

Carmen Boulosa
Translated from the Spanish by Catherine Hammond
NTM 2016



the manta ray's leap from the water

Slice of the sea.

Manta of the sea.

Solid land flying in the open sea
 lifted into the light, dancing.

Ray of light upon darkening becomes flesh.

The closed mouth you kiss, the teat of the sea.

Dry fish skin dancing an earthly connection.

It is a wave on top of another wave.

A wave of blood.

Dressed in skinned flesh.

Separate, it goes flying over the united body
of the sea.

Solid foam.
Hard, dark foam.

It is the black white.

Hare pursued.
Gazelle that leaves the herd.
Sea faithful to the loony moon.

Original dust seeking sister selenite sand.
The tracing of an inconsistent calligrapher.
Stroke of the paintbrush.
Master stroke of the chisel.

Unruly bird.

Ant with mutilated antenna.

The leaf that falls toward the sky.

The independent lake in the center of the ocean.
The neighborhood of the night sky in the center of the ocean.

A brain with an anatomy acquired anonymously,
pure outburst, no ideas.

The sea that has reason.
A stupid sea, mistaken and stupid.

Sweet salt,
The salt of cold blood.

It is the mother of itself, and it laughs.
It is the burn of salt,
the sting in the wound from salt.

The letter that does not fit in the music of the sea.
The open flower that returns to its bud.

The only tree frond in an almost blue desert.
Liquid frond of the sea baobab tree.

Leaf that stems from neither trunk nor roots:
born as the rose laurel in the garden of Ruben Dario.

The tear of the sea.

The bursting out laughing of the sea.
The cough of the sea.

The heart of the sea gravitating toward the sky.

Lost, blind eye of the caverns.

Eye of the caverns rebelling because it wants to see.

Shield of the immortal.

A cry from the entry to the underworld.

The creaking of mystery.

One happy drop of the huge, frowning sea.

The saddle for trotting across Columbus' wide sea.

Neptune's visible dream.

Longing that comes from algae.
An imitation of the role played by a dolphin.
Free wing of the whale.

Neptune's coming, blue semen of the god.

Flank of a being that does not exist.

Hiccup from a burial at sea.

Soul of an angel running to the sky.

Shawl of the siren.

Blue hair of the nymph.

Aphrodite's first milk.
Aphrodite's placenta.

Alcohol made from water.

Flesh from tequila.

Muscle of wine.

The absent heron's point of repose.

Water wanting to be a crocodile.

Water filled with regret.

True holy water.

The miraculous baptismal water of Leonardo.

Window of the sea.

The rip in the fabric of the sea that wrath made.

The thread snapped.

The sigh.

Piece of sea cut to mend the cloth of the sky

from the light pit of the star.

The manta jumping.

Sea devil jumping

(the two names both call you

to yourself, ray that jumps from the water.

Spirit of the dance.

Eye of the Cosmos.

Columbus sleepless.

Seafarer blind from so much sun.

The uncertain journey toward the end of the earth.

The edge of the world.

The tickle, the cramp and spasm.

It is a belch.

It is the sense of ridicule that comes from not belonging.

Leash without tension.

The rejected embrace.

Burned mouth of the unkissed.

The unavenged wound.

Open wound infected by rotten sugar

in the rotten diabetic flesh.

A piece outside the world.

Red stain on the flag.

Back legs of the uncooked frog.

Rape by your lover.

It's the thing of not being loved by your lover.

The aleph of the soul of Sisyphus.

Dawn drowned of desire in the solitary bed.

The exquisite wine glass hurled in fury.

Death that brings love.

It is love.

Night in the repeated dawn of the solitary life.

The wheel lying by the side of the busy road.

The word for English written in Chinese.

It is the dream of the lone sleeper:

in that bed Goya's phantoms show no mercy, seize
the sheets, strip him, undress him, strangle him:
solitary, the phantoms devour him:

in the leap of the ray we see them swallow him.

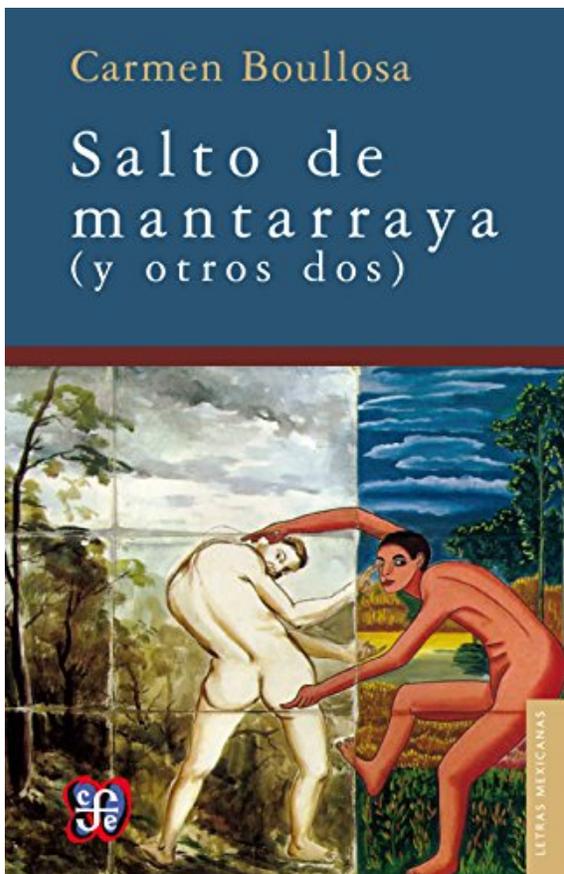
It is that full mouth that births the monster.

It is the moment the monster swallows.

It is Cronos devouring.

It is the bones of the thunder alone in the foul monster's teeth.

It he who attempts to escape its bite.



Carmen Boullosa (Mexico City, 1954) is a novelist, a poet, and a playwright. She has published seventeen novels and more than a dozen books of poetry. She received the Xavier Villaurrutia Prize in Mexico, in Germany, the Anna Seghers and the Liberaturpreis, and, most recently, the Café Gijón Prize of Madrid. She has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Cullman Center Fellow, held the Chair Andrés Bello at NYU, and the Alfonso Reyes Chair at La Sorbonne, and was distinguished professor at Georgetown University, Columbia University, and City College CUNY. She hosts the five times NY-EMMY winner TV show “Nueva York.”

More at <http://www.carmenboullosa.net>.

About the translator:



Catherine Hammond's translation of Olvido García Valdés book, *Y todos estábamos vivos*, winner of Spain's Premio Nacional de Poesía, 2007, comes from Cardboard House Press. Her manuscript of Carmen Boullosa's selected poems was a finalist at *Drunken Boat's* book contest. Other translations have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Field*, *Words without Borders*, and many other national magazines. Hammond's own poetry has been anthologized in *Fever Dreams: Contemporary Arizona Poetry* from University of Arizona Press, in *MARGIN: Exploring Modern Magical Realism*, and in *Yellow Silk* from Warner Books. She has three Pushcart nominations.