

*The Lorca Book* is a hybrid-genre work of translation, poetry, biography, literary theory, and auto-theory written in conversation with Federico García Lorca. This selection is the opening and invocation of a narrative that follows the chronology of Lorca's life and work as well as my discovery of it. I channel Lorca and write with him as a queer ancestor in order to translate him and his writing, which in this excerpt includes translations from the Spanish of Lorca's Gypsy Ballads, *Blood Wedding*, and *Theory and Play of Duende*.

The title *The Lorca Book* is an homage to Robert Duncan's *H.D. Book*, a similarly direct communication with a poet-ancestor who shared formal praxes and identity markers with the author. I also extend a bow to the incomparable poet, translator, anthologist, and delight Jerome Rothenberg, whom we recently lost. Across *The Lorca Book*, I intentionally blur translation and original writing as well as genre boundaries in order to more nearly approximate the relationship that translation is between a translator and their poet. The book leverages themes in Lorca's work and my own life as a lens to think about placing ourselves in the context of literary and historical figures and to find kinship across languages, borders, and times. Lorca is my sounding board and authorial mask, and, throughout the book, we converse in the margins of poems and essays as well as disrupted forms.

*The first poem in this work is dedicated to my love, Corey Pruett.*

My lover said he hopes one day I'll love him as much as I love you, Lorca.

It is preposterous and heavy, your body,  
But so am I.

My want is so large it's generational,  
A want built of so many lacks, so much  
Hiding and you inside each covered basket.

My want is a fire smoldering through my body,  
Which hovers under his like a pale gnat.

My lover asks to carry me over the threshold;  
I flame and collapse, cold and blue, on death's stoop.

The flies buzz heavy in my eyes  
And my tongue lolls loose, a drooping puppy.

The weight of generations kills me  
Though no one asked me to be so heavy.

If I said, find a home inside my ribcage,  
Would he scrapbook or mount my skeleton?

Am I tending back towards morbidity  
And the teenager I was while yearning for  
Whatever more?

My lover said he hopes I love him as much as I love you, Lorca, but what he does not know is how  
Death you are to me,

A specter of generations and a body of empty husks on which my name is also fixed,  
Like so many before me,

Grotesque masks and rakes of blood,  
The mystery of the closet and the boy I saw myself within.

But I don't want to crawl inside your skin and see, out, the sad, pale world. Yours is a body I have  
been.

What I love is the memory of you, how, by choreographing past injury, I might skim off dead  
decades that cling to my lover's skin.

This sad sailor remembers  
If he gives in a moment,  
his eyes will sink all the way  
to the bottom of the water.  
How slow the sailless sea  
and memories that in those  
same hours will be moving!  
What a sea covered in shadow  
roses and dead fish!  
And how real and how true!



hero(ine)

invocation for Lorca

*you*, wanting to  
    woman  
*you*, acquaintances  
    hiding you  
the inside of the mountain  
    hermaphrodite  
*you* are  
    Aphrodite spring-  
    water boiled apologetic  
*you* are  
    Hermes  
    cap winged  
    messenger, artful trickster  
take you from  
    Apollo  
his side  
    pierced of wing  
imagine you with me  
*we*  
*mythical*  
i count my bones  
wonder  
do you fill space  
your  
    bones, pigeon-holed  
i will  
channel you  
chanel you

Gehenna your  
killing fields i  
my politick  
a disaster of doves  
my muslin wall  
civil  
i will  
channel you  
charnel your  
ignored body  
ignored body  
sometimes i dream we  
are the nymphs, the  
love child  
us *Hermaphroditus*  
maybe I feel  
*middle*  
*middle* in your  
own your  
body  
left to decay  
dying now, dying now  
time me, my  
epithelium,  
the worms  
crawl up your  
tear ducts  
replace my ear  
canals, spring-water  
let's talk about  
Aphrodite  
intra Venus

