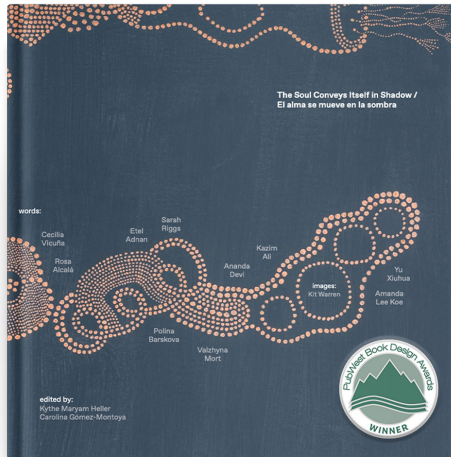


## PRESS KIT

### THE SOUL CONVEYS ITSELF IN SHADOW / EL ALMA SE MUEVE EN LA SOMBRA



hardback: \$52.50

ISBN: 978-1-7359523-2-1

9 x 9 x 5/8," 184 pages

*2023 PubWest Book Design Awards Silver Winner*

"This book is made of encounters. It moves from one mouth to another; it vibrates in a vulnerable, mysterious relation to errancy and awareness. Words press together in darkness, then fling open to light, then close again."

*The Soul Conveys Itself in Shadow / El alma se mueve en la sombra* is a book of encounters that listens across perceived borders, languages, and practices of translation. In this utterly singular anthology, five pairs of internationally-celebrated poet-translators and one artist-illustrator cross-pollinate to stretch poetry and translation to their full capacity as mediators of the immanent.

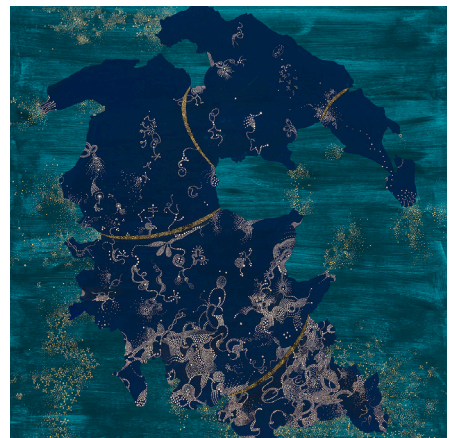
It centers the living relationships between

poet, translator and visual artist as a shadow space of connections expanding within and beyond language, but also as a model for social practice, an attempt to illuminate and transform the conditions of writing and translation at this moment in time. The dazzling artwork embraces and challenges the poetic texts as a visual translation that submerges readers into vibrant cosmologies of dissolution and reformation. Through this anthology, Stenen Press introduces its ambitious mission to open up the practice of translation and to unsettle English through poems, essays, conversations, and artwork, inviting readers to possible routes of new knowledge—deeply non-linear, transformative, alive.

Includes poems, translations, essays and conversations from: Etel Adnan, Rosa Alcalá, Kazim Ali, Polina Barskova, Ananda Devi, Amanda Lee Koe, Valzhyna Mort, Sarah Riggs, Cecilia Vicuña, and Yu Xiuhua. Artwork by: Kit Warren.

Edited by Kythe Maryam Heller and Carolina Gómez-Montoya

Keywords: Asian & Asian American Studies, European Studies, Latin American







## CONTRIBUTORS

### Cecilia Vicuña

*author, translator*

Cecilia Vicuña is a poet, artist, filmmaker and activist whose work addresses pressing concerns of the modern world, including ecological destruction, human rights, and cultural homogenization. Born and raised in Santiago de Chile, she has been in exile since the early 1970s, after the military coup against elected president Salvador Allende. Vicuña has published more than twenty-five poetry and art books, in Europe, Latin America and the United States, including *New & Selected Poems of Cecilia Vicuña*, edited and translated by Rosa Alcalá, (Kelsey Street Press, 2018), *Spit Temple: The Selected Performances of Cecilia Vicuña* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2012), *Instan* (Kelsey Street Press, 2001) and *Cloud Net* (Art in General, 2000). In 2009, she co-edited *The Oxford Book of Latin American Poetry: 500 Years of Latin American Poetry*. She edited *ÜL: Four Mapuche Poets* in 1998. This year, Vicuña won the Fifty-Ninth Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement. Curator Cecilia Alemani praised Vicuña for her efforts to preserve and translate works by Latin American writers and for her political activism, which includes lifelong advocating for Chile's indigenous peoples, and visual artworks "built around a deep fascination with Indigenous traditions and non-Western epistemologies."

