

YOUR IMPOSSIBLE VOICE

ISSUES ESSAYS INTERVIEWS REVIEWS READINGS SUBMIT

Sea

By [João Anzanello Carrascoza](#)

Translated by [Ilze Duarte](#)

violent, the water crashes, and the white foam advances toward the sand and, eyes stung by the salt, his lips part and he laughs, my boy, and soon another wave builds up, grows and gets ready and *catch this one, Dad*, and we go, side by side, the liquid impact on our bodies, and he laughs again, on his small yellow board, my boy, and the sun sprawls through the spaces, an airplane pierces the sky with the banner *Protect your skin with Sundown* behind it, and the two of us, lined up, once more, the voluminous wave, he gets in step and catches it on the ascent, and glides on it, aerial fish in revolution, and there he goes, carried away, my boy, and I turn to the beach and see him, laughing, his face like the bow of a sailboat, and over his shoulders the colorful umbrellas, the children with their buoys and their toys, people ambling from one end to the other, and the vendors dragging their carts across the sand, *Ice-cold yerba mate! Cashew nuts, sir? Corn on the corn, corn on the cob*, behind me the open sea, from where the waves are released, *Dad, Dad*, and a big one comes and jolts me, I in a whirl, and he is amused by my carelessness, the incessant waters, waves turning into waves, the murmur of the ocean, the murmur, and the two of us, the two of us, bathed by the same instant (an imperceptible joy), the water, violent, a jet ski tearing the blue surface before us, splat, the white foam moves forward, slaps the sand, eyes stung by the salt, his lips part and he laughs, and I, *close your mouth so you won't take in water*, my boy, and that back-and-forth and forth-and-back, the ebb of minutes we do not notice are passing forever, the minutes so full and so soon dispelled like the foam, and after a pause, *awesome, it was awesome*, the breeze soothes the fever of our bronzed skin, and the commentary in the shade, I and he in the aluminum chairs, the stickiness of the ice cream, *I want a chocolate ice cream bar, Dad*, his hair running across my eyes thirsty to see him smile, and along comes a woman selling fried shrimp on a stick, *No, thank you*, and soon the old man with a trash bag, *May I take the empty cans?*, the warm taste of summer, minimal rest, because he, *let's go, Dad, let's go*, tireless, as if discovering his element, the sea, the sea, the sea that calls, the mugginess burning us silently, slices of me in him, and again, and once more, and another wave, *that one's good, Dad*, and there he goes, the water passes like a heavy bird over our heads, *ah, I couldn't, it broke before I could get there*, and something catches my eye, a young woman dives in and emerges through the foam, Venus born before me, *too bad*, she doesn't fit my moment, the sea, the murmur of the surf, the sounds that break out from the shore, and I see him, he is coming back, positioning himself for the maneuver, clumsy, my boy, in the trepidation of the first lessons, so much sea still ahead, and there, in the shallow water, a couple plays frescobol, the sound of the ball on one racket, tock, on the other, tock, *Come on*, tock, tock, and then the ball dropping in the fluffy silence of the sand, and another airplane, *Skol, the beer that goes down smooth*, and

again the wall of water that builds up and, violent, crashes on us, and I look for him among the other bathers, nowhere to be seen, nowhere, and then I refocus in the same direction and, there, suddenly, his face beams, and I recognize myself in him, in the water where he is a part of me, and the moment compels me to smile, maybe this way he will notice—and years later will understand—that happiness is only happiness in that it is finite, I hear the lifeguard's whistle, and that to enjoy it is to be together, even amidst the muddled voices, in our deaf secrets, the undertow, we didn't even notice, it pushed us several yards ahead, over there the **Danger** sign, and I warn him, *That way, Son, that way*, and we move, slow, we move, the weight of the water halting our thighs, and soon we're as light as before, the vigilance dissipates, and he is having fun, and with renewed resolve, he catches the wave a bit too late for the drop, and, gloogloogloogloo, wipes out, *hahahaha*, he running to retrieve his board, and I repeat, *close your mouth so you won't take in water*, and my eyes sting because of the salt, and I see over there another father-and-son, just like us, the two getting wet of each other, this one of that one, that one of this one, different waters from the same sea, the sea, its blue in the blue that is lacking in us, the salt, Dad, where does it come from? *the salt, Son, is made of the sea and makes the sea what it is*, the sea, the substances in the in-and-out of bodies, and I know there is sweet in it coming from me, as there is bitter, and, thus,

