

This digital proof is provided for free by UDP.

It documents the existence of the book *Enigmas* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, translated by Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal, which was first printed in 2015.

If you like what you see in this proof, we encourage you to purchase the book directly from UDP, from our distributors and partner bookstores, or from any independent bookseller.

If you find our Digital Proofs program useful for your research or as a resource for teaching, please consider making a donation to UDP.

If you make copies of this proof for your students or any other reason, we ask you to include this page.

Please support nonprofit & independent publishing by making donations to the presses that serve you and by purchasing books through ethical channels.

UGLY DUCKLING PRESSE  
uglyducklingpresse.org

Sor  
Juana  
Inés de  
la Cruz

*Enigmas*

TRADUCIDO POR  
TRANSLATED BY

Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal



**Señal #2**  
BOMB Magazine  
Libros Antena Books  
Ugly Duckling Presse

*Sor Juana  
Inés de la Cruz*

Enigmas

**Traducido por / Translated by  
Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal**



¿Cuál es aquella homicida  
que piadosamente ingrata  
siempre en cuanto vive mata  
y muere cuando da vida?

~

What is that slayer-strife  
that piously naughty  
when living slaughters  
and dies upon granting life?

¿Cuál es aquella aflicción  
que es, con igual tiranía,  
el callarla cobardía,  
decirla desatención?

~

What is that torment  
wherein, with equal tyranny,  
to hush it lacks bravery,  
to speak it is neglect?

¿Cuál puede ser el dolor  
de efecto tan desigual,  
que siendo en sí el mayor mal,  
remedia otro mal mayor?

~

What can be the grief  
of such lopsided impact  
that the chief monster in fact,  
remedies a more monstrous mischief?

¿Cuál es la sirena atroz  
que en dulces ecos veloces  
muestra el seguro en sus voces,  
guarda peligro en su voz?

~

What is that atrocious mermaid  
that within sweet, swift echoes  
the guard within her voices shows,  
voices the hazard in her serenade?

¿Cuál es aquella deidad  
que con tan ciega ambición,  
cautivando la razón  
toda se hace libertad?

~

What is that deity  
that with such blind ambition  
captivating reason  
utterly becomes liberty?

¿Cuál puede ser el cuidado  
que libremente imperioso,  
se hace a sí mismo dichoso  
y a sí mismo desdichado?

~

What can be the heed  
that freely urgent  
self-made as pleased  
and self-made displeased?

¿Cuál será aquella pasión  
que no merece piedad  
pues pelagra en necedad  
por ser toda obstinación?

~

What shall be that passion  
that deserves no mercy  
so jeopardizes as idiocy  
by being utterly stubborn?

¿Cuál puede ser el contento  
que con hipócrita acción  
por sendas de recreación  
va caminando al tormento?

~

What can be the delight  
that with hypocritical gesture  
along pathways of leisure  
goes trekking toward a hellish plight?

¿Cuál será la idolatría  
de tan alta potestad  
que hace el ruego indignidad,  
la esperanza grosería?

~

What will be the idol vow  
of such high sway  
that makes prayer shame,  
the vulgar wow?



¿Cuál será aquella expresión  
que cuando el dolor provoca,  
antes de voz en la boca  
hace eco en el corazón?

~

What will be that spoken dart  
that when it causes wounds  
before voice in the mouth  
forms echoes in the heart?

¿Cuáles serán los despojos  
que al sentir algún despecho  
siendo tormento en el pecho  
son desahogo en los ojos?

~

What will be the dispossession  
when feeling disheartened  
being torture in the heart  
is respite in the eyes?

¿Cuál puede ser el favor  
que por oculta virtud,  
si se logra es inquietud  
y si se espera temor?

~

What can be the favor  
that by secret virtue  
if reached, is rued  
and if awaited, feared?

¿Cuál es la temeridad  
de una alta presunción  
que pudiendo ser razón  
pretende ser necesidad?

~

What is that audacity  
with such great presumption  
that possibly being reason  
fakes being idiocy?

¿Cuál el dolor puede ser  
que en repetido llorar,  
es su remedio cegar  
siendo su achaque el no ver?

~

What pain can it be  
that in recurring cries,  
its remedy is to blind  
as its blight is not to see?

¿Cuál es aquella atención  
que con humilde denuedo  
defendiendo con el miedo  
da esfuerzos a la razón?

~

What is that attention  
that with meek spunk  
upholding spook  
grants brawn to reason?

¿Cuál es aquel arbol  
de jurisdicción tan bella,  
que inclinado como estrella  
deslumbra tal como el sol?

~

What is that crimson  
of spectrum without par  
that bowing like star  
dazzles like sun?

¿Cuál es aquel atrevido  
que indecentemente osado  
fuera respeto callado  
y es agravio proferido?