Vicuña coined the term "Arte Precario" when she began creating "precarious works" and quipus in the mid 1960s in Chile, as a way of "hearing an ancient silence waiting to be heard." Her multi-dimensional works often begin as a poem, an image that morphs into a film, a song, a sculpture, or a collective performance; transformative acts that bridge the gap between art and life, the ancestral and the avant-garde. A partial list of museums that have exhibited her work include: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Santiago; Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) London; Art in General in NYC; Whitechapel Art Gallery in London; Berkeley Art Museum; Whitney Museum of American Art; and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

[ceciliavicuna.com](http://ceciliavicuna.com)



## Rosa Alcalá

*author, translator*

Rosa Alcalá is a poet and translator from Paterson, New Jersey, who has given readings, talks, and workshops in both the United States and Latin America. Her third and most recent book of poetry, *MyOTHER TONGUE* (Futurepoem, 2017), was described in *The New York Times* as "capturing empty spaces, hesitations and semantic difficulties to address mothers and daughters, herself as mother and herself as daughter, and the messy emotions and miscommunications that move between languages (in her case, English and Spanish), as well as between and within female bodies, in breastfeeding, menstruation, giving birth. Alcalá's short, wry lines, self-interruptions and open spaces remind us how little precedent there is for honest writing on these topics, compared with the epic traditions of fathers and sons." Previous collections include *Undocumentaries* (Shearsman Books, 2010) and *The Lust of Unsentimental Waters* (Shearsman Books, 2011).

Her fourth poetry collection, *YOU*, will be published by Coffee House Press in 2024. Her poems have appeared in *The Nation*, *Poetry*, and *The American Poetry Review*, among other journals, and are included in a number of anthologies, including *Best American Poetry* (2019 & 2021), *American Poets in the 21st Century: Poetics of Social Engagement*, edited by Claudia Rankine and Michael Dowdy, and *The Poem Is You: 60 Contemporary American Poems and How to Read Them* by Stephanie Burt. The recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowship, and runner-up for a PEN Translation Award, she is the editor and co-translator of *New & Selected Poems of Cecilia Vicuña*. Recently a Guest Editor for the Academy of American Poets' Poem-a-Day series, she is currently a Consulting Editor for the University of Chicago Press' Phoenix Poets Series. She is Professor of Creative Writing and de Wetter Endowed Chair of Poetry at the University of Texas at El Paso.

[rosaalcala.com](http://rosaalcala.com)



## Etel Adnan

author

Etel Adnan was born in 1925 and raised in Beirut, Lebanon. Her mother was a Greek from Smyrna; her father, a high ranking Ottoman officer born in Damascus. In Lebanon, she was educated in French schools and studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, Paris. In January 1955 she went to the United States to pursue post-graduate studies in philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley, and at Harvard University. From 1958 to 1972, she taught philosophy at Dominican College of San Rafael, California. Based on her feelings of connection to, and solidarity with, the Algerian war of independence, she began to resist the political implications of writing in French and shifted the focus of her creative expression to visual art. She became a painter. But it was with her participation in the poets' movement against the war in Vietnam that she began to write poems and became, in her words, "an American poet."

In 1972, she moved back to Beirut and worked as cultural editor for two daily newspapers — first for *Al Safa*, then for *L'Orient le Jour*. She stayed in Lebanon until 1976. In 1977, her novel *Sitt Marie Rose* was published in Paris, and won the France-Pays Arabes award. This novel has been translated into more than ten languages, and was to have an immense influence, becoming a classic of War Literature. In 1977, Adnan re-established herself in California, making Sausalito her home, with frequent stays in Paris. In 2003, Adnan was named "arguably the most celebrated and accomplished Arab-American author writing today" by the academic journal *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*. In 2014, she was named Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, France's highest cultural honor, by the French Government. Of her more than twenty-five books her most celebrated include *The Arab Apocalypse*, *Sitt Marie Rose*, *Paris*, *When It's Naked*, and *Journey to Mount Tamalpais*. In 2020, the Griffin International Poetry Prize was awarded to her book *TIME*, translated by poet Sarah Riggs. Her paintings, described by *The New York Times* art critic Roberta Smith as "stubbornly radiant abstractions," have been widely exhibited at dOCUMENTA (13), the Guggenheim, MASS MoCA, Whitney Museum of American Art, SFMoMA, Zentrum Paul Klee, L'Institute du Monde Arabe, and many others. Adnan passed on November 14, 2021.



