

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Humberto Ak'abal: Three Poems, Translated by Michael Bazzett

Humberto Ak'abal · Monday, May 8th, 2023

EL TIEMPO

El tiempo es silencio
que aman los pájaros.

Lo salpican con su canto,
lo hilvanan
con las herbas de su voz.

El tiempo:
ni va
ni viene
ni se detiene...

Los pájaros
simplemente
cantan.

TIME

Time is a silence
that birds love.

They season it with singing,
baste it
in the herbs of their voice.

Time
neither comes
nor goes
nor stays...

And the birds
simply
sing.

*

EN EL MANANTIAL

En el agua quieta,
una libélula de alas coloradas
navegaba sobre una hoja seca.

AT THE SPRING

In still water,
a rose-winged dragonfly
sails on a dry leaf.

*

SUEÑERO

—Es usted el Señor Sueñero?
—Sí, Señora, soy yo.
—No entiendo cómo usted,
siendo tan inteligente,
pierde el tiempo haciendo poesía.
Ya ve, cuánta se ha escrito
y el mundo sigue peor...
—Y usted cree
que si no se escribiera poesía
el mundo estaría mejor...?

DREAMER

—Are you Mr. Dreamer?
—Yes, ma'am, that's me.
—I don't understand how you,
being so intelligent,
waste your time making poetry.
You see how much has been written
yet the world grows worse...
—And you believe
if poetry were not written
the world would be better...?

*

All poems translated by Michael Bazzett



Michael Bazzett is the author of four books of poetry, most recently *The Echo Chamber* (Milkweed, 2021). His work has appeared in *GRANTA*, *The Threepenny Review*, *The Sun*, *The Nation*, and *The Paris Review*, and his verse translation of the Mayan creation epic, *The Popol Vuh*, (Milkweed, 2018) was longlisted for the National Translation Award. His translation of the selected poems of Humberto Ak'abal, *If Today Were Tomorrow*, is forthcoming from Milkweed Editions.



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