

# 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.



Books of Humberto Ak'abal

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