

To the Winds Our Sails

Irish Writers Translate Galician Poetry

Edited by

MARY O'DONNELL AND MANUELA PALACIOS



salmonpoetry

Published in 2010 by
Salmon Poetry
Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland
Website: www.salmonpoetry.com
Email: info@salmonpoetry.com

Copyright © The contributors and the editors 2010. All rights reserved.

© Copyright of the original, Galician poems remains with the individual Galician poets.

© Copyright of the English/Irish translations remains with each individual translator
for the poem/s they have translated.

ISBN 978-1-907056-37-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photography, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. The book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition, including this condition, being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Cover artwork: Mosaic © Arcobaleno | Dreamstime.com
Typesetting & Design: Siobhán Hutson

Published with financial assistance from the Arts Council



*Remembering languages no longer spoken, and languages
not yet born, this book is dedicated to those who attempt
to keep the flow of words and experience alive.*

Contents

Acknowledgements	12
Introduction by Mary O'Donnell	15
<i>Galician Women Poets Today: Moving from Strength to Strength</i> by Manuela Palacios	21

Luz Pozo Garza

Os palacios de inverno	30
Benvida a "San Felicísimo"	32
Bosque de rododendros	34
Páxina Atlántica	38
Avalon Avalon	40

María do Carme Kruckenberg

Falemos das acusacións incorrectas...	46
Non sei como fun pisando...	48
O cristal axústase...	50
Lembro aqueles tempos do verán...	52
Recordas como ladraba...	54

Xohana Torres

Penélope	58
Ofelia	60
Sibila en Ribadavia	62
Chámome imaxe á malva luz da hora. Ás veces vén a néboa que me muda de todo	64
Sempre baixaba pola Praza Vella...	66

Contents

Acknowledgements	12
Introduction by Mary O'Donnell	15
<i>Galician Women Poets Today: Moving from Strength to Strength</i> by Manuela Palacios	21

Luz Pozo Garza by Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill

Winter Palaces	31
Welcome to 'San Felicísimo'	33
Forest of Rhododendrons	35
Page of the Atlantic	39
Avalon Avalon	41

María do Carme Kruckenberg

by **Anne Le Marquand Hartigan**

Let's Talk about False Accusations...	47
Ní Aithním mo Choischéim Fhéin... by Rita Kelly	49
The Mirror Reflects...	51
I Remember Those Summer Days...	53
Do You Remember How the Dog...	55

Xohana Torres

by **Celia de Fréine**

Penelope	59
Ophelia	61
Sybil in Ribadavia	63
My Name Is Image in the Hour's Mauve Light. At Times the Fog That Transforms Me Descends	65
Many's the Time I'd Wend My Way through the Old Square...	67

Marilar Aleixandre

derrotas domésticas	72
o diario (3 rabuda)	74
varrer as cinzas	76
luis	78
comedores de cabezas	80

Luz Pichel

Poema prólogo	84
Queimar a leña	86
Pésanlle as pólas á figueira coa carga dos figos	88
Non se sabe case nada	90
Sachando na horta	92

Chus Pato

PORQUE NON É SÓ O IDIOMA O QUE ESTÁ AMEAZADO...	96
A voz era pánico...	98
Un cabalo para as musas	102

Ana Romaní

Os lagartos vírona pasar...	108
Por que sei que te vas ás veces...	110
Fuga	112
Que os cachalotes me suban polas pernas...	114
No medio da praza...	116

*Marilar Aleixandre*by **Mary O'Malley**

domestic defeats	73
the diary (3 surly)	75
sweeping up the ashes	77
luis, by Martin Nugent	79
the head eaters	81

*Luz Pichel*by **Catherine Phil MacCarthy**

Prologue Poem	85
Burning the Firewood	87
The Branches of the Fig Tree Are Laden with Its Crop of Figs	89
Almost Nothing Is Known	91
Ag Grafadh san Úllord	93

