

ON POETRY

Brossa, Joan. Barcelona 1.19.1919 – 7.30.1998.

Born into a blue-collar family, he participated in the Spanish Civil War at 18 years old, where he began his poetic career. When he was in his forties, thanks to his acquaintance with J.V. Foix, Joan Miró and Joan Prats, he was introduced to surrealism. His first contacts and friendships were fundamentally artistic. He was the co-founder of the journal *Dau al Set* (The Seven-Spotted Dice, 1948) and collaborated assiduously with artists such as Joan Miró, Antoni Tàpies, Eduardo Chillida, and Frederic Amat, among others. In 1950, his poetry experienced a turn, thanks his acquaintance with the Brazilian poet João Cabral de Melo, with the book *Em va fer Joan Brossa* (Joan Brossa Made Me), where the intention was clearly political and the formal breakthrough was absolute. Brossa also manifested this political-social interest in odes, sonnets, and plays of a more traditional structure. This formal rupture brought him to a progressive conceptualization and synthesis, evident in the turning points of his 1960s books (*Poemes civils* [Civil Poems], *El saltamartí* [The Tumbler]), since they contained visual poems. This path led Brossa to the world of plastic arts (visual and object poems), but the method was, at base, the same that we find in many of his poems of an earlier stage (as in the prose piece “Kamir”): the contrast of distant realities, which produces in the audience a new, poetic and mysterious reality. Ultimately, this is a transformation of the world occasioned by a completely playful conception of poetry. As Brossa said in 1968: “If I couldn’t write, in moments of euphoria I would be a guerrilla fighter, and in moments of passivity, a conjurer. To be a poet encompasses both of these.”

KAMIR

Dues persones, que fa molts dies que no s’havien vist, es troben, s’enraonen i no es reconeixen fins després d’haver-se separat.
Dues persones, que fa molts mesos que no s’havien vist, es troben, es parlen i no es reconeixen fins després d’haver-se separat.

Un paraigua es compon d’un tros de tela cosit a unes barnilles d’acer articulades a la punta d’un bastó. ¿No heu vist mai llum en una casa ruïnosa?

Maig de 1949

From *Proses de carnaval*, in *Alfabet desbaratat*. Barcelona, Ed. Empúries, 1998, p. 26.

KAMIR

Two people, who had not seen each other for many days, meet, talk and do not recognise each other until after they have gone their separate ways. Two people, who had not seen each other for many months, meet, talk and do not recognise each other until after they have gone their separate ways.

An umbrella consists of a piece of fabric sewn to steel spokes articulated around the point of a stick. Have you never seen light in a house in ruins?

Maig de 1949

Translation by Julie Work. *Joan Brossa, desde Barcelona al nuevo mundo*. Barcelona, Institut Ramon Llull / Fundació Joan Brossa, 2005, p. 297.

Info about Joan Brossa:

<http://lletra.uoc.edu/ca/autor/joan-brossa>

<http://lletra.uoc.edu/especial/brossa/>

<http://www.pocio.cat/membres/GloriaBordons/brossa.htm>

<http://www.fundacio-joan-brossa.org/engl/inici.html>

Translated into English:

Poems from the Catalan (translated by Arthur Terry). Barcelona, Ed. La Polígrafa, 1973.

Four Postwar Catalan Poets (translated by David H. Rosenthal). Minneapolis MN, *Cross-Cultural Review* no. 1, 1978.

1970-1995, *Twenty-five Years of Catalan Poetry* (translated by Arthur Terry & David H. Rosenthal). Barcelona, *Catalan Writing* num. 14 (October 1995), p. 14-20.

GLÒRIA BORDONS

WORK IN PROGRESS



Fot. Jordi Piny

Najat el Hachmi, Catalan writer born in 1979 in Nador (Morocco). Her debut in the world of literature came in 2004 with the work *Jo també sóc catalana* (I’m Catalan Too). Her second book, *L’últim patriarca* (The Last Patriarch), published in 2008, has been recognized with the Ramon Llull Prize of Catalan Letters. In this work, Najat presents the tensions and conflicts between the new generations of immigrants, already adapted to the country that has welcomed them, and the previous generation, still very much indebted to all that has been left behind.

