

CHAPTER 20



Clarice Lispector: 'Unreal like Music'

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Overture¹

In a letter to her sister Elisa, written in Naples in early 1945, explaining how she plans to spend her days, Clarice Lispector mentions that she wishes to take singing classes: 'Quanto a estudar canto, vou tratar disso' [As for learning to sing, I'm going to sort that out].² Ten days later, she returns to the subject in another letter to her eldest sister and her doubts are presented in a humorous tone similar to one we will come across in much of her writing:

Não tratei nada sobre o canto, sinceramente não me sinto muito animada a abrir a boca todos os dias e berrar. Mas certamente um dia desses resolvo e quando resolver você um dia acorda de madrugada e em vez de ouvir teus passarinhos ouve meus solfejos. Um dia desses fomos ouvir Lohengrin e não gostei. Ópera é chata como ela só. E apesar de ser Wagner era pau e cansava. Estou é com vontade de ter rádio, mas é difícilimo encontrar para comprar ou alugar.³

[I didn't sort out the singing lessons. I honestly don't feel in the right mood to open my mouth every day and bellow. But one of these days I certainly will take care of it and when I do, one day you will wake up in the early hours and instead of hearing your little birds you'll hear me singing scales. A few days ago we went to hear Lohengrin and I didn't like it. Opera is annoying as only opera can be. And despite it being Wagner it was a drag and tiresome. What I'd really like is to have a radio, but it's incredibly difficult to find one to buy or hire].

Music was a constant presence in Clarice's daily life, adding a clearly identifiable lively dimension to many of her texts. One obvious assertion about what music meant to her appears in the *crônica* 'Brain storm': 'A eletrola está quebrada, o conserto é muito caro, e não viver com música é trair a condição humana que é cercada de música' [The gramophone is broken, it is costly to mend, and to live without music is to betray the human condition which is surrounded by music].⁴ At the same time this need for the presence of music can be seen as a surrender that results from a quest, a permanent desire for knowledge. It comes about as the spontaneous externalization of sentiment, as the liberation of an ardently lived experience. In another letter, this time to her other sister, Tânia, from Berne, Switzerland (where

she lived in the late 1940s), Clarice reveals how she was deeply moved by a phone call she had just received from Tânia. Overwhelmed with joy, she began to sing a famous aria from Camille Saint-Saëns's opera *Samson and Delilah*: 'Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix, comme s'ouvrent les fleurs aux baisers de l'aurore...' [Softly awakes my heart, as the flowers open at the kisses of dawn].⁵

In this chapter my intention is to highlight aspects of the relationships we can glimpse between music and writing in Clarice Lispector's universe, starting out by selecting illustrative examples drawn from the full range of her published works. I will include biographical information relating to the author's experiences of and with music that illuminate the reading of her texts. The most immediate consequence of these experiences, as we see from the quotation above, is to arouse feelings of exaltation in her.

The presence of music in her works will be discussed using a primarily thematic approach in order to identify patterns which, to a greater or lesser extent, express the works' wider potential meanings. I will also consider other fields which bring up relevant and related points such as narrative structure and elements that can be considered musical in the process of composition of the books, and style, more specifically the rhythmical effects of repetitions, of the reiteration of segments of text to create similarity or contrast. One thinks straight away of the profoundly musical effect of openings and endings, which function like preludes and codas, especially in the novels and short stories. From the perspective of composition there are very pronounced elements which back up this approach, such as, for example, in *A paixão segundo G.H.* [*The Passion According to G.H.*] (1964), with its repetitions at the beginning of each chapter of the segment which ended the previous chapter. We must bear in mind, in relation to this point, Clarice's assertion that *A maçã no escuro* [*The Apple in the Dark*] (1961) was the book which demanded the greatest investment from her in compositional terms, and stamina. In fact, we can see how the carefully orchestrated structure of that novel is the one which most closely resembles that of a symphony, with distinct movements and great breadth. And if the echoes of jazz are quite overt in *Água viva* (1973), there are other texts, especially the shorter and more difficult to classify, which we might say are very similar to chamber music, both figuratively, because of the restricted numbers of instruments and voices, but also materially: they are assemblages of fragments.

As I read through Clarice's *oeuvre*, I discover several ways in which, quite clearly, the presence of music hints at the author's concept of how literature works; particularly, the art of composing the novel and short story. Although occurring in her shorter, more fragmentary texts, it is above all in the novels that I am able to glimpse different literary techniques which echo musical conventions and perspectives which link music and words.

I

One means by which the impact of Clarice's work can be measured is the way single phrases extracted from longer texts have circulated and been recontextualized in a wide range of formats, and read as maxims.⁶ I myself keep a note of certain phrases which have stuck with me over time and I began to realize that a significant number of them concern music or song, including two from the start of *A hora da estrela* [*The Hour of the Star*] (1977):

Eu canto alto agudo uma melodia sincopada e estridente — é a minha própria dor, eu que carrego o mundo e há falta de felicidade.

[So high-pitched I sing a strident and syncopated melody — it's my own pain, I who carry the world and there is a lack of happiness];⁷

É que a esta história falta melodia cantabile. O seu ritmo é às vezes descompassado.

[That's because this story lacks a *cantabile* melody. Its rhythm is sometimes discordant].⁸

Song is, in fact, a recurring motif in Clarice's work, associated primarily, especially in her earliest texts, with disharmonic music. At one point in *O lustre* [*The Chandelier*] (1946), Virgínia sings 'cantigas altas' [loud ballads], 'sem graça, puro som gritando, ultrapassando as coisas nos seus próprios termos' [awfully, pure sound screaming, going beyond things on their own terms].⁹ The voice reaches a certain dimension that transports it from the realm of reality into the realm of invention.

This episode centres on the relationship between the siblings Virgínia and Daniel, and manifest tensions with the paternal figure. And the line of flight that leads Virgínia to inventiveness links to something which is not immediate: the realm of intensities. Singing overlaps with or blends with crying, as the sounds, notes and voices which transport her to another reality rise up. A sob is not just a sob, it is more than that, it is equal to the 'loud ballads', something from the domain of multiple voices, multiple rhythms.

The repercussions of this projection into inventiveness reveal a discordant way of living. Both the novels and short stories emphasize mismatches and unsuccessful encounters, such as the scene in *O lustre* where, in counterpoint, in an admirable set of intersections, Virgínia glimpses the school glee club.¹⁰ In this sequence, a digression from the main storyline, the sounds resonate as they proliferate (the cockerel crowing, the chant of the rain as it falls) in a crescendo which creates an impressive kaleidoscopic-synaesthetic effect (involving visual sounds and audible visions), and captures very evocatively the subjective experience of a character who feels out of place in the world. Or much further on in the same novel, when, in a lovely passage about Virgínia wandering through the city, we come across an extraordinary metaphor used to describe her off-key singing:

Saía à rua, andava lentamente pelo passeio mostrando-se, os olhos atentos, a sensação de que fulgurava ardente, séria. Era um duro inseto, um escaravelho, voava em linhas súbitas, batia de encontro às vidraças cantando com estridência.

