(*distract and destroy*) anticipating by a century  
the tactics now known as black bloc

if cobain had been alive it's for sure  
that little refrain would have been for her  
'polly wants a cracker'

(that story about the girl who seduces  
her tormentor and frees herself and then  
tells her story to deaf ears

just like the tale of maria felipa  
whose act of guerrilla bitchcraft  
is known and celebrated by all too few)

100 years gone by and it's me banging  
you but not with a weed (with something else)  
to save myself from being overwhelmed

your *coxinha* republic will never accept  
my northeastern *mortadela* republic  
but maybe zika will equalize us all

micro- or anencephalic, only you and me,  
we'll keep on fucking, molotov cocktail  
of darkness, fertilizing with your sperm

all my captaincies till  
these times get the name of a city  
in the south, "new modern era".



there was that day they deported your friend  
 (the third) and his family  
 and you called me so sad  
 and we were silent, on the phone

there was that day the secret service  
 intercepted the anti-nazi march  
 before it even started  
 and arrested the activists  
 in munich  
 we don't live in munich  
 but we were silent, on the phone

there was that glorious day  
 where we went out in our thousands  
 for the right to housing  
 and slowly we reap the victories  
 in the organized struggle  
 and there was the day we danced  
 in front of the senate  
 for our friend not to be deported  
 and she wasn't and it feels so good to remember that  
 and then there were those weeks  
 when a nazi in a bandana followed me  
 around the neighborhood  
 and i stopped using that bus stop  
 looks like he was arrested  
 but it's got nothing to do with the fact that he's a nazi  
 maybe he got caught without a ticket on the subway  
 a lot of nazis are very poor  
 i don't know, everything's so awful

there was that day in the fall  
 when we held a vigil  
 to think about what we could do about brazil  
 and one time i saw you hiding your tears  
 you stayed till the very end  
 without being able to say a thing  
 it's not even your country  
 and they're not your relatives  
 it's not your northeast  
 it's not your lesbian friends  
 who will suffer the consequences  
 you stayed till the very end  
 not understanding a word of it  
 and you had to get up early  
 the next day to go work

## A Língua Geral

*for Sergio Maciel*

from a dead language was born the  
name of your republic  
which a century later  
i call a nation beardless  
and strange with the name of a river

i go back to you

passport stamped  
unendingly  
the same blazon  
as if entering  
over and over a country  
i never left

i come back to you torrential river with  
all the insolence of those who have oars  
your name now diffused between creole  
and the unspeakable language i translate  
swallow or spit out because i can  
no longer

swallow you

i go back to another country i don't know  
even though we share  
the same gentilic  
your tropic is another mine's equatorial  
yours is capricorn baroque and appalled i travel you  
annotating your flora your cliffs

your cracks

i don't even know who this is for anymore  
this poem whether for you or the birthplace or  
for exile or the tide  
that separates me from the three  
i can't write it  
because even  
though i've lived a lot  
i've read so little  
and if it were the other way around  
i still wouldn't write  
what's the measure  
how much spit does writing need  
to lubricate life or is it  
vice versa?

### Ken Loach #3

Fred was less than 60  
When he was found  
In his less than 60  
Square meter apartment  
Where he lived for years  
By himself.

Fred was unemployed  
And despite his ex-wife and kids  
Had no family  
I don't know what circumstances led  
Him to be so solitary  
And I'm well aware that Fred must have been no  
Angel  
But Fred died very alone very drunk and very poor  
In an apartment  
In a city  
Which is Berlin  
But could be any other.

The building where Fred lived  
Used to belong to Stasi  
the East German secret police  
And the Berlin Wall passed right in front  
After the Wall "fell"  
The building was sold to a private investor  
Who owns many other buildings besides this one (of course)  
This building is where Fred went to live  
Fred found his last home there  
A one-bedroom apartment  
Where with his own hands he built  
A big solid wooden loft bed  
Out of which he fell years later

And died  
At a time when Berlin rents were still  
Cheap and empty apartments were  
Rightly occupied: by punks, students,  
Workers, refugees.

