

Lois Patiño
Lenta fluye la noche

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A Semblance of the Night

In Japanese aesthetics there is a concept known as *Yūgen*, poorly translated as the mysterious undiscovered depths of the world. For the Japanese this would be everything in which there lies a component of genuine mysterious grace precisely because the dark nature of these depths cannot be explained. It is something greater or more complex than humankind and therefore, is charged with *Yūgen*.

There is no doubt that in the nocturnal vision Lois Patiño offers us, the holy cemetery of Okunoin or the great city of Tokyo could fall into this category. This is not merely for the beauty that is immense and alien to humankind but also because it reverberates like an infinite conversation on the brink of disappearing —and precisely the brink that implies this disappearance is the enigmatic and imperceptible essence of all our destinies.

The absences, the shadows, the flights and the barely glimpsed, the premonitions, and the almost forgotten are all recurring questions in Japanese poetical tradition. Lois Patiño's camera asks the same questions as Japanese poetry about absence and emptiness as the sea or the shadow extend or while it captures the silent lights of Tokyo's trains and ships glimmering like glowworms in perhaps one of the most beautiful images that oriental poetry has caught of the soul surprised as it abandons the body.

Lois enjoys lingering and tracing a constant allusion to the happy impermanence of everything as if silently spelling out this Japanese poem:

“Oh, in this world of
apparent passivity,
how moving it is to watch
the fishing boat
rocking on the current”

I still perceive in *El sembrador de estrellas* the idea of a submersed dream sinking into a realm with magic roots rich in depths and discoveries. Or, in the words of the great Cuban poet Lezama Lima it is “the journey of one's energy through a nascent awakening” through the inexorable maternal extension of the shadow, the night, the sea, and of the river of dreams. I dream in the perspective of Calderón: seeing the great cosmopolis and urban sprawls of the planet, tumbling towards this infinite Tokyo (an undefined and nocturnal kaleidoscope) we might also quote, in effect “life appears to us as a dream”. The dream, like the sea is unaware to the passing of time : “Sacred and mysterious falls the night/ Sweet as the friendly hand that caresses” as Luis Cernuda wrote.

Choosing the night, the *interior* of the night, Lois Patiño's gaze accompanies the transformations of the great city: the amorphous velvety supernatural shape, with its air of enchantment, its cosmic, mysterious stupor. He needs his revolving gaze to touch the dark, silky source of its centre in an obsession that does not hide its magic character. He brings not merely his eyes but also his ears to verify the secret laws of its gravitation, the source of its movement or its awakening. “Solitude, reef

and starry veil, whatever's worthy of knowing" —as Mallarmé wrote in *Salut*— "the white anxiety of our sail".

Lois Patiño reveals to us the deep and buried life of a world of unawakened shadows. In the womb of this ever-present fluid shadow, the images retain their secrecy and mystery: they demand an attendant vision, the slow glimpsing of a slither in the night, *that is the night*. Clearly, these are orphic images for as we know, for the believers of Orphism, in the beginning only night existed in the world and was represented by an enormous black-winged bird.

We can, however, ask ourselves if these images are entering or leaving the dream. We could say that carried by the spirit of enlargement, they move slowly towards the end of the night, denser in the centre that is also their limit. There is no doubt: the film grows inwards, towards its root that proves life to be the secret of the dream: life gathered up by death.

We should consider *El sembrador de estrellas* as a resonance bridge between that which disappears and that which begins to articulate itself once more. Embryos, origins, new protoplasm, corpuscles that merge with the immensity of daydreams as in the eternal renewal of the ocean.

Breathing space —almost in the Rilkean sense. In its humid shadow the night resembles the ocean, a dark and sinuous torrent of creative power: the driving force —dynamic, burgeoning soul — of the solitary observer. If the night is the wellspring of new forms it is revealed only to the solitary detached observer, who reaches out to his own (black) sunny interior. One must search for the site of one's disappearance.

Lois Patiño's camera never aspires to describe or analyse what is captured in the viewfinder. Rather, it listens and watches. The attention paid at the moment of creation is lost and gone but not before fracturing the already threadbare shapes of conscience.

Pursuit of the disappearance. There is a strange but captivating longing to make sense there, where the sense is hidden, where it evaporates, on the margins of reason, in the illuminated crackle of the air or the furtive movements of water. It ascends from the deepest depth of life, it traverses reality and stands before it, or better still, in its midst.

Dreams and the sea disregard the passing of time because dreams, the sea and the night compose the very depths of time. The rise and fall is the two-fold rhythm that must be caught: the shifting of arrival and loss, reception and flight, uncertainty and conclusion, absence and presence. This is the original game of appearance and disappearance, the heart beat of the dark life that comes and goes, ebbs and flows. Life: death.

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Translated by Diana Mathieson