i Psyche  
    you Eros  
you sexed Catholicism  
spear of light from  
the sky vault  
i share with you if  
    your wants it  
*roll with me*  
balladic in a  
cart on wheels  
baby we los  
sensuales gritando  
al abierto del telón  
i can only  
love you  
    in spanish  
so you my body  
    if you, light  
    if you, spear  
replace the dead  
body of the  
revolution;  
you did not fail  
no, my love,  
the wounded deer  
eloping off, arrows  
riddling its back—  
let's talk about  
    Hermes  
message  
    to your mother  
tyrannos

her son  
born with piano  
fingers  
nacido para toca la  
guitarra  
strain me frets  
turn the tighten  
líricos  
when did you discover  
*your language*  
tús árboles  
tú sangre  
pelo en mano  
abrazo  
I'd like to filter out  
your everything  
finally, ojos  
finalmente,  
eyebrows  
you must have been  
very beautiful  
when you sang—  
i found this caduceus  
by the well  
where you eavesdropped  
on the sisters next door,  
penned in, and  
they thought  
you a virgin  
too  
what was  
turning, the

turning a silver apple  
in the high garden?  
low every line is

*verde que te*

*quiero*

*que te quiero*

green was not

your color

as boys

would we have played

or fucked?

my best friend

the most beautiful

red hair

we cut ourselves

to mingle blood

to prove

to never part

he left and

i felt the pressure

of quicksand

on my

hands then filling my mouth

i would

do it again

your tongue the

blood on fingerprint

pressed to corn-leaf

let's talk

forbidden

revolution any

sweat on me



if we are  
    the same  
is this  
    mingling  
is me, both me  
    and not,  
both elongated you  
    and my thigh,  
your tongue,  
    hiding behind  
english  
not yet worthy  
    yet worthy  
rose in the  
    teeth  
i thought,  
if i tattoo  
    *a both, and*  
    *a verde que*  
maybe  
the mute boy  
taken  
translated into  
    insect  
your mother  
squashed  
    lifeless  
body— thorax—  
abdomen— face—  
cradled  
in the palm  
    en mi mano, then

permission to  
kiss  
*emerging* nymphoid  
en my mano  
necrophilia, no—  
*homophilia.*

*It felt right to me. That greeting felt right. Very proper.*

Do you think it'll land?

*Land?*

Do you think it'll, make sense, like—entiendes?

*I think so. I'm not sure. You want to know if I understand?*

...

*If I understand you?*

*But if you think so, in English, I'm sure they will.*

I'm not so sure.

*Why?*

I could be wrong. How do I know I'm right?

*Try again.*

~~meditations & mistranslations<sup>1</sup>~~

~~texts inspired by the work<sup>2</sup> of translation and adaptation~~

~~and un-translated<sup>3</sup> back into English~~

*Has the book started yet?*

Sure, I'm trying titles.

What did you picture when I told you I was writing a book in dialogue with Federico García Lorca?

*I was picturing a play, really. Theatre. Of dialogue. Or something less indulgently navel-gazing.*

Are you disappointed with my solo show?

*Oh, aren't you so clever. Lucky me. I mean, us.*

---

<sup>1</sup> *too sonic, you're indulgent*

<sup>2</sup> ???

<sup>3</sup> *THIS*

An enumeration from your secret admirer.

This is what he calls you:

1. Dialogue
2. Simple Colors and Images
3. Poem Shape
4. Repetition
5. The “Lorquian Word”<sup>4</sup>

These seem to me a gross interpretation of you. The *word*, Precisely whatever It is—well, You cannot imagine how simple it is to change, Transform a letter, transfigure a suffix, with an equation, a metaphor—He calls you these symbols, a straight diagram.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Now this I have to hear more about. Did I invent words? What's My Word??*

“Beginning with olive trees”

– Jerome Rothenberg *writing about me but still not me!!*

No kibbitzing, and we were just talking about him

*Sorry.*

...

*You're in charge.*

You're driving, I'm just a vehicle. And I have so much to show you.