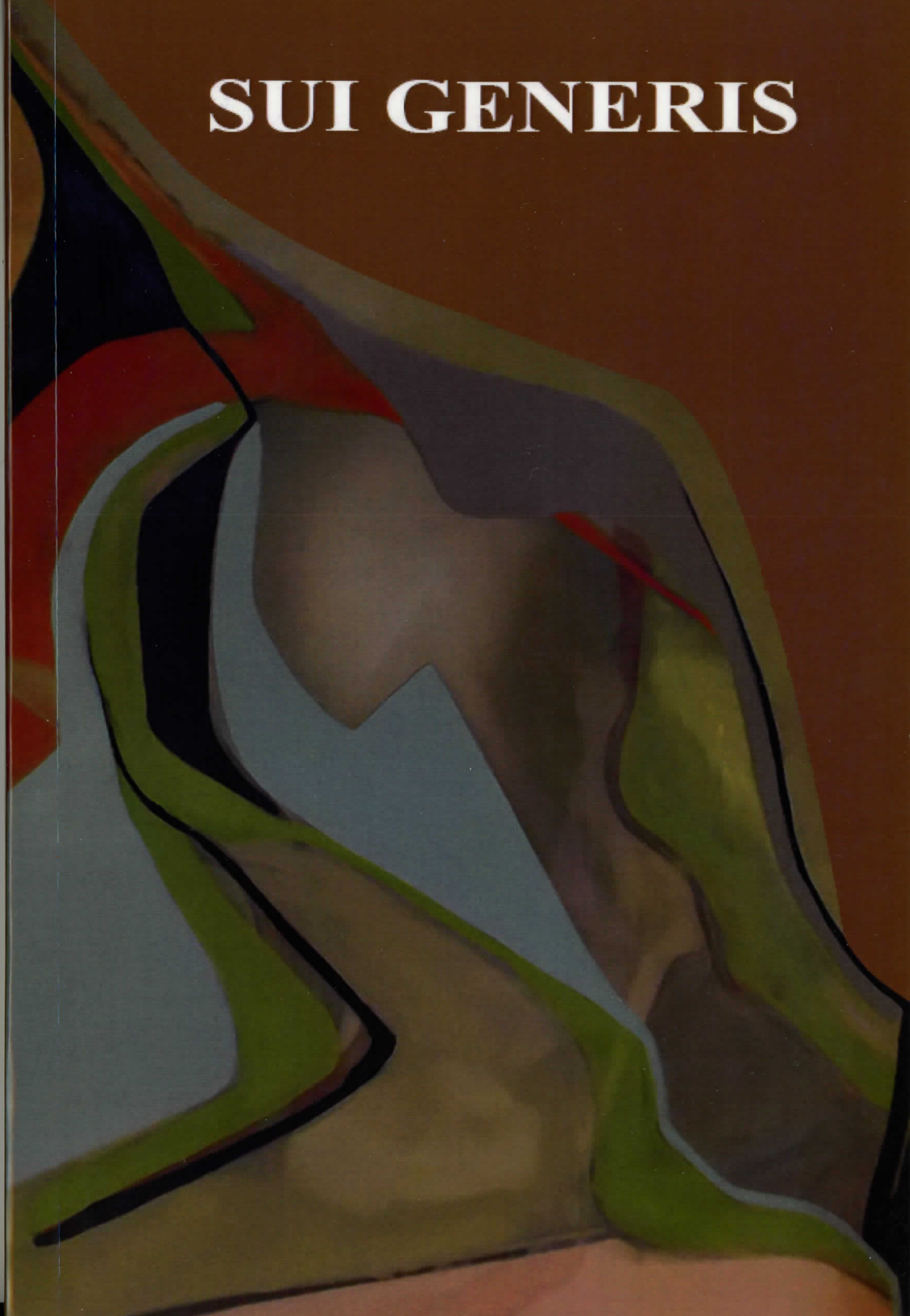


SUI GENERIS



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Sui Generis is a journal that seeks to represent work in translation and multilingual poetry, fiction, and non-fiction within the Bard College community. It appears annually in the spring.

