

POETRY
MINIMAL
ANTHOLOGY



Portrait made by Vitoriano Braga in 1914
(*Folhas de Arte*, 1924)

POETRY
MINIMAL
ANTHOLOGY
FERNANDO PESSOA



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LISBON
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Going over this anthology—and there are so many of Fernando Pessoa, and so many more yet to be made!—I am surprised to discover that it could not have been compiled just a few years ago, since many of the poems remained unknown and the need existed for a better understanding of Pessoa's personal archive and of other archives containing documents related to the Poet. Time is the real anthologist of an oeuvre, and this and other anthologies are but a contribution to that greater anthology—mere proposals attempting a happy cross between the poems that, in the words of Eduardo Lourenço, “the author of this anthology limited himself to choosing” and “those that, many years ago, chose him.” For Pessoa has already been anthologized by Lourenço and by so many other scholars, and today a Pessoaan anthology is a dialogue with numerous others of its kind. Pessoa, always plural, grows more plural yet. One can only imagine how increasingly multiple he will become...

To propose an anthology of Pessoa's poems is difficult, not only because every day brings with it a deeper understanding of the work of the author of *Mensagem* [*Message*], but also because Pessoa himself left immense plans for the publication of his poems, and because a more stable anthology already exists, namely, that constituted by the poems published in his lifetime. Those who do not limit themselves to collecting the poems from a list drawn up by Pessoa—which can serve as a table of contents—or to publishing again what he published while alive, will end up, after many considerations, including some poems and excluding others. Further still, where the versions are multiple, they will have to decide which to adopt. The inclusion here of images of the selected poems is a way of sharing *le goût de l'archive* (Farge) and of silently conveying the challenges of editing Pessoa.

This anthology required the scrutiny of the known versions of many poems and the revision of many transcriptions. In addition, each facsimile offers additional information about the edited poem (the orthography, for example) and, at times, facilitates the reading of other texts composed with the same materials. Now, this anthology, like Lourenço's and others, aims to reach "mere enthusiasts" of Pessoa's poetry, those unfamiliar with this poetry, those who have yet to form an opinion of it, those who bear rediscovering it, students, and those who still feel themselves to be students—like me, who, though I am (among other things) a professor, never stop learning with my students.

I recall having prepared some years ago, with Patricio Ferrari, an anthology of Pessoa's English poetry and not really knowing who its target audience could be. Imagine my surprise when I learned that this anthology had been discovered by Júlio Resende (among others), who, after reading it, composed uninterruptedly, in an ecstasy whose nature he cannot define, the songs of the Alexander Search band. This anthology, dedicated to Júlio, also aspires to inspire numberless unsuspected readers.

Jerónimo Pizarro

TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

Metrical equivalents between Portuguese and English poetry are bound to be inexact, since the one uses syllabic meter, the other accentual-syllabic. Still, rough equivalents are not difficult to find. Octosyllabic poems find equal counterparts in iambic tetrameter, with its eight-syllable lines (cf. "Sea. Morning."), and ballad stanza, with its alternation of tetrameter and trimeter, especially where the metrical feet vary between two-syllable iambs and three-syllable anapests (cf. "Reaper"). The versatile ballad stanza also suits pentasyllabic (cf. "*In the river, beneath the moon*"), hexasyllabic (cf. "*I leave to both the blind and deaf*"), and heptasyllabic poems (cf. "Song," "*O meadow, when at last I die*"). Poems of seven-syllable lines can be rendered in trimeter, as well, especially where anapests mingle with iambs (cf. "The Voice of God"). Poems of five-syllable lines also lend themselves to a mix of dimeter and trimeter (cf. "Là-bas"). One poem of Pessoa's—a metrical curiosity consisting of one- to two-syllable lines—inspired us to abandon accentual-syllabic versification and compose our lines according to syllables, symmetrically arranged, rather than according to metrical feet (cf. "*They say?*"). In the great majority of our translations, then, we employed more or less obvious metrical equivalents.