[She'd go out into the street, walk slowly down the sidewalk showing herself, her eyes watchful, the feeling that she was glowing ardent, serious. She was a hard insect, a scarab, flying in sudden lines, beating against windowpanes, singing with stridency].¹¹

The metaphor of strident singing reflects Virgínia's intense, painful way of living, and the many obstacles she encounters in the city. This moment comes straight after a memorable episode (the dinner with Miguel) which has ended explosively. The song of the scarab translates magnificently the echoes of the dissonances of a hostile world.

In Clarice's works there are many more representations of tuneless singing, or songs sung in the wrong place or at the wrong time — the Portuguese woman in 'Devaneio e embriaguez de uma rapariga' [Daydream and Drunkenness of a Young Lady] in *Laços de família* [*Family Ties*] (1960), for example. In the same collection, in 'Amor' [Love], comes the 'canto importuno das empregadas' [the tiresome singing of the maids],¹² and in 'Feliz aniversário' [Happy Birthday], we witness a caricatured rendition of the song 'Happy Birthday', full of interruptions and wrong notes. Or even the chicken in 'A galinha' [The Chicken] who wasn't given to singing.¹³ And there are so many occasions when we overhear the humming and warbling of Clarice's characters, in both major and minor keys. How can we forget Senhora Jorge B. Xavier, in 'A procura de uma dignidade' [In Search of a Dignity] in *Onde estivestes de noite* [Where were you at night], imagining an encounter with her beloved idol, the (now) veteran pop star Roberto Carlos, and recalling one of his greatest hits?

Seus lábios levemente pintados ainda seriam beijáveis? Ou por acaso era nojento beijar boca de velha? Examinou bem de perto e inexpressivamente os próprios lábios. E ainda inexpressivamente cantou baixo o estribilho da canção mais famosa de Roberto Carlos: 'Quero que você me aqueça neste inverno e que tudo o mais vá para o inferno'.

Foi então que a Sra. Jorge B. Xavier bruscamente dobrou-se sobre a pia como se fosse vomitar as vísceras e interrompeu sua vida com uma mudez estraçalhante: tem! que! haver! uma! porta! de saíiiiiíida!.

[Were her lightly tinted lips still kissable? Or was it disgusting to kiss an old lady on the mouth? She studied her own lips up close and with no expression. And still with no expression she softly sang the chorus from Roberto Carlos's most famous song: 'I want you to keep me warm this winter and to hell with all the rest'.

That was when Senhora Jorge B. Xavier abruptly doubled over the sink as if about to vomit up her guts and interrupted her life with an earth-shattering silence: there! must! be! an! exiiiiiiiiit!].¹⁴

One last example: the contrasting and overlapping musical sounds in 'A partida do trem' [The Departure of the Train] from the same story collection: Handel on one boy's transistor radio, girl scouts singing a hymn to Brazil in high voices in another carriage, Edith Piaf's 'J'attendrai' [I will wait] sounding out from another radio,¹⁵ and the protagonist, Dona Maria Rita, with her 'tremor quebradiço de música de sanfona' [brittle tremor of accordion music].¹⁶

At the denouement of 'A procura de uma dignidade', music is one way of highlighting the mismatch between the old lady and the young pop idol. But it is important to say here, and relevant to the next example too, that this pop cultural reference corresponds to a change in style and form identifiable in Clarice's *oeuvre* after 1974 (when she brought out the short story collections *Onde estivestes de noite* and *A via crucis do corpo* [*The Via Crucis of the Body*] and the text 'Brasília: Esplendor' [Brasília: Splendour]). It was a moment when her work began to harbour texts that were tonally different from those published in previous decades.

One could look, for example, at the references to music playing on the transistor radio in 'A partida do trem'. Although the presence of a radio in her texts has been meaningful from early on (*A cidade sitiada* [*The Besieged City*] (1949) and *A maça no escuro* come to mind), from the 1970s onwards it becomes even more so, especially when it plays unexpected medleys, another way of translating the strangeness of worlds which engage with us. I am reminded of the Strauss waltz known as 'The Free Thinker', juxtaposed with the advertising jingle for 'Cremogema' [Cream of Wheat] in the story 'Onde Estivestes de Noite', or the moment in 'O Corpo' [*The Body*] in *A via crucis do corpo*, when Schubert's piano music, playing on the radio, is the unusual soundtrack to Xavier being murdered with kitchen knives by his two lovers. Or one last example: the explosion of references to different kinds of music in 'Brasília', playing on the radio as the narrator writes: Strauss, Chopin and Debussy alongside Carmen Miranda, Amália Rodrigues; and a *Te Deum* following a samba or a military march.¹⁷

2

Among the letters sent back and forth between Lispector and her sisters, when she was in Washington, there is one from 1955 which narrates an experience that might have come from one of her short stories, in a voice that could belong to one of her characters:

Hoje de noite temos bilhetes para ver no teatro uma peça com Shelley Winters. Mas hoje de noite tem um único concerto de um pianista russo que dizem ser dos maiores, ele vai tocar uma sonata de Chopin que tem um tema, no quarto movimento, que me é muito querido e que eu ouvi no rádio quando tinha uns quinze anos e uma outra vez não sei quando — e sempre cantarolei o tema para quem entende música e ninguém conhecia, parecia até que eu tinha inventado. No sábado comprei uma sonata de Chopin e me deu esperança que nela encontrasse o tema. Estava ouvindo já sem esperança, quando no quarto movimento, a coisa estalou: ali estava ele. Então vim a saber que este 'quarto movimento' é considerado um dos pontos mais altos de Chopin, senão o mais alto. E, agora sabendo o nome da sonata (n. 3 em B menor), descobri no domingo que o pianista vai tocá-la. Então Maury vai com o filho de Mafalda ao teatro, e me deixa no concerto, se é que ele vai conseguir um lugar.

