

FROM PRINTED TO DIGITAL MEDIA: THE POETRY OF ANA MARIA URIBE

Jorge Luiz ANTONIO

Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem (IEL), Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP),
Campinas, Brazil

Abstract: *This article presents some aspects of the trajectory of Ana Maria Uribe (1944-2004)'s poetic works in the printed and digital media, indicating that the use of digital media meant an enrichment for her poetic communication.*

Keywords: *Ana Maria Uribe, Tipoemas y Anipoemas, El circo: El grand desfile, Escaleras y otros Anipoemas.*

1. OPENING WORDS

How is the reading of digital poetry? How to choose a poet or some poetry in order to present an overview of this kind of poetic creation, which brings artistic and technological aspects, in addition to poetic aspects?

We still have a few printed books on the subject in Brazil and in other countries there are many electronic publications such as articles, chapters and some books, but the approaches are quite varied and cover many poets, a lot of digital poems and, in several cases, the material that is found in floppy, CD, CD-ROM, DVD, sometimes difficult to access or to operate, especially when it is designed to a Macintosh and not to a PC.

Among the many existent possibilities of reading, this article was an option to study a course of a poet who passed through the printed and digital media, who knew how to exploit them properly and to produce a significant work.

The first version of this text, whose title was "Os (de)graus da poesia: do impresso ao digital [*The degree of poetry: from printed to digital media*]" (Antonio, 2005/2006), was written while Ana Maria Uribe (1944-2004) was alive, soon after an interview given to the

author of this reading (Uribe, 2003). She read this article in its original form, she liked the focus, and began translating it into Spanish and English, but unfortunately, she did not finish her project.

Some time later, "Ana Maria e a dança das palavras [*Ana Maria and the words' dancing*]" was published (Antonio, 2004), shortly before her death, which occurred on March, 5. There were several international honors, some of them headed by Jim Andrews, other ones by people related to *Rhizome*. In 2005, the Mostra Internacional de Poesia Visual e Eletrônica (Mostra Internacional, 2005) [*International Exhibition of Visual and Electronic Poetry*] paid her a tribute. This article has also become a tribute to the memory of the Argentine poet Ana Maria Uribe (1944-2004).

2. INTRODUCTION

A work in three media - two handmade books, two editions of CD-ROM and a website - which began in 1968 as a printed visual poetry that became animated visual poetry in digital network and on CD-ROM from 1997.

The author, Ana Maria Uribe, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1944. In the late 1960s, she created the *Typoems*, written with the typewriter Lettera 22 and Pica type. In

1997, she created the *Anipoems*, which were hosted on the Internet. She was a member of the international e-group *Webartery*¹ and participated in a number of national and international exhibitions, both real and virtual. To better understand the ideas and work of the author, the (e-)reader can enjoy the interviews, in English, given to Megan Sapna (Uribe, 2002), and/or to the author of this article in Spanish, English and Portuguese (Uribe, 2003).

In a very friendly language, the Canadian poet Jim Andrews, at that time coordinator of *Webartery*, then announced the beginning of the participation of Ana Maria in this *e-group*.

Does anyone know this website?

http://orbita_starmedia.com/~amuribe/typoems.html

Anipoems of Ana Maria Uribe

A number of works of visual poetry, varied and animated. It is in English and Spanish. I am surprised by not having accessed this work before², and it is online since 97.

This is one of the pleasant surprises from the web, isn't it? There are always more artists around creating interesting works than you know³.

In other occasion, Jim Andrews said:

I received an Ana Maria's CD some time ago. It is like her website, but it is a full screen. The full screen is very well-used, in such way that the author catches our fully attention. In addition, the poems are very humorous and filled with a sense of the possibility of hand gestures. The gestures we make ourselves as humans, gestures of mutual understanding and acceptance, when we are in our best moments. Moreover, she has an amazing sense of the carnivalesque, and the poem on the screen as a performance (Andrews, 2002).

¹ The Webartery egroup was funded in 1995, groups about 200 artists and poets from several countries and was coordinated by Jim Andrews (Canada): <webartery@yahoo.com and <http://www.webartery.com/>.

² The surprise of Jim Andrews is real, since he is a great expert in art and digital poetry from several countries and browse a lot on the web.

³ Translation and publication authorized by the sender of the email.