*Chus Pato*by **Lorna Shaughnessy**

BECAUSE IT IS NOT ONLY LANGUAGE THAT IS THREATENED ...	97
The Voice was Pure Panic...	99
Capall do na mBéithe	103
by Lorna Shaughnessy with Rita Kelly	

*Ana Romaní*by **Maurice Harmon**

The Lizards Watched Her As She Passed...	109
Because I know You Sometimes Leave...	111
Escape	113
Would That the Sperm Whales Would Climb My Legs...	115
Lar na Cearnóige	117

María do Cebreiro

A memoria é o espazo da reapropiación...	120
A Terra Devastada	122
Lúa	124
X.	128
The Death of Lieutenant General Sir Moore. 1809	130

María Lado

un	136
tres	138
sete	140
cuqui	142
catro	144

Xiana Arias

Este é o lugar onde medra a morte...	148
Non hai pistolas...	150
Recoñézome na dor...	152
Sentada na porta da casa...	154
Isto non é literatura feminina...	156

About the Poets

by <i>María Xesús Nogueira and Laura Lojo</i>	159
---	-----

About the Editors

168

María do Cebreiro

by **Caitríona O'Reilly**

Memory Is a Circumscribed Space...	121
The Waste Land	123
Moon	125
X.	129
The Death of Lieutenant General Sir Moore. 1809	131

María Lado

by **Máighréad Medbh**

one	137
three	139
seven	141
cuqui, by Rita Kelly	143
four	145

Xiana Arias

by **Paddy Bushe**

Here Is the Place of Death's Growing...	149
There Are No Guns...	151
Aithním mé Féin sa bhFulaingt...	153
By the Door of Her House, Sitting...	155
This Is Not Feminine Literature...	157

About the Poets

by <i>María Xesús Nogueira and Laura Lojo</i>	159
---	-----

About the Editors

168

Acknowledgements

The editors wish to acknowledge the support of the following institutions:

The Spanish MINISTERIO DE CIENCIA E INNOVACIÓN, and the CONSELLERÍA DE ECONOMÍA E INDUSTRIA, XUNTA DE GALICIA, which have funded our projects on contemporary Irish and Galician women writers (Refs. FFI2008-02401E/FILO, FFI2009-08475/FILO, INCITE09-204127PR, and finally INCITE09-ENA204035ES for the research network *Discourse and Identity*).

The ASOCIACIÓN DE ESCRITORES EN LINGUA GALEGA (AELG) for their financial support and logistic facilities.

The INSTITUTO CERVANTES, Dublin, and its director Dr. Julia Piera, for generous interest and assistance in this project.

The editors and the publisher, Salmon Poetry, gratefully acknowledge permission, from the authors and publishers below, to translate into English and Irish and to reprint, in this anthology, poems which appeared formerly in the following collections:

- Luz Pozo Garza, *As arpas de Iwerddon*. Ourense: Ediciones Linteo, 2005.
- María do Carme Kruckenberg, *As complexas mareas da noite*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior, 2006.
- María do Carme Kruckenberg, *Os límites do arreuizo*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior, 2008.
- Xohana Torres, *Poesía reunida (1957-2001)*. [It contains the collections *Tempo de ría* (Espiral Maior, 1992) and *Estacións ao mar* (Galaxia, 1980)]. Ed. Luciano Rodríguez. Santiago: P.E.N. Clube de Galicia / Editorial Danú, 2004.
- Marilar Aleixandre, *Catálogo de velenos*. Ferrol: Sociedad de Cultura Valle-Inclán/ Fundación Caixa Galicia, 1999. Esquíu Poetry Prize.
- Marilar Aleixandre, *Desmentindo a primavera*. Vigo: Xerais, 2003.