[We have tickets for the theatre tonight, to see a play with Shelley Winters. But tonight there is one-off concert by a Russian pianist who they say is one of the best, he's going to play a Chopin sonata that has a theme, in the fourth

movement, that's very dear to me and that I heard on the radio when I was around fifteen years old and another time, I don't remember when — and I've always sung it to people who understand music, but as nobody recognised it, it felt as if I'd invented it. On Saturday I bought a Chopin sonata and I was really hopeful that I'd find the theme there. I was listening to it and just when I'd given up hope, there in the fourth movement, the thing burst forth: there it was. Then I found out that this 'fourth movement' is thought to be one of Chopin's high points, if not the highest. And now I know what it's called (No. 3 in B minor) and I discovered on Sunday that the pianist will be playing it. So Maury will take Mafalda's son to the theatre and he'll drop me off at the concert, if he can get hold of a ticket, that is].¹⁸

What is Claricean in this episode, in literary terms? It refers to the manifestation of the yearning for discovery, the desire to recover an intense moment brought about by chance, and the way of experiencing it. I ought to highlight that what drives the narrative is the music that was lost and what the loss entailed, which in her account constitutes a nucleus close to what we will find in many of the author's texts: the element which corresponds, in the words of Benedito Nunes, to a 'determinado momento da experiência interior' [particular moment of internal experience].¹⁹ In this case, the epistolary account might indicate some sort of 'aspiração ou devaneio' [aspiration or daydream],²⁰ like that experienced by the characters, flowing towards a lack of resolution that is unmistakably Claricean.

The reference to Chopin and the impact caused upon hearing one of his sonatas recalls a biographical detail described by the author in one of her *crônicas* in the *Jornal do Brasil*, one that is crucial for any reading of the role of music in her work. The title, 'Lição de piano' [Piano Lessons], sets the tone, circumscribing the scope of the *crônica* which centres on her memory of learning to play the instrument chosen by her father for his daughters' musical education: 'Meu pai queria que as três filhas estudassem música. O instrumento escolhido foi o piano, comprado com grande dificuldade' [My father was keen that his three daughters should study music. The instrument of his choice was the piano, bought with enormous sacrifice].²¹ The driving force here is the paternal figure, whose distinctive sensitivity and dignity are evoked. Chopin, the beloved composer, is associated with a negative sensation provoked by the presence of the piano teacher: 'Quando Dona Pupu tocava Chopin me enjoava, Chopin de quem eu gosto' [Whenever Dona Pupu decided to play Chopin I always felt quite sick; Chopin, who I really like].²² The teacher's name is referred to repeatedly throughout the text to the point of distraction, like the trains of thought that lead the girl's mind away from the central purpose of the lesson (she was obese, what was her sex life like? how would she fit in her coffin?). Although the repetition of the teacher's nickname accentuates the comic nature of the tale, it also marks the psychological escape routes. The journey to the piano teacher's house and the appearance of an acacia tree at a particular bend in the road trigger a series of fantasies and streams of consciousness, beginning with the house hidden behind the yellow acacias ('quem morava ali?' [who lived in that house?]).²³

There is one very short sentence which stands out and summarizes the lessons: 'Como eu errava' [How my thoughts would stray].²⁴ A layer of creativity imposes

itself on top of rules and discipline. And it is here that the phantasmal figure of the mother emerges with all its strength:

Tinha nove anos e minha mãe morrerá. A musiquinha que inventei, então, ainda consigo reproduzir com dedos lentos. Por que no ano em que morreu minha mãe? A música é dividida em duas partes: a primeira é suave, a segunda meio militar, meio violenta, uma revolta suponha.

[I was nine years old and my mother was dead. Even after all these years I can still play one of those tunes using two fingers. Why should this date from the year my mother died? The melody is divided into two parts: the first part is gentle, the second fierce and almost martial, perhaps expressing my rebellion].²⁵

The account very clearly establishes a direct link between the paths to distraction and the ways to inventiveness. The child exercises a demarcation, a distancing of herself from the disciplining purposes of the piano lesson. In a certain way, this could be read as a projection of what the author's position will become, repeated frequently when she reflects upon her own art, asserting that she is not a professional. The girl gets distracted and it is during this process that creation occurs. Consequently, she is also distracted from pain and grief, even if the illness and death of her mother are simultaneously potential sources of inspiration. It is during the time when she was taking piano lessons that invented music imposed itself, in the year that her mother died. The structure of the piece of music reflects exactly that: the gentleness and fierceness, features that will come to mark the writing of the future author. It is also very interesting to note here the existence of a similarity between the musical terms of the composition invented by Clarice and the syntactic procedures of her writing where she highlights the rhythmic effect resulting from alternating between longer sentences and very short ones.

If the father equals presence, a motivating and supportive force, the mother is music, an open wound and a powerful trigger. Pain and guilt are pure sources of invention. At the end of the text, we find a reference to another pianist who taught the girl, a famous one this time: 'Acho que não tenho mais nada a dizer. Eu também passei para Ernani Braga²⁶ que disse que eu tinha dedos frágeis. Prefiro calar-me: este também morreu' [But I can think of nothing else of any interest. Like my sister, I also went on to have lessons with Ernani Braga who commented on my delicate fingers. I shall say no more: he died some time ago].²⁷ The text's closing lines are impressively revealing. They offer us the metaphor and its key: the emphasis on the singularity of her determination to highlight what the master musicians could not see, the paradox of strength contained in apparent fragility. A circle concentrates the ambiguity which generates mystery and enigma. The father is the impulse behind the music lessons, but it is the absence, the shadow of the mother (a fertilizing immobility) that unleashes the creative process. At the denouement comes the key. Just as with the music, the force of the literature is in her 'dedos frágeis e delicados' [soft, weak fingers].²⁸

The figurative description of the piano, as a metaphor or simile, occurs elsewhere, for instance in the *crônica* 'Lembrança da feitura de um romance' in which the author remembers 'The Making of a Novel'. This title invokes the image of the open

instrument with its 'simultaneous keys' in order to reveal a process of composition in which everything was written at the same time.²⁹

The piano features many times in Clarice's books, especially the novels (particularly, the early ones), in scattered references which may be notes relating to characterization, elements propitiating specific situations that are part of the action, or similes and excuses for reflection. For example, in her debut novel, *Perto do coração selvagem* [*Near to the Wild Heart*], Joana, the protagonist, looks at the open piano and glimpses the possibility of a whole universe contained within:

Por que não tocava sozinha todas as músicas que existiam? — Ela olhava o piano aberto — as músicas lá estavam contidas... Seus olhos se alargavam, escurecidos, misteriosos. 'Tudo, tudo.'

[Why couldn't she play every piece of music in existence on her own? — She looked at the open piano — it contained all music... Her eyes widened, dark, mysterious, 'Everything, everything'].³⁰

The metaphor seems to announce the reflection that we find in the metadiscursive note in the *crônica* mentioned above about the making of a novel. The piano fits admirably well into the author's ongoing reflections on the naming of things, on the question of the word and the real. Here there is a clear disentangling of those thoughts which do not become reality and others which are profoundly transformational, able to create worlds, projecting themselves well beyond their limits. The music contained, potentially, in the piano is an amazingly apposite metaphor with which to express the links Clarice sees between the imagination and creative activity, as the next section will explore.

3

None of Clarice's main characters are musicians, nor are they associated directly or indirectly with any particular instrument, even though reflections about music are presented from their points of view. Nevertheless, although music is not the central focus of the action, we cannot say that it is absent from the diegesis of the novels or short stories. The instrument which plays the most important role in the settings described in the texts is, as I have already indicated, the piano.

