

from **TRICING** by Beau Hopkins

An experimental translation of *Trilce* by César Vallejo

XXXI

molycoddled
hope moans in the cottons.

hoarse aws uniformed
of threats handmade from majestic germinations
with an autogenic
bodyguard of buttons.

the sun gnaw off your sixth?
terror be quiet. (it's a boy...!)

in goodchristian hope I'm always
waiting hoping
genuflecting on the circular stone
that lies over
the what, hundredthousand blind corners
of this misty destiny
where I appear, as me.

and a suddenly-startled
God presses hard
on our pulse
serious now, silent...

like a doting father with his little girl
He tenderly
parts the blood-sopped cottons, and
with finger and thumb
He tenderly
tears out the hope.

o God I
want it.
isn't that enough?

XXXII

999 calories.
vvvrrmm...rrreekk rrruuhh...kkra
the oscillate uvula
unspools a throw-ribbon of *'ot rooooooolls!*
from the bun-seller,
the cry gyring down
the ear canal.

o to be those
ice creams, or at least something
motionless, neither more
nor less. or the golden
mean. but no.

1,000 calories.
the gringo firmament
goes puce in the face, guffawing
its vast lethargy.
and the turkeywattled
sun sets, racking all brains
for coldest things.

goosebumped
like a nightterror: rrrrrrhmmmm...
a harmless and merciful omnibus
panting with thirst
scurries to the beach.

the air, fresh air! cool
ice. if only this heat (– better
not mention it.

my own quill,
even, is finally conking out.

thirty-three
trillion three hundred
and thirty-three
calories.

XXXIII

say it rains tonight. I'd hunker down
a thousand years away.
or maybe just a hundred.

act like
nothing had happened, kidding myself
it's ok, I'm still on track.

or maybe with
no Mother, or lover, lacking the zeal
even, to clamber down
and peep, on the pitfloor, a mere beating
muscle,
on such a night
as this.

there I'd be, unraveling
the vedic fibre, the vedic
yarn of my utmost end, hell
of a thread,
a hasbeen scheming to lead
by the nose
two rantiphonal tongues knelling
time in the one bell.

whether it's reckoning the
cost of being or
reckoning the never being born
the sum is always I
will never quite
be free.

what will be, will not be
all that's still to come, but what already
came and went, only
what already came, and went.

XXXIV

he's over,
the stranger, the one
you were always bringing home
in the early hours, talking and
talking.
now no one's
there waiting for me, my plighted
place laid out, all wrongs righted.

the warm early
evening's over. your wide baymouth and
clamour, and all that
chitchat
with your almost-extinguished
mother serving us tea
with twilight already
stirred into it.

it's over at
last, all of it. the long summer days
your obedient
breasts, the way
you'd murmur, no don't go, stay.

even our old nicknames.
for my coming-of-age
into this grief without season,
for our being
born like
this, for no reason.

XXXV

meeting my beloved
so much at once
is a fine detail, like one of those violetcoloured betting slips
too big to fold neatly.

and at lunch she'll order all our favorite things
from the old days,
repeated now
with a bit more mustard;

the fork's astonishment, and her charm and her radiance
of a spring pistil,
and her penny
pudency, still standing
on the slightest things.
and the beer
lyrical and shaking,
which her two sober nipples
keep under watch,
and which I really shouldn't binge so much on.

and other delights of the table
which that rich field sews
with its own germinal heavy artillery, out on manoeuvres
all morning long
as I see for myself, the amorous
archivist of her intimacies;
with the ten magic wands
of her metabolising fingers.

woman who unthinkingly begins
to natter away and loose
her tender words
like fresh-diced lettuce-hearts, lancing.

one more drink and I'm off.
and now
we're on our way, finally, to work.

meanwhile she folds herself
into the curtains and
– o needle of my frayed days –
sits down beside a seam,

to stitch
my side to hers,
to resew that shirtbutton
that's come off once again.

would you look at that!

XXXVI

here we are, fighting tooth and nail
viciously, like cornered
rats to pass
through the eye of a needle.

the fourth
corner of the circle almost goes
up in ammonia. male takes
up as female on account
of speculated breasts, precisely squared
by the root of all
that never flowers.

is that your secret, Venus
de Milo? you wear your
maims so openly, budding enwombed
in the teeming embrace
of being itself,
this being that meanwhiles
in perennial imperfection.

Venus de Milo your
increate ablated
arm is always on its way
back, trying to elbow-crawl across
mossy rasping shingle,
nautiline horizons, a manifold of ongoingness
taking their first steps, immortal
gloomings.

tamer
of imminencies, breaker
of parentheses.

refuse, and you
too, to set any
foot on Harmony's duplicated security.
absolutely refuse symmetry.

intercede in the strife
of points contending
points jousting
with fury to leap

through the eye of a needle!

now I can feel the little excess
finger on my left.

I move it and

think, it shouldn't be there, or me, at all.
nagging and chafing it drives me crazy,
but there's no getting away

from it, save
by pretending it's Thursday.

all hail the new
odd number

mighty with orphanhood!

XXXVII

once I met a girl. she was poor. I brought her
onstage. her mother and sisters simply
divine and her terribly moving
 'you're not
 coming back, are you.'

since I happened to be thriving in a certain line of business
they coddled and fussed me an air
of some magnificent scion.
 and the would-be
 bride ran to water.
 like a star
turn bawling out her poorly
 cribbed ardour.

I adored her shyness
in the dance, swishing her modest silks, her shawl sequins tracing
notes and strokes
 on the bars of her dancing, like breezed grass.

and when we dodged the altar, my business
went to the wall,
and hers, and the whole
 sphere, like swept dust.