The delicacy of the small fonts and the sobriety of colors make the work enjoyable in several different ways: the book brings the charm of printed visual poetry, suggesting incursions into other media and languages; the access to the CD-ROM, in the two editions, is easy and pleasant; and the network browsing brings the same setting that invites to the reading.

3. THE BOOKS

URIBE, Ana Maria. *Tipoemas y Anipoemas / Typoems and Anipoems: 1968-2001. Buenos Aires, Argentina: author's handmade edition, 2001.* The cover has a white background, the typefaces are black and containing a set of words in various colors, with a title that arouses our curiosity: typoems (typographical poems?) and anipoems (animated poems?) At the bottom of the book cover, there is a frame of the work *The Circus*, which is not included in printed work.

The notes at the foot of each page are a kind of journal of the poems, always with a reference to the passage from the printed to the digital media. "En 1998 se convirtió em Anipoema./ In 1998, this became an Anipoem" (p. 7)⁴.

Ana María Uribe
Tipoemas y Anipoemas

1968-2001



The entire work is a sort of path that represents the three fundamental traits of the

⁴ Information about the poem "Burbujas".

poetry of Ana Maria Uribe: words to be viewed animated and voiced, which were printed and migrated to the digital medium, giving the idea that the web and hypermedia were the natural paths for her poetic expression. The animation is not just using the resources of a program like Flash, but it is the materialization of the gestures that letters and words produce, with the aim of producing meaning in addition to the aesthetic aspect of the use of white space, the transformation of letters and words in people and objects. The use of human voices sounds and noises complement this significance that shows the presence of the poet in her world.

The black background of the site and CD-ROM is replaced by the white pages of the book that the author printed, sewed and glued by hand in order to be distributed to friends. In a bilingual edition (Spanish/English), the book gathers poems from 1968 to 1969 (Tipoemas/ Typoems) and 1997-2001 (Anipoemas/ Anipoems), 27 poems in 50 pages.

The printed version of *Tipoemas y Anipoemas* presents the matrix Ana Maria's poetic creation: A word that points to the sound and to the visual, especially by the graphic-spatial use of the paper.

A concise language of few words, but great semantic density, this work covers various aspects of the society, in a language predominantly playful, sometimes comical, gentle, which leads to surprise, reflection and empathy.

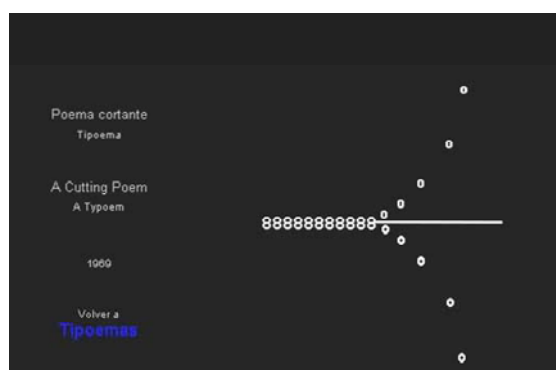
They are poems apparently simple, but of great significance, which produces surprise, delight, which provoke a smile, which seduce, intrigue, offer what is lucid, catch us by the simplicity, delight us by the lightness. They are aspects of the reality summarized in some words like: Bubbles, A View from a Train, Gimnasia, Se largó, A Train in Motion, Autumn, From Parmenides to J.-P. Sartre, Bowling, Guggenheim Museum, Red Dry Leaves, among others. Each word contains a theme that can be understood as a word-theme or word-world.

The poems are more than just printed words: in "Hojas Rojas Secas [*Dry Red Leaves*]" (p. 16), for instance, the colors (maroon, red, yellow and brown) and graphic-

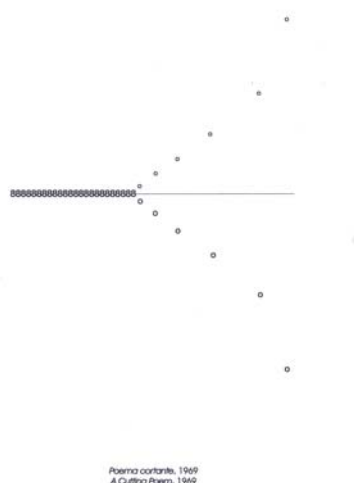
spatial distribution of words indicate the passage of time and leaves' movement.



