

“These marked spaces  
lie beneath / the alphabet”  
Readers, Borders, and Citizens in  
Erín Moure’s Recent Work

I don’t want what is already made but what is tortuously in the making.

—Clarice Lispector, *Agua Viva*  
(qtd. in Erín Moure, *O Ciudadán* 83)

In their call for papers for this special issue of *Canadian Literature* on poetics, Clint Burnham and Christine Stewart ask a key question: “Should one make political claims at all for formally-motivated poetry?” We intend to argue that when poetry is motivated by an awareness that form is not neutral, it always already demonstrates an overt and engaged relation to the *making* of the world by human agents. We can and should make political claims for such poetry. But how? To consider this question, we will focus on one of the key political issues of our time—the nature of citizenship—in relationship to recent work by Erín Moure. In our view, Moure’s challenges to notions of authorship and the book enable her to enact citizenship otherwise. To make this claim, we will focus, not only on Moure’s essays on citizenship<sup>1</sup> in her recently collected *My Beloved Wager: Essays from a Writing Practice* (2009), but also on her theory of reading, which we see as developing in two pieces she wrote in response to the work of artist Lani Maestro,<sup>2</sup> and in two recent books of poetry: *O Ciudadán* (2002) and *Expeditions of a Chimæra* (2009), written in collaboration with Oana Avasilichioaei.<sup>3</sup> As Moure’s work in these several modes demonstrates, thinking about citizenship requires us to think about readers, writers, and books. Just as her recent work challenges conventional notions of authorship and the book, so too does it challenge us to think about citizenship in a different mode.

In “Redefining Citizenship by Poetic Means,” Moure makes the overtly political claim that “citizenship is a mode of enactment, not belonging” (164) arguing that how we act as readers affects how we act as citizens. She sees both modes of enactment as intimately tied to what we make of borders. Do we stay put? Move across borders? Force others into or out of (our?) space(s)? Facilitate free movements? Do we see the world as given and unchangeable or as something, in Clarice Lispector’s words, “tortuously in the making”? If our reading practices involve the ways we engage with the spaces of the page and the book, how do they reflect or complicate other spatial relations between bodies, cities, and nations? How are we citizens not only of cities or nations but also of books? Can we learn, in being different kinds of readers, to be different kinds of citizens? How does our reading practice change if we consider ourselves citizens, not only of the book, but also of a field of books, and of discourse itself? What are the implications of these ways of thinking about readers for our practices as citizens?

In *O Ciudadán*, the text that, as its name suggests, most overtly engages with questions of citizenship and yet consistently challenges them, Moure writes, suggestively, that citizenship is “[n]ot ‘origin’ but the signal that traverses or imbibes, breaks [sic] . . .” (98). Lianne Moyes speaks of *O Ciudadán* as “not so much a collection of poems about citizenship as a field of conceptual inquiry into the epistemological limits of discourses and practices of citizenship” (113). Moure’s notion of citizenship as a kind of signifying energy that enacts crossing and opening extends the possibility of exchange across national and linguistic borders, encouraging us to see the foreign as Moure does, as “the possibility of meaning, rather than noise or the absence of meaning” (*O Ciudadán* 165). As we will argue below, Moure’s work teaches us how else to act in the world by interpellating us first as citizens of a different kind of book.

#### **The Book / A Book : Tent / Tentative<sup>4</sup>**

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari propose that the book should no longer be seen as a reflection of the world, separate and complete. They argue that “[t]here is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)” (23). Instead, they see the book as an assemblage that “establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders” (23). This “rhizome-book” is “always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*” (25). So when Deleuze and Guattari instruct

us to “[n]ever send down roots, or plant them, however difficult it may be to avoid reverting to the old procedures” (23), they are focusing our attention on this rhizomatic, decentred notion of the book and the ways it is able to remain unrooted and moveable. In this sense, “the book” is always already “a book,” an insight Moure drew to our attention in a 1999 book of poems which had two competing titles, one referring to “a book,” the other to “the book” (Mouré, *A Frame of the Book / The Frame of a Book*). But no book is rhizomatic naturally. Rather, books become rhizomatic through stances of authorship and readership that are open to and indeed generate possibilities. In fact, our own practice of flooding the textual site with various and varying questions (thereby suggesting multiple paths through the text) is one stance we might take to generate these possibilities.