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This issue of *Sui Generis* is dedicated to Peter Sourian, a writer and critic, and Professor Emeritus of English at Bard College. He taught in Annandale from 1965 to 2010, and contributed to *Sui Generis* for many years. We thank him for his continued support, kindness and generosity.

Au Prisunic

By Peter Sourian

Conquérant j'écris bien sûr en alexandrins.
Hier debout devant le comptoir avant
La Loi du Pardon on m'a pris — une brebis
Adorable dans les deux mains d'aujourd'hui.
Demain roi déposé j'irai en prison pour Shoplifting.
Si les mains ne sont pas liées
Vous pourrez pourtant parler puis — voix liée —
Caresser l'innocence, Alexandre.

Le Paroissien

By Peter Sourian

Ces montagnes d'hiver n'ont pas besoin de foi.
Personne ne vient là. Dieu vient s'y reposer.
Nos âmes — les oiseaux — ne viennent qu'au printemps.
Une vierge vapeur passe devant la lune,
Lente, majestueuse, et miséricordieuse,
N'exigeant pas la foi et ne la donnant pas.
Une clef, de ton père, ouvre la sacristie.
Ni croix, ni vêtements, ni meubles ne s'y trouvent.
Le vide seul y est. Toi-même, tu t'y trouves.
Les brins font le cordon, alors la cloche sonne.
Le beau silence... l'entends-tu?

By Santiago (Keith) Roscoe

Tú me quieres macho

Tú me quieres macho,
me quieres de madera,
me quieres de piedra.
Que sea guerrero
sobre todo, serio.
De músculos grandes.
Príncipe Encantador.

Ni lobo en nuestra
puerta me asuste.
Ni los grandes robles
se digan hermanos.
Tú me quieres potente,
Tú me quieres fuerte,
Tú me quieres macho.

Tú que duermes tranquila
soñando con hijos
que pueden disfrutar
la casa y jardín.
Tú que en el baño
te quedas por horas
relajándote así.
Tú que en las tiendas
románticas del pueblo
llevas a cabo
tus sueños más ricos.

Tú a que mi sueldo
guarda tan cómoda,

*no sé todavía
por cuáles milagros,
me pretendes macho
(Dios te lo perdone),
me pretendes macho
(Dios te lo perdone),
¡me pretendes macho!*

Huye hacia las fábricas,
vete a la oficina;
cortate el pelo;
lleva la corbata;
toca con los manos
el gran motor sucio;
alimenta el cuerpo
con carne y arroz;
camina tú sola;
trabaja sin fin;
saca la basura;
ponte pantalones;
bebe del grifo;
y levante al oscurecer.
*Y cuando las carnes
te sean tornadas,
y cuando hayas puesto
en ellas el alma
que por las alcobas
se quedó enredada,*
pues, mi buena mujer,
Preténdame potente,
Preténdame fuerte,
Preténdame macho.

The Pleasures of a Door

By Francis Ponge

Translated by Augusta Klein

Kings do not touch doors.

They do not know the happiness that comes giving a gentle, yet firm push onto the large familiar panels that push back against your weight and return to their place- holding a door in your arms.

...The pure happiness of gripping a porcelain knot, placed high on these tall obstacles that block you from entering a room; this brief body to body interaction delays your admittance, allowing your eyes to open and the entire body to adjust to its new surrounding environment.

With a friendly hand it continues to hold on before pushing it back and enclosing itself once more- this is assured by the strong click of the well-oiled spring.

Les Plaisirs de la Porte

By Francis Ponge

Les rois ne touchent pas aux portes.

Ils ne connaissent pas ce bonheur: pousser devant soi avec douceur ou rudesse l'un de ces grands panneaux: familiers, se retourner vers lui pour le remettre en place, - tenir dans ses bras une porte.

Le bonheur d'empoigner au ventre par son nœud de porcelaine l'un de ces hauts obstacles d'une pièce; ce corps à corps rapide par lequel un instant la marche retenue, l'œil s'ouvre et le corps tout entier s'accommode à son nouvel appartement.

D'une main amicale il la retient encore, avant de la repousser décidément et s'enclorre, - ce dont le déclic du ressort puissant mais bien huilé agréablement l'assure.