Occasional changes to the structure of the original poems were, nonetheless, necessary. The difficulty of matching Pessoa's dense patterns of rhyme forced us at times to relax the rhyme scheme, rhyming two rather than all three lines of a tercet (cf. "*We were three... We were three...*") or the dialogue only rather than the whole poem (cf. "The Monster") or two rather than all four lines of a quatrain (cf. "The Reaper," "Song," "*I leave to both the blind and deaf*," "*In the river, beneath the moon*," "*Just over water's sweep*," "*In welling depths of deepest*").

thought,” “Autopsychography,” “Initiation,” “*O meadow, when at last I die*,” “*Who knows if what we think is not*,” “*This history you salvaged from*”). Once, we abandoned rhyme altogether, judging it impossible, or at least imprudent to try (cf. “Swamps”). For these rare lapses, we console ourselves with the knowledge that our work boasts more—many more—rhymes than any existing English translation of Pessoa’s poetry. In one case, the relaxation of the rhyme scheme, in turn, necessitated a departure from the expected form (cf. “The Voice of God,” where the substitution of an ABCBDEFE rhyme scheme for the original ABABAB led, in consequence, to the addition of two lines to each of the two stanzas). In several instances, Pessoa’s irregular rhyme scheme, spread over lines and stanzas of irregular length, required us, in our search for suitable rhymes, to add lines while yet preserving the poem’s tenor (cf. “The Voice of God,” “Liberty,” “*Oh poor little tyrant!*,” “Un Soir à Lima”). The search for fit rhymes led in “Abdication” to a slight alteration in the rhyme scheme.

Iambic rhythm, with its alternation of unstressed and stressed syllables, predominates in our translations, but anapests, consisting of two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed one, make frequent appearance, as well. We deploy these anapests either to achieve a special effect (cf. the chiasmic unfolding of the wavelike final line in “Sea. Morning.” or the slow, bell-like rhythm of the second stanza of “The Villager”) or to avoid monotony. Where we use anapests more liberally, freely mixing them with iambs, the rhythm approaches that of iambic-anapestic—a rhythm popular with Hopkins, Tennyson, and Swinburne (cf. “The Voice of God,” “Barrel Organ,” “Abdication,” “Reaper,” “*O you who pluck the harp, were I to kiss*,” “Gomes Leal,” “*In the river, beneath the moon*,” “*The roses that grow in Adoni’s gardens I love*,” “*Your flower, and not the one you give, I want*,” “*Almond herb that soothes the aching foot*”). Just as we occasionally lengthen lines, then, either for effect or for variety’s sake,

we sometimes shorten lines, by omitting the initial unstressed syllable, for either of the same two reasons (cf. “Sea. Morning.” “Song”).

Where words can be pronounced either with one syllable or with two syllables, the reader should follow the demand of the rhythm. For example, in “Faust at the Mirror” *being* should be pronounced with one syllable; in “Nunc est bibendum...” *being* should be pronounced with two syllables. Again, both *toward* in “*We were three... We were three...*” and *flowers* in “Counsel” should be pronounced with one syllable.

Occasionally, we inverted sentence structure, either to form a pleasing sound or to avoid the monotony of repeated subject-verb-object sentence structures (cf. the opening line of “Slanting Rain” and the second line of the second stanza in “Saudade Dada”). Note that Pessoa himself employs inversion frequently in his poetry.

We retained the original title of “Saudade Dada” for its assonance and consonance, which are of a piece with that poem’s privileging of sound over sense. The sound poem’s dense weave of rhyme, both internal and terminal, necessitated the substitution of “Clovis and Chloe” for the original Portuguese names.

In the line “*O world, / Beingly you I am me...*,” in “The Voice of God,” we tried to capture the oddity of the original line.

We made no attempt at meter in translating Pessoa’s unfinished poems “*Come sit beside me, Lydia, on the river’s bank*” and “*Have nothing in your hand*”; nor did we attempt meter in rendering “*To be great, be whole; nothing yours*,” thinking that to do so would detract from its imperative force.

In “Salutation to Walt Whitman,” we translated Pessoa’s word *Camarada*, using Whitman’s own term *Camerado*.

Some readers might notice allusions to Keats, Coleridge, and the Bible—all prominent influences upon Pessoa.

We translated all poems into American English.

