

# Falling

Poems  
by  
**Tania Ramalho**



## Foreword

**N**ot until recently did I accept calling myself a poet (of sorts...). I knew about what the world considers “real” poets, and I certainly did not qualify. But now, OK, if I write what may be regarded as poems, so be it: I am a poet, too. Acceptance as a participant in Marge Piercy’s 2023 summer poetry intensive reinforced my budding identity. I am a poet without any formal training in poetry, with scant reading (never enough!) of American, Latin American, or Brazilian poets, and with just two poems published in newsletters. No major publication. A hand-full of public readings only. English is my second language since high school.

In other words, poet drawbacks. However, I love languages. I love to play with words. I love words’ sounds and rhythms. I love to string them together to say what I want, what I see. I like to name what could be different than what it is. Some say I am a wishful thinker, a dreamer. I prefer the word utopian. I am a seeker of utopias. I believe we are constructing utopias, slowly and painfully, like Queops, the pyramid in Egypt: so many big rocks to cut, pull, and mount.

Born and raised in Brazil, I was an American Field Service exchange student who returned to the United States for graduate school and later legally immigrated. Brazilian Portuguese is my first language. I speak English in my daily life. The two languages, cultures, and schoolings combine in what I express in the poems.

My examples of political poetry have been Marge Piercy and Margaret Randall. My poems say what I see, feel, and wish for society and the world, and me in/with it. This can be summarized in the expression, *social justice*, which includes and requires a commitment to *peace*.

When my friend Marla Perkins offered to create a chapbook of the fifteen poems I submitted to Piercy’s intensive, I instantly loved the image she chose as an example. A yellow leaf on a mossy wet rock: I thought it could represent the older woman in my autumn years. The picture shows one leaf, so I thought about us being leaves navigating the waters of life. As I am older, now, the yellow of the leaf represents me moving on, perhaps to a large blue ocean beyond. (Oh, so trite?).

I am grateful to my Writing Group sisters (Barbara Beyerbach, Bonita Hampton, Mary Harrell, Sharon Kane, Roberta Schnorr, and Christine Walsh), the first ones to listen and to read a poem and to reassure me it was all right, preferring and insisting that I read the poems aloud to hear my voice

through the words. I am grateful to Marla Perkins for being a fellow traveler on the waters who surprised me with the idea and the creation of this chapbook. Thank you to Marge Piercy and Margaret Randall for strong voices as women writers and poets in our time. Gratitude to all poets who use their experiences, imaginations, and inspirations to tell us things we must consider.

Tania Ramalho  
Oswego, NY  
A beautiful day of Spring  
May 12, 2023

P.S. I wrote a brief explanation about each poem.

## **Re: American nightmare**

I do not remember when I have not felt deeply about how society should take care of its people!

The idea that medicine—health care—is to be bought and sold in the market revolts me.

Healing and health are human rights and must be tended as so.

Becoming a health care practitioner at any level of expertise is to be revered and to receive just compensation, but no more or less than others who look after the well-being and the education of the people

Healers and healing are sacred. Marketization and monetization destroy them.

Collective responsibility for healthcare!

Healthcare for all, now!

# 1

## **American nightmare**

---

In the hospital,  
An ordinary hospital  
In an ordinary small city  
In Amerika  
At the ER  
As ordinary an ER  
Can be in a hospital  
In an ordinary small city  
Not too busy at the moment  
No high level of noise  
Occasional talk of the nurses  
No one cries  
No one moans  
No sound of pain  
In well-behaved, if sick, patients.

I am here with a friend  
To make sure she is well  
Fear comes in this silence  
Not for her health  
She will be well  
At the end of the day:  
Fear of the bill  
**THE BILL**

Every move of each attending nurse  
Numbered in figures  
(Perhaps even smiles count?)  
How much a smile, I wonder?

Step through these doors  
Stop at the ER's desk  
You are in the grips  
Of billing.  
Like in a grocery store.  
Your body, their profit.

As the nurse scans  
Tylenol  
The computer beeps  
“It is right here on her chart,  
The med she took, Tylenol”  
(And right on the bill--check)  
Five vials of blood in the arm  
Poked with flexible plastic tube  
“No more needles” she says  
Perhaps the technology  
Is better for patients but  
How many millions of them  
Will take to satisfy investors,  
One former needle, now plastic.  
Billed. Check. Pay investor.