Fred's upstairs neighbor  
Who liked him a lot  
Is called Eva she's  
A former East German fashion journalist  
Being a fashion journalist in East Germany seems to have been pretty  
great  
Because without a capitalist market, publishing was done  
Artisanally  
Journalists and stylists themselves designed  
And sewed the looks they didn't need to  
Advertise or lobby for any brand  
no one had to stick some society lady on the cover  
It must have been pretty cool  
(Check out Sibylle magazine on the internet)  
Eva's fashion journalist career  
Didn't thrive after the Wall came down  
She said: "most of all it was an ageist market that neither accepted  
Nor respected older women".  
I imagine the fashionistas of the West  
Devaluing Eva's unique expertise as an  
Anti-capitalist fashion journalist  
Who retired as a freelancer  
And today  
At 72  
Gets a pittance  
And complements it working as a cook twice a week in a family home.

Eva came to live in this neighborhood when no one wanted to  
There was no café, no corner shop  
"The only thing we had was a bunch of drunks in the square"  
Nowadays Eva says "it's better

There's more life and more youth in the neighborhood  
It's only gotten bad because the rent keeps getting higher and higher  
And more and more English is spoken in the building"  
(Eva didn't learn English she learned Russian)  
Eva says gentrification is bad, but it's good  
    for women and the elderly  
Because we benefit from the fact  
That there's life on the neighborhood sidewalks, and we're less afraid  
When we come home alone at night  
After work  
We just keep avoiding the square  
Because there's still no public lighting  
Well we know that public lighting is in the interest of:  
    1) women 2) private property  
And if there's nothing of value in the square  
Just a few unemployed and women coming home from work or school  
    at night  
Why spend those euros lighting the public square?  
If there were an auto dealer in the square  
A few streetlights posts would have been installed by now  
Right?

So this is gentrification  
It's when the private sector  
Is who invests in the improvement of neighborhoods  
"Providing" what the State ought to provide  
Making private what's really public  
And the price we pay is high  
    (single mothers and the elderly are the first  
    to be evicted)  
And that's why housing activists  
Talk so much not only about the right to live  
But the right to the city  
i.e. viva Kotti und Co., viva LA Tenants Union,  
viva MTST!  
These days we're trying to get around "Mietendeckel" before it's  
    approved

    colloquial name of the law pending in the Berlin Senate for  
    regulation and reduction of rents  
The private investor who owns her building  
Sent Eva a rent increase notice  
She was very worried  
She took her case to the Tenants' Association  
And then went to an informational event  
With Katalin Gennburg  
On the expropriation of large landowners  
    #DW&Co.Enteignen!  
But none of it helped solve Eva's material condition  
Besides everything else Eva had taken a fall  
And broke her arm  
So she couldn't work at the family home  
And if she couldn't work, she couldn't complement  
The miserable pension  
Eva gets after working  
Years and years  
As a freelance journalist  
So she had no way to pay the raise.

    Eva hasn't lost her apartment *yet*.

Eva is my upstairs neighbor  
And I live in the apartment where Fred used to live  
And I sleep in the bed Fred built  
And I'm very fond of Fred  
    who I never met  
But whose handiwork produced such a nice bed  
In which I lose sleep sometimes  
Not knowing how I'm going to pay next month's rent  
Or the increase in the price of heating  
Which though expensive doesn't work and the landlord won't fix  
Because by June all my jobs were canceled  
Because of the pandemic (or would it be better to write "because of  
    capitalism"?)

Sometimes I wonder if Fred was happy here  
Like sometimes I am but not always  
Did he also lose sleep  
Afraid of being evicted?  
What connects the three of us?  
Apart from our address:  
    our class.

I also have no family  
I also work in someone else's house  
    Even though I'm a journalist  
And my retirement will also definitely be miserable  
And when I'm sad, I also drink at home alone.

## **Men's Taste for Machines**

now that unemployment at the same time imprisons  
and frees you to arrange your books  
by color by theme in alphabetical order  
whatever floats your boat  
let's talk about what really matters

about life squandered on unwanted gifts  
men's taste for machines  
things no one needs  
take up space need washing  
the squandered lives of constant poets  
writing for no one to read  
bakers  
food deliverers  
drivers  
our love for our friends  
that anguish for the hunger we don't feel  
the fear of latin american poverty  
the yankee plan snapping  
at our heels  
the years we spend with our chins  
at last over the water  
now no one knows anymore  
here we are

journalists  
poets  
janitors  
dressmakers

condo fees would be good money  
if it were passed on to the employees  
to the sweepers

to the doorkeepers  
but sometimes the landlords don't pay  
their wages  
and porters janitors sweepers feel  
the water lapping at their chins  
if we breathe through our nose we can  
hold on until january  
here comes another month and god only knows

