



English Studies in Latin America

“Through Cut Glass”
“One Is Not An Alien Number”
“Not Far, Yet Wide”
“Grateful Among The Living”
“Tales From An Iron Climate”

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Peggy Aylsworth¹

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Through Cut Glass

This low-lying city wraps
its feet in gray, relying on the
ocean
for its blue and blond. Does this
moist remembrance, air, defend
the stars, the planets, guilty as
moons?

To decide on the grounding of
green,
much obliged to the insistence of
sun,
is to reside in an infinite summer,
a fake winter. Snow lives indoors,
melting what is left, a residue of
strings.

She had poured her few regrets
into a bowl of thin-skinned pears.
The bowl, cut glass, required the
chandelier. Night burns
its own dead wood. Her eyes

have learned to love veined rocks.
Nothing exists alone, she thought,
though the farthest room seems empty.
Even syllables have adjacencies.
Next door a new born cries.

Pages, bound with measured string,
disappear into rioting horses.
In the day's surround, she cannot
answer her lover's request,
under the heavy weight of no.

One Is Not An Alien Number

I collect dry leaves, bent twigs.
In blue vases, I put them at my
kitchen window, each afloat in its aloneness.

A coral branch insistently invades
the balcony. Red candles crowd
the fern, the palm, begging for communion.

And yet, a stillness holds, without a need
to gather, singular, but knitted
to the April air. Once I flew,

a Bohemian waxwing. The solitary
moon eclipsed my shadow as it fell
to arctic desolation. Within the city's

sturm I carried fullness at the curb,
gave all except my subway fare
to the old woman selling pears.

Not Far, Yet Wide

The sky bends with the hawk.
After the seldom rain, the room
swung open. You answer,
your words like water.

My hair is not the color
of night, but the moon leaves
its temporary light on the doorstep.
Dust falls into the arbitrary clock.

What has been in the making
bears its etching, engraved
in stone. Turn off the television.
The room has room, has blend.

You open the book. The silence
carries an expanse, as from
a country rife with laurel.
You find shelter in a bare shoulder.

And then, the ocean, that wedge
from the window, the sheen,
the partial (as we are). Your look
rests on the curve of my cheek.

Grateful Among The Living

She brought white cyclamen planted
in a black ceramic pot.
Japanese, she said.
Far away small splendors relieve the mind,
too held
by the nearness
of regret.
I stumble through these latter days,
the sidewalk
still warm through my leather soles.
No longer
a matter of how far,
just the eye able to glimpse
a yellow wing.
Instead of a name, no more
than signal,
this constancy, as in your love, as in expanded air.
Only pity
the poor brain glutted with the weight
of forgetting,
or worse, the what-else-is news
report,
someone, down the street or in Mozambique
is screaming.

Tales From An Iron Climate

That he disappeared from Chile was
conjecture, yet the vacant rooms,
the vacant rooms.

Hard to imagine
how a man with no arms could turn a page.
It is said he wrote and painted after
his plunge, the icy water reminding
him of land.

Two women, twins,
composed no more poetry, once the tale
was told: a flyer poet's knife stifled
their breath.

I tell you it is interdigital, crossed lines
and deaths in an iron climate. Streets
grow narrow. Whispers spread
assumptions. Shutters close.