

SHEREZADA "CHIQUI" VICIOSO



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ES

# EVA/SION/Es

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## **Sherezada “Chiqui” Vicioso, Women Writers, and the Dominican Literary Establishment in the 1990s**

**F**ew women achieve in their lifetime the significant impact Sherezada “Chiqui” Vicioso has had on Dominican literature and culture in the past three decades. Having come to the USA as a youngster, Chiqui Vicioso returned to the Dominican Republic in 1979, armed with a graduate degree from Columbia University and years of experience and travel in the USA and throughout the world. Vicioso returned full of enthusiasm and blinded by the optimism of seemingly benign Caribbean sun and skies to find, as she has indicated often of late, that discrimination was alive and well in her homeland. In a matter of a few years, however, Vicioso managed to organize the first Circle of Dominican Women Poets, to write essays that challenged established assumptions about women’s writing in the country, to publish her own books of poetry and essays as well as a regular newspaper column. Through it all, Vicioso has achieved an uneasy relationship with the Dominican establishment where at times her role as the *advenediza*, the one who struggles to legitimize marginal discourse, has pushed her against the aspirations of the country’s literary and cultural elite.

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Dominican literature until the decade of the 1980s could have been defined as the property of men. Women's presence in literary movements and anthologies was generally recognized in the person of one unique, exceptional woman who served to confirm the assertion that indeed there were no women writers in the Dominican Republic. The philosopher Mary Daly has often stated that women need to own language in order to exist and to control their universe. Because Dominican women's participation in literature was so limited, a study of Dominican literature in the past, however shallow in scope, would confirm that women have been traditionally misrepresented in the writings of men. Dominican literature, closely identified with what has been euphemistically termed "universal values" has managed for most of its existence to emulate European models. It is not surprising then to find that up to until quite recently the proverbial muse of Dominican male writers was a close relative of that Laura responsible for much of the heartache experienced by her famous Florentine bard. These fair-haired heroines of the tropics also conformed to a pretty rigid, traditional framework summarized by Octavio Paz in his seminal essay the *Labyrinth of Solitude*.

The resulting images of women in the writings of men, as much of Latin American feminist criticism of the past three decades has repeatedly pointed out, conformed to the crude stereotyping of Dominican women as either prostitutes or goddesses. Furthermore, since literature was considered the province, responsibility and privilege of men, women had

little opportunity to explore, create and publish, so it is not surprising to note that changes in these traditional images of women came about quite slowly. Consequently, recreating a Dominican literary history that would include women meets with the difficulty of identifying the reduced number of authors whose works have survived in many instances as mere references in anthologies and handbooks. Publishing in a country of limited resources quite often had meant just being able to get one's poetry or short story printed in the Sunday literary review of generally ambitious, short-lived progressive newspapers and journals. In his essay *La vida intelectual de Santo Domingo* the distinguished writer and scholar Pedro Henríquez Ureña underscores the impact economics have on the development of many a cultural institutions and literary careers. His comments, written in the early decades of the twentieth century still apply to a Dominican Republic struggling to survive.

Recent scholarship, however, reveal that despite the country's political stagnation, and economic hardship, Dominican writers have continued to struggle to fund their own publications and that the Dominican Republic has seen an unprecedented number of self-publications in the past three decades. To quote a few statistics from Frank Moya Pons' bibliographical database of Dominican literature, let us consider the number of publications of the last thirty years of this century with those of the entire nineteenth century: 723 collections of poetry compared to only 26; 148 novels

compared to 7; 51 book-length essays compared to 1; 221 theatre pieces compared to 6. (Céspedes: 21) Such numbers betray, if nothing else a need to create and to communicate that transcends practical and other considerations.

Despite a difficult history, women writers can also be counted in Moya Pons' numbers. Although for many years, women's presence in Dominican literature was represented by Salomé Ureña and Virginia Elena Ortea in the nineteenth century, and Aida Cartagena Portalatín and Hilma Contreras in the better part of the twentieth century. History took a turn in the early 1980s. This turn in a history that appeared to be poised to repeat itself: The literary establishment was ready to embrace Jeannette Miller and Soledad Alvarez' works as the token female presence in contemporary circles. The unexpected return home of Vicioso changed the course. Her enthusiasm and ability to reach out, organize, and succeed has had its wave of repercussions that continue to rock the stagnant and rigid environment of Dominican intellectual life.

Vicioso was instrumental in the forming of the first Circle of Dominican Women Poets organized in the Dominican Republic. Reaching out to women from very diverse political, economic, educational, and racial backgrounds, Vicioso worked to consolidate a group which included Carmen Imbert Brugal, Carmen Sánchez, Dulce Ureña, Miriam Ventura, Sabrina Román, and Mayra Alemán. They prepared a work agenda that began with their declaration of independence, Somos y estamos:

"The time has come for us to say what we want in our poetry, to express in our essays what we choose to express, to sing our songs, to draw our own images, to create our songs and dance to the beat of our own drums."

*(Sin otro profeta que su canto, 1988)*

At the heart of the circle's agenda was the need to construct a history of Dominican women's participation in literature. Regular reading and discussion meetings were scheduled, and as the women began to share their own creative work they looked to their elders with new eyes. One of their first activities was a concert in honor of Portalatín, the poet, fiction writer, essayist, and educator whose presence was felt for five decades in Dominican life. Another was a study of pivotal figures in literature. As a result, Vicioso began to publish in her weekly column in Ventana essays inviting a re-visiting of critical approaches to women's writing accepted until then. Among these publications we find essays on Salomé Ureña, Portalatín, and Carmen Natalia.

Of importance, Vicioso's study of Ureña focused for the first time in Dominican letters on the so-called poemas íntimos, pieces discarded by the traditional male criticism, which heralded her as a "pitonisa de fuerte estro varonil." Epistolario, la correspondencia de los Henríquez Ureña, a publication of the Secretaría de Educación, which gathers over 100 letters written by Ureña and her husband Francisco

Henríquez y Carvajal, confirms Vicioso's interpretation of her poemas íntimos, as betraying the deterioration of a relationship started by the passion of an aging, mulatto poet for a much younger, frankly quite self-involved man of letters who lived to become president of the Dominican Republic and a leader against the North American occupation of 1916.