Deliria

From *Une Saison en Enfer* by Arthur Rimbaud

Translated by Hannah Leclair

I Foolish Virgin Infernal Bridegroom

Let's listen to the confessions of a hellish companion:

"O divine Bridegroom, my Lord, do not refuse the confession of the most sorrowful of your servants. I have strayed. I am drunk. I am soiled. What a life!

"Pardon me, divine Lord, pardon me! Ah! pardon! What tears! And more to come, I hope!

"Later, I will come to know the divine Bridegroom! I was born to submit myself to Him. —Let the other one beat me now!

"Now I am at the bottom of the world! O my friends!..no, not my friends...Never any such deliria as this, nor such tortures...What a brute!

"Ah! I suffer, I shriek. I'm really suffering. I'm charged only with misapprehending the most mistaken of hearts.

"And just to be clear, repeat this confession twenty times—each more mournful, more insignificant!

"I am enslaved to the infernal Bridegroom, who doomed the foolish virgins. That demon right there. No specter, no phantom. But I, who have forgotten goodness, who am damned and dead to the world,—they won't kill me!—How to describe it! I don't know what else to say. I am in mourning, I weep, I am afraid. A breath of fresh air Lord, if you please; I implore you!

"I am a widow...—I was a widow...—but yes, I have been in earnest, and was not born to become a skeleton!...—He was nearly a child... His mysterious fragility seduced me. I forgot all my human duty in pursuit of him. What a life! Real life is absent. We are not in the world. I go where he goes, it must be so. And often he loses his temper with me, me, poor soul. The Demon!—He is a demon, you know, and not a man at all.

"He says: 'I don't love women. Love must be reinvented, as we know. They are incapable of valuing anything but the assurance of a stable situation in life. That ground gained, heart and beauty both are set aside: what's left is a cold disdain, the bread and butter of marriage these days. Even those women, whom even I myself could befriend, showered with happiness, are brutally consumed like funeral pyres...'
"I listened to him making a glory of infamy, of cruelty a charm. 'I am of a distant race: my fathers were Scandinavians: they pierced their sides, drank their own blood. —I gouge my body all over, I tattoo myself, I want to make myself as hideous as a Mongol: you'll see, I'll howl in the streets. I want to make myself berserk with rage. Don't ever show me any jewels, I'll write and contort myself on the floor. As for my wealth, I'd like to splatter it all over with blood. Never will I work...'
There were nights when this demon seized me and we rolled around together; I fought with him!—At night, drunk, he posted himself on backstreets and staked out houses so as to frighten me out of my wits—'They're really going to break my neck; how appalling.' Oh! days when he wants to skulk around with a criminal air!

"Sometimes he sweet-talks me, telling of death that brings about repentance, of the wretches that certainly exist, of weighty tasks, of departures that rend hearts. In the slums where we drank, he wept at the thought of those who thronged around us in miserable herds. He roused drunkards in black alleyways. He had all the pity of a bad mother for her unkempt children.—He went with all the gentleness of a little girl to catechism. He pretended to know all about everything, art, medicine—I followed him, I had to!
I saw the scene he spun around himself, clothing, drapery, furnishings: I reinforced it, masked him with a new face. I watched all that touched him, watched how he created everything in his own image. When he seemed in low spirits, I followed his every strange and complicated gesture, for better or for worse. I was certain never to gain entry into his world. Nights, I kept vigil for hours beside his dear sleeping body, wondering why he wanted to evade reality. Never had such a man such a wish. I recognized—without fearing for him,—that he could be a serious danger to society.—Did he possess

the secrets of other lives? No, but he was in search of them. In the end, his charity is a sham and I am its prisoner. No other soul had enough force,—force of despair!—to stand it,—being protected and loved by him. And besides, I could not imagine myself with a different soul. One pictured his Angel, never another's—so I believe. I was in his soul as in a palace emptied for a high noble, that he might encounter none who outranked him: that was all. Alas! I really was dependant on him. But what did he want, after all, with my dull and cowardly existence? He could not make me better, if he couldn't kill me! Sorrowfully jaded, I told him sometimes: 'I understand you.' He shrugged his shoulders.

