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 hacienda 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...

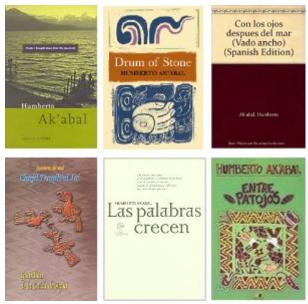
 —And you believe
- —And you believe if poetry were not written the world would be better...?

*

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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