Or Moure’s stance toward authorship. Although some scholars don’t recognize the name change at all,<sup>5</sup> the author formerly known as “Erin Mouré” has, since the publication of *O Cidadán* in 2002,<sup>6</sup> been publishing under the name Erin Moure. In fact, this proliferation of authorial identities began even earlier, in 2001, when the name “Eirin Moure” appeared on the cover of *Sheep’s Vigil by a Fervent Person* (2001). A close reading of the title of this book reveals Moure’s stance toward authorship, since *Sheep’s Vigil by a Fervent Person* is a translation, not only of “the” book *O guardador de rebanhos*, which she translates as *Sheep’s Vigil*, but also of “the” so-called author himself. She translates the name of the author—“Fernando Pessoa”—as *a Fervent Person*. “The” author may be a fervent person; but so is the reader as translator. It is in this sense that the poems in *Sheep’s Vigil by a Fervent Person* are what she calls “trans-*e*-lations. Trans-*eirin*-elations” (*Sheep’s Vigil* ix) of the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa’s *O guardador de rebanhos*.

To complicate the matter even further, Pessoa published *O guardador de rebanhos* under the name Alberto Caeiro, “one of [his] five major heteronyms” (131).<sup>7</sup> In her essay “Subjectivities,” Moure explains that it was “the movement in Pessoa that called upon [her] listening” (182). In using “Eirin,” “the old Galician version” (182) of her name, she exemplifies the ways that, for her, “[a] practice of reading is always embodied” (Erin Moure, “The Exhorbitant Body” 173) and it always engages an “other.” The “elation” of translation arises, for Moure, in those moments when the border between author, translator, and reader is open for negotiation. In a piece written collaboratively with Moure, the London-based French-Norwegian poet Caroline Bergvall points out that “[t]he more [Moure’s] work as a poet and as a translator<sup>8</sup> proliferates, the more [her] names do too” (Bergvall and Moure 167). With

Deleuze, whom she cites in the following epigraph to *Pillage Laud* (1999), Moure sees “experimentation on oneself” as “our only identity, our single chance for all the combinations that inhabit us.”

*Pillage Laud* is another text that complicates notions of authorship, since it seems to have, with the help of a computer, written itself. But of course this is not true. *Pillage Laud* was written in a collaboration between Moure and the computer since she chose the vocabulary that produced the poems and “selects” the poems from among those generated:

*Pillage Laud* selects from pages of computer-generated sentences to produce Lesbian sex poems, by pulling through certain found vocabularies, relying on context: boy plug vagina library fate tool doctrine bath discipline belt beds pioneer book ambition finger fist flow. (n. pag.)

Moure is in fact one of the few women poets to have generated poetry with a computer (Emerson 59). *Pillage Laud* was written between September 1997 and July 1998 (*Pillage Laud* n. pag.) using MacProse to generate “random sentences based on syntax and dictionary instructions internal to the program” (Moure, *Pillage Laud* 99). Unlike the mostly male writers of conceptual poetry however, Moure is interested in formal innovation only insofar as it simultaneously engages in “a critique of the generative process itself” (*O Ciudadán* 47). For her, “a purely generated, purely intentionless writing (free of ideology)” (Emerson 60) is impossible. Because she sees reading as “inherently a practice of exchange, of responsiveness,” as “radically communal” (Bergvall and Moure 170) the process of making alternative meanings is always available. As Anna Leventhal writes in a review of Moure’s collected essays, her “beloved wager” is on the opportunity “to be changed by language and have the world created anew” (n. pag.)