a fly on your face  
rammed earth  
smell of cow  
and epazote  
grandpa smell  
gravatá  
jaburu  
borborema  
agreste  
my pernambuco falling apart  
in the hands of the same family for years  
and to make things worse they joined up with tábata

the ground the heart  
broken

we doggy-paddle or we float  
swallow water if there is water  
get confused get annoyed but we go on  
são paulo and brasilia always end up  
dragging us to the bottom  
to migrate is always a possibility  
nonetheless a terrible one  
those who stay breathe through their nose and  
february arrives we rest  
unless a pandemic comes then we  
freelance get a gig  
park cars install an app deliver food

replace madame's shower  
replace gas with alcohol  
so we can cook  
the gas is so expensive holy shit  
and if the house doesn't burn down  
we'll eat  
sometimes there's even butter  
we live in casa amarela  
we're not all that broke  
we just don't know for how long  
with our pockets full of rocks  
like virginia woolf's

who put that shit there?  
where's the bottom?  
where's the revolt?

**Notes for a Poem with the Working Title**  
*A Poem for Alessandra*

theme: social reproduction and housework  
characters: me, alessandra, juliano, adriana; aunt bija, grandma, aunt mere, cinha and arleide; the mother of a friend of mine, a domestic worker, who was kidnapped by her employers during the pandemic and banned from returning home.  
frame of reference: i need to read everything i can find by tithi bhat-tacharya and nancy fraser... talk about Salome, Jesus's nanny; Hippolytus's nurse in Euripides; Vivian Maier, the photographer and nanny; Sylvia Plath's ridiculous text about being a babysitter.

this poem is about the domestic worker  
a minor  
who worked in the building i lived in  
when i lived in jaguaré  
(quasi-periphery of são paulo)  
in 1994  
alessandra worked at a neighbor's house  
and she became friends with our crew  
one day i came back from school and there was that mess  
a body lying on the ground a white cloth over it  
i'd never seen that before  
alessandra fell  
while cleaning the windows of the lady she worked for  
the girl that the boy i was in love with  
was in love with  
was with alessandra at the time  
and saw everything  
poor things  
nobody said a thing  
about the lady hiring an underage girl  
and/or making a worker clean the outside windows without  
safety equipment

the cops claimed it was a suicide  
and the case was closed  
when i think about it i feel such hatred

## Notes for an as Yet Untitled Poem About This Name We Have

**theme:** founding rape? sharecroppers were given the surname of the landowner. coronel bezerra owned the Poço da Pedra ranch in Sertânia. Does it have something to do with us? And the founding “revolutionary” spirit?, the revolutionary history of the brazilian northeast?

### a list, not thinking too much about it:

levante dos marimbondos  
the bezerras  
hilário bezerra  
gregório bezerra  
raimundo bezerra (grandpa)  
can i come up with a connection between panelas, where gregório was born, and gravatá do jaburu, where grandpa was born <3

### references:

luiz rufatto, his text, very moderate at the time, which caused controversy, aff, i never understood that  
Jorge Amado in Cacau – what a book!  
me in the text i made for the zine with Jessica Mangaba lulz  
“Luto” (GN by B.J. Fogueteiro)

### diary notes:

the agony i feel at not being able to trace my family’s past  
it must be similar to someone looking for a relative who has disappeared  
someone executed or disappeared in dungeons

i don’t know

this feeling of being adrift in the world

it sounds too frivolous for me to compare the hole left by the disappearance of someone who fought against a military dictatorship with the hole left by those who left no traces because they had no right to a place in “H”istory

but that’s not minor either. i don’t know, i need to think this through.

my impoverished ancestors with no money for photographs or birth records

my ancestors in the backlands of Pernambuco who didn’t always know how to write

i think i write  
to get revenge

or to bury myself in the earth i was pulled out of decades before i was born

can politically disappeared people and people erased from “H”istory be equal? wouldn’t they both be political disappearances?

a few days later i’m shocked  
because despite feeling guilty about the comparison  
the first name that appears when i search for “bezerra”  
on SIAN  
are the files that DOPS kept  
on another bezerra, not grandpa Raimundo,  
but Gregório  
looks like a sign:  
i don’t need to feel guilty  
i can keep researching



but that doesn't say anything  
about my initial question:  
why is my name bezerra  
apart from the fact it's the last name  
grandpa had?

finally: why are things the way they are?

ah just one more thing, nothing to do with the theme  
but i just thought:  
no longer having access  
to the same amount of things  
we used to have from time to time (but not always)  
it's not the same as being in need

## Notes for a Poem with the Working Title *Anti-premonition*

**theme:** post-corona life?  
the social commission of poetry?  
use professor marina gouvêa's "premonitions" about covid?

