

Octavio Paz
The Collected Poems 1957-87

ed. & trans. Eliot Weinberger
(Carcanet, 1988)

LECTURA DE JOHN CAGE

Leído
desleído:
Music without measurements,

READING JOHN CAGE

Read
unread:
Music without measurements,

sounds passing through circumstances.

Dentro de mí los oigo

pasar afuera,

fuera de mí los veo

pasar conmigo.

Yo soy la circunstancia.

Música:

oigo adentro lo que veo afuera,

veo dentro lo que oigo fuera.

(No puedo oírme oír: Duchamp.)

Soy

una arquitectura de sonidos

instantáneos

sobre

un espacio que se desintegra.

(Everything

we come across is to the point.)

La música

inventa al silencio,

la arquitectura

inventa al espacio.

Fábricas de aire.

El silencio

es el espacio de la música:

un espacio

inextenso:

no hay silencio

salvo en la mente.

El silencio es una idea,

la idea fija de la música.

La música no es una idea:

es movimiento,

sonidos caminando sobre el silencio.

(Not one sound fears the silence

that extinguishes it.)

Silencio es música,

música no es silencio.

Nirvana es Samsara,

Samsara no es Nirvana.

El saber no es saber:

sounds passing through circumstances.

Within me I hear them

passing outside,

outside me I see them

passing with me.

I am the event.

Music:

I hear within what I see outside,

I see within what I hear outside.

(Duchamp: I can't hear myself hearing.)

I am

an architecture

of instantaneous sounds

on a space that disintegrates.

(Everything

we come across is to the point.)

Music

invents silence,

architecture

invents space.

Factories of air.

Silence

is the space of music:

a confined

space:

there is no silence

except in the mind.

Silence is an idea,

the fixed idea of music.

Music is not an idea:

it is movement,

sounds walking over the silence.

(Not one sound fears the silence

that extinguishes it.)

Silence is music,

music is not silence.

Nirvana is Samsara,

Samsara is not Nirvana.

Knowledge is not knowledge:

recobrar la ignorancia,
saber del saber.
No es lo mismo
oír los pasos de esta tarde
entre los árboles y las casas
que
ver la misma tarde ahora
entre los mismos árboles y casas
después de leer

Silence:

Nirvana es Samsara,
silencio es música.

*(Let life obscure
the difference between art and life.)*

Música no es silencio:

no es decir
lo que dice el silencio,
es decir
lo que no dice.

Silencio no tiene sentido,
sentido no tiene silencio.

Sin ser oída

la música se desliza entre ambos.

(Every something is an echo of nothing.)

En el silencio de mi cuarto

el rumor de mi cuerpo:
inaudito.

Un día oiré sus pensamientos.

La tarde

se ha detenido:

no obstante—camina.

Mi cuerpo oye al cuerpo de mi mujer

(a cable of sound)

y le responde:

esto se llama música.

La música es real,

el silencio es una idea.

John Cage es japonés

y no es una idea:

es sol sobre nieve.

Sol y nieve no son lo mismo:

a recovery of ignorance,
the knowledge of knowledge.

It is not the same,
hearing the footsteps of the afternoon
among the trees and houses,

and

seeing this same afternoon
among the same trees and houses now

after reading

Silence:

Nirvana is Samsara,
silence is music.

*(Let life obscure
the difference between art and life.)*

Music is not silence:

it is not saying
what silence says,
it is saying
what it doesn't say.

Silence has no meaning,
meaning has no silence.

Without being heard

music slips between the two.

(Every something is an echo of nothing.)

In the silence of my room

the murmur of my body:
unheard.

One day I will hear its thoughts.

The afternoon

has stopped:

and yet—it goes on.

My body hears the body of my wife

(a cable of sound)

and answers:

this is called music.

Music is real,

silence is an idea.

John Cage is Japanese

and is not an idea:

he is sun on snow.

Sun and snow are not the same:

el sol es nieve y la nieve es nieve

el sol no es nieve ni la nieve es nieve

o

John Cage no es americano
(U.S.A. is determined to keep the Free World free,
U.S.A. determined)

John Cage es americano
(that the U.S.A. may become
just another part of the world.

No more, no less.)

La nieve no es sol,
la música no es silencio,
el sol es nieve,
el silencio es música.
(The situation must be Yes-and-No,
not either-or)

Entre el silencio y la música,
el arte y la vida,
la nieve y el sol
hay un hombre.

Ese hombre es John Cage
(committed
to the nothing in between).

Dice una palabra:

no nieve no sol,
una palabra
que no es
silencio:
A year from Monday you will hear it.

La tarde se ha vuelto invisible.

sun is snow and snow is snow

sun is not snow nor is snow snow

or

John Cage is not American
(U.S.A. is determined to keep the Free World free,
U.S.A. determined)

John Cage is American
(that the U.S.A. may become
just another part of the world.

No more, no less.)

Snow is not sun,
music is not silence,
sun is snow,
silence is music.
(The situation must be Yes-and-No,
not either-or.)

Between silence and music,
art and life,
snow and sun,
there is a man.

That man is John Cage
(committed
to the nothing in between).

He says a word:

not snow not sun,
a word
which is not
silence:
A year from Monday you will hear it.

The afternoon has become invisible.

ALSO BY OCTAVIO PAZ

Configurations

A Draft of Shadows

Eagle or Sun?

Early Poems 1935-1955

Selected Poems

The Collected Poems of Octavio Paz

1957-1987/

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With additional translations by
Elizabeth Bishop, Paul Blackburn, Lysander Kemp,
Denise Levertov, John Frederick Nims, Mark Strand,
and Charles Tomlinson

A NEW DIRECTIONS BOOK

Gavilla

ENTRE LO QUE VEO Y DIGO . . .

A Roman Jakobson

1

Entre lo que veo y digo,
entre lo que digo y callo,
entre lo que callo y sueño,
entre lo que sueño y olvido,
la poesía.

Se desliza
entre el sí y el no:
dice

lo que callo,
calla
lo que digo,
sueña
lo que olvido.

No es un decir:
es un hacer.

Es un hacer
que es un decir.

La poesía
se dice y se oye:
es real.

Y apenas digo
es real,
se disipa.

¿Así es más real?

2

Idea palpable,
palabra
impalpable:
la poesía
va y viene

Sheaf

BETWEEN WHAT I SEE AND WHAT I SAY . . .

for Roman Jakobson

1

Between what I see and what I say,
between what I say and what I keep silent,
between what I keep silent and what I dream,
between what I dream and what I forget:
poetry.

It slips
between yes and no,
says
what I keep silent,
keeps silent

what I say,
dreams
what I forget.
It is not speech:

it is an act.
It is an act
of speech.

Poetry
speaks and listens:
it is real.

And as soon as I say
it is real,
it vanishes.

Is it then more real?

2

Tangible idea,
intangible
word:
poetry
comes and goes

entre lo que es
y lo que no es.

Teje reflejos
y los desteje.

La poesía
siembra ojos en la página,
siembra palabras en los ojos.
Los ojos hablan,

las palabras miran,
las miradas piensan.

Oír
los pensamientos,

ver
lo que decimos,

tocar
el cuerpo de la idea.

Los ojos
se cierran,
las palabras se abren.

between what is
and what is not.

It weaves
and unweaves reflections.

Poetry
scatters eyes on a page,
scatters words on our eyes.
Eyes speak,

words look,
looks think.

To hear
thoughts,

see
what we say,

touch
the body of an idea.

Eyes close,
the words open.