- Marilar Aleixandre, *Abecedario de árbores*. Santiago: Concellaría de Cultura, Concello de Santiago/ Editorial Compostela S.A., 2006.
- Marilar Aleixandre, *Mudanzas*. Santiago: P.E.N. Clube de Galicia/Editorial Danú, 2007. V Caixanova Poetry Prize.
- Luz Pichel, *Casa pechada*. Ferrol: Sociedad de Cultura Valle Inclán/Fundación Caixa Galicia, 2006. XXVI Esquíu Poetry Prize.
- Chus Pato, *m-Talá*. Vigo: Xerais, 2000. [Also translated into English by Erín Moure. 58, Velwell Road, Exeter: Shearsman, 2009].
- Chus Pato, *Hordas de escritura*. Vigo: Xerais, 2008. Spanish Critics' Prize.
- Chus Pato, "Un cabalo para as musas" (unpublished).
- Ana Romani, *Das últimas mareas*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior, 1994.
- Ana Romani, *Arden*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior, 1998.
- Ana Romani, *Love me tender. 24 pezas mínimas para unha caixa de música*. Santiago: Concellaría de Cultura, Concello de Santiago/Editorial Compostela S.A., 2005.
- María do Cebreiro, *o estadio do espello*. Vigo: Xerais, 1998.
- María do Cebreiro, *Non queres que o poema te coñeza*. Santiago: P.E.N. Clube de Galicia/Editorial Danú, 2004. II Caixanova Poetry Prize.
- María do Cebreiro, *Os Hemisferios*. Vigo: Galaxia, 2006.
- María do Cebreiro, *Cuarto de outono*. Santiago: Sotelo Blanco, 2008.
- María do Cebreiro, "THE DEATH OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR JOHN MOORE 1809". *Poemas históricos* (unpublished).
- María Lado, *casa atlántica, casa cabaret*. Vigo: Xerais, 2001.
- María Lado, *berlín*. Santiago: Concellaría de Cultura, Concello de Santiago/ Editorial Compostela S.A., 2005.
- María Lado, *nove*. A Estrada: Edicións Fervenza, 2008. Avelina Valladares Prize.
- Xiana Arias, *Ortigas*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior, 2007. XIX National Prize Xosé María Pérez Parallé.
- Xiana Arias, "Este é o lugar onde medra a morte". From "Cleo de dez a doce", published in *Pirata*. Santiago: Brigadas de Intervención Rápida George Grosz in support of Cineclub Compostela, 2007.
- Xiana Arias, *Acusación*. Vigo: Galaxia, 2009.

Introduction

by MARY O'DONNELL

In recent decades, Irish poets have been accustomed to being the focus of literary research and scholarship from abroad. It has become an almost unquestioned aspect of being an Irish writer, and the work of a significant number has been translated to other languages, analysed, researched and/or the subject of literary conferences and summer schools the length and breadth of Europe, not to mention the all-welcoming, parental interest of universities, colleges and institutions in the United States. To be an Irish writer has often meant that our concerns became the scholarly concerns of others, that our lines and paragraphs were open to interpretation world-wide, our issues, themes, narratives and socio-cultural insights the material for academic investment and dialogue. One could argue that we have been pampered by such attention, and indeed until recently that appeared to be the prevailing response in our greater island neighbour across the Irish Sea, where finally a kind of *Sonnenuntergang* regarding Irish writers and prizes, Irish writers and favourable comment seems partially underway.

In this context, it struck me after a visit to Santiago de Compostela in summer 2006, that there was a dearth of information and interest in Ireland regarding Galician poets. My awareness had been stirred almost imperceptibly. The purpose of my visit had been to give a lecture on the journey from imagination to print for Irish women writers from the 1980s to the present. It was a sultry, humid few days during which I wandered the city, absorbing something that initially I could not quite identify. There was a sense of something being

out of kilter, and yet something falling rightly into place. Threads of a recognisable music caught me off-guard—pure Celtic, wavering on the air from some of the shops, or rattling the guts of the casual passer-by wherever young people played beneath shaded, ancient archways as the reverberations of what I could only call *bodhrán* and *uilleann pipes* followed me everywhere.

Then there were the images—simple, recognisable—Celtic knots, circles, trees and triads, in jewellery and shop signs, wherever the casual visitor might wander. There was a sense that, in Galicia, Celticism—the easily digested *tourist* brand that includes silver, tea-towels and CDs—was alive and well in a manner easily matched by any Irish town or in the summer throng of Dublin's Nassau Street.

