Sustenance

"You made the noise for me.
Made it again.
Until I could see the flight of it."
           E. Boland, from *Code*

She was my Mnáthan-tuirim,* keening
our language for me, showing its range,
its flight path, parsing our phrases, sloughing
off the old tropes. With a voice like the echo
of a summer song it tuned somewhere deep;
reverberating in pavements and city streets,
in the gathering shadows of granite buildings,
in the running tide of Anna Livia.

I heard the cry, saw the flight, saw noise
stitch the sky and tried to hold it
like a wayward running kite. String unspool-
ing in my hands, leaving me
raw and grounded, my back to the wind
I held on tight, but often missed
the bridle points as it pivoted
and plunged in my mind's sky.

                                                   Jean O'Brien

        Written for "Eavan Boland — In Her Many Images", *ABEI Journal* 23.2 (2021).

*Mnáthan-tuirim is the Irish word for a Keener (crying); the keening women paid respects to the deceased
    and expressed grief on behalf of the bereaved family.

Sustento

"Fixeches o ruído para min.
Fixéchelo de novo.
Até que puiden ver o seu voo".
E. Boland, Code

Ela era a miña Mnáthan-tuirim,* carpindo
para min a nosa lingua, mostrando o seu alcance,
a traxectoria do seu voo, anatomizando as nosas frases, desprendéndoas
dos vellos tropos. Cunha voz como o eco
dunha canción de verán, entoaba no máis fondo;
reverberando nas estradas e nas rúas da cidade,
nas sombras amoreadas dos edificios de granito,
no abalo da marea de Anna Livia.

Oín o pranto, vin o voo, vin o ruído
coser o ceo e intentei termar del
como un papaventos voando descarreirado. Corda desenro-
lándose nas miñas mans, deixándome
en carne viva, en terra, de costas ao vento
termei con forza, mais fallei decote
o punto de ancoraxe ao pivotar
e mergullar no ceo da miña mente.

Galician translation by Marilar Aleixandre

*Mnáthan-tuirim é a palabra en gaélico para a carpideira, a que facía o pranto na honra da persoa defunta e expresaba a dor en nome da aflixida familia.