Another activity undertaken by the Círculo was to re-examine traditional relationships among creative women. In her essay, *La varona intelectual*, Brugal explores the implications of only having the participation of a limited number of women. Those few fortunate who manage to be chosen by the male establishment, co-opted by the opinion that validates them, quickly walk away from any sense of sisterhood, and embrace their benefactors. Imbert Brugal explains the situation to a hypothetical varona:

“And it is because women are “sisters and enemies” when it comes to validation as persons. It is difficult for you to give a hand to those who like are in the well, like you were before being able to escape with a great deal of trouble, and thus you assume your position as varona (manly woman)...

...The vices and prejudices of the male stick to your skin. You will become powerful, and the machista attitude that kept you down for a while will be your weapon against other women...

...Those intellectual gatherings (peñas) celebrate the varona who is willing to sing the praises of her lord but were that same woman to dare to sing the praises of her own vagina she would be marginalized and plunged into the chaos caused by ugly rumor. Were she to dare to sing in celebration of her body, she would be assailed by the tertuliantes, and rumors about her frigidity, lesbianism or possible nymphomania would have their day..."

*(Sin otro profeta que su canto, 1988)*

At its time and even in ours, this essay has had a particular stinging effect in some circles. To put this piece of writing in a historical context, we also need to consider the early 1930s, when women organized the first feminist movement, Acción Feminista Dominicana. Time does not allow for a detailed account of this moment, but for the purposes of this paper let us recall how women such as Minerva Bernardino and others were strategically placed within the movement to co-opt its leadership with the promise of women's suffrage into signing an agreement that would transform the women's feminist movement into the women's wing of El Partido Dominicano, Rafael Trujillo's party.

Another element essential to the agenda of the Círculo was the inclusion of the voices of working class women. In her essay, *La mujer en la literatura dominicana: a cuarenta y siete años* de Camila Henríquez Ureña, Vicioso explains:

“While working in the farms, we noticed that women who participated in Housewives Clubs had their own hymns, generally written by one of them, and their decimas, where they described and often parodied their daily toils.

... Their presence made us think of funding with the support of MUDE (Women in Development) the First National Contest of Décimas and Poetry Written by Women Farmers..."

*(Sin otro profeta que su canto, 1988)*

To summarize, the ‘Círculo de Mujeres Poetas’ agenda involved a process of self-growth (study and discussion group), of mutual validation (organization of readings), of rediscovery of women writers, of rewriting traditional interpretations of women authors, of examining the impact of a male-controlled environment on solidarity or lack thereof on the lives of women, of exploring popular elements in Dominican culture, of breaking down traditional class-based barriers, and of an active search for a poetic expression that would assist these writers in the demythification of women’s history and participation in Dominican literature. (out above paragraph?)

In his *Ensayos críticos* the Dominican writer Bruno Rosario Candelier affirms that 1983 is the year of a boom

femenino (an explosion of women’s voices) in the Dominican Republic. How-ever, Candelier’s inclusion in his essay of only a relatively modest number of women writers is typical of male critics in the Domini-can Republic who even as they assert the importance of women’s participation fail to include female authors in any significant manner. A case in point is Pedro Peix’s anthology of short stories *La narrativa yugulada*.

We have an idea of the resistance women writers must face in the Dominican Republic when we consult Peix’s anthology, published in 1987 by Taller, the same year it produced Hilma Contreras’ collection of short stories *Entre dos silencios*. Contreras is not one of the writers whose literary production is analyzed by Peix in his extensive introduction. The gravity of this omission is understood in its full implication when in his brief biography of the author, Peix himself indicates that “it has been affirmed that she is the most prominent woman short story writer in the nation.” The absence of any reference to Contreras’ work has special meaning when we realize that Contreras is the only woman included in the six hundred and one pages of this anthology (how then in anthology).

Despite their absence in a number of anthologies and literary histories of the time, women published in unprecedent numbers during the 1980s. The Círculo de Poetas changed its name to Círculo de Mujeres Creadoras as it expanded to include other women. By the early 1990s, however, much of the collective work came to a halt because many of these women have begun to settle in the USA, for

example; others settled for the solitude of their employments and lives.

In his keynote address to the 1993 Congreso Crítico de Literatura Dominicana, Marcio Veloz Maggiolo defined Dominican culture as lacking in introspection; concerned with the world of outside its walls, but shy when it comes to the analysis of the internal process that characterizes it. Veloz Maggiolo established a distinction between this particular moment in the literary dialogue from past experiences where individual and particular visions were shared. The 1993 congress, Veloz Maggiolo explained, was designed to initiate a cycle of conferences to explore what the past 100 years of literary labor has produced in terms of a vision to be distilled and the relationship between the writers and their readers. For whom, for what, how, and why have Dominicans produced art. (Céspedes: 11)

Uninvited to this Congreso Crítico, Chiqui Vicioso, nevertheless, finds herself at the heart of a controversy. In his essay *La enseñanza de la literatura en la escuela secundaria y la universidad, ¿valor o ideología?* (Teaching Literature in Secondary School and at the University ¿Aesthetic worth or ideology?), Diógenes Céspedes, a self proclaimed literary critic and ex-police informer during the Trujillo dictatorship, criticized what he termed the “banalization of literature” by Dominican educational and cultural circles. Céspedes’ article chastises women’s participation, designating their involvement as “susanismo, magalismo, and chiquismo.”

In particular, Vicioso is derided for her participation in a movement Céspedes terms chiquismo, which he explains as deriving from chico, chica, chiquita, chiquito (a small thing, a trifle) or a poetic movement or phenomenon launched by manipulating the media, and which Céspedes concludes, has resulted in the trivialization of poetry.

Fragments of Céspedes’ essay were published in the daily papers the day after his presentation, highlighting his remarks about Vicioso who swiftly responded in print:

Dear Director (*El Siglo*)

I have read with surprise and a great deal of merriment the review of Diógenes Céspedes’ essay written by the excellent journalist Fausto Rosario Adames ...

Allow me to express my joy at having *El Siglo* echo my “discovery” as the leader of a “political feminist poetic movement,” something that if true would honor me greatly even if banal, since banality has been an attribute of women since the beginning of time.

I say joy because two years ago, in April of 1991, at an event organized by Gloria Vega in celebration of Language Week in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Diógenes Céspedes (in a totally intoxicated state) declared in front of an absolutely flabbergasted audience of

academics that there were no women writers in the Dominican Republic with the exception of the two intellectuals he references in his essay. This forced me to indicate in my moment of inexistence that my presentation was dedicated to Angela Hernández, Sabrina Román, Carmen Imbert, Miriam Ventura, Carmen Sánchez, Dulce Ureña, Martha Rivera and Mary Mora, my companions in this apparently provoking occupation.