Thus, my chagrin ceaselessly renewing, I found myself straying in my own sight,—as from all eyes that would have wanted to fix on me, if I had not been condemned to oblivion forever!—I hungered for his goodness. His kisses and his loving grasp made a real heaven, a somber heaven, for me to enter, and where I wanted to be left, poor, deaf, mute, blind. Already, I had taken up the habit of seeing us as two good children, free to wander in a Paradise of sorrows. We got on well. Both full of emotion, we moved together. But after a penetrating caress, he said: 'How silly all this will seem to you, when I am no longer here. When you no longer have my arms under your neck, nor my heart to rest on, nor this mouth against your eyes. Because I must go far away someday. Then I must help others: it's my duty. Though it won't be this appealing. . . , dear soul. . .'

Right away I envisioned his departure, in the grip of vertigo cast from the most fearsome of shadows: death. I made him promise that he would not let me go. He made this lover's promise twenty times. And so it was with great futility that I told him: 'I understand you.'

Ah! I was never jealous of him. He won't leave me, I believed. What's next? He has no discernment, he'll never work. He wants to live like a sleepwalker. Do his goodness and charity alone stake him a claim in this world? For the moment, I forget my pity: he will make me strong, we'll travel, we'll hunt in the deserts, we'll sleep on the cobblestones of strange towns, painlessly and carelessly. Or I will wake to find that laws and mores have changed,—thanks to his

magic power,—and the world, remaining just the same, will leave me to my desires, my joys, my perfect indifference. Oh! Will you give me a life of children's book adventures in return for all my sufferings? He can't. I'm ignorant of his ideals. He has spoken of having regrets, aspirations: those have nothing to do with me. Does he speak to God? Perhaps I should address myself to God. I am in the depths of the abyss, and I can no longer pray.

"If he explained his sorrows to me, would I understand them any better than his sneers? He attacks me, he spends hours making me ashamed of all that moves me and becomes indignant when I weep.

"You see this elegant young man entering the calm and lovely house: He's called Duval, Armand, Maurice, for all I know. There's a woman who devotes herself to the whims of this mischievous idiot: she must be a saint in heaven. You will kill me as he will kill her. It's our fate, come to us because of our good hearts." Alas! There have been days when all men and their actions appear to him the playthings of grotesque deliria: He laughed frightfully, for a long time. —Then he assumed the air of a young mother, a beloved sister. If he had been less savage, we would have been saved! But his sweetness too is mortal. I am in submission to him. —Ah! I'm a fool!

"Perhaps one day he'll miraculously disappear; but I must know if he is to re-ascend to some heaven, in order to catch a glimpse of his apotheosis!"

What a peculiar household!

Crocuses

By Guillaume Apollinaire
Translated by Hannah Leclair

The meadow is lovely but poisonous in autumn
The cows grazing there
Are slowly sickening themselves
The bruise-colored crocus
Is flowering there your eyes are dark like that flower
Which is violet like the shadows under your eyes this autumn
And I sicken, slowly, for the sake of your eyes

The schoolchildren come, dressed in smocks
And making a ruckus with their harmonicas
They come to pick the crocuses that are like their mothers'
Daughters and daughters of them the color of shadows beneath
Your eyelids that flutter deliriously like these flowers beaten by the
wind

Autumn and the cowherd sings aloud and sweet
The slow lowing cows leave behind
This wide meadow's bitter harvest

Vacancies

By Michel Houellebecq
Translated by Hannah Leclair

Dead weather. A lapse installs itself in life.
Sunrays pivot on the plazas.
Sun's still: afternoon's invariable.
Arrowy reflections crisscross the sand.

In a boiling of moist unmoving air,
One overhears the intersecting of female insects.
I want to kill myself, to reenter a sect;
I want to move, but it'd be useless.
Five hours more the sky will be dark;
I'll await the morning crushing flies.
The shadows palpitate like little mouths;
Then morning returns, dry and blank, hopeless.

Délires

from Une Saison en Enfer by Arthur Rimbaud

I

Vierge Folle
L'époux infernal

Écoutez la confession d'un compagnon d'enfer :

"O divin Époux, mon Seigneur, ne refusez pas la confession de la plus triste de vos servantes. Je suis perdue. Je suis saouée. Je suis impure. Quelle vie !

