



# Latin American Literature Today



HOME » MAGAZINE » NUMBER 8 » POETRY

◀ 50

## POETRY

## Four Poems

Elena Garro

ESPAÑOL



Elena Garro, Octavio Paz, and their daughter Laura Helena Paz Garro in Paris.

### Editor's Note

The following poems were translated collaboratively by a team consisting of:

- Adele Lonas. Translator. Master in Spanish from Colorado State University.
- Olatz Pascariu. Spanish teacher. Master in Spanish from Colorado State University.
- Silvia Soler Gallego. Translator and scholar. Assistant Professor at Colorado State University.
- Francisco Leal. Writer and scholar. Associate Professor at Colorado State University.

These translators worked under the direction of Patricia Rosas Lopátegui, Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico. *Latin American Literature Today* thanks this outstanding team for their valuable contribution.

### Introduction

Although Elena Garro is a well-known and respected Latin American author, she is

### LANGUAGES

ESPAÑOL

### CURRENT ISSUE



#### Number 8

The eighth issue of *Latin American Literature Today* pays homage to Nicaraguan writer and politician Sergio Ramírez, winner of the 2017 Cervantes Prize and an important voice in a country currently gripped by crisis. We also feature poetry from

Octavio Armand, as well as special sections dedicated to four indigenous writers of Mexico and Guatemala, bilingual sci-fi from Worldcon 76, and the poetry of Marosa di Giorgio, Olga Orozco, and Elena Garro.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

#### Editor's Note

[Editor's Note: November 2018](#)

#### Featured Author: Sergio Ramírez

**ESSAY:** "The Essays of Sergio Ramírez" by Nicasio Urbina

**ESSAY:** "Sergio Ramírez, the More-Than-Deserving Cervantes" by José Juan Colín

**INTERVIEW:** Sergio Ramírez: "I do not know of a single novel that has brought about a revolution": A Conversation with Tulio Hernández

