

# Estíbaliz Espinosa



## BIOGRAPHY

Estíbaliz... Espinosa was born in A Coruña, in 1974. She is a writer, singer and actress. She has published the poetry books; *Pan [libro de ler e desler]* (2000), *-orama* (2002), *número e* (2004) y *Zoommm. Textos biónicos* (2007). She also writes fiction and publishes articles and reflections since 2005 on her blogs *...mmmm...*, [...] *abra a cápsula, por favor*. Prizes for her work include; the *Premio Esquíu de Poesía* in 1999 and the *Premio de Podcasts poético-artísticos of Tarragona* in 2006.

She is a lyric jazz and cabaret singer. She was also a member of various Galician theatre companies and the storytelling group *Ulalume*. She has degrees in Sociology and Hispanic Philology from the University of A Coruña.

*If she described herself through a sign, it would be ellipsis.*

*Human race. B+. No known allergies. B1 Drivers License. Should wear reading glasses. Could have been nebula in Orion, creature of Frankenstein, jade, a sunflower, an arctic wolf, an automaton fabricated by an ancient engineer, a Russian peasant. Could have been born in Bruges in 1497, or next to the Sadiman volcano millions of years ago. But it turned out she is this one and here.*

*She will not be immortal, either.*

## AUTOPOETIC

The cosmos as a list of things. The aspiration to sometimes become cosmos, therefore, a list of things, anonymous, mutation in helium, hybrid stepdaughter of a piece of paper or screen.

Flee from the bad taste of saying everything in your texts. From the bad taste of posterity, from becoming a street or multi-purpose building. From the bad taste of cheap pedantry, and cheap show. If the construction of a text passes for the previous construction of the character that writes it, that character should never be allowed to exclusively inspire pity, apologise, seek for applause.

If poetry isn't also an essential word, I sense it can be more like a spectral silence between two linguistic experiences, an electronic device on the forehead of verbal thought that can and must burn, shock, relieve, give us something back, I don't know whether Greek, I don't whether African, or if originated in Shanghai or in Antarctica. Spectral silence is the moment that stops above us after having written or read words with those characteristics: the moments in which our primate brain feels a slight click that branches out our thought, arborizes it.

We know what silence this is about.

It is the silence that precedes the creation of a world, and also the collapse of a glacier. The silence that means the words that has just entered us deserved it.

It happens so rarely that it seems useless to set a coordinated poetic statement for oneself. Sometimes, it is preferable to sit under the night and simply wait for the rotating galaxy above our skull, to radioactivate it.

Go out wearing make-up from that cosmos, from that mute powder, that somber shadow on each eyelid, without blush, just like that, to the stage.

In all texts that are worth the trouble I always look for texture, and I summon the paper itself, the very substance of the writing as a character, or at least as a pretext that adjusts the course of events. The act of writing was such a powerful instrument that it can't pass through the contents simply as container: it should intoxicate the interior of the writing like a pearl, a tumor.

The genie inside a bottle.

In any case, I never wanted to dedicate myself completely to poetry.

I write about the serious surprise of seeing you here. On this snow. And it is my scientific curiosity, criminal, intact. I never wanted to write poems. However, today the act still amazes me. Makes me restless. For how long will this paper, this screen, reproduce my amazement your amazement my amazement...?

## **GALICIAN LITERATURE & GALICIAN POETRY IN PARTICULAR**

In current Galician literature there exists: a huge effervescence to contribute to it, prizes, wills, intentions, editorial infrastructures, an appetite for posterity, elaborate and experimental arguments along with simple arguments and plots that stir up applause, few readers, envy as the product of navel-gazing, the murmur for having tackled the great Galician novel (in case it hasn't been done yet), provincial resentment towards those who stand out, and more things I ignore.

In current Galician literature there exists no such thing as: wide thematic ranges, different stylistics, an incorruptible, thorough critic, many readers, complete translation of the classic corpus to other languages, exploration, crudeness, glaciality. Distance. Projection of our culture beyond Pedrafita. More things I ignore.

## **GALICIA & ITS FUTURE**

In this phase of its evolution Galicia rose to a tectonic plates movement that alternately move away and move closer. On the one hand, it wants to move away, more than from Spain, from the idea of centralism imposed since the Renaissance that today proves inappropriate because it paves over the cultural and linguistic sinuosities involved in the construction of an identity. On the other hand, it wants to get closer to other peripheral cultures like the Basque and Catalanian, and, above all, recover the decapitated common culture that bonds it to *lusophony*.

