

## The Heart of Fado



Some people call fado Portuguese blues.  
These poems are dedicated to  
Amalia Rodrigues,  
the beloved Queen of Fado.

**Nancy Jasper**

### Nem As Paredes

Not even to the walls  
can she confess  
who she loves,  
but it is public knowledge:  
The old women  
on the beach  
know all about it.  
Their mouths press in,  
towards the salt  
of someone else's  
fado.

### Tudo Isto É Fado

*Dedicated to Ana and Jose Vinagre  
and their dog, Binnie*  
The fado singers have a dog.  
They tell us  
everything is fado,  
nothing  
is beyond the reach of fado.  
So the dog must be fado,  
too.  
The singing of fado is stylized and passionate.  
Gestures with dark shawls,  
generational tides  
of longing.  
The dog waits outside the tent.  
He is good.  
Then he is not good.  
He runs onto the stage.  
His heart  
cannot be contained.

### Amalia In Fox Point

Yes, Amalia  
visited Fox Point.  
She muted her charisma.  
She took a walk  
in this small neighborhood,  
not too far from the water.  
She went to Friends Market.  
It was stocked  
with everything she remembered.  
She paused for a picture  
with the owner and his wife.  
Even now,  
she's not that far from us.  
This morning,  
on Ives Street,  
Joe cues up  
Amalia  
on Pandora.  
The fadista,  
that veteran of distances,  
slips into the room.

### Solidão

He extends a melody  
on the piano  
and offers it  
to Amalia.  
It's not a performance.  
It's what comes before.  
Two solitudes,  
quiet  
and collaborative.

*for Amalia's composer, Alain Oulman*

*Please recycle... to a friend.*

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(Coimbra guitarra)

**Origami Poetry Projects™**

**The Heart of Fado**  
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Acknowledgments:

*A Malasada Is Not A Doughboy* -  
appeared in Gávea-Brown and has  
been heard on Rhode Island NPR,  
as part of their This I Believe series.

*Tudo Isto É Fado* first appeared  
in the Origami collection, *Snout*.



Donations Greatly Appreciated

### The Birth Of Fado

They tell us  
fado was born  
in the heart of a sailor.  
He remembers  
the generosity of earth.  
Leaves, flowers, fruit.  
A woman.  
Amalia  
loves this sailor.  
She loves him  
because he gives himself  
to fado.  
He lets it  
come through him  
entirely.  
All he has  
is memory  
and a voice.  
He had not known  
his voice was beautiful.

### A Malasada Is Not A Doughboy

In the church garage,  
the women are assembling  
flour, sugar, eggs, and tricks  
their grandmas knew.  
Malasadas today,  
after the Mass.  
I want to get them bem quente,  
right from the oil.  
The sign on the garage reads:  
Malasadas/Doughboys.  
A malasada is not a doughboy.  
Malasadas  
have melismatic  
turnings of flavor.  
They don't give everything away  
at the first bite.  
Taste: the pleasure  
will glide away from you a little,  
like Portuguese vowels,  
like a word sung by Amalia.