One tube in the vein  
One saline solution to wash it through  
One bag of fluids connected  
To hydrate my patient in  
Drops of pure gold  
Added to the **BILL**  
One dollar...drip  
Two dollars...drip  
One thousand drips  
Dollars adding

Whose pockets are hydrated?

This one medical consult  
How much was that?  
The kind doctor, young, even handsome...  
Does charm count in the time for his price?

My friend has Medicare and  
Private insurance...  
She is lucky  
How much will THEY be billed?  
(Five thousand dollars for four hours of drips,  
we found out, a month later.  
She is fine.)

I still grieve the bill  
Not necessarily her large portion  
Left after the insurances pay their part.

I grieve the collective price  
Of making medicine for profit,  
Of turning a buck from human suffering  
Not using what we have to provide  
Care for all,  
Instantly as needed with  
No thought of price or  
Keeping people away  
or  
Letting them die.

Priceless: health care for all!  
Healing each other  
As the civilized do,  
As it should be--will be?  
When,  
in America?

## **Re: Coloniality defined**

Sometimes I lose patience with academic debates. Of course, I think they are relevant, and important. Often there is a tendency to make ideas so abstract that an everyday reader does not have a clue about the importance of the facts and ideas. Sometimes certain theories reveal mostly the arrogance of their creator, in competition with others, trying to be smarter, different, better. The idea of “coloniality” strikes me as such sometimes, even though it is crucial to our evolution as human species. We must make clear: the ultimate colonized body and soul belong to MOTHER (Mother Nature too!). She is most often forgotten.

## 2

### **Coloniality defined**

---

Coloniality is  
the fetus in the womb  
sucking a mother's blood, growing.

Coloniality is  
the baby pushing against the  
mother's entrails, through the  
channel of life, seeking breath  
through power.

Coloniality is the baby draining  
mother's breasts. Lacking sleep,  
she needs  
nourishment, rest.

Coloniality is the child growing  
beyond mother's death,  
body, mind, spirit,  
a swirlwind. She is never  
free—sometimes her joy,  
often penance.

Coloniality is sketched on a  
mother's soul,  
every woman a potential  
slave.

Fathers' talk about coloniality:  
academic mindfuck.  
Decolonize that!

**Re: A little poem of contrition**

Relationships are darned hard! When I react in an exchange to those near to my heart, one that challenges me, all my emotions come forth. They show in my face, through my expressions, my eyes... sometimes words... sometimes just sounds, sighs, growls... I am never physically aggressive due to successful socialization as a good girl. I know, though, that I could have better, more contained reactions.

# 3

## **A little poem of contrition**

---

I wish to look at you and feel nothing,  
no love,  
no grief,  
no anger,  
jealousy.  
Nothing.  
Nothing at all.  
I am working  
on perfection, here.  
Until I get there,  
please forgive me:  
I am so sorry for misbehaving!

## **Re: Christmas tree**

First, and most important, was my mother. She died on Christmas day. Then it was perhaps the one who was the man love of my life, who died the day before Christmas not long ago. When my mother died, knowing that she hated Christmas due to her large family, where people competed through gifts (not always coming from a place of love), I promised myself: memory and mourning and joyful celebration could co-exist at Christmastime. I would always love Christmas. When he died, I added him to memory too, not as a spoiler.

Decorating the Christmas tree with ornaments that sum up my life is a very special activity, especially since I have become a grandmother. I love putting up the Christmas tree. And yes, it is a fake one kept in a big box. I could not kill a tree for it to become an ornament in my living room and be seen through the window. Never! No matter how good it smells.

# 4

## **Christmas tree**



My Christmas tree is  
Like my head.  
The balls of old  
Still kept in boxes  
None make it up  
the annual display.

Over the years,  
I have collected  
Little figurines  
Here and there,  
Some bought  
In fancy stores  
Other at the thrift  
Or, as they say it in  
London,  
At the Charity store.

Centerpiece is  
The globe  
Earth herself  
Divided into  
Silly nations  
Fruit of the  
Violent  
History of  
Silly men  
With pretentious  
Powers  
Owners of armies

Of other men  
And now  
Women who want  
To share that  
Kind of “glory”--  
Slaying others  
For bigger  
Fish, bigger  
Piece of land.

