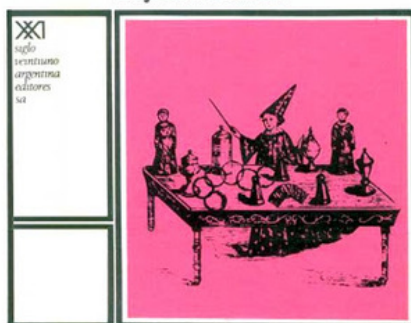


El infierno musical

Alejandra Pizarnik



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Las muñecas desventradas por mis antiguas manos de muñeca, la desilusión al encontrar pura estopa (pura estepa tu memoria): el padre, que tuvo que ser Tiresias, Iloa en el río. Pero tú, ¿por qué te dejaste asesinar escuchando cuentos de álamos nevados? Yo quería que mis dedos de muñeca penetraran en las teclas. Yo no quería rozar, como una araña, el teclado. Yo quería hundirme, clavarme, fijarme, petrificarme. Yo quería entrar en el teclado para entrar adentro de la música para tener una patria. Pero la música se movía, se apresuraba. Sólo cuando un refrán reincidía, alentaba en mí la esperanza de que se estableciera algo parecido a una estación de trenes, quiero decir: un punto de partida firme y seguro; un lugar desde el cual partir, desde el lugar, hacia el lugar, en unión y fusión con el lugar.

El infierno musical Details

Date : Published 1971 by Siglo XXI (Buenos Aires)

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Author : Alejandra Pizarnik

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From Reader Review *El infierno musical* for online ebook

Sofia says

Less transcendental, more practical than Celan, like that one scene in *On the Silver Globe*.

It is implied in one line that she felt she herself was most able to see herself, whose alternative might've given her some more time, which makes Cortázar, in his letter-preface, seem like a bit of a cunt, but everything else is pretty absolute, if not particularly deep.

Justin Evans says

I'm not a big fan of writing about writing, particularly about oneself writing; nor am I so big on the elemental symbols--water, fire, light, darkness and so on--being used unironically. But if you must do these things, know that Alejandra Pizarnik has done them better than you ever will:

"I cannot speak with my voice, so I speak with my voices."

"Before words can run out, something in the heart must die."

Section IV, 'The Possessed Among the Lilacs,' is truly wonderful.

Anna says

In Yvette Siegert's savvy translation.

Daniel says

Estaba abrazada al suelo, diciendo un nombre. Creí que me había muerto y que la muerte era decir un nombre sin cesar.

Gabriel Barab says

"I know that I no longer exist, but what I don't know is the thing that lives on in my place."

Noor Al-Samarrai says

A Musical Hell, I read this in NY somewhere, in an English edition that had a harp on the cover. Wonderful

in translation, can't imagine how much tastier it must be in the original spanish.

Ernesto Castro Herrera says

Esta es Pizarnik en toda su gloria depresiva y fabulosa.

Herman Kilian M says

Acabé leyendo a la Pizarnik por pura serendipia, algo como si uno se topara con una explosión violenta mientras busca silencio.

Cloud says

"Ya no soy más que un adentro."

"Vida, mi vida, ¿qué has hecho de mi vida?"

Christian Russo says

phenomenal.

s.penkevich says

‘O life, what have you done to this life of mine?’

Discovering Alejandra Pizarnik’s poetry was like surfacing for air. It was a gust of crisp, clean air that nearly stole my breath before filling me like phone of recharge. *A Musical Hell*, translated into english in this bilingual edition by Yvette Siegert and published as a pamphlet by New Direction (an endlessly cool publisher), is *‘a song—a tunnel to pass through;’* Pizarnik sends the reader's soul into a state of transcendence from their physical form to find solace and freedom existing in the realm of music and language where they float about with the purpose and power of the hook to a melody.

‘Before words can run out, something in the heart must die.’

Pizarnik is practically Argentina’s answer to Sylvia Plath (and not just said to connect that both we young suicides), though drastically different in style and tone, rummaging through the dark corners of the heart’s dresser drawers to find language and art as a shining lifeline.

Waiting for nothing but music and allowing the pain—the pain that vibrates in forms too beautiful and treacherous—to reach down into the depths.

Much of Pizarnik's poetry, presented often as prose poems or chunky three-line poems that celebrates the harmony of speaking out with our voice, be in language or music, to find the common human traits in all of us. It is a cry for love, for understanding, but most of all a cry to say 'despite it all, I am here.'¹ Even if not to others, but to oneself to remember that we live, we breath, we feel, and how wonderful it is how doing so manages to shine through the crust of our daily sadness and suffering. '*I cannot speak with my voice, so I speak with my voices,*' she writes, using the voices of language and poetry to blot out fear and silence.

'Maybe someday we'll find refuge in true reality. In the meantime, can I just say how opposed I am to all of this?'

The title is a brilliant, all-encompassing snapshot of the connective threads of this volume. There is an *ars poetica* sense to her poetry that examines the why, or the void that must be filled, by the thirst for words.

At the height of happiness, I have spoken of a music never heard before. So what? If only I could live in a continual state of ecstasy, shaping the body of the poem with my own, rescuing every phrase with my days and weeks, imbuing the poem with my breath while feeding the letters of its every word into the offering in this ceremony of living.

Her words are simply exquisite, a fine wine to get gloriously drunk upon. '*The light of language covers me like music,*' she prays like a sinner seeking the forgiveness of an Almighty, '*like a picture ripped to shreds by the dogs of grief.*' Language is an escape route, but it is also a shield. While Pizarnik is empowered by words to punch through the grime of reality ('*I write to ward off fear and the clawing wind that lodges in my throat*'), she also feels self-conscious and meek about it with language as the wool blanket a child hides beneath in fear of the formless monsters taking shape in the threatening blackness of bedtime.

*i'm going to hide behind language
Why
I'm afraid*

Silence—'*silence is fire*'—and fear are major motifs that she builds ramparts from music and poetry to keep from overrunning her existence. '*Just when I'd hoped to give up hoping, your fall takes place within me,*' she says of the light of language. The power to create can be a lifeblood that get's us through our darkest hours. What a cause for celebration.

Mortal Ties

A single thought cast out words like lifelines at sea. Making love inside our embrace implied a black light: a darkness that started gleaming. A rediscovered light, twice extinguished already, yet up in the deadened hues of repressed desire; it's light was the color of a mausoleum for infants. The rhythm of our bodies disguised the flight of the ravens. The rhythm of our bodies carved out a space of light inside that light.

Pizarnik is a potent and perfect voice not just of Latin American poetry but for all of poetry. While this volume is brief, it's beauty is vast. Also included is a letter to Pizarnik from her friend Julio Cortázar, who highly praised her work. '*Your book hurts me,*' he writes to her, '*it is so utterly your own; you're so you in every line, so reticently clear.*' Alejandra Pizarnik offers a ladder to climb in and nestle comfortably within her headspace. It is one filled with demons lurking in the darkness, but also one where language builds a warm blanket fort to keep you safe. Reading Alejandra Pizarnik is like coming back to life.

¹ This notion originates from Florencia's wonderful review of *Árbol de Diana*

Fugue in Lilac

You had to write without a for what, without a for whom.

The body remembers love like the lighting of a lamp.

If silence is temptation and promise.