Hojas Rojas Secas, 1968
Dry Red Leaves, 1968
Este poema fue escrito inicialmente con una Letra 22 con el tipo Pica y más tarde estampado con sellos de goma como diche en color. Finalmente se transformó en un poema animado. This was first typed with a Letra 22 in the Pica font and later stamped with rubber blocks as a color poster. In 1997 it evolved into a Web animated poem.

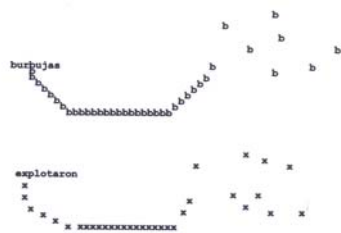


"Poema cortante / A Cutting Poem" represents the limit of the media and the fusion of languages, aspect that characterizes the work of Ana Maria: A set of letters "o" forms the handle of a blade (knife? dagger? sword?) formed by a long dash, while from both sides of the hand of the blade the letter "o" is formed. Is it an "o" (= oh!) of admiration because of the discovery of languages fusion?



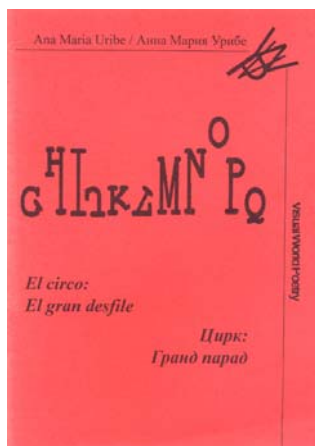
Poema cortante, 1969
A Cutting Poem, 1969

“Burbujas/Bubbles” embodies the meaning of the words (Burbujas explotaron), so that through the spatialization on paper emerge word-images. In the mind of the reader, it is implicit the sound and motion, enabling a view that is completed with the sense that the reader will create based on a set of signs with plurisignification.



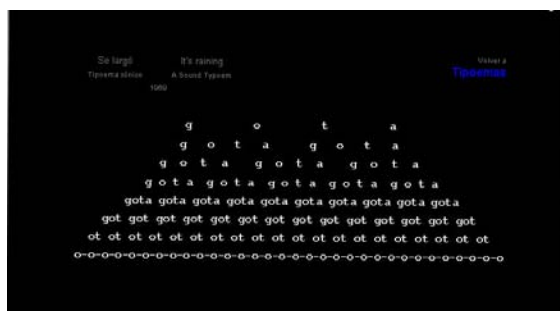
Burbujas, 1968
Bubbles, 1968
En 1998 se convirtió en Anipoema.
In 1998, this became an Anipoem.

URIBE, Ana Maria. *El circo: El grand desfile*. St. Petersburg, Russia: limited edition from Eter Panji, [2003]. “Visual World Poetry” collection.



Black letters on red background on the cover, Roman characters that mingle with the Cyrillic characters from Russia, one of several unnumbered volumes of the “Visual World Poetry” collection, edited by Ether Panji, limited publication of 50-60 copies, which runs the country as an alternative work of the authors such Clemente Padin (Uruguay), E. M. de Melo e Castro (Portugal), Friderich Achlietner (Germany), Heinz Gappmayr (Austria), John M. Bennett (USA), Klaus Peter

Dencker (Germany), Lawrence Upton (England), Thiago Rodrigues (Brazil), among others.

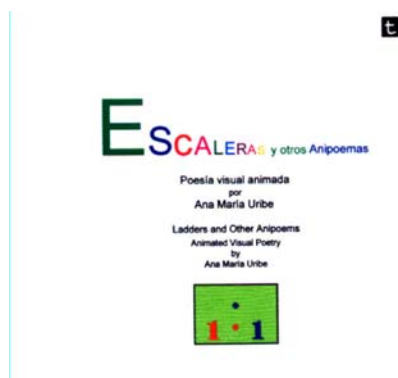


Ana Maria chose sixteen poems from *The Circus: The Grand Parade* to present her visual poetry, now in printed medium. As in her Argentine book, here the cyber/reader observes verbal structures distributed on the white space of the sheet of paper and determine meanings through his/her view. Often neither the title nor the lyrics give us clear meanings: they are built from our entry into the Uribe’s world of letters.

It is obvious in this case that the visual poetry exists and, in some ways, is independent from the animated poetry existing at the website of Ana Maria Uribe.

