

Ita ha'eñoso/ The Stone Is No Longer Alone. Miguelángel Meza

Selection, introduction and translation from Spanish by Elisa Taber

Miguelángel Meza is a Guaraní poet and cultural promoter born in Caacupé in 1955. He has contributed to numerous anthropological and linguistic research studies, as well as translations. He also worked for the National Ministry of Culture of Paraguay. He has published the books *Ita ha'eñoso* (1985), *Perurima rapykuere* (1985 and 2001), *Purahéi* (2001 and 2011), *Chipi Gonzales guahêrã* (2006), *Maleõ* (2007), *Perurima pypore* (2010), and *Arami mburukujaguýre* (2012). He is the founder of the cartonera press *Mburukujarami Kartonéra*, with which he has published numerous titles authored by him and others.



(photo credit: Douglas Diegues)

Ita ha'eñoso is a bilingual, Mbya Guaraní and Spanish, collection of poems by Miguelángel Meza. Mbya Guaraní is distinct from Jopara, a variant of Spanish-inflected Guaraní spoken widely in Paraguay, a bilingual country, Spanish and Jopara. This, his first book, published thirty-five years prior, is a twin collection to *Ayvu Rapyta*, the Mbya Guaraní sacred myths of origin transcribed and collected by Paraguayan ethnologist León Cadogan. He writes a self-reflexive response, not retelling, of the myths; therefore, while his images, symbols, and metaphors refer to an ancestral culture, they are also very much his own. Meza's words are signifiers without hierarchy that mean literally within the lyric structure, the first words by a new author, and connote literally Mbya Guaraní cosmological narratives. In essence both are the same as the word "ñe'ë," which literally translates "word-soul." The

origin of the world is not announced by the materialization of the hummingbird, but by a voice that mournfully asserts, “I appear.”

Since *Ita ha'eñoso* (1985) Meza has published six collections of poetry and short fiction. However, *Ita ha'eñoso* remains a seminal work in Guaraní poetry because it marks the transition from oral and communal to chirographic and authorial literature. He makes an attunement to both an authorial style and a millenary culture possible, while they jointly point to another way of conceiving the world. The counterintuitive way that this poet renders the individual from the communal is reminiscent of the Paraguayan embroidery technique, ñandutí. Ñandutí means spider's web in Guaraní. Threads extracted from, rather than woven into, a fabric trace a geometric pattern. Meza imitates this practice by claiming authorship through his lyric synthesis of a communal narrative. Meza seems to say through those that came before him: identity lies in erasure, not mark-making.

Miguelángel Meza © *Ita ha'eñoso/Ya no está sola la piedra*. Asunción: Alcándara Editora, 1985
Elisa Taber © Introduction. Translations “Tierra joven/Yvy kunumi” (Young Land),
“Manantial/Yvu” (Spring), and “Plenilunio/Ñasaindy” (Moonlight),
From *Ita ha'eñoso/Ya no está sola la piedra* (The Stone Is No Longer Alone)
by Miguelángel Meza (1985)

Yvy kunumi

-opupupávo tape.

Kunumi...
jatyta ryku,
esaingóna chekuâre jaha.
Ñamboyke ykua syry.
Epyrû che pyporépe,
jatyta pytúre ñapoñy.

Kunumi...
jajapichy ka'aguy pýre ava,
amo ko'ê oitypei háre
yvyty.

Oiméne ro'y ndohypýi véima ndesýpe.

Kunumi...
he'ô nderape;
nde yvága yvága
mbyja saingo háre.

Jatyta ku'e,
naha'eño véima ita.
Amambái rapo
okapúma yvyguy mymbágui.

Kunumi...
jatyta mboguývo,
esaingóna che kuâre jaha.

Young Land

-the simmer of the road settled.

Young man...
snail pulp,
hang on to my finger and let's go.
Let's skirt the spring.
Step on my footsteps,
we'll crawl along the trail of the snail.

Young man...
let's inhabit the heart of the forests,
there, where the dawn cleans
the hills.

Certainly, the cold is no longer enveloping your mother in its mist.

Young man...
your path is humid,
your sky, a fruit tree
the stars hang from.

Restless snail,
the stone is no longer alone.
The root of the fern
sprouts on the raw dominated earth.

Young man...
snail that stands erect,
hang on to my finger and let's go.

Yvu

Yvu,

yvy sununu ita kyti guýre.
Kambuchi jeka jeka
opu, opu, opu, opu, opu, opu.

Yvu,

mitâ jepyso ita ro'ysâgui.
Ao hovyú
saingo kyhapa.
Pysâ povyvy,
karugua renói.

Yvu,

kuña kytâpu,
peky remôi ñe'ê kyhyje
heruguâ mombu
opu, opu, opu, opu, opu.

Yvu,

yvytu oñomymba
mangaysyro ýre.
Oveví ky'a
ojehekýipa.

Yvu,

na'iká mo'ái
tuguy pururû ita ahy'ógui.
Oî kuimba'e.
Kambuchi jeka jeka
opu, opu, opu, opu, opu, opu.

Spring

Spring,
thunder of water from the cut of stone,
vessel that breaks and breaks,
surges, surges, surges.
Spring,
boy stretching from the cold stone.
Blue dress.
An abundance of hammocks hang.
Fingers probing.
Complaint of the swamp.
Spring,
lady in heat,
urgency of ripening, murmur,
desire to sip the mystery.
Surges, surges, surges.
Spring,
wind tamed
without the bitter whip.
The trash surfaces
and disperses.
Spring,
the crisp blood from the throat of the stone
will not dry.
Man is.
Vessel that breaks and breaks.
Surges, surges, surges.

Ñasaindy

Ñasaindy,
kamby jepyso morotî.
Ojehýi mombyry tuñe'ê.
Ju'I, kururu, karuguáre oñe'ê.
Karugua yma ogua ñande yvýre.
Ñasaindy,
Mandyju ahoja hyjúi ñande yvýre.
Jasy oje'o, oja, oñemona,
hypase vaicha ñande yvýre.
 ha... oke kane'ô,
 oñehê.
 Osýi tetyma.
Oipykua mbyjápe jasy
ha oho ho'a, oguejy, oike, okañy.
... otî vaicha
 iko'ê haġua yvy ári.

Full moon

Full moon,
milk whitely spread.
A whistle tingles in the distance.
Toads and frogs clamor in the swamp.
The old estuary seeps into the earth.
Full moon,
the cotton blanket foams on the earth.
The moon fades, approaches, spreads
as if wanting to dry off on the earth.
And the fatigue sleeps,
it spills.
The legs shrink.
The moon holds up the stars
and begins to fall, descend, penetrate, hide
as if ashamed
to dawn on the earth.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR



Elisa Taber is an Argentine writer and anthropologist. She explores the ontological poetics of Amerindian literature. Her stories and translations are troubled into being, even when that trouble is a kind of joy. Her writing appears in specialized media, such as 3AM Magazine, Colleex Open Formats, and Minor Literature(s). She is the recipient of two Library of Congress Hispanic Division Huntington Fellowship and a Janey Program for Latin American Studies Fellowship; and holds an MA in anthropology from The New School for Social Research. She is co-editor of *Slug*, a journal that bridges the gap between literature and ethnography, and editor of a Guaraní poetry issue for *Words without Borders*. Her books include *300 and 28* (Oakland: Gauss PDF, 2019) and *An Archipelago in a Landlocked Country* [Minneapolis:11:11 Press, (forthcoming) 2020]. Elisa was born in Asunción, and lives between Buenos Aires and New York.

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