

*VOLUME 8 Number 3*

*Ezra* urges you, as always, to attend the ALTA annual conference, Milwaukee, November 12-15. The American Literary Translators Association puts on a dazzling fest, and the Declamations, Book Fair and Bilingual Readings are not to be missed. This year there is a “speed-dating” event: translators (pre-registered) may show two pages of their work to editors for advice and guidance.

Ez was a tad peeved, while reading Anna Stowe and Shannon Farley’s fine article in *Translation Review*, when the idea arose of preconceptions about translation. The authors mention, in the context of teaching translation studies, that they “first needed to disrupt their sense that they already knew what a translation was and the general outline of how one might make a translation.” (1) Remember, this is students we’re talking about. Yet how many times are we thwarted by an editor who thinks the same way? The editor has the prerogative, of course, and may, in a long life, have developed a very sophisticated sense of our craft. Stressing the positive, there has been such growth in our field in recent years, and so many theoretical notes have been added to the scale, that we are benefiting from new attention from publishers. Still, the odder projects, like some of those mentioned by Stowe and Farley, can meet with blank stares. The old hurdles abound: the editor has never heard of your author, poetry doesn’t sell, and so on. More shocking is that the received notion of “what a translation is” can prevent editors from accepting writers who might have written in a kind of new code even in the original version, such as Tchicaya and Césaire (William Frawley’s “third code” is a doorway into Ez’s way of thinking, here). And there’s more! What will such editors and publishers make of a work that was meant to “read like a translation” even in the original? Abdelkébir Khatibi’s novels, Amos Tutuola’s *The Palm-wine Drinkard*. The point here is that some of the consciousness raising about “what a translation is” has not spread as far beyond our workshop as it needs to.

Among the many beautiful works in this issue is poetry by Mieczyslaw Jastrun. We are indebted, coincidentally, to that paragon of translation presses, Diálogos Books, for recently bringing out Jastrun’s *Memorials*.

Our feature this issue is the monumental Willis Barnstone, whose gifts need no introduction. One of them is his fine drawing of our great and dismal leader, Baudelaire (below)—and note the spectacular retrospective on Baudelaire in *Le Magazine Littéraire* (October, 2014, no. 548). His translation of a Baudelaire poem follows.

There are two reviews at the end of this issue.

(1) “No Language Requirement: Translation Theory in a General Education Context,” in *Translation Review*, 2014, issue 89.

**Featured Writer:**

**Willis Barnstone** is the icon in our field for whom the Willis Barnstone Translation Prize (given at University of Evansville) is named. He is a poet, and a scholar of Biblical, Jewish and gnostic texts, as well as an anthologist, critic and translator. His enormous output has been translated into more than half a dozen languages, and includes Ezra favorites *Borges At Eighty: Conversations* (1982) and *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice* (1993). Among honors too numerous to cite he has been a Guggenheim Fellow and a Fulbright Senior Scholar.



## **Our White House**

Our White House

Outside the city I have not forgot

Our white house, small but in a peaceful lot,

Her crude Pomona and her old Venus

In a withered grove hiding their bare busts,

And twilight sun both dazzling and superb

Behind the pane where its immense eye burned

Wide open, and the intense curious sky

Pondered our long silent meals and sly-

ly spread the bright candlelight to merge

on frugal tablecloth and curtain serge.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

### **Traduttori/traduttrici:**

Linda Benninghoff

Dawn Corrigan

Christopher Linforth

Dzvinia Orlowsky and Jeff Friedman

Lucina Schell

John Poch

Leonore Hildebrandt

## FABLES OF PURGATORY

*~~translated by Lucina Schell*

*L'Angoisse qui fait les fous.  
L'Angoisse qui fait les suicidés.*

ANTONIN ARTAUD

### XI. PRAYER FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL OF THE WATER STAR IN THE CONSTELLATION OF TIME

Near a valley in Guatemala I found a white metal wing or bird. It was empty and carried in crystal offerings something written in a language unknown to me but that somehow I understood, as if someone had taught it to me and later made me forget:

“It is here that I have launched you and you set yourself to build distant images. If you want to know where you are look at your hand each time more closely, lose yourself in it. Whatever you look at losing yourself will bring you to eternal space.”

I have tired myself looking at my hands, my body, the waters, your belly, your blood, but always eternal space multiplies itself and devours me.

I go through the rain and millions of drops cover me and I lose them from looking.

I also lose myself in the dying waters.