In this movement, sometimes abrupt and at others imperceptible, this chunk of earth passes through successful moments and authentic failures: through Cities of Culture as colossal dumps of design and budgeting, but also through the integration of social and political sectors that work with a common perspective: to dignify again the use of the language as part of the private treasure of the peoples, part real and part dream and also literaturalized, which is the memory. Today it is no longer necessary to bring the Galician language into the light. That was claimed by our previous generations. The crossroads of Galicia today is to know which of its multiple identities [the genuine, the *Lusa*, the Hispanicized, the Europeanized, the cosmopolitan], feels best for it in the present mosaic of identities which Europe has derived.

I believe that it would do us well to review many political postulates in this process: the postulate of *Country*, for example, a classical word completely different in connotations and implications from the terms *nation* or *state*. What would it mean to us to be a country? How do we as a country penetrate an alternate current?

In what way can we be a cell of universality, with all that being a cell entails; that organic autonomy, that life of our own, allusion to other cells at the same time as to our own?

## POEMS

I, that can make  
this verse last forever  
make the swallows return  
to resolve the happiness of a high prince  
always  
to make the snow return  
to make it return, always  
let the masses grab justice in a fist  
and let the sea open when my eyes order it.

I, that can make Ulysses  
sail and sail  
always thinking of returning  
and let the Beauty who Sleeps wake a hundred times  
and the mistaken dove  
and my Lesbia, always mine.

Is there something missing from my hands  
in the river current carrying forward  
figures and battles  
to leave between my fingers, sifted  
the fine silver and black sand  
of a page?

Do it all  
I can.  
The powerful hand of the uncertain prince  
supporting an empty jester  
is mine alone  
it's mine his thought  
that floats in the waters like a blossoming lady.

I, prince of darkness and light  
turn  
and turn  
like a mill that waits on a page  
literary immortality  
the most hurtful  
because it can confuse the memory of the people  
and make out of a sad mill  
a giant being  
to the sound of an ollyphant  
that never sounded.

I, that can make of this Aleph a home,  
that can recreate an everlasting Love  
-because behind the ever after, hidden, was the ever  
behind the page I can't turn  
behind the word end  
behind the falling curtain...

I, fragment of that silver and black sand  
so close to wonder  
that I burn  
I have to lower my eyes in front of you  
who are not a book  
whom I can't open  
nor can I read you  
even though you may be more handsome than Ulysses  
and than Lesbia  
and than Roland  
and Dulcinea

I should lower my eyes  
and not read any longer

I should lower my eyes  
in front the only fragment of my time  
which I don't know how to make  
last forever.

from *Pan [libro de ler e desler]*<sup>2</sup> (2000)

## **WOMEN OF CIUDAD JUÁREZ**

Inside this text...there was something

Something I forgot, because forgetfulness is the only thing that endures  
and there is more than what we forget.

I should continue with this text, now that I started  
Now that it eats at me...Now that I started.  
Your eyes mimic mine when they read this.  
I stopped here also.

*...in dorsal decubitus position and dressed in denim pants...*

A few words that will ~~forever~~ never last.  
Some have the very length of your blink  
Machine. Animal. Exquisite-smiled cromagnon  
slave to something that comes from further away.

*...of light brown complexion, 1'75 cms...chestnut hair, large mocha brown eyes,  
24 years old...*

It is even harder to finish poems of circumstances.  
Memory is an artifact tyrannized by its indolence.  
We won't remember what is worth being remembered.  
Inside this text there was something no longer here.

*Unidentified female body found*

*...At times, they have no choice but to walk alone through vacant lots and unlit  
paths...*

Them.  
Now, I remember them.  
They gave birth to sons of adversity. They have no sons. They  
are virgins.  
I don't know who they are.  
They didn't like coffee.  
They longed for coffee.  
For a moment they blinked in this text  
The text ends here.

*November 2004*

## THE PLOT, ITS REVERSE

You begin to read and a thread is laid out from me to you. It's subtle. It's now. It's the beginning of the plot. I speak to you. I speak. I speak first of a country, a city, an enclosed space. It has a climate, an atmosphere. Maybe you'll like it. Maybe you will not. Maybe you lift your eyes from the book, ponder it for a while

and once again you rest it, smiling, because you feel intrigued by that place even though you are still not sure if you love it or if it horrifies you. Because you are curious to know what happened there and why and who were its people. Its protagonists.

*[hello. We are alone, the two of us. It's when I think of you that I feel less alone]*

I introduce to you the characters, with a calculated courtesy. At times I lack sufficient skill, and they don't make sense to you. On other occasions, I aspire to be twisted and the characters appear devious, slanted, as if without any effort. You follow the threads I lay out with an obedience that captivates me and urges me on.

You ignore that in your head she has already begun to devise itself...

*[hello again. I am so eager to get to know you. What are you like?]*

...the plot.