4. THE CD-ROM

Ana Maria Uribe. *Escaleras y otros Anipoemas: poesia visual animada / Ladders and other anipoems: animated visual poetry*. (Buenos Aires, Argentina, author’s edition, 2001) 1 CD-ROM. Windows 95/98/ME/XP.



This CD is characterized by an economy of color and words, a moderate use of Macromedia Flash. The resources of hypermedia are the means of expression, a way of communicating the art of the word, not an effect in itself.

Works reread, retaken, and selected by the author herself. A reflection on her own poetry: what is left and still worthy, since 1968? An anthology of her own work. The reader-browser, even knowing this, can just enjoy the poems and not pay attention to this aspect.

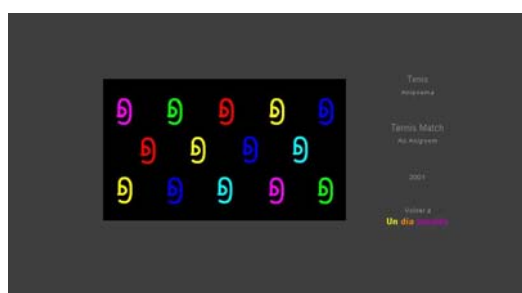
This CD-ROM gathers works of Typoems (1968-1969), Anipoems (1997-1999), Anipoemas y un tipoema tardío (2000-2001), The Circus (2000-2001), totalizing 61 poems.

What is different in the almost the same work on CD-ROM? What elements can the hypermedia add to the visual poem that already exists? Let's use as an example "Burbujas/Bubbles": on the printed book, the letters indicate that there is/was/will be movement, while on the CD-ROM the movement is materialized and is emphasized by the sounds of bubbles popping, which the reader has to imagine while reading the visual poetry.

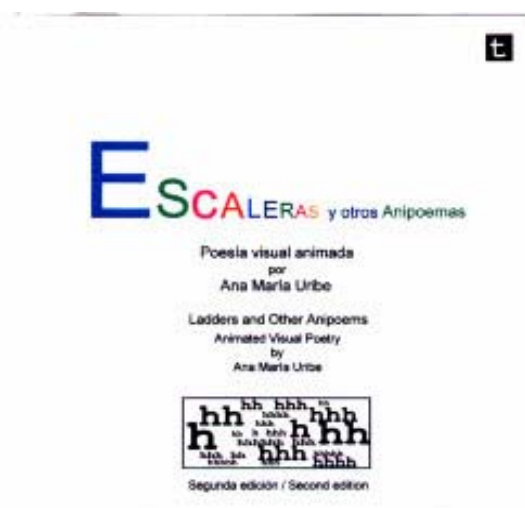
Instead of turning pages, the reader-operator clicks on links that indicate ways in the cyberspace of the hypermedia page.

The same spaces are reread and become different. It was a meta-linguistic exercise for the author and may be something similar to the reader who has the CD-ROM, website and book. For those who use the CD-ROM or web, the experience is unique, and we can say that the work will please even without the proportional comparison provided by different media.

The advantages and disadvantages of using the CD-ROM and website remain: the first is a "book" that we keep on our bookshelf and can be "reread" at any time while the website depends on the possibility of access, but provides us a work that is constantly updated, but that is so volatile that can "disappear" (if the server stop providing access, and we are not able to reread it, unless we record it in our PC or Mac).



URIBE, Ana Maria. *Escaleras y otros anipoemas: poesía visual animada / Ladders and other anipoems: animated visual poetry*. 2.ed. Buenos Aires, Argentina: author's edition, 2002. 1 CD-ROM. Windows 95/98/ME.



The second edition consists of the following works: Typoems (1968-1969), Anipoems (1997-1999), Some Anipoems and a Late Typoem (2000-2001), The Circus (2000-2002), A Busy Day (2001-2002), totalizing 69 poems. New poems are added to *The Circus: anipoema por entregas / An Anipoem by installments*, and the author presents *A Busy Day*.

The translation into Portuguese of *The Circus: An Anipoem by Installments* (O Circo: um poema em episódios) where is presented once again the synthesis ability of the author, because life in episodes, for her, is a structure of some words, sounds and movements in the printed, digital and multimediatic media. These few words, structures, and several associations of ideas and meanings are shown to the reader-operator through the titles of the poems: The Grand Parade, Skirmish, Malbaristas, Trapeze, Balance, Balance2, Trapecio, Los animales, Los payasos, Los zancos.