To have jumped from non-existence to the head of a “political feminist poetic movement” in such a short period of time, was above even my most immodest set of aspirations, and I am grateful to Diógenes Céspedes for his extreme generosity.

*(El Siglo, 30 July 1993)*

Although Vicioso was not the only woman attacked by Céspedes, and although a number of women were present at the Congreso Crítico, including some former members of the Círculo, Vicioso’s was the only response. Women participants, judging from the publication of the proceedings, also contribute little to the formulation of a national response to Veloz Maggiolo’s call for introspection in his opening address. A number of answers were presented by men at the time, but none has the poignancy of Andrés L. Mateo’s *Los escritores dominicanos o cómo nadar entre tiburones* (Dominican Writers or How to Swim Among the Sharks). In

his essay Mateo answers Veloz Maggiolo’s questions with one of the most pessimistic assessments to date of the condition of the writer in contemporary Dominican society. For Mateo, Dominican writers have been wearing a mask that allows them to deny society.

Writers are not real, Mateo points out, when the sociological existence of a literature derived from three factors, the author, the editor, and the reading public, is denied. Mateo insists in his assertion that among Dominicans only the author has offered a social presence. The current situation of few publishing houses, little state support for the arts, and what he terms the “structural censure” to a writer’s activity presented by a country whose statistics show a 27% of total illiteracy, added to a 45% of functional illiteracy, or a nation where more than two thirds of the population are non-readers. Under these circumstances, Mateo concludes, the writer is an unnecessary oddity, a being thrown out of the ideal Republic as the degraded shaman of the tribe or a wounded being, bleeding and surrounded by sharks, swimming desperately toward a wished-for but very distant shore. (Céspedes: 267-273) Mateo’s considerations, however, when coupled with the figures presented by Moya Pons at the same conference, raise a number of questions. If indeed there are no readers for whom to write, if there is no real function for a contemporary Dominican writer, why have so many publications circulated in the past thirty years? For whom are writers like Mateo writing? and why?

In an essay published a month before the Congreso

Crítico, *Sobre los problemas del escritor*, beginning with her deconstruction of the title of her essay, Vicioso explains her “poetics.” Supporting her conclusions on a reading of the theories of the Martinican writer Edouard Glissant, Vicioso summarizes the challenge faced by Dominican writers who must endeavor to resolve or answer issues pertaining to:

1. The conflict between sameness and diversity;
2. The literary construction of diversity;
3. The transition from orality to literature;
4. The creation of an authentic national literature;
5. To understand that the national language is that spoken by its people;
6. To begin to redefine Dominicanness and the literary approaches to achieve self-expression;
7. The creation of a cross-cultural poetics and of a sense of Caribbean-ness;
8. The expression in a participatory sense the dialectics between what is ours and what comes from the outside.

*(Listín Diario, Ventana, 2 May 1993)*

The 1993 “Congreso Crítico” was followed by the 1994 conference “Dominican Literature at the Turn of the Century: A Dialogue Between a Diaspora and Its Nation,” sponsored

by the City University of New York Dominican Studies Association and Institute of Latin American Writers. This activity is a useful tool to illustrate some of the concerns facing the Dominican literary community as it scrambles to deal with the change brought about by massive emigration, the rising number of women writers and intellectuals settled in the USA and elsewhere outside of the country who are observing closely cultural and literary developments in the Dominican Republic.

The conference of June 1994, however, signaled to the conflicts to be faced in tracing the path or paths in the future of studies of Dominican letters. On the one hand, there was a progressive call for re-examination of roles and a re-writing of history for inclusion and self-definition. Vicioso’s presentation, contributed much along those lines. Her humorous and iconoclastic “Dominican Yorkness: A Metropolitical Discovery of the Triangle,” narrates a young woman’s apprenticeship in the world of Dominican womanness. Issues of double-standards, sexism and racism are discussed from the point of view of a narrator who is at times a young girl, at others the reflective adult, who has dealt with learning the difficult lesson of her world:

“I discovered the geographical limits of my world when I was still quite young. One, two, three, four, five vertical streets until you reached the main road, la Calle del Sol, with its shop windows, sunny and inaccessible...

...I discovered also the limits of my grandmother's home which stretched like a worm, long and lanky, eating up slowly all that was green. Each one of us, like the bees, had her own cubicle..."

*(Literatura dominicana a finales del siglo, tr.  
Dr. Daisy C. De Filippis)*

The narrative continues to trace the gradual realization that there were, in fact, two worlds:

...The entire universe appeared to be masculine then. Boys could go fishing. Boys could stay playing in the street until eleven (we, girls, only until nine). Boys could go out alone."

These two worlds take additional significance when racial differences are at play:

"I always do things wrong. You should have looked like Juan and Antonia should have looked like Luis..."

But, Mama!

But, nothing! Imagine yourself a white woman with Juan's green eyes. And Antonia with Luis'

blue eyes and blond curls? Wouldn't that have been something!

But, Mama!

To have you turn out like your father. It isn't as if I didn't love him but the boys should have looked like him and Antonia and you like me."

The issue of racial identity is put to rest only when the young emigrant meets the gatekeeper in her new land:

"Your passport ...

Aquí está.

What is this business of "india clara"?

¿Dígame?

No buts ...

That is my color. In Santo Domingo we are classified by skin color. I am "india clara," that means "light Indian" ...

Indian is not a color ...

Pero

No buts ... look, I don't have time for this business."

That day the women participants presented much of what

is of concern to a community of Dominican intellectuals who are studying issues of inclusion; who are exploring the means of recreating a history that would represent women's lives from the point of view of women, and would begin to address the complex issue of racial identity and to consider a literary discourse legitimized much more by its Dominican-ness than by its ability to replicate western discourse.

On the other hand, the adherence to old paradigms and models by some of the presenters, signaled to the fact that there was much to call attention to a lingering "malaise" among Dominican writers, which at times degenerates in what the critic Manuel Mora Serrano has diagnosed as a case of narizparadismo (loosely translated as a chronically turned up nose). The theory of the value and of the difficulty in encountering the universality of letters finds support in the presentation of a young novelist, Juan Torres, who advises his audience to put aside the headache to be found in reading José Donoso's *El obsceno pájaro de la noche* for the pleasure of tracing Odysseus' journey. Torres' presentation detailed a long journey into the light of the traditional western canon, and served the apparent purpose of separating Torres' hypothetical young writer from the rest of Dominicans in the diaspora; a group of individuals who, as he takes pains to clarify, has only in common a nostalgia for the homeland.