A good example of this can be found in *O lustre*, when, still on the family farm in Granja Quieta, Virgínia and Daniel are planning to go and live in the city. Their departure is permitted by their father providing that they move there to study languages, business and piano. And a complementary piece of information about Daniel's skills is given: 'Daniel, que tinha tão bom ouvido e praticava algumas vezes num piano de Brejo Alto' [Daniel, who had such a good ear and practised sometimes on a piano in Upper Marsh].³¹ During their childhood (this is a novel which to a great extent portrays the role of childhood lived or relived) everything is marked by the relationship between the siblings. It is a link that is fortified by a strong desire to flee, and music becomes intimately associated with the idea of escape.

I would like to highlight two more occasions when the piano takes centre stage. It is played by secondary characters. The main focus, however, is on characters who are listening and effectively disrupt the performances: Otávio, in *Perto do coração selvagem* and Martim, in *A maçã no escuro*. The act of playing the piano and the identity of the pianist (Cousin Isabel in the former novel, and Ermelinda in the latter) become the pretext for the development of different tensions. In each case the sequence is fairly long, considering the narrative economy employed elsewhere in these two novels. In *Perto do coração selvagem*, Cousin Isabel plays waltzes by Chopin — music that Clarice knew well and loved. As for Otávio, he is full of pent-up tension: when he looks at his cousin, thoughts of conflicts in their relationship, going back to childhood, rise to the surface. With the passing of time, Cousin Isabel has aged and her piano playing has become full of hesitations and mistakes:

Ela não conseguia dar mais aquela antiga suavidade entre uma nota e outra, como um desmaio. Um som prendia-se ao outro, áspero, sincopado, e as valsas explodiam fracas, saltitantes e falhadas. Às vezes as badaladas espaçadas e ocas do velho relógio vinham dividir a música em compassos assimétricos.

[She was no longer able to move softly from one note to the next as she had in the past, like a faint. One sound would catch on the next, rough, syncopated, and the waltzes erupted weak, jumpy and full of gaps. Sometimes the slow, hollow chimes of the old clock would split the piece into asymmetrical bars].³²

The way in which such scenes are captured suggests a process of alienation and transformation. In *A maçã no escuro*, we escape from mists and torpor through moments of tension, confrontations, explosions. The scene in the lounge, in that novel, which almost feels staged, is strangely familiar. It is the strangeness that marks it out as being very different from stereotypical representations of bourgeois life, where there is always a piano in the background. The complex, mismatched relationships between the members of the group rise to the surface. Like Cousin Isabel, who plays without sheet music and makes sure everybody knows it, Ermelinda plays 'sem olhar o teclado' [without looking at the keyboard],³³ and, likewise, emphasizes this to her listeners. Otávio's pent-up tension is released when he leaves the room. And while the performance of the music in the scene from *Perto do coração selvagem* quoted above is a complete failure, in *A maçã no escuro* it is the instrument which is out of tune and any exit from this knot of tensions simply intensifies the disharmony in the room. The scene becomes punctuated by another noise: the repetitive sound of the mallet Martim wields tightly as he, in an unexpected turn of events, begins to tan a hide outside: 'O cheiro de couro e as marteladas tiravam da cena a sua total imobilidade e deu-lhe um caminhar progressivo: pouco a pouco o cheiro mais intenso e as marteladas levaram a situação a um final' [The smell of the leather and the mallet-beats drew the total immobility away from the scene and gave it a progressive march. Little by little the stronger smell and the mallet-beats brought the situation to an end].³⁴

This scene is the centrepiece of the second chapter of the third (and final) part of the novel. From the announcement that the Professor is coming and the preparations that, in the previous chapter, intrigued Martim ('seria o professor a mesma pessoa

que o alemão?' [Could the professor be the same person as the German?]),³⁵ to the moment he is invited pointedly to join them in the lounge, he walks a tightrope of accumulated tensions. We might say that, against the backdrop of this apparently harmonious family get-together, music is, in fact, the pretext for the meeting, the real reason for which is to air suspicions. Ermelinda seems to be off stage, as if the piano is playing by itself. But in truth the sounds of the music and the mallet blows on the leather seem to punctuate the accusatory dissonance of the moment. Everything is latent and phantasmagorical and what is not spoken in words seems to emerge through these dissonant sounds.

4

If we embark on a reading of references to music in Lispector's novels in chronological order of publication, from *Perto do coração selvagem* to *Um sopro de vida* [*A Breath of Life*] (1978), we will find a clearly differentiated range of examples that reflect, homologically, the specific worldview of each of the narratives.

In the first chapter of the first part of *Perto do coração selvagem*, the child protagonist closes her eyes, pretending to hear the sound of the clock in the lounge and dancing to the 'som da música inexistente e ritmada' [the non-existent and rhythmic music].³⁶ Also in this first part (in the second chapter), there is a scene which foreshadows the short story 'O jantar' [The Dinner] from *Laços de família*. In the novel, in the sequence where Joana stares at the man eating, a soundless tune is described: 'As pernas sob a mesa marcavam compasso a uma música inaudível, a música do diabo, de pura e incontida violência' [His legs under the table kept time to an inaudible melody, the devil's music, of pure, uncontained violence].³⁷ The in-existent only exists when it is not thought about. The question of thought and naming as factors crucial to existence is central to Clarice's *oeuvre*. This becomes clear in relation to several things, music included. An abstract dimension prevails when music is glimpsed in the same realm of thought: 'A música era da categoria do pensamento, ambos vibravam no mesmo movimento e espécie' [Music was of the same category as thought, both vibrated in the same movement and kind].³⁸

From the realm of abstraction we are led to another realm, and another recurrent motif imposes itself: music which manifests as vibration and translates excess. In Chapter 4 of Part II of *Perto do coração selvagem* we read: 'Sozinha no mundo, esmagada pelo excesso de vida, sentindo a música vibrar alta demais para um corpo' [Alone in the world, crushed by the excess of life, feeling the music vibrate too high for a body].³⁹ There are multiple descriptions of this state which builds up towards a certain limit, through which it breaks and explodes into excess. We can see it in images which translate accumulations, overlaps, intersections, like the tear in Joana's dress and the scream of the orchestra. Music conveys atmospheres, contradictions (oppositions, oxymorons), infinite things difficult to define such as the sound of silent footsteps like 'um cego ouvindo música distante' [a blind man listening to distant music].⁴⁰ Everything is excessive and replete with questions, from the deluge at the very beginning of the novel to the last pages: 'Fez-se muitas

perguntas, mas nunca pôde se responder: parava para sentir' [She asked herself many questions but she could never answer herself: she'd stop in order to feel].⁴¹ Music also surfaces in Joana's endless list of questions: 'Onde se guarda a música enquanto não soa?' [Where does music go when it is not playing?].⁴²

In *A cidade sitiada*, matching perfectly with the artificial atmosphere of the book, the references to music reveal one of the fullest portraits of the city of São Geraldo: music that is associated with the outdoors, the music of marching bands, military music, *charanga* music,⁴³ the pealing of bells, the accordion, the flute-playing figurine, the open piano:

A casa imersa no silêncio da eletricidade.
E lá estava o seu quarto.

