

THE SELECTED PERFORMANCES OF

**CECILIA
VICUÑA**

**SPIT
TEMPLE**

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY ROSA ALCALÁ

Spit Temple: The Selected Performances of Cecilia Vicuña
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SPIT TEMPLE

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EDITED BY ROSA ALCALÁ

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*Illapantac*¹

Al canto
se rompen

8 |

las aguas
del llanto

las que
media rán

cantá
rito
roto
la fer ti lidad

el canto
les abre

grueso portal
quíbralo dentro

que hay que llevar
el canto quebrado

que hay que comer

templo e'saliva
que no ha de volver

1. "Illapantac" and an earlier version of its translation appear in *cloud-net*. New York: Art in General, 1999, 62-63.

Illapantac

To song
the waters

of wailing
break

they will
mediate

pitch, a fertile
rite
a little
broken pitch
er

song
opens

a heavy portal
smash it in

it's time to de
cant, to begin

eating

the fractured
song

spit temple
to never return

“Made Not of Words, But Forces”: Cecilia Vicuña’s Oral Performances

Rosa Alcalá

I.

| II

JUST WHAT IS THIS WOMAN DOING?

Gathered with dozens of people in a small library at Brown University—too small, in fact, for the number who have shown up—I wait for the invited poet to approach the podium. There has been the usual introduction and applause, but after several minutes of silence, she is nowhere in sight. As I nervously scan the room looking for her, the silence gives way to the sound of audience members shifting uncomfortably in their seats. Then, at the height of tension, singing—a cluster of vowels, really—begins to rise up from somewhere among the rows of chairs, first quietly, then growing louder and more persistent, until it seemingly permeates even the library’s polished wood. Cecilia Vicuña emerges suddenly from within the audience, having wrapped wool thread around those sitting next to her. Continuing her high-pitched chant, she slowly and deliberately approaches the podium, pulling the thread behind her. Relieved, I expect her, despite the unusual entrance, to introduce herself, say a few words, and begin reading from *Unravelling of Words & the Weaving of Water*, the book that prompted this event in progress. In fact, I organized this reading on the strength of her book, knowing little about her, and there are poems I am hoping she’ll read, some favorites she might explain, into which she might offer insight. Still, she’s not reading—at least not in the usual sense; instead, she sings, chants, whispers, navigates a registry of sounds, swiftly moving between languages (Spanish and English, perhaps others I don’t recognize). With her voice and intonation she explores the musicality within words, changing their very meaning. Or she becomes quiet, compelling us to listen to the birds singing outside of the library, so that in the absence of her voice, we listen to what’s present at the edges of the university. There are books and papers in front of her, but this is, without a doubt, not a “poetry reading” in the usual

sense—an oral reproduction of text on the page framed by anecdotal remarks, performed with that “reading” voice so familiar to us all. And while I expect her to read poems written in Spanish, then equitably offer their English translation, her movement between languages is less than predictable. I keep listening for the poems that I remember, and maybe I recognize a phrase or an idea now and again, but so much of it, I think, must simply be poetry I have not yet read: I can’t say for sure if what I have just experienced is a “poetry reading”; I only know I am sure that it is poetry.

This first experience of Vicuña’s reading in 1995—confusing and appealing at once—perhaps resembles the experiences many audiences have had watching her performances, as Rodrigo Toscano confirms when he voices the audience’s collective uneasiness by asking, “just what is this woman doing?”¹ But what does the audience expect “this woman”—this poet—to do? Where does the audience expect to be taken within the space of the poetry reading? In a very basic sense, the audience wants to witness a kind of authenticity, the poem read by the person who wrote it. But that place is also one that is enforced by determined parameters, known well by those in attendance: there is a poet at the podium, there’s a poem on the page to be read, there’s witty preamble to the poem, and an audience in its place holding its applause until the end. All of it followed by the polite sale of books. In other words, the place the audience expects to inhabit—at best a “transcendent” space where poems open up in an exchange between audience and poet—is always-already encoded and pre-determined. These conventions remain in place despite a century of challenges to their primacy: Kurt Schwitter’s phonetic experiments at the Cabaret Voltaire, The Four Horsemen’s apocalyptic cacophonies, David Antin’s “untinterrupted dialogues,” or Augusto De Campos’s “verbivocovisual” dimensions. In fact, there are many examples of poetry performance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that don’t adhere to the conventional reading of poetry—and yet, what we normally expect from a poetry reading remains more or less intact.

Certainly, Vicuña’s approach to the space of the reading challenges those of us schooled in the twentieth-century Anglo-American poetry reading tradition and its conventions, but perhaps what makes Vicuña’s performances exceptional, and what challenges on a deeper level the poetry reading’s primary convention—the reading of poems printed on a page—is not her unusual

entrance or the use of thread, but the ways she re-imagines and animates the text by singing, improvising, and altering, in performance, her printed poems. In general, poetry readings—even when they are called performances—often reflect our general privileging of literacy over orality; despite poetry’s origins in orality, we expect readings to be merely fleeting enactments of poems that properly exist in books. As a result, the printed versions of poems—as is true for most poets in the age of print—are seen as the quintessential archive through which we measure the poet’s work and through which the poet is to measure herself. It’s true that there exists no dearth of recordings of poets reading their poems, but these recordings, while perhaps bringing a poem “to life,” rarely upset the centrality of the printed poem, and, more likely, reinforce it.

In addition to those oral performances which occur within the space of the poetry reading, Vicuña also delivers performance-lectures within the space of the conference or lecture hall. Here, Vicuña continues to challenge dominant paradigms by eschewing the usual formulas for argumentation or observation found in panel discussions and “talks.” Vicuña’s performative and less formal approach—“more ceremonial than academic,” as Linda Duke describes the Krannert performance-lecture—is similar to her recent critical “poem-essays” on Emma Kunz (“The Melody of Structures”) and Mayan dress (“Ubixic del decir”). Unlike most papers, which foreground an argument or thesis, building support through theoretical and textual evidence in a linear fashion toward a totalizing conclusion, the overlapping threads of her poem-essays and performance-lectures enact a flexible and multi-directional thinking-through of ideas. In a sense, she pushes the academic argument closer to that of poetry, and as with her poetry performances, Vicuña’s “papers” would be difficult to reproduce in journals—because they are improvised rather than read, and, more important, because most journals would not recognize them as proper academic arguments.

If we consider Vicuña’s work through this lens, the problem is that the oral performances—because they are rarely straight readings of papers or poems in books, and because they are improvised and ephemeral—rarely exist as print texts. Yet, one could easily argue that Vicuña’s performances are, in many ways, her definitive works, and are at the very least key to understanding her work as a whole. Despite their importance, however, little has been written about them,

and few recordings or transcriptions have been made available to the public. Most who have written on her work have discussed some element of her oral performances, or have looked at the ways in which the notion of performance (or the performative) intersects much of her work.² But few have studied extensively the oral performances themselves.³ All that exists to document her extensive work in oral performance, therefore, are a few transcriptions and recordings on the Internet.⁴

Listening to Quasars

Although Vicuña is focused on oral performance, hers is no romantic idea of a pristine orality. It is one fully cognizant of the intervention of print, and is concerned mainly with the interplay between poetic texts and the vocalization and improvisation of those texts. This “spoken poetics,” Sherwood writes, must be understood as “interface or hybrid (and not a ‘transitional technique’) between the oral and the written” (78). Echoing the darker side of historical debates concerning orality and textuality, Vicuña, instead, refers to the space between them as “a war zone” whose frontline is necessarily the performance (personal interview). In this “war zone” Vicuña weaves together improvised narratives with previously written or published poems she modifies in performance. This alteration of texts in performance is what Sherwood refers to as “versioning,” meaning that Vicuña creates new, in situ, renderings of her poems by changing language or phrasing, or alters the standard edition by singing, whispering or chanting.⁵ Poems are “versioned” between or as part of the improvised narratives, which in turn begin as notes handwritten with a certain site or concern in mind, sometimes days or hours before the performance. Compared to her published poems, neatly printed and bound in books, her notes appear to be disorganized, random compositions floating across the page, the detritus of transitory thoughts jotted on a small hotel notepad, each page torn as it is read. And unlike the poems which circulate in print, these notes are simply filed away after each performance, having fulfilled their function as a kind of score for the performance. While one might think of this technique as improvisation, a making new in the instant, Sherwood has us reconsider

the limitations of “improvisation” as a description for Vicuña’s performances, suggesting instead that we think of the technique as “more a kind of listening.”⁶ Sherwood suggests, in other words, that Vicuña isn’t letting herself go in just any direction, as we might associate with improvisation, but instead is listening to and harnessing, in a purposeful way, the energies and memories of language itself. We might think of Jack Spicer’s definition of a poet: one who is open to signals from the “outside,” which he or she “receives” like a radio (or, less receptively, as a “counter-punching radio”) and processes into poems.⁷

This listening, however, Sherwood points out, extends beyond the language of the poems and notes Vicuña transforms in performance, to the specificities of the performance space itself. By listening to the sounds and dimensions of her surroundings, she seems to welcome not only the unstable elements of the present moment as they intersect with her performance, but also acknowledges the site as its own “text,” with its history, signs, movements. She may recognize, for instance, that Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center in Buffalo, NY, a space now dedicated to contemporary art, was once a factory, releasing “toxic gas.”⁸ Or she may allow ambient elements to merge with or unhinge the performance, rather than ignore them or block them out (as one would during most conventional poetry readings). In other words, she is drawing connections between what we think of as the discrete venue and the world of which the poetry speaks. In her 1995 performance at The Poetry Project at St. Mark’s Church, for example, Vicuña relates the myth of the Pishtako, a monstrous being that is, in fact, “the sound / of all these machines / at work / in Lima... that’s eating / and feeding / on the blood / and grease / and body / of all the Indians,” then directs the audience’s attention to the stream of New York street noise permeating the walls of the space. Sometimes the relationship between site and performance is much more contentious; as Jena Osman observes, “At Art in General, the ambient elements are like an insurgency. Just about everything that could disrupt our focus does so. The sound system isn’t working correctly. The elevator door is tremendously noisy—like a garage door opening, accompanied by a game-show bell. The floors themselves are very ‘responsive’—offering something back for each step they receive.”⁹ Yet, even in this case, Vicuña incorporates the disruptions into the performance.

