

SINFONÍA EN GRIS MAYOR

El mar como un vasto cristal azogado
refleja la lámina de un cielo de zinc;
lejanas bandadas de pájaros manchan
el fondo bruñido de pálido gris.

El sol como un vidrio redondo y opaco
con paso de enfermo camina al cenit;
el viento marino descansa en la sombra
teniendo de almohada su negro clarín.

Las ondas que mueven su vientre de plomo
debajo del muelle parecen gemir.
Sentado en un cable, fumando su pipa
está un marinero pensando en las playas
de un vago, lejano, brumoso país.

Es viejo ese lobo. Tostaron su cara
los rayos de fuego del sol del Brasil;
los recios tifones del mar de la China
le han visto bebiendo su frasco de gin.

La espuma impregnada de yodo y salitre
ha tiempo conoce su roja nariz,
sus crespos cabellos, sus biceps de atleta,
su gorra de lona, su blusa de dril.

En medio de humo que forma el tabaco
ve el viejo el lejano, brumoso país,
adonde una tarde caliente y dorada
tendidas las velas partió el bergantín...

La siesta del trópico. El lobo se duerme.
Ya todo lo envuelve la gama del gris.
Parece que un suave y enorme esfumino
del curvo horizonte borrara el confín.

La siesta del trópico. La vieja cigarra
ensaya su ronca guitarra senil,
y el grillo preludia un solo monótono
en la única cuerda que está en su violín.

SYMPHONY IN GREY MAJOR

The sea, like a vast quicksilver mirror,
reflects the zinc sky's metal sheen;
remote flocks of birds bruise the
polished background of palest grey.

The sun, like a window-pane, rounded and dark,
climbs to the zenith at a sick man's pace.
The sea wind rests in the shadows with
its black trumpet as a pillow.

Heaving their leaden bellies,
the waves seem to moan beneath the wharf.
Sitting on a cable, smoking his pipe,
is a sailor, dreaming of the beaches
of a vague, distant, misty land.

This old man is a sea dog. His face was scorched
by the fiery beams of Brazilian suns;
the fierce typhoons of the China seas
have seen him drinking his bottle of gin.

The sea-froth, tinged with saltpetre and iodine, is an
old companion of his reddened nose,
his crisp hair, his athlete's biceps,
his canvas cap, his cotton-drill blouse.

In his tobacco's rising smoke-cloud,
he sees the distant misty land,
from where one warm golden evening departed his
brigantine with all sails set...

Siesta time of the tropics. The sea dog falls asleep.
A range of greys envelops the place;
the horizon's curve has vanished
as if an enormous charcoal had smudged it away.

Siesta time of the tropics. The old cicada
tries out its hoarse and ancient guitar,
and the cricket strikes up a monotonous solo
on the single string of its violin.

Rubén Darío

(Translated by Salvador Ortiz-Carboneres and Sue
Rasmussen.)