88 Dreams

Juan Eduardo Cirlot

Translation by Fedra Rodríguez Proofreading and Edition by Donald Breckenridge

1.

An immense moon, whose whitish decaying matter is thickly strewn with volcanoes, was quite close to me, surrounded by an absolute darkness. The lower edge of the sphere leaned against my work table.

2.

The room was full of unmoving animals who awaited an unknown signal to come to life and fall on me; especially serpents and beings that resembeld wicker sticks.

3.

Nativity figures had an ordinary shape and were arranged in their traditional stances, however, they were immensely distant from each other.

4.

The "woman from Paris" came out of the darkness and approached me. She was naked and her body was of gray clay, viscous and wet. Nevertheless, I was not repulsed, but instead I felt a great happiness to be there, next to her. 5.

I was tossing logs into the bonfire and, when falling into the flames, they were transformed into birds. From far away and surrounding me rose a magnificent rampart, circumventing the entire horizon.

6.

In a river, with water up to her knees, there was a naked woman, of white flesh and large and harmonious limbs. Several crocodiles swam near by. Finally, standing up on its hind legs, one of them embraced her.

7.

I kill off many enemies, always fighting with two swords, one in each hand.

8.

Upon arriving in the city of ice, built amidst the peaks, I felt wholeheartedly happy; a great serenity took hold and made me unconscious. I watched as my hands became pieces of crystalline water.

9.

He was forced by María del Carmen to live under swamp water. As it lacked depth, he had to move forward lying on his belly, and only from time to time, could he take his head out of the mud to breathe.

The convict is taken to the place of torture, kept in leg irons and dragged by a horse; although the animal does not move very rapidly, this forces him to perform many swift movements while walking, to prevent from falling to the ground. The device that will put him to death is a crane which feeds on living flesh. Its metal has a sort of reddish vibration.

11.

There is a big gray chamber, illuminated by an open door, from which smoke pours out. The walls contain signs from the Hebrew alphabet.

12.

I was heading for a great landscape of calcareous contexture in the dead of night, and with some olive dry branches I beat my own hip to turn myself into her.

13.

At the end of the corridor, as soon illuminated as in the dark, there was a clown was smiling at me.

14.

I had my chest opened by a large wound and and precious gems flourished in the lacerated flesh. I was stretched out on a desk covered with a white tablecloth. There was no other piece of furniture in the room, and the dirty flaking walls saddened me more than my own wound.

One could barely see through the vibrating atmosphere. On one end of the horizon, there was a pale and trembling sun; at the opposite end, the moon appeared. I extended my arms to orient myself and could go into town, but it didn't exist any more.

16.

In the church, the images of saints are not in the altar, but rather on the floor in disorder.

17.

She is sitting beside a window that almost takes up the entire wall. She is dressed like a bride and her white gown is stained with a few drops of my blood.

18.

Towards the terrace where I find myself, the stars go down as spheres in various violent colors, setting against the intensely dark sky. Bolts of lightning strike in the distance, but I feel an immense sweetness, because I am thus living with celestial objects.

19.

Secluded beaches, bristled with black masts, with posts that look as though they were made of burned wood.

20.

The dreams in which, obviously, I am in danger, as I find myself under imposing and crystalline bodies of water – large rivers, a sea – give me joy.

I see an organ as high as a mountain. Then I go to the cathedral and as I open the door, I see that it is full of lions which roam through the nave, the altar and the high pulpits.

22.

Sometimes I am a Christian thrown to the beasts; at other times, a spectator that, from the circus bleachers, contemplates the spectacle.

23.

A city slowly melts away as if it were consumed by an invisible fire.

24.

In the main square of a town they celebrate something like a bullfight. But it consists of the following: a girl torments a bull that is incapable of defending itself, and she slices off its skin in large strips, rips out its tongue and gouges out its eyes.

25.

When one places their hands on the table, great symphonies are heard.

26.

From the pockets of my jackets, left throughout the house, hung on the back of the chairs, scattered all over the ground, stuck in the closet whose doors only open halfway, a multitude of strange objects that I cannot fully recognize comes out; some of them appear to be bird feathers, others are like crumpled and burned papers.

There is a large pond of greenish and filthy water. The sky is gray and the field, in the distance, as if plunged into sadness. I am at one end of this elliptical-shaped waterhole, and on the opposite side there is one girl.

28.

Flying bodies of the most diverse natures and dimensions. At times, rope ladders and trapezes hang from them, and I am suspended between heaven and earth without any sense of dread.

29.

I hear a voice saying: Never visit in the daytime the places in which you sleep at night, as you run the risk of creating two lives that mutually destroy each other.

30.

From the depths of the cavern in which I live, one sees, at its entrance, a naked man, seated. This man is gypsum-colored and makes large pain and impatience gestures.

31.

I visit an underground place, full of cages as those of the beasts of the zoological park. In those cages, there are men locked up with one half of their bodies buried in the viscous mud that forms the ground. 32.

You should not forget me. – While saying those words, she gave me a small solid object in a sort of glass tower, filled with fragments that arranged and disarranged themselves, giving the impression of a building or a ruin.