The characters have been moving for quite a while. Their situation changes, their conversation, their space. They might end up as abstract as numbers that only exist by virtue of some strange imitation of nature. At times they turn out as concrete as your hand, which in seconds is about to turn the page. They live in other countries, even in other times or planets. Theirs is a life of prosaic hardship. You meddle in them. When they speak you think you hear them, you think you agree with them. Also, when they are silent. You have a weakness for some more than others.

*[we are less alone, right? Repeat after me: we are less alone. And feel their echo. Without pathos, please]*

You re-read often. You go back, don't understand something. Or you savor a part I never suspected. You get angry with me. For some opinion, some mistake. The negligence of all labor. You want to kill me slowly. With your mouth. And, at the same time, you adore me. You use that same mouth to smile. I'm back here, behind these words that unravels this story, but I can't see you. I haven't seen you in a long time. On this other side is my life, the tyranny of my body, its brush and its shoes, its characters, the television that makes me feel like an orphan, the internet that makes me feel less like an orphan. This is my plot: *introduce you in it*. Everything else, a circus.

Circumstance. Con-text.

On occasions the characters seem pathetic to you, full of holes from where their misery escapes with a whistle. It's a trick I do, yes, to make you feel better. If you laugh at them, you will accept their resemblance to the world much better. And the plot is intriguing and tense like a stick for smoke-curing. All full of rags, dirtier every time.

You have to tell someone about this plot, and do so with obedience. With fervor. It excites you, you resolve to solve it all and read. And you read. And you keep reading. You want to memorize *this, precisely this phrase by heart*.

*[I peek at the empty holes of the plot with a wide open eye. I don't want to miss any details of what you do, I, sentry, I, voyeur. ]*

You have to reproduce this exact phrase to someone. This one you liked so much. Tell them: I read that story, that argument, that ruse, which said: "You have to reproduce that phrase for them exactly."

But which one?

And to who? Who is worthy of it? Who will die in your arms or connect with you forever once you pronounce it?

The plot stopped for a few moments, to decide which path to take. You don't know it but, in my mind things didn't happen this way to start with. Nevertheless, now they do, this is what matters. Matured intentions matter less than immature actions, as unfair as this statement may be. I would rather have written something else. I didn't. I would have liked to create a life. I didn't. The plot of this story, *my plot*, is already a fact and I am to deal with it should I live a hundred years.

*[The tools you use to interpret me scare me sometimes. You can underline me, hurt me, mutilate me. Rewrite all of this and even bury it in a library, denying it the light of the sun. You can rip me from the heart I parasitize]*

Little by little you are involved in it. With it. You have little left to finish and you anticipate possible endings. Many times you overcame the temptation of taking a peek at the last page. This character, and no other, worries you. It's so worked up, so basic. A lot like you. You don't think it will end well.

*[are you handsome? You are observing without saying anything. Are you beautiful?]*

My story also has descriptions.

The descriptions are hard to follow, require concentration and vivid images. To have dwelled, at the least, in the XIX century without the paralyzing power of the audiovisual. The evocative tint, tactile, screwed of certain words helps, but occasionally we can perceive the time passed over them. For example, like in this expression, or in this other. Things are no longer said in this way. No longer thought in this way. No longer like this.

*[I have yet to make it to you. As much as I prolong the plot, as seductive as this one is. I stay at a distance the thickness of a page]*

Little is left. In the middle of the plot you create your existence, you abandon all that weaving for hours. In the middle of a soliloquy in the tower, just when the two characters find each other again as they exit the theatre, someone was speculating on the name of a traitor, or a grenade exploded next to a kid. In the middle, the gelatinous routines that enroll you in the community of the habitable: you brush your teeth, you sleep, you fill pages and pages with words, you fuck, you plot (*tu quoque*, you too, little brute), an infinitesimal lie, you say *please* and *thank you* and you buy too much.



Days pass without your return, without a consistent plot, but when you take it up again it's there, with its little tight knots, the figures and trajectories dissipated, my social context, the type of narrator I am according to Genet, the frostbitten characters that recover their movements and their speech at the command of your eyes [*imperious*], the subplot like a low chord, barely audible. The plot always loyal to itself. Or something chipped. Coral. Reef.

*[I am less alone with you. But you are not my main motive either. Sometimes, just the best excuse for a perfect plot]*

Almost none of the characters in the end behave as you expected. You get to the end with a certain expectation, that if someone asked you about it, you would perhaps deny. With perfect lucidity you hold up the end of the plot that must be tied up at the beginning. This one binds itself around a neck like a blind serpent. It tightens against itself, it must fit around itself, leave you with the aftertaste of some former harmony, forming a tight lattice window that only let in the essential air for its kidnapped. Don't get nervous. We are its kidnapped.

The plot ties us both. They are us. It is both of us [with a certain claustrophobia, a certain apnea] who wait in the center for the spider.

*[but actually, just you]*

*unpublished, 2002*

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<sup>=</sup> Pan, [book to read and unread]