Como um piano que se deixou aberto. Que susto ver as coisas. A composição das vigas no forro era estranha e nova, como de uma cadeira dependurada....

[The house immersed in the silence of electricity.
And right there was her room.

Like a piano left open. How frightening to see things. The design of the beams in the ceiling was strange and new, like that of a hanging chair...].⁴⁴

The music from outside permeates into and echoes through buildings. Lucrecia, the protagonist, is glimpsed between light and shade. Although it is indoors, the image of the piano seems to translate the particular state of her home, as if it were outside. The keenness of the narrator's gaze makes her see things back to front and inside out, as if she were looking at a photograph and its negative. The light and the brilliance are revealed in a de-sentimentalized way, the interiors show structures as profoundly as if they were external surfaces. This is how Lispector achieves the strange effect of a kind of dismantling which runs throughout the whole book, influencing the presentation of sounds and music, of the evolving suburb, of the environments through which Lucrecia moves, herself an evolving being.

In Clarice's fourth novel, *A maça no escuro* (the novel which is closest in structure to a musical symphony, as I mentioned before), what stands out is the way the text's greater length facilitates the theme of silence. A beautiful fit with the vast landscape is found in the silence, described as music of the night offered up by nature itself: 'aquela que é feita da possibilidade de alguma coisa piar e da fricção do silêncio contra o silêncio...' [fashioned from the possibility that things will chirp and from the soft rub of silence against silence].⁴⁵ From the outset we can tell that this is not music that will soothe the man, Martim. He is alert, he will not give in to gentleness, be ensnared by sweetness. In his speech to the stones, we come across a sentence which points in this direction: 'Mas também é verdade que os momentos de doçura eram muito intensos. E também é verdade que uma música ouvida antigamente podia fazer parar toda a máquina e estatelar por um instante o mundo' [But it is also true that the moments of sweetness were very intense. And it is also true that music heard in the past can make the whole machinery come to a halt and dumbfound the world for a moment].⁴⁶

In *A paixão segundo G.H.*, the opposite occurs. As I will explore in the next section, maximum concentration and the gradual overwhelming of the self mean

that references to music are rendered abstractly, the vibrations of heat and light becoming 'paixões em forma de oratório' [passions in the form of an oratorio].⁴⁷ *Água viva* offers us a magnificent reflection along metaliterary lines whereby, alongside painting, the composition of music mirrors the process of writing. These brief examples lead us on to the explicit musical references in *A hora da estrela*, most specifically in the Author's Dedication, which celebrates music and musicians. And lastly, in *Um sopro de vida*, more than anywhere else, we find explicitness in the form of an explosion of references. Here too music (musicians, composers) appears, in sharp or soft focus, to represent writing and the processes of verbal creation. Both the characters, Ângela and the 'Autor' [Author], when they attempt to define themselves, bring music into play in very clear ways.

5

In the chapter 'O banho' [The Bath], from *Perto do coração selvagem*, there is an exquisitely beautiful passage, narrated in the first person, which describes Joana's visit to a church:

Eu estava sentada na Catedral, numa espera distraída e vaga. Respirava oprimida o perfume roxo e frio das imagens. E, subitamente, antes que pudesse compreender o que se passava, como um cataclisma, o órgão invisível desabrochou em sons cheios, trêmulos e puros. Sem melodia, quase sem música, quase apenas vibração. As paredes compridas e as altas abóbadas da igreja recebiam as notas e devolviam-nas sonoras, nuas e intensas. Elas transpassavam-me, entrecruzavam-se dentro de mim, enchiam meus nervos de estremecimentos, meu cérebro de sons. Eu não pensava pensamentos, porém música. Insensivelmente, sob o peso do cântico, escorreguei do banco, ajoelhei-me sem rezar, aniquilada. O órgão emudeceu com a mesma subitaneidade com que iniciara, como uma inspiração. Continuei respirando baixinho, o corpo vibrando ainda aos últimos sons que restavam no ar num zumbido quente e translúcido. E era tão perfeito o momento que eu nada temia nem agradecia e não caí na ideia de Deus. Quero morrer agora, gritava alguma coisa dentro de mim liberta, mais do que sofrendo. Qualquer instante que sucedesse àquele seria mais baixo e vazio. Queria subir e só a morte, como um fim, me daria o auge sem a queda. As pessoas se levantavam ao meu redor, movimentavam-se. Ergui-me, caminhei para a saída, frágil e pálida.

[I was sitting in the Cathedral, in distracted, vague waiting. I was breathing oppressed the cold, purple perfume of the statues. And, suddenly, before I could understand what was going on, like a cataclysm, the invisible organ unfurled in full, tremulous, pure sounds. Without melody, almost without music, almost vibration alone. The church's long walls and high vaults received the notes and returned them sonorous, nude and intense. They pierced me, crisscrossed inside me, filled my nerves with tremors, my brain with sounds. I wasn't thinking thoughts, but music. Numbly, under the weight of the canticle, I slid from the pew and knelt without praying, annihilated. The organ fell silent with the same suddenness with which it had begun, like a flash of inspiration. I kept breathing quietly, my body still vibrating to the last sounds remaining in the air in a warm, translucent drone. And the moment was so perfect that I neither feared

nor gave thanks for anything and I was not drawn into the idea of God. I want to die now, cried something inside me freed, more than suffering. Any instant following that one would be lower and emptier. I wanted to rise and only death like an end, would give me the peak without the decline. People were getting up round me, moving about. I stood, walked to the exit, fragile and pale.]⁴⁸

The moment when the unexpected happens challenges everything that might be trapped by the narrow tools of comprehension: 'antes que pudesse compreender' [before I could understand]. The process of transformation is triggered by the weight of intensifications produced by the invisible instrument. And the description of sounds ('cheios, trémulos, puros' [full, tremulous, pure], '[s]em melodia, quase sem música' [without melody, almost without music]) is like one of the most extraordinary ways of translating the incessant quests which pursue themselves throughout Clarice's work, culminating here in a precise formulation: 'quase apenas vibração' [almost vibration alone]. The verbs expressively indicate the state provoked by the criss-crossing of the notes: 'transpassavam-me, entrecruzavam-se dentro de mim, enchiam meus nervos de estremecimentos, meu cérebro de sons' [they pierced me, crisscrossed inside me, filled my nerves with tremors, my brain with sounds]. The process of fusion leads to the annulling of limits — the space becomes a sort of sound box where inside and out, the walls of the church and the interior of the body connect, interlink, blend, become indistinguishable from one another and vibrate at the same wavelength, like a discharge that leads to a transfiguring horizon of expanded energy, beyond time and space, until it becomes a kind of dispossession. The chaotic accumulation of sounds, shattering losses of balance, and the thrilling sensations reflect a new state in which the minimum is equal to the infinite: 'Qualquer instante que sucedesse àquele seria mais baixo e vazio. Queria subir e só a morte, como um fim, me daria o auge sem a queda' [Any instant following that one would be lower and emptier. I wanted to rise and only death like an end, would give me the peak without the decline].