The examples cited above serve to illustrate, albeit only on the surface, the fragile state of Dominican writers and letters, and the more precarious state of women who continue to

labor, in many instances, still from the margins. The situation is as complex as the lives and works of many of these writers, who have not quite found their voice, or readers ... And Chiqui Vicioso ... well, in June 1995, she was one of the organizers of the "Primer congreso dominicano sobre la situación de las trabajadoras sexuales o mujeres prostitutas," which took place in the Salón de Fiesta del Gran Hotel Lina, one of the finest establishments in Santo Domingo, thus, beginning a new project to rescue and educate women.

## **The Poetry of Sherezada "Chiqui" Vicioso: Brief Introduction**

In 1979, Sherezada "Chiqui" Vicioso returned home to the Dominican Republic after having lived in New York City for eighteen years where she found the encouragement and the support needed to take that initial daring step: Publishing a first book. *Viaje desde el agua*, published in 1981, established her as one of the voices to be heard in the Dominican Republic. This first book gathers poems written while living in the USA and during her other travels abroad. Vicioso, as Jane Robinett affirms in her as yet unpublished article, "From a Woman's Perspective: The Poetry of Sherezada (Chiqui Vicioso)," is a poet who "observes and records." Of this need to record, or *hacer constar* the reality surrounding her springs *Viaje desde el agua* where the reader finds a world without artificial frontiers. To Vicioso, the world is indeed small, so small, in fact, that

everyday survival in New York City goes hand in hand with the struggles of the African people or of a Dominican youth drifting, seeking to find direction. This journey brings Vicioso to a safe port, that of the comfort to be bound in the solidarity with other human beings. In her early poetry, satisfaction derives precisely from the act of observing and recording, of giving voice to the voiceless, a home to those disinherited by injustice.

Another characteristic of Vicioso's early poetry is her honesty confronting issues. In fact, one of her most notable contributions is the recognition of the importance of the African element in Dominican culture:

Island of our sea  
out of place in this continent  
city  
past

...

refound  
Bissau  
tree  
Caribbean

*(Viaje desde el agua, tr. E.J. Robinett)*

The African presence in Dominican culture and in the poetic voice's own search for identity and understanding is a constant in Vicioso's poetry. By acknowledging the African roots of Dominican society in another poem, "Haiti," the poet rejects prejudices held by those Dominicans who scorn their Haitian brothers. The poem celebrates the unity of these two nations which is more than just a geographical accident:

Haiti

traveler who eagerly greets me  
interrupting the quiet of paths,  
softening stones, paving dust  
with your sweaty, bare feet

Haiti who can give art a thousand shapes  
and who paints the stars with your hands  
I found out that love and hate  
share your name.

*(Viaje desde el agua, tr. D.C. De Filippis)*

Outside the island, racial problems have terrible consequences such as the tragic, unnecessary deaths of Hispanic youths in New York City: "19 lines in the New York Times/19 and 17 years/19 and 17 niños/19 and 17 hombres/

because they were killed in the South Bronx/sadness was never bought so cheaply" (*Viaje desde el agua*, tr. D.C. De Filippis) In *A Strange Wailing of the Wind* (*Un extraño ulular traía el viento*, 1985), her second collection of poems, Vicioso anchors her poetic voice in the very search for understanding and identity. The poem begins:

Before identity used to be palm trees  
sea, architecture  
it used to recall the nostalgic other details  
the little girl kept asking her teacher  
and there was a strange wailing of the wind.

*(Daughters of the Diaspora, 1988)*

What was there before colonial glories of the past? What was the essence of our culture and the beginning of our people? This questioning in light of understanding underlines much of the poetic voice's search and affirmation of non-European cultures at the base and the heart of Dominican history and geography. Why not teach us about those who came before, it seems to question? The poem continues searching for a meaning that brings her to the numbers of the cabala and to the "secretive" nature of spiritual life buried by conventions. She says:

The walls of the number four used to reign in the empire  
but it arrived with the abruptness of drums  
with the sensorial remoteness of that which is near  
the unsleeping apparition of strangeness  
the numbers were revealed and the number seven  
--like pincers striking against number four--  
like a blue axe opening paths

*(Daughters of the Diaspora, 1988)*

The poem is one long search for meaning in a voyage of language, reflection, religions ... It speaks of a desire to see beyond, to explore and to hear the "wind," nature, the ancestral voice buried beneath polite ruins, remnants of European grandeur to be found in the island. But the poem is in itself a questioning and an answer, for all along the poetic voice intimates that it has heard the wailing and it has heeded it. This is why by the eighth stanza the answer is found and handed over by women and common folk. It chants:

Mirror the island projected to the cosmos its sphere  
and the shadow, in reflection  
like a giant drill  
rounded the edges.

The island became a ball  
in the hands of a great circle of female teachers,  
carpenters, peasants, longshoremen, poets,  
doctors, drivers, street vendors, peanut vendors  
blind men, cripples, mutes, beauty queens,  
traffic cops, police officers, workers, prostitutes  
a ball in the hands of a great circle of school children  
This we are! This you are! A wheel  
crushing--without violence--the Is it this?

*(Daughters of the Diaspora, 1988)*

“Is it this?” Search and creation of common ground and community have been at the heart of Vicioso’s work. The last two decades have seen a continued engagement in cultural activism and writing. The poetry written during this period has much in common, although it bears its very distinct imprint, with themes found in the works of a generation of women writers. These are: gender consciousness and an understanding of women’s role in an alienating society; the recovery of the past; the renewal and revision of the image of women in Dominican literature in terms of race and class; urban settings; dehumanizing experiences and the class and race consciousness come about as a result of the experience

of a diaspora and its impact on the search for identity at the individual as well as collective level; linguistic experimentation and code switching.

