

## of rivers crossed and lessons learned

somewhere in between the flower's head and the soil  
there's a new sound, an escape route  
you find it in the way that the water streams down the river  
constantly rolling along with the twists and turns of the ground

embracing the shape of the river banks  
eroded over time, stagnant for generations  
pathways to move in and swim within  
get lost

As recently as last week, after fifteen years of floating about, I returned home to my mother's arms. We danced, we cooked, we smoked into the night overlooking the deep, star-filled night sky. Somewhere along the way, I got my tongue in a twist.

A state of linguistic flux. 'Mãe' sounds better now, even though that isn't yet the word that wants to come out when I see her. 'Mum' – or the more effervescent 'mummy' – wants to roll out.

'Mum', a dear friend once told me, is also an English word for someone who is quiet, silent. She hated the word because it reminded her of how women – specially mothers or transgender women – were often expected to be mostly silent. No-one seems to know what its origins are. For that would be meaningless.

What matters is what I mean.  
The here.  
The now.

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Eventually, the future will come and it will all become much more clear.  
'Mummy' always reminds me, always, of the movie...

Oh Hollywood  
Oh divine, simple understanding  
Simple nuances  
Simple melodies  
Simple chords  
Get stuck in your head  
Form coherence  
Kill dissent  
Prevents a full bloom  
If only Spring where here already

floating along with the current, hitting salt fish along the way  
with short, temporary feasts we stumble onto one another with joy  
the *glee* of someone new  
fuck me, I need -  
to bend with the river's shores  
do the rivers even have shores?  
Fuck me, I need -

They do now. I have decided.

*Don't get so bogged down with words. They're just that.*

Just that. Words.

I should slow down. Go for a walk along the river.

Vou levar os calções de banho, talvez hoje a água não esteja tão fria.

Hoje quero dançar à borda do rio

Acompanhar a coreografia das ondas

In Lithuanian language, your surname tells *me* your marital status.

The English have a saying that Eskimos have 50 words for snow.

This is technically a lie. A racist one too, although in true *English* fashion, it is seen as a benevolent one because it sounds cute, or interesting. At best, it is a play with words, a true English tradition, so really you should just laugh it off.

The truth is that no, Eskimos don't have 50 words for now. There are many cultures, ethnicities and languages in the South and North Pole. The English just don't like to see the full colours of the world, even though they have a specific word for each of them...

Perhaps the English should learn from the continuous understanding of the spectrum of colours, like they do in the Dani language. Pink is, at the end of the day, nothing more than a lighter shade of red.

*(make a sound that reminds you of home – whatever that word is for you)*

In Portuguese, the word for someone who works in customer service at a restaurant is 'Empregado', the person who has a job to do. Labour. An active function.

Em Inglês, a palavra para definir o mesmo encargo é 'Waiter'.

Aquele que espera pelas ordens do consumidor. Ou do patrão.

Uma posição de servidão da classe operária para com quem manda.

Talvez um dia

Consigamos reunir palavras que desbotam

E com sentenças reconhecidas e coerentes

Até lá, então

Vai andando, sempre para a frente

Deixando para trás tudo o que escapa

Nós por cá ficamos

E no entretanto,

Vamos brincando às primaveras

somewhere in between

the flower's head

the leaves

the thorns

the stub

and

the soil

there's a series of patters

lines of different shapes, girth, stubbornness

they are there, not always visible  
but there if you look closely

in all the shades of green you can imagine

they tell stories of multiple lives

multiple stories and tongues from all over the world

of rivers crossed and lessons learned

of meals enjoyed and foods rotted

of new sounds and shapes grown over time

and patience

and every Spring, they bloom again with a new, beautiful colour

with renewed voracity

looking for a place in the sun

a place to call their own

a sound of their own making

a connection they all share with linked arms and raised fists

in unison

Xavier de Sousa