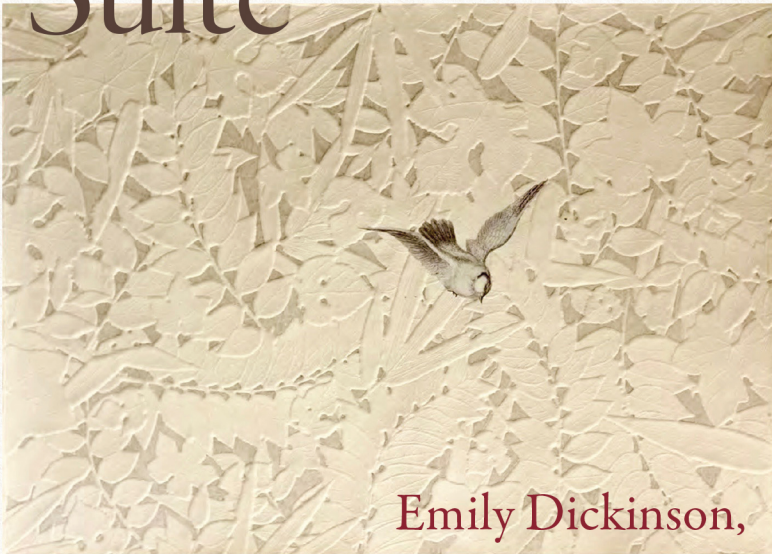


*With an Introduction
by Ilan Stavans*

Amherst Suite



Emily Dickinson,

SPANISH TRANSLATION,
AND POETIC
TRANSCREATION

Alberto Blanco

Translated & Edited by

JENNIFER RATHBUN

Amherst Suite

Amherst Suite:
Emily Dickinson,
Spanish Translation &
Poetic Transcreation

Alberto Blanco

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

Jennifer Rathbun

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Ilan Stavans

Amherst
College
 Press

Introduction © 2026 by Ilan Stavans

Edited collection and translations © 2026 by Alberto Blanco and
Jennifer Rathbun

Cover artwork © Alberto Blanco

Some rights reserved



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, California, 94042, USA. Note to users: A Creative Commons license is valid only when it is applied to the person or entity that holds rights to the licensed work. This work contains components (e.g. poetry quotations, song lyrics, and/or images) that have been published with permission from their respective rightsholders and to which the rightsholders of this work cannot apply the license. It is ultimately your responsibility to independently evaluate the copyright status of any work or component part of a work you use, and if necessary, seek permission from the appropriate rights holders, in light of your intended use.

The complete manuscript of this work was subjected to a partly closed (“single-anonymous”) review process. For more information, visit <https://acpress.amherst.edu/peerreview/>.

Published in the United States of America by Amherst College Press
Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025948809

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.13282652>

ISBN 979-8-89506-030-8 (paper)

ISBN 979-8-89506-031-5 (open access)

CONTENTS

I.	Introduction: Called Back	1
	<i>Ilan Stavans</i>	
II.	Emily Dickinson: Sigue siendo un enigma / Still an Enigma	10
	<i>Alberto Blanco</i>	
III.	Everything was White: An Interview with Alberto Blanco	20
	<i>Ronald J. Friis</i>	
IV.	Translator's Note: The Converging Voices of Alberto Blanco and Emily Dickinson	31
	<i>Jennifer Rathbun</i>	
V.	Emily Dickinson: 55 poems / 55 poemas	37
	<i>Translated by Alberto Blanco</i>	
VI.	Amherst Suite	151
	<i>Alberto Blanco, translated by Jennifer Rathbun</i>	
VII.	Acknowledgments	232

INTRODUCTION: CALLED BACK

Ilan Stavans

A brisk summer afternoon. Runners and bikers pass me by friskily. I'm surrounded by a lush green, walking alone, pensive, when I notice an old lady, short, dressed all in white, with a plush hat. Her walk is unstable. At a distance, I can't see her well. She apparently supports herself with a cane. She looks lost. The bicycle path parades all kinds of rebellious types, ready for carnival. Is she one of them?

As I come closer, her profile becomes sharper. Yes, I'm certain it is her—or else, her apparition, since she has been dead for almost 150 years. I pass by her homestead, 280 Main Street, almost every day. As I do, I invariably get an infusion of energy that brings me inner peace: I frequently imagine her in her garden, caring for her brave pansies, which she loved because they arrived early to announce the coming of spring, and their companions, marigolds and violets, daffodils and hyacinths, all of which, depending on the season, she would hang in baskets. Or I would see her with another basket, dispensing, in spite of her shyness, freshly baked cookies from her second-floor window to neighborhood children.

When I first settled in her town, I was annoyed by the frequent references to her. I cared little about poetry, and even less about American poetry. I would read one of her poems and it would look fractured, unfinished. But as years passed by, I became more attuned to her, and then, magically, she was a master, a voice unlike any other. "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know that is poetry," she wrote. "And if I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." I made these statements my mandate. "These are the only ways I know it," she iterated. "Is there any other?"

But I always thought of asking her if indeed there were other ways. When I read poetry, it doesn't make my body cold; to me the experience is more about quietness. Poetry makes my body go

slower, be more aware of the sensations I get from the environment. Poetry doesn't make me feel as if my head had been taken off; rather it unclutters it, allowing me to see things more clearly.

Her poetry is a map of her solitary mind. It isn't bombastic, like Whitman's, which is inevitably attached to the overflowing Brooklyn sounds. The two saw the country span its wings in search of power and gold, then witnessed it humiliate Mexico at mid-century only to be battered by a civil war and the Lincoln assassination. The country had expanded and shrunk. Mostly, it was looking for its true self. They helped find it.

Someone said that her presence in the American classroom is sorrowful: she represents an anti-social impulse as the author of poems "with strange grammatical impulses and macabre subject matter seemingly from another world." No, no, it is the opposite: her style is a message onto its own poems and her images an expression of supreme individuality.

Passersby don't seem to notice her, or me. In fact, as we get closer to each other, an adolescent on a scooter almost runs us over. She loses her balance and falls on the asphalt, whereas I make a clown-like pirouette that leaves me frazzled. Fortunately, we both emerge from the disturbance without injury. With the help of her cane, she gets back on her feet.

As I approach to see if she needs help, I notice a gesture of puzzlement, maybe even desperation, in her face.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

"Okay? Apologies, kind gentleman. It seems as if I am lost . . ."

"Lost? You were almost injured by that scooter."

"It passed by like a comet, leaving a trail of disaster. I have never seen such an instrument . . ."

"Not an instrument. A vehicle."

"I don't know what you mean. I'm sorry. I don't recognize my surroundings."

"Where are you going?"

"I need to be home. Maggie is waiting for me. Maggie, good and noisy. Maggie, the North Wind of the Family, but sweets without a salt would at last cloy."

“Is Maggie a poet?”

“Oh yes,” she responds. “But only in the way she talks. She doesn’t write down the verses. She isn’t even conscious of them. Maggie’s brother-in-law is Tom Kelley, who will be a pallbearer at my funeral. He bought property from my father. They have a dwelling house adjacent to the Dickinson Meadow and railroad depot off Main Street in Amherst, about a quarter mile from our home. Maggie worked for the Boltwoods, Lucius and Fanny. Maggie was going to travel to the gold fields of California with her brother, but she fell ill. My father brought her to work for us in 1869. She makes delicious butter, the best we’ve ever had. We bake together. She is warm and wild and mighty. I have stored my poems in Maggie’s trunk.”

For a second, I am overwhelmed by the possibility that the old lady might not be who I believe she is but an impostor.

“Your home isn’t far. I could walk you, if you are in need.”

“That’s open-hearted of you, young man.”

Although I’m not a young man, I thank her for her words.

“Did you hurt your sight?”

“Iritis, an inflammation of the fine muscles of my right eye. I have suffered from this condition for years. I am now on my way back from medical treatment in Boston. It’s exacerbated as the spring makes its splash.”

“I’m sorry to hear.”

As we walk together, a certain wistfulness colors our encounter. I don’t want to intrude in her privacy, yet I have an abundance of questions.

I ask her about soldiers who came back to the Pioneer Valley after the Civil War ended. Did she talk to them? Did the war feel as if the nation was dismantling? I also ask her about a copy she had of Noah Webster’s *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, and about her friendship with Wentworth—Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the Unitarian minister, abolitionist, magazine correspondent, soldier, and politician, who was seven years older than her.

I pepper the conversation with more mundane questions: how milk tasted for her, the location of her elementary school, and what

she learned at Mount Holyoke College. And then, inescapably, I ask if she heard languages other than English. I know she studied, like others did, Greek, Latin, and biblical Hebrew.

Her replies are succinct: she only knows a few foreign words. Perhaps her sister Vinnie knew more.

She inquires if I'm from these lands. From Mexico, I tell her. I didn't speak the language when I arrived but now I dream in it.

I ask her if she has ever come across a Mexican like me. She says she doesn't know. She was eighteen when the Mexican-American War ended with the capitulation of General Antonio López de Santa Anna and the sale of portions of what is today the Southwest to U.S. government. It was the third-largest transfer of land after the Louisiana Purchase and the Alaska Purchase.

"Thousands of Spanish-speaking people in these territories became Americans."

She's uninterested. While they were considered second-rate citizens, a few of these Mexicans wandered around the Northeast. Did she ever see one?

She says that the word *immigrant* doesn't apply to them, since they didn't choose to immigrate. In any case, the term has a different meaning for her. She describes newcomers as *exiles* and, if war is involved, as *refugees*. Emma Lazarus's "The New Colossus," written in 1883, portrays the Statue of Liberty as the Mother of Exiles.

We reach a bird sanctuary and then, without noticing it, are on Triangle Street, a couple of blocks away from her house. A stanza comes to me about a worm-eating bird: "A Bird, came down the Walk - / He did not know I saw - / He bit an Angle Worm in halves / And ate the fellow, raw." She sings to birds of all kinds, birds that visit her, birds as messengers, birds as symbols of hope. I'm in conversation with them as well: goldfinches, sparrows, eagles, owls, chickadees, blue jays, cowbirds, hummingbirds, woodcocks, kestrels, cardinals, and robins. They are our constant companions, singing poetry of their own, announcing the arrival of the seasons.

Intuitively, I have the need to ask about mortality, not hers but my own. "Are you afraid of dying?"

She wants to find out more about me. I tell her I'm a teacher. She tells me her paternal grandfather, Samuel, was one of the founders of one of the local colleges, named after the town. Her father, Edward, studied in the institution in its first year and her brother Austin graduated from it. "I have attended lectures there. In school, I studied Mental Philosophy, Geology, Latin, and Botany. How large they sound, don't they?"

She pauses. "Death? It makes things significant. Bereavement purifies us. It gives suspense to our life. The test of love and belief is death. Death returns us to our origins."

I recite a line from her Poem #448: "I died for Beauty – but was scarce." Again, she doesn't seem to recognize the words. Distracted, she returns to the topic of Maggie. "Her name is Margaret Maher. She came from Ireland after the Great Famine. I think she arrived in 1854. She is from Killusty, a townland in the Golden Vale of the River Suir that is in South Tipperary, particularly in Slievenamon, in Irish "Sliabh na mBan," meaning "mountain of women." She had eight siblings, from which three survived. They spoke English and Irish. Many poor Irish are in the docks in Boston and in neighborhoods in New York. Maggie has lived with us for years. She speaks in her own idiosyncratic way."

I ask if Maggie's dialect, Hiberno-English, shows up in her syntax. She wants me to rephrase the question. Once I do, she says she doesn't know what I mean.

She and I go up a hill, then around a quad. We are a few blocks from the center of town. She looks around in disbelief. Nobody approaches us, which makes me wonder if I'm an apparition as well. "I need to catch my breath," she says, and wants to sit down. We find a park bench near a garbage can.

She inspects the trash. The sight intrigues me. She blinks at fast speed. She is clearly having trouble making sense of what is around. She asks if at night one still needs gas lamps. She has heard that in Cleveland, Ohio, an inventor has placed dynamo arc lights outside, which projected a glow that was the equivalent of 4,000 candles in a single lamp. She complains that traffic is dangerous, with fast-moving carriages unready to give way to pedestrians.

There are strange restaurants in which people eat on paper plates. The daguerreotype business is gone. And there's a bookstore that advertises its volumes on the window. She's dizzy as she hears undecipherable sentences uttered by people she has never seen before.

I hold back, thinking it might be me who's generating anxiety in her. She wants details about how I learned English. I tell her I learned it while watching TV. I immediately explain to her what a TV is: a small screen on which a million images are projected. "Music too?" she asks. Sometimes, I answer. You get stories of all kinds. And you follow the news. Newspapers are no longer in need, I say. And you might see programs from different parts of the world.

"What is a program?"

"A compact story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end," I respond.

