

María Negroni

Exilium

Translated from the Spanish by Michelle Gil-Montero

As Juan Gelman once wrote, “exile has no form but leaves a trace.” In *Exilium*, Argentine poet María Negroni sketches precisely such a trace, in a poetic form that approaches opposite extremes of material immediacy and evanescence. On an imaginative terrain that sweeps the Greco-Roman, the “long night” of Argentina’s last dictatorship, and the crisis of displaced migrants today, Negroni locates the exile within poetry itself. In this poetics of exile, the poem shines in its utopian desire to write the “unwritten words,” revealing language at its most estranged.

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The eternal return of this exile is the tragic condition of the poem: language is born where paradise, lost, perishes.

— JORGE MONTELEONE

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María Negroni writes like a dancer working the barre, her movements lovely, stark, and essential. Michelle Gil-Montero’s rendition in English conveys the energies and austerities of each poem extending down the center of these pages: toned, gauzy, marvelously nocturnal.

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— KRISTIN DYKSTRA

Attentive as she is to the pre-semantic meanings of sound in María Negroni’s work, Michelle Gil-Montero is the ideal translator for these poems. Here, Negroni sculpts a connected network of spells and insights that conjure a portrait of the spirit of our time.

— FORREST GANDER



María Negroni has published several books of poetry and essays, and two novels. A recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Fundación Octavio Paz, she is the director of the Creative Writing program at Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, the first to exist in Argentina.



Michelle Gil-Montero is translator of contemporary Latin American poetry, hybrid-genre work, and criticism. She has been awarded fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Howard Foundation, as well as a Fulbright US Scholar’s Grant to Argentina, and a PEN/Heim Translation Prize.



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