### **loose notes half drunk:**

How to account for a poetic experience  
Inside a poem?  
How not to be corny how not to be ridiculous  
How to be useful how to live up to oh i forgot  
and  
The social commission  
?

i want to write a poem in which i  
go all wrong  
a kind of anti  
premonition  
write a self  
indulgent poem  
to talk about the kids i won't have  
i couldn't  
i didn't want  
they didn't want to have with me

a poem that misses the mark  
that says  
we fucked up  
and we'll die  
an anti-bacurau poem  
a defeatist poem  
a defeated poem  
a lazy poem

a so what poem  
a meme a

i want to write a backwards  
poem that says we should have stopped  
monsanto in 2021  
tied bolsonaro to a donkey  
sent him and sérgio moro  
and the old man from havan  
to the asshole of the world

i want to write a late poem  
that gets all mixed up  
to be contradicted in the future  
i want to write a poem that i feel ashamed of later  
and tell myself  
that's not why i've read so many verso books and books by boitempo  
and expressão popular  
a poem so wrong  
that talks about climate catastrophe  
about not finding my asthma inhaler  
that talks about the dearth of toilet paper in supermarkets  
and the mustache i didn't depilate  
because i couldn't find the wax or the tweezers

i want my poem to be wrong  
when it talks about forced castration  
of communists  
of poets and immigrants  
i want to make a mistake if i write one that talks  
about a ban on bookstores  
about a ban on the right to assembly  
that forces me to wear pink  
and forbids me to sing out loud

i want to be disavowed  
when they read this poem who-knows-when

and say look how crazy she is writing  
where were all the poets  
and single mothers  
who never organized  
in unions?  
and say  
adelaide look at all the  
collective councils and  
community gardens  
i want to be that embarrassed

these are the notes to that poem

## Translator's Notes

### 39

*Asma bint Marwan; Anne Askew, Qiu Jin.* 7th-century female Arab poet, murdered by Mohammed; Tudor poet, Anabaptist preacher, burned at the stake in 1546; Chinese revolutionary feminist writer, executed in 1907.

*Carmen Soler.* 1924–1985. Paraguayan poet; communist militant. Imprisoned and exiled more than once.

*poor rhyme / rich rhyme (rima pobre / rima rica).* Lusophone prosodic terminology. *Poor rhyme:* Rhyming words are the same part of speech and/or are made with very common word endings, for example: *gato/pato* (cat/duck); *correr/fazer* (to run/to make). *Rich rhyme:* Rhyming words are different parts of speech and/or are made with less common word endings, for example: *altar/desenhar* (altar/to draw); *noz/veloz* (nut/fast).

## Ars Poetica

*boys full of piss and vinegar and water.* Vinegar alleviates the effects of teargas. This also alludes to Rafael Braga, a young black man who worked as a garbage collector. He was arrested in Rio during the 2013 protests. He was carrying a bottle of Pinho Sol cleaner and a bottle of distilled water. The cops beat him and tried to frame him for possession of cocaine and claimed that he was carrying an incendiary device.

## Guerilla Bitchcraft

This is a revision of the translation made by Francisco Vilhena and the Poetry Translation Workshop of the Poetry Translation Centre in London. Francisco came up with the wonderful title. I am very grateful to Francisco and all the folks at PTC/PTW. Their excellent translation and explanatory notes are available on the PTC website: <https://www.poetrytranslation.org/poems/guerilla-bitchcraft>

*Maria Filipa de Oliveira* (?-1873) was a Black Brazilian independence fighter from Bahia. She was active during the Brazilian War of Independence.

*coxinha.* Several meanings, among them a kind of chicken croquette, but also, pejoratively: a trendy affluent teenager, a playboy, a conformist. In this context: a slang term used by leftists to refer to liberals and the right. Adelaide says, “Like, Fernando Henrique Cardoso is the god of the coxinhas”.