Vicuña’s “listening” leads not to the usual display of mastery but to

performance as unstable and unpredictable event. It is through the performance that the idea or poem on paper becomes what Vicuña calls a “quasar,” “an about to happen.” Vicuña writes that her quasar looks “for a form before the form,” adding, “A poem only becomes poetry when its structure / is made not of words but forces.” The quasar is not a tangible thing—a poem or story to be told—but a process of discovery that allows the evolving elements of the performance to manifest. Vicuña has also referred to the quasars as “not-yet poems” or “quasi poems,”¹⁰ which suggests that what manifests in these oral performances reveals threads that may later be pulled into the future design of a written poem. As a result, the poem sometimes moves from performance to page, rather than the conventional movement from page to performance. Performance, in other words, provides the warp and weft upon which any text may—or may not—be woven; and at the same time in performance, all texts are subject to change, all are precarious and “about to happen,” all are threads to be spun into a larger, continual textile, which is the interconnected worlds we inhabit.

A Thousand Tiny Fibers Dissolving In Air

This entanglement of the oral and the written “so that they are in tension like lovemaking” is, as Vicuña claims of indigenous Latin American textile, “what makes the weaving sacred.” But the possibilities of that tension lie foremost in the “unspun wool”—the undeveloped elements of the performance. In her 1998 Hallwalls performance she says, “People say that / unspun wool / contains the power / of the cosmos / because it’s not yet— / it’s nothing you see / it has not been spun / it’s no thing / it’s pure potential.” These threads of unspun wool, so omnipresent in her visual art, with their symbolic connection to the Latin American tradition of weaving, also play, thematically, a major role in the oral performances. The thread can become, metaphorically, a genetic line, one that overlaps and fuses with other genetic lines: “each one of our lines...continuing and completing the next.” And in this merging of genes, voice becomes that which is composed of many other voices, the vocal chords imagined as a bundle of threads caught up in language’s own knotty web. To speak a language, in other words, is to invoke multiple origins, the spun and unspun wool of cultural

histories; it is to enact, as Walter Mignolo says, “the ‘natural’ plurilingual conditions of the human world ‘artificially’ suppressed by the monolingual ideology and monotopic hermeneutics of modernity and nationalism” (228). Vicuña’s search for her own genetic makeup has been an attempt to upset such fictions; she discovered through a DNA test that her grandmother—despite her family’s claim that “there was no indigenous ancestry” (Isbell 50)—probably had Diaguita blood. In her 1998 Barnard College performance, Vicuña tells us that these unacknowledged or actively suppressed threads in our perceived origins emerge in performance of the everyday, particularly in song. And we can hear them if only we listen. Tracing Spanish back to the Arabic, for instance, she describes the “melodic matrix” present in the vocal chords of the mother who, singing a lullaby to her child, voices “the migrations of words” / “the migration of sounds.” Intuitive rather than learned or mastered, Vicuña’s singing—what she calls “musical debris”—is thus an attempt to connect viscerally, as the mother does with the child, to a field of meaning vibrating beneath the surface of words, an unregulated, invisible and alternate knowledge.

This “melodic matrix” can also hold the “ancestral memory suppressed by official culture” that Vicuña first recognized in Violeta Parra’s “dissonant” voice, a dissonance that helped recover Chile’s forgotten folk songs and launch the New Chilean Song in the 1960s. Parra’s work thus exemplifies Vicuña’s insistence that despite the suppression or selectivity of lineages and histories evidenced by our atomized voices, it is what we choose to hear beneath or within our voices that can reveal the lost threads of suppressed wor(l)ds, and thus enact a change of perspective that might instigate a change in our social framework. Vicuña points out that the etymology of “tone” is a stretched thread, so that to refer to “tone of voice” is to understand speech as the weaving of “a thousand tiny fibers dissolving in air.” But this dissolution does not absolve the speaker of responsibility to the lost threads of the world, as she says at the Woodland Pattern performance: “fate is to speak / and you fate yourself as you speak / as you name the name.” She suggests that fate is, in fact, not predetermined, but is a weaving enacted by what and how we choose to speak or name. Thus, by naming what lies beneath the surface, to put oneself at risk by speaking rather than safely reciting without attention to the present, is to perform the aesthetic of ethical action on which so much of Vicuña’s work depends.

In her 1998 Hallwalls performance, Vicuña arrives at the podium with a white thread woven between the fingers of her right hand. As she performs and gesticulates, the threads move in rhythm with the voice, seeming at times a deliberate punctuation of the accompanying performance. As she describes a thread installation envisioned in a dream, for instance, the dream seems to materialize between her hands. Then, when the dream becomes a reality, and she witnesses threads across La Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, hung with the pictures of the disappeared, victims of the military regime, the tensioned thread suggests the connection between the conscious and the unconscious, between the living and the dead. Later, as she describes an old woman lost in travel who drinks from water gathered in depressions left in the dirt by animal hooves, Vicuña raises her cupped hand to her mouth, and the strings dangle like drops of water falling between her fingers. Even as her hand moves naturally, an involuntary accompaniment to her speaking, the thread becomes a conspicuous part of the narrative, a white peak that mimics the “geysers” coming out of holes in a Manhattan street. With this ephemeral book of gestures, Vicuña draws attention to the body’s stitch, the way it threads the eyes of words; this ephemeral book of gestures traces, too, all those disappearances, those omissions, hemmed invisibly, violently, into the official versions of who and what we are.

This pulling at the threads of disappearances, then, that hold together our social fabric, our histories, is at the center of Vicuña’s performances. In her 1995 Poetry Project performance, Vicuña tells us about the last Selk’nam woman shaman, Lola Kiepja, and the tragic events surrounding the disappearance of her people, and with them, a language and culture. Singing a lament for Kiepja, Vicuña’s voice digs deep into the subterranean and subcutaneous layers of all losses. But disappearance can also mean “farmers / losing / crop / varieties / as / species / dwindle,” Vicuña warns us during a 1999 performance at the Krannert Art Center, a reflection of her attention to ecological destruction, beginning in the 1960s and central to her work. Together, these accounts, like the photographs of the disappeared hanging over the Plaza de Mayo, string together and make visible a world of connection that either we can’t see or choose not to notice, while leading us to an awareness of the possibilities and political implications of collectively following the thread. Furthermore, these

performances, because they build their strength on instability, at the precipice of disappearance, become symbolic ground on which to trace such loss.

Even suppressed or discarded accounts, like official ones, are never static, they must be understood against changing contexts. It is interesting to note, then, how her narratives of disappearance change and adapt to different sites and historical moments, how they reveal differently at different times, and how they thread themselves in and out of performances. Take, for instance, Vicuña's invocation of Luis Gómez, a migrant worker from Ecuador, who, according to Somini Sengupta of the *New York Times*, was buried alive on July 10, 1998 near Vicuña's apartment in the Tribeca section of Manhattan, while working for Safeway Construction, a company contracted by Con Edison. In the notes for the 1998 Hallwalls performance, we find several lines dedicated to Gómez, and in performance these lines become a burial rite, a lament for the disappeared immigrant. Vicuña develops her narrative from six lines in the right hand column of her notes, but omits from the actual performance several more lines beneath them, which say: "some time ago / writing / about one of those / doors, / a few meters away / I said: / writing is the door / of the under / world // the body / of those who / disappear / in the / writing." Three years later, only days after the events of September 11, 2001, Vicuña once again re-tells this neighborhood story or *New York Times* report, exhuming, then re-animating, the memory of the buried worker. This time, however, in her performance at Woodland Pattern Book Center, September 29, 2001, the loss of one life comes to represent that of many. Vicuña, who since 1980 has lived just a few blocks from where the World Trade Center once stood, was greatly impacted by the events of Sept. 11—not only did dust and debris infiltrate her apartment and studio, but the devastation brought her back to the despair and helplessness she felt while living in London and learning of the Chilean military coup of 1973, which also occurred on September 11. During the performance, Vicuña begins by making reference to the *cloud-net* performance¹¹ filmed by the Hudson River in 1998 only blocks from the World Trade Center, and then says simply, "The towers disappeared and they became this white light going up..." Vicuña then proceeds with a version of the Luis Gómez story, and in doing so, emphasizes the importance of remembering, among the larger tragedies, those individual losses that often go undocumented or unnoticed, those bodies that "disappear

in the writing.” Sometime between the 1998 performance at Hallwalls and the 2001 performance at Woodland Pattern, then, emerges a poem about Luis Gómez, appearing in the journal *Cross Cultural Poetics* in 2001. The poem is distinct from but shares elements with these performances; it is hard to know whether Vicuña transformed the already written poem in performance, or whether the poem came later, as a result of the performed narrative.

