

BOOKS

With my Whole Body

With more glide than glitter, Aline Pettersson (1938) takes us on a journey to the most important regions and moments of her intimate life. She does this, if one could qualify it in such a way, through a prose that is intensely feminine. Here we have that young girl who is broadening her world, who must write about it and who is encouraged by her teacher. The adolescent who embraces death and confronts it with curiosity and distance. The mother who makes literature come alive by reading countless novels to her children. The adult woman who immerses herself in the world of young people who study literature in the University. The mature woman at fifty who falls in love and decides that nothing is important except to live her "interior burning time". Her skin that is never satiated. Her way of shaking herself free of those things that convert the happiest being into the most unfortunate one, or the most suffering into the most fortunate.

To attain this true self-portrait, Aline Pettersson uses the old trick of direct prose with no contrivances. Nothing that happens to her or happened to her in the past can escape the task of converting her experiences into literary objects. The autobiography of Aline, a young writer in virtue of her spirit and freshness, reminds us of the things most dear to life that define themselves in the smallest everyday detail.

Aline chooses anecdotes, as does everyone, that are full

of ups and downs. She has to confront whom she herself defines as the severest judge of all: the written word. She states that all literature is autobiographical but humbly accepts that the literary transmutation of her life may not be so fortunate. In her way of thinking, the problem is not only in choosing the anecdote, but also in touching it up and illustrating it: "Of course (the autobiography) is not synonymous with a resume or a case history, but it has a little bit of both. It is more like the family album. It has photographs that have been retouched, where you almost don't recognize the persons."

Thus, the faithfulness of the written portrait itself has other connotations. There are those that dissolve between truth and fantasy, a mixture of fiction and reality. There are those that have the logic of converting personal actions of the author into transcendent events for the reader. They complete the circle of the literary phenomenon by stirring, not without promiscuity, the passions of the writer and her readers.

Which things that happened to Aline Pettersson happened also to me? What is my end in her story? How does her prose include me? When is Aline lying about her truths?

"Finally, writing is a device", says Aline Pettersson, "and as such it has limitations, enormous deceptions, great truths. The only way that I can justify these pages is to say that my life which has been so void of such adventures that may be called worthwhile, on the inside has housed a Leviathan."

That wonderful marine monster that dwells in each one of us, the symbol of passion, is expressed by Aline through a soft prose, without exaltations, throughout the book. And although she states that she doesn't have the words to transmit her passions, the principal character of her autobiographical story is

this same "I" who flows over into the need to write. It is the inner time that has no reserves, the inner voices that clamor to live.

Perhaps the autobiographical mirror and its literary devices help us to rebuild our fragments. Alberto Dallal once said: "I write in order to pull together in one place the thousand spirits that I have found myself divided into". Aline discovers herself as an isolated child. From this point, she runs through her life as if it were a chronology of discoveries picking up each "minute" event - those fragments of sensuality - that today are seen as a complete body. She is always seeking to identify herself in some shining point of her eyes, which also lack sufficient space to be contained.

With My Whole body **De cuerpo entero** by Aline Pettersson, is part of a collection of books by the same name, published by the Literature Department of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Dirección de Literatura de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México). Other autobiographical stories in this collection include those of Gerardo de la Torre, Federico Campbell, Rafael Ramírez Heredia, María Luisa Puga, Humberto Guzmán, Bernardo Ruiz and Ethel Krauze. Mexico City, 1990.

De Cuerpo Entero
(With my Whole Body)
Aline Peterson
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Jorge Luis Sierra

