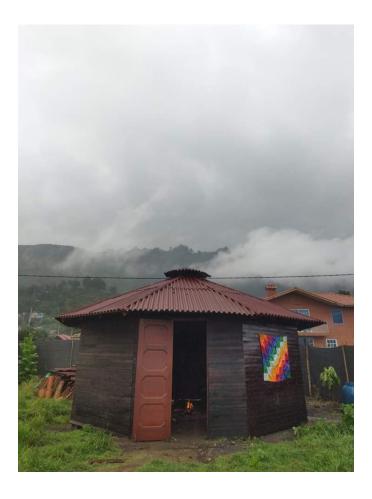
Tobacco Blood. Javier Jayali



Sangre de tabaco © Javier Jayali. Común presencia, 2023 Tobacco Blood © Lorrie Lowenfield Jayne

Javier Jayali is originally from Cota (Kundurmarka, Colombia). He is a writer and an educator of literature and orality. He studied Literature at the National University of Colombia. For years, he directed the creative writing workshop *Tejedores de historias* (*Story Weavers*) at the Public Library of Cota, from which he published the poetic anthologies *Cota se cuenta en copla* (2020), *Cuerpos y palabras* (2021) and *Senderos, resiliencias y otros espejos* (2022.) Since 2018, he coordinates *Fiba we*, a research and pedagogy traditional lodge for community practices. He is the founder of the *Cota Literature Network* (2020-2023), as well as the Andean music collective *Sikuris del Majuy* (2018-2023.) He is a farmer, cultural organizer, and community leader. The following poems were selected from his book *Sangre de Tabaco*, a unique volume in the recent literature produced in Bakatá/Bogotá, the fertile valley of the condors, the ancestral Muisca territory.

Kusmuy (House of Thought)

storm
rain
animal
everything has its place and desire
its movement and word
in the house of thought.
Mourning
healing
sickness
all has its story, its pattern
–echo–
its purge for life and a right to silence.
Everything has its limit too
invincible aloneness, confusion

invincible aloneness, confusion

impossible understanding.

Somewhere someone seeks

reparation

reconciliation and a place, common lineage in the countryside

a lane on the path and the nearness of the hillside.

Someone seeks to exist seeks their spiritual name

their fish or worm clan

and a sense of their abyss.

Someone seeks a home for their visions

a divining rod for their intuition.

Everything seeks the secret forge

to display their courtship

and their shroud,

the feverish balm

to dance their first dance,

the fertile corner

to share isolation.

There is an open door the wood spreads out its arms and the homefire beats like the tongue of a drum: Welcome, welcome, to this chink in the finite though standing so alone a straw peaked roof on stilts has been for many dreams a compendium of the cosmos a breviary of the dawn and a library of fires.

The house of thought is open.



Hoska (Rapé)

Be calm tobacco carries the hummingbird spirit comes close with its sifted song and powdery feather. Crosses your nostrils like a gust and aurora brings present -echo, buzzthe beat of its wings pollinates the mind. Runs through the brain tames the voices who lie in wait like angels and the past eases and the future awaits. From its emptiness a crevice greens. The body feels its own time, clean.

Walking Seated

The tree trunk my ancestor whose dream is a place to go forward sitting.

With my body seated and my mind walking I am a a vein of the tree an appendix of the earth. And I am with poporo with mochila and sash and spindle in my hand –and without these thingswith a brilliant breast collecting stars and silences.

I am also
with my splintered glance
legs bound with veins
tongue forged
with a wrinkled sadness
and fury;
I am upon a ceremonial stool
(an extension of flesh)
heart seated deeply
blood flowing
in front of a fire.

Whole or in pieces everything and all am I if I have space to speak to confide or be silent strike a chord or call out because I have body and place my soul, a seat.

I am, perhaps,

-upon a cosmic stool for musing drawing on tobacco telling a tale or suffering-vestige of the tree action springing from thought.

Gorge

For a long time he tended a rotten fire stoked at his walls a flaming tuber death sun that devours amygdalas and aborts the wind. There within the bloodstained veins the word the pyrite word the obsidian word the magma word. The word? -timid, teimid, tamida fossil preserved in volcanic urns. He waited a long time like a star that burns as it dies and as it dies, it names. In this way the forest birthed the word, unconscious, crestfallen. The gorge was once crater, laid out and defeated to whom the hummingbird offered tobacco seed, tobacco dust medicine from air balm from the word.

