Three Poems from *Y todos estábamos vivos/And We Were All Alive*
by Olvido García Valdés
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by Catherine Hammond

como murciélagos entramos en noviembre
desde la transparencia

tejados y un lienzo
de ladrillo que absorbe cuando llueve
densa el agua pero ahora
es pálido como desvanecerse
como sustancia
devaneciéndose

de la naturaleza de los afectos
de lo que ocurre o no

like bats we enter in November
from transparent light

tiles and a brick canvas
that fills up when it rains
heavy, dark water but now
pale as it fades
like a substance
disappearing

from the essence of the union
of that which occurs or does not

arenas movedizas—oyó—, y antes,
a su interlocutora, la palabra
ángel; no hablaran de amor;
visto lo visto—insistió la más joven—
prefiero mantenerme a distancia,
en la vida duele todo, hago deporte

quicksand—she listened—, and before,
to her questioner, the word
angel; they might not speak of love;
having seen what is seen—insisted the younger—
I prefer to remain at a distance,
in life everything hurts, I play

Qué blanca está la higuera justo antes
de brotar, sarmientos de plata clara
con garras de gato verdes, ha hecho suyas
cicatrices de poda, se ha vestido
de pálida, purificada y clara con el
hielo, ensimismada entumecida.
Blanca antes de ser peluda, y áspera
al reverso de las hojas,
y suave intensamente
verde y grande y protectora
de frutos al cestillo.
La intensidad
de lo que no corresponde, como si
no hubiera entre yo y ser adecuación,
entre bondad o belleza y vida.

How white the fig tree is right before
budding, vine shoots of bright silver
with green cat's claw, exposing its
pruning scars, it has dressed itself
pale, purified and luminous
with frost, lost in thought, numb.
White more than hairy, and rough
on the bottoms of leaves,
and soft intensely
green and grand and guardian
of fruits in their own small basket.
That intensity
is not reciprocated, as if
there were no balance between me and being,
between goodness or beauty and life.