

## RAQUEL ANTUN TSAMARAIN. ANENT VERSES

Raquel Antun Tsamaraint is a Shuar poet, originally from the Province of Morona Santiago (Ecuadorian Amazon). She is a native speaker of Shuar Chicham, a language that she protects and spreads through education and literature.

Anents are prayer songs that bring about action, strong words that the Shuar elders have cultivated from time

immemorial. The Kichwa poet, Yana Lema, who collaborates with Siwar Mayu and has compiled the collection, *Ñawpa pachamanta purik rimaykuna / Antiguas palabras andantes. Poesía de los pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas del Ecuador* (2016), sent us these words to introduce the work of Raquel Antun Tsamaraint:



“The forms of relations between all living beings in the jungle are so very deep and close. In the voice of Raquel, we encounter the coexistence between humans and all that exists in the forest. The life of plants and sacred animals are interlaced with the lives of humans, whether man or woman. Even so, this poet shares with us not only the sense of her nation, Shuar, but also of the Shuar woman. I can say that her verses are anent, sacred songs, new songs guided by the ancestral anent that the women of her people have sung and continue to sing. She speaks of caves, of food, of the jaguar, of tobacco, of the peccaries - and in all of this, she speaks with a woman’s sense. For this reason it gives me great pleasure to present the poetry of Raquel Antun, a voice at once colloquial and direct, while at the same time deep and loving”.

Raquel Antun © *Ñawpa pachamanta purik rimaykuna / Antiguas palabras andantes. Poesía de los pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas del Ecuador, 2016*  
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## **NATEM**

Winchar winchar waintjai  
Panki, napi, uunt yawa, churuwia aintsank  
Arutam wantinkiamuri  
Micha, micha jawai  
Nakarkum pujumame  
Karar iiame  
Kakarmaram surame  
Wainkiajme, aintme, amini wekasajai, mejentrusume, miniaktrusume!  
Yapir nukartusume, esaintme!  
Yampinkia nuwaitjai!  
Natem umaruitjai!

## **NATEM \***

Thousand of lights, lit,  
Various shapes: boas, snakes, tigers, eagles,  
The world of the Arutam spirits,  
And I quaked: what cold!  
You were lying in wait,  
Watching my dreams,  
Your claw's gash gave me power,  
I found you, followed, walked towards you, you sniffed me, you held me,  
Licked my face, nipped me.  
I was the Tigress Yampinkia  
I had ingested Natem.

\* Natem: ayawaska, sacred plant that is ingested to have visions.

## **NUA TSANKRAM**

Nantutinium tsankjai uumpuim nua jawai.  
Anentjai Nunkuin, mash takusan tusan séame.  
Nawanka tsank umar kanar uunt jastiniun iiawai.  
Atash yawajai iiawai  
Nantiar, nantiar iiawai.  
Nunkuin iiawai.  
Nua tsankramuiti.

## **TOBACCO WOMAN**

By the light of the moon, you blow upon her womb- she becomes woman.  
With your sacred songs, you ask Nunkui to fill her with health,  
prosperity and abundance  
The girl dreams, dreams of grandeur and prosperity.  
She dreams of hens and dogs,  
She dreams of mountains and valleys,  
She dreams of Nunkui, Earth Mother.  
Celebration of the tobacco woman!

## **ANENT**

Etsa taramtai anentrajai, umar wakeruta jati tusan nampeajai,  
Jikia jikiamu jatrawa, umar wake mesempra pujutrawa, tu  
Pujutajai.

Anentrakui panki aintsanak aminin penkan wekaja. Wake  
Mesempra pujutrawa. Maru, maru enentaintrawa.

## **SACRED SONG**

I sing when the sun is dying,  
These rays of death inject my melody with love and the  
miracle of love occurs, fine vibrations reach the heart of my Belóved  
inject his soul with passion.

My song reaches you and wraps you in colors, like the anaconda,  
wrapped in you my sacred song will walk and you will not forget me,  
you will always have me near, Belóved mine.

## **YAMPINKIA NAYAIMPINIAM**

Yampinkia nayaimpiniam wakaruiti yaa aintsank.  
Nayaimpiniam charip chichainiakuinkia nii ainiawai nunkanam  
Tarattsa wakeruiniak.  
Yampinkiaka yaa yunkunmirin yuiniawai, niinkia winia apachur  
Ainiawai, karar wainianiawai.

## **SKY JAGUARS**

And then the jaguars climb up to the sky turned into stars.  
If suddenly the firmament roars, it is they who miss the warmth  
of earth.  
Sky jaguars eat stardust, they are my grandparents  
who guide my dreams.

## **UWISHIN**

Intiashin enkema entsanan enkemamiayi, Tsunkijai pujustasa.  
Entsanmanka Tsunki iwiaku pujuiniawai, itiur namaksha ajuntain,  
itiur jaancha tsuarminiat, tusa unuimiarmiayi.  
Tsunki nii kakarmari susaru, chichatainiam, usuknumsha.  
Uwishin jaasmiayi.

## **SHAMAN**

Then, he submerged himself beneath his long black hair and began to breath under water. He went to the Tsunki kingdom to live as they live.  
He learned that the kingdom of water is wondrous, Tsunki people taught him to heal the sick, to cure their ailments.  
He received from the Tsunki his power, the power that resides in words and saliva.  
He became shaman.

## **PAKI**

Tuntui chichakui jea chicham awai timiajai. Uunt paki matnium  
Chicham aujmatkatsar untsunmiayi. Kashinkia yurumtsuk  
tsank umartaji, nuaka nijiamanch nawawarti. Ayamtai  
najanatniutji. Paki nakarmainiawai, niisha ijiamaniawai ii jeatin  
asarmatai.

## **PECCARIES \***

Quiet beats from the tuntui- something was happening in the village.  
It was the call of Chief Uunt to discuss the peccary hunt.  
Tomorrow we will fast and drink tobacco, he told them, women  
will prepare nijiamanch so we can undertake the trip, we will make an  
ayamtai in the woods. The peccaries await us - they too  
prepare a welcome celebration.

\* Sajino: Pecari tajacu

## For more about Raquel Antun Tsamaraint

- Raquel Antun on intercultural education ([video](#))
- “La tigresa de la cultura Shuar”, Ignacio Espinoza ([Proyecto Wakaya](#))
- “Raquel Antun, una guardiana de la oralidad” ([Diario El Comercio](#))

## About the translators



Lorrie Jayne, a collaborator in Siwar Mayu, teaches Spanish, Portuguese, and Personal Narrative in the Languages and Literatures Department at UNCA in Asheville, North Carolina. She lives with her husband and daughters in the Appalachian Mountains where she enjoys plants, people, and poetry.



Juan G. Sánchez Martínez grew up in Bakatá, Colombian Andes. He dedicates both his creative and scholarly writing to indigenous cultural expressions from Abiyala (the Americas.) His book of poetry, *Altamar*, was awarded in 2016 with the National Prize *Universidad de Antioquia*, Colombia. He collaborates and translates for *Siwar Mayu*.

Recent work: [Muyurina y el presente profundo](#) (Pakarina/Hawansuyo, 2019); and *Cinema, Literature and Art Against Extractivism in Latin America. Dialogo 22.1* (DePaul University, 2019.)