Finally, as Pessoa was a trilingual poet, so this is a trilingual anthology. While some ninety percent of the poems included here were originally written in Portuguese, two of the poems were originally written in French: “*We were three... We were three...*” and “*This history you salvaged from.*” Six of the poems Pessoa wrote in English, and so we did not translate them but rather present them here in their original language: “Sonnet VIII,” “Meantime,” “Painted,” “*The happy sun is shining,*” “The Fall of the Titan,” and “Justice.” To learn more about Pessoa’s English poetry, see the journals *PLCS* 28 and *Pessoa Plural* 10.

John Pedro Schwartz

Robert N. Schwartz

FERNANDO PESSOA

Mar. Manhã.

Suavemente grande avança
 Cheri de sol a onda do mar,
 Pensadamente se balanceia,
 E desce como a descansar.

Tão lenta e longa que parece
 S'uma criança de Titan
 O glauco sei que adormece,
 Bufando a' brisa da manhã.

Parece ser um ente apenas
 Este comer da onda do mar,
 Como uma cobra que em sereno,
 Sobos se alongue a colhear.

Umida e vasta e interminável
 No seu seio agul do sol,
 brifa com um mover-se estavel
 Oceano ebrío de ametol.

E a minha sensação é nula,
 Cheri de prazer, quer de pesar...
~~Então de prazer e de pesar~~
 Na onda lucida do mar.

16-novembro-1909.

Fernando Pessoa

SEA. MORNING.

Softly big and flecked with rays
 Mounts the sea-wave to its crest,
 Yet pausing now and then it sways,
 And swaying, swoons as if to rest.

Like the glaucous breast that nurses
 A Titan's offspring off to sleep,
 As to the breeze it pants and purses,
 So the wave does swell and sweep.

A sea-quick creature, vision fooling,
 Its pulsive motion clearly shows,
 A green-blue serpent softly spooling
 Along its axis as it goes.

Wine-stained, vast, and fluid table
 Spread beneath the warm tableau,
 Itself it moves, yet always stable,
 This ocean drunk on reddish glow.

A wave of pleasure or pain allays
 My senses. Now I cease to be...
 By alien ways it tilts and sways,
 The drunkenly undulant fulgurant sea.

16-11-1909

NIGHT

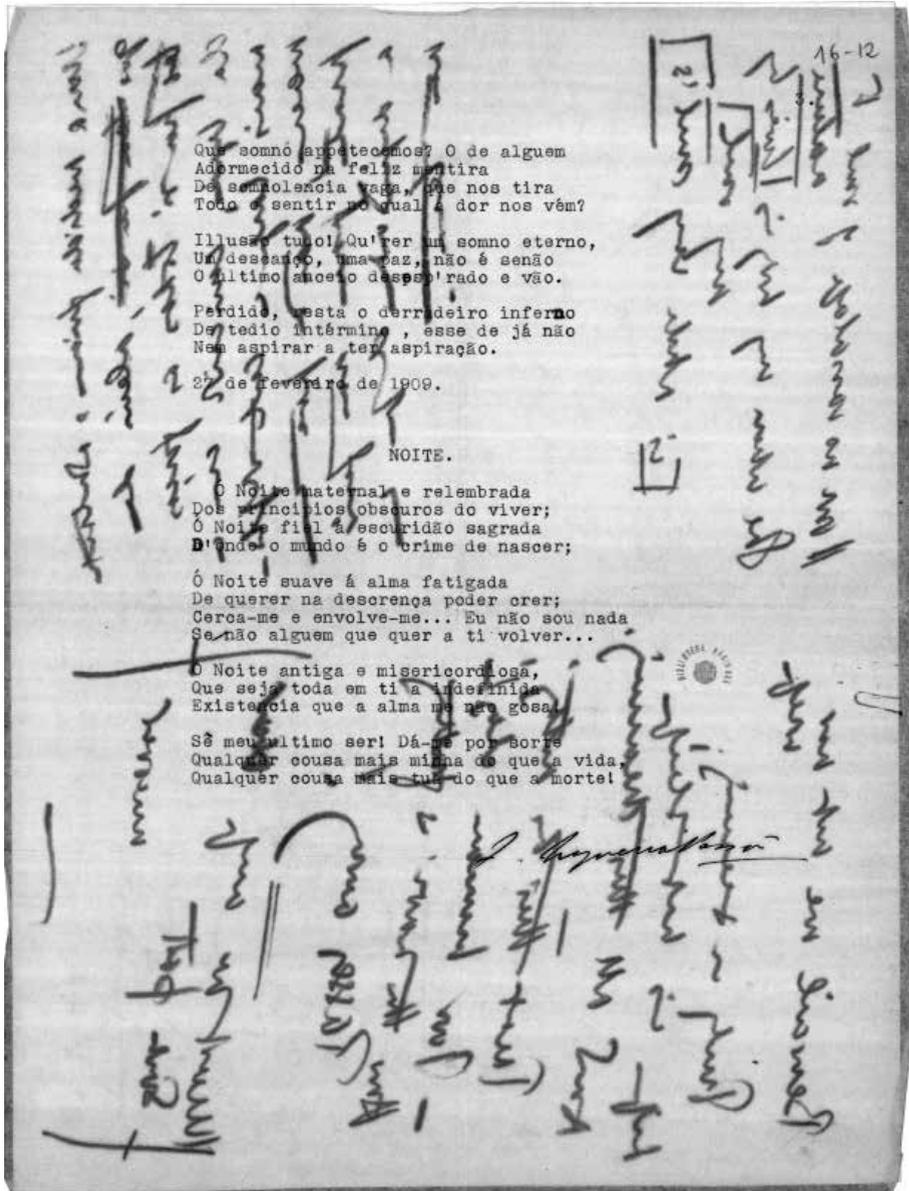
O Night, just now recalled the darkened womb
Whence issued all existence on this earth;
O Night, the faithful spouse of sacred gloom
That gave the world to know the crime of birth;