Out of these impressions and further reading, one year later the idea for this anthology was born, and at the time it seemed relatively uncomplicated. Thanks to the enthusiastic response from my co-editor and collaborator Manuela Palacios in Santiago and also, significantly, from Jessie Lendennie of Salmon Poetry in Co. Clare, things slid into place very quickly at first and the decision to proceed was made. It was then a matter of securing our poets —on both sides of the equation— and inviting them to participate in this project.

I read more about Galicia and Celticism. As I suspected, sceptical arguments have also been mounted regarding alleged Celtic roots in Galicia and an ancient co-Celtic, utopian brother and sisterhood. Galicia and Ireland have traditionally shared various other social circumstances that have characterised their identity. Both have been strongholds of Catholicism in Europe and—despite declining religious observance, (and the current rupture in the Irish church, itself a cause of ongoing investigation)—Catholic morality continues to be decisive in family and sexual politics for significant numbers of people.

Both communities have two official languages, Irish and English in Ireland, whereas in Galicia they have the vernacular and Spanish. Both English and Spanish are traditionally viewed by many as having been imposed on two communities which

already had complete and developed languages, themselves a naturally evolved repository of considerable enriching historical, mythic and social inheritance. Admittedly, attitudes towards the languages vary and some differences apply: Irish and English are linguistically much further apart than Galician and Spanish (both derived from Latin), and Galician is much more widely spoken than Irish is today. Is there a danger that notwithstanding the fluency of some three million Galicians, the language of both our communities may eventually disappear off the fragile linguistic world map and remain—as it so often does in Ireland—as a sanctified code to be pulled out and dressed up on official and formal occasions?

Another difference is an environmental one. The oil tanker *Prestige* split in two in November 2002 releasing millions of gallons of oil along the wildlife-rich Galician coastline. There exists a more heightened consciousness of the fragile nature of the eco-system than in Ireland, and some of its literary writers have engaged with this aspect of connection to landscape.

Yet what became apparent was the amount and quality of articles, books and pamphlets which demonstrated a categorically clear interest in *Irish* writers by Galician scholars and poets over the years. The interest from there to here has been unstinting. Whether or not one argues that the Celtic link between our two countries is real or idealised is, in a way, very much beside the point. The evidence of a need to connect with a culture Galicia dreamed of, both fact and imagining, was evident.

Further back Galicia's interest in Ireland had peaked several times, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, with writers Eduardo Pondal and Manuel Murguía. The latter based his *Galicia* and his *Historia de Galicia* in a regionally-oriented Celticism and in a romantic ideology which were of literary and cultural importance. One of the outstanding figures of his time, Murguía's marriage to the iconic poet Rosalía de Castro, and his friendship with Manuel Curros Enríquez were significant, to the extent that his Celticist ideals gave rise to a group based in A Coruña called "A Cova Céltica"

[The Celtic Lair]. Galicia's literary and cultural revival peaked earlier than that of Ireland, but a resurgence again followed in the 1920s, and in 1926 the first translation of fragments of James Joyce's *Ulysses* was rendered into Galician by Otero Pedrayo. Today, many researchers in the three Galician universities are working on Irish studies.

By proceeding chronologically through this volume it is possible to discern a trail of interests, issues and concerns in the work of these Galician poets (outlined by Manuela Palacios in her introductory essay). In a sense, it can be read as unfolding in three movements, and this division is reflected in the selection of the Irish poets. Thus one of our greatest poets, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, translates the myth-enriched and explorative vitality of Luz Pozo Garza; Anne Le Marquand Hartigan, Celia de Fréine, Mary O'Malley, Catherine. Phil MacCarthy, Lorna Shaughnessy, Maurice Harmon, Caitríona O'Reilly, Máighréad Medbh, and Paddy Bushe follow on a trail of discourse which embraces political struggle and identity, feminism, literary tradition and the interrogation of these subjects. Each Irish poet is, in their own lives, distinguished by differing approaches to technique, thematic schema and vision, but all are imbued with an ear for the music of language.