-from *Fantastical Fragments*, 1965

MIGUEL ANGEL BUSTOS (Argentina, 1932-76)

**The Seafarer**

*~~Anglo-Saxon, translated by Linda Benninghoff*

May I by myself a true story utter,  
tell of journeys, how days of toil,  
time of hardship I often suffered,  
bitter breast-care have endured,  
known on ship care filled days,  
terrible rolling of waves. I often  
kept an anxious night-watch at ship's prow,  
as it by cliffs tossed. Cold-pinched were  
my feet, frost bound,  
cold-fettered. Sorrows sighed  
hot around my heart; hunger tore  
the sea-weary spirit from within. So he  
who lives pleasantly on land, does not know  
how I wretched on ice-cold sea  
in winter dwelled, in the paths of exile,  
of kinsmen deprived,  
hung with icicles, fleeing hail-showers.  
I heard nothing but the roaring sea's frigid waves.  
Sometimes I took

swan song for entertainment,  
gannet's call and curlew song for the laughter  
of human beings, gulls' singing for mead-drink.

Storms beat against a rocky crag.  
There the icy-feathered tern replied to me.  
Full often the dewy-feathered eagle screamed  
round about.  
There were not any protecting kinsmen  
with the power to comfort  
the wretched soul.

He who abides in the town,  
high-spirited and gay,  
and makes grievous journeys few—  
knows not how I  
weary often on sea-voyage  
was compelled to stay.  
Night comes, with northern snow,  
Frost hangs on the land, hail of the coldest corn falls.

Therefore the lonely sea-streams  
salt-waves tossing  
that I made trial of  
press in my heart.

I often lamented my heart's desire  
to journey far from home,  
a stranger on earth  
seeking home.

Wherefore is not man on earth  
proud in spirit,  
although favored by God,  
in youth active and brave in his deeds  
although his lord is gracious to him  
even if he did not have  
this sorrowful voyage  
he knows not what  
the Lord would bring him.

Nor is he given the harp's spirit,  
nor the gift of gold rings,  
nor the ability to win women,  
nor other worldly pleasures,  
nor anything else except sea-waves tossing.  
He ever has longings  
he that will go to sea.

Groves burst with blossoms.  
The town is made beautiful.  
Meadows brighten.  
The world hastens on.

All this reminds his mind to hasten,  
the heart to journey  
on sea-voyage  
to depart for distant places.

Likewise the cuckoo exhorts  
with mournful speech  
sings in the summer to God  
announces sorrow  
bitterness in the breast,  
so the man blessed with comfort does not know,  
to what end the seaman  
endure paths of exile far away.

My inmost thoughts are  
with the ocean-streams  
over whales-way, to their home.  
Therefore now my soul rises  
takes flight far and wide,  
to the earth's surface,  
then comes back to me,  
hungry and greedy,  
crying out loudly, a solitary flyer.  
It incites the heart irresistibly  
to travel on whales' ways  
across the expanse of the sea.  
Therefore I am hot



for the Lord's joys,  
instead of this dead and fleeting life on land.

I believe not at all  
that earthly wealth remains forever.  
Each of the Lord's servants is  
fated to die, to pass away.  
Always one of three things  
wrest his spirit away  
sickness, old age or deadly violence.

Wherefore noblemen each  
speaking of a man after his death  
praise the living reputation  
left behind.  
Therefore let him bring about,  
before he must depart  
good deeds and valiant deeds against the devil,  
so that children of men praise him,  
and afterwards his praises  
live amid the angels eternally,  
the heavenly host.

The days of glory of the earthly realm are departed.  
Kings and Caesars are not now,  
nor gold-givers such as were of old.  
Then man the greatest number of

Glorious deeds had to accomplish,  
and on most lordly glory live.

Fallen is all this  
company of noble hosts.

Music is departed.

There remains only the inferior and the world-possessed,  
who partake through trouble.

The fruit is brought low,  
the earth's nobility grows old  
and withers,  
in like manner now in each man throughout the world.

Old age overtakes him,  
face pales.

The gray-headed mourn  
the lord of former days whom they knew,  
a prince's son to the grave consigned.

Now he cannot  
enjoy the pleasures of the body,  
nor sweets swallow,  
nor pain feel,  
nor hand stir,  
nor with heart think.

Wherefore the grave will gold destroy,  
brother his brother  
bury for dead.

But for the soul that is sinful  
gold will not help him before God's awful power,  
when he has hoarded it  
while he lives.

Epilogue:

Great is God's awful power,  
because of Him the earth turns,  
the rocky foundation of the earth's surface,  
and heavens above.