[eteladnan.com](http://eteladnan.com)



## Sarah Riggs

author, translator

Sarah Riggs is the author of seven books of poetry, including most recently *The Nerve Epistle* (Roof Books, 2021), as well as *Eavesdrop* (Chax Press, 2020), *Chain of Minuscule Decisions in the Form of a Feeling* (Reality Street Editions, 2007), *60 Textos* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2010), *Autobiography of Envelopes* (Burning Deck, 2012), *Waterwork* (Chax Press, 2007), and *Pomme & Granite* (1913 Press, 2015). Her essays were published as *Word Sightings* (2002). She has translated six poetry books from French: Isabelle Garron's *Face Before Against* (Litmus Press, 2008); Marie Borel, Wolftrout, co-translated with Omar Berrada (Fence Books/La Presse, 2006); Ryoko Sekiguchi,

*Two Markets Once Again* (The Post Apollo Press, 2008); Oscarine Bosquet, *Present Participle*, co-translated with Ellen LeBlond-Schrader (Fence Books/La Presse, 2012), and *TIME* (Nightboat Books, 2019) by Etel Adnan. Sarah Riggs' translation from the French of Etel Adnan's *TIME* won the International Griffin Poetry Award, The Best Translated Book Award, and was nominated for the PEN Translation Award and the Lambda Award, in 2020.



Riggs is also a filmmaker, artist, and podcaster. In 2004, she and Omar Berrada created Tamaas, an intercultural arts association, with a focus on creation-based projects intersecting poetry with translation, film, dance, education and earth arts justice. Projects include the multilingual poetry journal *READ: A Journal of Inter-Translation*, the podcast "Invitation to the Species," translation seminars, and films set in Tangier, New York and beyond. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband Omar Berrada and their two daughters.

[sarahriggs.org](http://sarahriggs.org)

## Ananda Devi

author, translator

Ananda Devi is a novelist, short-story writer and poet born in Mauritius. Her work has been translated into a dozen languages and she is considered one of the major figures in modern African writing in French. As an ethnologist—she holds a doctorate in social anthropology from the University of London—and a translator, Devi is sensitive to the interconnection between identities and languages. Choosing to write in French, her poems, novels, and short stories also incorporate Creole and Hindi. She lived for many years in London, and in Congo-Brazzaville. She currently lives in Ferney-Voltaire, in France.

Her books published with Editions Gallimard in France include *Eve de ses décombres* (2006), *Indian Tango* (2007), *Le sari vert* (2009), *Les hommes qui me parlent* (2011), *Les jours vivants* (2013), and *L'ambassadeur triste* (2015). Her works available in English translation are *Indian Tango* (Host Publications, 2011) and *Eve Out of Her Ruins*



(Les Fugitives and Deep Vellum, 2016; Speaking Tiger, 2017), *The Living Days* (Les Fugitives, 2020; Feminist Press, 2019) and *When the Night Agrees to Speak to Me* (Harperperennial, 2021; Deep Vellum, 2022). She has published fourteen novels as well as short stories and poetry, and was featured at the PEN World Voices Festival in New York in 2015. Her literary awards include the Prix des Cinq Continents de la Francophonie (2006) and Prix Télévision Suisse Romande (2007) for *Ève de ses décombres*, as well as the Prix Louis-Guilloux (2010) and the Prix Mokanda (2012) for other works. In 2020 Devi was made an Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French government and in 2014 she was awarded the Prix du Rayonnement de la langue et de la littérature françaises by the Académie Française. The University of Silesia, Poland, conferred upon her an honorary (a Honoris Causa) doctorate. Her latest novel, *Le rire des déesses* (2021) won the Prix Femina des Lycéens.