In Wish-Ky Sour we find search and formal and linguistic experimentation. In this collection of poems, dramatic in nature as evidenced by their integration into the award winning play of the same name, Vicioso reflects on the life of women of the upper classes as they reach la tercera edad, late middle age and begin to lose their allure in the eyes of their husbands and men in society at large. In this collection of poems Vicioso continues with the formal experimentation began with Viaje desde el agua (1981) and in subsequent works such as Un extraño ulular traía el viento (1985), and Internamientos (1991). With great irreverence and an iconoclasm that leads to game-playing with the semantic structure of words, Vicioso introduces a game in two languages and the dilemma of these doñas as evidenced in the poem, “Exit”:

When all show res-  
Pect  
And appearance is  
Your best calling  
Card  
Doña and señora  
Owner and proprietor

Of a condom

Inium

*(Wish-Ky Sour, tr: D.C. De Filippis)*

Vicioso synthesizes a preoccupation with the degree of alcoholism and the lack of meaning in the life of this sector of Dominican women, which could very well be representative of middle-aged women of this social class in other parts of the world, with the play on words between two languages. Vicioso constructs the poem “Fuzzy Navel” with that game between two languages and with the interpretation of sour drinks, the bitter drinks of women who try to give meaning to their lives in the company of a bar or a drink: “Bottled up Eden/Of peaches and oranges/And ron/... To drown out sex” (Wish-Ky Sour, tr. D.C. De Filippis) A picture of banality in an existence founded on the conventions of an obsolete society, Wish-Ky Sour is an invitation to break mental and social schemes that serve only to undervalue women once they are passed a certain age. This collection of poems, as much of Vicioso’s work of the last decade does, is transformed into two other texts: a short story and an award winning play.

This is also the case of “Desvelo,” a poem included in *Internamientos*, which transcribes an invented conversation between two nineteenth-century poets: the Dominican Salomé Ureña and her North American counterpart Emily Dickinson.

Vicioso’s efforts to re-discover and recover Ureña’s poetry has resulted as well in an essay on Salomé’s life and works, *Salomé Ureña: A cien años de un magisterio* and an award winning play, *Y no todo era amor*, also staged as *Salomé U: Cartas a una ausencia*. In her essay as well as her poems and play, Vicioso studies the lesser known poems by Ureña; those poems termed intimistas, too womanly to be of any value. Nevertheless, as it has been pointed out in a number of studies, the Salomé Ureña to be found in those poems has another story to tell: That of struggle and loss in the life of a woman poet who is also an educator, a mother and a wife. The private Salomé is brought to the public sphere in Vicioso’s reading and interpretation of her poems, as well as in her own re-creation of this woman’s voice. The play is a tour de force of intertextuality, as Vicioso weaves in and out of her play Salomé’s and Vicioso’s own contemporary interpretation of a woman whose life unravels and who ultimately pays for it with her own life.

Eva/Zion/s, her latest creation is the natural evolution of Sherezada “Chiqui” Vicioso’s acercamiento to her cultural surrounding, the plural Caribbean and linguistic hybridity. The mystery that is everyday life in these islands is at the heart of this collection, introduced with a quotation by that grand and over-arching soul, our Cuban and universal Lezama Lima:

“Everything will have to be reconstructed, intended anew, and the old myths, reappearing will offer us their spells and their enigmas, with an unknown face...”

The poem then offers itself as one of many acts of reconstruction, intended to let us see with different eyes all that is old, and ours. In effect, the quote announces the spell and enigma before us in the name of a long poem, designed to give us anew what is our ancestral home. Alchemy and cabala play an important role in this poetic creation where the Caribbean’s cultural hybrid in the form of the many religions and belief systems that co-exist in our midst is at the heart of spiritual growth and understanding. It is not surprising then to find Africa, Asia, native lore and European tales come together in the poem: “Auroboros, Al/bion, Anavatapta and Pong-lai,” places and creatures that merge and emerge to create this hybrid kaleidoscope, lulling us as it aims to teach or to make new what is ancient and at the same time present:

### III

Quessant, Surija, Tula  
Altars, chiseled by the waves  
for the wandering ships of the soul

the Point of Pain  
in the geography of the unattainable.

This unattainable geography, geography of the soul in search for answers and reconciliation in light of splintering fragmentation:

### XIV

Broken jar, my heart  
by the liquid serpent ringing it  
submerging us without anchoring me  
in the swamps of its mud  
Silhouette of this other pilgrimage

Yet the journey, however painful, can lead to resourcefulness and survival:

### XVII

Lost from my tribe  
beast chained  
to the violent fear

of the victors

I decided to loosen my sails  
and build myself a sea  
that suits me.

The sea as the bearer of life and death and as a symbol of infinite life and possibilities has been possessed by the poetic voice, an aware voice, a voice that understands the perils and the weakness to be found in the “violent fear of victors.” Yet all has not been won or lost, the complexity of experience and life, continues to haunt the speaker:

XXII

All pain, all islands  
fatherlands of an interior  
where the only door frame  
is the blue of my nostalgias  
I am weightless  
sterility of memory.

To what extent can one trust oneself, in strength or weakness? Are we not subject to our own re-creations of truths and tales, the poem appears to imply. Is this sea I create

for myself a source of freedom and truth or just a coping mechanism? Is that blue of my nostalgia true to my beliefs or just a palliative, the poem seems to question itself. There are no comfortable safe ports here, just a few moments of reprieve and consciousness.

XXV

Sherezade

I survive the thousand and one nights  
of insomnia  
Oyá of the howling wind  
of Ochún and Yemayá  
daughter and godchild

The poetic voice has identified herself as Sheherezade, she of the thousand tales of survival and insomnia. Sherezada is Vicioso's name, and she points to herself, to her own womanhood and survival as dependent on her ability to weave tales, to tell stories that bring closure and open new questions ... to live another day and another night to continue to tell ... The howling in the wind brings us back to her earlier collection and see that the girl questioning the teacher has evolved into the narrator/poet who understands that there are few answers; that the answers are found in the questions and

that the questions and stories are tied together ad infinitum in a valiant struggle, as wild and untamed and as blue as the ocean she conjures up in her verses.

XXVII

Eve-Mulatta

from the violent safekeeping of my ancestors

I only inherit the silence

of the victims

the coffee smell of dawn

and the black mark of the chewing tobacco

spat out again and again

like my luck

Inheriting the silence to be borne out as the daughter of both the rapist and the victim, there is shame and fear.

XXXII

I have my womb as frontier

of Africa, Asia, Europe

the internal rhythm of bagpipes

zithers, drums

from what I have been and reborned  
resonances

Visceral, primal and disquieting as it might be, her body serves as a meeting place for happiness as well ... She can create music and bring harmony in her own body, as a result of these unspoken and silenced encounters. For in the end, reconciliation can be achieved through the poem and the self:

XXXVIII

Ignorant of decrees

illiterate

life makes its way

among scattered frontier markers

a wall of paper

in the deserts.

The wall of paper in the deserts bring with it the opportunity to be torn down or to have it evolve into something much more transcendental and true: The poem:

Trumpets of Jericho

the laughter of girl and woman  
rises from the rubbish of weeping  
a Quisqueya of sugar  
a Haiti of birds and suns.