Forlorn is he who does not dread the lord,  
and comes to death unprepared.

Blessed is he who lives humbly,  
to him comes the favor of heaven.

God in him that heart established,  
therefore he on His power believes.

A man shall steer a sure course  
and on that foundation hold,  
and be constant in his pledges,  
manner clean.

Each should  
with moderation control  
love with beloved,  
and with hatred and malice.

Therefore he will not be full of pride,  
though on funeral pyre consumed.

The friends he has made  
fate will strengthen.

God is mightier  
than any man's thought.

Let us consider  
where we possess our homes,  
and then think how we thither came  
and we then also strive  
to go thither  
onto that eternal happiness.

There life is inseparable  
from our loved Lord,  
bliss in heaven.

And we the Holy One thank  
since he exalts us,  
Heaven's Lord,  
Eternal Lord  
for all time.

[It is not known who wrote the Old English poem *The Seafarer*, but it may have been originally pagan in sentiment. It is believed the epilogue with its Christian sentiment may be a later edition.]

The seafarer was an exile—someone who in that time in England was forced to travel without friends or family and who probably could not return to home. He may have committed a crime, he may have chosen the seafaring life, as he emphasizes many times. The state of exile however seems to have brought him closer to spiritual truths, and he may be less an exile, as he states, than many who live on the land.]

## **Wulf and Eadwacer**

*~~translated by Christopher Linforth*

Little is known about the author of “Wulf and Eadwacer.” The fourteen-line poem exists only in the Exeter Book (Codex Exoniensis), a tenth-century folio of Anglo-Saxon documents.

To my people            it is like a gift given;  
they wish to kill him,        if he comes with his cruelty.  
But that is different to us.  
Wulf is on one island,        I on another.  
Enclosed is that island,        surrounded by fen.  
Bloodythirsty are the men        on that island;  
they wish to kill him,        if he comes with his cruelty.  
But that is different to us.  
My Wulf’s long journeys,        I had hopes and thought  
when it was rainy weather,        and I sat lamenting,  
when he the battle-bold        surrounded me with his arms.  
That was joy to me,        also that was pain.  
Wulf, my Wulf!        My hopes of you  
caused the sickness,        your seldom-coming  
my mind fearful,        not lacking food.  
Do you hear, Eadwacer?        Our cowardly cub  
a wolf bears        to the woods.  
One easily tears apart        that which was never united:

our tale together.

## **To Those Who Come After**

*~translated by Leonore Hildebrandt*

I.

Truly, I live in dark times!  
The innocent word is for fools.  
An untroubled forehead shelters  
the callous mind. Those who laugh  
have not heard the terrible news.

What times are these  
when to talk about trees  
is almost a crime—  
its silence is pregnant with atrocity!  
Someone is quietly crossing the street—  
is he happy his friend's anguish  
will no longer find him?

And yes, I am earning my living—  
but believe me, only by chance. Nothing  
gives me the right to a meal  
just my luck (when it fails, I am lost).

They say, Eat and drink! Be happy  
that you can! But how can I eat, how  
can I drink when I snatch every bite  
from the starving, when the thirsty  
die for the water in my glass?  
Still I eat and I drink.

I long to be wise.  
In the old books it says this is wisdom:  
avoid the world's quarrels, live  
your short life  
without fear and make a path  
without violence—  
repay evil with kindness  
and forget, do not satisfy, desire—

all this is wisdom!  
all that I cannot do!  
truly I live in dark ages!

2.

In a time of disorder I came to the cities  
when hunger was ruling the people.  
I came in a time of unrest  
outraged, I rallied with outrage—  
all my time passed on earth  
my time that was given to me.

I ate my meals between battles.  
I lay down to sleep with the murderers  
attended to love carelessly  
and with nature I lacked patience—  
thus my time passed on earth  
my time that was given to me.

In my time the road led to the swamp.  
My speech betrayed me to butchers.  
I could do so little, but the ones who ruled  
sat more safely without me, or that much I hoped—  
I passed my time on the earth  
my time that was given to me.

So little strength and so  
great a distance!  
All clearly visible  
but all out of reach—  
on earth my time passed  
my time that was given to me.

3.

You who come after, who will surface  
from the flood in which we drowned  
when you speak of our weakness  
consider—

you escaped  
our darker ages.  
We walked across borders, changing countries more often than shoes,  
moving through wars between classes, desperate  
when there was injustice but no outrage.