O Night, relieve my weary soul of wanting
To believe; oh help my unbelief.
Surround me now, enclose me... I am nothing,
Merely one who in you wants relief.

O mother of mercy, ancient moonless Night,
Take back the groundless void, this futile strife
Wherein my soul does not itself delight.

Be my ultimate being! In lieu of breath,
Give me something yet more mine than life,
Give me something yet more yours than death.

5-3-1910



16-12

Que somno apetece-mos? O de alguém
Adormecido na feliz mentira
De semiolécia vaga, que nos tira
Tudo o sentir no qual a dor nos vêm?

Illusão tuol! Qu'erer um somno eterno,
Um desassiso, uma paz, não é senão
O último anseio desamparado e vão.

Perdida, nesta o derradeiro inferno
Do tedio interminado, esse de já não
Nem aspirar a ter aspiração.

27 de Fevereiro de 1909.

NOITE.

O Noite maternal e relembrada
Dos princípios obscuros do viver;
O Noite fiel á escuridão sagrada
D'onde o mundo é o crime de nascer;

Ó Noite suave á alma fatigada
De querer na descrença poder crer;
Cerca-me e envolve-me... Eu não sou nada
Se não alguém que quer a ti volver...

O Noite antiga e misericordiosa,
Que seja toda em ti a indefinida
Existência que a alma me não gosa!

Sê meu último ser! Dá-me por sorte
Qualquer coisa mais minha do que a vida,
Qualquer coisa mais tudo do que a morte!

p. 95-96

4

O ALDEÃO

Ó sino da minha aldeia,
Dolente na tarde calma,
Cada tua badalada
Soa dentro da minh'alma.

E é tão lento o teu soar,
Tão como triste da vida,
Que já a primeira pancada
Tem o som de repetida.

Por mais que me tanjas perto,
Quando passo, sempre errante,
Es para mim como um sonho:
Soas-me na alma distante.

A cada pancada tua,
Vibrante no céu aberto,
Sinto mais longe o passado,
Sinto a saudade mais perto.



