

The Bird

Patrick Lane

The bird you captured is dead.
I told you it would die
but you would not learn
from my telling. You wanted
to cage a bird in your hands
and learn to fly.

Listen again.
You must not handle birds.
They cannot fly through your fingers.
You are not a nest
and a feather is
not made of blood and bone.

Only words
can fly for you like birds
on the wall of the sun.
A bird is a poem
that talks of the end of cages.

Patrick Lane. *Beware the Months of Fire*. Toronto: Anansi, 1974.

Lake Sagaris. *Un Pajaro Es Un Poema* Santiago: Pehuén/Casa Canada, 1986

It's quite fitting that Lake Sagaris isolated the penultimate line for the title of her Spanish anthology of Canadian poems, in English and Spanish (translations by herself), Un pájaro es un poema. Lane's tender lyric can be read in a variety of ways, including as a response to so-called benign dictatorships and other varieties of patronizing. It is both a paean to the power of language ("only words") and a recognition that that power is limited. Lake Sagaris currently resides in Santiago, Chile.

The influence of the cultural explosion that accompanied the freedom movements of the last two decades in Latin America has strongly affected Canadian literature. We present in this issue the work of only four many Canadian poets who've listened to and travelled in the rest of this long, skinny continent.

El Pájaro

Translated by Lake Sagaris

El pájaro que capturaste ha muerto.
Te dije que iba a morir
pero no quisiste aprender
de me decir. Querías
enjaular un pájaro dentro de tus manos
y aprender a volar.

Escucha nuevamente.
No debes manosear los pájaros.
No pueden volar a través de tus dedos.
No eres un nido
y una pluma no es
de sangre y hueso.

Solamente las palabras
pueden volar para ti como los pájaros
en la muralla del sol.
Un pájaro es un poema
que habla del fin de las jaulas.

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