We know it well:  
hatred of baseness  
distorts the face.  
Rage at injustice  
makes the voice hoarse. We  
who wished to ready the ground for friendship  
couldn't be friendly ourselves.

And you—when the time comes  
that you can be human, when  
each can be each other's helpmate,  
in hindsight think of us  
with kindness.

BERTOLT BRECHT

### **The People**

*~~translated by Dawn Corrigan*

The people is a beast varied and great  
that doesn't know its strength and therefore groans  
under the burden of firewood and stones  
piled on by a weak child; the weight  
could be removed with one careless shake  
of its head, but instead it fears and loams  
the child whom it serves everything it owns,  
from which he pays the addled beast some back.



Stupendous thing! Tamed by its own hand  
it says to the lowest bidder: "I am  
yours; use me for war or any other game."  
All that stands between the sky and land  
is its, but this it will not understand  
and if someone tells, he is killed in shame.

### **The World and Its Parts**

The world is a great and perfect animal,  
a statue of God that resembles and praises  
its maker, and we are corrupt worms, a vile  
family taking refuge in its mazes.

If we are ignorant of its love and understanding,  
nor do the worms in my belly grow thinner  
for lack of knowing me, but hurt with their clinging  
so I must take care when planning dinner.

This then is the ratio: we are to the earth,  
that great animal inside a greater one,  
as lice to our own bodies, a hurtful equation.

Haughty people, raise your eyes to the night  
to measure how much every being is worth

and learn that you are just a parasite.

TOMMASO CAMPANELLA (1568-1639)

## Conclusion

*~~ translated by Dzvinia Orłowsky and Jeff Friedman*

Animals—nothing more. Trees  
Grow unaware of their own crooked ways.

Even man is suspect.  
I download firmament in telescope,

light-to-eye.  
Dark trees increase. In the world,  
a monstrous mechanism jealously

shields us and springs halo,

fake lighting.

Fire, snake sheds skin—  
flakes fall from a single flower. On bare icy fear  
air wounds. But I see past the flower—

a shapeless odor  
In the rose touch causes friction.  
And when it disappears,

I disappear.

## **Memorized in Childhood**

On the hill where the shed roof  
throws a triangular shadow—  
its walls undermined by ground water,  
strategically attacked by the rainforest—  
a small boy fills with fear and raspberries,  
  
comes up stealthily  
but the threshold recoils.

He slowly descends the stairs  
guarded by black and white sisters  
in mourning, who wait for him  
and protect his wound, wrapping  
a white bandage around his forehead.

The copper bulldog shrieks  
an evil alarm  
and the child flees back into the quiet forest.

And stairs blur into a field  
flat and fallow, pronouncing  
that precipitous time  
from green to snow man.

## **Doorway**

When the doorway opens

he is safe again,

in death.

We give him eternal praise.

Stocky figures rise

above the book,

petrified layers

rustling, Pythagoras in

the stone sky,

Aristotle, broken peasants—

I can't recall.

Ancient deaths

linger

in vineyard branches.

Are these not stony gorges?

Is nature dead?

Don't eat the bread

and the water isn't for drinking.

## **Birth of Man**

Not worth their weight

in rare gems or even valuable

for mysterious reasons,  
they were expelled into a hostile world,  
a couple just created

joining other secret couples  
(where truth hides in the darkness  
like hands in gloves).

The world dries. He  
creates the stars in the sky and the moon  
calling for the ocean to rise,  
this great oratorio,  
cold fire in the heavens.

They go to a different world,  
live in seclusion, quiet resolution,  
their thoughts captured,  
handcuffed.

MIECZYSLAW JASTRUN

**I (Sonnet)**

*~~translated by John Poch*

—My truth, my Paraclete, my strife,  
sweet Lord of time and of the wound—  
rule and inscribe the lines of my life  
with the invisible pulse of your hand.

Look what becomes each day's yoke and how  
it makes a way for the rush of useless fear.  
Look at the hours come unbridled now.  
What yesterday was far—today how near!

Surely, Lord of dawn and of the mist,  
with white foam and the sea, reave  
this prayer written in the sand.

You know when my road has found its end,  
that if, by your love, you open your breast  
to my destiny, to be was worth the grief.

#### **IV (Sonnet)**

When are you and I alone? How many stars  
will the intimate evening unfold?  
And how will you hold me, will you regard  
this man who dreams of your steps with my very soul?

With what rapt sparks' detonation  
will the dawn be eternally drenched  
and, free from slavery and argumentation,  
when will this human thirst be quenched?

