

APOIOU

SUPPORTED

You crow when you find it, the word
that confirms our deepest suspicions—
that this language truly is on the verge
of dissolving completely into vowels:
It's easy enough to sing, a-p-o-i-o-u,
but just how should we convert it
to the rapid slur of daily speech?
A-pó-joo. So close in sound to *apogeu*,
the crowning point, our apogee,
and still it sounds so oppositional.
Third person. Singular. Past. *Ele* or *ela*
se apoiou. They did. They helped.
For no reason, no reason at all.
It gives me pause. I oppose the thought
for it doesn't include us. City after city,
it never does. I'm so turned off these days
by my surroundings, but the tawdriness
of this city is not so very different
from our own. It's *uma cidade normal*—
with its dog shit and broken glass
and ubiquitous graffiti: *o imperialismo*
é um tigre de papel, imperialism is just,
don't we all know it, a paper tiger.
Here, the small shops are as sparsely stocked
as any country store or ghetto market in Georgia.
And, like there, the shelves, half-bare, still hold

the essentials: *o pão*, bread, *o sabão*, soap, *o queijo*, cheese,
o molho de tomate, tomato sauce, *a água mineral*,
bottled water, and *as velas*, candles
for when the lights go out—
so it's not so different, not so different at all.
This homely insight *me apoiou*, just like this pun.
The ground, today, *me apoiou*. Life itself
more times than I can count *me apoiou*.
And who knows, even here, one day *um homen*
ou uma mulher (still yet to be met),
me apoiaria, and I too may come to the aid
of a total stranger, *o apoiaria*,
for no reason, no reason at all.