At the literal boundary of *O Ciudadán* (the cover), Moure presents, in the form of a photograph of an installation entitled *Cradle* by Montréal artist Lani Maestro, a spatial metaphor that suggests how, in being “changed by language” (Leventhal n. pag.), we become both active and tentative readers: a structure that is unrooted, temporary, and yet habitable, the tent is a spatial metaphor for citizenship itself. Maestro assembled *Cradle* by using sisal strings to suspend cheesecloth tents across the gallery space (Baert and Maestro n. pag.). As Moure’s work does, Maestro teaches us how to occupy such official spaces (like galleries, books, countries) otherwise. The tents do subdivide the space. But because they are made of a gauzy, translucent fabric, the internal pockets are penetrable. In a catalogue of Maestro’s work, Baert reads the space created by these tents: “Cradled in these airy enclosures that

are private yet permeable, set apart yet neighbored, one is invited to expand silence, to breathe” (22). In Maestro’s work, borders separate inside and outside, but in a way that allows light, motion, language, and sound to cross.

But Moure does more than simply include a photograph of Maestro’s *Cradle* on the cover of one of her books. She wrote two crucial pieces in response to Maestro’s *Cradle*. Taken together, these pieces constitute a kind of Mourean theory of reading. The first piece, entitled “These Notes on Lani Maestro’s Cradle [sic]” (1-3),<sup>9</sup> was published as a poem in Calgary-based *dANdElion* magazine (2002). A significantly revised version was published as an essay in Moure’s *My Beloved Wager* under the title “Three Notes on Lani Maestro’s *Cradle*” (127-30).<sup>10</sup> In both pieces, Moure ties Maestro’s tents to language by linking Maestro’s sisal strings with the alphabet: “Tension in the strings—each string an / alphabetic letter—its tension (is readerly)” (1). For Moure, *Cradle*, with all its permeability and *tentativeness*, gives us a way to think about language and discourse:

*Cradle* is a stringed instrument.  
Its lines contrast with its planes—  
because it marks off space with planes.  
These marked spaces lie beneath  
the alphabet.

This is a description of discourse  
that is working for me. (1)

What are these “marked spaces” that “lie”? That lie “beneath the alphabet”? How do we read the instrumentality of lines and planes (of language and discourse) when they “mark off” (or tortuously make) space? Why is Moure interested in the kind of space produced in *Cradle*? How does this notion that “marked spaces lie beneath / the alphabet” describe a discourse that works for Moure? Why and how does it work for her?

The word “lie” names an equivocal relationship between the “marked spaces” and “the alphabet.” The spaces thus marked both exist (there they are, lying there) “beneath the alphabet” *and* cease to exist (since the marked spaces “lie”) simultaneously. Moure writes that a “description of discourse” which marks spaces off with planes, which sets up a temporary relationship between space and representation, works “for” her. Why and how would this notion of discourse be particularly useful to a woman poet? A lesbian poet? A girl who grew up in Alberta and became a multi-lingual translator living in Montréal? Perhaps there is something in the equivocations of the spatial field assembled in *Cradle*. Perhaps Moure is interested in the temporariness and

alterability inherent in Maestro's installation. The risk of marking off space is that the space might become permanently marked, that space might become fixed and unquestionable, that space might root itself rather than be a route elsewhere. Perhaps Moure is interested, to *détourne* the statement by Lispector originally quoted by Moure and then by us at the beginning of this essay, in a space (and a discourse) that is not always already marked out but is tortuously in the process of being marked and remarked on, made and remade.

As Moure writes in "Three Notes on Lani Maestro's *Cradle*," the second version of her reading of *Cradle*, Maestro's permeable borders and impermanent structures make up a kind of discursive field. We play the reader in *Cradle* just as *Cradle* plays with us as readers:

What is in a discursive field  
can be said to make it up.

All discursive fields include the  
reader, who performs not just in  
front of them, but in them.

In *Cradle* we play the reader.

The reader is a performance complicit  
with a tension in the body.