THE VILLAGER

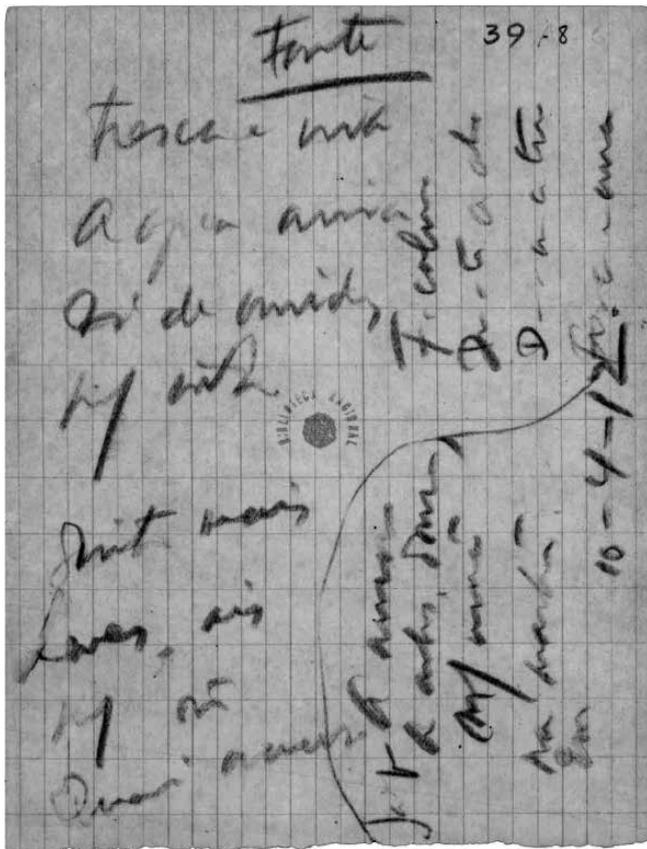
O village bell at fall of dusk,¹
That sounds the compline toll,
Each mournful stroke that fans the calm
Resounds within my soul.

So slow is your rhythm in tolling the time,
So laden with sadness in store,
That always the opening stroke will reveal
The sound of the stroke before.

However near your peals may ring
When wand'ring I drift by,
You're like a dream to me, so far
Within me rings your cry.

With every measured stroke of yours
That dream-like I yet hear,
I feel my past much farther off,
My longing still more near.

8-4-1911



[39-8]

FOUNTAIN

Fresh and keen
 These lively jets,
 Vigor and vim
 Their sound begets.

My yoke turns easy,
 My burden light,
 My strength resurgent
 Restores me to flight.

Calm fountain so pure,
 I give you my soul.
 In turn, give me yours,
 So fresh and so whole,

Now that the morning
 Begins to unfold,
 And makes you my sister
 And colors us gold.

10-4-1912

SONNET VIII

VII.

Thy words are torture to me, that scarce grieve thee—
 That entire death shall null my entire thought;
 And I feel torture, not that I believe thee,
 But that I cannot disbelieve thee not.
 Shall that of me that now contains the stars
 Be by the very contained stars survived?
 Thus were Fate all unjust. Yet what truth bars
 An all unjust Fate's truth from being believed?
 Conjecture cannot fit to the seen world
 A garment of ~~the~~ thought untorn or covering,
 Or with ~~its~~ stuffed garb forge an otherworld
 Without ~~itself~~ its dead deceit discovering;
 So, ~~all being possible~~, an idle thought may
 Less idle thoughts, self-known no truer, dismay.

*/her/
/herself/*

*/her/
/since all may be/*

well

VIII.

How many masks wear we, and undermasks,
 Upon our countenance of soul, and when,
 If for self-sport the soul itself unmasks,
 Knows it the last mask off and the face plain?
 The true mask feels no inside to the mask
 But looks out of the mask by co-masked eyes.
 Whatever consciousness begins the task
 The task's accepted use to ~~sleepness~~ ties.
 Like a child frightened by its mirrored faces,
 Our souls, that children are, being thought-losing,
 Foist otherness upon their seen grimaces
 And get a whole world on their forgot causing;
 And, when a thought would unmask our soul's masking,
 Itself goes not unmasked to the unmasking.

(dullness)

How many masks wear we, and undermasks,
 Upon our countenance of soul, and when,
 If for self-sport the soul itself unmasks,
 Knows it the last mask off and the face plain?
 The true mask feels no inside to the mask
 But looks out of the mask by co-masked eyes.
 Whatever consciousness begins the task
 The task's accepted use to dullness ties.
 Like a child frightened by its mirrored faces,
 Our souls, that children are, being thought-losing,
 Foist otherness upon their seen grimaces
 And get a whole world on their forgot causing;
 And, when a thought would unmask our soul's masking,
 Itself goes not unmasked to the unmasking.