[ile-en-ile.org/devi](http://ile-en-ile.org/devi)

## Kazim Ali

*author, translator*

Kazim Ali was born in the United Kingdom and has lived transnationally in the United States, Canada, India, France, and the Middle East. His books encompass multiple genres, including the volumes of poetry *The Voice of Sheila Chandra* (Alice James Books, 2020), *Inquisition* (Wesleyan University Press, 2018), *All One's Blue* (HarperCollins India, 2016) and *Sky Ward* (Wesleyan University Press, 2012), winner of the Ohioana Book Award in Poetry. His most recent book is *Northern Light: Power, Land and the Memory of Water* (Milkweed Editions, 2021), which Literary Hub called "A balm for the soul." His novels include *The Secret Room: A String Quartet* (Kaya Press, 2017) and among his books of essays are the hybrid memoir *Silver Road: Essays, Maps & Calligraphies* (Tupelo Press, 2018) and *Fasting for Ramadan: Notes from a Spiritual Practice* (Tupelo Press, 2011). *The Beloit Poetry Journal* describes Ali's *Fasting for Ramadan* as a "mix of quotidian detail and the extraordinarily rich vocabulary Ali has cultivated through the discipline of inwardness for raising subverbal impression to the level of speech, (which) locates the reader both in and outside of the fast." He is also an accomplished translator of Marguerite Duras, Sohrab Sepehri, Ananda Devi, Mahmoud Chokrollahi and others, and an editor of several anthologies and books of criticism.

In 2004, Ali co-founded Nightboat Books and continues to edit books and serve as President of the Board of Directors. He has received an Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council, and his poetry has been featured in *Best American Poetry*. Ali has been a regular columnist for the *The American Poetry Review* and a contributing editor for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs' *Writer's Chronicle*. He is a former member of the Cocoon Theater Modern Dance Company. After a career in public policy and organizing, Ali taught at various colleges and universities, including Oberlin College, Davidson College, St. Mary's College of California, and Naropa University. He is currently a Professor of Literature at the University of California at San Diego.



kazimali.com

## Polina Barskova

author

Polina Barskova was born in Leningrad (today St. Petersburg). She started publishing her work at the age of nine, and her first book appeared when she was still a teenager. At the age of 20, she left Russia to pursue a PhD at the University of California at Berkeley, where she is now a professor of Russian literature. Barskova's poetry has won her wide recognition as one of the best poets of her generation; her collection of creative nonfiction, *Living Pictures*, received the Andrey Bely Prize in 2015 and is forthcoming in German with Suhrkamp Verlag and in English with NYRB. She has been shortlisted for Russian prizes including the Debut, and has published numerous collections in Russian. Her work has also appeared in English language anthologies such as *The Ecco Anthology of International Poetry* (Harper Collins, 2010), co-edited by Ilya Kaminsky, who also translated a short volume of her poems, *This Lamentable City* (Tupelo Press, 2010). Several other books of her work have appeared in English translation: *The Zoo in Winter* (Melville House, 2011), *Relocations: Three Contemporary Russian Women Poets* (Zephyr Press, 2013), *Air Raid*, translated by Valzyhna Mort (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2021), and *Living Pictures* (NYRB, 2022). Editors Boris Dralyuk and David Stromberg describe Barskova's work as "passionate and analytical, rapturous and cool, profoundly serious and daringly flippant."

She has done extensive archival work on the literature of the siege of Leningrad, resulting in the award-winning volume *Written in the Dark: Five Poets in the Siege of Leningrad* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2016). Her book, *Besieged Leningrad: Aesthetic Responses to Urban Disaster*, appeared from Northern Illinois University Press in 2017. Her scholarly publications include articles on Nabokov, the Bakhtin brothers, early Soviet film, and the aestheticization of historical trauma.

