

simbólicas; en «Presencia del abuelo» la pertinaz memoria del abuelo Inocencio para recordar un pasado truncado por la guerra; y, por último, en «El hoyuelo» el recuerdo de unos hechos sucedidos en el curso 1967-68, exentos de toda gloria política y caracterizados por la timidez juvenil. Como correlato de los grandes acontecimientos históricos, todos estos personajes pertenecen al círculo de hombres y mujeres heridos por la historia y el tiempo personales, por un tiempo que, al estar desposeído de su poder curativo, deja las heridas de juventud expuestas. Asimismo, la historia en relación con el compromiso político se hace evidente en tres cuentos de la colección: «*Art is a gun*» donde se realiza un relato apócrifo de Ernesto «Ché» Guevara; «El mapa de Peters» en el cual se compara la visión del mundo civilizado de dos cartógrafos Gerardo Mercator y Arno Peters; y «La lucha interminable», cuento intertextual puro, en el cual el discurso contestatario y evangélico de San Marcos en el siglo I continúa ininterrumpido hasta nuestros días en las palabras del subcomandante Marcos. En estos tres relatos se pone en evidencia el poder de la representación ya que la autoridad para marginar se construye a través de la palabra y de las imágenes.

A estos personajes creados por Talens determinados por la historia, hay que sumar los atravesados por la muerte: Manuela en «Odisea», besada por su amor de juventud en el ataúd que la lleva al cementerio; Araceli Peiró Cepeda consumida por un cáncer de mama y desatendida por un médico inhumano de la Seguridad Social en «La soledad»; la mujer en la playa asesinada mientras tomaba una sangría en «Sangría»; el terrorista muerto por el drogadicto en el momento de cometer un atentado en «Cazador»; y los guiños de la casualidad al estilo cortazariano en «Destinos cruzados». Con ellos Talens avisa al lector que la muerte no es nada más que un paso más allá en la aventura de la vida, el cual no merece nuestro sufrimiento existencial, como informa el brevísimo relato «Epitafio para caminantes».

En conclusión, con un estilo que conjuga el arte de contar de Antón Chejov con el minimalismo de Raymond Carver, Manuel Talens ha retratado en *Rueda del tiempo* una serie de perdedores, de antihéroes, de individuos heridos por la historia y por el tiempo que hacen reflexionar al lector sobre la dimensión existencial del ser humano.

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CARMEN DE URIOSTE

Salinas, Pedro. *Certain Chance*. Versions and Introduction by David Lee Garrison. Prologue by Pedro Salinas. Reminiscence by Willis Barnstone. Art by David Leach. Lewisburg, Bucknell UP, 2000, 167 pp.

Seguro azar (1929) is almost totally a work of intellect: precise, honed to a minimum number of words, and much more drawn to wit and irony

than to the expression of feeling. With the perspicacity of someone fifty years ahead of his time, Pedro Salinas suggests that in our modern urban lives, traditional humanistic concerns about the eternal mysteries of nature, love and death are being replaced by fascination for newfangled products of technology such as automobiles, electricity and movies. In this world of «cable car and tourism» (131), the sea is no longer a metaphor of the infinite, but simply an opportunity to go sunbathing at the beach. The beauty of a conch shell «will never be/ good for anything» because it is not practical: «People pick her up,/ look at her, then throw her away» (123).

And yet the poet knows that the ancient mysteries of nature still surround us, and the urban world of the new is fully subject to the enigma of being. The lines of the conch shell «sweep unerringly toward/ solution of that riddle/ posed/ at the bottom of the sea» (ibid.). So too, a light bulb turned on at night becomes the embrace of a lover, «Just she and I in the bedroom, lovers/ forever; the docile muse/ who lights up the mass of secrets/from the night outside...» (109). I doubt Salinas ever read Viktor Shklovsky's famous «Art as Technique» (1917), but he is a master at implementing its aesthetic of *ostranenie*, defamiliarization. *Seguro azar* shows how ordinary objects and experiences in daily life—including relatively new ones in 1929 such as taking motor trips or going to the movies—can be transformed poetically so as to appear radically new, no longer banal and ordinary but replete with hidden mystery. Just trust *chance*, he seems to tell us, for it is *certain* to reveal the invisible world of wonder out of which life has been created.

One might think that it would be easy to translate an ordinary language poet who concentrates on the intellectual qualities of everyday life. How difficult can it be to talk about stopping the car for a rest in Navacerrada, just north of Madrid?