"Does that mean people no longer find a reason to travel? With these programs, you bring the world to you, isn't it? Apologies, I'm out of place. Maybe also out of time. I might have accidentally left my own coordinates," she states. Does she know that, aside from the almost ten poems she published between 1850 and 1866, all anonymously, about 1,800 were released, signed with her full name? She seems incredulous. She mentions that it wasn't her wish for them to be printed. Actually, they weren't finished. She wanted them destroyed after her death. She made her sister Lavinia promise she would burn them. But Lavinia changed her mind, instead asking Mabel Loomis Todd, who had an extramarital affair with their brother Austin. Todd's editing hand is heavy.

I tell her that, in awe of her verses, I translated a handful of her poems into Spanish. Recreating the rhythm in another language is challenging. I recite the opening of her Poem #288: "I am Nobody!":

"Yo soy Nadie! Tú quién eres?

Eres — Nadie — También?

Pues somos dos los dos!

No lo digas! lo anunciarán — ya sabes!"

And I mention that I rendered it in Spanglish as well, the hybrid tongue made of Spanish and English:

“Soy Nobody! Tu quién eres?
Eres — Nobody — too?
Then somos pareja!
Silencio! lo anunciarán — you know!”

She’s bothered: it doesn’t sound, even remotely, like what she might have composed. Could she find any of these words in Webster’s lexicon? What is the purpose of a hybrid? It mixes and matches. It desecrates the anatomy of words. She invokes the King James Bible, which has the same words Shakespeare used.

In Spanish, I say, there are dozens of versions of her poetry. I like one in particular by Alberto Blanco. He doesn’t translate the lines as much as he reinvents them. That, I say, is the task of the translator. We have fallen into the trap of being loyal, by which we mean being accurate. Loyalty is impossible and so is accuracy. What we strive for in a translation is a recreation, a new birth for the poem.

I give her an example—Poem #1083, written circa 1866:

We learn in the retreating
How vast an one
Was recently among us.
A perished sun

Endear in the departure
How doubly more
Than all the golden presence
It was before!

In Spanish:

Se supo en el retiro
Cuán vasto el uno
Estuvo entre nosotros.
Un sol difunto

Adorado en su adiós
Más de dos veces
¡Que la presencia de oro
Que fuera a veces!

She suddenly says: “*Albus* in Latin is white. What is it in Spanish?”

“*Blanco.*”

“I want to learn your language, just as you learned mine.”

I’m uncomfortable: my penchant for translation has inundated her—yes, like a merciless torrent of water. I think you must stop now, Ilan. Translation is a precious endeavor in that, like science fiction, it places an author beyond their original context. Readers appreciate it, but it is rough for the authors who, were they conscious of the game, are *out of date*, meaning outside time.

Soon I hear shouting. “Miss, miss, where have you been? I have been worried about you. Your right eye is swollen. And your beautiful dress is dirty with mud. Please come back.”

It’s Maggie, a block away from the homestead, anxious to accompany the old lady on the last leg of her outing.

“Maggie dear, I’m exhausted. And frightened, quite frightened . . . This gentleman is a teacher. He has generously attended to my needs. I couldn’t see where I was walking and became disoriented. My cane almost broke. The world isn’t the same as it used to be. I’m lonesome.”

“I have tea, bread, and marmalade set on the table.”

Dusk is making its appearance. I’m tired myself. The walk away from the bicycle wasn’t straightforward; we twisted and turned without much logic, ending up in the West Cemetery where in 1886, at fifty-five, she was buried after a long illness. I learned in one of her biographies that the lining of her casket was white, as were the handles and the adorning ribbon. And her attire was a robe of white flannel. The funeral procession circled her flower garden, walked through a barn behind the house, and then meandered across buttercup fields to get to the cemetery. The original tomb

bore her initials, E.E.D., but her niece replaced it with a taller one that reads “Called back.”

The old lady smiles. The terror in her has dissipated. “Maggie, this man is familiar with laborers from Mexico who live in California. He says they are acquainted with my poetry, which is nonsense. They even render it in other languages—a maddening endeavor. You will find him amusing. The past is a curious creature, as is the future. The present is our prison and our trampoline.”

She then turns toward me. “How do you say *thank you* in Spanish?”

Día de los Muertos—November 1, 2025

EMILY DICKINSON: SIGUE SIENDO UN ENIGMA

Alberto Blanco

*Multiplicar los muelles
no disminuye el mar*
Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson nació el 10 de diciembre de 1830 en Amherst, Massachussets, en el Noreste de los Estados Unidos, donde vivió toda su vida. Una vida singularmente carente de grandes acontecimientos exteriores, que supo hallar en los estrechos confines de su entorno la amplitud de horizontes propia de un visionario hasta llegar a la totalidad de su propia naturaleza. «Mi negocio es la circunferencia», confiesa Emily Dickinson en una carta fechada en julio de 1862.

¿Cómo ofrecer al lector en un manojó de poemas y de versos traducidos una visión completa, redonda, de la obra de esta poeta singular? Apostando, tal vez, por la calidad más que por la cantidad, toda vez que, como la misma Emily Dickinson lo decía: «multiplicar los muelles no disminuye el mar». Ciertó. Además, por más puntos de partida y de llegada que pueda ofrecernos una obra, por más lazos dispuestos al comercio entre la obra y el lector que existan, unas cuantas palabras introductorias no reducen en lo más mínimo las dimensiones de una obra poética como la de Emily Dickinson. Sus poemas están allí, como un mar en calma, un mar gris, casi blanco, que se niega a revelar a simple vista su increíble profundidad. No cabe duda: nos encontramos ante uno de los grandes logros poéticos del siglo XIX, lo que hoy se llamaría una gran obra en «tono menor».

Pero esa intimidad a la que nos remiten los poemas de Emily Dickinson, y de donde ellos mismos han brotado, es más un espejismo que una realidad. Si a la intimidad añadimos la limpia factura de sus versos, y la austeridad y la justicia de sus expresiones—toda

su obra está cifrada en poemas cortos—, tendremos ya tres elementos que, a primera vista, parecen facilitar la lectura. Sin embargo, muy pronto nos percatamos de que la facilidad no es una de las características de esta poesía. Aunque nutrida de instancias domésticas, hasta casi podríamos decir que nimias, los poemas de Emily Dickinson abren constantemente la puerta de la costumbre y la cotidianidad para ponernos frente a frente al misterio. Poesía del asombro, de la sorpresa inteligente.

¿Cómo es posible que esta mujer pequeñita que vivió toda su vida en Amherst a mediados del siglo XIX, prácticamente sin ningún contacto con los grandes movimientos literarios europeos (su padre, un puritano de rancio abolengo, muy estricto y distante, pero no, por cierto, carente de buenos sentimientos, le compraba algunos libros y se los regalaba con la petición expresa de que no los leyera) y, para el caso, de ninguna otra parte, fraguara una obra que iba a cambiar el curso de la poesía norteamericana del siglo XX?

Desde la soledad de su voluntaria reclusión en la casa familiar (en las últimas décadas de su vida tan sólo salió un par de veces a la vecina ciudad de Boston para atenderse de un problema ocular), esta mujer admirable logró realizar una de las obras más originales de la poesía moderna. Sí, porque hay que hacerlo notar, la poesía de Emily Dickinson se cuenta entre las obras que resultan indispensables para entender la poesía contemporánea.

Casi al mismo tiempo que Laforgue y Rimbaud en Francia, y apenas algunos años después que Baudelaire y Hölderlin, esta gran escritora abrió nuevos cauces a la poesía de su tiempo y del nuestro. Su obra se alza como un contrapunto preciso, necesario, de aquella otra obra majestuosa de la poesía estadounidense del siglo XIX: nos referimos, por supuesto, a la obra de Walt Whitman. ¡Qué contraste tan marcado entre estas dos creaciones, entre estas dos vidas! Y, sin embargo, aunque construidas en las antípodas, cuántos aspectos en común tienen, cuántos vasos comunicantes las hermanan, y cuántos lazos fraternales existen entre sus visiones del mundo. Frente a la desbordante vitalidad de Whitman, la reconcentrada capacidad de observación de Emily Dickinson.

El mundo no fue extraño a ninguno de los dos. Lo conocieron y lo gozaron, cada uno a su modo. Walt Whitman lo hizo con su poderosa vista telescópica; Emily Dickinson lo hizo al microscopio, casi sin tocarlo, casi sin hablar, con un cuidado punto menos que infinito. Con ese mismo cuidado que utilizaba para vestirse impecablemente de blanco, o para seleccionar y arreglar las flores que regalaba a sus escasos visitantes, o para escribir sus poemas. Un cuidado que se manifiesta constantemente en sus extraños versos y que la lleva a identificarse con las criaturas más pequeñas y humildes, hasta llegar a decir en una declaración de principios que es la negación misma del *American way of life* (el modo de vida norteamericano): «¡Yo no soy nadie! ¿Quién eres tú?» Cada detalle en su poesía ha sido serenamente sopesado. Cada poema ha sido trabajado con esforzado esmero, procurando no desperdiciar nada. Evitando, sobre todo, desperdiciar el tiempo y la inteligencia del lector.

Emily Dickinson utilizó magistralmente varios recursos que después han sido explorados y explotados de mil formas distintas. Y no es que ella fuera la primera en hacerlo—baste pensar, para no ir demasiado lejos, en Edgar Allan Poe, otro de sus vecinos antípodas—pero sí una de las primeras en aplicar con rigor y sistemáticamente estas posibilidades: los cambios de ritmo; las rimas sorprendentes, «esos cascabeles . . . en la iglesia dentro de nuestro corazón», como ella misma decía; el verso blanco, ágil, que no duda en romper con la cadencia musical regular si las necesidades intrínsecas del poema así lo exigen. Y es que aquí, como en tantos otros aspectos, la poesía de Emily Dickinson resulta doblemente engañosa.

Primero, es engañosa por hacernos creer que se trata de una poesía tradicionalista—en un sentido peyorativo—y atildada, cosa que no es verdad, pues encontramos con frecuencia irrupciones de una poética sumamente moderna, tanto en la rima como en el metro, tanto en la sintaxis como en la puntuación. Segundo, decimos que es doblemente engañosa porque, en cuanto al sentido de los poemas, en lo que toca a la observación apasionada que del mundo hizo la autora, nos encontramos frente a una

poesía que, a primera vista, parecería sencillamente un ejemplo más de poesía religiosa y, en particular, cristiana. Sin embargo, si hacemos una lectura cuidadosa, veremos que estos poemas manifiestan una visión acendradamente personal, enraizada en el escepticismo, que no excluye las contradicciones. Una concepción moderna y angustiada de la existencia que si bien hunde sus raíces en la herencia tradicional cristiana (el libro de los Salmos era una de sus lecturas de cabecera) tiende sus brazos a la desolación del siglo XX.

Emily Dickinson decía lo mismo, «¡Ah, cómo cantamos para apartar la oscuridad!», que confesaba en una carta a su mentor, T. W. Higginson: «Canto como lo hace el niño al pasar junto al cementerio: porque estoy asustada». Oscuridad y temor en una mujer que amó la blancura y la claridad; oscuridad y temor en la poesía de una artista que buscó siempre la seguridad y el amor. Es una poesía que no deja de sorprendernos. La vida de su autora tampoco.

A pesar de los largos estudios que se le han dedicado, su vida sigue siendo un enigma para nosotros. Durante su existencia, Emily Dickinson sólo publicó siete poemas, sin firmar, y no fue sino hasta 1890—cuatro años después de su muerte acaecida el 15 de mayo de 1886—que se publicó su primer libro: una selección hecha por el ya mencionado Higginson (¡el mismo que le aconsejara en vida no publicar nada!) de los casi dos mil poemas que dejó escritos.

Unos cuantos años después se publicaron otros dos volúmenes de poesía, junto con dos colecciones de su fértil correspondencia. En 1914 se publicaron más poemas, y no fue sino hasta 1950, año en que la Universidad de Harvard adquirió todos sus manuscritos y los derechos de publicación, que se inició la edición meticulosa de su obra completa, eso que a ella le gustaba llamar: «una carta dirigida al mundo».

Sólo existe una semblanza escrita en vida de la autora que nos permite asomarnos a la distancia a su mundo. Es obra también de su inefable mentor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, el único literato con el que Emily Dickinson tuvo contacto en su vida, casi únicamente a través de una larga y copiosa correspondencia que,

por sí sola, se distingue como una obra maestra de la literatura del siglo XIX.

Higginson vio a la poeta sólo en una ocasión (a lo más dos) y el único recuento que escribió de su visita nos resulta ahora precioso. Años después Higginson pagaría no sólo su hospitalidad, sino su gran amistad, devoción y confianza, haciéndose cargo de su primer libro. «La impresión de un genio poético original, totalmente nuevo, se abrió paso en mi mente de inmediato . . . », dice Higginson, aunque más adelante agrega: «indudablemente me impresionó su tremenda tensión y, en parte, su anormalidad . . . era demasiado enigmática para mí».