Conciliation at last, through the brief moment of the writing and the eternity of the written word comes about: Quisqueya and Haiti, sugar, birds and suns rise again as one, as a result of the wailing, the howling, the weeping that has been overcome in the poem.

Sherezade, she of the thousand tales and the thousand shapes, has been given new life in the splendor and despair of the islands, lived in by and sung by a mulatta Sherezade of the Tropics, rising from the edge of the sea and memory, to celebrate our raw hybridity and our ancient and ever present legacies.

**Dr. Daisy Cocco De Filippis, PhD**  
President Nagatauk College  
Conncticut, USA, 2005  
Author, *Desde la diáspora/A Diaspora Position*  
New York, 2005

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## EVA/SION/ES

To María Luisa Sánchez Vda. Vicioso, Poet.

“Everything will have to be reconstructed, intended anew, and the old myths, reappearing, will offer us their spells and their enigmas, with an unknown face”.

*Myths and classical weariness, José Lezama Lima*

I

The fish swam  
out of the water  
and it was common  
to encounter birds  
in the roots of trees.

II

Free  
the sea rose through violet plains  
there was no sun  
but the light reigned  
in that Paradise  
under the green absolutism  
of an apple tree.

III

Ruah, K'I, divine breath  
Kalpa and Purlaya  
The nine beginning whispers  
Hamsas's rainbow  
Sealed alliance between God and his creation  
Where Eva originates.

IV

Silicius land  
By God's will  
Incarnated Golem  
One of two faces  
Detached from the circular head  
Two of four legs  
Untied and claiming for a back  
Their own essence  
For the beginning  
Of their crossing.

V

Ouessant/  
Surija/  
Tula  
altars chiseled by the waves  
Islands  
for the wandering ships of the soul  
Finis Terra  
in the geography of the unattainable  
where I encounter  
the foam's in piercing blades.  
My sisters of worship the Apsaras.

VI

Anavatapta/  
lake  
beyond my surges  
Pong-lai/  
Island  
Where I rest/  
from the bite of original hunger  
the mortal curiosity of my anguishes.

VII

Navigational chart/  
white stele/  
guide to the temple  
of my twelve chambers  
Abbion/  
Auroboros/  
ocean of nine spirals/  
green isthmus/  
at the mouth of the Ozama.

VIII

Rock for unfortunated Psykhes  
where fertile ignorance inseminates  
salted land  
fertilized by the flight of bats  
prohibiting the vision of semidarkness.

IX

Fanged lightning  
Waves/  
Tempest/  
tide  
fury of dew  
Damballah Weddó, thunderstone  
serpent of many colors that feeds on the seas.

X

Broken cube of crystal/  
tears of ambar  
liberated fire  
wavering fragments  
announcing the nostalgias of the bedrock  
a longing for the Eliseo.

XI

Minos  
wings at rest  
landing place in the center of the pool  
where whoever else I am is waiting for me.

XII

Thuatha De Danann  
Seine south of the world  
where Halcyone searches endlessly for Keyx  
the nests of our passion  
washed –like Sysiphus curse-  
by the implacable rush of waves.

XIII

Augur of my ancient condemnation  
Salamander  
Tongue of fire  
first exclamation of the eye  
pleasurable sinking of the foot  
into the warmth of its exile.

XIV

En Nur  
Light that overcomes me  
Smoke song  
Vibrating presence of what is absent  
from the shadows a luminous reflection?.

XV

Broken jar, my heart  
by the liquid serpent ringing it  
submerging us without anchoring me  
in the swamps of its mud  
Siloe of this other pilgrimage.

XVI

Crack in the casket of my breast  
Talisman/  
sudden manifestation of dawn  
blue morning/  
yellow of afternoon  
from east and west gradation of red  
a miracle of the rainbow's resurrection.

XVII

Encircling caress of the roses  
piercing judgment of the mamey  
rapture of scents  
heel without wings that reinstates itself  
In the heldback advance of my feet  
by a newly discovered  
sense of gravity.

XVIII

Displaced from my tribe  
beast chained  
to the violent fear  
of the victors  
I decided to loosen my sails  
and build myself a sea  
that suits me.

XIX

There the wind  
whispered the name of an island  
of rivers and lagoons  
where the casting of stones is learned  
from wild fruits and flowers  
from the animal love of the animals  
from sex in the grass  
or among currents  
that make you forget  
the weight of the door on your back.

XX

Reykiavik of shapes and sounds  
the sea began to tell me about the Caribbean  
about trees pulled apart by the wind  
about darkness only broken by the light  
of scattered crystals  
about the terrifying silence  
after the first whiplash  
and the first calm.

XXI

Fury of greens and blues  
war between water and air  
where the body is the foundation  
and the victim.

XXII

Displaced from rapture  
and its ecstasies  
the memory of love undone and its mourning  
sheltered me in its asylums  
and began to minate me

one  
by  
one.

XXIII

All pain/  
all islands  
fatherland of an interior  
where the only door frame  
is the blue of my nostalgias  
I am the weightless  
sterility of memory.

XXIV

Atlantis today/  
Manhattan yesterday  
what sank lies down here  
the saga of love undone  
wreckage of the Paradise of obedience  
parricide of the first verb.

XXV

I live all my deaths  
with prose as the only shield  
amazement the recanting of the poem  
I am all the Juanas  
the one who leaps up and cleans the cannons  
the one who fights without arrows or a bow  
the one who writes her renunciations  
in the same ink  
that enslaves her.

XXVI

Sheherezade  
I survive the thousand and one nights  
of insomnia  
Oyá of the howling wind  
of Ochún and Yemayá  
daughter and godchild.

XXVII

In the slave passage  
I found my mothers again  
from them comes the rebellion of my hair  
and my undefined color  
of sand without beaches.

XXVIII

Eve-Mulatta  
from the violent safekeeping of my ancestors  
I only inherit the silence  
of the victims  
the coffee smell of dawn  
and the black mark of the chewing tobacco  
spat out again and again  
like my luck.

XXIX

I cry during the moons  
of the Fourth Quarter  
and when they are full  
of an unassailable pregnancy.

XXX

Made of dances  
and flying skirts  
of incantations of jasmine  
and white roses  
Amaterasu-Omi-Kami  
I try to put out the torch  
of the inquisitor who wound/ers  
if I sleep with Lucifer.

XXXI

Stench of burnt meat  
rumor of charring bone  
chorus of agony  
gone, the women-islands  
expelled from Paradise  
with their snakes and apples.