Aided initially by the indispensable work of Minia Bongiorno García, who provided the cribs which enabled the Irish writers to create their versions, it was decided that of the five poems contributed by each Galician writer, one of these was to be rendered to Irish—a minimal way, perhaps, of acknowledging the still living presence and identity of our original cultural language. Six of the Irish writers selected are Irish speakers, and for those who are not, the bilingual writer-poet, linguist and scholar Rita Kelly secured the Irish translations, with one from Martin Nugent.

Styles and interpretations vary from the literal to the re-imagining of certain poems. Several of the Galician poets expressed willingness to having their poems freely explored in

these versions. Therefore, in some instances, literalism is not necessarily to the fore. It remains one of the essential questions whenever translation is in the air: how should it be done—an attempt at a literal transposition, an attempt to capture the *spirit* of the poem, regardless what gymnastics of language and phrasing, or is it a bit like making a dog stand on its hind legs? In other words, can it be done at all?

As so often in translation, it remains a matter of discernment, personal approach and—sometimes—political strategy (conscious and unconscious) on the translator's part. The translator needs, ideally, to find some sense of the originator's identity with which s/he can uncover a linguistic resonance in the host language. There is also, then, the matter of cultural identity itself, and the translator's understanding of it. As Prof. Michael Cronin, Director of the Centre for Translation and Textual Studies at Dublin City University, remarks in the opening page of his work *Translation and Identity* (Routledge, 2006), "identity is one of the most important political and cultural issues of our time", and in this context he examines the manner in which translation has played a critical role in shaping discourse "around identity, language and cultural survival in the past and in the present".

With this in mind, this anthology hopes to contribute to the further shaping of such discourse, given the commonality of socio-cultural and to some degree, political histories, shared by Ireland and Galicia. It is hoped that in Galicia the work of the Irish poets will be seen as a reciprocation, an unequivocal answering-call to the sometimes visionary work of our sister-poets further down the Atlantic seaboard, as they too wrestle with diverse challenges—each to her own time—and that finally it can be said that in literary terms a two-way channel between our cultures has been forged.

My thanks to the Galician poets who contributed poems to the project. Without them nothing would have happened. Thanks and admiration also to the Irish poets who engaged with them, sometimes for months on end, who have lived with the poems and made decisions regarding best choices, line-

breaks, punctuation, interpretation, revising them often, deeply involved in an enterprise the aim of which throughout has been to do justice to the poems made by the women of Galicia.

In a time when the local and the global are so often interchangeable as concepts, when cosmopolitanism can be viewed as surging uprootedness instead of something which indicates evolving *exchange* and *mutual dialogue*, it seems vital now to make steps towards the latter brand of cosmopolitanism, remembering what it has emerged from in this case—two histories of struggle, two histories almost assimilated by greater, eloquent cultures that communicate in what are decisively termed *world* languages (meaning incontestable language presence).

Thanks to the advances of technology, the world may be a village as a village is the world, but that does not automatically signify an absence of connectedness. On the contrary, we find ourselves in the contemporary world at a nexus of heightened awareness of what is *other* and *same* and the ability to recognise both, in this instance especially, in the inter-webbing of the cultures of Galicia and Ireland.

MARY O'DONNELL
Dublin 2010

Galician Women Poets Today: Moving from Strength to Strength

by MANUELA PALACIOS

In the last three decades, Galician literature has experienced a radical transformation which has undoubtedly benefited from the cultural and linguistic policies furthered by the 1981 Galician Statute of Autonomy. Fran Alonso, assistant director of Edicións Xerais, provides us with some revealing figures: “the total of 68 titles published in Galician and Castilian in 1975 rises to 1,665 books published in the Galician language in 2006” (2010: 37). At present, when we speak of Galician literature, we usually mean writing in the Galician language, since a majority of Galician writers have chosen the vernacular as their means of artistic expression. The conspicuous growth of the publishing industry has certainly been favoured by the economic prosperity of recent decades, which has allowed some substantial public funding for the advancement of Galician culture.

