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Anna Montero



They Have Said ...

Anna Montero is from Valencia, both by origin and adoption. Montero's poetry is an inquiry into silence, in which she reveals the impossibility of capturing the instant

beyond one's own verbal experience, which is the poem itself. With a minimal use of elements her poetry is maximally suggestive, for in the silence we intuit the presence of lost voices and in absence we comprehend the futility of the fact that what was once present for us now occupies a void.

Anna Montero's poetry never reflects the unbridled wildness of a storm. Her poems are serene acceptance of the voracity of an element that is common to flotsam lying on the beach and the words with which the poet tries to cling to quietude: the inexorable passing of time. I admit that, in this regard, I should have liked to find more moments of expansion, some crack through which the inner convulsion might emerge without all the symbology-stripped containing dykes over which Montero constructs her work, the code that if, on the one hand, it confers her own distinctive voice -in good part characterised by her search for the purifying chisel of silence- on the other, it becomes a gag that only permits the fizzing depths to be intuited. Like the calm of the sea that in a few days will see to it that everything is returned to its place. I speak of inner convulsion because the signs are there, for example -and this is a crucial theme- the passing of time which, throughout *Serenitat de cercles* leaves its traces behind. These, however, are traces that are fossilised, where contemplation and reflection, have been detained, where the process of erosion that polishes forms has done its work until coming to a tacit recognition of being part of the hours that do not stop.

Going beyond mere appearances or the surface of things is one of the main aims of the book, one of the key matters with which Montero must come to grips in her inner periplus: "to know the close water under the rock. to feel the presence of the sap in the heart of the tree". This means expanding our apprehension of the world from a level of introspection that should lead us to feel kinship with Anna Montero's poetry and her conception of writing and also, perhaps, of life, from the standpoint of oriental teachings more or less close to a Zen perspective. [It is her] intention to recompose the world from an awareness of a dual reality: one that appears to the external senses -a mountain peak, the motionless horizon of the sea- and the other, the underlying one -subterranean rivers, the quiet chafing of shells at the bottom of the ocean.

Appropriating the past is another of the zenithal points where the venture of introspection brings lucidity that goes beyond a murky surface ("day by day / in the mirror there slips away / a root going deeper than time, / a secret of furtive water / that the darkness was hiding"), and this lucidity must come motivated precisely by liberation *vis-à-vis* temporal conventions, in order to reach the exact centre of the circle, the zero point, the umbilical connection at the end of which a life begins.

Maria Josep Escrivà, "Tot és on ha de ser" (Everything Is Where It Must Be"), *Caràcters*, (second phase), N^o. 30 (January 2005)

There is, in Anna Montero's poetry, a primary, primitive, essential, tactile, "earthy" (in the positive

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sense of the word) vitality, that bears some relation with Miquel Gil's way of being and speaking. It is precisely this essence, that we can scent in the lines of the poem "S'amaga" (Is Is Hidden), and that we joyfully pick up in the voice of the singer-songwriter as well. It is an essence that makes its presence felt as a distinctive feature that bestows singularity and poetic "personality" on Anna Montero's literary project: and this is repeated as her "trademark" fable, as a syndrome of beauty in every one of her poems.

[...] *Serenitat de cercles* is yet another demonstration of the *savoir faire*, of Anna Montero, who has slowly made a name for herself as one of our poets and one who should be kept very much in mind. Anna Montero's poetry is at once sensual and scathing. This is the premise and power of her poetry. Underlying the abundant flow of her verses, there is an endless current that imbibes of the essence of things, a primordial and telluric force that takes us back to the first word: a horizon of essential words, the vital and precious sap that lies beneath the bark.

Juli Capilla, "Versos sota l'escorça" (Verses beneath the Bark), *Levante* (22/4/2005)

Besides her considerable body of work as a translator, Anna Montero, also writes poetry. In 1983 she published the collection *Polsim de lluna* (*Moonspray*), which was followed in 1988 by *Arbres de l'exili* and a chapbook with three poems: *Traç 45* (*Line 45*) (1990). She has just published a new collection, *La meitat fosca* (*The Dark Half*) -the title being taken from two lines of Valéry that constitute the title quote of the book- and this work is a rigorous and interesting Valencian contribution to Catalan poetry.

At first sight, *La meitat fosca* would seem to be a continuance of her previous collections. We find, for example, the tendency to write short poems and a refined, bare-essence lyricism: "lyrical minimalism" [?]. I believe, however, that these new poems reveal an effort to go beyond the earlier *oeuvre*. In *Arbres de l'exili*, for example, we frequently find a kind of discourse that is enlivened by a dramatic movement within which some personal adventure is expressed. This essential dynamism is no longer to be found in *La meitat fosca* [...]. We hear a purer poetic voice, one that states its emotions in highly stylised, quintessential and simple language (with deliberate repetitions of words in a single poem). The desire for abstraction, nonetheless, we find in a more accentuated form in "Presagis" (Portents), which adopts a generally impersonal standpoint. These poems are like small crystallisations of a unique, unrepeatabe, silent moment, like "illuminations" in the darkness. [?] Everything, in the end, boils down to language.