XXXII

Skirmishes  
that I have not fought  
runaway slave of alien histories  
I am a Moorish prisoner sold as white  
Geisha who drags  
her sequestered feet  
Nanny, serving girl, prostitute  
Worker in the Free Zone.

XXXIII

I have my womb as frontier  
of Africa, Asia, Europe  
the internal rhythm of bagpipes  
zithers, drums  
from what I have been and reborned  
resonances

XXXIV

Upright I bear myself  
and break water  
in a tide of challenges  
and curses.

XXXV

Exiled fraction of the total  
portion, piece, particle  
scattered mass of fragments  
I am Lot's wife, where what remains  
is the certainty of the uncertain.

XXXVI

Sugar roads  
trains, rails  
of the cane fields I know the hells  
black paradise of autumn flowers  
on islands without seasons  
Zion of the condemned  
hill turned into a valley of tears.

XXXVII

Epaulets, kepis, unicorns  
all that remains of the Generalissimo  
of my school, the white uniforms  
and brilliant patent leather shoes  
under the beating of palms  
yielding worship to the Archangel  
who announced the end  
of our maidenhood.  
the blood of massacres engendering  
the blood of liberation  
Debora emerging from the lion's faucets  
Victorious Hipolita over Heracles.

XXXVIII

From this eastern side  
in fragile boats from Higuey and Miches  
other Hatueys and Anacaonas  
try to cross the Lethe  
blood that at last unites  
in the bed of the Mona Strait.

XXXIX

Ignorant of decrees  
illiterate  
life makes its way  
among scattered frontier markers  
a wall of paper  
in the deserts.

XL

Plumed, the serpent  
seeks new Adams  
in the broken innocence  
of our Edens.

XLI

Quetzalcoatl bites his own tail  
before a wailing wall  
turned into laughter  
Eve – islands  
giving birth to themselves without pain.

XLII

Yang and Yin  
Castor and Polux  
Metanoia  
Eva of Adam animus-anima  
Sun and moon  
Heaven and earth  
Rebis  
Eva without Polycrates's ring  
Aisthesis, nous, logos  
Sophia  
A Caribbean Afrodita Urania.

XLIII

Trumpets of Jericho  
the laughter of girl and woman  
rises from the rubbish of weeping  
a Quisqueya of sugar  
a Haiti of birds and suns.  
A mistress piece of Arte Regia.

XLIV

Paradise  
free of edicts  
where there were apples  
the miracle happens.

XLV

Amnios  
that drags us down  
to the salt-bitten freedom.

“Todo tendrá que ser reconstruido, intencionado de nuevo, y los viejos mitos al reaparecer, nos ofrecerán sus conjuros y sus enigmas, con un rostro desconocido”.

*Mitos y cansancio clásico, José Lezama Lima*

I

Nadaban los peces  
fuera del agua  
y era común  
coincidir con los pájaros  
en las raíces de los árboles.

II

Libre  
el mar ascendía por llanuras violeta  
no había sol  
pero la luz imperaba  
en aquel Paraíso  
bajo el verde absolutismo  
de un manzano.

III

Ruah, K'i, aliento divino  
Kalpa y Purlaya  
los nueve soplos del principio  
arcoíris del Hamsa  
alianza entre Dios y su creación  
de donde Eva es originaria.

IV

Golem encarnado  
una de dos caras  
desprendida de la cabeza circular  
dos de cuatro piernas desatadas  
reclamando una espalda  
dos brazos, y un torax  
para el caribe.

V

Ouessant, Surija, Tula  
por las olas altares cincelados  
para extraviados navíos del alma  
Punto a Penas  
en la geografía de lo inalcanzable  
donde reencuentro  
en la penetrante fuerza de la espuma  
a las Apsaras  
mis hermanas de culto.

VI

Amavatapta, remanso  
fuera de mis oleajes  
Pong-lai  
para la mordida del hambre original  
la mortal curiosidad de mis ansias.

VII

Carta de ruta, blanca estela  
guía al blanco templo  
de mis doce cámaras  
Abbión/a, Auroboros, océano de nueve espirales  
istmo verde en la desembocadura del Ozama.

VIII

Roca para desventuradas Psykhes  
donde fecunda la ignorancia enseñores  
tierra de sales  
fertilizada por el vuelo de murciélagos  
prohibiendo la visión de las penumbras.

IX

Relámpago dentado  
olas, tempestad, marea  
furia del rocío  
Damballah Weddó, piedra de rayo  
serpiente de colores que se alimenta de los mares  
añoranza del Eliseo.

XI

Roto cubículo de cristal, lagrimas de ambar  
fuego liberado  
vaivén de fragmentos  
anunciando de lo firme las nostalgias.

XII

Onogoro-jima, Ku-Che  
alas en descanso  
Ceilán, Minos  
desembarcadero en el centro del estanque  
en el cual otra que soy me está esperando.

XIII

Thuatha De Danann  
Sena al sur del mundo  
reino del tigre, colibrí, jaguar  
Draco, Ophys, Amanta  
donde Alcione sigo en búsqueda de Keyx  
los nidos de nuestro amor  
como la maldición de Sísifo  
barridos una y otra vez.  
Por el oleaje implacable.

XIV

Lumbre de mi antigua condenación  
convertida en salamandra  
primera exclamación del ojo  
gozoso hundimiento del pie  
en la tibia sensación de su destierro.

XV

Luz auricular  
súbito rumor *¿furioso batir de alas?*  
soplo que silba, canto del humo  
vibración de la Nada  
*¿vieja VOZ del dictamen?*

XVI

Msahapralaya, En Nur  
verde presencia del Aor  
del helecho ofrenda primigenia  
nacimiento de Seth  
de las tinieblas luminoso reflejo.

XVII

Vaso roto, mi corazón  
por la líquida serpiente que anilla  
sumergiéndonos sin anclar me  
en los pantanos de su lodo  
Siloé de este otro peregrinaje.

XVIII

Hendidura en el ataúd de mi pecho  
talismán, súbita manifestación del alba  
azul mañana, amarillo de la tarde  
del oriente y occidente gradación del rojo  
de la resurrección del arcoíris un milagro.

XIX

Envolvente caricia de las rosas  
penetrante dictamen del mamey  
embriaguez del olfato  
des-alado talón que se reinstala.  
en el detenido avance de los pies.

XX

Desplazada de mi tribu  
encadenada bestia  
al violento temor  
de los vencedores  
decidí desatar mis velas  
y construirme un mar  
a la medida.