In this dynamic cultural context, poetry has been a cherished genre, in part because of its roots in the prestigious Galician-Portuguese secular and religious lyric which reached its zenith in the thirteenth century—the *Cantigas* that Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill relishes in her poem “Ceol” (1999). The Galician literary revival in the second half of the nineteenth century had a woman poet as its figurehead, Rosalía de Castro (1837-1885), who—for better or worse—has been appropriated as an icon of national identity. As the poet Chus Pato suggests, Galician women poets today need to renegotiate their pact with this literary foremother on new conditions that may let the daughters breathe (2008b: 128).

Since Rosalía's times, other women writers have worked vigorously for the advance of Galician poetry, and this anthology includes writers such as Luz Pozo Garza, María do Carme Kruckenberg and Xohana Torres, who began publishing in the 1950s—in the extremely hostile conditions of General Franco's dictatorship. A second wave of writers, influenced to various degrees by feminist discourses, the struggle for democracy and Galician national identity in the 1970s, is also represented in this anthology by Marilar Aleixandre, Luz Pichel, Chus Pato and Ana Romaní—even if, interestingly enough, many of these writers did not start publishing book-length collections until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Finally, a younger generation of women poets has elbowed its way into the literary establishment, while their poetry calls into question deep-rooted assumptions about national literature, literary tradition and women's writing. María do Cebreiro, María Lado and Xiana Arias are three among this prolific group of emerging writers. It is our good fortune that these three generations often work side by side, inspire one another and join forces to advance the presence of women in the public sphere of literature.

Luz Pozo Garza's poems, from her collection *As arpas de Iwerddon* [The Harps of Iwerddon] (2005), bear witness to the vitality of Celticism in contemporary poetry. The *Lebor Gabála Éren* or *Book of Invasions of Ireland* suggests a possible connection between Galicia and Ireland through the myth of the sons of Mil and their poet Amergin—the great-grandson of Breogán, the mythical father of the Galician nation. However, Luz Pozo Garza shifts the stress from the account of the invasion to that of the amorous fusion between the mother's Galician culture and the daughter's adopted Irish traditions. Very much like Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Pozo has past myths inform the daily reality of the modern world in verse that proceeds with the grace and poise of a classic writer.

María do Carme Kruckenberg's poems from her two collections *As complexas mareas da noite* [The Complex Tides of the Night] (2006) and *Os límites do arreuizo* [Shiver's Limits] (2008) entwine critical scrutiny of the present with memories of a life lived to the full. Like Anne Hartigan's poetry,

Kruckenberg's vindicates love and pleasure, but she does so from a sober stance which simultaneously explores the tensions between lexicon and rhythm.

Our triad of doyennes of Galician poetry is completed with Xohana Torres, whose poetry resounds in that of many contemporaries; such is her mastery. Torres' Penelope, in the eponymous poem, refuses the domestic and expectant role ascribed to her in Homer's *Odyssey* and claims the ocean as the metaphorical space into which women must venture. It comes as no surprise, then, that many Galician and Irish women writers are intent on postulating new odysseys, as Celia de Fréine's *imram/odyssey* (2010) also attests. Apart from rewriting Western literary classics, Torres' collections *Estacións ao mar* [Seasons to the Sea] (1980) and *Tempo de ría* [Estuary Time] (1992) delve into those spaces and people that once acted as havens of innocence, though the sense of loss is always kept in check by the poet's sophisticated craft.

Marilar Aleixandre's poems from *Catálogo de velenos* [Catalogue of Poisons] (1999) and *Desmentindo a primavera* [Denying Spring] (2003) elaborate on the struggle between patriarchal injunctions and expectations—even if these are sometimes perpetuated by women themselves—and a young woman's craving for freedom. The undisguised affection and admiration felt for the father and mother figures collides with the lyric subject's necessity to live life according to her own convictions. From *Abecedario de árbores* [ABC of Trees] (2006), "luis" revels in those Celtic legends which continue to inspire Galician poetry and strengthen the ties between Galicia and Ireland, while her most recent collection *Mudanzas* [Shiftings] (2007) rewrites Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by purveying a much-needed woman-centred gaze.