[slavic.berkeley.edu/people/polina-barskova](http://slavic.berkeley.edu/people/polina-barskova)





## Valzhyna Mort

author, translator

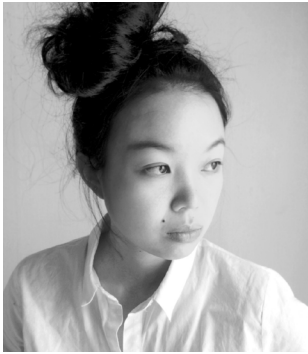
Valzhyna Mort is a poet and translator born in Minsk, Belarus. She is the author of three poetry collections in English: *Factory of Tears* (Copper Canyon Press, 2008), co-translated from the Belarusian by Elizabeth Oehlkers Wright and Franz Wright, *Collected Body* (Copper Canyon Press, 2011), and *Music for the Dead and Resurrected* (FSG, 2020), named one of the best poetry books of 2020 by *The New York Times* and *NPR*, and the winner of the 2020 International Griffin Poetry

Prize and the 2022 UNT Rilke Prize. Mort's Belarusian books are *Я тоненькая як твае вейкі* (Lohvinau, 2005), *Эпідэмія Ружаў* (Lohvinau, 2017), and *Песні Для Мёртвых і Ўваскрэслых* (Pflaumbaum, 2022).

She is a recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy in Rome, the Lannan Foundation, and the Amy Clampitt Foundation. Her work has been honored with the Bess Hokin Prize from Poetry, the Glenna Luschei Prairie Schooner Award, and was short-listed for the Forward Prize. Her international honors include the Burda Prize for Eastern European authors (Germany), Crystal of Vilenica Prize (Slovenia), and fellowships from Sylt Foundation, Literary Colloquium Berlin, Gaude Polonia Scholarship in Warsaw, Literarisches Haus Graz Fellowship in Austria, and Alice Yard Artist Residency in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Her essays and poetry have appeared in *The Best American Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *Poetry*, *Poetry Review*, *Granta*, *The White Review*, *The Baffler* and many more. With Ilya Kaminsky and Katie Farris, Mort co-edited *Gossip and Metaphysics: Russian Modernist Poems and Prose* (Tupelo Press, 2014). She is also the editor of *Something Indecent: Poems Recommended by Eastern European Poets* (Red Hen Press, 2013).

In an article from *The New Yorker*, Jennifer Wilson writes, "That a bard of the unsayable would emerge from Belarus is not an accident. Given the suppression of artists and intellectuals under Stalin, in the nineteen-thirties, and the current censorship of journalists, under President Alexander Lukashenka, Belarusians have been warned for the better part of a century not to tell anyone what happens there. Mort recalls, as a child, listening to her grandmother tell stories about growing up as part of a class of well-off farmers, *kulaks*, who were forcibly dispossessed under the Soviet regime. After these chats, Mort's mother would always remind her, 'Valzhyna, you cannot tell this to anybody.'" She currently lives in New York and teaches at Cornell University. Valzhyna Mort writes in English and Belarusian and translates between English, Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish.

[valzhynamort.com](http://valzhynamort.com)



## Yu Xiuhua

author

Yu Xiuhua, born in Hengdian, Hubei Province, China, is a poet from an impoverished rural background who was born with cerebral palsy. Yu began writing poetry in 1998. In 2014, her poem “Cross Half of China to Sleep With You” became an online sensation, launching her career as a celebrity poet and writer. Her poetry collection *Moonlight Falls on My Left Palm* (Guangxi Normal University Press, 2015), sold over 250,000 copies, a record for Chinese poetry titles of the past two decades. Yu received the Peasant Literature Award in 2016 and the Hubei Literary Prize in 2018. *Still Tomorrow*, an award-winning documentary film about her life and poetry, was released to critical acclaim in 2016.

In 2022, an English translation of *Moonlight Falls on My Left Palm* (Astra House, 2021) was published and translated by Fiona Sze-Lorrain. A review from *The Washington Post* describes the collection: “Moments of reverie give way to self-loathing; painful accidents suddenly turn transcendent. Her style mixes straightforward language and confessional frankness with sudden disjunctures and imagines mundane scenes into which strange images intercede. Autobiographical intimacy is something Yu invites and resists. ‘One can never tell his or her truth. Truth once spoken tends to be false,’ she observes, and in a reflection on disability, writes that the body ‘provides us with multiple versions and aspects of a soul.’ The multiplicity, therefore, becomes essential, as the poems are rarely frozen in a single feeling. Yu renders her life in a way that is irreducible.”