Some of the “unspun wool” for the narratives that ground the oral performances are culled from recent events, “web gossip” (as we see in Vicuña’s telling of Cacique Guaicaipuro Cuatemoc’s address to the European Union at the Poetry Project at St. Mark’s Church, 2002), current news of scientific discoveries, pop culture, history, and everyday observations. With the help of her performance notes, they are pulled out of the mundane, anecdotal, or disposable, and into the field of myth-making, as Sherwood has pointed out. Maria Damon sees the emphasis of myth in Vicuña’s performances as an affirmation of its basic human function: “A creation myth is recreated every day, out of the everyday matter of breath and cloth, eating, sleeping, speaking, breathing.”¹² If we now consider the Internet, the World Wide Web, as a form of the basic human communicative function (one, not coincidentally, modeled on weaving), Vicuña reminds us at her 1999 Krannert performance that our ethical use of these materials, our “weaving” of them, depends on the “we we we” suggested by the acronym for the World Wide Web.

Where Borders Shift

The oracular quality of the performances has a great deal to do with the way in which Vicuña performs these narrative and versioned poems. It is as if they were part of an ongoing oral epic yet to be written down (“the storyteller continuing the parable,” Edwin Torres writes), the intimacy of her half-whispering but insistent voice imparting cohesion to the various elements. As both Torres and Dennis Tedlock mention, this voice, without adjusting volume, navigates a range of pitches and tones, suggesting that when Vicuña repeatedly asks if she can be heard, she’s not asking whether she needs to speak more loudly or adjust the microphone.¹³ Instead, she is asking those in the audience to adjust

their hearing, to lean forward, to listen along with her. The poems, the venue, the audience, the narratives, and the disappeared threads of the world, all become connected in that distinctive voice, rather than delimited by category or function: “poem,” “anecdote,” “joke,” “song,” “ambient noise,” “gestures,” or “observation.” All elements, through Vicuña’s performative voice, are pulled into this elusive, emergent event she calls the quasar.

She does this by allowing few or no boundaries between the elements—pauses or shifts that would indicate the transition between, say, a preamble and a poem. If we consider the reading of poems as discrete events that are bracketed off from the larger event of the poetry reading by means of introductions—where the poet gives the poem’s background, for example, or simply announces the start of a new poem by giving the title—then Vicuña rarely employs what Erving Goffman refers to as an “episoding convention.”¹⁴ Vicuña’s narratives are not explanations that precede the reading of a poem. Because she rarely pauses to emphasize the title of a poem, and sometimes omits it altogether, it is in fact easy to miss the transition from narrative or commentary to a versioned poem—none of these elements is framed as such. As Sherwood has argued, Vicuña’s lack of hesitation between these elements suggests not only “interrelated forms,” but a new version of the poem itself, connected to the evolving oral performance (“Sound Written” 88), and perhaps, therefore, even a new version of poetry.

In performance, Vicuña’s “high, wispy Andean voice” (Lippard 14) similarly works its way indiscriminately through both English and Spanish, incorporating words and concepts found in languages indigenous to Latin America (Quechua, Mapuche, others), and lets them ride together, occasionally working in an explanation or translation. Vicuña traces this mix of languages to the late 80s, when she found herself without a translator and was forced to “improvise in a mixture of English, Quechua, and Spanish.” In turn, this multilingual improvisation, Vicuña claims, caused “the borders between the written and the oral [...] to shift.”¹⁵ Because since 1980 Vicuña’s performances have been largely for English-speaking audiences in the United States, these language shifts—this English made non-standard in the mouth of a native Spanish speaker, this Spanish in a mostly non-Spanish setting—create different levels of opacity and unintelligibility, depending on the listener. In crossing, with

and without papers, the language borders maintained by most social structures (even that of the poetry reading), Vicuña performs what Walter Mignolo calls “linguaging”: a “thinking and writing between languages, that moves us away from the idea that language is a fact (e.g., a system of syntactic, semantic, and phonetic rules), and [moves us] toward the idea that speech and writing are strategies for orienting and manipulating social domains of interaction” (226). In her printed poems, a similar thing occurs; as Vicuña examines their origins or fuses different languages, words move through and open up new and forgotten histories and meanings. As Hugo Méndez-Ramírez explains, “Once we go beyond the surface of words and enter their etymologies, we discover that the languages and cosmogonies of many cultures are intertwined” (66). For Vicuña, words are not just the inheritors of tradition, but can perform outside of their conscripted roles, if we let them. In her poems, verbs might dress up like nouns, a noun might move like a verb, migrating into uncharted territory, mating (or merely flirting) with what and whomever it chooses.

Hazards & Holes

While they are different in emphasis (one on the oral and the other on the visual, even though these two categories sometimes overlap), there are a number of similarities between Vicuña’s oral performances—which exist in that “war zone” between voice and text—and her performance and visual art, which could be said to exist in the “war zone” between object and ritual. Taking cues from performance and conceptual art—including both land art and installation—Vicuña’s more visual performances signify (often symbolically) through the arrangement and movement of objects and bodies, and create, as her oral performances also often do, a ritual space. Many of these performances have served to protest political, social, or ecological injustice—from the much-discussed 1979 Vaso de leche (Glass of Milk) street performance in Bogotá, Colombia,¹⁶ to a recently filmed performance at the Nevado del Plomo in Chile, where Vicuña extended on the ground blood-red strands of wool, several feet long, arranging them like streams flowing down the mountain, and sat at the end of one strand, holding it between her splayed legs to resemble menstrual

blood. This un-announced mountaintop performance preceded a street performance in front of Palacio La Moneda, Chile's government palace (the Centro Cultural, just under the palace, was the site where Vicuña had installed "El Quipu Menstrual" as part of the 2006 group show, "The Other Side: Chilean Women Artists"). The street performance involved several participants carrying a similar blood-red strand, but several inches thicker in diameter, from the policed doors of La Moneda to a fountain, where they immersed it in water. The performances and installation were meant as a protest against the Chilean government's approval of the gold-mining project Pascua-Lama, initiated by the Barrick Gold Corporation of Canada, which would allow the company, according to local environmental and civic groups, "to harm the local water supply, destroy agriculture, and walk away without paying taxes or royalties" (Rohter). Although Vicuña, in general, is not recognized as part of the surge of performance art in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s, her visual, as well as oral, performance, in its political intent and invocation of ritual, might therefore usefully be considered within the context of much of the work discussed in Coco Fusco's anthology, *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*.¹⁷

Vicuña's "quasars" are also properly understood within the context of two other major manifestations of her own visual art, the *precarios* and the large-scale, in situ thread installations like *cloud-net*. The *precarios* or precarious objects—which Vicuña also refers to as *basuritas* or "little litter"—are small, fragile objects composed of man-made and natural refuse (twigs, roots, pencils, a plastic grid) that are "installed" like altars or offerings in urban or rural settings, and are therefore vulnerable to ocean tides, waves of pedestrians, and river currents. The in situ installations of the *precarios* are often unannounced, ephemeral performances to which no audience is invited or expected. At other times, these objects are displayed as sculptures in a gallery, assembled and disassembled for each exhibition. While both the in situ installations and the gallery displays of the *precarios* have often been photographed, their delicate nature makes these objects, as their name suggests, subject to time and the elements; they are prone to disintegration, and to a shifting of their composition, not unlike the unscripted and ephemeral quasars. Yet, the tensions between determinacy and indeterminacy, contingency and the absolute—so at

the center of discussions regarding mid-century avant-garde practice—seem for Vicuña rather to be found more specifically in the ancient roots that underlie the notion of “the precarious,” as she explains: “Precarious is what is obtained by prayer. Uncertain, exposed to hazards, insecure. From the Latin ‘precarious,’ from ‘precis; prayer’” (Precario 2).

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Like the *precarios*, the large-scale thread installations have been part of her work since the early part of her career. These installations respond to the architectural specificities of a room and the conventions of an institution, restructuring its navigable space by extending unspun wool across it, like a web or net. And like so much of her work, the thread installations recall the indigenous Latin American traditions of weaving, as well as the pre-Columbian mnemonic devices made of knotted thread known as quipus, which require the fingers, rather than the eyes, to read what it records. By putting into dialogue modernist art practice with the indigenous, as other Latin American artists and writers had done before her, she simultaneously recovers the “ancestral memory suppressed by official culture” and gestures towards movements such as surrealism and dadaism, which she claims as early influences. In doing so, Vicuña has consistently drawn from the rich cultural reserves of Latin American thought and art, as well as its pre-Columbian legacy, much like the body-centered performance artists featured in Fusco’s book. This attention to the local, Fusco reminds us, is in contrast to European modernists who sought the “new” outside of their native Europe (7-8). Vicuña’s art work, then, like Latin America’s own *mestizaje*, reflects both the difficult and generative marriage of indigenous and European cultural production. But more than simply sites of syncretism, the installations, too, refer to the erasure or undervaluation of indigenous cultures. We see a poignant example of this in “A Net of Holes,” an installation of a grid or net made from black yarn, sagging from the corner of a ceiling at the 1997 Whitney Biennial. This installation—which often went unnoticed by visitors unless a museum guard stationed beneath it prompted them to look up—was, according to Vicuña, “a statement of invisibility” meant to echo an anonymous Nahuatl poem relating the Spanish conquest of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital, which says, “Our only legacy was a net of holes /but not even shields can /hold such emptiness.”¹⁸ But “A Net of Holes,” can also be understood as a statement of hope and possibility, as the installation,

according to Vicuña, invokes another voice, that of modern Cuban poet, José Lezama Lima, who writes: “El vacío es calmoso / lo podemos atraer con un hilo”¹⁹ (qtd in Martin 68).

