

Running Homenaxe a Kent Johnson poeta crítico editor organizador agitador

por Erín Moure (Montreal)



When I think Kent, not man Kent but word *Kent* as received by ear, I hear
quente (adjectivo) *hot* or
quente (substantivo) *an animal "in heat"*
or
a quenta *a harsh reprimand given someone*

A big guy
drinks beer
smokes tobacco
loves what's raucous
stays up all night
sharpening swords
for the public fight

"let's discuss this in public" he'd say of a disagreement and I'd say I actually just want to express my point of view to *you* (on translation, or...) and you can take it into account, or stick to your view and reject mine. *All I want is that you know my point of view is different from yours.* That was hard for him (I felt); whatever wasn't on his side, he was against. Or thought he should be against, we should all be against.... Even I should be against. And with me not being against, but in another mode entirely, not binary, he'd be a bit disappointed in me. No fight! But to me the fight obscured the terms, and the reflection, and I prefer to go about thought in another way, one that does not, regardless, invalidate his...

Big guy
lumbering
Kente quente
argument or harangue (which?) (are we literary yet?)
castigo
tírón forte de orellas
hard pull of the ears (like my dad, mad)
in the midst of it all *but but but* and oh, the old problem:
—can a girl get a word of her own in edgeways?—

Behind the scenes
no quiet!

his poetic scheming
loving poetry always
out of love of poetry always
railing always against poetry's institutionalization
against the egos/ego against ego!
against poetics being USA only
against the blindness of borders
still *scheming*
still wanting to "go public"
as if to *win*

and in our arguments
he couldn't *win* me over, at times, and it seemed maddening to him,
as my means were otherwise, still are:
an attentionality that's multiple,
attentionality quietly and its effect on the cellular structure of the human
so that we can make our own decisions going forward, leave the seams
visible
—plus why cross swords? what gain? does thought move forward?—
(*for* and *against*: where I saw poetry, he saw "poetry wars," we talk about it and agree
to disagree)

—in a war, can a girl get hey even a stray word in sideways?—
Against fluster, his or anyone's, I've patience
learned out of feminism
learned out of Butler and Rankine and Brand and Brossard, out of gay struggle, and out
of the texts and insistences of those racialized by a world of white privilege and still today
won't relent)

I want to beckon to listening and receiving
But there he is and for poetry's sake!
The room goes Kent-quete
Sweating in sweaters
Appreciating appreciations

The rest of us head home late but Kent's up all night
(apparently, he said so, I was elsewhere sleeping!)
Big guy
Dishevelled somewhat at the conference the next morning
Loud as heck
but!!!

Gentle, too, a gentle giant, friendly giant
Kind
Quiet and kind
Hallowed
Born elsewhere, home elsewhere, at home in the never-at-home
(fishing real and metaphorical)

Kent making a space for others
Kent making a space for poetry, keeping poetry's spaces open
letting us all disagree for a moment
—not amicably (maybe) but maniacally (maybe)—
giving sympathy and a hand to those in grief or difficulty
—so that a girl does yes get a word in edgewise—

Quente Kent spent rent
Trying in poetry make a dent
What he did was what he meant
Let loose in more and other accents!
(I appreciated that)
haranguing or grins
helping
doing that other thing but through it *helping*
oh poetry
just helping

enemy of all hierarchy even imagined ones
pin-poking into untenable high-muckamuck balloons

pomposity's nemesis
imitator fragilator instigator mitigator (no, not that last)
low muckamuck
mucking about
mocking maybe but with a kind of poetry zeal

laughing
translating poetry
making space for words of others
making room for poetry
more and more poetry
supporting translators
urging translators
thanking translators
making space for translation, relentlessly
impatient with slow steps, wanting revolution now! HIS revolution!

wanting to make poetry new
wanting us to see poetry new and across borders
quente:

quen é Kent, quente, quen é who who
até quantar a cabeça
até quantarlle a cabeça a alguém
hothead heating
turning up the heat
if you can't stand the heat, get out of the *poetry* kitchen!

quente Kent quantando (nunca quitando)

helping
listening while still talking (insert laugh emoji)
larger than life's if
larger than life's lie
Sempre se mete en leas!

fe_faith
li_lily
z

feliz
é Kent