*Cradle* makes up my discursive field. (130)

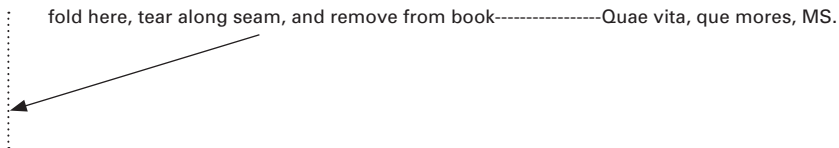
For Moure, *Cradle* is a discursive field in which the reader performs, moving perhaps from tent to tent, looking through to other spaces, calling across to others. The space is gauzy and dream-like. But it is also open to the movements of meaning making, since, from each seemingly private space, one can see through to adjacent spaces. The reader is a performer *inside* the textual field.

Moure invites us to participate in the textual spaces she constructs in the same way we might enter the space of Maestro's *Cradle*. Speaking of "Lévinas's take on 'hospitality,'" Moure notes that a hospitable space is "a space of interruptibility or leakage where there is no claim to totality. The one welcoming the visitor is already in the visitor's debt, for visi-tor is also visi-ble, brings the visible into being" (*O Ciudadán* 103). Moure changes a reader/text relationship into one of visitor/visited, creating a discursive field of being among and with, but not alone. Perhaps this discursive field is that of the readerly citizen, unwilling to impose meaning on the other, instead negotiating meaning in a field of exchange across a porous border.

***O Ciudadán* (2002): Closing Singular Narratives, Opening Textual Borders**

How might we think about the notion of citizenship *spatially*? And how might that relate to the space of the book and the act of readership? In the “Thirteenth Catalogue of the Maternity of Harms” section of *O Ciudadán*, as she reflects on the relationship of the body to the body’s image of itself and to the city, Moure suggests that the “citizen-relation is itself spatial” (83). This connection makes sense, given our discussion of Maestro’s *Cradle* and the interactive spaces it provides. But here she applies the flexibility found in Maestro’s installation to the body, arguing that “*lability of meaning* means sexual organs might be *invested in* or *migrate to* any region of the body” (83). Psychosexual investment can shift to different sites on the body and is not automatically assigned to the genitals—Moure suggests, as an example, “her right ear” (83). “Funny thing is,” Moure turns, “an organ could also, then, be cathected outside the body—‘proper’ so that the body—‘cognizant’ oversteps the body—‘proper’ at any given time” (83). These different bodies, these shifting investments, these labile meanings: how should we read them? Certainly the body is a conflicted site for Moure, who resists the unified (and typically psychoanalytic) reading of the body. The overlapping spatial scales Moure engages with (body, city, nation, *book*) are dealt with in similarly complex ways. Elements of the body (or city or nation or book) might “be *invested in* or *migrate to* any region of the body” (83).

It is interesting then that just two pages later, Moure invites her readers to “fold here, tear along seam, and remove from book” (85):



The words “fold here, tear along seam, and remove from book”<sup>11</sup> gesture via an arrow that points to the inside margin, where, from the bottom of the page to about halfway up, a dotted line is printed. The words that invite us to fold, tear, and remove appear at the top of this dotted line, forming a horizontal plane—the words themselves are another kind of dotted line, printed deliberately in a very small font to match the cut-line in size. These two lines demarcate a space in the book she dares us to remove, to excise from the bounded space of the book.

When we suggest that Moure “dares” us to remove the page from the book we have used the verb “to dare” deliberately. As Johanna Skibsrud noted

in her 2010 essay on “Border Crossings in Erin Moure’s *O Ciudadán*,” for Moure,<sup>12</sup> “Poetry is a limitless genre. Its borders are only in ourselves and we can move them, in our lifetimes, if we dare to” (18; qtd. in Skibsrud 24). This section of the book could be understood therefore as a dare to the reader: do you dare to fold and tear and remove it?<sup>13</sup> Why or why not? And if you do, how do you think about the book that remains? Is it scarred? Does it become a supplement? After all, the book is now, in at least one sense, more open. It has gained a roaming page, which, though still numbered, can move to different locations in the book or to a different book altogether. It can also disappear completely, be excised from the book as waste, relegated to the trash, or recycled. It is not, however, imperative that we remove the page. Moure playfully gives us the option of leaving the page in the book: the verso of the page invites us to remove the page “[o]r not, MS, or not” (86). How might we read this daring invitation to consider the ways the page could migrate from the book? Certainly our reaction, and our action (if any), reveals several assumptions about our reading practices. It functions as a litmus test measuring our attitudes toward the borders of books and our attitudes toward borders generally.