I Am My Father

How handsome he is there, with a half smile, not being goofy. He’s so handsome that I would go for him all of the sudden. Well, I could do it, what I’d like best to do would be to contact you, skipping all the logical rules. What rules? I mean, WHAT rules? Is there some rule that says that you can eat my cunt, tear me inside because you wanted to rouse me to pleasure with your fingers, which were frantic when you put them inside me and I don’t know if I noticed or not your fingernails scraped off pieces of the moistest skin that I have on my body and then you not saying anything to me? And me not saying anything to you. Continuing on as if nothing had happened, as if we had shared a meal and that’s it, an afternoon and that’s it. As if some of your liquids hadn’t been inside of me somewhere, as if they hadn’t mixed with my liquids, as if I hadn’t seen a green bit of gunk coming out of your eyes just when you had your fingers inside of me and them looking at me with my face transformed more by excitement than pleasure, I wouldn’t say that at any time there was pleasure. I tell you this because I know what excitement without pleasure means, I know what it is that intense explosion that looks only for the edge and that, when it’s gone over the edge, becomes the most desolate of emotions. If I had orgasmed with you maybe I wouldn’t go for you now, I wouldn’t have you all under my skin and I wouldn’t go for you there. You’re too much like him, like my father, but in fact when I go for you I am my father. I am he who defies you and looks you deep in the eyes to tell you I can do what I like with you and ten thousand more because that’s what he did, he could do it with one woman and ten thousand more. Now he can’t any more, he’s too old. Like you can’t any more, but I still haven’t decided if it’s because you couldn’t or didn’t want to. You didn’t want to undress or you didn’t have time to do it or you had a hang-up about something or you’re impotent or you only wanted to look at me. Something told you to look, that you wanted to look at me and see how I shrieked, yes, you said shriek, while I masturbated. But before that you had said that you wanted to eat my cunt and a whole string of that word’s synonyms. Like I said, it wasn’t a long time, but all of those intimate contacts in fact seemed short and abrupt, even to a certain degree inhuman, grotesque. Remember the green gunk from your eyes that came out because of the sweat that already covered your whole face. But you didn’t disgust me because you’re him, my father and, as much as I’ve said that my father disgusts me, I am my father when I go for you, at least I was my father when I so urgently went after other men so they would push me to the edge I was talking about before. Yes, what I would like right now is to wring you out completely, to repeat the passion, was it passion?, of the other day until I had enough. But the most messed up part of all of this is that you haven’t called me I don’t know why, but I don’t call you because I know that in a little while I would be tired of you, that looking for your secret I would find something I don’t like to the point of not getting excited any more. Now you excite me because I don’t know what your secret is, but now that I’m beginning to glimpse it I think it will be a secret I’ll hate and that will make me hate myself for not having stopped before, for not having given in to you even though it was me who went for you. And tell me something, if I’m the one who goes for you, does that mean I have no right to withhold anything from you? Does it mean I can’t tell you you’re a disgusting pig, that it can’t be done? Since the first day when you hurt me and you tore me so much and the worst of it is you don’t call me or write me or say anything and you prefer to be with your paintings? Is that it? I don’t have the right to expect human behavior from you just because it was me who insisted on staying? I didn’t insist so much, you set a trap for me and I fell into it. You called me afterwards, but it doesn’t matter. I don’t have to ask for any explanations about why you called me. Even if you had made all the contacts I wouldn’t be able to demand that you call me or anything. Because it’s always that situation when you can’t do anything, when you don’t have the right to say anything and now I don’t know if I am my father for pride or my mother for submission but I know that your secret has something to do with me, that I can’t do anything and you are the one who enjoys all the rights.