*mortadela.* Derogatory slang that people from the south and anti-PT people in general use to refer to PT supporters. Adelaide: “Mortadela jamonada is a cheap kind of sliced packaged ham for the poor, you know? It is a very anti-left, anti-poor slur.”

*new modern era (nova era moderna)* ironically refers to the names of cities in the very conservative region of southern Brazil: Nova Hartz, Nova Roma do Sul, Nova Hamburgo, Nova Friburgo, etc. These names celebrate white colonizers.

## A Língua Geral

*A Língua Geral* is the name of two lingua francas spoken in Brazil: *A Língua Geral Paulista* (*Tupi Austral*, or Southern Tupi), which was spoken in Southern Brazil but is now dead, and *A Língua Geral Amazônica* (*Tupinambá*) of the Amazon (it has been supplanted by the *Nheengatu* language). Both were simplified versions of the language of the indigenous Tupi people.

*your republic.* Republic of Curitiba, a term used by white supremacists who have a strong separatist movement which aims to separate the Brazilian south from the rest of Brazil, mainly because of their anti-northeastern and racist sentiments. Curitiba is the capital of the State of Paraná. In 2016, Lula allegedly said “I am sincerely afraid of the Republic of Curitiba because one federal judge can make anything happen.” He was probably referring to Sérgio Moro, one of the lead judges in the Operação Lava Jato so-called anti-corruption investiga-

tion, which led to the jailing of Lula and the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff.

*with the name of a river.* Paraná State is named after the Paraná River. Paraná is the Guaraní word for “big river.”

## Men’s Taste for Machines

*gravatá / jaburu.* See notes to “Notes for an as Yet Untitled Poem About This Name We Have,” below.

*borborema / agreste:* Planalto da Borborema is a plateau in NE Brazil. Agreste is a region in NE Brazil. There are Wikipedia articles about both.

*tábata.* Tábata Amaral is a politician from São Paulo. Fence-sitting technocrat.

*Casa Amarela* is a mainly working class and poor neighborhood in Recife. A lot of political organizing goes on there.

## Notes for an as Yet Untitled Poem About This Name We Have

*Bezerra* is part of Adelaide’s full name.

*Coronel Bezerra.* See note about “Luto,” below.

*Levante dos Marimbondos or Guerra dos Marimbondos (Uprising of The Marimbondos, War of the Marimbondos),* 1852. Free and freed small farmers in NE Brazil successfully rebelled against the promulgation of a census, which they believed would lead them back into slavery. After abolition in 1888 and the Proclamation of the Brazilian Republic in 1889, a census was established.

*Hilário Bezerra.* I’m unable to find out who this is/was. Adelaide can’t remember.

*Gregório Bezerra.* Great peasant leader, revolutionary, communist. Imprisoned four times, he spent 22 years in prison all told. After the 1964 coup, he was jailed and tortured. He was dragged half naked behind a jeep through the streets of Recife. In 1969, he and other political prisoners were freed in return for the release of C.B. Elbrick, the kidnapped US ambassador. Gregório spent the next 10 years in exile in the USSR, and returned to Brazil in 1979, after the Amnesty.

At the time of his release, he wrote: “As a matter of principle, I must clarify that, although I accept liberation under these circumstances, I disagree with isolated actions, which will do nothing for the development of the revolutionary process and will only serve as a pretext to further worsen the lives of the Brazilian people and as motivation for greater crimes against [the people]. [...] I do not want my attitude at this time to endanger the lives of the other political prisoners to be released. Nor do I, as a humanist, wish the unnecessary sacrifice of any individual, even the ambassador of the greatest imperialist power in history. I fight, on principle, against systems of power. I do not fight against individuals. I only believe in the violence of the masses against the violence of reaction.”

In his poem “História de um valente”, Ferreira Gullar called him a man “made of iron and flowers.”

“I would like to be remembered as a man who was a friend to the children, the poor and excluded; loved and respected by the people, the exploited and suffering masses; who was hated and feared by the capitalists; and regarded as the number one enemy of the fascist dictatorships.”

*Gravatá de Jaburu* is a small town in Pernambuco.

*Luiz Ruffato.* Brazilian writer of fiction from a working-class background. His work can be scathing in its condemnation of inequality in Brazilian society.

“*Luto*”. First person singular of lutar, to fight, to struggle; also, noun, “mourning.” Graphic novel written by B.J. Fogueteiro and illustrated by various artists. The GN concerns a 1911 revolution in Pernambuco. Coronel Bezerra was involved.