Later in this novel, through the character Otávio, we come across a force conceptualizing music and musical expression similar to that voiced by Ulisses in *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres* [*An Apprenticeship or the Book of Pleasures*] (1969) when he resorts to music to speak of his essay writing technique: 'Se um dia eu voltar a escrever ensaios, vou querer o que é o máximo. E o máximo deverá ser dito com a matemática perfeição da música, transposta para o profundo arrebatamento de um pensamento-sentimento' [If I ever write an essay again, I'll want it to be the greatest. And the greatest should be said with the mathematical precision of music, transposed to the deep rapture of a feeling-thought].⁴⁹ But for Joana, however, the process is very different, taking the form of the blind surrender of the corporeal, in which all the constraints of rationalization are suspended.

In Clarice's work there is another vivid moment which dialogues with the one above, or perhaps builds upon it: Chapter XII of *A paixão segundo G.H.*, when the protagonist comes face to face with the cockroach. The maid's room reveals itself intensely as reverberating silent music. This is the maximum point for the capture of vibrations experienced at the limit states at which opposites attract:

Meu suor me aliviava. Olhei para cima, para o teto. Com o jogo de feixes de luz, o teto se arredondara e transformara-se no que me lembrava uma abóbada. A vibração do calor era como a vibração de um oratório cantado. [...] Esperei que aquele som mudo e preso passasse. Mas a vastidão dentro do quarto pequeno aumentava, o mudo oratório alargava-o em vibrações até a rachadura do teto. O oratório não era prece: não pedia nada. As paixões em forma de oratório.

[My sweat was relieving me. I looked up, at the ceiling. With the play of the beams of light, the ceiling had rounded and transformed itself into something that reminded me of a vault. The vibration of the heat was like the vibration of a sung oratorio. Only my hearing part was feeling. [...] I waited for that mute and imprisoned sound to pass. But the vastness inside the little room was growing, the mute oratorio was enlarging it in vibrations that reached the fissure in the ceiling. The oratorio was not a prayer: it was not asking for anything. Passions in the form of an oratorio].⁵⁰

The progressive transformation of the space through the effects of light and heat, in the way they expand it, prefigure the path to an encounter characterized by fusion and revelation. The muteness which vibrates in singing makes visible the unlimited nature of the new lived experience: a depersonalizing profundity. Coming from a higher, but not superior, realm, the intense vibration of the vault is consubstantial to the deepest interior core of the self. It is the vibration and the musical elements existing within it that bring the nucleus of life closer: 'Minha carência vinha de que eu perdera o lado inumano — fui expulsa do paraíso quando me tornei humana. E a verdadeira prece é o mudo oratório inumano' [My neediness came from having lost the human side — I was banished from paradise when I became human. And the true prayer is the mute inhuman oratorio].⁵¹

But, yes, paradox is also a way forward. The mute reverberation triggers self-knowledge via the non-conscious. Here, the narrative itself almost becomes an oratorio which reflects G.H.'s experience. Words are not an accompaniment, like an ornamental choir. The various stages of the encounter (including fear, retreat, intensifying enlargement) are the same as those involved in the process of writing, of the sayability of the new state she has reached: 'Dentro dos sons secos de abóbada tudo podia ser chamado de qualquer coisa porque qualquer coisa se transmutaria na mesma mudez vibrante' [Within the dry sounds of the vault, everything could be called anything, because anything would be transmuted in the same vibrating muteness].⁵²

What happens in *Água viva* is different: the character advances conscious of what she is searching for. The assertion of a complete corporeal surrender brings with it an adaptation to the creative process (writing, painting): 'escrevo-te toda inteira' [All of me is writing to you], 'é também com o corpo todo que pinto' [I also use my whole body when I paint].⁵³ Here one finds an awareness of the process which takes music as its conductor: 'apóio de leve a mão na eletrola e a mão vibra espriando ondas pelo corpo todo: assim ouço a eletricidade da vibração. Substrato último no domínio da realidade, e o mundo treme nas minhas mãos' [I gently rest my hand on the record player and my hand vibrates, sending waves through my whole body: and so I listen to the electricity of the vibrations, the last substratum of reality's realm, and the world trembles inside my hands].⁵⁴ The experimentation

goes beyond the level of the sentence, approaching an admirably perceived new state, in terms of overcoming, plunging, surrendering. A central leitmotiv in *Água viva* is the introduction of the word into one realm which leads us to another: the fourth dimension. Through the body or the senses one reaches a phase in which the use of words encounters music: 'A palavra é a minha quarta dimensão. [...] O que pintei nessa tela é passível de ser fraseado em palavras? Tanto quanto possa ser implícita a palavra muda no som musical' [The word is my fourth dimension. [...] Can what I painted on this canvas be put into words? Just as the silent word can be suggested by a musical sound].⁵⁵ Music is not summoned up here as a romantic concept of the unattainable transcendentalized, but through a new kind of textual experimentation close to jazz. It is a mode of expression open to variations and modulations which translate the urgency of instants that are always new and the pulsing of multiple streams of energy:

Para te dizer o meu substrato faço uma frase de palavras feitas apenas dos instantes-já. Lê então o meu invento de pura vibração sem significado senão o de cada esfuziante sílaba. [...] O que diz este jazz que é improvisado? Diz braços enovelados em pernas e as chamas subindo e eu passiva como uma carne que é devorada pelo adunco agudo de uma águia que interrompe seu voo cego. Expresso a mim e a ti os meus desejos mais ocultos e consigo com as palavras uma orgiaca beleza confusa. Estremeço de prazer por entre a novidade de usar palavras que formam intenso matagal!

[To tell you of my substratum I make a sentence of words made only from instants-now. Read, therefore, my invention as pure vibration with no meaning beyond each whistling syllable [...]. What does this jazz that is improvisation say? It says arms tangled with legs and the flames rising and I passive like meat that is devoured by the sharp hook of an eagle that interrupts its blind flight. I express to me and to you my most hidden desires and achieve an orgiastic beauty. I tremble with pleasure amidst the novelty of using words that form an intense thicket].⁵⁶

Improvisation, explosion, networks, interweavings, that which whirls, intersects and prolongs as echo, visible in this text, are the rendering explicit of the restless and incessant experimentation in the search for the nucleus of the living word that has been underway since the first novel, in various different ways. In the passage from *Perto do coração selvagem* cited above, we read Joana's thought: 'Eu não pensava pensamentos, porém música' [I wasn't thinking thoughts, but music].⁵⁷ The different fictional experiences conform to the expression of a ceaseless search to reach the core — of the word, of the self, of being. Music is not just a vehicle in this process; the textual experiments incorporate the musical model as a major reference point.

