

MÁRGARA RUSSOTTO

Of Useless Knowledge

Translated from Spanish by Peter Kahn

Of what use is it to know
that the divine Monteverdi
composed harpsichord pieces
to put his patron to sleep?

And that there are one hundred fifty species
of poisonous spiders
on American soil?

And that the *Aconitum napellus*
sedates the grieving heart
and soothes as much as it poisons?

And that Harmony is not a circle
but rather a spiral?

Of what use are Pythagorean commas
tuning forks and tortillas
as instruments for shackling
and others for liberation,

and this *Musurgia Universalis*
of what use is it on my table
so many years promising
vain erudition
if I am far from your breath
 oh my love
oh beloved and beloved above all the sciences
and mundane thing
and holy nourishment
 oh?