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The Una

that is my river
in her I have recognized myself
there where the reeds are the braids of travertine nymphs
who in August, when the water level lowers, show their thighs
on which walk incandescent swimmers while the summer sun sprays the air

that is my river
swift as a thought of one's beloved
capable like opal of changing shades
it is a meander in the shape of glittering veins
along which sail wood-framed boats
and between them flash the polished bellies of fish
with scales larger than a human fingernail

that is my river
her color rhymes with the atmosphere
I drink it like mother's milk
hidden from bullets, I watched it through shivering leaves of ash
and I admired its live azure

that is my river
in war, a line of the demarcation of two worlds
the Berlin Wall of a million drops
which we built during Babylonian night watches
yearning with all our might to break it down

that is my river
my earthly star
not as famous as the Guadalquivir
it still flows through my heart
perfectly justifying her name.

Translated by Sara Elaquad - © 2007 Sara Elaquad

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