we leap into the light of many other summers ahead, the molting of dreams, and everything and nothing changed, and he silent, the sand falls down the hourglass, grain by grain, making what is great, flowing into the quiet, and the twists and turns, the welcomed ones and the resented ones, the cliffs, the unexpected rain showers, the nights of flowing and the days of ebbing, and I, unawares, some gray hair already, in the splash of years renewed, *Wow, how big he's got!*, my boy, such long arms, the earring on his ear, the tattoo on his leg, his surf board long, black, the board of a pro, God, how much we learn and how much we don't even notice while life, life, only a few stretches covered, from one beach to the next, from the hairless face, the water, the white foam, to the shadow on his face, the hairs that poke through the skin, the sun solidifying the day that dawns, the sun that dries the placenta, and yes, suddenly I see the man, he bigger than I, and so many things have we gone through together, to be at hand, things that stuck to our skins like birth marks, the signs of what we are, like the leaf on a palm tree is the palm tree in leaf form, this nose just like that nose, the hands so alike, the voice, *Father*, vigorous, an echo escapes from my lips, *Son*, the molecules blend together, memories fluctuate, one on top of another, a tube, a drop, he lying on his stomach, the comfort of hearing the sounds he made in his room, as if I didn't need him or he me, both of us pretending the sea has no end, and the world is reborn every morning, the world, awake, vast, with its buried treasures and unreachable islands, and between the two of us, between two people, between all of us, always a sea to cross, and in the excitement of it, Pedro, Paulo, Tiago, his friends, *we're going down to the beach, Dad*, and I, *when will you be back?*, the car engine on, the boards on the car top, *Sunday!*, the whistle, like the other times, so young, the sea is theirs now, time to enjoy its waves, to savor unwittingly the taste of the elemental water, to discover the capes, the bays, the promontories, the sand banks, the submerged continents, time to ignore the lighthouses, the signals of the surf, the smell of the breeze, we are what we are, *catch that one, Dad*, the children with their buckets, **from dust we came and to dust we return, life was born of the primeval sea**, the sea belongs to them more than to me, sail away, sail away, because all that is left for me is to float, I already know, the suspicions, I each day farther away into the sea, I know when the undertow pulls even before I get wet, the **Danger** sign, the wave that gets nearer, the strength that drains away, what comes further ahead, I know, the suspicions, the ultimate wave, the mystery that awaits me, the natural anchoring, and the hours come, and the wait doesn't matter, the sand comes, the ringtone of the cell phone, *hello*, the news, and I can imagine how it all happened, the water, violent, the water crashes, violent, the water crashes, and the white foam advances, gloogloogloogloo, my eyes stinging with salt, *close your mouth so you won't take in water*, and silence now hovers over me, and I see his lips closed, my boy, forever, there in the sea, in the sea, in the depths of me, and another wave and another wave, the salt stinging my eyes, the salt, the salt

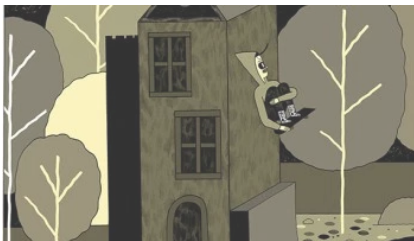
João Anzanello Carrascoza is an award-winning writer and professor at the University of São Paulo's School of Communication and Arts. He is the author of the novels *Notebook of a Missing Person* and *At 7 and At 40*, and the short-story collections *The Volume of Silence*, *Thorns and Pins*, and *Small Loves*. His work has been translated into Croatian, French, Italian, Spanish, and Swedish. English translations of his short stories have appeared in *Words Without Borders* and *Granta*.

Ilze Duarte translates works by contemporary Brazilian authors and writes short stories of her own. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Milpitas, California. "Sea" is her first published literary translation.