**ESSAY:** "Cervantes Prize 2017 Acceptance Speech" by Sergio Ramírez

#### Dossier: Octavio Armand

**ESSAY:** "Octavio Armand and the Undoing of Cuban's Literary Tradition" by Johan Gotera

**ESSAY:** "Think of Overlook" by Alejandro Sebastiani Verlezza

**ESSAY:** "Octavio Armand and Zequeira's Hat" by Rafael Rojas

**ESSAY:** "Heraclitus' Arrow" by Octavio Armand

**POETRY:** Three Poems by Octavio Armand

**INTERVIEW:** Octavio Armand: "A Concert for Misconduct": A Conversation with Roberto

HOME	MAGAZINE	PUBLISH IN LALT	GET INVOLVED	ABOUT		
<p>in response to her social activism and feminist perspective. However, many are unfamiliar with her poetry, which was compiled and published by Dr. Patricia Rosas Lopátegui for the first time in <i>Cristales de Tiempo</i> (UANL) in 2016.</p> <p>The translation of <i>Cristales de Tiempo</i>, which is already underway, began after Dr. Lopátegui's visit and presentation in September 2017, at Colorado State University (CSU). Dr. Lopátegui, in addition to being both editor and compiler of <i>Cristales de Tiempo</i>, was also a long-time friend of Elena Garro and was her literary agent. Following the presentation, Dr. Lopátegui invited us to collaboratively translate four of Garro's poems, included in this present selection.</p> <p>With the exception of the poem "El llano de huizaches," a superlative long surrealist poem, we selected poems with one subject in common: love relationships. Our idea was to highlight the conflicted relationships that Garro had with writers of her time, such as with her previous husband, Octavio Paz, and with Adolfo Bioy Casares; we also wanted to highlight the concise power and frequent fury of her poetry.</p> <p>Because of the complex and metaphoric nature of Garro's poetry, translating it is both an intellectual and linguistic challenge in determining how to manipulate the target language adeptly enough to convey both the original text's meaning and style. Notwithstanding, the collaborative nature of the translation has facilitated resolving the linguistic challenges; while English is my first language, but I learned Spanish more specific to Mexico, Spanish is the first language of my colleagues. We read over the original poems and the translations to compare them for consistency in the method and voice. We note any suggestions for unresolved problems, but also highlight any doubts about specific expressions, word choice, etc. Following, when we meet in person, we negotiate meaning and the translation problems encountered. After resolving any remaining translation problems, we submit them for final reviews to Dr. Silvia Soler-Gallego, Professor of Translation at Colorado State University.</p> <p>Dr. Lopategui requested the translation of <i>Cristales de Tiempo</i> specifically to publish the compilation in English. Her desire is to increase awareness and appreciation of Garro's poetry, person, talent and life and to make Garro's poetry accessible to a wider audience. Likewise, it also serves to increase a deeper understanding of the experiences, relationships, and other factors that influenced her work as a whole. For the same reason, translating <i>Cristales de Tiempo</i> will allow a key component of Garro's work to be studied in Women's Studies and Chicano Studies programs, to understand its significance and impact beyond the parameters of literary studies.</p> <p>The opportunity to translate the work of such a renown author within Hispanic Letters, within Hispanic Women's Literature, and representing the canon of 20<sup>th</sup> century Hispanic feminist authors, is uncommon. For the same reason, in being aware of the uniqueness of the opportunity, our goal is to create a translation that reflects the talent of Elena Garro and Dr. Lopátegui's dedication to sharing Elena Garro's poetry, and also our own dedication to literary translation and the unique intellectual challenge that it presents.</p> <p>Adele Lonas</p> <p>O.</p> <p>All year is winter next to you, King Midas of the snow. The swallow hidden in the hair</p>				<p><b>Essays</b></p> <p>"Octavio Paz Revisited" by Ismael Gavilán</p> <p>"Violeta Parra: Ahead of Her Time" by Patricia Cerda</p> <p>"The New Latino Boom" by Naida Saavedra</p> <p>"Report for an Infamous Institution" by Álvaro Contreras</p> <p>"Postcards from Sad Songs: The Fresán Variations" by María José Navia</p> <p><b>Latin American Science Fiction</b></p> <p><b>ESSAY:</b> "Genre in Mexico and the crazy, joyful adventure of the anthology for The Mexicanx Initiative" by Stephen C. Tobin and Libia Brenda</p> <p><b>CHRONICLE:</b> "The Long-Overdue Recognition of Mexicanx Science Fiction at This Year's WorldCon76" by Stephen C. Tobin</p> <p><b>FICTION:</b> "Shoot" by Pepe Rojo</p> <p><b>FICTION:</b> "Kan/Trahc" by Iliana Vargas</p> <p><b>FICTION:</b> "Aztlán Liberated" by David Bowles</p> <p><b>FICTION:</b> "A Truth Universally Acknowledged" by Julia Rios</p> <p><b>COMIC:</b> "Rhizome" by Libia Brenda and Richard Zela</p> <p><b>Indigenous Literature</b></p> <p>"Translating kuxlejal in Ab'ya Yala in Four Mesoamerican Poets" by Paul Worley</p> <p>Three Poems by Manual Espinosa Sainos</p> <p>Four Poems by Adriana López</p> <p>Four Poems by Ruperta Bautista Vázquez</p> <p>Four Poems by Manuel Tzoc Bucup</p> <p><b>Poetry</b></p> <p>Five Poems by Marosa di Giorgio</p> <p>Four Poems by Olga Orozco</p> <p>Four Poems by Elena Garro</p> <p><b>Fiction</b></p> <p>"Men Who Walk Alone by the Sea" by Juan Pablo Roncone</p> <p>"Susana and the Sun" by Óscar Godoy</p> <p>"A Portuguese Ghost" by Miguel Gomes</p> <p>"City X: A Novel in 101 Tweets" by Alberto Chimal</p> <p><b>Interviews</b></p> <p>Feline Restrepo Pombo: "Any writer who</p>		

