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EDITORS' NOTE

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Editors' Note

Richard Parker & Francisca Folch

Dear Readers,

This special issue of *ESLA* came about as a result of the V Jornada de Literatura en Inglés which had as its main topic Poetry and Performance and was hosted by Letras UC in January 2022. The conference was held online and brought together two clusters of actively experimental poets based in the UK and Chile. The British poets we include in this issue are loosely connected to the London-centred maelstrom of poetic innovation that grew out of the British Poetry Revival in the 1990s and 2000s, expanding as an informal alternative to the more codified experimentalisms of poetic schools such as Cambridge, initially under the auspices of committed performance poets like Bob Cobbing and institutions such as the London branch of Writers Forum and working from British and American poetry and performance traditions. More recently the Crossing the Line poetry series, lately organised by Jeff Hilson, has sprung up alongside Writers Forum and provided a collegial venue in London for the encouragement and dispersal of numerous approaches towards poetic experimentation. Heterogeneity is the most consistent element of the various poetics that have emanated from these sources, but an interest in the material, performative, sonic and visual

elements of poetry—those parts that extend the poem beyond the page—is shared throughout much of the work associated with these poets. This interest and faith in the ability of the poem to be more than a linguistic construct lies behind all the work that we have brought together here and qualifies it for study under the rubric of “performance”.

The French-born, London-based poet Iris Colomb, who contributes poetry and an explanatory essay here, is an active contributor to London’s experimental poetry scene—an event organiser in the mould of Cobbing and Hilson and an uncompromising experimenter whose work draws from performative, conceptual and minimalist traditions. Her work here offers a glimpse of some of the more extreme possibilities countenanced by the broadly-conceived definition of performance poetry that we’re working from here.

The experimental node extends beyond London, of course. Scott Thurston is Professor of Poetry and Innovative Creative Practice at the University of Salford and a one-time organiser of the Manchester experimentalist collective The Other Room, a project that brought a series of important northern writers into connection with wider networks. Thurston provides an explanatory essay and videos of his dance poetry practice, which brings physical performance to the forefront and insists on the presence of the body in the poem.

Nia Davies, previously the editor of the important poetry journal Poetry Wales, is based in Wales and works on the intersection between poetry and ritual. Her essay and recorded talk offer an insight into the performative poetics of Maggie O’Sullivan, a poet, visual artist and performer, previously associated with the London scene who is now based in Hebden Bridge.

The Catalan poet Jessica Pujol Duran, who wrote for some time from London and the midst of Crossing the Line experimentalism, and who is now working in Santiago de Chile, addresses the idea of translation as performance in an essay that brings together three translators and three source texts: Tim Atkins’s stunning reimagination of Petrarch, William Rowe and Helen Dimos’s ground-breaking gloss-translation of Peruvian poet Cesar Vallejo and Caroline Bergvall’s challenging approach towards Dante.

Pujol Duran’s contribution signals a bridging of the activities of the preceding UK-based

writers with Chilean writers working from a different, though connected, tradition. Writers Forum has had a Chilean branch running in parallel to since the early 2000s, providing a loose network of experimentalists the opportunity to connect around innovative ideas and practices in Santiago. It is from this international connection that the Chilean writers Felipe Cussen and Martin Bakero's Language is à Virus sound-poetry orientated virtual reading series emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. In their essay here Cussen and Bakero describe the incredible internationalism of a project that took full advantage of the changes in reading, performing, consumption and connection of poetry through that period.

Among the many outstanding performance and sound poetry projects shared through Language is à Virus is the New York poet and "lingualisualist" Edwin Torres, who provides a recording of a sound and visual poetry performance here. Edward Gonzalez, a Cuban-American poet who also spent time in the New York spoken word milieu that Torres riffs off and is now a successful spoken word performer based in Santiago, provides an essay of his experience of working with spoken word poetry and performance.

We would like to thank the whole *ESLA* team, especially Allison Ramay and Andrea Casals for guiding us so expertly on this experimental poetic journey. Many thanks as well to Francisca Fernández, Tamara Cubillos, and Catalina Salvatierra for their invaluable work on this issue.

Richard Parker

Francisca Folch

Guest Editors