XXI

Allí el viento  
susurró ~el nombre de la cañada  
de los ríos y lagunas  
donde se aprende a sortear las piedras  
de las flores y frutos silvestres  
del animal amor de los animales  
del sexo entre la hierba  
o entre corrientes  
que hace olvidar  
el peso de la puerta sobre la espalda.

XXII

Reykiavik de formas y sonidos  
el mar comenzó a hablarme del Caribe  
de los árboles desprendidos por el viento  
de la oscuridad solo rota por la luz  
de dispersos cristales  
del pavoroso silencio  
después del primer azote  
y de la primera calma.

XXIII

Furor de los verdes y los azules  
guerra entre el agua y el aire  
donde el cuerpo es lo firme  
y es la víctima.

XXIV

Desplazada de la embriaguez  
y de sus éxtasis  
la memoria del desamor y de sus lutos  
me acogió en sus asilos  
y comenzó a éter-minarme

una  
a  
una.

XXV

Toda dolor, toda islas  
patrias de un interior  
donde el único lindel  
es lo azul de mis nostalgias  
soy la ingrávida  
esterilidad de la memoria.

XXVI

Atlantis hoy, ayer Manhattan  
lo que hundido yace aquí  
es la saga del desamor  
escombros del Paraíso de la obediencia  
parricidio del primer verbo.

XXVII

Vivo todas mis muertes  
con la prosa como única adarga  
el asombro el recanto del poema  
soy todas las Juanas  
la que salta y topa los cañones  
la que combate sin flechas y sin Arco  
la que escribe sus renuncias  
con la misma tinta  
de la que es esclava.

XXVIII

Sherezada  
sobrevivo las mil y una noches  
del insomnio  
Oyá del ulular del viento  
de Ochún y Yemayá  
hija y ahijada.  
En la ruta de las esclavas  
reencontré a mis madres  
tengo de ellas la rebeldía del pelo  
y el difuso color  
de la arena sin playas.

XXIX

Eva-Mulata  
de la violenta salvaguardia de mis ancestros  
sólo heredo el silencio  
de las víctimas  
el olor a café del alba  
y la negra mancha del andullo  
escupido una y otra vez  
como mi suerte.

XXX

Lloro en las lunas  
de Cuarto Menguante  
y cuando están llenas  
de una preñez inexpugnable.

XXXI

Hecha de danzas  
y faldas al vuelo  
de conjuros de jazmín  
y rosas blancas  
Amaterasu-Omi-Kami  
intento apagar la antorcha  
del inquisidor que in/daga  
si duermo con Lucifer.

XXXII

Peste de carne abrasada  
rumor de huesos que se calcinan  
coro de ayes  
ayéres de mujeres-islas  
expulsadas del Paraíso  
con sus serpientes y manzanas.

XXXIII

Mitad gestas  
que no he combatido  
Cimarrona de historias ajenas  
soy prisionera morisca vendida como blanca  
Geisha que arrastra  
los vedados pies  
Nana, sirvienta, prostituta  
Obrera de zona franca.

XXXIV

Tengo el útero por frontera  
del África, Asia, Europa  
el ritmo interno de gaitas  
cítaras, tambores  
de lo que he sido y renacido  
resonancias

XXXV

Vertical me alumbró  
y rompo aguas  
en una marea de desafíos  
y maldiciones.

XXVI

Exilada fracción de lo total  
cuota, pedazo, partija  
disperso cúmulo de añicos  
soy mujer de Lot donde lo que permanece  
es de lo incierto las certezas.

XXXVII

Caminos de azúcar  
trenes, riel  
del batey conozco los infiernos  
negro paraíso de flores otoñales  
en islas sin estaciones  
Sión de los condenados  
colina convertida en valle de lágrimas.

XXXVIII

Charreteras, kepis, unicornios  
del Generalísimo sólo permanecen  
de mi colegio los blancos uniformes  
y brillantes zapatos de charol  
bajo el batir de palmas  
rendiendo culto al Arcángel  
que anunciaba nuestro final  
como doncellas.  
masacrada sangre engendrando  
sangre libertaria  
Debora emergiendo de las fauces del león  
Hipólita, victoriosa frente a Heracles.

XXXIX

De este lado del Este  
en yolas desde Higuey y Miches  
otros Hatuey y Anacaonas  
atravesar el Leteo intentan  
sangre que por fin se aúna  
en las fauces del Canal de la Mona.

XL

Ignorante de decretos  
analfabeta  
la vida se abre paso  
entre dispersos pilotes fronterizos  
muralla de papel  
en los desiertos.

XLI

Emplumada la serpiente  
busca nuevos Adanes  
en la fragmentada inocencia  
de nuestros Edenes.

XLII

Quetzalcoatl se muerde la cola  
frente a un muro de lamentos  
convertido en risa  
Eva – islas  
sin dolor pariéndo-se.

XLIII

Yang y Yin  
Castor y Pólux  
Metanoia  
Otra vez Eva en el Adan original  
Animus –anima  
Luna y sol, cielo y tierra  
Rebis  
Eva sin el anillo de Polícrates  
Aisthesis, nous, logos  
Sofia, caribeña Afrodita Urania  
Pieza magistral de Arte Regia.

XLIV

Trompetas de Jericó  
de la niña y la mujer la risa  
surge de los escombros del llanto  
una Quisqueya de azúcar  
un Ayití de pájaros y soles.

Paraíso  
de edictos libre  
donde hubo manzanas  
sucede el milagro

Amnios  
que nos arrastra  
a la salada libertad.

1.- "Hurt, too damaged to look at herself, she recognizes herself, reconstruct herself, in the word".

... **Adela Fernández Fernández**, Mexican writer.



2.- "Out of the wreckage of paradise comes this passionate rendering of the human soul, mortal and immortal, a saga of love".

... **Dr. Agnes Lam**, de la Universidad de Hong Kong.

3.- "She breathes and lives here, with us, and immediately flies and places herself in the territory of the myth. This book is like Chiqui, tall and definitive".

... **Abel Prieto**, Minister of Culture of Cuba.

4.- "Eva/Sion/Es, appeals to our consciousness and incarnates the nomadism of the original experience".

... **Camille Aubaude**, poet at the University of Paris III, Sorbonne.

5.- "Chiqui Vicioso is our Scheherazade of the Caribbean: giving voice to stories that both enchant and remind us of who we are, saving the voices of women from evasions and silences, capable of healing the sick hearts of sultans of ignorance and violence. She is a treasure who enriches her readers with the power of her large-hearted and fierce imagination and talents. With this publication, we share our treasure with new readers who might not have had previous access to her magic"

... **Julia Alvarez**, Poet and novelist