Vicuña’s artistic formation was also decidedly influenced by the non-objective avant-garde tendencies of the 1960s and 70s—a time when body art, happenings, and groups like Fluxus or Arte Povera were questioning the commodification of the art object, favoring instead process-oriented and participatory art. In Latin America specifically, performances or “actions” during this time were simultaneously responding to the “disappearance of bodies, the brutality of the military and the police, the censoring of contestatory voices, and open warfare against political opposition” by “infus[ing] avant-garde strategies with social and political orientations, to address state institutions, and to envision the deployment of art in public space as a symbolic confrontation with the state” (Fusco 9). From the beginning, influenced as she was by the potential she saw in Salvador Allende’s socialist Popular Unity government, Vicuña understood art as a form of political engagement. While in Chile during the late 60s and early 1970s, Vicuña produced, in addition to paintings and poems, conceptual art and installations—such as a gallery filled with leaves, which she offered as homage to socialism²⁰. With the Tribu No, a group of friends and artistic collaborators, Vicuña performed her poems and participated in actions, interrupting, for example, the International Writers Conference held in Chile in 1969, to which the group had not been invited. There they distributed among the literary and government dignitaries handwritten fliers that combined quotes from well-known writers, such as Antonin Artaud, with those penned by Tribu No, denouncing “functionaries who drink cocktails with government ministers,” and declaring, “Long live poetry,” “Long live the displaced.”

In London, where she arrived in 1972 on scholarship to the Slade School of Fine Arts, Vicuña began to create a “Diary of Objects”—a collection of *precarios*—by picking up and arranging street debris. Simultaneously, Vicuña began *Saboramí*, a book documenting and incorporating some of these objects. But as the threat of the military coup grew closer, the tone and message of the book changed, and she began to incorporate poems, journal entries, and explicit denunciations of both the Chilean military and U.S. involvement in the coup. It was while assembling *Saboramí* on a farm in Devon, England (the

site of Beau Geste Press, the book's publisher) that news of events surrounding the Chilean military coup began to reach Vicuña. As a result, *Saboramí*, with its scatterings of found objects and writings, became an aesthetic representation of the fragmentation and loss that had begun to manifest in the country from which she was now estranged—a representation of her own sense of helplessness and resulting exile. In his introduction to *Saboramí*, Felipe Ehrenberg, artist and co-editor of *Beau Geste*, writes,

Appearing as it does two months after Chile was carefully raped by starry striped militarists, *Saboramí* is the very first howl of pain to emerge from the rubble under which Chile's conscience lies stunned. This book is sheer irony; the result of converging chance happenings: it collects nearly ten years of work by Cecilia and was planned as a celebration. Now it symbolizes the contained fury and the sorrow of her country's present. It also gives an inkling of the strengths that will fight to break the New Disorder now in power.

Years later, discussing the fused particles of languages in her book *Instan*, Vicuña points back to the Chilean military coup, claiming, "after that moment I have lived mostly in english. the coup disintegrated language...the disintegration of my speech began when that axe blow was inflicted on us. if we are to be made into litter and cast-offs, then fine, I assume that position, I am garbage and a cast-off, and that is my language, the exploded fragment" (E-mail to the author). And in assuming this position in her performances as well, she allows one to hear an "inkling of the strengths" that can come as Vicuña gathers, from bits of poems and hints of notes, through songs and whispers, the threads of disappeared languages, lives, cultures, and histories, to weave a larger, collaborative, and ever-changing whole. It is thus through listening with these performances that one hears how the ephemeral, the seemingly fragile, can stand up against, and even topple, that which profits through such disappearances.

II.

WITH A LITTLE SPIT

The title of this book, *Spit Temple*, is derived from my translation of a poem Vicuña wrote and published in the catalog for her *cloud-net* exhibition. “Illapantac,” the poem’s title, and the word contained in it, “Illapa,” refers to “the oldest deity in Andean myth,” whose name “condenses thunder, lightning, and thunderbolt,” and is therefore known to control “fluidity and rain.” This deity is also the “supreme mediator of sound,” and can go by the name “Pachacuti, ‘world reverser’” (Vicuña, *cloud-net* 95). The poem—here in a new translation—describes the fertile and transformative powers of song, which can break open the vessel of creation, launching a series of changes from which there is no return. This poem condenses then, too, Vicuña’s own poetics: to sing the text, to break it open, to unpack and mediate what is found there, is to open up a space for possibility. It is to create something that cannot be repeated. As Heather McHugh reminds us, *poesis*, poetry’s Greek root, means “to make,” but the poem itself is a construct that differentiates itself formally from other writing by means of breaking itself into lines and stanzas (278). Moreover, a poem quilts itself from pieces or fragments of language, ideas, experiences, etc., and unifies or places them within the frame of the poem. In this sense, Vicuña’s oral performances—these quasars—heighten the poetic process by reveling in a circular act of mending and fracturing, of moving in and out of frame.

Pulled from the translation of “Illapantac,” the phrase “spit temple” is, first, meant to emphasize the centrality of the body in Vicuña’s work, exploring its dangers and vulnerabilities, but also its sacredness. This is evident in conceptual projects from the late 60s and early 70s, particularly her “Dictionary of Come-ons and Insults,” and “‘Museums of Hair and Fingernails’ in shoeboxes” (Vicuña, *The Precarious / Quipoem* q33), as well as her painting, “Manraja, menstruating angel” (1973), with its naked girl sitting on a tree, legs spread open and eyes rolled back as if in agony or ecstasy. However, it is also meant to reflect the ways in which Vicuña’s oral performances challenge not only the sanctity of the “poetry reading,” but also that of the printed text, consecrating and desecrating them equally, as a means to explore the borders between them.

Central to this exploration is Vicuña's notion of the precarious, which suggests that to venerate the text, to pray to and for it, is to "expose [it] to hazards." This tension between danger and possibility inherent in the precarious gestures towards Mary Douglas's claim that "[s]acred rules are thus merely rules hedging divinity off, and uncleanness is the two-way danger of contact with the divinity" (9). The linguistic paradox, Douglas points out, is at the very root of sacred, the Latin "sacer," which "has this meaning of restriction through pertaining to the gods. And in some cases may apply to desecration as well as to consecration" (10). According to Douglas, this "hedging off" or demarcation of what is sacred and profane, varying from culture to culture, can also be located in the body, which like all structures, is most "dangerous" and "vulnerable" at its margins—its orifices, tear ducts, and pores (150). In performance, the text—clean, contained, solid on the page—becomes contaminated by the voice of the performer, spit and air mixing to form words that then "dissolve in the air" and come in contact with and enter the listener.

Spit Temple is divided into four sections. The first is "Performing Memory: An Autobiography," written by Vicuña in Spanish specifically for this book, and translated here. Grounding her aesthetic in an historical and lived context, Vicuña's performative re-telling of her life is accompanied by photographs from her archives, many of which have never before been reproduced. The next section, "Poetics of Performance," is comprised of two poems, "Quasar" and "K'isa Alango," that together trace Vicuña's approach to performance. The third and central section, "The Quasars: Selected Oral Performances (1995-2003)," includes transcriptions of several of Vicuña's performances, as well as performance notes. The final section, "Listening: Responses to Vicuña's Oral Performances," is a collection of short essays by Dennis Tedlock, Jena Osman, Linda Duke, Kenneth Sherwood, Juliana Spahr, Rodrigo Toscano, Edwin Torres, and Nada Gordon.

The oral performances transcribed in the third section fall into two categories. First are the poetry performances, which occur within the frame of the poetry reading and are composed of improvised narratives and versioned poems. These comprise most of the transcriptions. Second are the performance-lectures mentioned above, specifically those at Barnard College (1996) and the Krannert Art Center (1999), which occur within the frame of the academic

conference. The origins of the performance-lecture can be traced perhaps to London, where, as a student in the 1970s, Vicuña was asked to give lectures about the arts in Chile, and about Chilean social democracy. While it is difficult to know to what extent Vicuña transgressed norms in her delivery, a twelve-page script of a talk from that time reflects an idealistic belief in social transformation through popular art that would set the stage for her oral performances. Discussing Chile's *El Teatro Nuevo Popular*, for example, she writes:

[W]e have a piece about events happening during the nationalization of a textile industry. We go to the industry and rehearse in front of the workers asking them to participate. We perform a scene and we stop and ask: "How did things really happen?" "What changes do you propose?" In the beginning people are shy and reluctant to talk, but as we continue to work they become more and more involved and in the end they change completely our text, and the piece continues to change through rehearsals and also after we perform it in different places (Lecture on the Arts in Chile after 1970, Center for Contemporary Arts, London, 1973).

