

Copla por la muerte de su padre Poem upon the death of his father

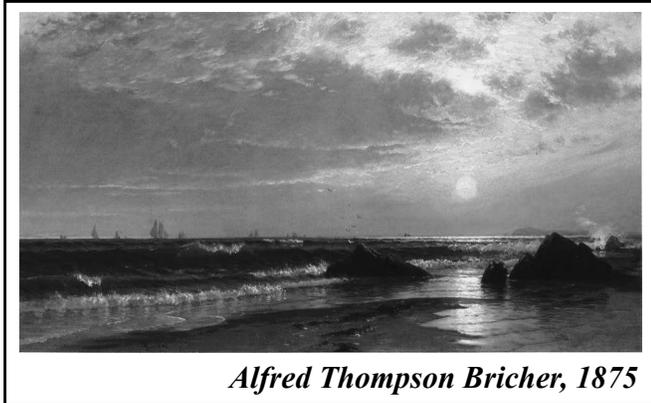
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ABSTRACT

In this self-translated bilingual poem, Puerto Rican poet Urayoán Noel reflects on life and death in the Caribbean from a contemporary diasporic perspective, recasting the 15th-century Castilian poet Jorge Manrique and his famous version of the copla verse form



Alfred Thompson Bricher, 1875

Keywords: poetry, bilingual, self-translation, Puerto Rican, Caribbean, death, father, copla

BIO

Urayoán Noel is a writer, performer, and translator from Río Piedras, Puerto Rico. His books include *In Visible Movement: Nuyorican Poetry from the Sixties to Slam* (University of Iowa Press), winner of the LASA Latino Studies Book Prize, and, most recently, the poetry collections *Buzzing Hemisphere/Rumor Hemisférico* and *Transversal*, both from the University of Arizona Press. Urayoán Noel lives in the Bronx, teaches at New York University, and is a board member of the Clemente Soto Véllez Cultural and Educational Center.

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leyendo a Jorge Manrique en Río Piedras
reading Jorge Manrique in Río Piedras

En un rincón del Caribe
When these Caribbean skies
el año del huracán,
were swallowed by the hurricane,
se murió.
he was gone.
Su ceniza sobrevive
I'll be next. His ashes rise
en las costas de San Juan.
and fall like a sargasso skein
Falto yo.
off San Juan.
Su cadáver representa
His dead body represents
mil galaxias deseantes
infinite desiring galaxies
en la flora
in the flora
de la neurona que sienta
of the neuron that invents
las bases librepensantes
free thought, the synaptic circuitries
de la aurora.
of aurora.

No hay después de la tormenta.
There is no after the storm.
Hubo vendavales antes,
There were always tempests here.
polvo ahora
Now there's dust
(de multitud que revienta
(cries of multitudes, blood-warm,
de gritos agonizantes...)).
forever piercing the atmosphere...).
Ríe, llora.
Laugh. Sob. Thrust
Baila y con tu cuerpo escribe
your body toward these skies.
el imposible ademán
Dance. Write the absurd refrain
del bongó
of the dawn.
que retumbará inclusive
Bongos, echo. Rematerialize
en la flor del guayacán
the lost flower in our pain.
que voló.
It lives on.