

POETRY

E F R A Í N J A R A I D R O V O

Weeping for Pedro Jara¹ (Structures for an Elegy)

I

1.1 1 the radiogram said
2 "Your son was born. What should we call him?"
3 I was then in the islands
4 scattered procession of basalt
5 clots of astonishment
6 dry ganglions of eternity
7 chain of rocks in the ocean's palm
8 faces sculpted by the ageless flames
9 loneliness
10 gleaming stubborn duration
11 bitter seminal odor of the tidelands
12 wandering
13 wondering
14 I said
15 while blood and seagulls shouted
16 he will be called pedro
17 pedrobonesofstone
18 pedrolaughterofrock
19 rock inflamed by the fire of life's meteors

1.2 1 the radiogram said
2 "Your son was born. Send his name"
3 I was then in the archipelago
4 blackened bones of basalt
5 syllables of silence
6 ashlar of eternity
7 garland of stone on the ocean's breast
8 colloquium of ageless cyclops
9 loneliness

- 10 glimmering orphaned space
 11 ripping of the wind's tunics
 12 wandering
 13 wondering
 14 I said
 15 while sex and seals howled
 16 you will be named pedro
 17 pedroveins of stone
 18 pedro flame of rock
 19 rock fired by the breath of life's lions
- 1.3 1 the radiogram said
 2 "Your son was born. What do we name him?"
 3 I was then in the galapagos
 4 jaundiced gums of basalt
 5 alveoli of abandonment
 6 teeth of eternity
 7 stone tiara on the ocean's head
 8 cloaks of ageless lava
 9 loneliness
 10 glowing hollow time
 11 continuous boiling of stars at the foot of the cliff
 12 wandering
 13 wondering
 14 I said
 15 amidst the roar of dreams and waves
 16 I will name you pedro
 17 pedro spine of the steep
 18 pedro ageless rock
 19 tough and incandescent rock that will outlive me

II

- 2.1 1 Beloved son!
 2 relentlessly bitten by caustic days
 3 you seemed sculpted in diamond
 4 made to last amidst the stones
 5 made to endure
 6 among the proliferations of time's rust
 7 but everything that burns in blood or intelligence
 8 sounds like leaves falling and annihilation
 9 oh stone chisels for cleaving rocks
 10 oh muted impact of the blow of the masses
 11 oh factions burned by expiration's tongue
 12 faces of stone

21 disseminating
 22 you seemed forged with the toughness of the reef
 23 time's forgotten cliff
 24 unswervable javelin of the albatross
 25 but you were the flap of a swallow's wings in a gale!
 26 I imagined your bones developing
 27 with the tough gracefulness of columns
 28 with the aggressive stubbornness of coral reefs
 29 but you were barely the last glittering gasp
 30 of a sea bass thrown upon the sand!
 31 oh pedroseaweedtrail
 32 oh pedrowavesplash
 33 on the sparkling cliff of life

3.2 1 fulminant incandescence of the ephemeral
 2 we
 3 the fools
 4 fed with absurdity and frustrations
 5 we who persist
 6 in justifying the joy of being here
 7 we covet the vastness of the forest
 8 but we only own the hesitation of a leaf
 9 I loved you pedroforest
 10 I kept you pedropetiole
 11 I yearned for you pedrofrond
 12 I lost you pedrofallenleaf
 13 you should have outlived me as the seed does the
 sunflower
 14 but your blood ran faster than my vigil
 15 brittle pine needle
 16 tottering resin pupil
 17 frenzy of butterflies at the sight of pollen
 18 warble of a nightingale amidst the waterfall clamor
 19 everything's falling
 20 sinking
 21 disappearing
 22 you seemed built with the vigor of the olive
 23 time's forgotten oak
 24 limitless fringe of the hawk's flight
 25 but you were a hummingbird in the funnel of a tornado!
 26 I conceived the shaping of your forehead
 27 with the sweet persistence of bark
 28 with the sour lust of roots
 29 but you were barely the rustle of an angel's wing