La obra de Emily Dickinson sigue siendo enigmática para sus lectores. La pequeña selección que aquí presentamos como un breve pero sentido homenaje a esta poeta excepcional a los casi 140 años de su muerte consta de 55 poemas: uno por cada año que vivió la autora. En las traducciones he respetado, en la medida de lo posible, su peculiar puntuación, así como el característico uso de las mayúsculas de los textos originales, tratando de conservar el espíritu que los animó al ser escritos. En última instancia, a pesar de la extrema brevedad de los poemas, nos queda la innegable sensación de estar ante una obra de grandes dimensiones.

En este inmenso, interminable poema que todos los poetas han escrito—y que seguimos escribiendo—los versos de Emily Dickinson tendrán siempre la rara cualidad de parecernos irremplazables.

EMILY DICKINSON: STILL AN ENIGMA

Alberto Blanco

*To multiply the harbors
does not reduce the sea*
Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson was born on December 10, 1830, in Amherst, Massachusetts, in the Northeastern United States, where she lived her entire life. A life singularly devoid of major external events, she managed to find within the narrow confines of her surroundings the expansiveness of horizons typical of a visionary, reaching the totality of her own nature. “My business is circumference,” Emily Dickinson confesses in a letter dated July 1862.

How can one offer the reader a complete, rounded vision of the work of this singular poet through a handful of poems and translated verses? Perhaps by focusing on quality rather than quantity, considering that, as Emily Dickinson herself said, “to multiply the harbors does not reduce the sea.” Indeed. Furthermore, no matter how many starting and ending points a work may offer us, no matter how many connections are established between the work and the reader, a few introductory words do not diminish the dimensions of a poetic work like Emily Dickinson’s in the slightest. Her poems are there, like a calm sea, a gray, almost white sea that refuses to reveal its incredible depth at first sight. There is no doubt: we are facing one of the great poetic achievements of the 19th century, what today would be called a great work in a “minor key.”

Yet the intimacy with which Emily Dickinson’s poems speak to us, and from which they themselves have sprung, is more of a mirage than a reality. If we add to this intimacy the clean craftsmanship of her verses, and the austerity and fairness of her expressions (her entire body of work is encrypted in short poems), we already have three elements that, at first glance, seem to facilitate reading.

However, we soon realize that ease is not one of the characteristics of this poetry. Although nourished by domestic instances, almost to the point where we could say trivial, Emily Dickinson's poems constantly open the door of custom and everyday life to confront us with mystery. Poetry of wonder, of intelligent surprise.

How is it possible that this tiny woman who lived her entire life in Amherst in the mid-19th century, with practically no contact with the great European literary movements (her father, a strict and distant puritan of ancient lineage, though not devoid of good feelings, bought her some books and gave them to her with the express request not to read them), forged a work that would change the course of 20th-century American poetry?

From the solitude of her voluntary seclusion in the family home (in the last decades of her life, she only ventured out a couple of times to the neighboring city of Boston to attend to an eye problem), this admirable woman managed to create one of the most original works of modern poetry. Yes, because it must be noted that Emily Dickinson's poetry ranks among the indispensable works for understanding contemporary poetry.

Almost simultaneously with Laforgue and Rimbaud in France, and just a few years after Baudelaire and Hölderlin, this great writer opened new channels for the poetry of her time and ours. Her work stands as a precise, necessary counterpoint to that other majestic work of 19th-century American poetry: we refer, of course, to the work of Walt Whitman. What a stark contrast between these two creations, between these two lives! And yet, although constructed at opposite poles, how many common aspects they have, how many connecting vessels unite them, and how many fraternal bonds exist between their worldviews. Faced with Whitman's overflowing vitality, Emily Dickinson's concentrated power of observation.

The world was not strange to either of them. They knew it and enjoyed it, each in their own way. Walt Whitman did so with his powerful telescopic vision; Emily Dickinson did so under the microscope, almost without touching it, almost without speaking, with a care just short of infinite. With the same care she used to dress impeccably in white, to select and arrange the flowers she gave

to her few visitors, or to write her poems. A care that is constantly evident in her strange verses and that leads her to identify with the smallest and humblest creatures to the point of saying, in a statement of principles that is the very negation of the American way of life: "I'm nobody! Who are you?" Every detail in her poetry has been serenely weighed. Every poem has been worked on with painstaking effort, seeking not to waste anything. Avoiding, above all, wasting the reader's time and intelligence.

Emily Dickinson masterfully employed several resources that have since been explored and exploited in a thousand different ways. And it's not that she was the first to do so—just think, not to go too far, of Edgar Allan Poe, another of her antipodal neighbors—but she was one of the first to rigorously and systematically apply these possibilities: changes in rhythm; surprising rhymes, "the bells are ringing . . . [in] the church within our hearts," as she herself said; the blank, agile verse that does not hesitate to break with the regular musical cadence if the intrinsic needs of the poem demand it. And just as in so many other aspects, Emily Dickinson's poetry is doubly deceptive.

First, it is deceptive in making us believe that it is traditional poetry—in a pejorative sense—and provincial, which is not true, because we frequently find eruptions of an extremely modern poetics, both in rhyme and in meter, in syntax as well as in punctuation. Second, we say that it is doubly deceptive because, regarding the meaning of the poems, concerning the passionate observations that the author made of the world, we find ourselves facing poetry that, at first glance, would simply appear to be another example of religious poetry and, in particular, Christian. However, if we read carefully, we will see that these poems manifest a deeply personal vision, rooted in skepticism, which does not exclude contradictions. A modern and anguished conception of existence that, although rooted in the traditional Christian heritage (the Book of Psalms was one of her staple readings), reaches out to the desolation of the 20th century.

Emily Dickinson said the same thing, "And tell each other how we sang / To keep the dark away," which she confessed in a letter to

her mentor, T. W. Higginson: "I sing, as the Boy does by the Burying Ground—because I am afraid." Darkness and fear in a woman who loved whiteness and clarity; darkness and fear in the poetry of an artist who always sought security and love. It is a poetry that never ceases to surprise us. Neither does the life of its author.

Despite the extensive studies dedicated to her, her life remains an enigma to us. During her lifetime, Emily Dickinson only published seven poems, unsigned, and it was not until 1890—four years after her death on May 15, 1886—that her first book was published: a selection made by the aforementioned Higginson (the same one who had advised her not to publish anything during her lifetime!) from the nearly two thousand poems she left written.

A few years later, two more volumes of poetry were published, along with two collections of her prolific correspondence. In 1914, more poems were published, and it was not until 1950, when Harvard University acquired all her manuscripts and publication rights, that the meticulous edition of her complete works began; what she liked to call "my letter to the world."

There is only one sketch written during the author's lifetime which allows us to glimpse her world from a distance. It is also the work of her ineffable mentor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the only literary figure with whom Emily Dickinson had contact in her life, almost exclusively through a long and copious correspondence that, by itself, stands out as a masterpiece of 19th-century literature.

Higginson saw the poet only once (at most twice), and the only account he wrote of his visit is now precious to us. Years later, Higginson would repay not only her hospitality but also her great friendship, devotion, and trust by taking charge of her first book. "The impression of a wholly new and original poetic genius was as distinct on my mind at the first reading . . ." says Higginson, although he later adds: "The impression undoubtedly made on me was that of an excess of tension, and of an abnormal life . . . she was much too enigmatical a being for me . . ."

Emily Dickinson's work remains enigmatic to her readers. The small selection presented here as a brief but heartfelt tribute to this exceptional poet nearing the 140th anniversary of her

passing consists of 55 poems: one for each year the author lived. In the translations, I have respected, as much as possible, their peculiar punctuation as well as the characteristic use of capitals in the original texts, trying to preserve the spirit that animated them when they were written. Ultimately, despite the extreme brevity of the poems, we are left with the undeniable feeling of being in the presence of a work of great dimensions.

In this immense, endless poem that all poets have written—and that we continue to write—Emily Dickinson's verses will always have the rare quality of seeming irreplaceable.

EVERYTHING WAS WHITE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ALBERTO BLANCO

Ronald J. Friis

RF: Alberto, before we talk about *Amherst Suite*, first, tell us about your visit to Amherst, the visit that gave rise to these poems.

AB: I was invited to do some readings in 2002 and I'd never been there before.

Of course, Amherst was in my mind for a long time because of Emily Dickinson but being there . . . was going to be different for me, obviously. What I didn't expect was that I was going to be trapped in the middle of a huge snowstorm! I mean *huge*! It was February and it was not cold . . . it was absolutely *freezing*! When I arrived, there was ice everywhere and as soon as I got to my room in the hotel it began to snow fiercely and it didn't stop the whole time I was there. And so, everything was white . . . totally, completely covered with snow that didn't stop until the day I left. It gave me a beautiful title for a novel I won't ever write . . .

RF: You don't write novels! [laughs]

AB: I'm a serious person . . . I don't write novels! [laughs]
But, the title is nice . . . *Duró lo que duró la nieve* . . .
Translate that into English.

RF: It lasted . . . as long as the snow?

AB: It doesn't sound that good in English!

RF: No, it doesn't! [laughs]

AB: *En español*, it sounds nice. *Duró lo que duró la nieve*.
Okay. What happened during those days was something special for me. That very first night, looking at

the landscape through the window of my room and the little restaurant, the poems began to happen. I began to hear these . . . tiny little creatures of sound and sense . . . like birds. I began to take note.

At the very beginning, I thought it was one poem, and then another, and another one. All of them short and very much in some sort of aesthetics or poetics of Emily Dickinson. When I am in a moment like that, or in a season like that, I don't stop to think what's going on or to think about the relationships or anything. I'm just . . . *listening*. Taking note.

That continued for, I guess, it was four or five days. It kept snowing and everything was so beautiful under the snow, everything looks gorgeous under the snow. Everything, even those yards full of junk, all covered with snow, they look gorgeous—the trees, barns, church, cemetery . . . everything.

So, I had a chance to walk around Emily Dickinson's places, her house, her tomb. The cemetery is pretty close to her home. That was her turf. I mean, she made one or two short trips before concentrating in her home, basically, in her room. And then, later on, she made one or two trips, because of her eyes. But, basically, she was confined to the place where she was born and where she died. So, everything there strongly reminds you of Emily Dickinson and makes you feel the presence of her poems because the stuff that appears in her poetry is right there in front of your eyes.

So, I continued writing the poems that were granted or given to me. Only later on I began to . . . land? [laughs] And try to figure out what happened.

RF: You've anthologized and translated a lot of twentieth-century American poetry but how familiar were you with Dickinson before your visit?

AB: Before my visit I had also translated Emily Dickinson's poems. Not as a project or as part of any kind of job or anything like that, just because I liked them a lot and wanted to see if it was possible to transfer some of that poetry into Spanish. And I discovered, at least in my own experience, that some of the poems . . . work. And some of them? Nope. At least, not to my satisfaction.

Honestly, I don't buy those translations with a huge theoretical foreword telling you that, okay, we're getting rid here of rhyme and metrics, and basically throwing the whole poem into the wastebasket in order to translate it . . . I don't think that's the way to do it. You want to preserve at least part of the feeling for the form, the content, the images . . . a good translator shouldn't lose anything of the images. Anything.

Each language has a lot of inner labyrinths and associations that are unique to that language's content. When we're talking about what a poem means, it's not only the most obvious meaning or meanings, but also what happens with the concepts and words underneath—the resonances between words which are different for each language.

In terms of rhyme, if I use the word *luna* in Spanish and I'm looking for rhymes, I have a small set of options. In English, you have a totally different set of options. In Spanish, the moon, *luna*, has nothing to do with *June*! Nothing. If you think of the word *soul* in Spanish, *alma*, immediately comes to mind *calma* [calm]. It's almost a given. If you're looking for something like that in English, for *soul* . . . What are you going to do?

And then there's sound. The sound of each language is totally different. Trying to preserve part of that is part of the job of a good translator. And that involves

the metrics, the rhyme, the alliterations, the whole gamut of sound possibilities in poetry in a particular language.

RF: Continuing with sound, your book is called *Amherst Suite*, which I take to be a musical term, *suite*. Can you talk a little bit about the choice to use the word *suite*?

AB: Yes, well, the title is part of that otherworldly time when I was writing the poems. You may call it any way you want, but it's a different time, a different frame of mind, a different way of looking at things. It's like not being there. It's like not being you. I mean, it's something that's happening, in my own experience, not *to* you but *through* you. Okay, so the title, for me, was part of that. It was part of what was happening through me. "*Amherst Suite*? That's the title? Okay? I'll write it down." I like the title *Amherst Suite*. I like the sound of the title. I like the musical connotation. I like the fact that it makes me think of something sweet . . . which Emily Dickinson is not.

RF: No. [laughs]

AB: Or, at least, maybe only in a very peculiar way, sometimes.

RF: Let's unpack that a bit . . .