33.

I was in a square at midnight, and that square had undescribable dimensions. A hard, shining and parched fountain stood in its centre. Then, a shooting star fell from a great height, but instead of disappearing after its destruction, it fell bouncing off the floor. I chased the fired object and took it on my fingers.

34.

I see myself holding my mother's hand and strolling on a blinding white avenue, fringed by gardens where there are flowers of all colors, shapes and sizes, but especially red lilies, which blossom as we pass by them.

35.

I was handed one of the books that I wrote, bound in pink silk burnt around the edges.

36.

Alongside a garden, next to a pomegranate tree, two tall men, muffled in black coats, shake their hands.

Remains of buildings made of wood painted in different colors were floating in the sea, they seemed to belong to oriental pleasure pavilions; the water surrounding them had a special texture that recalled thorny plants.

38.

Having to put a mask on, I chose one of a demon and when wearing it for the first time, a hole in the wall has opened up and warned that a strange woman was watching me.

39.

I am in a forest and I know that roosters living in cages are afraid of walking along the bushes, because deep within the burrows, large blue wingless peafowls creep up on them.

40.

The man who had invented the instrument of torture that killed through ripples which cut like knives, and that was kept at the bottom of a well, placed in the prision courtyard, required his victims to have their picture taken with him, as if it were a gathering of friends celebrating a party.

41.

I see a golden plain and, first and foremost, a naked tall maid whose arms are extended backwards. There are two dogs behind her back and she inserts her hands into their mouths to have them devoured.

A stemboat, in a rare and antique form, arrived on the island where we were imprisoned and, while taking a quick lap around it, its men tossed tree trunks into the water to save us.

43.

At the top of a slim tower, built with a tin-plated steel sheet and sapphires, an elderly man with a very white beard stirs himself, bringing together a crowd that does not yet exist.

44.

After an extremely long pilgrimage through the desert, I see in the distance a walled town, in which one of its towers stands out extraordinarily. Clouds and mists that veil and overshadow it go by, but this tower, which the sun rays hit directly, always reappears.

45.

Hands reached my heart, but another gaze remained fixed on the horizon.

46.

When arriving at that beach, after crossing a rough dark sea, I found I could not set foot on the rocks or the sand, because it was all overrun with a crunchy crowd of crabs. (My childhood dream). I walk down a street in the city, holding my mother's hand, and suddenly I see a yellow-colored airship going down slowly. In the gondola, which has an elongated and bare form, there are ten or twelve men rigorously outfitted in full dress, who greet us ceremoniously taking off their top hats while the aerostat ascends again getting lost behind the roofs of the houses.

48.

Many poor children threw stones at me and I hid myself amongst the ruins of the houses of a wretched slum.

49.

Has she been here? – I ask the silent couple who, in the gloom, remains leaning against the wall of a church of an unknown town. – *Yes* – they tell me. *And so have you, but you do not remember*.

50.

I have incurable diseases.

51.

I cross rooms and more rooms, all of them the same, in which only the wallpapers have distinct colors. None of them has furniture. I do not find what I am searching for.

María del Carmen throws a grasshopper (the animal I fear the most) into my face.

53.

I am not the one who lives in your/his life – she says to me. *I am the one who is with you since the beginning*. And then I see that the cliff between both is filled with a white sand.

54.

I enter the Market at midnight. There is no one in it and I wander through stalls of vegetables, fruits, fish and meat. Slowly one begins to hear a rising sound. All of a sudden, I realize that it is a lament composed of a thousand screams of pain. The floor is stained with blood.

55.

A woman pulls off her stockings in front of me, hitching her skirts right up her hips. She has thick but shapely legs, and the room in which we are is very poor.

56.

In the middle of a stone desert, whose uniformity is only interrupted by low mounds, a huge palace brusquely appears; what strikes me the most about it is its white marble terraces. But I walk past it and go back to the country all alone. People flail around on the bed or on the floor, being neither dead nor alive.

58.

I walk in the countryside, dressed as a soldier. I have in my hand a kitchen knife and when I find my worst enemy I do not want to fight against him. I understand that killing is useless and I keep on walking along a crooked path towards unknown places.

59.

The room where I am has no doors or windows, but a mirror in which I look at myself. Suddenly the walls fall apart and a landscape of almond trees in bloom towering from the ground appears around me. When I look at myself, I notice that a full metamorphosis has taken place. I have a thick blond mane and my lips are as red as blood.

60.

Many dreams with lizards, grasshoppers and big black turtles.

61.

I travel along the space and see the cities at my feet. I do not fly, but rather walk in the air.

The sea, when hitting against the huge cliffs, sounds like an orchestra for a long time; the song is unknown.

63.

In a swampy terrain, there was a large number of cars that were missing their wheels.

64.

The room in which I found myself was painted in black. There were several swords simetrically arranged on the wall. The furniture was gold-colored. I nervously wandered, waiting for something that was never achieved. Suddenly, the lights turned off and I found myself flabbergasted, wanting to scream and without being able to.