[c. 29-5-1912]

THE AUTHOR

FERNANDO PESSOA (1888-1935) is today Portugal's principal literary link with the world. His work in verse and prose is the most plural imaginable, for it has multiple facets, materializes innumerable interests, and represents an authentic collective patrimony: of the author, of the diverse authorial figures invented by him, and of the readers. Some of those personae—Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, and Álvaro de Campos—Pessoa called “heteronyms,”

reserving the designation “orthonym” for himself. The director of, and a collaborator on various literary magazines, the author of *The Book of Disquiet*, and, in everyday life, a “foreign correspondent in commercial houses,” Pessoa left a universal oeuvre in three languages, one that has been edited and studied ever since he wrote, before dying, in Lisbon, “I know not what tomorrow will bring.”

THE EDITOR

Professor, translator, critic, and editor, Jerónimo Pizarro bears credit for the majority of the new editions and new series of texts by Fernando Pessoa published in Portugal since 2006. Professor at the University of the Andes, Chair of Portuguese Studies at the Camões Institute in Columbia, and Eduardo Lourenço laureate (2013), Pizarro reopened the Pessoaan arks and rediscovered “The Private Library of Fernando Pessoa,” to use the title of one of the books in his bibliography. He supervised Portugal's participation in the International Book Fair of Bogotá, and for the past several years he has coordinated the visit of Portuguese-language authors to Columbia. He is the co-ed-

itor of the journal *Pessoa Plural* and is an assiduous organizer of colloquia and exhibitions. With Carlos Pittella, he wrote the book *Como Fernando Pessoa Pode Mudar a Sua Vida [How Fernando Pessoa Can Change your Life]* (2017), also published in Brazil. Since 2013 he has directed the Pessoa Collection, in Portugal and Brazil, which includes new editions of the complete works of Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos, and Ricardo Reis, of *The Book of Disquiet*, of *Faust*, of the dramatic works and political writings of Pessoa, in addition to various essays on the Pessoaan literary universe. *Ler Pessoa [How to Read Pessoa]*, a book-length synthesis of the poet, is his most recent title.

THE TRANSLATORS

John Pedro Schwartz is Associate Professor of English at the American University of Malta. He sits on the Editorial Board of the journal *Pessoa Plural*. He has published scholarly articles on James Joyce, Henry James, Jorge Luis Borges, and Fernando Pessoa, as well as on the interstices of composition, media, and museum studies. He has co-edited two books, *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World* (Routledge 2016) and *Trans-Latin Joyce: Global Transmissions in Ibero-American Literature* (Palgrave 2014).

He has also taught at the American University of Beirut. While there, he seized the opportunity to return to his journalistic roots. Freelancing for *Foreign Policy*, he filed two comprehensive reports on the Syrian civil war. In a further journalistic venture, he published a three-part investigative series in *Warscapes* in April 2015, on the vigilante uprising against the Knights Templar drug cartel in Michoacán, Mexico. With his father, he is currently translating two further works by Pessoa, *Prose—Minimal Anthology* and *Message*.

Robert N. Schwartz has studied philosophy at a seminary in Ohio, with the beginnings of his scholarly work on the Roman Empire at the American Academy in Rome through a Rockefeller Foreign Language Fellowship. An Arthur Patch McKinley grant from the American Classical League allowed him to complete the chapters. Before that, he studied sociology at Calumet College of St. Joseph, with doctoral studies in Latin American history at Indiana University and at the University of California (UCLA), taking the Ph.D. at the University of Houston. An ardent student of the past, Dr. Schwartz has published on the Roman and Incan Empires for both the general public and students. He has

lived, studied, taught, and explored in both of these bygone empires and has taught on these subjects at all levels. In addition, he has dedicated many summers to the progress of the developing world through teaching adult literacy in Peru, where he has contributed articles to the *Peruvian Times* that reflect Peru's Incan past. He has also done developmental work with Helping Hands Medical Missions in the Brazilian Amazon. Today, Dr. Schwartz publishes commentary on contemporary issues in the United States and abroad through popular media, both digitally and in print. His dedication to historical and contemporary Peru continues to draw his attention.

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