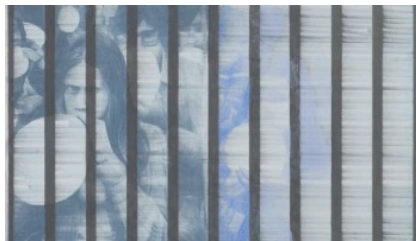
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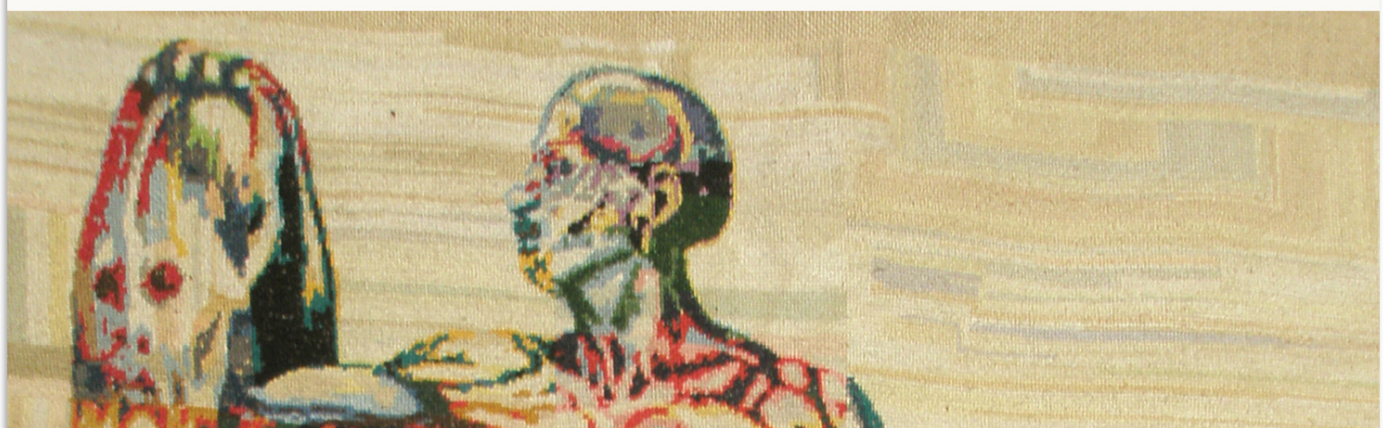
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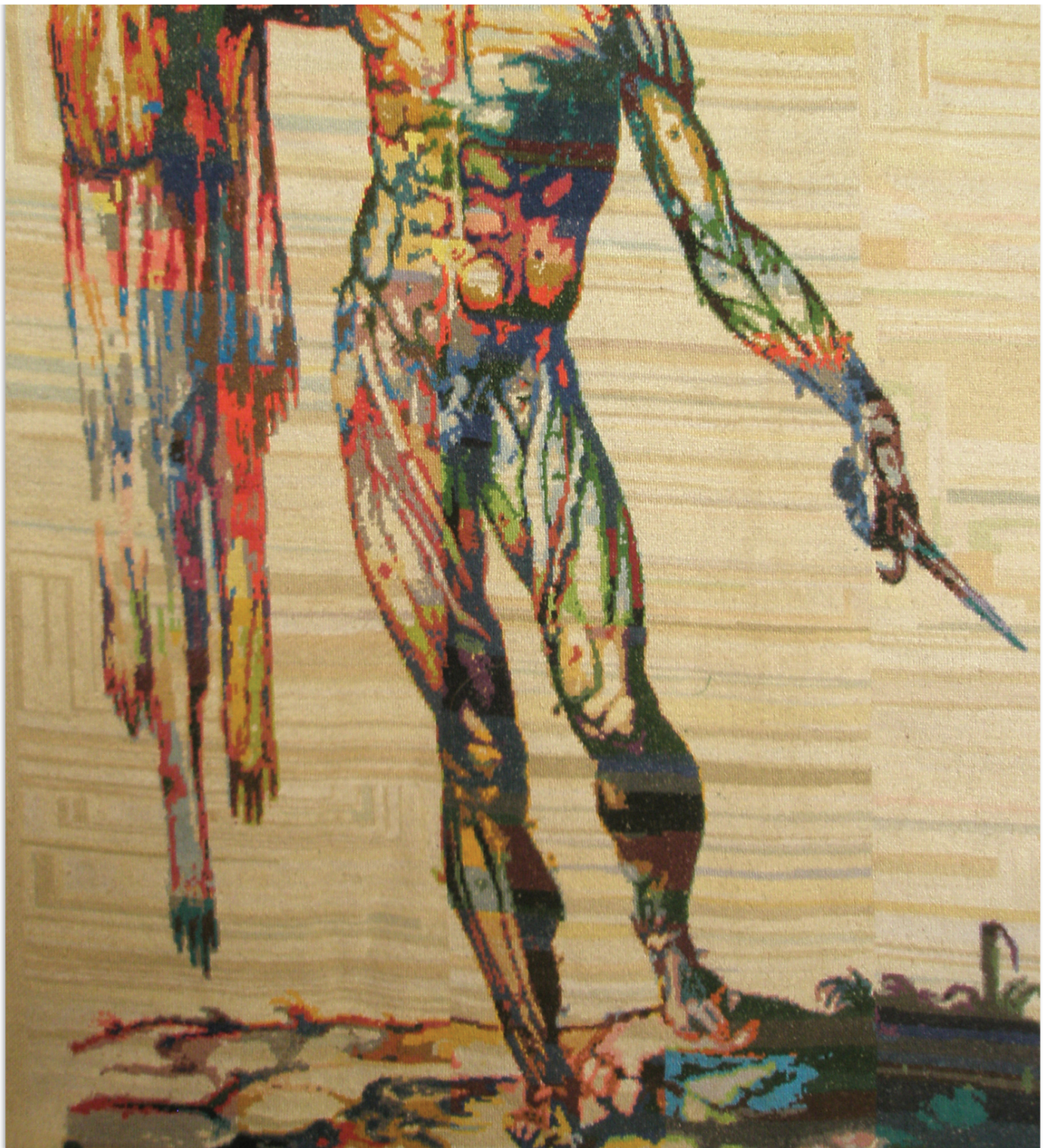


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