*SIAN*. Sistema de Informações do Arquivo Nacional (National Archives Information System).

*DOPS*. Departamento de Ordem Política e Social (Department of Political and Social Order) .

### **Notes for a Poem With the Working Title *Anti-premonition***

*professor marina gouvêa*. Marina Machado Gouvêa is a Brazilian Marxist economist. She led a Capital reading group during quarantine.

*Bacurau*. Excellent, intense 2019 political film set in Pernambuco.

*tied bolsonaro to a donkey*. See end of *Bacurau*.

*Sérgio Moro*. One of the lead judges in Operação Lava Jato. Later appointed Minister of Justice and Public Security by Jair Bolsonaro.

*the old man from havan*. Luciano Hang aka Véio da Havan; billionaire majority owner of the Havan department store chain. Close ties to Bolsonaro.

*Boitempo and Expressão Popular*. Brazilian leftist publishers.

## **Translator’s Afterword and Acknowledgements**

*Translation is a solidarious impulse...*

— José Manuel Teixeira da Silva

This is a brief selection of poems from Adelaide Ivánova’s much longer book, *Chifre* (Macondo Edições, Juiz da Fora, 2021). David Buuck made the selection, for which I am grateful, as I have no distance from the work, and of course I hope that one day the whole translation will be published.

Adelaide is deliberately careless about punctuation and capitalization. Her syntax can be challenging; for example, she often ends one sentence and begins another in the same line without a period, which causes a feeling of breathlessness. I’ve retained her punctuation (or lack thereof) and her line breaks as accurately as possible, but occasionally I felt that changing things up would be OK for various reasons. I hope I’ve been able to bring over Adelaide’s honesty and humor (both can be *brutal*). Above all else, I’ve tried to capture the youthful tenderness which, despite everything, she refuses to bury. All errors and half measures are mine.

Apart from forcing me to write in a great variety of modes, registers, and styles, which is a lot of fun, my translation practice—all things considered, a very small thing—gives me the opportunity to share in another human life. I learn a lot about all kinds of things. I learn about myself and my many limitations. A small thing, yes, but I wouldn’t want to live without it. The great reward is comradeship.

In these dark times of capitalist crisis, imperial sadism and hegemonic decline, a comrade is a blessing and a necessity. I thank you all. However, I do need to thank the people who directly helped make my translation of *Chifre* possible.

Early in October 2022, Erin Honeycutt and Siddhartha Lokanandi of Hopscotch Reading Room in Berlin hosted Adelaide and me.

Poet and translator Christian Hawkey sat with us and moderated the reading and discussion. Without Christian's comments and questions, I would have been pretty much lost. Christian called attention to the documentary nature of Adelaide's poetry. I'd never thought of it in that way. His insight has had a strong effect on my thinking about Adelaide's work. I am thankful for the generosity of Christian, Erin, and Siddhartha. We will meet again.

I thank all the folks who came to the reading. It was a lovely time. Your encouragement helped me to complete the translation.

Many thanks to artiCHOKe for support. The final version of "Ken Loach #3" owes a great deal to Sam Langer's editing, which influenced and corrected me.

Infinite gratitude and a resounding shout out to everybody involved at *Tripwire* and, again, Hopscotch Reading Room.

Art can in no way save the world. However, art can help us change the way we feel and think about things. How valuable is *that*?

Adelaide is a badass. In her work and in her life, she puts herself on the line. She helps me to scrutinize the difference between the person I think I am and the person I know I need to be. I'll translate her writing for as long as she lets me. It was wonderful to be able to sit in her kitchen and work on finalizing my translation of *Chifre*. I'm so proud and thankful that I can, with utmost affection, call her my collaborator, my friend, and my comrade.

I dedicate my work in these pages to the memory of Sean Bonney. He was one of us. He was one of the best of us.

—CD, November 2023

Adelaide Ivánova is a poet and housing activist from Pernambuco, Brazil. In 2018 she won the Rio Literature Prize for her fifth book, *the hammer*, which was published in Brazil, Portugal, USA, United Kingdom, Germany, Argentina and Greece. In 2020 she was nominated for the Derek Walcott and National Translation Awards. *Chifre* was published in 2021. She has lived in Germany since 2011 and is active in Deutsche Wohnen und Co. Enteignen since 2019.

Chris Daniels is a feral translator of global Lusophone poetry.

