Casa Branca Public Wash Tanks

You can still hear the sound of water. As if it ran between these words, between these letters, the sound of water between what you are able to hear and see in your thoughts. Women washed clothes with that water in these tanks. It was their hands that made the sound that we now remember or imagine, just as if we had heard it.

The clothes these women washed here were worn by the entire population of Casa Branca. The footsteps of these socks echoed in every corner of the village, the chests of these shirts touched as everyone hugged everybody else, the sleeves of these blouses built every little bit of everything that you see here.

In these tanks, endless generations of women have been secret goddesses, Casa Branca mothers, Casa Branca daughters, your grandmother and mine. Without anyone realising, indistinguishable from daily life, they washed away all the gestures of Casa Branca, all the intentions, laid the past to rest, prepared what was to come, regenerated the world.

From within the silence, in the space between each word, every time we say *Casa Branca*, between the word *Casa* and the word *Branca*, you can still hear the sound of water. That is the sound of time, from the hands of the women who raised us, the women who, when they did the laundry, raised the universe. Yes, you can still hear the sound of water, it exists; let us never forget that it needs our thoughts to exist.

José Luis Peixoto