

Author

José Mármol

José Mármol is a poet and essayist from the Dominican Republic. Author of thirteen books of poems and eight books of essays, he is considered the most important poet of his generation and the founder of the style of "poesía del pensar" (poetry of thought). His work has won the Salomé Ureña National Prize for Poetry (2007), the Premio Nacional de Poesía (1987), the Premio de Poesía Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1992), and the Premio Casa de Teatro (1994), and was the finalist for the Premio Internacional "Eliseo Diego" (1994).

Translator

Erica Mena

Erica Mena is a poet, translator, and editor, not necessarily in that order. She is completing her MFA in Literary Translation at the University of Iowa. Her original poetry has appeared in *Vanitas*, the *Dos Passos Review*, *Pressed Wafer*, and *Arrowsmith Press*. Her translations have appeared in *Asymptote*, *PEN America*, and *Words without Borders*, among others. She is the founding editor of Anomalous Press

Deus ex Machina

Throw the dice, Lord, your turn has come and it is winter. The trident is cornered, the mountains covered with a skin of ash. Lord, behold light's song here, your due, in the stillness of the sea and the pure discretion of the endless night. Behold your son, Fire, burning the whole surface with his touch and seducing the water with his gilded tongue. Look here, Lord, his stepsister Dawn, liquid hierophant, maker of shape. In their terrible language they tell of celebrations, obedience, sin. This time, Lord, throw to us the seed and the male of the healthier species. Don't announce him by chance, because he will become a cry and rise up with the warm murmur of pavement, and once again be lost to us, punished, denied. Let none but you, oh Lord, wield the butcher's knife this time; mature a chord when life ceases and rain unexpectedly cleanses the lovers' yoked hips. Throw the dice, Lord, your turn has inevitably come. Cast them without fear from your wide hand, because luck's twelve sides won't wait, and the sky points towards multitudes and disaster. Throw them, Lord, your turn has come and it is burning summer.

Translation of "Deus ex machina." From La invención del día [The Invention of the Day]. © José Mármol. By arrangement with the author. Translation © 2011 by Erica Mena. All rights reserved.

Deus ex Machina

Arroja tú los dados, Señor, te ha llegado el turno y es invierno. Arrinconado está el tridente, una piel de ceniza cubrió las cordilleras. Señor, he aquí el canto de la luz a ti debida, en la quietud del mar y discreción tan pura de la noche infinita. He aquí a tu hijo Elfuego, ardiendo con su tacto la superficie toda y al agua seduciendo con su lengua dorada. Ved aquí, Señor, su hermanastra Elalba, hierofanta líquida, posesa de las formas. Ellos narran en su tremendo idioma las celebraciones, la obediencia y el pecado. Arrójanos tú esta vez, Señor, la semilla y el varón de la especie más sana. No lo anuncies al azar, porque deviene llanto y se alza con el tibio rumor del pavimento, y otra vez se nos pierde, nos castiga, nos repudia. Que nadie sino tú, oh Señor, esgrima esta vez el cuchillo del jifero; madure un acorde cuando la vida cese y la lluvia limpie, sorpresiva, las caderas uncidas de los copulantes. Arroja tú los dados, Señor, te ha llegado el turno de lo ineluctable. Despídelos sin miedo de tu anchurosa mano, porque a los ocho lados la suerte nada espera, y hacia la muchedumbre y el desastre apunta el cielo. Arrójalos tú, Señor, te ha llegado el turno y es ardiente verano.

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