Josep Iborra, "La llum i l'ombra" (Light and Shade), *El Temps*, N^o. 547 (12/12/1994)

Anna Montero (Logronyo, 1954) writes brief poems speaking of love, poetry and dreaming, always with an existential edge that reflects anguish at the senselessness and emptiness of the world. *Polsim de lluna* (1983) manifests this *Weltanschauung* in stark, image-laden language: "I shall hang out tonight / on the balcony clothes and stars. / The moon will dry the dreams". *Arbres de l'exili* (1988) presents the "nameless journey" where nature, memory and time converge and where the fleetingness of things also implies the desire to live intensely because, later, absence will be imposed again ("nothing remains but the frost / of desire"). Poetry becomes the means of forging another dream while the perfect, essential word implies a meditation on love, existence and language.

Ferran Carbó, "La poesia" (Poetry), *Literatura actual al País Valencià*, N^o. 547 (12/12/1994)

[In *Arbres de l'exili*] Anna Montero seems to have found the right track for her forms and spare, suggestive language that aspires to condense the world.

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This world [...] is based on the obligatory solitude of the poet, writing as internal exile wrapped in shadows it has known, in attributes that have led to a particular precise and intimate standpoint which, on its outer face, has what makes of the human being "country / ? /for exile" when she wants to spread her gaze in reflection and to go deeper into the ultimate reasons of existence. [...]

The roots of Anna Montero's poetry should, perhaps, be sought in some French poets, Jaccottet, Bonnefoy, in the spatial sense of a Paul Valéry [...], or perhaps in the voracious search for the ideal word of a Jorge Guillén, or Carles Riba, and this is not to overlook a certain community of interests with some books of Eugenio de Andrade.

This is a line within which Anna Montero locates herself in her unhurried quest for a way to define life, desires, the happiness of the being that stops and strives to understand everything that remains since a beginning.

Xulio Ricardo Trigo, "Jardí essencial" (Essential Garden), *El Temps*, N^o. 217 (15/8/1988)

Anna Montero had published *Polsim de lluna*; this was a book of splintered syntax and forceful images that didn't make it easy to predict where her future might be going. Later, her translations of Baudelaire with Vicent Alonso indicated, at least, that her interests were moving closer to the best model. Now, without surprises, she clarifies any possible conjectures. [In *Arbres de l'exili*] Montero has opted for simple diction, the fractured poem of immediate, isolated images that may imply a highly tenuous comparison with amorous or -even more occasionally- moral life.

Francesc Parcerisas, "La tímidesa" (Timidity), *El País. Quadern* (27/10/1988)

Anna Montero has published her fifth book of poems, *Serenitat de cercles* (Proa), a work of great intellectual, human and artistic maturity. Montero's new collection is very subtle because the discrete and effective lyrical tone that pervades the book skilfully masks the demanding intellectual process that is operating at deep levels throughout the four parts of the collection. In fact, this work reconstructs the poet's extraordinary journey to maturity, which she wholly achieves in the last part of the book.

Sam Abrams, "L'esclat de verds" (The Lustre of Greens), *Caràcters*, N^o. 32 (June 2005)

No less personal is Anna Montero who, from love and maternity, in *La meitat fosca*, embarks upon a subtle inquiry into the creative power of the word. Dextrous in her handling of the brief verse, Montero calls up the lyricism of interwoven echoes that, in its reticence, tempts poetics from silence, while also resting upon the law of fruitful associations. She gives a name and she creates, like the power that she invokes.

Enric Sòria, "Poesia valenciana: una eclosió precària" (Valencian Poetry: a Precarious Eclosion), *Escola catalana*, N^o. 323 (October 1995)

What is so striking in *Com si tornés d'enlloc* is the effect that is rawly installed in the poet's emotional nature and, even more than that, the emotion that perforce remains with the reader. Anna Montero knows that words are (precious) stones, for populating absence, incorruptible witnesses of a time. She lovingly polishes them, taking her time, being careful not to damage not so much what they exhibit as the mystery they conceal.

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Maria Josep Escrivà, "L'hàbil commoció de la nostàlgia" (The Adroit Upheaval of Nostalgia), *Caràcters* (second phase), N^o. 9 (April 1999)

Anna Montero's highly refined, insinuating poetry of tenuous tone and delicate ambience gains in intensity with each new publication, as is evident with *Com si tornés d'enlloc*, where she speaks of nostalgia, absences, the void and memory as vital sustenance.