30 of a wheat spike trampled by hooves!
 31 oh pedroheron's footprint
 32 oh pedrocaress of wind
 33 on the gleaming promontory of life

3.3 1 incessant whirl of today
 2 we
 3 the stubborn
 4 warpers of discord and syllogism
 5 we who despair
 6 to decipher the signs of uncertainty
 7 we strive for the imperturbability of the mountain
 8 but we only own the prostration of the dust
 9 I loved you pedromegalith
 10 I had you pedropebble
 11 I yearned for you pedrorock
 12 I lost you pedrosand
 13 you should have passed beyond me as the moon does
 the hill
 14 but your anguish expanded faster than my pain
 15 fragmented sheet of lapis lazuli
 16 dazzling wound of diamonds
 17 gleaming ecstasy of a gold-bearing vein
 18 cooing of a dove amidst the roar of an avalanche
 19 everything's sinking
 20 fading
 21 blurring
 22 you seemed implanted with the serenity of a snow-
 capped mountain
 23 time's forgotten lode
 24 majestic signature of the falcon's flight
 25 but you were the struggle of a butterfly in a storm!
 26 I visualized your shoulders standing out
 27 with the powerful simplicity of summits
 28 with the perseverance of ramparts
 29 but you were barely a sudden sparkle
 30 of a pebble crushed by a rushing stream!
 31 oh pedroextinguishedcrater
 32 oh pedrocrumblingsand
 33 in the bottomless gorge of life

I V

4.1 1 truly
 2 was it true?

- 3 was it you who dangled from the toilet chain
 4 like a dry willow wisp over a river
 5 vanished being
 6 wounded being
 7 receding tide
 8 suicide
 9 oh dove's furrow of thought
 10 erased by the deafening sound of scorn
 11 oh arrogance of the star that sends its orbit to hell
 12 oh obstinate repudiator of convention
 13 pedrobbackwardcap
 14 pedrobirdshooter
 15 pedrowindowbreaker
 16 and your eternally splinted arm
 17 pedro fermentation of life's entrails
 18 but you are no longer here!
 19 when I closed your eyelids
 20 to veil the frozen thunder in your eyes
 21 I no longer recognized you
 22 was it really you?
 23 that frozen indolence of an ice floe?
 24 that ember that desperation urges one to blow?
 25 that which crumbles in the darkness forever?
- 4.2 1 truly
 2 was it true?
 3 was it you who hung from the toilet chain
 4 like a useless pulley in an abandoned unfinished
 5 building
 6 vanished being
 7 ceased being
 8 no sun outside
 9 suicide
 10 oh mirrored precinct of thought
 11 steamed up by the vapor of the poppies of passion
 12 oh sinister fascination with the whirlwind of emptiness
 13 oh perpetual attacker of obedience
 14 pedroinsideoutunderwear
 15 pedroshavenhead
 16 pedrozeroinggrammar
 17 and shirttails untucked
 18 pedro bewilderment of life's ivy
 19 but you are no longer here!

10 never the arteries of diamonds and flowers in the
 forehead
 11 imprints of the embers of duration
 12 but you sparkle within me
 13 like a shooting star entering the atmosphere
 14 but you dream within me
 15 you still live within me
 16 you burn in my memory
 17 like old tribal songs on the lips of youth
 18 beloved son!
 19 we are the echo of an eternal tune

NOTES

1. Normally it is the policy of *ISLE* to print translations together with original texts. Because of the unusual length of "Sollozo por Pedro Jara," however, we have been able to publish only Cecilia Mafla-Bustamante's English translation. The original Spanish version of the poem can be found in Jara Idrovo's book entitled *Efraín Jara Idrovo: Grandes Poetas de los 50* (Quito: Editorial El Conejo, 1986).

2. Inca ruins in Ecuador.