

## Flood · *Dionisio D. Martínez*

*after paintings by Humberto Calzada*

### YEARS OF HOPE

What my 1731 Stradivarius cannot play, my ears will invent.

My catalogue of inventions is worthless in the absence of desire.

I came for the music, but I stayed for you.

My tenuous landscape is nothing but layer upon layer of paper.

I sleep on the faultline and dream of being swallowed. At 5:19 in the morning one bird and then another will wake me.

What good is the dark without music?

You are as punctual as winter light.

### YEARS OF SOLITUDE

To the one who sets a second place at the table anyway.

To the one at the back of the empty bus.

To the ones who name each piece of stained glass projected on a white wall.

To anyone convinced that a monologue is a conversation with the past.

To the one who loses with the deck he marked.

To those who are destined to inherit the meek.

To us.

## YEARS OF RECONCILIATION

The mime troupe is in town again. They want to reconstruct us bit by bit.

This is where the house went up in flames.

This is how we walked away, trying to salvage nothing.

That's us, building our separate houses in the aftermath.

There were ashes to be swept away, years of débris, pages and pages of unresolved music.

Here we are, looking out of our respective windows at the space between us.

Of all the illusions, forgetting is the most dangerous.

## YEARS OF FORTUNE

Suppose we count backwards and nothing happens.

The palm reader says I live on intuition.

Something tells me you're home for good, your unpacked bags nothing to worry about.

This morning I paid off the mortgage. By the middle of the afternoon I noticed that the house had not changed.

Indiscriminate wishes determine the length of a season and the falling of the light around here.

Escape has such a final ring to it. Let's just say we're taking our time in returning.

For better or for worse, ours is a variant of a rather common story.

### YEARS OF JUDGMENT

One lethargic word crawls out of your reach and confronts you.

Each breath unfolds with intentions of its own.

Even the slightest preoccupation with absolute stillness is a significant increment of time.

Everything is measurable.

Salvation is a deliberate leap into the eye of a cataclysm.

Believe like a man and you will drown in a drop of faith.

Believe in nothing and the first rains will level your house.

### YEARS OF VISION

In a matter of minutes I destroyed the journal I had kept for 15 years, maybe longer.

A man in love soon learns to be unfaithful to himself.

I changed my name and taught myself not to answer when you call me by the old familiar one.

It became obvious that accidents are worth repeating.

Each day I woke a little closer to the sea with little more than my cobalt blue history to keep me afloat.

I bought a shirt to match the earth of each new country I stumbled into—*terra cotta, terra firma, terra incognita*.

In countries with nothing but overabundance, language has the luxury of moving backward—*red hibiscus, dark leaves*.

## YEARS OF DISCOURSE

are not always preceded by years of silence. More than likely, they follow unfulfilled demands.

An arsenal of threats is dismantled.

The hands of the adversary begin to look surprisingly life-like.

For the agnostics, a man with cancer in his throat heals himself and begins to sing like a broken angel.

Those most susceptible to nostalgia are reminded of the mythical Age of Miracles.

An arsenal of memories, long abandoned, is discovered and restored.

Familiar voices reappear. In proportion to the sky, they are whispers.