In Vicuña's description of the collaborative and improvisational process of the ambulatory *Teatro Nuevo Popular*, we get a glimpse of what's to come in her work—a mindfulness of place and presence in performance that often alters, in the instant, the spoken work. Similarly, the belief that poetry is not just written or spoken, but always becoming something else or bringing something else into being, is at the heart of her discussion of "the other poetry" (oral, improvised, popular, and anonymous): "I think 'the other poetry' is fertilizing Chilean Poetry. From this fermentation something is coming out, but none of this poetry is translated into English. Some of it has not been even published yet" ("Lecture" 4). It is conceivable—although impossible to know—that Vicuña deviated from the dense and lengthy script, particularly in the sections titled "Stories," and "Short Stories," in which she describes, for example, Chile's "magical island," Chiloé (8), and the ways in which people there avoid the work of sorcerers: getting a fat woman to urinate in the middle of the kitchen, putting twelve mounds of sand on the table to keep the devil occupied, having a communal exorcism by burning excrement (10). Such mythical and magical narratives seem like early versions of those that occur in the oral performances.

The idea to transcribe these oral performances was influenced by the work of Dennis Tedlock, Jerome Rothenberg, and others associated with the ethnopoetics movement, who broke new ground with their studies, transcriptions, and enactments of indigenous orality and performance, as well as by Kenneth Sherwood, who remains one of the few to write extensively about Vicuña's oral performances.²¹ Borrowing methods developed by these scholars, the transcriptions here attempt a graphic representation of Vicuña's shifts in register and pauses by means of spacing, fonts, and size of type in order to capture not just what the words say, but how they are being said. In this graphic representation of register, I do not differentiate between the spoken languages; this isn't meant to erase their difference, but to suggest fluidity of movement between them, and to avoid the mark of otherness often suggested by italics or quotation marks. In this, I take my cues from Vicuña's own undifferentiated fusing of languages in her book *Instan*, which in turn takes cues from her own multilingual performances. Still, no transcription can capture the greatest marker of difference here, Vicuña's voice, with its pronunciations and accents, how it changes when moving from English to Spanish, how it inscribes the voice of the Chilean Spanish speaker on to the English. Vicuña's voice—every voice, really—embodies the threads of difference in a way impossible to achieve with standard, written languages, including the transcriptions included here. Thus, these transcriptions enact, too, a precarious and imperfect performance that can never become the definitive archive.

Locating performances to transcribe for this book required wading through several shelves of videotapes, cassettes, and discs in a dusty back closet of Vicuña's studio, where she kept recordings given to her by the universities, bookstores, or galleries that had hosted her performances, then attempting to find recordings that had decipherable audio or from which stills could be extracted. Transcriptions created from visual recordings include descriptions of what could be seen as well as heard; those relying on audio capture only what could be heard. Some of the performances here, however, were used despite their poor audibility. This can be seen in the performance for the opening of her *cloud-net* exhibition at Art in General (New York, 1999), where the conditions of the venue prevented an audible recording, and as a result, a complete transcription. Here I decided to capture what could be heard in

the first few minutes of Vicuña's performance, between the creaking of the floor and the opening of the elevator doors, reflecting, as Jena Osman points out, the very difficulty of hearing the performance that night, its disruptions. Osman's essay, however, goes far to relate the fuller effect of the performance's dimensions, beyond what can be heard or seen on the videotape. Whereas some performances had poor audio or shaky camera work, two included here, at the Rarig Center and Pierogi Gallery, were never recorded. In order to re-animate these performances, I coupled Vicuña's notes with Maria Damon's and Rodrigo Toscano's recollections.

Finally, the short essays that form the last section of this book were solicited from poets and critics who had attended one or more of Vicuña's poetry performances. Because much of what can be understood of these performances takes place as they are being voiced, the aim is for the essays to provide greater insight into Vicuña's work by relating the experience of being there. Most of the contributors—Osman, Spahr, Toscano, Damon, Duke, Tedlock—wrote in response to a performance they had attended and which is included in this book, either in the form of transcription or performance notes. These contributors were aided by recordings, transcriptions, or copies of performance notes I provided for them, but as their essays show, they relied on a combination of memory and documentation, providing a re-reading of the event, keyed by some lingering effect /impression it had on them. Edwin Torres's essay, however, gives us an overview of the accumulative impact of Vicuña's performance style, then relates an experience altogether different from that of the public performance—a much more intimate one—of recording her in a small apartment, with sound equipment in a closet, for an issue of *Rattapallax*. Accompanied by an essay, Kenneth Sherwood provides his own transcription of a performance, which, contrasted against the other transcriptions presented here, makes evident not only the individuality of listening, but also the possibilities for its graphic representation. Nada Gordon's essay, the last in the book, begins with notes she took during a performance at NYU in which Vicuña projected poem-drawings from her book *Instan*, and then proceeds to describe the connection between Vicuña's poetics and the book's contents.

To end *Spit Temple* with Gordon's essay on Vicuña's book *Instan* is to show the congregate influence that her evolving approach to performance has had on

her written work. In *Instan*, the laboratory of corporeal movements found in her oral performances presents itself in two forms—visual poems and multilingual poems. *Instan*'s first section, "Gramma Kellcani (the drawings)"—derived from the "Greek gramma, to scratch, draw and write," and the Quechua verb meaning to write and draw" (notes, *Instan*)—contains a constellation of word-objects handwritten in pencil that look strikingly similar to her performance notes. The drawings spiral across or down the page, forming threads of genetic material, hovering at the margins: words as stars or spermatozoa, grids of multiple meanings, cells or chemical compositions. The last page features dots floating on a page, like decomposing letters, or far away planets, even quasars dictating poems. The incredibly subtle reproduction of this first section of *Instan*, in fact, tempts the reader to run a finger against the page to see if the penciled poem-drawings rub off, as if Vicuña had just written them. The sections that follow the visual poems, "el poema cognado / the poem" and "fábulas del comienzo y restos del origen / fables of the beginning and remains of the origin," appear to provide a reading of the handwriting, a rendering of the histories beneath or traversing the word-objects. To say that this book feels informed by Vicuña's evolving poetics of performance is not to suggest that *Instan* represents a preferred direction or movement—from performance to print—since, as we have seen, all of Vicuña's texts loop back to performance, and some of the performance can sometimes become text. Rather, it suggests that in her work one cannot exist without the other.

The process of documenting Vicuña's oral performances, by bringing together these "lost" materials and people to comment on them, employs the dialectical or dialogic strategy Damon notes in Vicuña's work, one not looking for resolutions, but the constant tug and pull of opposing and mutable forces. By giving others a thread, as Vicuña does when she enters a performance, I was asking them to undo or reweave the experience in order that together we'd make something new, a quasar perhaps. These transcriptions and accompanying sections, therefore, are not the final say on Vicuña's oral performances; these performances are voiced now as they, borrowing Damon's words, "oscillate" or "merge," then "separate" and merge again with each reader who, bringing their own "Spit Temple," enters this "closed but permeable space."

III.

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The idea for *Spit Temple* began several years ago, in conversation with Darren Wershler-Henry, and along the way, many others have helped make that initial conversation into the book you are now holding.

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Despite everyone's generous contributions to *Spit Temple*, I accept all responsibility for its errors.

THE QUASARS:
SELECTED ORAL PERFORMANCES
(1995-2002)

I called the performances quasars because they were quasi per, quasi form

They were nothingness itself in formation

—Cecilia Vicuña

THE POETRY PROJECT AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH
MAY 6, 1995¹⁸

A woman introducing Vicuña walks away from the podium. The camera's gaze is directed towards an empty podium and microphone. Silence. Then, chant-like sounds somewhere in the distance, out of frame. Frame opens and Vicuña approaches, singing, her hands folded behind her back, clutching a manila envelope. She sings.

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...Basura sa liva
Basura sa liva
Ba su basura
Basura soy qori
*qori wantu*¹⁹

She takes papers out of the envelope and begins to read:

Una palabra
es tiempo

y sonido

tiempo
que respira

the word is time

18. Filmed by Mitch Corber.

19. Garbage spit / Garbage spit / Your garbage goes / Gold garbage I am / Gold berth." Vicuña begins with the word "basura," garbage, by hearing the English word "litter" in "litera de oro," which is the Spanish translation of the Quechua phrase "qori wantu," or "gold berth."

and sound
breathing

el sonido es un estado
y el estado es una estrella

a star is a state
and a state is a sound

A form of
consciousness?
a mess?
togetherness?
to gather ness?

Sound
in its ancient form
was swen

chan
tation
in cantation

sound
is enchanting
light?

There are two
South American myths
about sound
Sound,
the creator

One
accounts for the origins
of people who write
and people who sing

People in the rainforest
say
that when the gods
created peoples
they gave them
memory
so that
through sound
they could remember
all of their stories
but they created as well
some people
with no memory at all
these people they created
with a little notebook
in their hands
of course
you may guess
they were the Europeans
in the form of anthropologists
as they showed up
to the rainforest

audience laughs

Then there's another story
about sound
this one
is told
in Lima

When people
 come down
 the mountain
 looking for work
 into the huge city of Lima
 the first thing they hear
 is the roar
 of the motors

It's funny but here in New York
 we don't hear them do we?

looks around, as if trying to hear

only faint in the distance
 there they are
 thank you²⁰

Well, the sound
 of all these machines
 at work
 in Lima
 are the sounds produced from
 by one being
 that's the **Pishhh** ta ko
 the **Pishhh** tako
 that's eating
 and feeding
 on the blood
 and grease
 and body
 of all the Indians

the Pishh ta ko

20. The sound Vicuña perceives coming from the outside is not audible on tape, but it must have been to members of the audience, who laugh when she says this.