With *O Ciudadán*, Moure drops us in a field of books. On her acknowledgements page, she notes that *O Ciudadán* represents “a reading practice in a community of others” (141), following this with a substantial list of texts, theoretical and otherwise, that contribute to the dense textuality of her own book and that are in fact “critical to the book’s conception and movement” (141).<sup>14</sup> Moure references these writers and their texts throughout her book, making *O Ciudadán* one book floating on a shelf with others, each book with gauzy, translucent covers to better see from one book to the next. Moure’s book is exploratory, a research project in process, or rather several projects overlapping: theoretical “documents” sit beside love poems, lined poems have diagrams added to them. Skibsrud complicates her discussion of border crossing by drawing our attention the notion of overlay or overlapping in Moure’s work. The illustrative figures in Moure’s text, she argues, and the ways figures and shapes “exist simultaneously” and “overlap” in them are indispensable to Moure’s project because they

not only allow us to perceive literally the ways bodies (here, read ‘bodies’ in both the literal and figurative senses that Mouré intends) ‘touch,’ but also to call into question—by this superimposition of figures ‘under’ and ‘over’ one another—the notion of ‘origin.’ (20)

For Skibsrud, Moure’s focus on overlapping texts and images calls into



question the notion of origin by presenting textual bodies that do not remain solitary, that instead touch and interact, that overlap in complex ways. The proactive reading practice Moure teaches us to adopt might lead us to attempt, when we face *O Ciudadán* as an isolated book object, to give in to this logic of overlapping. Instead of removing one page, we feel as if we could cut *all* the pages from *O Ciudadán*, leaving us with a stack of archival documents—an archive of Erín Moure’s reading practice around the problems of citizenship, an archive we could fold into other books and discourses.

But if we think of Moure’s texts as exemplifying her reading practice, we can recognize that she is marking off (but not rooting down) a discursive field of and for ethical citizens to inhabit (invest in and migrate across). Here spatial production is tied to a relationship with the other. But not just with the other we know directly; also with the other we may not know and yet remain connected to:

As if “being among” is a kind of reading—for not everyone is “now present” *sur place* in this “among,” just as people in a book are not present. In “being with” [relation of amor] the other *is* present. In French this is marked as *autrui* (every other) or as *autre* (the other). (*O Ciudadán* 72)

In “Acts of Citizenship,” Lianne Moyes reads this attention to the *autrui* as a kind of “civilian love,” referring to Moure’s 1992 book *Sheepish Beauty, Civilian Love*.<sup>15</sup> She argues that *O Ciudadán* “explores citizenship as an ethical practice of ‘being among,’ an ethics that allows for the ‘elsewhere’ and irreconcilable difference of ‘others’” and that “[s]uch acts of citizenship—the leap of imagination that is reading or that is ‘being among’—constitute civilian love” (117). If reading is an act of citizenship, its performance must not only take into account those who are already within the discourse, but those who are excluded from it. Moyes’ conception of “civilian love” is tied to the ethical accounting for “those subjects who are without papers, who are stateless” (117).

Ironically then, if we think of citizenship within a practice of reading, we must not only think of including those “without papers,” but perhaps also those “without language” or “without letters” or those excluded from participation in the public sphere outright. O Citizen; O Ciudadán; O reader” (*O Ciudadán* 98). “A public space,” Moure tells us, “is where we are both signs” (*O Ciudadán* 9), making each of us a sign to be read (or not read). We face the other as a page to be read, to be marked up as we circle certain words and erase others. We inscribe the other’s body (the other’s page), but how? Moure connects reading to the idea of a “trait,” a mark created through our own reading of it:

Even *if* reading creates the trait, aren't *both* gestures needed? Isn't the *gestural* crossing of "reading" with "trait" the very armature of trait as marking? The origin of any particular condensation of meaning is thus outside the body of the fold or mark, and outside the body of the reader, at a gestural point or series (temporal) of points that are traversed and that traverse (both active and passive). (*O Ciudadán* 21)

Since "[t]he readings we can give each other, and the world, are the world" (*O Ciudadán* 68), any creation of meaning, of the trait, depends on a gestural exchange between the body of the reader and the "body of the fold/mark," that is, the body of the *read*: "As if reading itself is localization, situation, siting" (*O Ciudadán* 68). A citizen's identity is based on a gestural exchange between participants in a public space.