Luz Pichel, a member of the Galician diaspora in Madrid, has written both in Spanish and Galician, and her poetic interests range from present-day metropolitan life to memories of a rural childhood. *Casa pechada* [Locked House] (2006) invests the rural world with a surrealist perspective that is not uncommon in either Galician or Irish folk culture. There is no room for the picturesque in this poetry which constitutes a truthful reconstruction not only of the pain and hardships but also of the

pleasures and affections experienced in childhood, as they are remembered by a woman who returns to her village in order to lock up her parents' house for good. Each of Pichel's poems defies predictability and unsettles our preconceptions about country life.

Chus Pato is a notable representative of the engaged poet, as she is deeply committed to critique capitalist commodification of language, literature and human life in general. Although her book *m-Talá* (2000) calls into question the transparency of language and poets' capacity to convey their messages—thereby demanding a very participative reader—Pato's writing perseveres in the defence of justice. She tests the limits of what can be said in poetry by challenging genre boundaries and defamiliarising the reading process in an act of resistance to literary conventions that domesticate our intellect. In *Hordas de escritura* [Hordes of Writing] (2008a), Pato deploys a multiplicity of voices from different contexts and times, thus showing that poetry equals excess. Rather than fit the world into the poem, she has it erupt from the lines like lava.

Ana Romani's collection *Love me tender. 24 pezas mínimas para unha caixa de música* [24 Minimal Pieces for a Music Box] (2005) has its genesis in a piece of journal news: between 30% and 50% of women in the world are beaten and humiliated by their male partners. These poems expose the traps of that kind of amorous discourse which relies on possessiveness, dominance, control, poor self-esteem and submission; that is to say, what Maurice Harmon very aptly calls "love's ferocious intricacy" in his poem "The Winding Stair" (2008). In contrast with this, Romani's other poems from *Arden* [Blazing] (1998) put forward some empowering and self-assertive feminine models such as those conjured up by awesome and adventurous whales.

The poems by María do Cebreiro included in this anthology give us a fair idea of the wide range of forms and themes that this young poet has already covered. Her first collection, *o estadio do espello* [The Mirror Stage] (1998) starts what will become, in her poetry, a recurrent concern with the creative process, poetic inspiration, the speaking voice, the reader's expectations and literary tradition. *Non queres que o poema te coñeza* [You Don't Want the Poem to Know You] (2004)

playfully hides the lyric "I" in a mesh of references to other writers such as, among others, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and Seamus Heaney. This self-effacing process culminates in the dramatic poems from *Os Hemisferios* [The Hemispheres] (2006), which eclipse the authorial voice and represent the characters' tenacious gropings for communication no matter how elusive the latter may turn out to be.

María Lado has won her readers' favour with her appealing performances—a characteristic she shares with her translator in this anthology, Máighréad Medbh—and her experimentation with audiovisual technology. Her poetry spans from an apparent childlike gaze in *casa atlántica, casa cabaret* [atlantic house, cabaret house] (2001) and a deliberate fantasy of idealised love in *berlín* (2005) to the bitter dystopia of *nove* [nine] (2008), a collection marked by the traumatic oil spillage of the tanker Prestige in November 2002 off the Galician coast. Much more formidable than the hostile sea which swallows fishermen and ships or the island that imprisons its inhabitants is the islanders' incapacity to remember. It is for this reason that Lado closes her collection *nove* with a reference to the Prestige oil spillage: so that readers may not forget.

Xiana Arias closes this anthology with poems that sting and accuse us. Her collection *Ortigas* [Stinging Nettles] (2007) denounces violence against women in all its modalities, child abuse, and the marginalisation of disempowered groups with verse that is itself wounded. *Acusación* [Accusation] (2009) interpellates our conscience—often full of good intentions—for our inability to take action, and does so with lucid lines not exempt from acrimonious humour. One perceives in the characters that inhabit these poems a yearning to escape from claustrophobic spaces and oppressive social structures, although they are often too knocked about by life to find the exit.