## Amanda Lee Koe

author, translator

Amanda Lee Koe's first short story collection, *Ministry of Moral Panic*, won the Singapore Literature Prize and was shortlisted for the Haus der Kulturen der Welt's Internationaler Literaturpreis and the Frankfurt Book Fair's LiBeraturpreis. Her debut novel, *Delayed Rays of A Star*, was an NPR Best Book of the Year, and has been translated into German and Ukrainian. She received her MFA from Columbia University's Writing Program, where she won the

Henfield Prize. She is working on a Mandarin to English translation of Su Qing's novel, *Ten Years of Marriage*. Born in Singapore, she lives in New York.

Ilana Masad writes for NPR that Lee Koe's novel *Delayed Rays of A Star* is "the kind of performance that ambitious women have always had to put on in their quest to achieve their dreams—just think of superstars like Janelle Monáe, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga and others, all of whom project a confidence and strength onstage and in their work to such an extent that it's easy to forget that they are human beings with complex inner lives, insecurities, moments of weakness or doubt or shame. Fame discourages us from looking at icons as people, as if doing so will make them lose their power. Amanda Lee Koe's debut novel, *Delayed Rays of a Star*, proves that it is just the opposite, that it is their humanity, their internal struggles, that makes their outsized

performances all the richer... It is the moral tightropes... and the razor thin edge between fulfilling one's ambition and selling one's soul, that is at the core of the novel."

[amandaleekoe.com](http://amandaleekoe.com)



## Kit Warren

artist

Kit Warren is a visual artist based in Brooklyn, NY and Woods Hole, MA.

Her work has been widely exhibited and includes shows at the Zillman Art Museum/University of Maine (solo); Garvey Simon, NYC; Whitelight Contemporary Art, Santa Fe; Art on Paper, NYC; Key Projects, NYC; Kenise Barnes Fine Art, Larchmont NY; PS 122 Gallery, NYC; SCOPE, NYC; and The Painting Center, NYC. Her work is in numerous private and public collections. She has been featured in Art Spiel, Posit Journal #21, Works and Days Quarterly, and 100 Philosophers, 100 Artworks, 100 Words, Aesthetics for Birds.

Warren has been awarded fellowships at Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, The Saltonstall Foundation, and the Conception Arts Fellowship at the Chateau Orquevaux Residency in France, with financial support from Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation and The Joseph Robert Foundation. She holds a BFA from University of Pennsylvania, an MFA from School of Visual Arts (NYC) and a certificate in Multi-Media from New York University.

[kitwarren.com](http://kitwarren.com)

## Kythe Maryam Heller

editor

Kythe Maryam Heller is a poet, essayist, interdisciplinary artist, and scholar. She is author of the poetry collection *Firebird* (Arrowsmith), writing and inter-media works including *Immolation*, *Thunder Perfect Mind*, and *Rite of Spring* (with Meghan McNealy), film and installation work presented in the US and Canada, and critical studies published by Cambridge University Press, Akron Series in Contemporary Poetics, and Harvard Divinity School Graduate Journal. She is the founder of Vision Lab, a socially-engaged art and research collective in the future of the human spirit (based at Harvard Divinity School), the editor-in-chief of *Forecast Journal*, and a faculty member of the Language and Thinking Program at Bard College. She has received fellowships and grant awards from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (to support a writing fellowship in poetry at the MacDowell Colony), The Mellon Foundation, Harvard University, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and elsewhere. Currently, she lives in Cambridge, MA, and is completing a doctorate at Harvard University.

[visionlabcollective.com](http://visionlabcollective.com)

[forecastjournal.us](http://forecastjournal.us)

## Carolina Gómez-Montoya

editor

Carolina Gómez-Montoya is a writer, translator and professor living between Spanish, English and French. They hold a PhD in Latin American and Peninsular Literature and they are a faculty member of the Language and Thinking Program at Bard College and at the Young Writer's Workshop at Simon's Rock. Carolina's writing appears in *Literal: Latin American Voices/Voces Latinoamericanas*; *¡Basta! Mujeres colombianas contra la violencia de género*; and the *Oregon Humanities* magazine. In 2020, they co-founded Crear Colectivo, in hopes of using language as a tool to promote solidarity, empathy, equity and the full participation of communities that have traditionally been excluded by institutions. They are currently based in Paris where they are engaged in a writing program at the Université de Paris 8 and working on a creative project devoted to the question of language and recognition.