I only know you'll come, with ardent breath,  
glittering in your brilliance, your touch rife,  
the early light of everlasting dawn,

the sun undone in a ray like a thread,  
conviction and ancient fire of my life  
crackling between flames with such calm.

ENRIQUE BARRERO RODRIGUEZ (Spain, contemporary)

## REVIEWS:

THE ALTERATION OF SILENCE: RECENT CHILEAN POETRY, Galo Ghigliotto and William Allegrezza, Editors. Various translators. Diálogos Books, 2013. 327 pp.

Two specters haunt *The Alteration of Silence: An Anthology of Recent Chilean Poetry*, and to its credit, it supersedes both. Beloved Pablo Neruda remains the most widely known Chilean poet in the United States, with few others translated. With a focus on active and living Chilean writers, the military dictatorship presided over by Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990) hangs over the poetry, whether politically addressed or pointedly ignored. Conceived as a cross-cultural project, *The Alteration of Silence* is the second companion volume to an anthology of recent North American poets published by the same pair of editors, with William Allegrezza in charge of the English/North American poetry and Galo Ghigliotto guiding the Chilean selection presented here. The title is apropos: *The Alteration of Silence* seeks to open communication where it has been silenced between two poetic traditions that have much to gain from each other, while the poets themselves seek to alter the historical and political narrative of their generation in the aftermath of a brutal regime.

Ghigliotto does an admirable job in his introduction of trying to contextualize the poets into groups, but so many resist categorization. Ultimately the anthology presents an aesthetically diverse group of 28 poets who are equally innovative and strong, articulated by 12 different translators. The bulk of the anthology is made up of “poets of the 90’s,” known for their distance from political content to encompass a broader range of themes. Yet there is plenty of political poetry here, though never political for its own sake. Malú Urriola, one of the poets of the democratic restoration period, articulates well the poet’s ambivalence toward politics in “Santiago in Ruins, April 1992”:

I have no need for anything else tonight,  
I don't care for a poet's tired anecdotes.  
I am not sure if I will get to see the future, unless  
it passes me by.



I have hope for the glory of the sexless.  
I will leave myself to silence,  
like a criminal lets go of weapons and the pleasure  
of blood. (219)

Ricardo Maldonado, whose efforts are well represented in this anthology, embodies Urriola's internal conflicts in his intelligent translations.

Since the 2000s, a group known as the “newest poets,” represented gloriously in this anthology by Héctor Hernández Montecinos, has accused the “90's poets” of perpetuating dictatorial systems by ignoring politics. In translations by Irma Casey and Donald Wellman, Montecinos speaks powerfully to his generation: “No to the respectable whores of beauty/No to the distinguished dogs of poetry/We have sung for our generation/without succeeding in waking them from fear/We have played being a word spilling shots of freedom/on dumbstruck heads that never imagined an outburst/such as this on account of poetry and on account of what lives by means of it” (229). Poetry is a necessity, a way of processing the historical void and psychic pain of a generation who grew up under a repressive regime. “In this super dictatorship,/poetry is again a weapon./yes, a weapon,/on this symbolic side of violence,” Montecinos affirms (247).

Yet a poem need not be overtly political to combat fascism, as Soledad Fariña, one of the older poets included in the anthology who published during the dictatorship, reminds us with her supremely erotic poems, written in tight lines that sprawl uncontainably across the page:

Rough mouth admits its want  
wringing out from within my division's secret  
my aftertaste, bitter, draining                      Corners  
filled in indescribable scenes  
Sap gushing from deep fissures                      Attempts  
the tongue whorls opening among currents  
warm                      cold  
Pulp surges fossilizing memory  
pacific in the morass (103)

Fariña's sexy language is suffused with violence and strain, artfully conveyed by Lea Graham in her translation that captures the struggle of the undulating, writhing tongue. In a silenced society, all acts of memory are subversive; the attempt to remember the flavor of an erotic encounter calls to mind other “indescribable scenes.” And one must remember that in Spanish, as in English, “tongue” is another word for language.

In this context, the following poet Sergio Coddou, one of the “90's poets,” forms a lovely pairing with Fariña in versions by the same translator, with keenly observed, minimal poems like “I am a hotel”:

I am a hotel  
decker out to receive your laments  
with a room  
especially accommodated  
to shuck myself in your presence  
and you make of me  
sublime popcorn  
with the fire of your glance.

