the outside of the poem: its height, eye colour, the sex to which it belongs; when it eats, sleeps, walks it is different than when we say: thought, i, consciousness?

does the poem have an inside/outside?
do all these words (intellect, mind, reason…) belong to the inside?
is it private, the language the poet uses when configuring the inside of the poem?
is there an outside?
is it private?

language is a labyrinth of pathways a traffic

(Pato, Charenton 50)¹

“I have never found a concept that was grasped in a word.” The phrase is Jacques Derrida's (83). I take it as my starting point because I see his words as rich with possibilities for discussing Chus Pato’s poetics.² In terms of what her poetics say as well as when they are read in the negative. One can imagine that Derrida and the poet would concur that discourse (understood as the result of an act and of enunciative conditions), that the text (understood as interwoven from remnants and non-monological registers), that writing itself, as process, network, hybridization, advance, indeterminacy of its own subject, as horde, already contains all concepts, and along with them, the world.
This is no trivial matter, for our very understanding of what poetry is today depends on it, even if this understanding cannot be stated in specifics and is not something that can be demarcated, here or anywhere. It cannot be reduced to the word and its ordering. Yet, from Hölderlin on, poetry traditionally retains a foundational capacity, perilous in the face of history: it maintains both world and life in immanency. In the shift that stretches from Mallarmé to other avant-gardes, this tradition still holds and is key to a volcanics of poetry: the surging bed of lava – destruction/production – that captivated the surrealist movement and that Chus Pato revisited as mytheme in her Hordas de escritura (2008).

From mineral to animal, from architecture to fluvial beds, space, earth; space contemplated with a soil scientist’s eye and with tools to register transformations, changes, at times over long periods. The poetry of Chus Pato is one of mutation, from a present that observes history and, out of it, projects our collective future, in mutual understanding and recognition.

Gender, nation, language, body, culture; and erosion, humus, metamorphosis, death. But no concept can be grasped in a word. Not even in life, humanity, poetry, or end. Pato’s writing, from Urania (1991) to Secesión (2009), presents a different cartography, other limits, another habitus, other possibilities for understanding and speaking, other ways of communicating and reading. There are few poets with whom it is impossible not to dialogue. Some of us insist that Chus Pato is one of these.

Chus, to what extent do you consider the poetry you write to be affected by knowing that at certain points in time, you yourself will embody it with a presence, with your voice, your body, or your presence in front of an audience?

I can say right away and truthfully: there is no relationship, because again and again the act of writing determines itself. It begins and ends in itself and has no affinity with anything but itself. Having said this, the nuances involved, also true, are complex.

Over and over, for nearly twenty years now, I’ve read my texts in public and in private. I read in private when I prepare a public reading. I rehearse, to put it simply. When I do, a voice emerges from the writing itself, along with bodily movements that take shape non-violently and in harmony with the text; whether seated or standing, I move, and my voice is generally quite slow, and I breathe and listen to my breathing, I write the poem anew as I utter it and in returning myself to the moment/s of writing, I experience a kind of pleasure. I am alone with my writing and I know how I must dub the text with my voice and body.

Something quite different occurs when I read in public. For years, reading in public used to fill me with dread, and all I wanted was to get it over with as soon as possible and get out. I felt a kind of shame that is hard to explain; it had to do with the fact that I didn’t feel authorized to read to (impose on) an audience what I had