In her "chapter on reading" (*O Ciudadán* 67) Moure calls into question the ways bodies are read, specifically

[t]he ways women's bodies are read, reified (plunder / essence / demeure).  
"Fighting the dominant codes of intelligibility" (Butler) critical. Fighting that  
fraught foreclosure of sense, by fraying another way through.

Here, reading's relation to the body is intelligibility's demeure. Our bodies  
extend into the book. (*O Ciudadán* 70)

"Here" where "[o]ur bodies / extend into the book" (70) we can challenge fixed readings of women's bodies, fight the dominant codes of intelligibility and see "reading's relation to the body" as "intelligibility's demeure" (70). Moure exemplifies an open, resistant mode of reading bodies, "Fighting that fraught foreclosure of sense, by fraying another way through" (70). In an interview, Deleuze relates a story about a woman in treatment whose experiences are reduced by the analyst. The analyst is struck by a detail—the name René, which he associates with re-né, literally rebirth. "The doctor gets his bearings," Deleuze tells us, "And he gets her to talk about her mother and father" (51). Before the analyst asked the question about René, the woman's narrative was, we are told, already detailed and complex. Deleuze notes that "[u]p to that point, she was speaking about the metro, Hiroshima, Vietnam, of the effect all that had on her body, the need to cry about it" (51). The analyst, in focusing on a single detail, marks the patient's narrative within the narrow confines of the Oedipal triangle. The patient's narrative shifts scales, moving from the body to the city to the nation—her narrative dynamic and panoramic—but the analyst, in limiting the scale to the family, eliminates its richness and possibility, relegating the narrative's "noise" to the trash. The analyst effectively drains the site in an attempt to read a pure truth. Clearly, Moure cautions us about this kind of fascist reading.

In fact, several of the essays collected in *My Beloved Wager* warn against fascist reading practices. In her essay on “Redefining Citizenship by Poetic Means,” cited at the beginning of this paper,<sup>16</sup> Moure reminds us that “Originary thinking—war on evil, eternal Name-your-Country, infinite justice—brings us closer, [she thinks] to fascisms. It removes others from our conception of ourselves, flattens the paradox of the citizen as movement, and the troubled and transgressive relation of this citizen to borders” (167). Moure links the widescreen nationalist “originary thinking” to the scale of the body, suggesting that fascisms can easily exist at both levels—in both the way our nation treats other nations and cultures *and* in the way each of us treats the others we encounter in our everyday lives. In her own poetic movements, Moure complicates these scales, suggesting that we not disavow our complicity on the wider scale and daring us to remain critical and vigilant in our everyday relations. In contrast to the “being with” and “being among” of *autre* and *autrui* respectively, perhaps we could think of this tight drawing of borders as a “being apart,” as a troubled nationalism. Moure evokes one of the central tensions of globalization—the seeming loosening of borders to commerce at the same time borders tighten to bodies:

Rio street children excised by police, por exemplo. And the fundamentally right-wing nationalisms that nourish societal fracture, instead of *accueil*. The two “sides” block any who would convect new forms of confederation, insisting all convectibility “colludes” with hellishness. (*O Ciudadán* 137)

Moure opposes the societal fracture caused by the impermeability of borders to *accueil*, or welcome. This closing of borders because of an originary, nationalist thinking, of rooting the identity of the citizen in a specific place, limits us to a singular narrative opposing all others. This nationalist space is, as Moure suggests, “Where *laccueil* is impossible, for the eyes go blind to the other, thinking they see god” (137).