The writers in this collection display heterogeneous aesthetic approaches and interests, they belong to different generations and have gone through unlike life experiences, though they have one thing in common: their determination to play an active role in the advancement and remodelling of a poetic tradition that cannot afford to do without women's voices. Our anthology wishes to recognise the contribution

made by Galician women writers—those who are represented here and many others who would deserve to be—towards the consolidation of Galician-language poetry. This, borrowing Xiana Arias's phrasing in her last poem, may not be *feminine* literature, but it is indeed the writing of women who “score the asphalt with their toenails”.

MANUELA PALACIOS
Santiago de Compostela, 2010

WORKS CITED

- Aleixandre, Marilar (1999) *Catálogo de venenos*. Ferrol: Sociedad de Cultura Valle-Inclán/ Fundación Caixa Galicia.
- (2003) *Desmentindo a primavera*. Vigo: Xerais.
- (2006) *Abecedario de árbores*. Santiago: Concellaría de Cultura, Concello de Santiago/ Editorial Compostela S.A.
- (2007) *Mudanzas*. Santiago: P.E.N. Clube de Galicia/ Editorial Danú.
- Alonso, Fran (2010) “Women, Poetry, and Publishing”. *Creation, Publishing, and Criticism. The Advance of Women's Writing*. Eds. María Xesús Nogueira, Laura Lojo and Manuela Palacios. New York: Peter Lang. 35-39.
- Arias, Xiana (2007) *Ortigas*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior.
- (2009) *Acusación*. Vigo: Galaxia.
- De Fréine, Celia (2010) *imram/odyssey*. Gaillimh: Arlen House.
- Harmon, Maurice (2008) “The Winding Stair”. *The Mischievous Boy and Other Poems*. Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare: Salmon Publishing. 33.
- Kruckenber, María do Carme (2006) *As complexas mareas da noite*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior.
- (2008) *Os límites do arreuizo*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior.
- Lado, María (2001) *casa atlántica, casa cabaret*. Vigo: Xerais.
- (2005) *berlín*. Santiago: Concellaría de Cultura, Concello de Santiago/ Editorial Compostela S.A.
- (2008) *nove*. A Estrada: Edicións Fervenza.
- María do Cebreiro (1998) *o estadio do espello*. Vigo: Xerais.

- (2004) *Non queres que o poema te coñeza*. Santiago: P.E.N. Clube de Galicia/Editorial Danú.
- (2006) *Os Hemisferios*. Vigo: Galaxia.
- Ní Dhomhnaill, Nuala (1999) “Ceol”. *The Water Horse*. Oldcastle: The Gallery Press. 90.
- Pato, Chus (2000) *m-Talá*. Vigo: Xerais.
- (2008a) *Hordas de escritura*. Vigo: Xerais.
- (2008b) Interview with María Xesús Nogueira in “Los signos de la diferencia. Entrevistas con las poetas Chus Pato y Ana Romani”. *Palabras extremas: Escritoras gallegas e irlandesas de hoy*. Eds. Manuela Palacios and Helena González. A Coruña: Netbiblo. 127-139.
- Pichel, Luz (2006) *Casa pechada*. Ferrol: Sociedad de Cultura Valle Inclán/ Fundación Caixa Galicia.
- Pozo Garza, Luz (2005) *As arpas de Iwerddon*. Ourense: Linteo.
- Romani, Ana (1998) *Arden*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior.
- (2005) *Love me tender. 24 pezas mínimas para unha caixa de música*. Santiago: Concellaría de Cultura, Concello de Santiago/ Editorial Compostela S.A.
- Torres, Xohana (1980) *Estacións ao mar*. Vigo: Galaxia.
- (1992) *Tempo de ría*. A Coruña: Espiral Maior.