

JAIME LUIS HUENÚN / David's Ruka¹

TRANS. ISRAEL HOLAS-ALLIMANT, STEVE BROCK, AND SERGIO HOLAS

Long years I waited for my subsidy,
my brother,
and the government / our father / has finally given me
the house I dreamed of.
Hard, the earthen and rubble floor
long and green the rat-infested roof
/impermeable/
deep the fire at the centre
of my grey ageing.
The posters of my favourite bands
RAMONES/THE CLASH/FISKALES AD HOK
hang faded on the warm dry straw
and the ancestral sling
/witrúwe heritage/
still comes in handy when hunting
cows and ostriches
on neighbouring estates.
In my ruka
time looks East
—my songs to the mountain sun go—
Here I cook / sing / speak
and get drunk,
here I learn / recite / old tricks
of the literate wingkas
and I write / commissioned by CAM² /
dreamed lyrics
for the machis' choir
of the future Nguillatún mountain range.

1 Mapuche house.

2 Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco, clandestine Mapuche political organisation.

It was time to slow down
my useless diaspora, brother,
my eternal suicide tour
along the wide and dirty Mapocho valley
/It was time/

The apostates called me
the “Araucanian Byron”
the Sid Vicious of Mapuche poetry
the Aoiodos of the concrete jungle,
another loyal representative
of the most vulgar of tribes
catalogued by the INE³.

After all,
they always made of my verses
/ without shame or parsimony /
a narrow cave of thieves;
a thousand linguists / reporters / anthropologists
slaughtered like the Jivaro
my cranium.

I learnt the fame of dogs,
my brother,
the groupies of Ñuñoa / Plaza Italia / of La Chimba,
injecting themselves with heroin and metaphysics
and snorting in smelly dressing rooms,
the adulterated powder of the shaman.

That’s why

I no longer go to gigs
nor land grabs,
my brother,

no more confrontations or interrogations
with snitches and witnesses
hired by the murky and secretive PDI.⁴

3 Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas

4 PDI: Policía de Investigación.

I'll roll up my flags
 / FOYEWENU⁵ / COLO COLO⁶ /
 old rebellious colours in Lumaco
 and La Pintana;
 hide in the earth the Toqui clubs
 and rusty Comblains
 of the last battle of La Frontera.
 Better times will come,
 my brother,
 to raise the bloody banners
 in the fields and mountains,
 liberated by the *pewma*⁷
 from Banking and Writing.
 Now,
 left without battles or legends
 / nor tardy editors /
 I return home.
 Translating my poems into Spanglish,
 / al patois /
 and the sweaty creole of Antilles,
 I live freely on my income
 / my rights /
 MY LEGITIMATE KIMUN⁸ / MY RAKIZUAM⁹

From Jaime Luis Huenún. *Reducciones*. Santiago: LOM, 2012.

5 National flag of the Mapuche.

6 Name of a Mapuche chief from the period of La Conquista.

7 Dreams

8 Traditional knowledge.

9 Ancestral beliefs.