AB: She's very tricky, she's unique . . . an anomaly. I guess there are very few poets, great poets, or even great writers, less understood than Emily Dickinson. For me, she continues to be a huge mystery.

In a certain sense, it's like the mystery of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. I revere Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's poetry, works, way of thinking, of seeing, of singing, of *cooking*! Everything! How could something like that happen in colonial Mexico? A poet like Sor Juana, a woman happening at that time in *this* place, because I'm right here now in Mexico City, in the context of the Catholic Church which eventually

destroyed her . . . it's almost impossible to understand. She was way ahead of almost all the poets writing in Spanish at that point.

Well, Emily Dickinson appears in the United States, in the Northeast, which is kind of a different country, during the apex of the Transcendentalists. It's Emerson's time, the Hudson River schools . . . And this strange woman was an *existentialist*! From what I've seen and read, very frequently she's closer to Rimbaud, to Lautréamont, to Kafka than to any poet you'd like to mention in the United States or in England in those times.

It was also Whitman's time. Seen together, Whitman and Emily Dickinson bring to my mind that famous photograph of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo when they got married—*el elefante y la paloma*, the elephant and the dove. Diego Rivera looks huge, and Frida Kahlo was tiny and fragile and very feminine. We know she was not fragile or very feminine, but she looks that way. Walt Whitman was a cosmos, like Pablo Neruda. Huge. Big, enormous, ambitious, cosmic poets. Very American in that sense.

At the same time, and almost in the same place, you have Emily Dickinson. Isolated—and Emily Dickinson was much more isolated than Sor Juana. A woman. Single. Supposedly very religious. Supposedly very puritanical . . .

She was *strange*. That's a fact; I mean, even *weird*. She didn't like to be seen . . . at all. At some point, she closed the doors, and even to the very few people that had access to her, she was behind a curtain. She never wanted to be photographed.

She played a lot of games. She was very elusive. For a lot of people her poetry is a wonderful example of feminine poetry, mystical poetry, transcendental

poetry. Religious poetry? I don't think so . . . I really don't think so.

RF: But "Faith is a fine invention!" The boldness of that line has always struck me . . .

AB: Again, I don't think she was a "religious" person in the normal sense of the word, the one that almost everybody accepts. Of course, she was religious in a different, more deep sense, like any poet is, because she has a religious feeling for nature and for everything in terms of seeing everything connected, everything part of the same. So, in that sense, she doesn't have much need for things like faith or hope. There is a famous poem of hope as a bird . . .

RF: "Hope is the thing with feathers." Beautiful.

AB: Yes, or this, "Faith is a fine invention," and then she proceeds to compare these "spiritual things" with instruments, microscopes, telescopes. My feeling is that, as I was saying, she was an *existentialist*. Very skeptic in many ways. Whenever she's writing about death or the departure of someone, even someone supposedly very dear to her, usually you don't see in her reactions a Christian feeling of someone trying to transmit hope for the afterlife, or even sharing real compassion for what's going on. Her attitude is much more matter-of-fact, like: *This is it? That's it. Don't need to delve into that or try to get deeper into something that we don't know, don't understand. We didn't invent this. We don't have a say in all this.*

RF: It seems at times that the plants and the animals, the crickets, snakes, and bees that populate Dickinson's world are a response to the loneliness she describes in lines like "This is my letter to the world that never wrote to me." What would you say about the way she talks about solitude?

AB: Solitude is one of the great poetic themes. It runs all through the poetic tradition, *here, there and*

everywhere. Was she a very solitary person? It seems so. But it also seems to me that, with her way of seeing, what I would call the “Zen attitude,” she was not alone. It’s impossible to be alone if you’re seeing with clarity that we are just part of it—that we are not only connected or related but that the whole thing is like an ocean, and the ocean is full of waves of all sorts, of all sizes, flavors, colors, etc. We can imagine that each and every individual wave is a person or a being, but that’s only an illusion because waves do not have independent lives or being. Each one of us may be seen as a little wave, not waves on the shore but waves in the middle of the ocean, a little wave that rises, reaches a peak and then . . . supposedly disappears. But there is no “going anywhere”—it’s the ocean. That’s the way the ocean moves and lives and is.

It’s my feeling that Emily Dickinson had that kind of mind and vision and approach. So, in that sense, she was able to connect with anything or everything. A cricket, a stump of a tree, a bird, a cloud, a snake . . . there are a lot of snakes in her poems! A chair, a glass, and now and then a human being, but very rarely. So, her attitude is *not* a transcendentalist attitude . . . And maybe that’s one of the reasons she decided to keep secluded and guarded, and far away from all the rest, because somehow she knew that . . . she was a *crazy cookie!* She was! She was totally out of sync with what was going on in the poetry, literary, or cultural scenes of her time and her place. Maybe . . . I don’t know.

RF: As you write in one of these poems, “*En el casi radican / Todas las cosas Humanas.*”

AB: With Emily Dickinson *everything* is tentative . . . it’s only speculating. And her poems don’t help that much, because her poems are like implosions. Yeah,

that's the feeling I have with her poems, like poof!—something crystallizes and you have a weird geometry with some facets in this direction and some others in that direction . . . some peaks here and other peaks there . . .

And she was very picky with words. Very careful with the words she used. There's no extra stuff in the poems. And there's no narrative.

You just have these results of some kind of mind implosions—these spiky little objects of sound and sense. Sometimes they are very beautiful . . . like crystals are . . .

RF: Beautiful.

AB: . . . but they are not soft . . . And they are not nice . . . Beautiful? Yes. Pretty? No. In that sense she was not very “feminine”—I'm using the word in a very old-school sense here, a totally obsolete sense. She was hard.

And there's a lot of violence in her poetry. Much more than what a casual reader would recognize. There is a lot of sadomasochism in her poetry. Camille Paglia calls Dickinson's humor “jarringly curt” and gives examples that are hard not to take into account . . . Just to give you one, which is amazing and kind of creepy: “Split the lark / And you'll find the music.”

Wow! “Split the lark / And you'll find the music”? This means . . . pick up an axe if you want to discover where the bird's song comes from? My God! I've written a lot of poems about birds, and I would never, *ever*, say something like that.

This is something I want to make clear. When I was under the influence or impression or *aura*, or whatever you might call it, of Emily Dickinson during those days when it was snowing in Amherst, and I began to receive these poems that were going to be *Amherst Suite*, my connection was not with the dark

side of Emily Dickinson . . . It's not in my nature, that kind of approach. It is not in my poetry. My poetry is not perverse. My poetry is not violent, but Emily Dickinson's poems frequently are. I was connecting with the luminous side, with the innocent side, but also with the skeptic side and with the existentialist side too. And, of course, with the center of the whole thing, what I would call the Zen approach of everything connected, of mind even bigger than God, as she says, or at least bigger than the ocean.

RF: I agree. There is a connection, a poetic intimacy here. I've spent a lot of time reading your poetry and was surprised in *Amherst Suite* when you called Emily by her name, her first name! I don't remember you doing that with anyone else.

AB: Yes, you're right. It was like a dialogue. Keep in mind that *everything* was white. *Blanco*. There's a poem here about whiteness, and she talks about the well-known fact that at some point she decided to wear only white clothing. It was something for me to be in her room, in her house . . . in her room, in particular, everything was very white . . . "Mine by the right of the white election." It's like saying, "I'm always dressed like a bride, and I am married to myself."

And she also disguises herself. Sometimes in her letters she refers to herself as a boy—"When I was a boy . . ." meaning "when I was young." She's always disguising things, covering things, substituting this for that. One thing that she does constantly is substituting persons for objects and objects for persons, or animals or things. A perfect example, and one of your questions, is the way she uses the word *brain*.

RF: Yes . . . "The brain is just the weight of God."

AB: In a lot of poems, she talks about parts of the human body . . . single parts! Like there has been

an amputation, or a horrendous murder, or like she's in the morgue or someone who's dissecting a corpse. When she talks about a lung or a brain or an eye, she makes me think of those engravings by her contemporary, the Symbolist Odilon Redon. They're luminous and dark, same as Emily Dickinson. In this series of lithographs, the main character is an eye! An isolated eye! So they are pretty creepy! Emily Dickinson does the same.

To my way of seeing things, a lot of times when she uses the word *brain*, she means *mind* . . . but she uses the word *brain* and that gives the poem a totally different connotation. Like the one you mentioned: "The brain is wider than the sky." If you think in terms of the mind, the mind is wider than the sky; it's very Zen.

RF: *Amherst Suite* ends at Dickinson's tomb with the word *partir* . . .

AB: That was the culmination of my trip. I visited her tomb at the very end:

La Nieve entre las ramas
sigue su Camino —
encaramándose
a su Destino —

El Tiempo en su Sitio
No nos deja mentir —
La Nieve se derrite —
Tenemos que partir.

It reminds me of an image that Robert Frost used to compare a poem with a block of ice on a red-hot metal stove. He said the poem must ride and move with its own dissolution.

RF: Wow.

AB: [laughs] Not with those words, but that's the idea. And in this sense, the way my poem *Amherst Suite* ends, it's not transcendental. It's like saying, come on, there's no mystery . . . *that's* the mystery. And that's also very surrealist, in a way. I guess it was Reverdy who used to say, "Yes, there is another world . . . It's this." If we think of the ocean and the image I constructed before, then yes, the netherworld, the other world, is this one.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: THE CONVERGING VOICES OF ALBERTO BLANCO AND EMILY DICKINSON

Jennifer Rathbun

Every act of translating poetry embodies a new and unique poetics of creation and re-creation. Thus, just like the poet, the translator is a philosopher of language. For *Amherst Suite*, this endeavor entailed a sophisticated exercise in convergence and comparative literature, drawing upon the many transversal connections between Alberto Blanco's version of Dickinson's poetry in Spanish and my renditions of Blanco's Dickinsonesque verses in English. While I strive to preserve the original verse with utmost fidelity, I firmly believe that every translation constitutes a new creation in its own right, a testament to the respect and reverence I hold for the original work. I delve into the poetic imagery, sounds, and rhythms and reimagine them in English.

The most challenging aspect of translating *Amherst Suite* was recreating rhyme without introducing new elements into the poem while maintaining its meter to the extent possible. The repetition of words, imagery, and themes throughout *Amherst Suite* contributes to the collection's musicality, which creates a mesmerizing chant with the power to envelop its reader in this intimate dialogue between the poetic voices of Emily Dickinson and Alberto Blanco amidst a snowstorm. This timeless exchange teaches the reader that "What I feel is what I see / Light is Poetry". As the translator, I dwelled on this light to recreate it in English, ensuring that the English-only or bilingual reader may witness the magic of these verses and have an aesthetic experience.

Amherst Suite is one of the most unique texts I've had the pleasure of translating. It is one that has accompanied me for a while and will stay with me forever. I first met Alberto Blanco in 1998 at

the University of Arizona when he delivered a reading of his newly released book at that moment, *El corazón del instante* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998). I was a PhD student then, studying contemporary Hispanic literature in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. One of my professors, Peruvian poet Mario Montalbetti, had invited Blanco to campus and encouraged all of his students to attend the event. At that time, I could never have been able to imagine how Blanco's poetry would later shape and inform me as a translator, nor that our brief encounter was the start of a decades-long friendship. The story of the creation of this book starts then, and like most Latin American literature, its telling does not unfold in a traditional, linear storyline, but rather in circular, layered moments.

I first began translating Alberto Blanco's poetry when, on October 1, 2009, after Blanco had read one of my initial full-length poetry translations of another Mexican author, he wrote to me:

La verdad es que luego de leer tu traducción no resisto preguntarte: ¿no te animarías a traducir un libro mío? ¿TRAS EL RAYO, quizá? Conste que es sólo una pregunta que no llega ni siquiera a proyecto o propuesta, pues no tengo editor en mente ni planes específicos para publicar . . .

O considera la pregunta como un elogio a tu traducción. Your choice . . .¹

I chose to take it as a serious proposal and a literary challenge which two years later resulted in the publication of *Tras el rayo / Afterglow* (New York: The Bitter Oleander Press, 2011). Eleven years after

¹ The truth is that after reading your translation I can't resist asking you: would you dare to translate one of my books? *Afterglow*, perhaps? Note that it is just a question that does not even amount to a project or proposal, since I have no editor in mind or specific plans to publish . . .

Or consider the question as a compliment to your translation. Your choice . . .

that, with the collaboration of deceased Bay Area poet John Oliver Simon, we published Blanco's *Giros de faros / Circling Beacons* (Toronto: Guernica Editions, 2022).

As Blanco and I were collaborating on the edition of *Circling Beacons*, we had a conversation about other potential future projects and on September 9, 2019, he wrote to me in an email exchange:

Uno que siento yo que te espera como traductora, a ti y a nadie más que a ti, es *Amherst Suite*, los 40 poemas inspirados en Emily Dickinson que se escribieron solos en Amherst.