Looks through some papers that appear to contain handwriting:

So here we are to hear
the sound
of the New York
Pishtako

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In a whispery, sing-songy voice, almost like an incantation:

Canta huevón
Canta huevón
Dile al Pishtako
*Dile al Pishtako*²¹

Switches to a small notepad, and rips each one-inch sheet from the pad as she reads

Now I wish to tell you
a sort of not yet poem—
it's about Lola Kiepja
Lola Kiepja
was a Selk'nam²² woman
and the Selk'nam
were the first
disappeared

21. Say to the Pishtako / Say to the Pishtako / Sing, you fool / Sing, you fool.

22. The Selk'nam people, also known as the Ona, once inhabited Tierra del Fuego (Karukinká, for the Selk'nam), an Argentine-Chilean island at the southernmost tip of Patagonia. Anne Chapman, who first visited Tierra del Fuego in 1964, writes that Lola Kiepja was "the only Selk'nam then still living who had been born before the colonization of her land, which began about 1880" (xi). She adds that Kiepja was also the last to live "as an Indian and the only remaining shaman." Kiepja died in 1966. See *Drama and Power in a Hunting Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982.

in Chile, that is to say,
they were a whole people
made to disappear

in order to grab hold
of their land, Karukinká
Karukinká,
which we now call
Tierra del Fuego.
These were not the Spaniards
in the 15th or 16th century
but it was us
contemporary Chileans
and Argentines
killing the Selk'nam
to grab hold
of their land
Karukinká.
The ranchers paid
one pound
per each Selk'nam man
who had been killed
but they paid two pounds
for each
woman
who had been killed.
And the proof of the killing
in their case
was their tits
cut
off.

Their tits.

They were proud of their tits—
to defend their hearts
against
the icy waters
when sea diving
around Karukinká.
Tits with designs
to talk back
to the stars
above
Karukinká.

Then
they were covered
by the missionaries
and no more right
to even speak.
Tits.
No more rights.
Tits.

In her last days

Lola Kiepja

who was the last
Selk'nam
the last person
Selk'nam
the last shaman
Selk'nam
in 1966
she started to record songs

for Anne Chapman²³
 and she loved la máquina²⁴
 la máquina
 she said
 mmmm
 la mááquina
 that was the tape recorder
 she just loved it
 and after recording one song
 she would say
 ORI SHEN
 ORI SHEN
 ORI SHEN:
 that's beautiful
 and then she would say
 YI PEN
 YI PEN
 disgusting, disgusting

As an incantation:

Atina sentir
tus grandes tetas
mariscadoras
mariscadoras
mariscadoras

ya no
ya no
ya no
su mariscal

23. Selk'nam (Ona) Chants of Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. Recorded by Anne Chapman from March to June, 1966. Folkway Records: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1972.

24. The machine, referring to the tape recorder.

ya no
ya no
ya no

naúfragos flotadores
tus tetas
Lola

ya no
ya no
ya no

Switches to singing:

ya no hay mariscal

ya no
ya no
ya no
ya no

con ropa te encerraron
con ropa Lola
con ropa
con ropa te guardaron
te guardaron
*te hicieron Lola*²⁵

Lola
Lola
mariscadora

25. According to Vicuña, *hacer lola*, literally "to make lola," is a Chilean expression which means "to crash" or "to destroy a person."

te hicieron
no
te hicieron
no
te hicieron
no no no
*naúfraga*²⁶

aaah, Lola

Switching to larger notebook

Now I will read you a poem
 an urban poem
 of three women
 this I wrote in the sixties
 and
 it was censored in Chile
 but this is a recent translation
 and this is in proper English so I read it to you
 it's called "Mother and Daughter"
 it's translated by Suzanne Jill Levine²⁷

26. Try to feel / your large tits / sea diving / sea diving / sea diving // no more/ no more / no more / sea bounty // no more / no more / no more // your tits / shipwrecked / Lola // no more / no more / no more // no more sea bounty // no more / no more / no more / no more // they imprisoned you with clothes / with clothes, Lola with clothes / with clothes they kept you / they wrecked you Lola // Lola / Lola sea diver // they made you / no / they wrecked you / no / they made you / no no no / shipwrecked.

27. Levine's translation was first published in the *American Poetry Review*, May/June 1995, Vol. 24: No. 3.

The mother is as friendly as the daughters
she prostitutes herself
with ease
she's 20 years old
in each breast
and her nipples rise
agile
like race horses
her buttocks are sunken
and her maximum
aspiration
is to deny the existence
of all humidity
to take those worlds
off the earth
to let her daughters
be flat dolls

in the night
gusts of skin
take the house
all that was erased
begins to exist

crazed
the mother flings herself
upon her daughters
and rapes them

one after the other

since childhood they have known
no
other

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treatment
today, reaching poverty
(puberty, I mean, or poverty)
with an apparent timidity
they look
as if they dominate
the world

Opens up her book, *Unravelling Words and the Weaving of Water*:

Now to pick up on the poems of David Trinidad
also about dolls
and about smoke
as if we had come to an agreement

well anyway I will read you another
girl poem
but this one
is a little more complicated
um
it's about a pun
in Spanish the word 'oro' means 'gold'
and also it's first person for 'I pray'
now the ancient weaver girls were isolated in a place called *acllahuasi*²⁸
in ancient Perú
where they had no other mission
but spinning
and weaving
this golden thread
of Vicuña hair
now the whole poem is constructed constructed like two threads
the concept is that the two threads have to be

28. "House of Chosen Women" in Quechua.

one spun to the right
the other one to the left
so that they are in tension like lovemaking
to one another
this is what makes
the weaving
sacred

Reads:

Oro es tu hilar²⁹:

*TEMPlo del siempre en he brar
arma tu casa en el mismo trez nar
teja mijita no más
truenos y rayos bordando al pasar
tuerce que tuerce el dorado enderezo el fresco ofrendar
ñustas calmadas de inquieto pensar
marcas señales
pallá y pacá
hilos y cuerda
los negros y los dorá
cavilan el punto
no se vaya escapar
hilo y vano
lleno y vacío
el mundo es hilván*

Looks in book

*pierdo el hilo y te hilacho briznar
código y cuenta*

29. This poem and the translation that follows were published in Vicuña's *Unravelling Words & the Weaving of Water*. St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press: 1992. 96-100. The translation is by Suzanne Jill Levine and Eliot Weinberger. In the transcription, I do not conform to the formal elements of the published version of poems, nor of their translations. Vicuña makes some changes to the Spanish version as she reads.

*cómputo comunal
todo amarran
hilando en pos
cuerdas y arroyos
aunar lo tejido
¿no es algo inicial?*

*el cálido fuelle
oro templar
habla y abriga
el mejor juglar*

Gold is your spinning

Gold
is your thread
of prayer temple
of forever threading eyelet
your house
built from the same braid
weave on
thunder and lightning embroidered
as you go
twisting and twisting
till the gold
rises
a fresh
offering
the unquiet thoughts
of the quiet weaving girl
marks and signs here and there
the threads and strings
black and gold

thinking
before
each stitch
not
to let it drop
a grid of empty space
a fabric of holes
the world
is a loose stitch
I've lost the thread
but I rag on
it's a code
an account
an account
of the people
tying it all
threading towards it all
streams and strings
the stars
the river weaves
the woven
woven into one.

Eso es todo
gracias

Returns applause and walks out of frame

BARNARD COLLEGE

NEW YORK CITY, NOVEMBER 16, 1996³⁰

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AaaaHHH

aaaahhhh

We're all tired aren't we

aaaaahhhhhhhhhh

I'd like to respond to Rachel's

"nomadic

sheeee-mmmmer"³¹ *hmmm*

"nomadic

shimmer"

but this one

between life

and death

and back

I like

to think

of our selves

as if we were dead

30. This performance-lecture, here in its entirety, was part of "America's Feminisms and the Poetics of the Avant-Garde," a panel organized by Rachel DuPlessis for Barnard College's 10th International Conference on Translation, November 15-16, 1996. The panelists, in order of presentation, were Kathleen Fraser, Susan Rubin Suleiman, Vicuña, and Rosmarie Waldrop. This transcription was made from an audio recording.

31. Vicuña is responding to DuPlessis's introduction, in which she explains, in relation to the title of the panel, that "*America's* means native-born and world-born, not a nationalism or a continent-ism, but a nomadic shimmer inside a specific civic and political location."