[crearcolectivo.com](http://crearcolectivo.com)

# Reviews

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“This book is close to the perfect incarnation of what a nomadic poetry & poetics needs to & can be: multiple voices, multiple languages, de concert (in & out of concert/unison), exploring paths or ‘mirrors’ that fork & fold, braid & dance. Which is the only way to experience (& then share as poem or art) the richly bewildering complex multiplicity of this, our world. And the only way to even approach its many-hued truths. All language is translation, and thus any/all language-constructs such as poems are always already translations. Read, reread & cross-read these ‘newly-spun thread(s),’ so as ‘to be perpetually reborn.’”

—Pierre Joris, author of *A Nomad Poetics* and *Always the Many, Never the One*

“‘What is unsaid in a work, in a life, migrates from one language to another,’ note the editors of this exquisite and utterly singular anthology. It’s precisely this migration we witness as master poets alternate carrying each other across oceans and cultures into the habitats of new worlds and orthographies until this communion of voices from around the globe envelopes us in its fortifying mysteries. ‘To be born is to risk,’ writes Cecilia Vicuña. What these writers risk is nothing less than themselves, which is to say, everything.”

—Askold Melnyczuk, founding editor of Arrowsmith Press

“A kind of ceaseless motion moves through all these disparate texts and voices, a restlessness, an uneasy sense of displacement. Death, loss, love, sex, exile: all the inescapable themes of great literature are here, but in new and unexpected configurations, which are then reconfigured once more through brilliant yet unruly translations, re-creations that interrogate the nature and method of translation itself.”

—Kareem James Abu-Zeid, translator, editor, writer & scholar

“A joyous, prismatic collection that playfully pushes at the boundaries of translation.”

—Jeremy Tiang, author of *State of Emergency*



*“The Soul Conveys Itself in Shadow / El alma se mueve en la sombra* offers its readers an innovative countermapping of poetry and translation. Here we are blown off-course, led astray, forced to wander, by some of today’s most relevant poetic voices in dialogue. Praise for this encounter with the liminal, for this imprecision of borders and boundaries, for this embracing of errancy.”

—Katherine M. Hedeem, translator of poetry & Managing Editor of Action Books

*“The Soul Conveys Itself In Shadow* (El alma se mueve en la sombra) is an anthology with a powerful and raw expression of poetic identity. Its pattern is kaleidoscopic, woven with vibrant threads of diverse voices, delving into themes of love, loss, and liberation. It is not a book one simply reads; it’s an experience, a communion with the multifaceted soul of language. The translations, while literal in their approach, effectively capture the original voices of the authors. Additionally, the artwork is intricately detailed and visually stunning.”

—IndieReader

“In this perfect anthology, Kythe Heller and Carolina Gómez-Montoya invite you to hope along with them that the ‘reciprocity of care in approaching languages and each other’ will become a social practice. Here, the task of translation is to reveal not only an exchange of language as it morphs into renditions of meaning, but also to dissolve any artificial boundaries between one body being a poet, and the other being a translator. Here, there are no discreet beings; rather, each is an emerging and hierarchyless montage of thoughtful presences encountering each other within the field of the poem. The poet is the translator and the translator is the poet, and in this bodylessness, language as a ‘living presence’ unfolds with exquisite intensity within form, story, concept, history, trauma, eros, resistance, and everything else that is moving. The astonishing paintings of Kit Warren are woven within the pages, conveying the cellular and atomic field into which these morphings are ‘practices of errancy across language & consciousness.’ This book is a rare gift into which translation, as poettranslator AlcaláVicuña write, ‘perhaps the truest translation of the flower is yet to come.’”