[E]stuviste ahí todo el tiempo, mientras sucedían estos poemas. Una maravillosa epifanía que duró lo que duró la nieve.²

And he attached the poetry manuscript to the email. He must have known beforehand that I would accept.

However, this book was different from Blanco's other works I had translated. The collection is risk-taking and innovative, uniting the American and Mexican poetic and literary traditions. It is the only publication that combines these two canons in an exchange that bridges languages, cultures and centuries. *Amherst Suite* carries out a poetic dialogue with Emily Dickinson throughout forty untitled poems. In them, true to Dickinson's writing style, Blanco employs quatrains, rhyme, and dashes, as well as unconventional capitalization and vivid imagery while writing about Dickinson's favorite themes—nature, morbidity and the gospel. Blanco composed *Amherst Suite* while visiting Emily Dickinson's home town of Amherst, Massachusetts, in 2003 for a reading at Amherst College,

² One that I feel awaits you as a translator, you and no one else but you, is *Amherst Suite*, the 40 poems inspired by Emily Dickinson that were written entirely in Amherst.

[Y]ou were there the whole time, while these poems were happening. A wonderful epiphany that lasted as long as the snow lasted.

when I also happened to be living there and had the privilege of hearing Blanco read in public for the second time.

As the translator of *Amherst Suite* into English, not only was I taking on one of the most challenging projects of my life (translating rhyming quatrains is no easy feat); I was also cognizant of the fact that I was paying homage to one of the most famous American poets of all time—Emily Dickinson. This was a daunting task, to say the least. I worried about capturing all of the beauty in this poetic dialogue and rendering it in another language, plus I had the additional pressure of having to recreate *Amherst Suite* with a Dickinson-like voice. Normally, my translation approach begins by a thorough reading of the literary work at hand. In this case, my process began by rereading the collected works of Emily Dickinson. Then I did a close study of how Blanco had translated Dickinson into Spanish and continued to investigate other Spanish versions of Dickinson. Only then was I ready to analyze *Amherst Suite* and commence its translation.

When I began the project in the fall of 2019, I had no way of knowing what would happen in the spring of 2020. All of the additional time at home that COVID afforded me allowed me to concentrate on the translation of *Amherst Suite*. Overall, I spent countless hours immersed in the work and dedicated an average of eight hours per poem on the initial translation into English. The majority of the verses were translated as I sat on my front porch swing in Delaware, Ohio, and reminisced about the two years I had lived in Emily Dickinson's hometown of Amherst, Massachusetts, from 2002 to 2004: I recalled her homestead and her tomb; I remembered Amherst College's Special Collections and Archives (where I had the privilege of seeing some of Emily Dickinson's personal papers) and the feelings of awe this inspired; I thought of her lady's slippers; but, most of all, thanks to the verses, I reminisced about the snow (the word *snow* appears at least twenty-nine times in twenty-four verses and is alluded to in most of the forty poems) and the impressive storm we experienced in 2003 during Alberto Blanco's visit. The swaying of my front porch swing influenced the

music in the translation as it marked the cadence and rhythm of the verses.

Over the years, I've returned to *Amherst Suite* polishing the poems, questioning, adjusting, and reaffirming every choice I've faced as the translator. Blanco and I thoroughly revised all of the poems together; furthermore, I'm grateful to my dearest and closest bilingual poet friends who have lent me their ears and expertise as I edited the manuscript. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to Alberto Blanco for entrusting me with his voice, yet once again, and challenging me to continuously grow and expand my creative horizons.

Above all else, I'm beholden to Emily Dickinson's poetic chant that summoned Blanco and me to reunite in March of 2024 in her home state of Massachusetts at the NeMLA Convention. I am convinced that her spirit guided us to connect with the editors of Amherst College Press. It is an immense pleasure to release *Amherst Suite* now with this prestigious editorial house. These verses couldn't be published anywhere else. Amherst is, and will forever remain, the heart of this dialogue in poetry.

Emily Dickinson: 55 Poems / 55 poemas

TRANSLATED BY ALBERTO BLANCO

My business is circumference

Mi negocio es la circunferencia

Emily Dickinson

By chivalries as tiny,
A blossom, or a book,
The seeds of smiles are planted —
Which blossom in the dark.

c. 1858 (55)

Los pequeños caballeros
Un botón, un libro, plantan,
Son semillas de sonrisas —
Que en la penumbra cantan.

Exultation is the going
Of an inland soul to sea, —
Past the houses, past the headlands,
Into deep eternity!

Bred as we, among the mountains,
Can the sailor understand
The divine intoxication
Of the first league out from land?

c. 1859 (76)

Exultación es viajar
Desde el interior del mar, —
Más allá de las casas y los valles,
¡El alma en la eternidad!

Nacidos, como yo, entre los montes,
¿Podrán los marineros entender
La intoxicación divina
De este viaje de placer?

Our share of night to bear,
Our share of morning,
Our blank in bliss to fill,
Our blank in scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,
Some lose their way.
Here a mist, and there a mist,
Afterwards — day!

c. 1859 (113)

Nuestra parte de noche,
Nuestra parte de día,
Nuestro hueco de gracia,
Nuestra hueca ironía.

Un astro aquí, y un astro allá,
Tal vez no tiene guía.
La niebla aquí, la niebla allá,
Después de todo — ¡el día!

To fight aloud is very brave,
But gallanter, I know,
Who charge within the bosom,
The cavalry of woe.

Who win, and nations do not see,
Who fall, and none observe,
Whose dying eyes no country
Regards with patriot love.

We trust, in plumed procession,
For such the angels go,
Rank after rank, with even feet
And uniforms of snow.

c. 1859 (126)

Valiente es aquel que lucha,
Pero tiene más valor
Aquel que lleva en el pecho,
Su calvario de dolor.

Aquel que cae sin ser visto,
Aquel que invisible gana,
Cuyos ojos moribundos
Ninguna patria reclama.

Procesiones emplumadas,
Puros ángeles parecen,
Sus pasos, rango tras rango
Y uniformes de nieve.

At last, to be identified!
At last, the lamps upon thy side,
The rest of life to see!
Past midnight, past the morning star!
Past sunrise! Ah! what leagues there are
Between our feet and day!

c. 1860 (174)

¡Al fin, ser identificado!
¡Al fin, las lámparas a tu lado,
Lo que resta de vida para ver!
¡Tras la medianoche, tras la estrella matutina!
¡Tras el amanecer! ¡Ah, qué lazos hay
Entre el día y nuestros pies!

Faith is a fine invention
For gentlemen who see;
But microscopes are prudent
In an emergency!

c. 1860 (185)

La fe es toda una invención
Para el caballero con conciencia;
¡Los microscopios son buenos
En un caso de emergencia!

It's such a little thing to weep,
So short a thing to sigh;
And yet by trades the size of these
We men and women die!

c. 1860 (189)

Es algo tan nimio llorar,
Es tan mínimo un suspiro;
Y a pesar de este tamaño
¡Mujeres y hombres morimos!

I'm wife; I've finished that,
That other state;
I'm Czar, I'm woman now:
It's safer so.

How odd the girl's life looks
Behind this soft eclipse!
I think that earth seems so
To those in heaven now.

This being comfort, then
That other kind was pain;
But why compare?
I'm wife! stop there!

c.1860 (199)

Soy esposa; terminé
Con ese otro estado;
Soy Zar, soy una mujer:
Todo está asegurado.

¡Qué rara se ve la vida
Detrás de este suave eclipse!
Así han de observar la tierra
Los que están hoy en el cielo.

Si este es el placer, entonces
Eso era el dolor quizá;
Mas, ¿por qué comparo?
¡Soy esposa! ¡Y ya!

With thee, in the Desert —
With thee in the thirst —
With thee in the tamarin wood —
Leopard breathes — at last!

c.1860 (209)

Contigo en el Desierto —
Contigo en esta sed —
Contigo en el oasis —
El Leopardo respira — ¡otra vez!

Wild nights! Wild nights!
Were I with thee,
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile the winds
To a heart in port, —
Done with the compass,
Done with the chart.

Rowing in Eden!
Ah! the sea!
Might I but moor
Tonight in thee!

c. 1861 (249)

¡Noches salvajes! ¡Noches salvajes!
Si estuviera contigo,
¡Las noches salvajes serían
Nuestro testigo!

Inútiles los vientos
Para un corazón varado, —
No hace falta el compás,
Ni los mapas de antaño.

¡Bogando en el Edén!
¡Ah, el mar!
¡Ojalá que en esta noche
Contigo pudiera anclar!

Heaven is what I cannot reach!
The apple on the tree,
Provided it do hopeless hang,
That “heaven” is, to me.

The color on the cruising cloud,
The interdicted ground
Behind the hill, the house behind, —
There Paradise is found!

c. 1861 (239)

¡La manzana en el árbol es el cielo
Que yo no puedo alcanzar!
Como allí seguirá sin esperanza,
Le llamo “cielo,” ¡quizá!

El color de la nube pasajera,
Aquel terreno prohibido
Detrás de la colina, tras la casa, —
¡Allí se halla el Paraíso!

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

c. 1861 (254)

La esperanza es esa cosa con alas
Que se encarama en el alma,
Y que canta sin palabras,
Y nunca jamás se calma.

Y dulce en el viento se escucha;
Y dura ha de ser la borrasca
Que abatir pueda al pajarillo
Que a tantos del frío guarda.

En los mares extraños lo he escuchado,
También en las tierras más heladas;
Y sin embargo, ni por asomo,
Me pidió nunca una migaja.

Tie the strings to my life, my Lord,
Then I am ready to go!
Just a look at the horses —
Rapid! That will do!

Put me in on the firmest side,
So I shall never fall;
For we must ride to the Judgment,
And it's partly down hill.

But never I mind the bridges,
And never I mind the sea;
Held fast in everlasting race
By my own choice and thee.

Good-by to the life I used to live,
And the world I used to know;
And kiss the hills for me, just once;
Now I am ready to go!

c. 1861 (279)

Ata las riendas a mi vida, Señor,
¡Lista estoy para partir!
Sólo un vistazo a los caballos —
¡Qué más se puede pedir!

Colócame firmemente,
Para nunca abandonarte;
Cabalgamos hacia el Juicio,
Cuesta abajo en buena parte.

No me importa la pendiente,
Tampoco me importa el mar;
Veloz en la gran carrera
Por ti, por mi voluntad.

Digo adiós a la vida que tuve,
Y al mundo que yo conocí;
Beso los montes por última vez;
¡Lista estoy para partir!

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us — don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

c. 1861 (288)

¡Yo no soy nadie! ¿Quién eres tú?
¿Tampoco eres nadie tú?
Ya somos dos — ¡Pero no lo digas!
Ya sabes, luego nos censurarían.

¡Qué terrible ser alguien!
¡Qué público croar tu nombre
Cual rana, todo el santo día
Para que un tronco se asombre!

Alone, I cannot be,
The Hosts do visit me,
Recordless Company
Who baffle key.

They have no robes, nor names,
No almanacs, nor climes,
But General Homes
Like Gnomes.

Their coming may be known
By Couriers within;
Their going — is not,
For they're never gone.

c. 1861 (298)

Sola no puedo estar,
Huéspedes me visitan,
Socios sin Registrar
Que las llaves evitan.

Sin ropaje, ni nombre,
Ni almanaque, ni clima,
Un Hogar General
Como el de las Haditas.

Su llegada registran
Correos escondidos;
Mas su partida — no,
Porque nunca se han ido.

I send two Sunsets —
Day and I in competition ran,
I finished two, and several stars,
While He was making one.

His own is ampler —
But, as I was saying to a friend,
Mine is the more convenient
To carry in the hand.

c. 1862 (308)

Envié dos puestas de sol —
El Día y yo compitiendo,
Mientras yo acabé en segundo,
Con astros, Él fue primero.

Sí, la suya es más grande —
Mas como dije a mi hermano,
La mía es más conveniente
Para llevarla en la mano.

We play at paste,
Till qualified for pearl,
Then drop the paste,
And deem ourself a fool.
The shapes, though, were similar,
And our new hands
Learned gem-tactics
Practicing sands.

c. 1862 (320)

La jugamos a barro,
Pero vamos a perla,
Luego, tiramos el barro,
Y necios nos consideramos.
Las formas son semejantes,
Y nuestras manos nuevas
A ser gemas aprendieron
Practicando con arenas.

Heaven is so far of the mind
That were the mind dissolved,
The site of it — by architect
Could not again be proved.

'Tis vast as our capacity —
As fair as our idea —
To him of adequate desire
No further 'tis, than Here.

c. 1862 (370)

El cielo está tan lejos de la mente
Que si la mente se disolviera,
Según el arquitecto — su morada
Jamás se volvería a comprobar.

Cual nuestra competencia es vasto —
Cual nuestro pensamiento es bello —
Y para quien lo desea suficiente
Se encuentra Aquí, y no en el más allá.