Over the troubled  
Planet, a round  
Decoration in blue china  
Peace on Earth  
It says,  
With dangling white  
Strings to shower  
All.

I surround the globe  
With little people  
Native American  
A woman in a burqa  
A torero and his bull  
(who will never run,  
Or be killed,  
I promise.)

Then, the rest,  
My favorites in this  
World  
Shinning stars  
Birds and other animals,  
A deer, some chicken,  
An armadillo  
Even a Halloween

Bat, in purple.

Cats, of course!  
Angels galore  
And hearts,  
Hearts, heart,  
To send much love  
Love to us.  
We need it.

## **Re: Epstein**

On sexual matters, I was a naïve adolescent, even young woman. I believed in romance and making a family, all the bells and whistles that middle class teaches us about life (married) with a man. I never experienced incest, sexual assault, or rape; I was truly lucky! Granted, I was not a beauty queen for Brazilian standards, and I learned early to hide any signs of sexual availability—which I could not even entertain! No too-short skirts, low-cut, tight clothes, flashiness.

Patriarchal mores caught up with me eventually, and my consciousness about the relations, sexual and social, between men and women changed with feminist understanding. But the connections of sexuality to social class were not immediately available.

When the big Jeffrey Epstein scandal happened, I was a bit, but then, not at all surprised. Perhaps the most surprising was his lurid accomplice's role of satisfying "her man's" wishes. At any rate, when he died in custody, I never doubted for a moment that he could have been assassinated by command of any of the celebrity men with whom he shared girly meat. But then... who knows, he might have had other dirty secrets and, finally, overwhelmed by shame and guilt did it to himself?

**5**  
**Epstein**

---

Dead in  
His cell  
the financial wizard  
with fistfuls of money  
made on Wall Street,  
in the thrill of  
gambling with people's futures  
people's fates.  
He was a winner!

How to spend the gold?  
too much of it  
no need for work  
no need beyond  
giving orders  
have desires  
fulfilled  
right now.  
No accountability  
No shame  
No empathy  
No remorse.

Castles in the sand  
become empty mansions  
in the most beautiful  
spots on Earth,  
a Caribbean island even,  
of royal standing.

Freedom!  
Complete freedom  
(Defended by armies!)  
to come and go  
to hire, dismiss, and fire.  
Jets, limos, cars  
pilots, drivers, attendants  
cooks, cleaners,  
massage mistresses.

Mistresses:  
the most beautiful  
the most tender  
unspoiled flesh  
found in the  
market  
of city streets,  
worldwide.  
Procure them outside  
schools,  
nymphets  
Hollywood stars look-alike  
Victoria Secret models  
to be,  
perhaps groomed at home  
by some daddy, an uncle, or a brother?

Nothing wrong with nimble  
Tender pussies  
For the stiff muscles  
and anxious penises  
of grown men  
celebrating  
investments  
with high yields!  
Spurious pleasures

cost money--  
Freedom is not free!

Dead in his  
New York City  
cell,  
Hedone's worshiper.

The question remains:  
Who trumped Jeff?

**Re: Untitled**

Really? Do people in general—not only people of color—need to fight to have clean water? Is water part of the war on the poor, too? (And “poor” here is everyone who is a worker, who works to survive!).

I am obsessed with clean water to drink, to cook, to bathe. I have tasted water everywhere, my favorite drink, indeed. But I learned to become suspicious, even in the so-called “land of the free” where the bosses are free to pollute! Republican governments are always trying to get away with murder (literally) through disbelief in environmental controls, considered expensive.

Clean water is a big issue, with so many unaware of the dangers of the chemical-full liquid that comes out of our faucets. People are starting to use filters, but it is really a minority; most are trusting, unaware.

Water is another aspect of our collective insanity.

# 6

## **Untitled**

---

In this water  
I taste poison:  
Chemicals  
Unknown  
Metals.  
I taste centuries of mindless  
Exploitation of the land.

*Descaso\**

I taste the rain  
Washing through  
Dead soils  
Dripping  
Underneath into  
Creeks in the earth, then  
Running into wells.

The water flows  
To faucets  
Pumped  
Into homes  
To baths  
To kitchens  
Where it pours into  
Pots and pans cooking  
Ice in the refrigerator.

This water, labeled “clean,”  
Perfectly primed  
Prompted for veins,

Leaves behind speckles of  
Death  
Every day.

