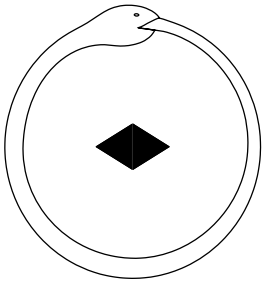


SUN OF THE WASHERWOMEN  
Veronica Pinheiro



notebooks  
SELVAGEM



## SUN OF THE WASHERWOMEN

Veronica Pinheiro

*This notebook consists of the translation of the transcription of Veronica Pinheiro's talk about the Sun, filmed in Rio de Janeiro. Veronica's video can be [accessed here](#) as part of the Sun Cycle, which comprises 17 speeches.*

The story I'm going to tell you now I heard from my grandmother while she was doing the washing up. Of the many things she knew how to do and was known for, my grandmother was also a washerwoman. She would go round to people's houses, collect their dirty clothes, take them home, wash them, dry them, iron them and take them back to their owners. Even when the activities we had to do to survive were paid for, we depended on nature. It was the water from the well at the end of the yard and Sun who made it possible for my grandmother to wash, dry, iron and take the clothes back to their owners.

One day the Sun didn't come out. Then she asked me to scratch a Sun on the ground and call the Sun. I did so and asked her: 'Why should it be me?' She said that it wasn't because it was me, that it had to be a child. And I asked her why only a child could make a drawing of the Sun on the ground and call the star.

She said that she had heard from her mother that, long ago, Sun was a man, a man from the ancient race. My grandmother's mother said that he would wake up, climb the mountain and raise his arms. When he raised his arms, very bright lights would come out of his armpits, illuminating everything. And so, with his arms raised on top of the mountain, he would stay there until he got tired, put his arms down and go to rest. This is what he did every day, making sunny and bright days possible. Until, over the years, this man grew tired.

He got tired and started sleeping more than necessary. And after he became elderly, he slept a lot. Then the people began to feel cold and plants began to grow very slowly. The children, fearing the worst would

happen, went to the Sun Man's house, because only children are able to communicate with the ancient race. They called out: 'Sun, wake up!' And he didn't wake up. Worried about what would happen if everyone remained in darkness, the children got together, picked up the man and threw him into the sky.

And there in the sky, he became round, hot and very, very bright. And so he shines to this day.

Then I realised why, even today, when there is no Sun, children – because they can communicate with the ancient race – are able to call Sun. Even today, when it's raining and Sun doesn't appear, a child draws a Sun on the ground and calls out:

'Sun! Come, Sun!'  
And Sun comes.

### VERONICA SINGS:

Wake up Sun from behind the *Ingá* Tree<sup>1</sup>  
Come, bring on the morning, for night is stealthy  
Wake up, Sun of the washerwomen  
Welcome, Sun of the washerwomen  
Wipe away the cries of the Creole women  
From the hands of these labourers  
Turn these sea waters into joy  
Just as the day dawns  
As the day dawns  
As the day dawns  
As the day dawns  
And so  
Bloom in the east, beautiful flaming flower  
Oh, celestial rose, fall from the south  
Come up behind the hills

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1. Scientific name: *Inga*. Class: *Magnoliopsida*. Family: *Fabaceae*.

Rising, split the horizon  
Gently burn, sparkle across the sky  
Just as the day dawns  
As the day dawns  
As the day dawns  
As the day dawns  
As the day dawns

Hey, Sun!  
Wake up, Sun.

That was the first Sun I got to know, the Sun of the Washerwomen.

**Song sung by Veronica Pinheiro:**

“Sol das lavadeiras” [Sun of the Washerwomen], by Zé Manoel.

**Cover:** Sun drawn by Veronica Pinheiro.

VERONICA PINHEIRO is a *brincante*<sup>2</sup>, a teacher in Rio de Janeiro’s municipal public school system and a researcher in art teaching for ethnic-racial relations as a master’s student in the Postgraduate Programme in Arts at Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ). She has been a member of the Selvagem team since 2023, coordinating activities with and for children.

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2. The term *brincante* [playful] refers to a person who is dedicated to cultural and artistic activities, often linked to popular traditions such as dances, music, street theater, and other forms of cultural expression.

**TRANSLATION**  
**MARCOS MORAES**

Dancer and choreographer, Marcos Moraes works as artist, teacher and cultural producer. He has created and directs The Performing Kitchen - Collaborative Platform for Artistic Research and Creation. Graduated in Languages - English by FFLCH-USP translates books and texts and takes part in the Selvagem team since its beginning. He currently lives and works between São Paulo and Lisbon, where he co-manages Penhasco Cooperative Art cultural centre.

**TRANSLATION REVISION**  
**MARY HATAKEYAMA**

Mother, gardener, teacher, translator. Graduated in languages and pedagogy. Born in São Paulo, Brazil. Since 2022 participates in the Comunidade Selvagem, collaborating in the Spanish and English text translation groups, reading, translating, and revising texts collectively and artisanally.

The editorial production work of the Selvagem Notebooks is carried out collectively with the Selvagem community. The editorial coordination is by Alice Faria and the design by Tania Grillo and Érico Peretta. The coordinator of English translations is Marina Matheus.

More information at [selvagemciclo.com.br](http://selvagemciclo.com.br)

All Selvagem activities and materials are shared free of charge. For those who wish to give something back, we invite you to financially support the Living Schools, a network of five educational centres for the transmission of Indigenous culture and knowledge.

Find out more at [selvagemciclo.com.br/colabore](http://selvagemciclo.com.br/colabore)

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