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CULTURAL WORK

Lembah Elqui / Valle de Elqui / Elqui Valley

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Abstract

The three versions of Ian Campbell's poem about Valle de Elqui (in Chile) presented here comprise a poem he first wrote in Spanish, then in English and finally in a more powerful version in Indonesian, which was first published in 2012 in the literary pages of the Jakarta mass media daily *Kompas*. Campbell regards this whole process as emblematic of his explorations in trilingual poetics, namely what does a 'concept'/poem idea look like if done in the three languages with which he has some degree of written knowledge or fluency: English, Spanish, Indonesian. This mirrors the 'three-pronged' title 'Selatan-Sur-South' that he adopted for the collection of his poetry in *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2008. The Indonesian version, 'Lembah Elqui,' was also included in Campbell's poetry and prose collection *Tak ada Peringatan* (Vivid Publishing, 2013). In each version now the reference is to Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957), Nobel Prize Laureate for Literature (1945), whose burial place lies in Monte Grande in the Valle de Elqui in northern Chile.

Keywords

Ian Campbell; Gabriela Mistral; Lembah Alqui, Chili; Valle de Elqui, Chile; Elqui Valley, Chile; trilingual aesthetics

Lembah Elqui, Chili

Lereng-lereng lembah melandai,
ke buminya;
garis-garis vertikal bergabung,
ke buminya.
suatu kuburan dikelilingi batu-batu,
sungai berbuih,
alirannya.

Gabriela Mistral pernah
mengajar di rumah sekolah
bekasnya;
bangku-bangku berdebu tetap;
sekolah sepi,
ketenangannya.

Lewat jendela saya melihat
daun-daun anggur,
tersinar cerah,
meluap-luap gula
putihnya.
di tengah batu-batu,
tersebar,
di bawah logam berat
matahari merahnya.

Lembah-lembah terjauh,
kepuisiannya;
kesunyian biru,
kepuisiannya,
batu menjelma ke dalam kata;
sorga dihancurkan,
kekosongan,
di bawahnya.
Dikuburkan
kepuisiannya;
batu-batu mendalam
menguning
di bawah pencelupan
sekarat matahari,
merahnya.

Valle de Elqui, Chile

cuesta empinada,
 tumba rodeada por rocas.
 rápido y blanco el río,
 escritorio y pupitres antiguos
 escuela Mistral.

uvas destinadas para *pisco*,
 brillantes de azúcar
 a través de las montañas,
 metales pesados del sol,
 patrimonio de todos,
 sin excepción.

poesía de los valles lejanos
 silencio azul,
 piedras de palabras,
 polvo de cielo,

poesía enterrada,
 en rocas duras,
 amarillentas por
 el fuego rojo del sol.

Elqui Valley, Chile

Valley slopes angle down,
 all verticals converge,
 tomb surrounded by stone,
 white river runs.

here Gabriela taught,
 her old school house and
 pupils' dusty desks,
 now for ever stilled.

through the windows
 outside *pisco* grapes dazzle,
 brim full of sugar amid
 scattered rocks,
 beneath the heavy metal of the sun.

poetry of the far valleys,
of the blue silence,
stone becomes word,
heavens pulverized
by the void below.

poetry is interred,
deep stone
yellows
under the dying red of the sun.