

Feliu Formosa

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by Antoni Martí

Feliu Formosa was born in 1934 and started publishing his poetry in 1973, with *Albes breus a les mans*. His most recent works are two volumes of his diaries that appeared in 2005: *A contratemps* and *El somriure de l'atzar*. Between their publication dates he was awarded the "Premi d'Honor de les Lletres Catalanes", which represented yet another occasion on which his literary and theatrical career received acclaim, despite his invisibility and modesty; he was always surprised to find himself observed - not to say admired - by many readers, and moreover readers of a certain kind who are also invisible.

There is an invisible thread that links these dates, genres and forms and runs through all his publications, converting them into a permanent meditation and showing a unity of essence. This unity is not, however, exempt from certain shifts of emphasis, such as the relationship with death in *Cançoners* (1976) and in the first volume of *El present vulnerable*, (1979); or in a complementary but somewhat different way in *Si tot és dintre* (1980) and *Darrere el vidre* (2004), that are volumes of self-observation in poetry rather than assembled poems.

The unity of the work of Feliu Formosa is the result of a unique questioning of writing and the need for writing that permeates all his books, from 1972 to the more recent poems, to the most recent pages of his diaries, and to the translations already published or in the process of being published. This is evident, for example, in the form of the books and poems in *Darrere el vidre*. Strangely enough, what had originally been books, and had been structured differently in the 1980 collection, in 2004 more or less returned to their original arrangement, although some of the poems have been altered. It is very clear that the distance between "Sóc amic de la tarda d'hivern que em disposa al poema / i he sabut finalment que el poema mateix no pot ser" (*Llibre de les meditacions*, 1973; *Si tot és dintre*) and "Sóc amic de la tarda d'hivern que em disposa al poema / i he sabut finalment que el poema mateix no té fi" (*Llibre de les meditacions*, version from *Darrere el vidre*) cannot be measured from a philological point of view; it is not a variant or a rewrite, but a writing that is still developing, that is still searching for itself, still in the offing. Feliu Formosa began to reveal a certain impatience in 1972, and it is still growing, like a kind of waiting.

It is a waiting that is without time, but formed of time, keeping it present in his mind, like the present. His early diaries, *El present vulnerable* (1979), which were begun in 1973 and were marked by the same wounds as *Cançoners*, were also troubled by another piercing wound: the translation into Catalan, at precisely the same time, of Franz Kafka's *Diaris* (1979). And his most recent translation is also of a work by Kafka, the *Aforismes de Zürau*. As before, the self-observation learned from Kafka makes its appearance again in the most recent diaries, as it probably will too in those as yet

unpublished.

Formosa's theatrical activities, his daily work on translations, his nightly wait for the poem, his everyday life, the journeys as brief as the words that describe them, the portraits, the loves, the deaths, the poems by others, those others themselves - all constitute a permanent reflection that can be materialised in a poem, a translation, a diary entry, a short story. Together they are moments that he writes about: giving them all his time.

Translated by Joanna Martínez