65.

After murdering her, I dumped the body into some sort of lake contained by a wall. Her hands clung to the brick wall, but finally disappeared into the water.

66.

She came walking down a street, whose atmosphere vibrate to the extreme of making it difficult to see. It was winter and it seemed that it had snowed. I kissed her on the forehead, and from that moment, I remained under her dominion.

At the seashore were assembled ancient galleys, very low, in different light colors that stood out against the deep-blue, almost black, of the water. And then there was a battle.

68.

The soul is a more hideous prision than the flesh, I heard them say. It was an elders' meeting, small-town people gathered in the main square, perhaps to judge me.

69.

That tall stout man was dressed in rags; yet, in spite of my princely garment, he bossed me around and I was in duty bound to obey him all the days of my life.

70.

I am not interested in the afterlife, I said, for there also there are suffering and torturers.

71.

María del Carmen appeared to me between two shimmering mountains; as I get close to them, I see that they are made out of jewels. Then she laughs and flees, throwing herself against one of the fulgent heaps. Afterwards, I go down a very poor street, it's night time, and a tall woman with dishevelled hair walks by my side. We stand at a gateway and she kisses me. When I turn her face away from me and glimpse it in bright light, I feel mortally grieved. A train moves in the distance and the evening falls. All of a sudden, the train approaches and I see that the soil is moist, becoming a quagmire. I am there myself, in the mud, blocking the rails by which the train will move and there is nothing I can do to prevent my body from being tattered.

73.

I enter a room and see that there are several boxes left on a table and on various shelves. They have different shapes and sizes; are made up of distinct materials. Some are large, like strongboxes, and others are tiny. I remain undecided, unsure about what to do in this situation. I open a box, and then another one, and another, and many others. All of them are empty.

74.

It is late and in the brothel there is only a tall half-naked woman. I come up to her and let myself be carried away to a dark dirty bedroom. *It is the other way around*, I hear them say. Then I see the dining room of the house, in which four or five men play cards by candlelight.

75.

In a large ballroom, couples are dancing; the women wear evening gowns and dressed in military uniforms of past eras are the men. They do not seem to realize that a group of ragged guys has entered the room and, with pickaxes, has started to drill downward through the floor. Afterwards, they drag some large logs and form a cross. I am walking down a street in an African city. On both sides there are women dressed with typical national costumes. I approach one of them, who leads me towards the interior of a house. There she sticks needles into my ring finger and grafts a spider on it, putting the legs of the insect inside my wounds. Then she wraps a bandage around my finger.

77.

María del Carmen stabbs a long penknife into the body of a still throbbing fish that has just been taken out of the water.

78.

My talisman has been broken or lost. Fraught with anguish, I spend the whole night searching for it.

79.

I fight against two Roman warriors with a sword. I use a strange trident-shaped sword.

80.

In the distance I see a house and go walking painfully towards it across the desert sands. A woman, slender as a boy, smiles at me at the entrance. I know it is pointless to strive to get there because I will never be able to live within; I will only be allowed to roam around it and let myself be loved by her, whenever she wants to seek me out. I go walking through a field full of ditches and weeds. Everything is incoherent. I understand the chaotic nature of the field.

82.

All night long I climb a mountain full of brambles. When I reach the summit, I see an immense landscape, bathed in the gray dawning light, at my feet. Firstly, I fly horizontally over it, then I join my hands and rise vertically through the gray clouds. An unutterable feeling that the Whole is in me.

83.

I swim in a very blue sea, amidst floating golden spheres.

84.

Forest glade. A naked and transparent woman was upon me, and I am not only in my own body, but in all the elements of the forest.

85.

I do not distinguish properly what I see from what I know as I am aware of it. I am in the central space of the main arch of the Cascade of the Park monument. Next to me is T. T.

I embrace her intensely, with tenderness, eager for a spirit possession. I know we are surrounded by fossils; I could not define whether we are within a huge fossil (taking part in it), or whether there are small fossils that fill all the voids, although somehow transparent, or whether the entire ensemble: Cascade of the Park, T. T. and me are only one single fossil. **86**.

I am the only Roman warrior who is ready to defend the camp. Arrows rain down on me and although I raise the shield to protect myself, I fall wounded, dead?

87.

I see a urinal, like one of those that there were once in the Rambla. Upon entering, an old woman shows me a magnificent bronze sword and wants to sell it to me. As the price was too high, I cannot buy it and I leave the place. Later on, an antiquarian offers me an agate whose surface has irregular concentric rings. I stare fixedly at it.

88.

On a vast plain there is a huge black terracotta head of a goddess. A sunny and warm landscape. I turn around and find myself in front of a great monument with red and black bricks, a central plant and four archs of triumph at the four entrances. The interior is full of marble statues, Roman, like the building. Among these, two draw my attention: one of a woman-mermaid that seems to be laughing and one of the emperor Trajan.

Extracts from *En la llama*, by Juan Eduardo Cirlot, 2005. Originally published by Ediciones Siruela, S. A., Madrid, Spain.