

RULFO

By Ana Catarina Milhazes

I am a dog.
Dogs don't speak.
But they think.
This is what I think.
Let's begin
This reasoning, Rulfo.

Dogs speak
But only inside.
I am a dog,
Therefore I talk
(But only inside).
All dogs know it.
Canine philosophy.
Redundancy, thus.
No, no. Calm.

Rulfo, you are doing well.
Bit by bit.
Sentence by sentence
(That's why dogs
Think in rhymes).
Start from the beginning.

I have thought about ordering thought.
A dog has several memories
Untidy.
You have to order them.
I want to take direction
To the underground.

Humans now say
“The little animal
Is old”
(This *‘little’* is the sound of tenderness
Because I’m *old*,
A septuagenarian,
In dog age,
And I am an *animal*, i.e.
large-sized).

Seven decades of life
(One only in human age)
Is a whole History
With a capital H.
I’m relying on this life only.
Having more is a cat thing.
(I do not know what memory
Cats have, but their thoughts
Must be few, as they lack space
And means to store them.
Also within these parentheses:
Just as my humans
Are “dog people”
I am a “people dog”;
Cats are not our fauna
And that’s that).

I am a Portuguese dog.
I think in Portuguese.
So, in what
The Portuguese
Call “bow-wow”.
I am not sure

That they know much
About what we think
And how we think.
But they certainly know
That we think in a different language
According to our geography.
English dog: woof-woof.
French dog: ouaf-ouaf.
Spanish dog: guau-guau.
Italian dog: bau-bau.
Anyway, I am not a polyglot,
I do not know what languages
Siberian or Afghan Hounds speak.

The point is that the world
Is changing and I need
To put a sense in all this.
As I said,
I don't have seven lives and
I need to take some discernment
With me under the ground
(Earth feeds off good ideas).
Not much is asked
Of us, sheepdogs:
Only that we look after the cattle
And reflect
While we are given shade
By the cork oaks in the landscape.

There is not much cattle to guide anymore:
Sheep and cows
Live in factories
Madhouse cells, says Leo,
Hence mad cows and other delinquencies,

Says Leo (Leo doesn't eat meat),
And black pigs, there are
But it's not worth giving them orders
They are buddies and they know it.
What's left to me is to lick my paws,
Scratch my ears
And think.
And Leo.
It was because of her
This idea of straight thinking
Because, she explains to me,
It is not only that I'm going underground
The most serious case (I lowered my eyes)
Is that the world will end!
I thought she had said that to me
To reassure me
(I know! But Leo thinks weirdly!)
Because I'm going underground
And poor little Rufinho
Is so old
This pet of mine.
But no, that's not all.
She really thinks
That the world
Is ending.
It's not just me.
We do not know
If someone will stay.
This is the thing:
Leo sees farther.
And because of that
She will now sit
At the Parliament's door.
Then she'll come back and tell me everything.

Leo always tells me everything.

Leo was little

When I was little

I was younger than she

When we meet.

I had just been born

She was four.

Now I'm older than her.

Much older.

I'm old.

She's ... very young.

The catch of canine age.

Leo is a teenager

But very intelligent.

Surely more intelligent

Than the young dogs I know.

Maybe more intelligent than me.

She still teaches me many things.

Her tricks are still indecipherable.

(That thing with the cookie

Under three glasses...

How does she do it so fast?

My nose does not follow

The reasoning of her hands.)

Neither I nor Leo

Believe anymore

That she is a lion.

She isn't. That was the reason

Of Leonor » Leo

Because once a lion.

But she has a blonde mane

And is fierce. There is something

Of a lioness in there.

Leo is fiercely
Furious with what's going on *here*.
I think that *here* is *here*
At home
In the pasture
In the farm
In the land around
In the country
In Europe
In the world
In the planet
In the universe.
Leo often speaks
Of the planet and the universe.
I do not understand how she can
See so far.
But anyway, she is
1m 10cm taller than me.

What interests me?
Is to make sense
Of Leo's words.
Leo is cute.
(She says I'm cute.
And loyal.
But she's the one who is.)
And very intelligent.
She has many important things
To tell the world, i.e. the planet,
i.e. Parliament
Because the planet now
Lives within Parliament.
That's what she thinks.

Leo skips class
Because there are people out there
In need of a great lesson.
(Leo is fiercely furious).
I'm gathering all the crumbs
Of Leo's thought.
Crumbs because I'm
Here crumbling this
And because she throws
These pieces at my head
Like when she stretches her arm
Under the table
To give me her
Piece of roast beef
Because
Rulfo is a carnivore
But I'm not.
(I smile with her
Wise wisdom.)
Crumbs are not, therefore,
Small reflections.
No.
Leo's thoughts
Are deep and remote
Like fracking,
But they do the planet good.
(Parentheses: Leo explained to me
What fracking is?
And I realised what fracking is
But I cannot explain fracking).

Leo does not need
Anyone to take care of her.
It's the planet that needs

Someone to take care of it.
It's what she's doing.
This is a defining moment
It is *to think or to swim*
As in a poster
On the wall of her room.
Thinking while there is time
Because then
Where there is ice
There will be none;
Instead of docking
We will be floating.
The world will be
A large high sea
With no low tide.
In some areas.
Because others
Will be the opposite.
Like here,
Where my *puppies*
Will not have a future.
That's what Leo says.
Although I, to my knowledge,
I am nobody's father.
But Leo is
Fiercely furious
And sees far,
So she can know
Of things that I don't know.
Leo says *puppies*.
She says things in English,
Some of which I end up understanding.
I cannot speak woof-woof
But she can speak English.

Leo is very intelligent.

Leo thinks that
Speaking one language only
Is sad.
And I understand.
For example, the best dish
That human's cook
Is Portuguese stew?
Which is made of different meats?
Leo certainly
Disapproves of this image.
But explains it in another way,
Speaking of the monocultures
That is destroying the land around
The interior
The country
Europe
The planet
The universe.
Shoo monocultures.
Shoo pesticides.

I do not know if I am able
Of ordering all these crumbs.
So much time looking at these clouds,
Billowing, that reminds me
Of Leo's mane,
So much free time
Without grazing animals that are gone;
I don't know if it's this warmth
That puts my head in water.
Maybe I cannot repeat
Everything that Leo explained.

The case is so serious that,
As Leo tells me,
The climate crisis is worse
Than the black magic of Voldemort.
Thus, serious. Very serious.

Anyway,
There are already some ideas
That I will take with me
To the underground.
(The land feeds off good ideas).

1) Some humans
Really like us.
Earth, save these,
Which are the best -?
They can be eaten
After the season and
They will still be good.

2) The house is a place
That begins under
The shade of the cork oaks
And ends in the dark
Around the stars of the universe.

3) Other animals are buddies
And we all like
More or less the same:
Cookies, patting
And some fresh grass
For napping.

4) Closed cells harm

Animals' heads
Even humans',
Whose disease has progressed
Like the borders,
Walls and fences
That they build.
Forecast: fresh grass
Will do well to humans.

I'll take these ideas with me.
The land here is so dry
That it will be necessary to dig deep.
I will continue to think
And lick my paws.
I am one of the last shepherds here
(Not counting Leo).