In an essay on “The Medium,” Moure reminds us, “The medium is not poetry but language itself” (69):

Because language affects the way we perceive.  
Because perception is all we know of reality.  
Because the surface and density of the words  
Affect our seeing, even if we don't believe. (69)

Moure is interested in interrupting “the surface and density of words” so as to “affect our seeing,” to permit us to see across otherwise impermeable borders. In an interview with Dawne McCance, Moure notes that *O Ciudadán*

is “a text about crossing borders, and it finds out that movements into a territory are part of what defines a territory; a border is only a useful edge if it can be crossed” (n. pag.). Further, McCance identifies the citizen as enacted in and by Moure’s text as “not defined by a territory per se, but by how she or he acts in a territory. *O Ciudadán* is a call to action, to acting, to acts that open borders” (n. pag.). Moure explores the inside/outside relation of the border, noting that “[w]hat is placed ‘outside’ gives ‘inside’ purchase. Similarly, inscription bears the ‘not-inscribed’ as its very possibility for speaking” (*O Ciudadán* 112). The demarcation of a kind of border, marking those outside as essentially different from those inside, gives those on either side an identity. Moure is clearly uninterested in the impermeable border—the border built through nationalist or Oedipal narratives—but doesn’t wish to deny the existence or importance of borders “[f]or they mark a disruptive and unruly edge” (112).

For Moure, the disruptive edge of the border is not hermetically sealed, but is closer to the lung, the porous entryway to the body, letting in oxygen and letting out carbon dioxide. Moure is interested in the lung’s porosity and its sheer size, the potential of its exchange surface: “They call the surface of landscape a skin (the hugeness of that organ). But it is a lung. 25 times the surface of the skin, 500 million passageways into the blood” (*O Ciudadán* 65). The lung is a folded boundary, porous, and the source of speech. Moure gives us an unnational map—a “[m]ap of the inside of the lung”—where “[i]f a language does not belong solely to its speakers, but to everyone, the nation as soil makes no more sense” (59). The floating page (or the archival mess of floating pages) mimics this economy of the lung in the ways that knowledge and information can always move between the inside and outside of books, thereby complicating the unitary conception of the book as singular object (and the conception of nation as singular place).

As we have suggested, *O Ciudadán* invites readers to produce our own roaming pages, our own readings across books. But an actual roaming page called “HOW” was published with and inserted into *Expeditions of a Chimæra* (2010), Moure’s collaboration with Oana Avasilichioaei. Single, long lines of text appear on both sides of the page entitled “HOW.” All but the last line begins with the word “How.” The last phrase of the last line is “how to breathe.” Here is a sample:

How to find language in life’s commonplaces and have it mean.  
 How to live in language that opens language to language, opens us to one  
 another, language that humanes us. . . .

How to threshold the threshold. How to live in the crossings of a threshold.  
How to unborder a border. How to unmean, unwar, unnormalize a border.

How to unborder a language's borders. (Avasilichioaei and Moure n. pag.)

How, we ask, might we read "HOW"? The repetition of the word "how" at the beginning of every line suggests, at first glance, that what we have before us is a list of questions. But in the absence of question marks, "HOW" can be read, instead, as a "How to" catalogue or even an index. Another text is referenced directly from the page marked "HOW": a footnote leading to Edmond Jabès that reads, "*J'évoquerai le livre et provoquerai les questions.*" Rosmarie Waldrop translates this line as "I will evoke the book and provoke the questions" (Jabès 31). Jabès' statement can be read as another kind of "how to" and as a key to "HOW." The indexical nature of the piece gestures *elsewhere* in the same way that an index directs the reader to another place in the book. As a kind of index (though one that refuses the specific reference of page numbers), "HOW" literally evokes *a* book (rather than *the* book) and provokes questions in us about where we would find the information we need to read the world.