For now
we are people
but then
we will be only
voice
Navigating
we will go back
to the ancient
future
stream

stream of voice

When Rachel
invited me
to come

I thought
of all of us
of the lines
that began
in each one of the poets
present in this room
and each one
of all the ones that were reading
and the way
in which a phrase

—for example in a piece of paper
that Kathleen brought in
the dissolving string
from Barbara Guest—

each one of our lines

is continuing
 and completing the next
 so when we're all read
 way back
 in the future
 HOW are we going to sound
 speaking
 to each other
 becoming
 once more
 voice

And to respond and to echo
 to this future
 ancient
 stream
 of our voices
 I wanted to go back
 to the very very first time I came across it
 But before I go into that
 I wish to speak back to Susan³²
 to her mother
 and the play with mother
 Before we begin I'll remember my mother
 I used to
 write some text about her
 where she would say:
 YA MIJITA *vuelvo al tiro vuelvo al tiro*
Okay, baby, I'm coming back I'm coming back
 Disappear for the rest of the day
 THAT was her education
 GREAT joy
 GREAT fun

32. Referring to Susan Rubin Suleiman's talk prior to Vicuña's.

hmp

In the 60s

I'm a teenager and I'm living in Chile
and I discover this book

Antología de la poesía surrealista
translated by Aldo Pellegrini³³

Dada and Surrealism in Spanish
my goodness

Dada

You have to figure out

I was fourteen and Santiago is a city
at the foot of these *huuuuge* mountains

Yet the city transfigures itself mentally
into a European city

Of course, everybody thinks this is so Western

DA-DA

DA-DA

nothing could be more appropriate
for us

And I remember the one poem

in this book

that did it for me

It was called "E pericoloso sporgersi"³⁴

"E pericoloso sporgersi"

Kathleen would know what that means

this is a sign in Italian trains telling you not to put your arm like this
just outside the window you know

or your head much worse

audience laughter

I remember this poem for like 30 years

and what it had done for me

And when I thought of this poem

I could see the arm, of course, outside the window

33. In Pellegrini's *Antología de la poesía surrealista de la lengua francesa*.

34. "Danger: Do not lean out."

and the hair in the arm at full speed
 and the skin becoming like a PRAI-rie of skin
 and so
 yesterday just before coming here
 I thought to myself I better check it out

Of course it was nothing like I remember it

audience laughter

Not a word of it

“E pericoloso sporgersi” was actually the second poem
 and the one that I had forgotten
 was the one that had the line

The line said
 “no hay palabras
 solamente pelos”

audience laughter

hheehheee
 no translation needed?
 NOOO—let me translate a little
 OK
 SHE says, there are no words only hairs
 hmmm?
 So of course, I mixed them in
 The poem I was reading in Spanish was written in English
 by an Egyptian woman
 born in London
 Her name
 is
 Joyce Mansour

and I say this poem did it for me because in THAT poem

I found the door
 to
 write
 exactly
 the kinds of things that I perceived
 and saw at that age
 But the way it all began for me
 was two years later
 This is a lazy afternoon siesta
 and all of a sudden
 I get up
 as if somebody or someone
 or "what"
 the "it" probably
 from Charles's³⁵ poem
 was holding me
 from the nape of my neck
 and *CRRRAKKK*
 all of a sudden I begin to write
 And the first words
 that came in that poem
 are in this little magazine from Mexico³⁶

It says:
 "*Baghdad y los helicópteros*
Baghdad y los limones
Baghdad y las personas que cantan"³⁷
 Baghdad, *hmmm*, Baghdad. Why Baghdad?

I thought of you
 perhaps for you Baghdad

35. Referring to Charles Bernstein.

36. *El Corno Emplumado*.

37. "Baghdad and the helicopters / Baghdad and the lemons / Baghdad and the persons who sing."

would bring the image of Saddam Hussein
of what we now call Iraq

But for me, Baghdad in the 60s
what could it have been?

It must have been Scheherazade
the woman who saved her neck
every night
with her tongue

A forgotten scholar
a man called
Emilio García Gómez³⁸
writing in the 40s in the South of Spain
said
that the melodic matrix
of the language we now call Spanish
began in Mesopotamia
began there
long before Baghdad was even called Baghdad
a melodic matrix
that traveled on the backs of camels
and horses all the way through Africa
into the Mediterranean
and into Spain
imagine that matrix
that melodic matrix
the sound innate
breathing in the songs
the mothers sing to their children
this matrix remains

38. In 1933, preeminent Spanish Arabist and translator García Gómez published *Poemas árabo-andaluces*, an influential study of Arabic-Andalusian poetry.

the same as words
as syntax changed from one language to the next

The same and different
through all the migration of words
the migrations of sound

Then of course the meditation could go
into the
way all these Arab lyrics
so-called Arab
they were only Arab for a while
these lyrics
went into the Mediterranean
but would leave the Mediterranean behind
and now in the Andes
again
hearing my mother
and my mother is a dark woman
a Chilean woman
Chilean for generations
but she's Moorish
dark, hairy Moorish woman on one side
and Quechua, possibly
or who knows
Mapuche Indian
on
the other
side
so when she sung to me
two matrices
two melodies
were
mixing

the Andes
and Mesopotamia

148 | Each one falling
and pushing the other
into place
for it is the emptiness
the void
the forgotten aspect
of each sound
that is probably
propelling us
into speech
as we search for memory
and oblivion
at once

words move in waves
of memory and forgetfulness

one giving birth to the other

A transmission
of voice: *"mi amor mijita
mijita venga para 'ca"*
the heart beat, all future rhymes
*"mijito DESGRACIADO
VEN PARA 'CA
DESGRACIADO, hasta cuando me va a joder
este conche su madre"*³⁹
that's all you need
And the melodic matrix is in place

39. "My love, my girl / c'mere my daughter" ... "Miserable child / c'mere / stop messing with me / you little brat"

As I speak to you in English I think
translation is possible because
thoughts are word less
and the voice is the transfiguration
of milk
the milk of thought
the milk of thought
you know going back into the sky
La via láctea, you know
is the mother pushing her tit up
you know
voice and words are feminine in Spanish
La voz y LA
palabra
but in Quechua they are neuter
because the voice as the person
includes both female and male
That's all.

unflummoxed and tentacles reaching toward each other, streaming outward for the stimulation of each others' communitasse from which to drink hungthirstily in our core elementalities. Intertextuated, we revel in her unraveling, spelling/binding gossamer sonority, soft-precarious and we strain to hear a keening, to catch with our kenning-challenged hear-hands. A precise marriage of sensory and cerebral, perceptive and affective, knowing and knotting, nodding and no-ing.

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN
ODESSA, APRIL 11, 2002: A TRANSCRIPTION BY KENNETH SHERWOOD

[Melodious Chant - Vocables]

a la salud ustedes
salud

ahhh

ay ay ay ay

gracias a todos por venir
gracias a ken por traer me
gracias a todos

you all understand that don't you?

gracias
you know

what's the origin of the sound GRAA
GRAAAAAAAAA

he thinks its very funny doesn't he

graaaaaaaa
gra in its most ancient form
is heart

and the idea is that when you say gra
it's like saying heart aloud
so each time you say gra cias
it's like you bring the Aloudness
of the heart
back

heart aloud
gracias concha y tu mar

graaaa
graaaaaaaaaaciaaaaa

....

it was hard to come in
inside
because outside
you know you have this terrace
you've been to this terrace?

so you can lie flat

watching the falcons
play a game with the swallows

and the swallows do just like the hummingbirds
they pretend
that light
is flashing
on their bodies

TAH they go like that
and turn the ray
in a different direction
so I will begin
with a hummingbird poem for you
because this is what they do
some of these creatures they have
this is the males
they have this red plumage
here in the front of their breast

and this is how they catch the females
they play with the light in such a manner
Tah they go like that
and **Fum**, throw a ray of light
so she
will catch
the one
that throws the best
rays of light

La luz

es el primer animal visible de lo invisible.
Light

is the first visible animal
of the invisible.

That's
Lezama
Lima

Tienes algo que comunicar, Colibrí?

Lanzas rayos

colibrí?

el jugo de tus flores

evidentemente

te ha mareado Colibrí

lanza rayos

lanza rayos,

colibrí

i

that's

Chiripá Guaraní

Have something to say,

Hummingbird?

Hummingbird flashes

rays of light

The juice from your flowers

has made you dizzy

Hummingbird flashes

rays

of light!

Ten
tenelaire
Zun Zun

La luz

Traga néctar
lumbrón

Espejo
que vuela

Oro tornasol

Cáliz
corola
bicho fulgor

Vence a la muerte

Altarci to licór

Light plays upon you

[you] sip
nectar

[nectar in death]
bird-fly
[fly in death]
Mirror in flight

Iridescent gold

Chalice of petals
[shine shine] shining critter

beat death

nectarine
liquor shrine

Child licking Sip sip

Chupá
[chupá chupá] picaflor!

Nadie es lo frágil
Quicker than quick
heart
beats
Pico en perfume
Flying prism
light of the edge

I'm off
to work
Ven a
trabajar

Viso y derrumbe

Cálamo zúm

Humming [the] feather
Dream
whirringdon't
stop!

Gracias
el pobrecito hummingbird I
I had not thought of him

do you have them around here?