A visitor in March —
Who influences Flowers —
Till they are orderly as Busts —
And Elegant — as Glass —

Who visits in the Night —
And just before the Sun —
Concludes his glistening interview —
Caresses — and is gone —

But whom his fingers touched —
And where his feet have run —
And whatsoever Mouth he kissed —
Is as it had not been —

c. 1862 (391)

Un visitante en Marzo —
Que mejora las Flores —
Hasta volverlas Bustos —
Elegantes — de cuarzo —

Que llega por la Noche —
Y antes del despertar —
Acaba su visita reluciente —
Acaricia — y se va —

A quien sus dedos han tocado —
Donde sus pies han corrido —
Y a quien su Boca ha besado —
Son como nunca han sido —

This is my letter to the world,
That never wrote to me, —
The simple news that Nature told,
With tender majesty.

Her message is committed
To hands I cannot see;
For love of her, sweet countrymen,
Judge tenderly of me!

c. 1862 (441)

Esta es mi carta para el mundo
Que nunca me quiso contestar, —
Simples noticias que la Naturaleza
Dijo con tierna majestad.

Su mensaje es enviado
A manos invisibles para mí;
Por amor a ella, compañeros,
¡Júzguenme tiernamente aquí!

I had no time to hate, because
The grave would hinder me,
And life was not so ample I
Could finish enmity.

Nor had I time to love; but since
Some industry must be,
The little toil of love, I thought,
Was large enough for me.

c. 1862 (478)

No tuve tiempo para odiar, porque
La tumba me iba a estorbar,
Y la vida no era tan grande
Como para acabar con la enemistad.

Tampoco tuve tiempo para amar; pero ya que
Algo hay que hacer aquí,
El trabajito del amor, pensé,
Era más que suficiente para mí.

Mine by the right of the white election!
Mine by the royal seal!
Mine by the sign in the scarlet prison
Bars cannot conceal!

Mine, here in vision and in veto!
Mine, by the grave's repeal
Titled, confirmed, — delirious charter!
Mine, while the ages steal!

c. 1862 (528)

Mía ¡por el derecho de la blanca elección!

Mía ¡por el sello real!

Mía ¡por el signo de la roja prisión

Las rejas no lo pueden ocultar!

Mía, aquí en la visión ¡y en el veto!

Mía, de la tumba negación total

Titulada, confirmada, — ¡escritura delirante!

Mía, ¡mientras las eras se van!

An ignorance a Sunset
Confer upon the eye —
Of Territory, Color —
Circumference, Decay.

Its Amber revelation
Exhilarate — Debase —
Omnipotence' inspection
Of our inferior face.

And when the solemn features
Confirm, in Victory,
We start — as if detected
In Immortality

c. 1862 (552)

Una ignorancia un Ocaso
Le confiere a la visión —
Del Territorio, Colores,
Círculo, Declinación.

Causa alegría rebaja
Ámbar su revelación —
La inspección omnipotente
De nuestro rostro inferior.

Cuando los rasgos solemnes
Confirman, la Realidad,
Comenzamos — revelados
Para la Inmortalidad.

A dying tiger moaned for drink —
I hunted all the sand —
I caught the dripping of a rock
And bore it in my hand.

His mighty balls, in death were thick —
But searching, I could see,
A vision on the retina
Of water, and of me.

'Twas not my blame who sped too slow,
'Twas not his blame who died
While I was reaching him —
But 'twas the fact that he was dead.

c. 1862 (566)

Un tigre moribundo tenía sed —
Y por todo el desierto yo busqué —
Hasta hallar unas gotas en la roca
Que entonces en mis manos le llevé.

Sus ojos majestuosos eran turbios —
Y al fondo de sus ojos pude ver,
Una mortal visión en la Retina
El agua clara y yo, una mujer.

No fue mi culpa ser un poco lenta,
Tampoco fue su culpa irse a morir
Mientras que yo en la arena lo buscaba —
La verdad es que estaba muerto allí.

The body grows outside, —
The more convenient way, —
That if the spirit like to hide,
Its temple stands alway

Ajar, secure, inviting;
It never did betray
The soul that asked its shelter
In timid honesty.

c. 1862 (578)

El cuerpo crece por fuera, —
Del modo más conveniente, —
Si el espíritu se quiere esconder,
Su templo permanece

Entreabierto, seguro, seductor;
Pues no traicionó jamás
Al alma que le pidió asilo
Con tímida honestidad.

The Battle fought between the Soul
And No Man — is the One
Of all the Battles prevalent
By far the Greater One.

No news of it is had abroad —
Its bodiless Campaign
Establishes and terminates
Invisible, Unknown.

Nor History record it —
As legions of a Night
The Sunrise scatters — these endure
Enact, and dissipate.

c. 1862 (594)

La Batalla entre el Alma
Y Nadie — es mayor
Que todas las Batallas
Por mucho es La Mayor.

No se tienen noticias —
Su Campaña sin cuerpo
Se establece y termina
Sin verse y en Silencio.

La Historia no registra —
Legiones de una Noche
Que al Alba se disipan — estas son
Perduran, y desipan.

The brain is wider than the sky,
For, put them side by side,
The one the other will include
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea,
For, hold them, blue to blue,
The one the other will absorb,
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God,
For, lift them, pound for pound,
And they will differ, if they do,
As syllable from sound.

c. 1862 (632)

El cerebro es más grande que el cielo,
Porque, puestos lado a lado,
El primero contiene al segundo
Fácilmente y tú agregado.

El cerebro es más profundo que el mar,
Porque, de azul a azul, repara,
El primero absorbe al segundo,
Como la esponja absorbe el agua.

El Cerebro es sólo el peso de Dios,
Porque, si los pesas, kilo por kilo,
Verás que difieren, si acaso,
Como la sílaba del sonido.

Pain has an element of blank;
It cannot recollect
When it began, or if there were
A day when it was not.

It has no future but itself,
Its infinite realms contain
Its past, enlightened to perceive
New periods of pain.

c. 1862 (650)

El dolor es como el vacío;
No se puede saber
Cuándo empezó, ni si hubo un día
En que no llegara a ser.

No tiene futuro sino él mismo,
Y guarda su vasto reino
El pasado, prendido para ver
Nuevas eras de sufrimiento.

The Soul unto itself
Is an imperial friend —
Or the most agonizing Spy
An Enemy — could send —

Secure against its own —
No treason it can fear —
Itself —its Sovereign—of itself
The Soul should stand in awe —

c. 1862 (683)

El Alma por sí misma
Es nuestro real amigo —
O el peor de los Espías
Que manda — el enemigo —

Segura de sí misma —
No teme traicionar —
Señora — de sí misma
Temor reverencial —

Fame of myself, to justify,
All other Plaudit be
Superfluous — An Incense
Beyond necessity.

Fame of myself to lack, although
My name be else Supreme —
This were an Honor honorless
A futile Diadem.

c. 1863 (713)

Si soy famosa para mí, se justifica,
Mas los Aplausos en cambio
Son superfluos — Un Incienso
Del todo innecesario.

Si no soy famosa para mí
Ya mi gloria puede ser Suprema —
Será un Honor sin honor
Una inútil Diadema.

From Blank to Blank —
A threadless way —
I pushed mechanic feet —
To stop, or perish
Or advance,
Alike indifferent.

If end I gained,
It ends beyond
Indefinite disclosed —
I shut my eyes, and
groped as well —
'Twas lighter to be Blind.

c. 1863 (761)

De Claro a Claro —
Un camino sin sentido —
Para pies mecánicos —
Avanzar, o parar
O perecer,
Daba lo mismo.

Si al fin gané,
El fin va más allá
El indefinido revelado —
Cerré mis ojos
Anduve a tientas —
Y había más luz para estar Ciega.

Deprived of other banquet,
I entertained myself.
At first a scant nutrition
An insufficient loaf.

But grown by slender additions
To so esteemed a size
'Tis sumptuous enough for me
And almost to suffice

A robin's hunger able,
Red Pilgrim, he and I,
A berry from our table
Reserve for charity.

c. 1863 (773)

Privada del banquete,
Yo misma me atendí.
Primero magramente
Poco pan para mí.

Mas algo fui agregando
Hasta llegar a ser
Suntuosamente grande
Para dar de comer

Al ave muerta de hambre,
Petirrojos, los dos,
Una baya en la mesa
Reservada para Dios.

Two were immortal twice —
The privilege of few
Eternity in time obtained,
Reversed Divinity.

That our ignoble eyes
The quality perceive
Of Paradise superlative
Through their comparative.

c. 1863 (800)

Dos doblemente inmortales —
La prebenda de unos pocos
Si concedida en el tiempo,
La eternidad, inversa Divinidad.

Que nuestros ojos innobles
Conciban la condición
Superlativa del Paraíso
Por una comparación.

Ample make this bed.
Make this bed with awe;
In it wait till judgment break
Excellent and fair.

Be its mattress straight,
Be its pillow round;
Let no sunrise' yellow noise
Interrupt this ground.

c. 1864 (829)

Haced esta cama
Con espíritu de servicio;
Excelente y buena
Mientras llega el Día del Juicio.

Su almohada redonda,
Su colchón derecho;
Que el ruido amarillo del alba
No interrumpa nuestro lecho.

Before he comes
We weigh the time,
'Tis heavy, and 'tis light.
When he departs
An emptiness
Is the superior freight.

c. 1864 (834)

Antes de su llegada
Pesamos el tiempo,
Que ligero o pesado nos parece.
Después de su partida
Hay un vacío
Y esta es la carga que prevalece.

The robin for the crumb
Returns no syllable,
But long records the lady's name
In silver chronicle.

c. 1864 (864)

Por las migajas que recibe
El petirrojo no dice nada,
Pero anota el nombre de la dama
En su crónica plateada.

We outgrow love like other things
And put it in the drawer,
Till it an antique fashion shows
Like costumes grandsires wore.

c. 1864 (887)

Guardamos el amor en el armario
Pues también el amor nos queda chico,
Hasta que cobra un aire de anticuario
Como las ropas de ese viejo rico.

Experience is the angled road,
Preferred against the mind,
By paradox, the mind itself
Presuming it to lead

Quite opposite, how complicate
The discipline of man
Compelling him to choose himself
His pre-appointed pain.

c. 1864 (910)

Anguloso camino es la experiencia,
Preferido por la mente,
Contra la mente misma paradoja
Que conduce justamente

Al lado opuesto ¡Qué complicación
Del hombre la disciplina,
Que lo impulsa a escoger para sí mismo
El dolor que se avecina!

Love is anterior to life,
Posterior to death,
Initial of creation, and
The exponent of breath.

c. 1864 (917)

Es anterior a la vida,
Es posterior a la muerte,
El amor es el origen
Y del aliento exponente.

The soul's distinct
Connection
With immortality
Is best disclosed
By danger,
Or quick calamity.

As lightning on
A landscape
Exhibits sheets of place
Not yet suspected but
For flash and bolt and suddenness

c. 1864 (974)

La distinguida conexión
Del alma
Con la inmortalidad
Se revela mejor
En el peligro,
O en la calamidad.

Así como el relámpago
Revela claros
En el paisaje
Sorprendentes de no ser por la luz
El rayo u su voltaje.

The mountain sat upon the plain
In his eternal chair,
His observation omnifold,
His inquest everywhere.

The seasons prayed around his knees,
Like children round a sire:
Grandfather of the days is he,
Of dawn the ancestor.

c. 1864 (975)

Se sentó el monte en el valle
En su perpetuo sillón,
Su observación omnisciente,
Ubicua su inquisición.

Las estaciones llegaron
Cual niños a sus rodillas:
Es el ancestro del alba,
El abuelo de los días.

To die without the dying,
And live without the life —
This is the hardest miracle
Propounded to belief.

c. 1865 (1017)

El morir sin la muerte,
Y el vivir sin la vida —
Es el mayor milagro
Que acaso se conciba.

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

c. 1866 (1075)

El cielo es bajo, pobres son las nubes,
El copo de nieve inquieto
Más allá del establo o de los surcos
Medita sobre su vuelo.

Un viento muy delgado que se queja
De la atención recibida;
Como nosotros, la naturaleza
Sin diadema sorprendida.

Superiority to fate
Is difficult to learn.
'Tis not conferred by any,
But possible to earn

A pittance at a time,
Until, to her surprise,
The soul with strict economy
Subsists till Paradise.

c. 1866 (1081)

Ser superior al destino
Es difícil de lograr.
Pues no lo concede nadie,
Pero bien se puede ahorrar

Un poquito cada cuando,
Hasta darle la sorpresa,
Al alma que pobremente
Hasta el Paraíso llega.

We learn in the retreating
How vast an one
Was recently among us.
A perished sun

Endears in the departure
How doubly more
Than all the golden presence
It was before!

c. 1866 (1083)

Se supo en el retiro
Cuán vasto el uno
Estuvo entre nosotros.
Un sol difunto

Adorado en su adiós
Más de dos veces
¡Que la presencia de oro
Que fuera a veces!