~

What is that nerve  
that obscenely gutsy  
were it hushed be dignity  
and offered is a barb?

¿Cuál podrá ser el portento  
de tan noble calidad,  
que es con ojos ceguedad  
y sin vista entendimiento?

~

What will be the whiz  
of such noble caliber  
that is with eyes blinder  
and without sight wits?

¿Cuál es aquella deidad  
que con medrosa quietud,  
no conserva la virtud  
sin favor de la maldad?

~

What is that deity  
that with composure ghoulish  
preserves no virtue  
without aid of evil?

¿Cuál es el desasosiego  
que traidoramente aleve,  
siendo su origen la nieve  
es su descendencia el fuego?

~

What is the despair  
that traitorously fakes,  
its origin snowflakes  
its offspring the fire?

### ***Translator's Not-(Subtractive Letter)***

*What eclipse enamors  
that blurts apocalypse,  
kisses a reader's lips  
with lack of answers?*

Dear Reader,

A translator's note would be antithetical to translating Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's enigmas, for the unknown draws the translator's and hopefully the reader's suspense. The irony is that quatrains give the illusion of completion, but Sor Juana's enigmas give the reader room to have the final word. These brief poems are already at the crossroad of translatability and untranslatability, yet to layer a rendering of the texts, even a Spanish speaker has to establish a close reading and an evaluation of the most memorable literary devices, thereby using literary interpretation as a form of partiality and fragmentation. My border-oriented division splits etymology anachronistically, and I do so knowing that for the sake of multiplicity, translators like Amanda Powell have already explored temporal cohesion when translating Sor Juana. My maximalism would prefer for all of Sor Juana's enigma translations to be hyperlinked to each other as if they were online publications. My self-assigned apocalyptic conflict on the papered plot of literary translation is that singular mimesis does not suffice, yet that inevitable selection is a necessary end. By prioritizing a reader's response, Sor Juana's legacy has allowed for a plethora of translations, granting feminisms and aesthetics to be reimagined through each translator's phenomenological lens.

I swap vantage points in a multiple-point perspective to depict my synesthetic goal: through translation of the original Baroque poetry in Spanish, my maximalist transnational mind frames its perspective constructing English from the Generation 1.5 view. This framing encompasses four facets of my being: 1) a migrant child with Spanish as my first language, the one that brings long, soft words as my comfort at moments of panic; 2) a subtractive Ainsworth effect from my early childhood, a Mayan glottal stop and singsong rhythms that my part-time long-lost nanny still

whispers in my dreams; 3) an adult Chicana who has grappled with the coercion of prosaic English as a business language but who has found poetry to be a refuge; and 4) a product of Affirmative Action, a process that permitted extensive studies of German during formative teenage years and was my foreign rebound from my first love math as a universal language, to immerse myself in art as a form of subjective sensory communication. Together, these four modes frame my aesthetics which I call *partial poetics*; although I usually use four other descriptions for my multimedia work, for me to stick to words alone and to translate Sor Juana means to find four basic midpoints of access between her writing and my reading.

I rely on my inner child to be my inner ear and index finger to point out and to balance poetic phonetic traditions in English while retaining occasional cognates and Latinate English, but my adult checkpoint fingers contemporary Chicana feminism, which often relies on Indigenous spirituality and begs to differ from Amanda Powell and Electa Arenal's contrast between Sor Juana's seventeenth-century theology and contemporary secular feminism. Consequently, I holistically toy with cacophony, as Spanish is sometimes associated with euphony when a) Indigenous languages also experience aural discrimination and b) English is considered a Germanic language; additionally, I take into consideration the discrepancy between my Latinate rhythmic preference and my Anglo-Saxon revision. I prefer to hear the start of a trochee, but I know my English reader will be more inclined toward iambs. Despite Arenal and Powell's affirmation of Sor Juana's "fluent expression," Sor Juana's smooth rhythm yet rigid end rhyme gave me contrapposto decisions at every enigma. I made an effort to stay true to the content while teasing the ear to learn a new syncopated way of listening. The ear is like the lusty cusp at the hem of the clothing where the imagination is sexier than what is actually exposed.

Sound accused of covering silence, however, sheds expression. My phonetic emphasis is my way of including the unsaid sacrifice of selecting English substitutes for the Spanish. As much as I love plurality, I had to pick a unifying aesthetic that would point to naked sound. Sor Juana uses "concepts...based on antithesis," yet her "forms are strict," says Margaret Peden.

My translation adamantly accepts Sor Juana's overt rhyme or phonetic proximity, deflects covert syntactical additions when possible (as Spanish has verb-oriented word order, while English contains subject-oriented word order), and rejects lexical purity while trying to maintain both a rhythmic pace yet antipodal content. Consequently, I do not follow strict denotations but seek a closely related synonym, for translation can be porous compensation.

