



Traducir del español por ANITA M. HART

University of Nebraska at Kearney

Valle Rubio, María del. *Inusitada luz* (1982-2007). Chucena:

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Inusitada luz (1982-2007), the collected poetic works of María del Valle Rubio, features twelve books of poetry published over the past three decades. The concise, arefully crafted poems reflect the writer's thoughtful introspection, as well as her inclination to find meaning and vitality in a

variety of circumstances. Born in the small town of Chucena (Huelva), Valle Rubio began to publish in the period of the 1980s, when Spanish women poets were gaining increasing attention. Poet and painter Valle Rubio captures in her work moments of life, with expectations and disappointments, loss and recovery, doubt and confidence.

Beginning with *Residencia de olvido* (1982), the poetry points to a search for light and a desire to live fully and consciously. The work of creation, in poetry and art as well as in the design of a life, involves trial and discovery.

For Valle Rubio, this process leads to a perception of the “unusual” or “rare” light chosen for the title of the collected works. Lines from this early collection contain a phrase that, with slight modification, becomes the title of the larger volume: “Soy el centro de frío de una cama, / que busca en la insistencia / aquel rayo de luz inusitado” (*Inusitada luz* 59). Images in lines from the untitled initial poem, “Sube el cuerpo sin lastre como cometa / a regiones azules, en juegos espirales” (30), work well with the illustration, credited to María del Carmen Pacheco, on the cover of the book *Inusitada luz*. The art work, with spiraling, overlapping globes of color and light

ranging from dark blue to shades of light blue to white, may well reflect the

idea that experiences of deep understanding or intuitive knowledge occur in the process of engaging life’s challenges. The poet’s opening to light and consciousness continues, with twists and turns, through works of the

following years.

Valle Rubio’s energy and determination are evident in *Residencia de olvido*, in the lines “Quiero luchar, morir, vivir luchando, / en guerra estoy conmigo y no me rindo (38) and in the assertion “Necesito ausentarme del tedio y la rutina” (63). A divided self contemplates directions for her life. A shift to an inward turn and a more introspective tone occurs in *Clamor de travesía* (1986). In *Derrota de una reflexión* (1987), the speaker in the poem “Intimismo itinerante” seeks a recovery of authenticity: “Quiero ser arrojada/ a mi calle más céntrica. / A ese lugar de mí que no comulga / sino con el silencio. / Místicas ansias / imponen su querella: / volver a mí, / defender mis

murallas, / y, acaso, / dejar la hostilidad fuera de luz” (153).

In returning to the self, Valle Rubio verbalizes an effort to redefine herself in *El tiempo insobornable* (1990): “Escribo, me transcribo, huérfana de mí / intento la aventura de crearme” (168). In this book the poet creates memories

RESEÑAS 282 Cuadernos de ALDEEU of childhood in rural Chucena, as in these lines: Estás ahí, detenida y distante, con tu trenza pendulando en la espalda. Duermes acurrucada, seguramente en un lugar de mí recóndito y de olvido.

Nada que te revele para quien te contempla, pues

no sé qué fue de aquel aire salubre de flor y de trival. (185)

The poem’s speaker, acknowledging the positive natural environment of her youth and the changes brought by the passage of time, concludes: “Viéndote, me contemplo y deshago el más triste equipaje / que soñara, ese

desprendimiento por las cosas, / [...] / Van pasando las tardes del invierno, y una voz juvenil / me insta a volver sobre ese pasado donde tú permaneces” (185). In another poem the speaker is inspired by a memory that arrives “con

sabor a sandía”: “Vuelvo a ser la chiquilla descalza que mastica la vida / y absorbe la sensación purísima del primer paladar” (186).

She recovers, at least for a time, the vitality and joy of childhood, thus recreating the self through memory.

The process of discovery and creativity continues in Valle Rubio's book *Museo interior*, awarded the Premio Rafael Alberti 1990 and published in 1991. Here the poet incorporates into her writing references and images related to painters (such as Goya, Velázquez, El Greco, Monet, and Picasso), works of art, literary figures, characters, and film stars as a context or a point

of departure for her interpretation, as well as her poetic creation. In the poem "Las meninas" Velázquez, appearing somewhat perplexed and concerned, observes the scene and ultimately inserts himself into the painting (206). In "Idealizado autorretrato" the quiet, serene woman in the portrait, the "yo" of the poem, comes to life and takes action to change her state of mind: "Sin otra solución / me remito a elevar / la sombrilla y, con ella mi espíritu" (212). The poem "Alfred Hitchcock" plays with perspective and concludes with a reversal of expectations in the statement "Sólo entonces sabemos / que Hitchcock nos contempla tras la cámara" (237). In these pieces the poet creates new views and interpretations of the situations. Seven other books of poetry in *Inusitada luz* come from the past ten years, showing evolving understanding of her life and her creativity. In an untitled poem from *Para una despedida* (1995) the image of the mirror, which appears frequently throughout Valle Rubio's poetic production, conveys the speaker's doubt: "Yo espejo confundida conmigo. / Tanto dudar de mí / para saber quién soy. / [...] / Quiero ser yo de nuevo iluminada / más allá del azogue y los afeites" (294). In *Sin palabras* (1995) the poet acknowledges the limitations of language: "Nada es castigo, perdición, tormento, / si vives la quimera. / Por esa finitud Reseñas 283 de la palabra / me he quedado sin voz" (336). At the same time she maintains belief in poetic expression: "Conservo la esperanza, ya os lo dije, / mejor

quiero la fe, / [...] / Una luz que me alumbré / cuando no haya caminos / para seguir contando los recuerdos" (336). In a poem from *Acuérdate de vivir* (1998), the speaker's self-confidence alternates with doubt, and a bit of

humor accompanies an unexpected ending: "Nadie ose engañarme: / la edad está cumplida, y yo me erijo / sobre estos tacones insufribles" (387). *A cuerpo limpio* offers a section on "Objetos," including the poem "Abanico," in which the memory of a grandmother emerges through images and comparisons: "Como ala feroz, entumecida, / se mueve el abanico / en la mano cansada. / [...] / Como un viejo reloj agonizante / las varillas se quejan, reproducen / el lento parpadeo que sostiene / la vida y la memoria de mi abuela" (451). The volume ends with a selection of "Poemas inéditos," including a five-part

poem titled "Ciudades." Offering a valuable introduction to *Inusitada luz* (1982-2007), Manuel Gahete's insightful "Prólogo" guides the reader through Valle Rubio's works

and provides information on the eleven poetry prizes and the "Accésit" awarded to the poet's books of poetry. Also helpful are the references to reviews found in Spanish newspapers and literary publications. Taking into consideration several directions mentioned by critics in assessing Spanish poetry at the end of the past century and the beginning of the current one, readers may conclude that Valle Rubio's work resists easy classification, having aspects of both the poetry of "difference" and the poetry of

“experience,” along with metaphysical elements. The collected works in *Inusitada luz* give readers the opportunity to explore Valle Rubio’s varied poetry and hear the voice of yet another dedicated poet of the past

several decades. With poems that shed light on a woman’s experiences and a poet’s process, the volume showcases Valle Rubio’s ways of engaging and creating her reality.

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