Flames of fire now blanket the volcano.

Canopy of Birds

I have in my vertebrae a canopy filled with birds who nest and forage whose songs are presences, lucid or terrible.

They later throng to my breast sometimes all of them sometimes none and these ones, these who don't emerge who do not migrate through the veins, or are more like fruits of the tree, or abstracts, they also sicken.

Suspended in air many have died tremulous with hope; some others persisted their feathers turn to air their latency, idea.

Always, they hope
that from my mouth will stretch forth
the ancient heavenly vine
that binds time to the world;
perhaps a question, a response,
a page and a pen,
a couplet,
a whistle from the wooden flute.
Always...
The juices from the coca and tobacco
show the way and free them..

The Rock of Confession

On the mountain, first and foremost, permission with a barefoot soul, without notions imposed.

I offer yarn and corn husks, I remember the path.

I seek the rock of confession.

I speak with her:
like the primate who only recently descended from the tree but also like the spores on the fern.

And I come again, as I have come before
I come to surrender, to feed the mountains and return to the world weightless.
I want to descend lighter, walking seated, with an empty mochila,
I return.

The andean chameleon glides between the cracks. The highland eagle passes before the rock.

Fire Dream

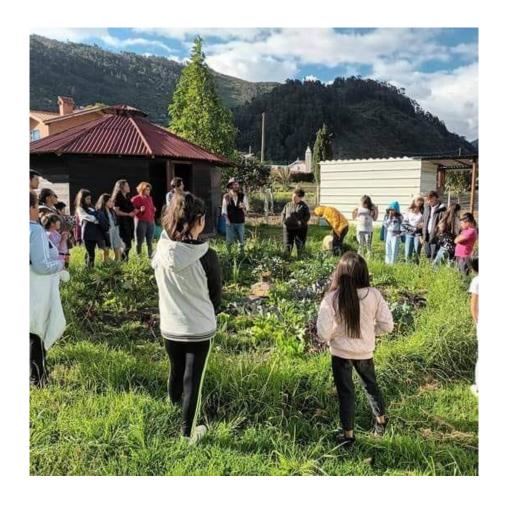
Dreaming displays remains of those things that have not yet happened of that which has not yet been named and yet exists.

Smoke seems like
the fire's dream,
the fire dreams.
He dreams of an open house
of hands spread with sandy clay
of ears of corn
and owls
and Andean colored flags at dusk.

If there are words, the fire rests. If silence, he dances.

The questions seem to be
the dream of thought,
Thought dreams:
"Which dream do I need?
The tall flame that kindles or frees?
The medium flame that observes and contains
or that slow one that gives out?
The ember that subdues yearning to lethargy
or that one there that calms the suns at the dying of night?

Awaken smoke embraces the rays of light. The fire dreams the dream of the ancient one: "another existence exists."



Equinox

The sowing season arrives and the seed falls from the water.

The fist of the universe opens the rain returns with its outstretched palm.

We put on the plumage of birds and wait to be born anew.

The sun will wait for us as it highlights its eternal analemma.

We will be there and we will know that we've said what we never wanted to say that we have been unjust with the living that we have postponed the postponed

that we have seen the river paved over that our eyes are worn out-diminished.

We have waited for the new sun.
The day lasts as long as the night
and the awakening as long as our fears.
We will make a cosmic contract
and a sowing of purpose:
we'll ask the voices in our minds to rest
give ourselves time and discipline
consume what is necessary.
We will sink our hands in the ground.
We'll make an offering.
The equinox sun will watch us be born.
Thank-you.

Mochila

The cord and the placenta that some sowed and buried that were robbed from us or that we lost becomes visible with the thread in our hands a thread that creates its history of itself like the ring of a tree like the myth like the story of country folk.

The threads and color knot together to make a mochila weave the visible the memories and the tangible. Moving inward they weave emptiness space and form the invisible: a grave in the earth memory to remember and a query: What do you want to carry and how much can you bear? to go through the world without origin? The mochila is a placenta united to its umbilical cord.

For more about Javier Jayali



Poetry of his poems in La Raíz Invertida (Spanish)

Sikuris del Majuy Collective: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVKnMq3gzi4

About the translator



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