[Yes]

They've been hiding from me though

I haven't seen them around
and
I never saw before the association between that
the red light
somehow in you made me think
it was really them
doing it

in reality
when I thought of showing you this film

it's because that film
I did in 1999

years before it all happened

do you remember that line
that says

we will all
go away
unless
a new
net

worth
is born

306 | imagine the worth
of the whole
net
as a new
net
worth

imagine that

imagine too
that this is my second 11th of september

imagine that in the second
for you
it's the second
because for you this one will always be the first

but for me the first
is 1973

do you remember the american pilots flying chilean planes
to bomb la moneda in Santiago
do you remember that

remember that
remember that flight

forgotten in threads
forgotten in threads
forgotten in silence

as if it never ever ever happened
gone into the black black hole

gone

gone

form addresses shadow

T'ao Ch'ien says

form

into the shadow

peace

peace

do you know what's inside the word peace

LOOK at the word

it is not a word at all

it is a state

it is an inner core

it is

something I cannot even see

here in the page

the scribbling goes round

I cannot see

it says the three are a trellis

the first meaning of peace was a trellis

a trellis of hands?

no

a trellis for vines?

no

a trellis of words?

no
the origin of page
a pact
pact in peace
an accord
as if the page agrees
to be
with us
as if we're **in accord**
waiting waiting for an accord

as if the page
the sound of the page is bound together
with us
as if the sound of this page
is moving
about

is moving about
is moving
about

imagine the sound of writing
bringing about the page

the page of peace
are we in the same page you say?
are we in the same pact
pacting peace
are we of the peace
do you say

do you say a peace

pact pact pact

the word comes to you

as a bird to a nest
who is she
who is she
it comes from others to you

does it come to you
it dwells in you
it speaks in you
it comes in you

walkers on a dry sea
on a deep blue sea

someone asked
what is this permian basin
floating about
floating about this dark oily sea

we are the walkers of the dry sea
the walkers of the dry sea

last night
we were on the fourth floor of this building
looking out into the dry sea
people flying kites
kites against a deep blue sky

floating about
the dark dark oil

going up in flames
going up in flames
going up in flames

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CARDINAL FORMANTS: EMPLACEMENT, TANGENCE,
WITNESS, RAPT

Kenneth Sherwood

Emplacement

we are the walkers of the dry sea
the walkers of the dry sea

It risks becoming a commonplace to image the post-industrial *estadounidense* as a driver cruising in Humvee, and for whom, even clotted in suburban gridlock, there is no *place*—but roads, networks, multi-lane shunts that bypass by design the particulars of place or locale. Reading Vicuña on the hummingbirds chasing automobile tail-lights that pierce the smog of Santiago streets, one suspects that she knows El Autopista del Sur of Cortazar, in which an unreal cessation in traffic flow brings travelers out of their automotive shells to enter a mutual space, a flickering of utopia before the movement is resumed. Premonition of the local, lost.

Vicuña speaks “on location,” in situ, eschewing compass and G.P.S. As one learns from Dennis Tedlock, this is not anomalous but fundamental to such “other Americans” as the Zuni or the Maya. And not just at the scale of architecture or monument or ritual act, but as a function of everyday living. Vicuña orients herself—to the cardinal points (or four directions), the wind, light, topography and ecology—with equal intensity whether gazing from high in a university building in upstate New York or scanning the horizon in west Texas.

Accessed again with texts, audio tapes, and notes sitting beside one, the performances overlay physical spaces and remembered locales: the canvas "Ode to Joy" hangs behind the podium in Capen Hall, Buffalo, New York . . . a flotilla of ice shards sweeps towards the falls at Niagara . . . late light tinctures the tributaries of the St. Johns River become earth's veins in Jacksonville, Florida . . . wisp of Swallows sweeps above the flatness of the Permian Basin in Odessa, Texas. Each performance begins in place, bringing it—the placeness of the place—freshly to the minds of the locals who should (but as often do not) know it. Then the coming inside, entrance into a performance space and the space of language.

*it was hard to come in
inside
because outside
you know you have this terrace
you've been to this terrace?*

Plural Tangence

*do you know what's inside the word peace
look at the word
it is not a word at all*

Or it is not a word in the fixed, singular sense. The event creates a pluralized space, employing various media. But more than the simple multiplication of media—a chanted song, the silent video of dancing figures weaving, the images of a cloud-net, rays of light (threads) superimposed upon poet, audience, screen, room—it is an effect of tangence.

The book. Joining in space and through sight/sound from tangent to tangible (from *tangere*, to touch). In: touching the linguistic dimension. On: touching

the visual dimension. Off: touching the temporal dimension. Words' forms weighed and weighted, assuming sound shapes, page shapes. Before us, language transpiring (breathing), "connecting" through patterns of repetition, etymological riffs, puns, and rhymes.

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*imagine the sound of writing
bringing about the page*

*the page of peace
are we in the same page
you say?
are we in the same pact
pacting peace*

The performativity brought to her readings foregrounds less the expressive spontaneity associated with improvisation, and more a kind of listening. Roland Barthes writes: "...whereas for centuries listening could be defined as an intentional act of audition (to listen is to want to hear, in all conscience), today it is granted the power of playing over unknown spaces...listening grants access to all forms of polysemy, of overdetermination, of superimposition...by definition, listening was applied; today we ask listening to release...."¹⁰² Place the performance/transcription of "Tentenelaire Zun Zun" (Zit Zit, Hummingbird) against the pages of *Unravelling Words & The Weaving of Water*.¹⁰³ Grounded in the text, a virtuoso crossing between languages unfolds. The conventional bi-lingual page of the translation enforces a kind of cultural separatism; in the performance, a fusion or melding creates a new, local arrangement—in Spanish and English, with lines omitted, repeated, reordered—a new versioning.

Versioning—creating new arrangements of a poem during performance—shifts our orientation towards *the* poem, or the *Vicuña* poem. Nick Piombino writes: "There is a distinction that can be made between written works that can be appreciated by means of ordinary silent reading and those in which

102. "Listening," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*.

Trans. Richard Howard. U California, 1991. 58.

103. *Vicuña*, 74-79.

each word should be heard read aloud or individually sounded out aloud in the mind. With the latter works readers are encouraged to experience the poem by sounding it out internally in a process of concentrated, yet freely imaginative listening and reading.”¹⁰⁴

The witnessing of a performance encourages one to begin to read as a listener, entering and stretching the language itself and the “texts” of the poems. We sound out the words in an echo of the composing process. Vicuña embodies the “poet [as] researcher who must listen closely to the sounds and voices of actuality to discover where the poetry may exist within it.”¹⁰⁵

*are we of the peace
do you say*

*do you say a peace
pact pact pact*

Burnt Witness

*the word comes to you
as a bird to a nest
who is she
who is she
it comes from others to you*

*does it come to you
it dwells in you
it speaks in you
it comes in you*

104. Nick Piombino. “The Aural Ellipsis and the Nature of Listening in Contemporary Poetry.” *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word*. Ed. Charles Bernstein. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 62.

105. *Ibid.* 65.

Here oral performance exploits the mutable, the fusion of syllables and tongue. The page, the sounding. Sounding takes the form of a resistance to forgetting, *as if it never ever ever happened*. Sounding and forging, as if every ever happened.

Somehow the performances foreground the ethical, historical, and political in their enframing of a communitarian space. Whispered, gestured towards: the towers and the architecture. Here too resonates Nathaniel Mackey's observation on the experiencing of September 11th not as a sudden crisis but as part of an ongoing catastrophe. For Vicuña, there is the need to construct poems amid some thirty or more years of dust and debris.

Ears hear: The word comes to you /as a burnt witness.

Chatter After Rapt

Doors opened to a performance and the space was filled, or rather syllables performed its dimensions. Words as worlds as warders, watchers offering themselves up, leaving the memory of shared space and words. Then from the audio file which runs on past the end: sightless digitized sound replicates a space, a vertiginous, stereo simulation. Shifts, tensions, patterns as invisible migrations across a transparent sky, or the settling into order of tracks across a blank field. Voices cluster, breaking the crust and the words rush back as air into a vacuum. High-fidelity chatter after rapt.

THE POETRY PROJECT AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH
NEW YORK, NY, MAY 15, 2002

Cecilia Vicuña

*Vicuña writes to her mother regarding the St. Mark's performance on May 15, 2002*¹⁰⁶:

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yes, mami, it was the most beautiful reading in the world for me. as always, i begin not knowing what i am going to do. i am introduced, people applaud, and as they wait, i don't make a move. i am nowhere to be found. i sit quietly, in the back, with a spool of white thread in my hand, and suddenly, i lift the spool and make it spin, as if it were a spindle. and at that moment i realize that i, too, have become a living spindle and begin to listen to its slight sound, almost imperceptible. while turning, and without thinking, I begin to do a little dance beneath the spindle, placing the spindle next to the ears of some people, so that they too can hear it turning. i walk down the wide aisle in the center of the hall. mimicking my movements, the thread begins to fall to the floor, like a small cascade, undulating back and forth: it goes forward as I approach the stage, then back again, until it forms a tangle. then I take the spool and throw it forward, towards the podium. once there, i grab the end of the thread and put it in my mouth, saying: "That is my mother" and I begin to sing a little song, as if in your voice, and say: "that is what she would do, with a thread in her mouth," and I continue to sing and read the poem from my new book that is dedicated to you. when i am done, everyone is like in another world, and it is difficult to return to this one. it is a gesture of love towards you, who taught me to weave and play with thread while singing, as you do. ¿le gustó?

love, your cec

106. Translated from the Spanish.

The first overview of the work of this seminal multi-disciplinary artist, SPIT TEMPLE collects texts and transcriptions of Cecilia Vicuña's uncategorizable improvised performances, which combine singing, movement, chants, and stories. Also included are a critical introduction by Rosa Alcalá, a poetic memoir by Vicuña addressing her life in performance, images from Vicuña's extensive personal archive, and response pieces by Maria Damon, Linda Duke, Nada Gordon, Jena Osman, Kenneth Sherwood, Juliana Spahr, Dennis Tedlock, Edwin Torres, and Rodrigo Toscano.

“VICUÑA'S WORK, AT ITS VERY ESSENCE, IS 'A WAY OF REMEMBERING'—AS IF EXILE AND RECALL JOINED TO UNRAVEL AN 'AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN DEBRIS,' AS ONE PERSONAL STORY WITHIN A LARGER NARRATIVE.”

—ROBERTO TEJADA

CECILIA VICUÑA is a Chilean poet, artist, and filmmaker. The author of twenty poetry books published in Europe, Latin America and the U.S., she performs and exhibits her work widely. At the forefront of conceptual, impermanent art and improvisatory oral performance, her work deals with the interactions between language, earth, and textiles. Since 1980, she has divided her time between Chile and New York.

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