5. THE WEBSITE

URIBE, Ana Maria. *Tipoemas y Anipoemas*. Buenos Aires, Argentina: author's, 1997-2003. Translation: Markko

Niemi (Finnish) and Adrian Lesenciuc (Romanian). Available at:

<<http://amuribe.tripod.com>> and also at:
<<http://www.vispo.com/uribe/index.html>>



The work was translated into English by the author. In 2004, Markko Niemi translated into Finnish the whole website, and Adrian Lesenciuc translated the *Typoems* into Romanian.

A *homepage* divided into five lexical units: Title (Typoems and Anipoems), followed by the name of the author, the indications of a bilingual work (English and Spanish), plus the publication date and copyright. In a quick reading, the reader-browser gets to know the entire content of the website accessed. The other link presents the poem and provides the path forward or backward to another poem, new or not.

The *homepage* is almost a page of a book cover, a lean “cover” with black background and text in white and lilac-gray, almost because there are animations and sounds that do not “belong” to the printed book.

The ticking noise of the clock marks the reading time. It is a loud and repeated noise that invites the visitor to continue their path, not to stop, to read more and more. The title and the details of the English versions scramble and make then legible, which draws the attention of the cyber-reader.



The graphic design of the typography used and the colors present letters (N, P, H) in colors (light blue, dark blue, lilac, green, red)

that indicate joy and humor in the printed media. The sound and movement of them offer the circus.

A website of easy navigation: The links takes us very quickly to the pages that we want through icons; The hypertext is developed this way, in the sequence of readings that our interest delineates. Accessing the parts of the website seems to be the concern of the author: the paths are clear, easy and enjoyable. There are no large files that take too much time to be loaded/accessed. The same simplicity is expressed in concise words and effects and is repeated in the preparation of the website, which reveals softness, sweetness and an invitation: the electronic reader wants to see more. The few clicks recommended by Jakob Nielsen (2000) to get the information in a commercial website seem to fit the kind of poetic communication that the author intends to achieve.

Sounds, noises and voices accompany all spatialized words moving. It is curious that the repetition of sounds at the end of each animation leads us to seek other paths, somehow motivates us to see the whole website, and also invites us to follow the dynamic pace, but not hit, of the animations. And the click-read (which is not like turning the pages of the book) is an adventure of spatialized words, sounds and images filled with many cultural references.

6. THEMATIC GROUP

A thematic group runs through the *Typoems* and *Anipoems*: a course by the aspects of life through words-titles and words-images, since the visual, sound and animation produce another syntax (it would be the digital or hypermedia syntax, the result of interacting links and languages?). Thus, we have the nature (Waterfall, Autumn, Winter, Spring, etc.), the city, the circus, the discipline, the tennis, the orchestra rehearsal, the train in motion, the busy day, episodes seemingly fragmented of our daily hlife. The look of the author creates a kind of journal by keywords.

The shift from printed to electronic media was not only an update of media, but also a need for poetic expression and

communication. Uribe would certainly write object-poems in the third dimension, poems-sculptures, maybe she would turn them into videopoems if she had not chosen the digital medium.

Similar procedures can be noticed in the work of E. M. de Melo e Castro, Jim Andrews, Augusto de Campos, Sérgio Capparelli and Ana Claudia Gruszynski, Arnaldo Antunes, David Daniels (1933-2008), Clemente Padin, among others, who joined the digital medium in order to make it an ally aiming at improving the form of poetic expression.

The work of Ana Maria Uribe, in any media, is aimed at students of the Languages Course, at scholars of contemporary poetry, at people who appreciate good poetry, regardless of the classification it may have. Two titles of her works - Typoems and Anipoems - contribute to the new names of digital poetry, such as “vpoem” or virtual poem (Ladislao Pablo Györi, Argentina), click poetry (David Knoebel, EUA), “infopoetry” (E. M. de Melo e Castro, Portugal), langu(im)age (Jim Andrews, Canada), Palm Poetry (Fatima Lasay, Philipines), “interpoetry” (Philadelpho Menezes e Wilton Azevedo), among others.

A world in words and of words seem to be the synthesis of the author's work, whose four editions reveal the same aesthetic aim over time, pointing to the transformative power of the poetic word in many different means.

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