



**MERCEDES ROFFÉ**

**PART 1 : REVISITING EKPHRASIS**



**Ekphrasis, 1**

looking isn't enough

sinking in is just a beginning

later on forgetting      later

being reborn within      straightening up      later

becoming      again      looking



around

leaving

looking

perhaps

perhaps then

## **Ekphrasis, II**

as it is with music

perhaps

or perhaps not

there's no looking there  
there's a breaking apart

there's      seeing

with the eyes of the soul  
the eyes of the wind

the music keeps on announcing that  
which is (not) seen

that which is drawn instead    that  
which appears and  
fades before

being



be-ing-perceived.

*Translated from the Spanish by Rebekah Smith*

**PART II: from FLOATING LANTERNS**  
(Bristol, UK: Shearsman Books, 2016)



There is no distance  
the distance is fire  
No distance  
it is smoke and ashes  
it is reflection  
it is the earth you step  
this distance is my face in the mirror  
your steps on your steps



her ashes on your ashes

There is no distance

I am she

I am the insomniac

the one found again persecuted in the desert

I am her eyes

her mirror

her distance from me and from herself

There is no distance, there is blindness

There is no distance, there is reunion

There is no distance, there are different desert colors

seas of different colors

grass sky night

of the distant color of time

There is no distance, there are colors

and deserts

There are houses and rubble

houses raided and demolished

tents, igloos, teepees

lofts bunkers palaces

there ranches huts there ramallahs

venom puppets snitches

there are the seven cities of gold and the Incan gold

gold dust black gold God



**CAESURAE: POETICS OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION VOL2: 2 (ISSN  
2454 -9495)**

**JANUARY 2018**

*(UGC APPROVED E-JOURNAL, SL NO 118; JOURNAL NO 41668)*

bless us and those who are not us  
let us pray  
let us speak the prayer, the missing word  
the cipher          the number          the key  
let us inhabit the night in the pure presence

*because to feel is more than seeing but even more so is to merge*

We have to return  
we have to go back  
we have to go back forward  
unwind the skein of time  
return to the future  
we have to return  
to the blue mass starry night  
where we were light  
miniscule particles of light dispersed  
in the bosom of night  
we have to go back  
unwind the weft of this night

Let us dissolve the night  
Let us breathe  
One breath  
Let us infuse the night with light          with air

Let us infuse the night with true night





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**Rebekah Smith** is a translator, editor, educator, and printer. She co-edits the Señal series for contemporary Latin American poetry and the Eastern European Poets Series at Ugly Duckling Presse, where she is also the Production Manager. Her co-translation (with Victoria Cocco) of Pablo Katchadjian's *the rou of alch* was published in 2016 (UDP). She teaches in the Education and Language Acquisition Department at LaGuardia Community College.

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