—K (Kristin) Prevallet, interdisciplinary conceptual poet & author of *Everywhere Here and In Brooklyn*

*“The Soul Conveys Itself in Shadow* reminds us that translation can be a tool for thinking, for remembering, for ‘consoling us’. Full of curiosity and ‘expansiveness’, the works collected in this anthology breathe the myriad ways we can commit to a poem, and make it ‘palpable’. Translation, here, is such a ‘breathable fabric’, is hooks, is curves, is dotted lines, a rug we curl up on, a kitchen table we gather around. These texts across languages, across memories, across borders, are ‘soaked’, ‘laden’ ‘leveled’, ‘slippery’, they mark what or who’s been silenced, drawing us in. Kit Warren’s drawings further translate the page, making it vibrate with attention, they hook us, circling around a pattern, a shape, in varying degrees of thickness or emphasis. I follow these lines. Like translation, like all making that traces another voice, another idea, another material, these lines sometimes cross over, sometimes they lift into the air, or constrict, draw borders, form edges. Sometimes shapes peek out from in between the fold of the page, are barely visible, and we sense that the real work lies inside the gap, the ‘gutter’, which we can’t grasp. Translation is this dot inside a little cube, a leaky brittle body, a fruit peel, with its layers, it adds flourishes and swirls. Ultimately, it’s in the ornamentations, the annotations, that we get to know the matter something’s made of, how it holds together. Little ‘scraps of weaving garbage’, I gather these works in my hands, to care for them.”

—Sophie Seita, multi-disciplinary artist, writer & researcher

“After reading this collection of translated poems, the word that emerged almost materially in my mind is buckle, a tool to fasten two ends together into one. A belt around the body, which is a body of a book and the bodies of all of these authors and translators. Some of the pairs translate one another in an exchange, some engage in conversations that elucidate their processes and their thinking about the crossings inherent in these translations. There is a coming together and a coming apart. A buckle is a temporary instrument, and it is designed to come undone.”

—JD Pluecker, translator & editor

# Sample Interview Questions

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## 1. In what ways does this book explore the subtleties of language and linguistic space?

This book is made of encounters... We felt our way in the dark among these eleven voices, complex in origin and destination. Many of us live between two, three, or more languages, and our perception travels through mirrors that fork and fold meaning so that a word isn't only a word, but its *palabra, verbo, signo, voz...* the infinite and the minuscule that is a word. To occupy such a space between blur, echo, and dilation, is a worthy and important task.

## 2. *La sombra* is woven through this anthology like a thread. What does it represent and how does it function?

Many of the poets in this book suggest that *la sombra* is secretly a place of light; a place of transformation, of reinventing language in order to say what could not be said before, or to say otherwise. This is, ultimately, an invitation to enter poetry and translation with a sense of mysterious awareness. The soul is conveyed through many bodies of shadow. As editors, writers, and readers in our own right, we invited this awareness. What has moved us has been the company of these poems in our luggage, on our journeys, and the joy of conversations that happen, often behind the scenes, in the dim light of betweenness where new forms of knowledge, of becoming and of experiencing the world, are being unfolded.

## 3. What are the experimental highlights of this book, both in terms of language and visual art?

We wanted to explore how a variety of partnerships and approaches to translation have been equitable and sustainable. We believe the book evidences a reciprocity of care in both its poetic translations and reflective exchanges about process.

The book also proposes something new about the role of the visual artist as a contributor, at once positioning her as a “first reader” or engaged in another form of translation. We asked ourselves: how many folds are there between poetry, translation, commentary, and the visual intervention of the artist?

Over time, we encourage you to hear new possible routes as the book's translations move in and beyond languages and into the visibility of gesture. They move across the page and among you, the many readers who continue to encompass the practice of translation with us.

#### 4. What advice would you give to the book's readers?

To choose to move within languages, to read with a multidimensional lens and navigate layers of meaning, is not necessarily a comfortable position to inhabit. We invite you to embrace this discomfort as well as its pleasures; to move and be moved as it casts light on, and beyond, the page. We invite that sudden rush of "intoxicating polyvalence" (Rosa Alcalá) that words reveal in the darkness of translation, that soulflash of transformation.

#### 5. What do you hope audiences take away from this book?

Many of us live in transit. Sometimes we send postcards from the past, from places we have left behind, or from the future, where we have yet to arrive. Other times, our voices over cell phones are tentative, unstable—*Are you there?*—reaching out through faltering electronics and time zones, across oceans and flickering screens.

We invite the book's readers to think of it as a postcard to the possibility of the impossible—a shadow space to search for connections expanding within and beyond language, but also as a model for social practice, an attempt to illuminate and transform the conditions of writing and translation at this moment in time.