\* *Descaso*: lack of concern or caring in Portuguese

## **Re: Empty beer can on the side of the road**

When I returned from a long stay in Finland in 2022, I was hyper-alert with respect to the environment in the United States. At reentry I stayed in a remote area of South Carolina, at a tranquil cabin on a lake. I walked on remote roads for exercise. I could find empty beer cans by their side every day.

It is just too simple to keep your own trash and take it home to dispose properly, perhaps recycling.

No. Discarding items through the window seems more convenient.

It reminds me of garbage- and sewage-filled streets from medieval urban areas to today's even, particularly in countries with no efficient collective removal systems.

Trash is another insanity of ours, to the degree it is even shipped to modern-day true "refuse colonies" in Africa.

I wrote this poem tongue-in-cheek, from the point of view of a road-discarded beer can rendered female.

**Empty beer can on the side of the road**

I was the beer can  
Longing for the  
Lips of the  
Young man who craved  
The golden color  
Of my flavors  
One grabbed me  
While driving  
Pulled the key to  
My mouth and  
Brought to his,  
Avidly,  
Sipped me  
Gulped me whole

In the grand finale  
Inebriated  
He crunched me  
With his fists  
Throwed me  
To the side of the road  
Speeding the car  
Leaving me to  
My fate  
Accomplis.

**Re: Untitled**

I was ruminating about the nature of love relationships in this next poem. I have experienced three of them, the first three. The last of the relationship types (utopian?) is mostly on the books only, often ending in death of one or the other, or of both in the couple.

Sigh!

**Untitled**

Relations between two people  
May be of  
Body  
Mind  
Heart.

Fiery,  
Sometimes it is only of body,  
Orgasmic moments  
Through tastes  
Scents  
Sweat  
Movements  
Entrails leading to heated furious  
Coupling.

Sometimes it is only of mind,  
Thoughtful  
Imaginative  
Planning for what's best,  
Discussing  
The complexities of life.

Sometimes it is only of heart,  
Spinning head  
Sighs  
Dreams  
Romance,

Admiring looks to the image of the  
Beloved.

Only rarely  
Does the wanting of the body  
The warmth of the heart  
The wonderings of the mind  
Meet alchemically,  
Giving birth to  
Blissful one-soul.

### **Re: Mantle of coloniality: Lesser positions I wear daily**

Reading further on coloniality, I reassured myself concerning the knowledge about my personal experiences as a colonized subject. As such, I am the lesser counterpart of a subject considered by society as greater, better, more important than me. Jean Baker Miller, a psychologist, called these “permanent relationships of inequality.” Such permanence is being put in check, however, as we better understand the abusive nature of these relationships.

We live in a time of deepening the knowledge about human inequalities, the trauma they cause to parties, and how to change them. Of course, changing the whole of society has been a slow process, and we must deal with the consequential dysfunctions. The truth is, psychologically and socio-anthropologically we can bring about change to coloniality, thus freeing all subjects in the process; we are wired for it, according to the scientists. In other words, we can “turn the tables,” the “weaker” becoming stronger, and the “strong” having to live with it.

**Mantle of coloniality: Lesser positions I wear daily**

## 1. Lesser than a man

Oh, so strong,  
Capable of removing mountains...  
Of feats in science and technology,  
Always a threat to others  
In the eternal wars.  
So smart are men!  
The very God, a male Lord,  
Powerful like his only son!  
(No daughters.)

## 2. Lesser than the richest child

He (or she) can go anywhere  
From sparkling mansions:  
In private planes,  
Car rides with chauffeurs.  
No concerns for the open roads leading  
To red carpets.  
School doors? Open everywhere:  
Classy teachers, private tutors,  
Just the very best of everything.  
Even doctors.

## 3. Lesser than the most beautiful

Blond hair, blue-eyes, pearly smile,  
Skin so tender the sun's rays  
Redden it and  
It never, never turns  
Brown,

The color of cockroaches.

4. Lesser than the young athlete  
With a perfect body lifting  
Heavy weights  
Off the problems that challenge  
My fat old body now.  
I succumbed to what was sold  
As a thrill:  
The sweetest candy  
The saltiest chips  
Chocolate and pop and ice cream,  
All before I was old enough for  
Booze,  
Cigarettes and pot.  
(I know better now.)