One expressive formulation of this search can be found in the note 'to possible readers' at the beginning of *A paixão segundo G.H.*: 'a aproximação, do que quer que seja, se faz gradualmente e penosamente — atravessando inclusive o oposto daquilo que se vai aproximar' [the approach, of whatever it may be, happens gradually and painstakingly — even passing through the opposite of what it approaches].⁵⁸ Or, in other words, in a self-referential text which makes explicit that which she always sought and will continue to be her watchword until the end: 'chegar àquele ponto em que a dor se mistura à profunda alegria e a alegria chega a ser dolorosa — pois

esse ponto é o agulhão da vida' [to reach that point where sorrow mingles with deep happiness and happiness turns out to be painful — for at that point comes the sting of life].⁵⁹

One of the most extraordinary examples of Clarice's reflections on music can be found in 'Hindemith', a text about a quartet by the eponymous German composer.⁶⁰ The content we read here is, in fact, very close to the way the author describes how she sees and speaks the world. In this sense, one could say that it is metapoetical: Clarice talks of the art of Paul Hindemith's music as a way of addressing her own literature, her means of capturing things. Not by chance was this text later incorporated into *Água viva* but modified so as to apply more explicitly to the realm of writing: 'Estou te falando em abstrato e pergunto-me: sou uma ária cantabile? Não, não se pode cantar o que te escrevo' [I am speaking to you in the abstract and wonder: am I a cantabile aria? No, you cannot sing what I am writing you].⁶¹

Nevertheless, it is in the original text about the composer (and not the version adapted for *Água viva*) that the Claricean universe is best revealed: 'Mas que *fato* tem uma noite que se passa inteira num atalho, onde não tem ninguém, e enquanto dormimos? História de escuridão tranquila, de raiz adormecida na sua força, de odor que não tem perfume' [But what *event* takes place at night in a deserted cul-de-sac while we are all asleep? A tale of tranquil darkness, rooted in spent forces, and without any perfume].⁶² The discussion about the night in the cul-de-sac (what happens there, in that 'lugar onde tantas coisas acontecem' [place where so many things happen] while we sleep), centred on the music of the composer, is clearly and revealingly echoed in Clarice's characterization of her own literary project. Her reading of Hindemith's quartet is an amazing projection of her ideas into another form, and which touches on a point central to her prose: the question of representation. What shines out in Clarice's interpretation of the world is not the linear capture of the real. Writing about realism in Clarice's work, specifically *O lustre*, Ana Cristina de Rezende Chiara has described the predominance of the 'figura da circularidade' [figure of circularity].⁶³ The real is 'indeterminado, inorganizável' [indeterminate, un-organizable], she tells us, hence the 'ordem labiríntica' [labyrinthine nature] of her narratives. The *crônica* on the music of Hindemith leads us, precisely, to the ways of that which is not responded to. The labyrinthine nature of Clarice's literature shows that the ceaseless search along these circular paths is not that of the adamic or orphic encounter in which the word approaches the right word or the idealized music. The search is above all to do with intensity, an effect carried to paroxysm which exposes the dissonances, the discontinuities, the abysses, the latencies and, consistently, the research process itself:

Pena que a palavra *nervos* esteja ligada a vibrações dolorosas, que 'nervos expostos' sejam expressão de sofrimento. Se não, seria quarteto de nervos. Cordas escuras que, tocadas, não falam sobre 'outras coisas', 'não mudam de assunto' — são em si e de si, entregam-se iguais como são.

[What a pity the word *nervous* is associated with mournful vibrations, that exposed nerves are seen as an expression of suffering. Otherwise, the quartet could be described as one of nerves. Dark chords which are not played to evoke 'other things' or to touch on 'another theme'. These chords remain as they are and seek to explain nothing else.]⁶⁴

For Clarice, realism is inextricably associated with the interplay between figurative and abstract. She states it very directly in a very short, one-sentence-long text, entitled, precisely 'Abstrato é o Figurativo' ['The Abstract is Symbolic']: 'Tanto em pintura como em música e literatura, tantas vezes o que chamam de abstrato me parece apenas o figurativo de uma realidade mais delicada e mais difícil, menos visível a olho nu' [In painting, as in music and literature, what is often termed abstract strikes me as being simply representative of a more delicate and elusive reality which is barely visible to the naked eye].⁶⁵ Beyond the conventionally reducing spaces, beyond preconceived dualities, the figurative that Clarice refers to explains how art can reveal the most complex reality, which, like life itself, is not subject to any sort of categorical limits.

In a letter she sent from Naples to her sister Elisa on 20 April 1945, which she wrote while listening to a concert being broadcast on the radio, Clarice highlights an observation made by the announcer about the way the harp is used in the piece: '[o compositor] tirou o elemento decorativo da música' [the composer took the decorative element out of the music].⁶⁶ What the writer retains, in a point transmitted enthusiastically to her sister, is a kind of synthesis, illustrating what she does in her literature: 'Realmente a música que estou ouvindo não tem por assim dizer "história". Parece um bordado de sons, um manejar puro de notas. É belo, belo' [Actually the music I'm listening to doesn't have a 'story' as such. It's like embroidery done with sounds, a pure handling of notes. It's lovely, just lovely].⁶⁷

Coda

On a final note, rather than a simple exercise of style, for Clarice bringing music and writing together is one of the ways in which the self comes into maximum confrontation with itself. Therefore, one of the references to music made by Ângela, in *Um sopro de vida*, admirably sums up Clarice's motto: 'Eu me defrontei com o impossível de mim mesma. Aí, eu desafinei sem querer. Irreal como música' [I came up against the impossible of myself. At that point, I went off key without meaning to. Unreal like music].⁶⁸

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- *Laços de família* (Lisbon: Cotovia, 2006 [1960])
- *Minhas queridas* [My Dears], ed. by Teresa Montero (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2007)
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Notes to Chapter 20