When Moure and Avasilichioaei enter the line "[h]ow to open hands justly" (n. pag.) into their index, not only are they inviting us to ask the question, "how *do I* open my hands justly?" they are also inviting us to ask, "where is the information that would help me to answer that question?" The floating nature of "HOW" means it could cross any textual border and inhabit any book. Because it floats, the answers to the questions provoked could be anywhere. Looking for and perhaps even finding them is what Moure's texts, which ask us to keep reading, invite us to do. Perhaps the question that needs to be answered, therefore, is not whether we *should* make political claims for poetry like Moure's that addresses the meanings form makes, but rather *how* we as readers should stake out our claims. Should we take a book like *O Ciudadán* that is rich and multiple, unwilling to root itself in a single discourse or poetic, and pin it down to a simple political gesture? Perhaps we should. But by doing so we play out the script of Deleuze's analyst, looking only for the moments in Moure's text that prove one singular point. The failure of much politically motivated writing is the way it risks reductive polemic in attempting to get a point across (capitalism is bad, don't eat meat, etc.). And we could say the same about most politically motivated reading. Moure's recent work is politically valuable precisely because it resists simple political readings. In the process, it invites us to think about how we,

as readers, draw our political lines across the space of bodies and rooms and cities and nations, choosing where to make or dissolve borders and how to include others in the negotiation of that space.

#### NOTES

- 1 Particularly “The Public Relation: Redefining Citizenship by Poetic Means” (163-72).
- 2 These two pieces, published under two different spellings of Moure’s name, are “These Notes on Lani Maestro’s Cradle [sic],” which appeared in *dANDelion* as by Erin Moure, 2002, and “Three Notes on Lani Maestro’s *Cradle*,” which appeared in Moure’s collected essays *My Beloved Wager* as by Erin Moure, 2009.
- 3 *Expeditions of a Chimæra* offers another example of Moure’s open, generative, and collaborative relationship to authorship. Not only was it written in collaboration with Avasilichioaei, it was written with “interferences” from yet another of Moure’s identities, her heteronym Elisa Sampedrín, who first appeared in a piece called “Eight Little Theatres of the Cornices, by Elisa Sampedrín” (Erin Moure, *Little Theatres* 27-34).
- 4 We are indebted to Angela Carr and Tente, her “collapsible, feminist poetry and poetics press” (mclennan n. pag.), for reminding us to think about tents as temporary and yet inhabitable structures.
- 5 Note the retention of the earlier version of Moure’s name in Johanna Skibsrud’s 2010 essay “If We Dare To: Border Crossings in Erin Mouré’s *O Ciudadán*.”
- 6 That these books don’t “belong” to a particular named version of herself is underlined by the fact that *O Ciudadán* offers a list of books “Also by Erin Moure / Eirin Moure” (n.pag.)
- 7 In “A Note on Fernando Pessoa Heteronyms,” Moure tells us that heteronyms are “complete poetic personalities/characters with different bodies of work, biographies, horoscopes, educations, professions, and aesthetics” (Eirin Moure, *Sheep’s Vigil* 131).
- 8 Moure has translated the work of Nicole Brossard, Chus Pato, Fernando Pessoa, and Andrés Ajens from, respectively, French, Galician, Portuguese, and Spanish into English.
- 9 This piece was published under the name “Erin Moure” (i.e., without any accents anywhere); this may or may not have been an accident.
- 10 In an endnote to the so-called essay version of the piece, Moure explains that her “Three Notes” were made in response to a 2000 exhibition of *Cradle* at the Galerie Université du Québec à Montréal (*My Beloved Wager* 317).
- 11 This instruction appears on the verso of the page as well, reading “fold here, tear at the seam, and remove from the book” (86).
- 12 As we noted earlier, Skibsrud uses the pre-*O Ciudadán* spelling of Moure’s name.
- 13 For the record, one of us removed the page; the other didn’t. Interpret this however you wish.
- 14 This dense textuality includes references to texts by theorists (Judith Butler, Hélène Cixous, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Luc Nancy), writers (Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Federico García Lorca, Clarice Lispector, Cormac McCarthy) and, again in *O Ciudadán*, Lani Maestro.
- 15 A section of this book is also entitled “Civilian Love” (*Sheepish Beauty* 39-73).
- 16 Significantly, this essay was originally published in a book on *Global Neo-Imperialism and National Resistance* (2004).

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