5. Lesser than the faithful  
Who knows how to love those of the  
Opposite sex.  
I love everyone!  
I love men, for sure, for the  
Force of their arms and splashes of the  
Seed of life,  
I love women, for sure, for the  
Likeness of soul,  
Scents and tastes,  
Inebriating  
But forbidden.

Lesser, all right,  
But wearing coloniality's mantle  
With awareness and grit!  
Strong, we too can turn the tables!

### **Re: Work of art**

My friend Patty Wilson heard this poem and asked me to send her a copy. She said that she pinned it at her school district office. We have never discussed it, but I hope that we do, for the goal of education is nourishing the works of art, metaphorically speaking, which each of us can become, shapeshifting lifelong.

We are not mechanical parts of machines, no matter how much “the bosses” try to convince us that is all we are good for as they impose pedagogical conditions to fashion robots.

# 10

## **Work of art**

---

I am a work of art!  
What am I?  
A Picasso, beautifully distorted?  
A Monet, delicately ephemeral?  
An extravagant dreamy Dali?  
Or a solid Michelangelo, of times past?  
No...

I am closer to Kahlo:  
Colorful, fruity, imaginative.  
And O'Keefe's flowers  
Frozen in time,  
Eternal openness to pleasure.

I am a work of art,  
Parts of many artists  
Whose images I've seen in museums,  
Names I do not remember,  
Lost in memories.  
Light, shadow, lines, circles, hues of colors.

I am a work of art!  
Who are you?

**Re: In praise of Finnish restrooms**

There is nothing like a clean restroom, public or private! But clean public restrooms in an entire country are amazing.

## In Praise of Finnish Restrooms

---

I have not been in a  
Public toilet in  
Finland  
That is not clean.

Maybe not hyper-clean  
Spotless  
Bacteriumless  
Sparkling, even.  
No. Just  
Your basically,  
Fundamentally  
Clean restroom,  
Yes!

Most have cloth hand towels  
Rolled so you can pull down  
The part that no one else has  
Set their dirty hands on.  
It looks like linen but  
It isn't. Not polyester either.  
Cottony, absorbing  
Drops of water to dry hands after  
You wash them properly,  
As pandemic protocol dictates.  
(Even if you do not follow instructions sometimes.)

The flushes work:

One for pee—short.

Another for the fruits of digestion—longer.

You have options! Even long toilet brushes  
On the side, in case you get considerate.

Leaving the best for last:

Hand showers!

Sometimes attached to the bowl,

Sometimes to the dandy sink

--in the stall—your own individual

Little sink at the corner.

Use your shower mindfully,

Not to burn the parts with too hot water

Or splash it on the floor all over.

There is toilet paper also!

And paper towels, electric dryers.

Never leave a restroom in Finland

Dissatisfied.

But then, with only five million people,

What could you expect from

The National Latrines of the

Happiest place?

## **Re: Memorial Day in a new America**

Traditional celebrations of public holidays are part of the culture as much as of the yearly calendar. As such, it is part of the collective consciousness and then of unconsciousness too. Holidays' original meanings and the energies that put them forth in the first place are forgotten and sometimes misrepresented. Present contextual meanings for such holidays are really unspoken of. Memorial Day is about militarism.

Few people will say aloud that the United States of America is a militarist state. Its history is a history of military take over and continued war in the American continent and abroad for commercial purposes (aka "freedom"). The economy is a militarist economy, money-making out of weapons and military actions.

When I wrote this poem about a different Memorial Day, one that is not male-centered, I was imagining the other side of men's wars.

**Memorial Day in a New America**

Guns salute the war dead: 'our' heroes.  
Maimed in body, emotion or spirit,  
those left behind  
parade, raising flags in the wind...  
Solemn voices woven  
into martial songs  
announce  
victory and loss  
in times of turmoil,  
shadows of what's still to come.

Oh, brave young men  
who honor the immemorial ritual of war,  
madness of the fathers' nations,  
killing for some prize of domination,  
brief moments of glory, revenge.

Sacrifice for country,  
for liberty and freedom!  
they say  
empty words in return for fresh blood  
and mourners' tears.

We start the summer remembering such slaughter.

