

**MIA COUTO**

# Say My Name

—Translated from the Portuguese  
by Joana Araújo and Zack Rogow

**Mia Couto** is a poet, fiction writer, and journalist from Mozambique. Initially trained in biology and medicine, he changed careers to pursue journalism. A supporter of the movement for the independence of his country, he became the director of the Mozambique Information Agency after that nation broke away from Portugal. He later edited the journal *Tempo*. His honors as a writer include the prestigious international Neustadt Prize, often compared to the Nobel Prize. In recent years, he has returned to his roots as a scientist and works as a biologist for the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park.

**Joana Araújo** is a Portuguese-English bilingual content reviewer onsite at a Fortune 100 company in Cupertino, California. Her translations of poetry from Portuguese have been published previously in *Catamaran*. She received her bachelor's degree from the Catholic University of Lisbon. In Portugal, she worked as a journalist and a TV production assistant. In 2002 she moved to San Francisco where she earned her MA in broadcasting arts and was a graduate assistant at San Francisco State University.

**Zack Rogow** was a cowinner of the PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Prize for *Earthlight* by André Breton and winner of a Bay Area Book Reviewers Association (BABRA) Award for his translation of George Sand's *Horace*.

Say my name  
pronounce it  
as if the syllables burned your lips  
exhale it with the softness  
of a secret  
so the darkness becomes delicious  
and your hair comes undone  
as it sometimes does

Because I grow for you  
It's me inside you  
drinking the last drop  
and I take you to a place  
without time or shape

Because I have gestures and color  
only for your eyes  
and inside you  
I gather my wounded self  
exhausted by all the battles  
where I defeated myself

Because my tireless hand  
keeps searching for the inside and opposite side  
of appearances  
because the time in which I live  
dies when it's yesterday  
and it's urgent to create  
another way of navigating  
a different direction a different impulse  
to give hope to all the ports  
that wait in silence

In the damp center of the night  
say my name  
as if I'm a total stranger to you  
as if I'm an intruder  
so I don't even recognize myself  
and I'm shocked  
when you gently  
whisper my name

**JOAN WADLEIGH  
CURRAN**

*Cast Away*, 2015  
Oil on canvas, 40 x 40 in