SHARES

HOME	MAGAZINE	PUBLISH IN LALT	GET INVOLVED	ABOUT	
<p>in the towers. Through the crack the blue wave fled at whose center swayed the dove.</p> <p>The white sky descended to drown the trees. The bed is the glacier that devours the dreams. The ice dagger appeared to meticulously sever the small beauty that I defend.</p> <p>The sun moves further away each day from my orbit. There is only winter next to you, friend.</p> <p><i>January 18, 1955</i></p> <p><b>The Huisache Plain</b></p> <p>Elena! I hear my name, I look for myself. Only this ear remains? This one that hears my name on a huisache plain? My name, cried out like that, to the four winds, at night, on the plain of death?</p> <p>Elena! It's strange that, quartered, my limbs advance on the huisache plain. The name no longer unites them nor names them. It's strange that they still advance and that in the center is the mouth of the void. Now my name calls them: Come here, Elena's nose! Come here, Elena's arm! Only the chamber pot remains steadfast covering the head that sleepwalking rolls in the valley of huisache. Is there still a kick left? Does anyone still come to play ball? No one forgot a good spit of fang for the head rolling among the huisache?</p> <p>Elena! My name calls out to them: Come here, hand leg neck! It's been years since they've danced apart in the land of spits. Is there anyone who still has sputum for that eye closed by spits?</p> <p>Elena! The voice comes from the deep center of my navel</p>				<p>with Heather Cleary, translator of Comemadre" by Denise Kripper</p> <p>Ricardo Cárcamo: "I wrote the annotations in the 2017 edition of The New Novel": A Conversation with Scott Weintraub</p> <p><b>Previews</b> From Dangerous Matter by Gabriela Cantú Westendarp</p> <p>From Jawbone by Mónica Ojeda</p> <p><b>Nota Bene</b> Nota Bene: November 2018</p> <p><b>BOOK REVIEWS</b> Sombra de Paraíso by Claudia Sierich</p> <p>Luz negra by Noel Luna</p> <p>Una novela criminal by Jorge Volpi</p> <p>The Bottom of the Sky by Rodrigo Fresán</p> <p>Comemadre by Roque Larraquy</p> <p>Savage Theories by Pola Oloixarac</p> <p>Inscripción de la Deriva by Ismael Gavilán</p> <p>Huir no es mejor plan by Mario Montalbetti</p> <p>Death Comes in Through the Kitchen by Teresa Dovalpage</p> <p>Cadavers by Néstor Perlongher</p> <p><b>POPULAR TAGS</b></p> <p>Mexico Indigenous Lit Science Fiction Venezuela Colombia Chile Argentina Mapuche Maya Short Fiction Cuba Feminist Lit Translation Chronicle Graphic Lit Borders Peru Guatemala Tzotzil Bogotá39</p>	

SHARES

[HOME](#)[MAGAZINE](#)[PUBLISH IN LALT](#)[GET INVOLVED](#)[ABOUT](#)

and the hands that dance the crazy dance of the crazy fingers  
without slate, without pencil, without child, without lover.

I look for myself. I find myself.

Hanging from a dry branch is one of my lips.

And now over there runs the tongue

that recited the school lessons:

*Rosa rosae...*

What is it doing there, so far from the blackboard,  
discarded in the valley of huisache?

Elena!

I look for myself. I find myself.

No one removes the chamber pot covering landscapes,  
birds seen in dazzling canopies,  
the point of the star from which I was hanging  
and the syllables of my name rocking me toward a past  
and a future both of gold  
before being here, you shouting at yourself  
amid the huisache.

Nor does one have to look through the hole of the aorta.

Gentlemen, a mecate to tie it up well!,

so that never again will it get to the center of that heart  
that sprawls red moon fallen on the huisache plain.

Will the ladies and gentlemen like it  
lying down, illuminating the huisache red  
in the valley where my navel rolls,  
like the marbles rolled before, calling me?  
Click! Click! Click!

Elena!

My white spine advances viper-like  
toward the black well of the void.

Is there any satin heel,  
of those pious satin heels that women wear  
to smash his head?

Rosary and decency in hand, there were ladies!

Checkbook and decency in hand, there were gentlemen!

The plain, this plain, is for the penniless.

Ladies and gentlemen live along avenues  
of cardboard and drink Indian blood.

Elena!

I look for myself. There's time, the well is still far.  
The teeth free from the gums advance by small leaps.

Until the last of them falls,  
until the solemn bell that presided  
over the palate and the word falls, I won't be able to respond to you.

Elena!

I tell you that I look for myself, that I find myself.  
Wait until the last of the nails gets to the black well.

The huisache plain is long!

The huisache plain is wide!

It takes centuries to cross it!