And thus i,  
like scraps between your molars,  
will savor the trace of your kisses. (109)

Coddou's surprising use of a corn cob as an erotic metaphor reminds us how much North Americans and South Americans have in common culturally (and Coddou leaves “pop corn” in English in his original).

Another poet of transient spaces, Alexis Figueroa, fuses the erotic and political to discuss the proliferation of television and commercialism as a means of distracting the masses. James Davis' translation vibrates with creativity in lines like, “Come in, come to the women with skin agolden,/come to see their eyes of sunflowering feathers,/their panther steps,/their hands engloved in flourescent light” (41). Lines that have their antecedent stateside in poets like cummings turn

sinister here, “Now come to the woman of the nuclear poppies between her legs,/come to the living room of the trees in flames,/welcome to the TV, welcome to the machine;/all its innumerable clockworks await you” (43-45). Here is the inheritance of Neruda's eroticism, which many North American readers will expect of Chilean poetry: “Welcome to the machine:/If you want them blond they'll be blond,/with the soft color of the deserts,/with hair like a sun spilling from sheets,/with its body of the same curve as the golden dunes on the beaches.//If you want brunettes,/with grape skin,/barely skin,/skin toasted and soft, all velvety it'll be open,/it'll be a fig cut and ripe, revealing its red interior./Welcome to the machine, welcome to the TV:/Well come to the garden of the night flowers,/Well come to the Virgins of the Sun Inn Cabaret” (45-47). Lest we anglophone readers be tourists, the anthology reminds us that real pain and hardship underlies much of this poetry, yet it is a poetry that fights and insists on being, beautifully, and we would do well to assimilate the innovations of these fine poets into our own poetics.

~~*Lucina Schell*

METAPHYSICAL ODYSSEY INTO THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION, C.M. Mayo. Dancing Chiva Literary Arts, 2014. 281 pp.

Catherine Mayo is widely known as an editor and translator. Her *Best Contemporary Mexican Fiction* is a trove of hip Mexican writing. She won acclaim for *The Last Prince of The Mexican Empire*, the bloody tale of the last days of European empire in Mexico. Few have read and interpreted the soul of Mexico as Mayo has.

Her new book is not only an introduction to Francisco Madero—strangely unknown to most North Americans—but also a window into his wilder nature. Madero is a great (and martyred) hero, the first elected president of Mexico after the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship. He is the gateway into the events (from 1910 on) now called the Mexican Revolution. Little known is that his book, *The Presidential Succession in 1910*, was an enormous best seller. Mayo's signal achievement is to be the first translator of a much stranger book of Madero's, his *Spiritist Manual (Manual Espírita, 1911)*, and to include it in her study of Madero's metaphysical vision.

Written by Madero at the request of a body he cites as the “Permanent Board of Mexico's Second Spiritist Congress,” the *Spiritist Manual* comes at the end of that most materialistic phase of Mexican history, the Díaz years—and is not *sui generis*, however kooky the Permanent Board now sounds to us. The product of long research, it is “dedicated” to other thinkers “Who have led [Madero] out of the fogs of ignorance, opening his eyes to splendors and vast horizons.” Madero's Dedication and introduction not only define the Spiritist agenda, but give it its true nineteenth century context. Indeed, this is the fine purpose of Mayo's book. Her translator's notes and her research into Madero and related arcana such as the Biblioteca Orientalista have produced a long and winding study that satisfies both with its thoroughness and with its titillating other-worldiness.

The research side is buttressed by what we need to know of nineteenth century metaphysical and spiritual(ist) systems: the all-important Swedenborg (a pole star for Nerval, Baudelaire and many others), such thinkers as Edouard Schuré, and the flourishing of mediums and their séances (in the United States as well). [N.B.: The *Manual*, flawlessly translated by Mayo, largely consists of questions and answers such as these, which remind us of Houdini and Arthur Conan Doyle: Q. Now I beg you to tell me, what is understood by table tipping? A. This name designates the phenomena produced by small tables, or similar furniture, in transmitting messages by means of raps, as at a door.] Helpfully, Mayo's tone is spirited (oops) rather than academic. She speaks of "bushwacking" through metaphysics' "sticky wickets." One of her section headings is "Yucky Chunks of Cognitive Dissonance." And references to Madame Blavatsky (there are several) always make Ezra laugh.

So *Metaphysical Odyssey* is as entertaining as it is informative. In the end, though, it is more. It's somewhat *haunting*. This derives partly from Madero's valor and genuineness and partly from the *cri de coeur* of an entire nation seeking a new way.

~~Peter Thompson