In a New America, however,  
a change in this ritual is proposed:  
gather flowers, sisters,  
for we too are celebrating

our dead and maimed  
for Mother Liberty  
in the new Memorial Day,  
summer's trumpet!

Come march survivors of rape and sexual abuse,  
just behind the battered wives,  
those who remember the sisters killed or disappeared  
when anger triggered a man's rage  
a gun, a knife, strong hands, a penis.  
Here too are the ones hurt in the arms of butchers,  
or priests and politicians interpreting God's wishes.  
A quiet wing, in black,  
mourns the dead of  
despair amidst plenty  
for there were no decent paying jobs  
food  
medicine  
hope  
home,  
a safe place to be.

Sacrifice for your men,  
for children,  
generations!  
they say  
empty words in return for fresh wombs  
and mourners' tears

Memorial Day is complete!  
Cast in memory, all wars:  
the wars of men for spoils,  
the wars of women, for love.

Survivors,  
may we fully understand and recoil.

With remembrance,  
perhaps a chance to evolve.

**Re: A response to the slogan “freedom is not free”, used to justify militarism**

Militarism is insidious as much as it is insidiously attractive. It makes unthinking people—most especially males—feel good about might, getting things right, getting rid of demons. War is also intimately connected to religion beneath the appearances, the savior syndrome.

The one militarist slogan that makes me exceptionally angry is “freedom is not free.” Granted, it is a magnificent slogan, very effective rationalizing. But it is propaganda, nonetheless, for the support of militarism and the sacrificing of the young and poor for the profits of the wealthy.

# 13

## **A response to the slogan “freedom is not free”, used to justify militarism**

---

Real freedom  
is free!  
It costs... nothing!

Don't ever believe it  
that freedom costs  
money  
weapons  
blood spilled  
lives of young men and women  
baited by inventions  
of “patriotic duty”  
by generals  
of army and industry,  
with the consent of  
governments  
(as repeated on TV).

No.

Real, real freedom  
is indeed free--  
not bought or sold  
in markets of greed and hate.

Freedom is an act of peace,  
A confident step into the world  
with a question:

What can we do  
to create,  
to make life better,  
for us,  
for others,  
today?

Freedom as an act of love.  
That,  
is entirely  
free.

## **Re: Uncle Sam**

Being born after World War II, all the way in Brazil I was exposed to images of the cartoon, Uncle Sam, both good and critical. Everyone knew “Uncle Sam” could spread benesses as well as intervene in our country’s destiny at any moment. Because this image of the United States was of a white man, and a family relative (“uncle”), it reminded me of one my uncles. Three of them were respectable family men (at least in appearance). One was semi-respectable, sort of impossible, but the youngest needed improvement. This uncle was a drunk, gambler, womanizer, could not keep his word, and always made bad decisions.

As I became clearer about the United States as a country, the more I identified it with a young man like my uncle, out of control and creating unnecessary havoc. I have not lost faith yet that Uncle Sam can mature!

**Uncle Sam**  

---

He is really not my uncle  
or yours either  
Though we learn to call him so:  
Uncle Sam.  
Oddly dressed in flashy clothes,  
Bright red, white and blue  
Large stripes, star studded  
He might as well be a rock star, Elvis!

Not the least.  
Uncle Sam's inclinations  
Are not so much for loud music  
Brass, guitars,  
Fun and fireworks  
But military glory instead,  
Firing guns  
on the battlefields  
in science and technology  
labs of destruction.  
He is a soldier, a rocket star  
Meddler, aggressive, ready to kill  
Uncle Sam is not a nice man.

A millionaire's top hat  
Frames his leathery thin face  
Complementing his gray beard  
and whiskers.  
Uncle Sam's eyes scouts for the gold,  
for prizes.

Nothing escapes his greed for more, more,  
A house, the biggest one!  
A car, gas guzzling sports utility!  
Better still,  
Armored vehicles!  
Might.

He overcomes obstacles on the road  
Betting to get to the destination fast and first  
No matter what the price of gas  
No matter what accidents  
conflicts  
he causes.

Uncle Sam is a reckless driver,  
A drunk driver with power.  
in need of a serious dose of reality,  
restraints, education,  
AA program.  
Uncle Sam could use some time  
in jail  
before he kills us all.

We might as well  
disown him  
cast him out of our heads  
our spirits  
find another uncle,  
another hero,  
May we put Uncle Sam  
to  
R.I.P.