SHARES

[HOME](#)[MAGAZINE](#)[PUBLISH IN LALT](#)[GET INVOLVED](#)[ABOUT](#)

There where we find the lost  
 There where what was had goes  
 There where the dead are dead  
 and there are days when they revive and repeat  
 the actions prior to their death  
 There where cried tears are cried  
 again without a cry  
 and where intangible lips seek each other  
 and are found already without a body  
 There where we are suddenly children  
 and we have a house  
 and where cities are photographs  
 and their monuments reside in the air  
 and there are pieces of gardens attached to some eyes  
 There where the trees are in the void  
 where there are lovers and relatives mixed  
 with familiar objects  
 There where celebrations come after mourning  
 births after deaths  
 rainy days  
 after sunny days  
 There, lonely, without time, without childhood,  
 comet without origin, a foreigner to the landscape  
 strolling among strangers  
 There you reside,  
 where memory resides.

*Paris, 1951***A A.B.C.**

That each of my tears  
 drowns each of your days in salt  
 and each of your days becomes rock  
 and when you dream, be it only you alone  
 lost in the salt lakes,  
 dead under a wind of salt.  
 That you look at the eyes of death  
 in the eyes you look at and that look at you  
 and the intricate paths of my tears  
 of that Friday  
 sink into your skin  
 until they make a tattooed mask of you.  
 That my tears have the virtue  
 to erase your memory of bliss  
 and that empty days shackle your tedium.  
 That one alone is enough  
 to sour the sweetest of fruits  
 and another to blind you to beauty.  
 That one of my tears, gentle, slight,  
 becomes rock  
 and all a rushing river

SHARES

[HOME](#)

[MAGAZINE](#)

[PUBLISH IN LALT](#)

[GET INVOLVED](#)

[ABOUT](#)



deceptive fixed star  
like this inexplicable misfortune  
of pursuing that Friday  
that stone balcony  
that good-bye  
that tree floating alone in the night air  
distancing itself more as I advance  
in the memory.

*Tokyo, October 11, 1952*

Translated by Adele Lonas, Olatz Pascariu, Silvia Soler Gallego, and Francisco Leal

Edited by Patricia Rosa Lopátegui

**Elena Garro** (1916-1998) is one of the most important writers of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Mexican and Hispanic Literature. Playwright, novelist, short-story author, journalist, screenwriter and poet. From the fifties, her work that stands out are one act plays, "Un hogar sólido" (A Solid Home) "El árbol" (The Tree), "Los perros" (The Dogs) and "La señora del balcón" (The Lady of the Balcony) (compiled in *Elena Garro: Works Reunited. Theater*, FCE, 2009). In them, themes of existential order, of race and of gender are addressed, renewing previously 'costumbrista' theater. She is considered a precursor to so-called magic realism because of her theatrical pieces, as well as for her novel, *Recollections of Things to Come* (Xavier Villarrutia Award, 1963). In this work, she accomplishes an acerbic analysis of the treason of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 at the same time as she presents the myths that shape up the idiosyncrasy of Mexico, with a singular handling of time by juxtaposing and fusing the western cosmovision with the prehispanic. In her collection of stories, *The Week of Colors*, one of her most emblematic short stories, "Blame the tlaxcaltecas," stands out. In the role of activist, she wrote countless articles and reports on the 1960's in her struggle for democracy and social justice against the dictatorship of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). This led the government to discredit and exile her (1968-1993). In her ample bibliography, *We are fleeing Lola* (1980), *Testimonies about Mariana* (1981), *Reunion of Characters* (1982), *And Matarazo Didn't Call...* (1991), *Memories of Spain 1937* (1992), *Inés* (1995), among others, stand out.

*Biography by Patricia Rosa Lopátegui.*

#### Recommended Reading:

[From Dangerous Matter by Gabriela Cantú Westendarp](#)

[Four Poems by Olga Orozco](#)

[Five Poems by Marosa di Giorgio](#)

[Three Poems by Octavio Armand](#)

[Four Poems by Manuel Tzoc Bucup](#)

Latin American Literature Today  
University of Oklahoma  
780 Van Vleet Oval  
Kaufman Hall, Room 105  
Norman, OK 73019-4037

Accessibility  
Sustainability  
HIPAA  
OU Job Search

Policies  
Legal Notices  
Copyright  
Resources & Offices

Updated 11/05/2018 16:51:07

SHARES