Los dos solos. (Qué bien aquí, en el puerto, altos!	Just the two of us. So good to be up here in the mountain pass! (60, 61)
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But it doesn't take long to realize that the scene is a playful dramatic monologue in which the speaker is discussing with his automobile the relationship within modernity between man and machine:

Alma mía en la tuya mecánica; mi fuerza, bien medida, la tuya, justa: doce caballos.	My soul inside your mechanical soul; my force well-measured; yours, exact: twelve horses. (ibid.)
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There is more to this than appears. The allusion to the soul—both of the man and of the car—, the elegant contrast between «well-measured» and «exact», and the ironic reference to horse power subtly capture an uneasy

truce between man and machine that the translator has rendered with an understatement equal to that of Salinas. This is translation at a very high level, and one can only offer the highest praise to David Lee Garrison for the quality of his work.

One characteristic of Salinas's texts is their impersonal style with frequent nominal phrases that impose aesthetic distance at the same time as they achieve concision and ambiguity. It seems almost impossible to capture this in English without sounding disjointed, so Garrison sometimes resorts to pronouns and conjugated verbs where none appear in Spanish. Contrary to what we might have expected, however, he still captures the precise but gentle tone of the original:

Vencido verde, triunfo de los dos,...	Together we have conquered the green, arriving in triumph. (ibid.)
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Or this intriguing example from «Valle» («Valley»):

En el paisaje tierno —aquí quedarse—, el puente de hierro.	In this countryside that holds on to you —stay here!— the iron bridge. (88, 89)
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To translate «tierno» by the clause «that/ holds on to you» must at first glance appear clumsy and verbose, but the sharpness of the command that follows, «stay here», brings out the tension of a speaker who is struggling to hold on to a fleeting landscape where, ironically, only a modern iron bridge is able to slow time's passing. Garrison's phrasing is not clumsy at all and captures the melancholy of the original with great subtlety.

Consistent with the defamiliarizing aesthetic that governs it, *Certain Chance* is full of playful inversions that contradict expectations and surprise the reader. Most depend on paradox, metaphor and large doses of *ingenio* or wit that are intellectually rather than stylistically complicated. As a simple example, I mention the earth-bound sky in «Otra tú» («Another you») that is no longer infinite because soaked in the water that reflects it through the slats of a veranda railing:

[el cielo] tiene cuatro esquinas, húmedo, está en el agua, cuadrado.	[the sky] has four corners, wet, lies in the water, square. (44, 45)
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Another tendency of *Certain Chance* is the short, choppy rhythm that disrupts the flow of the verse and forces us to linger over isolated words and phrases:

Estuvo aquí. Sí. Latidos, corazón tierno de pájaro.	It was here. Yes, The beating, the tender heart of a bird—
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Yo le sentía. (Qué lucha I could feel it. What a struggle
de caricia, roce, pluma! against my caress-flailing feathers!! (134, 135)

By obstructing the flow of his lines, Salinas makes us stop to think about meaning beyond the surface. Garrison expertly captures the tension of these disruptions at every turn.

I found very few obvious errors in Garrison's translations. Perhaps the most apparent is the first line of «Far West», where the phrase «¡Qué viento a ocho mil kilómetros!» is translated as «A wind of eight thousand kilometers an hour» (75). The context makes clear that the wind takes place in a movie in America, eight thousand kilometers *away*. In a similar vein, the phrase «el pecho apunta apenas» does not mean «her breast barely touches me» (117), but rather «her breast is just budding». Still, in this case either phrase captures the early arrival of Spring, so there is no great error. Finally, I admit some disappointment that the title «Amada exacta» is rendered «*Lover Beside Me*» (121) because I believe it misses the author's deliberately ironic insinuation that love is precise, like mathematics. However, «*Lover Beside Me*» does capture a concrete situation in the text and is therefore not inappropriate. Further examples would be equally quibbling or minor, and none detract from the overall excellence of the translation.

Certain Chance includes several drawings by David Leach as well as a short reminiscence of Pedro Salinas by the eminent translator, Willis Barnstone. Garrison also includes a brief introduction on the poet along with a bibliography of his work and the main critical studies on him. Most of all, the translation begins with a fascinating prologue by Salinas himself that was originally published in 1938 to accompany the first translation of his work into English. In it, Salinas insists that, far from achieving wide readership, poetry is saved by not being popular. It must be «barely visible, either subterranean or celestial, but always in the center of things» (16). In this light, we owe Bucknell University Press a major debt of gratitude for issuing a volume whose author declared over sixty years ago that few people will buy it. All I can say is that those few who do are in for a rare treat that will leave them far richer than they could ever have imagined. David Lee Garrison has given us a remarkable translation of *Certain Chance*.

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Julia Otxoa. *La nieve en los manzanos*. Málaga, Miguel Gómez Ediciones, 2000, 35 pp.

La escritora Julia Otxoa (San Sebastián, 1953), autora de libros de relatos así como de poesía, construye en este su más reciente poemario