
TRANSLATION

House of Geishas

ANA MARÍA SHUA

[ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED AS *Casa de geishas*

(BUENOS AIRES: EDITORIAL SUDAMERICANA, 1992)]

SELECTIONS TRANSLATED BY DAVID WILLIAM FOSTER

“The Recruitment”

The first women are apparently recruited at random. Yet once assembled, certain outlines in the group can be observed, an organization which, if emphasized, could become a style. The madam is now looking for the women still needed, not just any women, but only those who fill in the gaps defined by the others. It is now possible to discern the sort of brothel in the making and even what kind of clientele it might attract. Like a book of stories or poems, or even a novel.

“Simulacrum”

Clearly, it is not a real House, and the geishas are not really Japanese. During times of crises, they can be seen without kimonos working the docks, and although their names might not be Jade or Lotus Flower, Monica and Vanessa are not their real names either. So there is no reason to be scandalized by how the boarders of the House who simulate pleasure and at times even love (for more money, of course) might not be women after all, as long as they meet the sanitary code. There is no reason to be concerned by the fact that they might not even be transvestites, so long as they pay their taxes, or that they might not even have a belly button so long as the clients are not bothered by this somewhat brutal absence from bellies that are so smooth, so inhumanly smooth.

“Rosaura”

Rosaura is the most generous one of all, the one with the sex that knows how to grip, which she rents to men and lends to women. Thanks to Rosaura’s sex, any woman can grip and hold fast the man she loves indefinitely, or a client who has not paid her fee. But she has no choice but to release them when called upon to return it to its rightful owner, generous Rosaura.

“Being Partial”

The looks of men are partial. Consequently, those who hawk their wares from doorways might praise, for example, a pair of turgid, tempting buttocks. Someone so attracted might be surprised to discover the strict truth of the hawker's words: these buttocks exist exactly as described and there waiting for him are just the buttocks, lying solitary and beautiful on the bed, free of any body to hold them up or any woman attached to them.

“Bonds”

Many men like to be tied up, and the quality of the bonds varies, as you might expect, in accordance with the wealth of the desiring victim, from bonds of silk to even bonds of blood. In the end, nothing binds like the responsibility of a family, undoubtedly the most expensive of pleasurable sufferings.

“Sophistication”

For the most sophisticated (and let us agree that it is a very expensive perversion), Madam is willing to agree to provide even the services of their own wives.

“Masochists”

An entire wing is dedicated to those melancholic and generous clients, the masochists. There is a series of rooms in which suffering is measured out in accordance with the degree of pain provided by the stimuli. If the first room contains women who inflict punishment, the sixth room offers copulation with a crocodile, the eighth, with the memory of lost happiness.

“She Who Is Not Here”

No woman is more successful than She Who Is Not Here. Although still young, many years of conscious practice have perfected her in the subtlest art of absence. Clients who ask for her end up making do with someone else, and they take her distractedly, attempting to imagine that the one in their arms is the best, the only one, She Who Is Not There.

“Six Fingers”

Those who know her and have tried her call her Six Fingers, but her sixth finger is retractable, and nothing about that perfectly smooth hand suggests its existence. Rumor has it that only on occasion and only for certain clients does that sixth finger appear, extending itself like a red, fuzzy worm capable of making the world

explode in rhythmic pleasure, only for the best, like me, everyone says. Would anyone be the first to admit that he has not seen it or never felt it?

“Tattoo”

In a certain hidden fold of her anatomy, Jezebel bears a complex tattoo. Many have paid to see it. Those clients who, thanks to their ability or their fortune, can tell about it say that the pattern is that of a map tinted in soft colors, a combination of tints matching the natural tone of the skin. The map marks the point at which the observer finds himself, along with the path that will lead him to the exit.

“The Thin Woman”

There is a woman whose thinness is so dense, opaque, and extremely pointed that she is capable of penetrating while being penetrated, wending her way among the pores like a thread that inserts its drawn-out tip into the eye of a needle. She emerges in the final spasm through the urethra, ready to collect the extra fee she so richly serves.

“The Fat Woman”

There is a woman whose flesh is flabby and swampy like the tongue of a whale. Clients find it hard to extract themselves from her, their bodies pulling free with a popping sound. It is sometimes possible to make out on the surface of her translucent skin the outline of a bald pate, the vertebrae of a sweaty back, a shoe.

“Erotic Fantasies”

Erotic fantasies jumble together in the corner of a ceiling in Room Twenty-seven. They are there at the disposal of the clients, many of whom have so little imagination! The psychological nature of the fantasies makes them lighter than air, and the wind of frustrated desires sweeps them to the corner farthest from the door. Some clients stare at them for hours without deciding which one to choose. Just to make sure this sort of fascination does not result in lost money for the House, the same fee is required to enter Room Twenty-seven as for She Who Is Not There. ✨