**Re: My nine religions, or personal consequences of cultural syncretism**

**Minhas Nove Religiões, ou, Consequências Pessoais do Sincretismo Cultural**

I consider myself profoundly religious. Some people would say, spiritual. Either way, I feel connected to the world, to people, animals, Nature, even rocks. My reverence feels like love. I work for all to feel the sacredness of our interconnections.

Reflecting about how I got to this point led me to think about this poem on my religious experience. Initially, I counted seven religions. But at the end, it became nine!

I rarely go to a church. Life is my church. And yes, I am blessed.

**My nine religions, or, personal consequences of cultural syncretism**  
**Minhas nove religiões, ou, consequências pessoais do sincretismo cultural**

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Sou Católica Apostólica Romana Feita a primeira comunhão Vou à missa E à do galo Rezo pros santos e à Virgem Mãe: um milagre puro!	I am Roman Catholic Baptized Took First communion Attended mass Rooster's Midnight Prayed to all saints and the Virgin Mary—pure miracle!
Filha de Enock, Protestante, Ouvi versos bíblicos nas Igreja Batista e Luterana onde	Enock's daughter, I am Protestant, Heard Bible verses in Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist Temples I follow Jesus' precepts: The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want!
Sigo os preceitos de Jesus: O senhor é meu pastor, Nada me falta!	
Sou Espírita Cadencista Li a Bíblia de acordo com O Allan.	I am Spiritist Kardecist Read the Bible also according to Allan.
Vou aos centros onde os Irmãos me dão: Passe, conselho e oração!	I go to centers where Spirit brethren give me Benediction, counsel, and prayers!

Macumbeira  
Das Sete Linhas  
Com guia verde e branca  
Ogum na cabeça, salve!  
Nos terreiros:  
Danço e canto ponto com  
batuque  
Recebo orientação e patuá!

Muçulmana mandinga,  
Minha cabeça coberta  
Com lenço multicor  
Entro em silencio na mesquita  
Azul  
Rezo Seus Noventa e Nove  
Nomes:  
Alah acima de todos,  
Acima de tudo!

Como budista, meditando  
À minha volta  
No dia a dia, vejo  
As penas da vida  
As mudanças: o mundo gira  
Tudo dança,  
Eu sorrio!

Sou hinduista em adoração a  
Sri Ganesha  
Sri Hanuman  
Sri Sarasvati  
Vou ao ashram  
Para o kirtan

Voodooist  
Of the Seven Lines  
Green and white beads in my  
necklace  
Ogun is my head, hail!  
I go to the sacred yards  
I dance, singe with the drums  
Get guidance, protection,  
benediction!

An African Moslem  
My head is covered  
With a colored scarf  
I entered the Blue Mosque in  
silence  
I prayed His Ninety-Nine Names  
—  
Allah Akbar  
Allah above all.

As a buddhist, meditating  
Around me  
Day to day I see  
Life's sorrows  
Change—in every dance  
the world spins.  
I smile!

I am Hinduist in adoration to  
Sri Ganesha  
Sri Hanuman  
Sri Saravasti  
I go to the ashram  
For kirtan

Canto, rezo:  
Hare Krishna, Hare Rama, Hare  
Hare!

I chant, I pray:  
Hare Krishna, Hare Rama,  
Hare, Hare!

Sou judia de  
Lá detraz onde a história se  
perdeu e  
O ancestral se esconde,  
Quem sabe, em Ramalah?  
Frente à sinagoga Contemplo  
ritos: Yom Kipur, Purim,  
Pesach!

I am Jewish  
Back from when history got  
lost &  
ancestors hide,  
Perhaps in Ramalah?  
In front of the synagogue  
I contemplate rites:  
Yom Kipur, Purim, Pesach!

Minha direção na wicca  
Norte, Sul, Leste, Oeste  
Terra, Fogo, Ar, Água  
Masculino, Femino  
Deuses, Deusas, Natureza.  
A emulsão completa:  
Magia em progresso!

My Wiccan directions  
North, South, East, West  
Earth, Fire, Air, Water  
Masculine, Feminine  
Gods, Goddesses, Nature.  
Complete emulsion:  
Magic is afoot!

Ninguém pode dizer que não sou  
abençoada.

Nobody can say I've not been  
blessed.

Amém.

Amen.

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