Francesc Calafat, "En el nom de la poesia (Notícia de la poesia de l'any 1999)" (In the Name of Poetry (Poetry News for 1999)), *Caràcters* (second phase), N^o. 11 (April 2000)

A selection of texts

Text



WEB: Poesia catalana d'ahir i d'avui

L'escriptora Anna Montero a La il·lustració poètica metropolitana & continental.
<http://perso.wanadoo.es/lipmic/Poecat/montero.htm>



WEB: Per llegir a internet

Alguns poemes del llibre *Arbres de l'exili*.
<http://www.uv.es/~dones/CARME/poeanna.htm>



WEB: "Autoretrat" i altres poemes

Extrets de *Com si tornés d'enlloc*, *Jardins de Samarcanda* i *Serenitat de cercles*. A The Barcelona Review, núm. 29 (març-abril 2002).
http://www.barcelonareview.com/29/c_am.htm



WEB: Al Daltabaix Poètic!

Tres poemes de l'autora en aquest web de poesia que acull poetes de tendències ben diferents.
<http://www.sant-cugat.net/daltabaix/montero.htm>



WEB: Bibliografia i poemes

El web del Festival de Poesia de Sant Cugat recull els títols publicat per Montero i una selecció de poemes.
<http://ilma.orgfree.com/poesiasantcugat/Montero.htm>



WEB: Catalan Poetry Yesterday and Today

The writer Anna Montero in La Il·lustració Poètica Metropolitana & Continental.
<http://perso.wanadoo.es/lipmic/Poecat/montero.htm>



WEB: To Read on Internet

Some poems from the book *Arbres de l'exili* [Trees of Exile].
<http://www.uv.es/~dones/CARME/poeanna.htm>



WEB: "Autoretrat i altres poemes" (Self-portrait and Other Poems)

Taken from *Com si tornés d'enlloc* [As If You Came back from Nowhere], *Jardins de Samarcanda*

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http://www.barcelonareview.com/29/c_am.htm



WEB: Anna Montero in Daltabaix Poètic!

Three poems by Anna Montero offered by this independent poetry website.

<http://www.sant-cugat.net/daltabaix/montero.htm>



WEB: Poetry in Sant Cugat

Bibliography and a range of her poems.

<http://ilma.orgfree.com/poesiasantcugat/Montero.htm>

Bio-bibliography

Biography



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WEB: Fitxa al "Qui és qui a les lletres catalanes"

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WEB: Anna Montero a Literatura valenciana actual

Fitxa dedicada a l'autora en aquest web de la Universitat d'Alacant.

<http://www.iifv.ua.es/lletraferit/consultes/veureAutor.asp?pld=69>



WEB: The author in the Who's Who of Catalan Literature

<http://cultura.gencat.net/ilc/qqq/fitxaAutorsuk.asp?nom1=montero&nom2=&cercauk2=Search&quinfo rm=form1&NRegistre=&idregistre=2325>

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WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques universitàries catalanes (CCUC)

http://ccuc.cbuc.cat/search*cat/a?SEARCH=Montero+Anna&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=23



WEB: Què hi ha a les biblioteques públiques

<http://argus.biblioteques.gencat.cat/iii/encore/search/C|SMontero+Anna|Orightresult|U1?lang=cat&site=pearl>

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WEB: Per comprar-ne llibres

<http://www.llibres.cat/ca/detall-autor/montero-anna>



WEB: Articles de l'autora (Traces)

<http://traces.uab.cat/search?f=author&p=Montero%20Anna&sc=1&ln=ca>



WEB: Articles sobre l'autora (Traces)

http://traces.uab.cat/search?ln=ca&p=Montero%2C+Anna&f=keyword&action_search=Cerca&c=Traces+%3A+base+dades+de+llengua+i+literatura+catalanes&sf=&so=d&rm=&rg=10&sc=1&of=hb



WEB: Works in the Biblioteca de Catalunya

http://cataleg.bnc.cat/search*eng/?searchtype=a&searcharg=Montero+Anna&sortdropdown=-&searchscope=13&searchscope2=13&SORT=D



WEB: The author in The European Library

<http://search.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/en/search/%28%22creator%22+all+%22montero+anna%22%29.query>



WEB: The author in the Congress Library (US)

<http://catalog.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>



WEB: The author in the COPAC Catalogue (UK)

<http://copac.ac.uk/search?&au=Anna+Montero>

Comments on the author

Comments



PDF: "Aigua furtiva"

Susanna Rafart comenta *Serenitat de cercles* a l'*Avui* (16/22/04).
<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av03516.pdf>



PDF: "Aigua furtiva" (Furtive Water)

Susanna Rafart discusses *Serenitat de cercles* in *Avui* (16/12/04).
<http://www.traces.uab.es/tracesbd/avui/av03516.pdf>