Longing is like the seed
That wrestles in the ground,
Believing if it intercede,
It shall at length be found.

The hour and the zone,
Each circumstance unknown
What constancy must be achieved
Before it see the sun!

c. 1873 (1255)

Esperar es la semilla
Que se debate en el suelo,
Creyendo que si intercede,
Encontrará algún consuelo.

Sin saber las circunstancias,
Hora, zona, condición
¡Qué gran constancia se necesita
Antes de mirar el sol!

The Heart is the Capital of the Mind —
The Mind is a single State.
The Heart and the Mind together make
A single Continent.

One — is the Population —
Numerous enough —
This ecstatic Nation
Seek — it is Yourself.

c. 1876 (1354)

La Mente es un solo Estado,
Su Capital — Corazón —
El Corazón y la Mente
Son un solo Continente.

Es una — la Población —
Y grande es un eufemismo
Que la extática Nación
Está buscando —Tú mismo.

How happy is the little stone
That rambles in the road alone,
And doesn't care about careers,
And exigencies never fears;
Whose coat of elemental brown
A passing universe put on;
And independent as the sun,
Associates or glows alone,
Fulfilling absolute decree
In casual simplicity.

c. 1881 (1510)

Qué feliz es la piedrita
Que rueda en la carretera,
Sin ocuparse de cuitas,
Ni temer las exigencias;
Cuya capa pertinaz
Le diera el mundo fugaz;
Como el sol, independiente,
Resplandece en soledad,
Cumpliendo absolutamente
Con casual simplicidad.

Image of Light, Adieu —
Thanks for the interview —
So long — so short —
Preceptor of the whole —
Coeval Cardinal —
Impart — Depart —

c. 1882 (1556)

Imagen de la Luz, Adiós —
Gracias por la entrevista —
Tan larga — tan pequeña —
Preceptora universal —
Que Imparte — y Parte —
Contemporánea Cardinal —

The pedigree of honey
Does not concern the bee;
A clover, any time, to him
Is aristocracy.

c. 1884 (1627)

El pedigrí de la miel
No le concierne a la abeja;
Pues aristocracia fiel
Un trébol es para ella.

Beauty crowds me till I die,
Beauty, mercy have on me!
But if I expire today,
Let it be in sight of thee.

? (1654)

Belleza, contigo estoy,
¡Belleza, cuida de mí!
Pero si he de morir hoy,
Que sea viéndote a ti.

Lightly stepped a yellow star
To its lofty place,
Loosed the Moon her silver hat
From her lustral face.
All of evening softly lit
As an astral hall —
“Father,” I observed to Heaven,
“You are punctual.”

? (1672)

Ligeramente la estrella amarilla
Se colocó en su lugar,
La Luna perdió su sombrero de plata
Quedó el rostro lustral.
Todo el crepúsculo iluminado
Como un salón astral —
«Padre», contemplé los Cielos,
«Eres puntual».

Sweet is the swamp with its secrets,
Until we meet a snake;
'Tis then we sigh for houses,
And our departure take
At that entralling gallop
That only childhood knows.
A snake is summer's treason,
And guile is where it goes.

? (1740)

Muy dulce es el pantano y sus secretos,
Hasta que con la víbora topamos;
Suspiramos entonces por la casa,
Y corremos después a refugiarnos
Con ese galopar encantador
Que nada más conoce uno de niño.
La víbora es el odio del verano,
Y la maña y el dolo, su destino.

To make a prairie it takes a clover
and one bee, —
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do
If bees are few.

? (1755)

Se necesita un trébol y una abeja
para hacer una pradera, —
Un trébol y una abeja,
Y soñar horas.
Soñar es más que suficiente
Si las abejas son pocas.

Elysium is as far as to
The very nearest room,
If in that room a friend await
Felicity or doom.

What fortitude the soul contains,
That it can so endure
The accent of a coming foot,
The opening of a door!

c.1882 (1760)

El elíseo está tan lejos
Como el cuarto más cercano,
Si en él un amigo espera
Felicidad o fracaso.

Por eso puede aguantar,
El alma con tanta fuerza
Los Pasos que se aproximan,
¡O cuando abren una puerta!

The earth has many keys —
Where melody is not
Is the unknown peninsula
Beauty is nature's fact.

But witness for her land
And witness for her sea
The cricket is her utmost
Of elegy to me.

? (1775)

La tierra tiene sus tonos —
Y donde no hay melodía
Está la ignota península
La belleza es natural.

Mas testigo de su tierra
Y testigo de su mar
El canto del grillo es para mí
La mayor sublimidad.

*

AMHERST SUITE

*

Alberto Blanco

TRANSLATED BY

Jennifer Rathbun

I

La nieve es la Nieve —
Silencio alrededor —
Todo esto sucede
En medio de Esplendor —

Y no será el Amor
Ni la Pasión inerte —
Terror — Dolor — Mejor
No ser aquel que duerme —

I

The snow is Snow —
Silence all around —
Everything's aglow
Amidst Splendor found —

And it shall not be Love
Nor Passion meek —
Terror — Pain — Proves
Best not to fall asleep —

II

Como dormían las Hojas
Bajo la Luz de Octubre —
Es una la congoja
Y Legión el que sufre —

¿Qué saldrá de la Tumba
Si en la Vida no ha entrado?
Nada que no esté vivo
Ni vivo haya quedado —

II

Like Leaves slumbering
Beneath October Hues —
Singular is the suffering
And Legion he who rues —

What rises from the Tomb
If it is not yet alive?
Nothing that has died
Nor living will survive —

III

La Nieve es la distancia —
El Fuego es interior —
Con el Viento se siente
Que adentro está mejor —

Cristal — Transparente —
Muy lejos de la Idea —
Muy cerca del Presente —
¿Qué desea quien desea?

III

The Snow is distance —
A Fire burns inside —
With the Wind's insistence
It's better fireside —

Crystal — Transparent —
Far from the Notion —
Very close to the Present —
What's desired with devotion?

IV

Anhelos de las Flores
Bajo la Nieve viva
Se juntan — Son las Voces
De la Palabra *arriba* —

Y la Palabra *abajo*
Nos vuelve a recordar —
Por la Palabra hatajo
No se puede escapar —

IV

Longing for Flowers
Beneath blankets of Snow
The Voices - they gather
From the Word *above* —

And the Word *below*
Reminds us once more —
We cannot escape though
The Word flock may soar —

V

Siluetas en el Viento
Se estremecen al punto —
Los Olmos — Los Abetos —
Comentario y Asunto —

¿La Palabra construye?
Las Manos nunca son
La Paloma que huye —
Desierto y Oración —

V

Silhouettes in the Breeze
Quiver at once they seem —
The Fir — Elm Trees —
Comment and Theme —

Does the Word create?
Hands are never
The Dove that migrates —
Desert and Prayer —

VI

Soledumbre en la Calle —
Lámparas en Silencio —
La Tumba — Nada grave —
Nada que no hayamos hecho —

Nada que en la Pantalla
No cobre Forma y Vida
Cuando los Comentarios
Subrayan la Medida —

VI

Solitude on the Street —
The Tomb — Nothing dire —
Lights in Silence —
Nothing we haven't done prior —

Nothing that doesn't seem
To come Alive on the Screen
When Narration
Illuminates the Dimension —

VII

Y todos los Despachos
Confirman la Noticia —
La Nieve está cayendo
Y cubre la Avenida —

Cubre mi Pensamiento —
Medida sin Medida —
Ver para ver qué siento —
La Luz es la Poesía —

VII

And all Dispatches
Confirm the News —
Heavy Snow showers
Cover the Avenues —

Cover my Thoughts —
Measure beyond Measure —
What I feel is what I see —
Light is Poetry —

VIII

Amherst se vistió de Blanco —
Ángeles de nueva Luz —
Un Sudario de Silencio
Sobre el Cuerpo de Jesús —

Amherst se vistió de Blanco —
Azucena y Alcatraz —
En sus Mansiones de Hielo
La Vida descansa en Paz —

VIII

Amherst dressed in White —
Angels of a new Light —
A Shroud of Silence
Over the Body of Christ —

Amherst dressed in White —
Calla lily centerpiece —
In her Ice Mansions
Life rests in Peace —

IX

Un Árbol está temblando
Bajo la Nieve de Abril —
Hasta nunca y hasta cuándo
Los Ángeles vendrán por mí —

Un Árbol está muy quieto
Sólo siempre — Porque sí —
Ya no tengo ningún miedo
Y esto te lo debo a Ti —

IX

A Tree trembles
Under April Snow —
How long until
Angels come for me —

A very still tree
Always Blue —
I no longer fear
Beholden to You —

X

Un Cuchillo está llorando
En la Mesa — Junto a mí —
Hasta siempre o hasta cuándo
Volveremos a vivir —

La Mujer viste de Blanco
Y el Sueño viste de Añil —
Bajo el Cielo puritano
De las nevadas de Abril —

X

A Knife is weeping
On the Table — Next to me —
Will we get back to living
When we meet in Eternity —

The Woman wears White
And the Dream Indigo —
Under the puritan Sky
Of April's falling snow —

XI

Los Iris de Primavera
Que se empezaban a abrir —
Bajo la Nieve tardía
Se volvieron a dormir —

Púrpuras Sombras serenas —
Colores equinocciales —
Que en la Hora buena
Resucitan puntuales —

XI

Spring Lilies

Beginning to crest —

Under the late Snow

Went back to rest —

Purple serene Shadows —

Equinoctial plane —

The Hour is coming

To revive again —

XII

El silencio reza solo
En la Iglesia Episcopal —
Un haz de varitas secas
Hace guardia en el Altar —

La Iglesia bajo la Nieve
Quisiera reverdecer —
La Paloma trinitaria
Viste de Blanco también —

XII

Silence prays alone
In the Episcopal Church —
Dried stems on stone —
Crown the high Altar —

The Church in the Snow
Longs to be green anew —
The Trinitarian Dove
Dresses in White too —

XIII

La Nave boga en Silencio —

La Blancura la apuntala —

Columnata — Presbiterio —

Episcopio y Atalaya —

En medio de la Blancura —

En medio de Nieve tanta —

En las Ventanas esbeltas

Vidrios de colores cantan —

XIII

The Nave sails in Silence —
Under a White Shower —
Colonnade — Presbytery —
Episcopal and Watchtower —

Amid the Whiteness —
Amid so much Snow —
In the slender Windows
Stained glass glow —

XIV

Emily, yo te siento
En el Silencio y la Nieve —
Sigo mi Sentimiento
Adondequiera que lleve —

No tengo pena — Tormento —
Remordimiento ni afán —
Para cantar lo que siento
Con el vino — Como el pan —

XIV

Emily, I feel you
In Silence and Snow —
I follow my Feeling
Wherever it may go —

I'm not ashamed — Tormented —
No Remorse — no Dread —
To sing what I feel
With wine — Like bread —

XV

Emily, yo te escucho
Como un murmullo en mi pecho
Y te siento cuando cantas
En Silencio del Silencio —

Señora, sé que en el Tiempo
Sólo cuenta el Corazón —
Y yo no sé lo que canto
Con Razón — Y sinrazón —

XV

Emily, I hear you
Like a murmur in my chest
And when you sing I feel you
Silently from Silence blessed —

I know in Time my Lady
Only the Heart has its season —
And I don't know what I sing
With and without Reason —

XVI

La Razón ya estaba dada —
Una Regla y un Compás —
Una Columna dorada —
Una Noche — Nada más —

Dos Corazones en uno —
Dos pupilas — La Mirada
Me devuelve lo que tuvo
Resplandor en tu Morada —

XVI

The Reason was given —
One Ruler and Compass —
One golden Column —
One Night — Oneness —

Two Hearts in one —
Two pupils — The Gaze
Returns what once Shone
In your Home to my praise —

XVII

¿A dónde me lleva el Canto
Que ya no puedo parar?
Viajar desde lejos — ¡Tanto
Que ya ha quedado detrás!

¿Por una quimera sólo?
¿Por un sueño nada más?
Pero si Sueños son todos
Y todos somos Soñar —

XVII

Where does the Song lead me
The one I can't detain?
To travel from so far away —
So much behind remains!