How do I pass on or include translational options? The dotted lines are drawn by the priority of rhyme. Vertically, rhyme further combines a linear Western patriarchal poetic tradition with my innate ESL cognate recursion I acquired from my political mother whose feminism was shaped by Sor Juana—in context, today, rhythmic rhyme in English can still be heard, among other contexts, in protest slogans—but horizontally, rhyme tugs between the traditions of euphonic Spanish assonance and cacophonous English consonance. Sometimes I cheat diagonally and use English alliteration to pretend to practice vocal undressing while addressing vocabulary. The key is the plasticity between meaning and the perennial *sounds good*.

In an abstract-concrete dichotomy the expectation and surprise of sound highlight that the most important factor is the structure. I sustain a consistency between “what” and “that” toward the beginning of each enigma to stress the macroscopic litany of twenty quatrains amounting to the religious processional number of forty-day couplet measures and forty-night couplet measures. The difference is that day and night are associated with heavenly bodies, while I am creating an outer and inner sense of time. To time the effect of double entendres, I gauge which of the two meanings should be prominent. In essence, to maintain structural integrity employs a series of simultaneous parallels, like a string of double helix carrying Sor Juana's and my blood to donate to a reader's pulse. Is the reader's experience like watching a short film on loop (experiencing the past, present, and future cyclically) or like a linear chupacabra-vampire-mosquito trio in the monstrosity of time (requesting an angelic rhetorical triangulation)? Each new enigma calls for both variants and repetition; sound and syntax become the materials to build the foundation that is both purposefully mismatched and substantially fitting.

Am I worried about precision? The marginal errors of translation are sometimes social context. My polar associations to sound and form can be embodied by the symbol of Gloria Anzaldúa's *vagina dentata*. The androgynous ideograph has several histories but is brought forth more commonly by the popularity of vampires; to recontextualize *vagina dentata* Anzaldúa reclaims the term somewhere between a Christian and Mesoamerican serpent. Similarly, through a Neo-Baroque deletion of first person yet a postmodern acceptance of my individuality, my translation of the Baroque has embedded opposition through intersectionality. Duality here ought to neither be construed as contrary nor contradictory, for Sor Juana does not force the reader to decide between either *yes* or *no* but rather facilitates the coexistence of *yes and no* to illustrate the viscera of an oxymoron on paper.

My pluralist vulnerability to literary translation started as happenstance bilingual demands, but has developed into an ethical commitment to question empathetically obvious codes in the original language while encoding critically in the target language, in order to compromise between literal and cultural translations. Despite my fragmentation, my intent is to leave you, dear reader, with a singular yet irregular vision of Sor Juana's enigmas, post-process as a new product with an antecedent, a persona living vicariously as wholehearted as possible.

Warmly,  
Stalina Emmanuelle

#### References:

Gloria Anzaldúa – “Entering into the Serpent.” *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1987

Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell – Preface to the Second Edition. *The Answer/La Respuesta*. The Feminist Press at the City University, 2009

Margaret Sayers Peden – Introduction. *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Poems*. Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe, 1985



***Enigmas***

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Translation / Traducción © Stalina Emmanuelle Villarreal, 2015

First Edition, First Printing, 2015

Primera edición, Primera impresión, 2015

1500 copies / 1500 ejemplares

ISBN 978-1-937027-77-3

Distribution / Distribución: SPD | Small Press Distribution

[www.spdbooks.org](http://www.spdbooks.org)

Series design / Diseño gráfico de la serie: Andrew Bourne

Typesetting / Tipografía: Rebekah Boudon & Don't Look Now!

Type / Fuente: ITC Century

Printing and binding / Impresión y encuadernación: McNaughton & Gunn

Cover offset / Impresión ófset de la tapa: Prestige Printing

Flyleaf letterpress / Impresión tipográfica de las guardas: Ugly Duckling Presse

Señal is a project of BOMB Magazine, Libros Antena Books, and Ugly Duckling Presse. Additional materials, including a translation into Spanish of the translator's note, can be found on the Señal website: [www.señalseries.org](http://www.señalseries.org)

Señal es un proyecto de BOMB Magazine, Libros Antena Books, y Ugly Duckling Presse. En el sitio web de Señal se encuentran materiales adicionales, entre ellos una traducción al español de la nota de la traductora: [www.señalseries.org](http://www.señalseries.org)

BOMB Magazine

[www.bombmagazine.org](http://www.bombmagazine.org)

Libros Antena Books

[www.antenaantena.org](http://www.antenaantena.org)

Ugly Duckling Presse

The Old American Can Factory

232 Third Street, #E-303

Brooklyn, NY 11215

[www.uglyducklingpresse.org](http://www.uglyducklingpresse.org)