1. Translated by Claire Williams.
2. Letter dated 12 January 1945. Clarice Lispector, *Minhas queridas* [My Dears], ed. by Teresa Montero (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2007), p. 70. All translations by Claire Williams unless otherwise indicated.
3. Letter dated 22 January 1945. *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72.
4. Clarice Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 1999), p. 245; *Discovering the World*, trans. by Giovanni Pontiero (Manchester: Carcanet, 1992), p. 319. Clarice included a slightly altered version of this text, under the new title 'Tempestade de almas' in the collection *Onde estivestes de noite* [Where were you at night] (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1992 [1974]), pp. 117–20; trans. by Katrina Dodson as 'Soul Storm' in *The Complete Stories* (New York: New Directions, 2015), pp. 501–03.
5. Letter dated 2 January 1947. Lispector, *Minhas queridas*, p. 149.
6. See chapter by Karyn Mota in this volume.
7. Clarice Lispector, *A hora da estrela* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1992), p. 25; *The Hour of the Star*, trans. by Benjamin Moser (New York: New Directions, 2011), pp. 3–4.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 30; *ibid.*, p. 8.
9. Clarice Lispector, *O lustre* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1992 [1946]), p. 29; *The Chandelier*, trans. by Magdalena Edwards and Benjamin Moser (London: Penguin, 2019), p. 25.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 60–62; *ibid.*, pp. 55–57.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 169; *ibid.*, p. 161.
12. Clarice Lispector, *Laços de família* (Lisbon: Cotovia, 2006, p. 17); *The Complete Stories*, p. 115.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 29; *ibid.*, p. 130.
14. Lispector, *Onde estivestes de noite*, pp. 19–20; *The Complete Stories*, p. 430.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24; *ibid.*, p. 433.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 30; *ibid.*, p. 439.
17. On the 'soundtrack' to this text, see Claire Williams, 'A Brasília que Clarice construiu: o desmonte da nação nas crônicas lispectorianas', in *Fora do retrato: estudos de literatura brasileira contemporânea*, ed. by Regina Dalcastagnè and Anderson Luís Nunes da Mata (Vinhedo: Horizonte, 2012), pp. 145–65.
18. Letter dated 25 October 1955. Lispector, *Minhas queridas*, pp. 262–63. TN: Érico Veríssimo (1905–1975) was a Brazilian writer and diplomat who, along with his wife Mafalda, became

- friends with Clarice and her family during their stay in Washington D.C. in the 1950s. Their son, Luiz Fernando Veríssimo (b. 1936), is a celebrated fiction writer and *cronista*.
19. Benedito Nunes, *O drama da linguagem: uma leitura de Clarice Lispector* (São Paulo: Ática, 1989), p. 83.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
 21. Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo*, p. 51; *Discovering the World*, p. 71.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 52; *ibid.*, p. 71.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 52; *ibid.*, p. 72.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 52; *ibid.*, p. 72.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 52; *ibid.*, p. 71.
 26. TN: Ernani Braga (1888–1948) was a Brazilian composer, conductor and pianist, who collaborated with Heitor Villa Lobos and participated in the famous 1922 São Paulo Modern Art Week. He lived in Recife in the 1930s and was one of the founders of the Pernambuco conservatoire.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 52; *Ibid.*, p. 71.
 28. *Ibid.*, p. 52; *Ibid.*, p. 71.
 29. Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo*, p. 284; *Discovering the World*, p. 371.
 30. Clarice Lispector, *Perto do coração selvagem* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1990 [1943]), p. 50; *Near to the Wild Heart*, trans. by Alison Entrekkin (New York: New Directions, 2012), p. 32.
 31. Lispector, *O lustre*, pp. 17–18; *The Chandelier*, p. 13.
 32. Lispector, *Perto do coração selvagem*, p. 99; *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 77.
 33. Clarice Lispector, *A maçã no escuro* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1992 [1961]), p. 201; *The Apple in the Dark*, trans. by Gregory Rabassa (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 223.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 204; *ibid.*, p. 226.
 35. *Ibid.*, p. 193; *ibid.*, p. 213.
 36. Lispector, *Perto do coração selvagem*, p. 20; *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 4.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 26; *ibid.*, p. 10.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 54; *ibid.*, pp. 36–37.
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 155; *ibid.*, p. 129.
 40. *Ibid.*, p. 184; *ibid.*, p. 157.
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 192; *ibid.*, p. 164.
 42. *Ibid.*
 43. TN: In Brazil, *charanga* music is played by brass bands, most commonly to support sports teams.
 44. Clarice Lispector, *A cidade sitiada* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1992), p. 52; *The Besieged City*, trans. by Johnny Lorenz (London: Penguin, 2019), p. 56.
 45. Lispector, *A maçã no escuro*, p. 18; Lispector, *The Apple in the Dark*, p. 13.
 46. *Ibid.*, p. 40; *ibid.*, p. 44.
 47. Clarice Lispector, *A paixão segundo G.H.* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1991 [1964]), p. 86; *The Passion According to G.H.*, trans. by Idra Novey (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 79.
 48. Lispector, *Perto do coração selvagem*, pp. 83–84; *Near to the Wild Heart*, pp. 62–63.
 49. Clarice Lispector, *Uma aprendizagem ou o livro dos prazeres* (Rio de Janeiro: Sabiá, 1973), p. 99; *An Apprenticeship or The Book of Pleasures*, trans. by Stefan Tobler (London: Penguin, 2021), p. 80.
 50. Lispector, *A paixão segundo G.H.*, p. 86; *The Passion According to G.H.*, pp. 78–79.
 51. *Ibid.*, p. 164; *ibid.*, p. 169.
 52. *Ibid.*, p. 100; *ibid.*, p. 96.
 53. Clarice Lispector, *Água viva* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1990), p. 14; *Água Viva*, trans. by Stefan Tobler (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 4.
 54. *Ibid.*, p. 15; *ibid.*, p. 5.
 55. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15; *ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.
 56. *Ibid.*, p. 27; *ibid.*, pp. 5, 16–17.
 57. Lispector, *Perto do coração selvagem*, p. 84; *Near to the Wild Heart*, p. 63.
 58. Lispector, *A paixão segundo G.H.*, p. 13; *The Passion According to G.H.*, p. xi.
 59. Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo*, p. 201; *Discovering the World*, p. 264.
 60. TN: Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) was a German musician, composer, conductor and music theorist.

61. Lispector, *Água viva*, p. 86; *Água Viva*, p. 73.
62. Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo*, p. 229; *Discovering the World*, p. 299.
63. Ana Cristina de Rezende Chiara, 'O cruel realismo de *O Lustre*', in Clarice Lispector, *O Lustre* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves Editora, 1992), pp. 1–6.
64. Lispector, *A descoberta do mundo*, p. 230; *Discovering the World*, p. 299.
65. Lispector, Clarice, *Para não esquecer* (São Paulo: Siciliano, 1992), p. 49; *Discovering the World*, p. 413.
66. Lispector, Clarice, *Minhas queridas*, p. 83.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
68. Clarice Lispector, 'irreal como música', *Um sopro de vida* (Rio de Janeiro: Francisco Alves, 1991 [1978]), p. 89; *A Breath of Life*, trans. by Johnny Lorenz (Penguin: London, 2012), p. 78.