Is it only a chimera?
Is it just a dream?
But if Dreams are all of us
And Dreaming is all we are —

XVIII

Que no cese, Mi Señora
Dormida en aquel Altar
Entre las ramitas secas
Y la Paloma — El Cantar —

Ofrezco mi desconcierto
En el Concierto de Rimas
Para que cese el Invierno
Y vuelvan las Golondrinas —

XVIII

May it not end, My Lady
On that Altar Asleep
Among bouquet and Dove
The Canticle you keep —

I offer my disconcertment
In the Concert of Rhymes
So Winter may end
And the Swallows chime —

XIX

Gorrión — Hambre en la Nieve —

Aguja en la Nieve — Hambre —

Lentamente se teje

La bufanda de estambre —

Lentamente la Vida

Va tejiendo el Destino —

Juguemos la Partida

Porque el Juego es Divino —

XIX

Sparrow — Hunger in the Snow —

Needle in the Snow — Hunger —

Slowly knits and sews

Lambswool scarves — Wonder —

Life yet ever slowly

Knits our Destiny —

We Play along freely

The Game — Divinity —

XX

El Silencio de las Horas
Con el Tiempo se disuelve
En el ruido de las Hojas —
En los pasos en la Nieve —

Un Camino para Dos —
Una Ventana con Flores —
Una Mesa — Una Silla —
¿Acaso hay Horas mejores?

XX

The Silence of Hours
With Time dissolves
In the rustling of Leaves —
In the steps in the Snow —

One Path for Two —
Flowers on Windowsill —
One Table — One Chair —
Are there better Hours still?

XXI

Ángeles del Momento
Me visitan cuando quieren —
Banderas en el Viento —
Bicicletas en la Nieve —

El Humo del cigarrillo
Se confunde con la Luz —
Y el calor que viene solo
Con un Resplandor Azul —

XXI

Angels of the Moment
Visit me — I know —
Flags blowing in the Wind —
Bicycles in the Snow —

Cigarette Smoke rings
Dissolve into Light —
And warmth which brings
A Blue Radiance tonight —

XXII

Cada Error es un Favor —
Sólo espero que me lleve
El Tren de la Medianoche —
Las Vías Negras en la Nieve —

Cada Acierto es un Vacío
Donde juega la Blancura —
En la corriente del Río
Cada Error — Una Figura —

XXII

Every Error, a Favor bestowed—
May it lead my path aright
The Midnight Train's dark road —
Black Tracks on Snow, a sight —

Every Precision, a Void
Where the Whiteness plays —
In the River's current
Every Error, a Figure displays —

XXIII

La Nieve de los Aleros
Está atenta —
Sólo espera el Momento
De besar la Tierra —

En los Pinos enhiestos
La Vocación más pura —
Cubiertos de Silencio —
Troncos Negros — Blancura —

XXIII

The Snow on Rooftops
Is attentive — Alert —
Awaits the Moment
To kiss the Earth —

In majestic White Pines
Its Vocation upright —
Covered with Silence—
Black trunks — White —

XXIV

Un Paisaje nevado
Es el Mundo al revés —
Allá al fondo hay un Lago
Que es un Cielo a la vez —

Pajaritos del Tiempo —
Campos de Amanecer —
En el Cuarto un Espejo —
Las Estrellas del Ver —

XXIV

A snow-covered Landscape
Is the World upside down —
In the background a Lake
The Sky turned around —

Birds of the Moment —
Meadows of Dawn —
In the Room Atonement —
Stars our Eyes draw on —

XXV

El perfil de los Montes
Ya quiere despertar —
De un Sueño de Siglos
Por llegar —

Un Perfume de Tiempo —
Un Viento de Color —
Petirrojo — Carpintero —
Y el Cuervo del Dolor —

XXV

The profile of the Hills
Longs to awake from —
A Dream of Centuries
Yet to come —

A Perfume of Time —
A Wind of Color reign —
Woodpecker — Robin —
And the Raven of Pain —

XXVI

Una Zorra ha parido
Su camada en la Nieve —
Y yo sólo le pido
Que no se los lleve —

Para verlos al menos
En toda su Pureza —
Juguetear un Momento
En la Maleza —

XXVI

A Fox has birthed
Her litter in the Snow —
And I'll only ask her
To please not go —

To see them at least
Play for a spell —
Such Pure beasts
In Underbrush dwell —

XXVII

Una túnica Blanca —

Una tela sencilla —

Una Novia sin mancha —

Una Flor amarilla —

Un Círculo en la Nieve —

Y en lugar de Hojas secas —

Las Violetas de siempre —

Y las Promesas huecas —

XXVII

A virgin Bride —

A simple cloth —

A yellow Flower —

A White robe —

A Circle in the Snow —

And instead of dry Leaves —

The perennial Violets —

Promise — Deceive —

XXVIII

Las imágenes del Agua
De las márgenes se alejan —
Los Troncos están muy quietos —
Y en el Agua se reflejan —

Pasan altas las Parvadas —
Las formaciones de Gansos —
Y los Patos que ya buscan
La Verdura de otros Pastos —

XXVIII

Images of Water

Drift from the shoreline —

Motionless Trunks —

Mirrored in Waters shine —

Flocks fly high above —

Geese formations of vees —

And the Ducks in search of

Greenness of other Leas —

XXIX

En los Campos cultivados
Con la Paciencia de Antes
Los Surcos están muy Blancos
Porque la Nieve es muy grande —

El Tabaco — El Girasol —
Porque la Nieve es muy grande —
Negra y Blanca — Aparición —
Cada Vaca es un paisaje —

XXIX

With Bygone Patience
In cultivated Fields
Furrows are pure White
Snow is grand like Dreams —

Tobacco — Sunflower —
Snow is grand like Dreams —
Black and White — Apparition —
Every Cow is a scene —

XXX

Los rescoldos en el Fuego
Me miran con Atención —
Y yo — Que sigo despierto —
Vuelvo a soñar — Corazón —

¿Por qué si sueñas
Lloras? — Algo, presumo
Tienen que ver las Horas —
Las Lágrimas con el Humo —

XXX

Embers in the Fire
Watch me without Fear—
And I — Who am not tired —
Dream again — my Dear —

If you dream, why do
You cry? — Something, I daresay
That has to do with Hours —
Tears with Smoke fade away —

XXXI

Un Resplandor azulado
Se mira tras la Ventana —
Y yo me quedo pensando
Que la Vida es casi Nada —

Pero en el *casi* radican
Todas las cosas Humanas —
Como Copos que tiritan
Al trasluz de la Ventana —

XXXI

A blue Splendor
Through the Window shone—
I thought while I lingered
Life is almost Nought —

But in the *almost*
Human things shine bright —
Like Flakes that quiver
Against Window light —

XXXII

Murmullos del Aire —
Del Agua — Del Viento —
Me dicen lo que dice
El Sentimiento —

¿A dónde he de ir?
Cuando estoy contento
Sólo he de seguir
Soñando este Sueño —

XXXII

The Rustling of Wind —
Of Water — Of Air —
Tells me what Feelings
Have to say —

Where will I go?
When I'm a gleam
I only have to continue
Dreaming this Dream —

XXXIII

No hacen falta direcciones
Ni mil Mapas para dar
Con la Tumba — Las Acciones
Bastan para llegar —

La Carretera — La curva —
La recta y el Misterio —
Al final Nadie turba
La Paz del Cementerio —

XXXIII

You don't need directions
Nor Maps to encounter
The Tomb — Actions
Guide you as you wander —

The Highway — The curve —
Straight line and Mystery —
In the end Nobody disturbs
Peace in the Cemetery —

XXXIV

Voy siguiendo las pisadas
Al camposanto del hielo —
Cuatro Lápidas nevadas
Tras una verja de Hierro —

Aquí yace la Poeta —
Donde el Pino se bifurca —
Esta es la Meta —
Y Nadie triunfa —

XXXIV

I follow footprints
To the frozen Graveyard —
Four snowy Headstones
Beyond an Iron Guard —

The Poet rests here —
Where the Pine splits in two —
The Objective is clear —
And Nobody wins through —

XXXV

Llego al pie de la Tumba
Cubierta por el Invierno —
Nada me dice que “Nunca” —
Nadie me dice que “Eterno” —

En el empeño callado
Se bifurcan los Caminos —
Siento al juntar las Manos
La Ascensión de los Pinos —

XXXV

I reach the foot of the Tomb
— Nothing tells me “Never” —
Covered by Winter —
Nobody tells me “Forever” —

In silent resolve
The Roads diverge —
I feel the Pines’ Ascension
When my Hands merge —

XXXVI

Oscuras las flores
De la vista a las visitas —
Obras son Amores
Y no pistas de Artistas —

El Camino no está lejos
Si ni siquiera lo ves —
El Camino es lo que pisas —
La Sombra bajo tus pies —

XXXVI

Dark are the flowers
For the visitors to gaze —
Deeds are Lovers
Not an Artist's maze —

The Road isn't far beyond
If you don't even see it —
The Road is what you walk upon —
Shadow beneath your feet —

XXXVII

Misterio la Vida —

Misterio la Muerte —

En el Predominio

Del más Fuerte —

Calla cuando nieva —

Llora cuando llueve —

No hay mayor Misterio

Que un Cuervo en la Nieve —

XXXVII

A Mystery Life —
A Mystery Death —
In the Command
Of stronger Breath —

Silent when it snows —
Cries when it rains —
There is no greater Mystery
Than a Raven in Snowy plains —

XXXVIII

Una Visión transparente
Es igual a no ver Nada —
El Ojo está tan cercano
Que la Pupila es Mirada —

Y la Mirada y el Mundo
Abren y cierran sus Alas —
¡A volar en un segundo!
La Vida es un Vaso de Agua —

XXXVIII

A transparent Vision
Sees Nothing at all —
The Eye is so near
That the Pupil enralls —

And the World and Gaze
— Wings that flutter —
Take flight right away!
Life is a Glass of Water —

XXXIX

Más allá de las Formas —
Más allá de los Nombres —
El Mundo no es las cosas —
Ni las cosas el Hombre —

Las cosas son las cosas —
La Conciencia es el Hombre —
Y en la Paz generosa
De la Nieve se esconden —

XXXIX

Beyond the Forms —
Beyond the Names —
The World is not things —
Nor things Man —

Things are things —
Man is Awareness —
And both are hiding
In the Snow's Peacefulness —

XL

La Nieve entre las ramas
Sigue su Camino —
Encaramándose
A su Destino —

El Tiempo en su Sitio
No nos deja mentir —
La Nieve se derrite —
Tenemos que partir —

XL

Between the branches
Snow continues its Way —
Falling softly
As Destiny holds Sway —

Time in its Place
Won't allow us to lie —
The Snow thaws —
It's time to say our goodbyes —

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Fifty-six¹ Emily Dickinson poems published and translated in *Amherst Suite: Emily Dickinson, Spanish Translation & Poetic Transcreation* come from the following public domain sources:

1890 *Poems*

Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and T. W. Higginson.

Published by Roberts Brothers of Boston.

1. The mountain sat upon the plain
2. The sky is low, the clouds are mean,

1894 *Letters of Emily Dickinson*

Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd.

Published by Roberts Brothers of Boston.

1. Before he comes

1896 *Poems Third Series*

Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd.

Published by Roberts Brothers of Boston.

1. Superiority to fate
2. To make a prairie it takes a clover
3. We learn in the retreating

¹ Alberto Blanco translated a total of fifty-six poems into Spanish—one for each year of Emily Dickinson’s life—yet chose to title the collection *Emily Dickinson: 55 Poems* in homage to her age at the time of her death.

1924 *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*

Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi.

Published by Little, Brown and Company of Boston.

1. Ample make this bed.
2. At last, to be identified!
3. Beauty crowds me till I die,
4. Elysium is as far as to
5. Exultation is the going
6. Faith is a fine invention
7. Heaven is what I cannot reach!
8. Hope is the thing with feathers
9. How happy is the little stone
10. I had no time to hate, because
11. I'm nobody! Who are you?
12. I'm wife; I've finished that,
13. I send two Sunsets —
14. It's such a little thing to weep,
15. Lightly stepped a yellow star
16. Love is anterior to life,
17. Mine by the right of the white election!
18. Our share of night to bear,
19. Pain has an element of blank;
20. Sweet is the swamp with its secrets,
21. The body grows outside, —
22. The brain is wider than the sky,
23. The pedigree of honey
24. This is my letter to the world,
25. Tie the strings to my life, my Lord,
26. To fight aloud is very brave,
27. Wild nights! Wild nights!
28. We play at paste,
29. We outgrow love like other things

1929 *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson*

Edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi & Alfred Leete Hampson.

Published by Little, Brown and Company of Boston.

1. The soul's distinct

Emily Dickinson Archive/ edickinson.org:

1. Alone, I cannot be,
2. A Visitor in March —
3. The Heart is the Capital of the Mind —

Amherst College Library Digital Collection Transcriptions/
<https://acdc.amherst.edu/>:

1. A dying tiger moaned for drink —
2. An ignorance a Sunset
3. By chivalries as tiny,
4. Deprived of other banquet,
5. Experience is the angled road,
6. Fame of myself, to justify,
7. From Blank to Blank —
8. Heaven is so far of the mind
9. Image of Light, Adieu —
10. Longing is like the seed
11. The Battle fought between the Soul
12. The earth has many keys —
13. The robin for the crumb
14. The Soul unto itself
15. To die without the dying,
16. Two were immortal twice —
17. With thee, in the desert —