"Pardon, divin Seigneur, pardon ! Ah ! pardon ! Que de larmes ! Et que de larmes encore plus tard, j'espère !

"Plus tard, je connaîtrai le divin Époux ! Je suis née soumise à Lui. - L'autre peut me battre maintenant !

"À présent, je suis au fond du monde ! O mes amies !... non, pas mes amies... Jamais délires ni tortures semblables... Est-ce bête !

"Ah ! je souffre, je crie. Je souffre vraiment. Tout pourtant m'est permis, chargée du mépris des plus méprisables coeurs.

"Enfin, faisons cette confidence, quitte à la répéter vingt autres fois, - aussi morne, aussi insignifiante !

"Je suis esclave de l'Époux infernal, celui qui a perdu les vierges folles. C'est bien ce démon-là. Ce n'est pas un spectre, ce n'est pas un fantôme. Mais moi qui ai perdu la sagesse, qui suis damnée et morte au monde, - on ne me tuera pas ! - Comment vous le décrire ! Je ne sais même plus parler. Je suis en deuil, je pleure, j'ai peur. Un peu de fraîcheur, Seigneur, si vous voulez, si vous voulez bien !

"Je suis veuve... - J'étais veuve... - mais oui, j'ai été bien sérieuse jadis, et je ne suis pas née pour devenir squelette !... - Lui était presque un enfant... Ses délicatesses mystérieuses m'avaient séduite. J'ai oublié tout mon devoir humain pour le suivre. Quelle vie ! La vraie vie est absente. Nous ne sommes pas au monde. Je sais où il va, il le faut. Et souvent il s'emporte contre moi, moi, la pauvre âme. Le Démon !

- c'est un Démon, vous savez, ce n'est pas un homme.

"Il dit : "Je n'aime pas les femmes. L'amour est à réinventer, on le sait. Elles ne peuvent plus que vouloir une position assurée. La position gagnée, coeur et beauté sont mis de côté : il ne reste que froid dédain, l'aliment du mariage aujourd'hui. Ou bien je vois des femmes, avec les signes du bonheur, dont, moi, j'aurai pu faire de bonnes camarades dévorées tout d'abord par des brutes sensibles comme des bûchers..."

"Je l'écoute faisant de l'infamie une gloire, de la cruauté un charme. "Je suis de race lointaine : mes pères étaient Scandinaves : ils se perçaient les côtes, buvaient leur sang. - Je me ferai des entailles partout le corps, je me tatouerai, je veux devenir hideux comme un Mongol : tu verras, je hurlerai dans les rues. Je veux devenir bien fou de rage. Ne me montre jamais de bijoux, je ramperais et me tordrais sur le tapis. Ma richesse, je la voudrais tachée de sang partout. Jamais je ne travaillerai..." Plusieurs nuits, son démon me saisissant, nous nous roulions, je luttais avec lui ! - Les nuits, souvent, ivre, il se poste dans des rues ou dans des maisons, pour m'épouvanter mortellement. - "On me coupera vraiment le cou ; ce sera dégoûtant." Oh ! ces jours où il veut marcher avec l'air du crime !

"Parfois il parle, en une façon de patois attendri, de la mort qui fait repentir, des malheureux qui existent certainement, des travaux pénibles, des départs qui déchirent les coeurs. Dans les bouges où nous nous enivrons, il pleurerait en considérant ceux qui nous entouraient, bétail de la misère. Il relevait les ivrognes dans les rues noires. Il avait la pitié d'une mère méchante pour les petits enfants. - Il s'en allait avec des gentilles de petite fille au catéchisme. - Il feignait d'être éclairé sur tout, commerce, art, médecine. - Je le suivais, il le faut !

"Je voyais tout le décor dont, en esprit, il s'entourait ; vêtements, draps, meubles : je lui prêtai des armes, une autre figure. Je voyais tout ce qui le touchait, comme il aurait voulu le créer pour lui. Quand il me semblait avoir l'esprit inerte, je le suivais, moi, dans des actions étranges et compliquées, loin, bonnes ou mauvaises : j'étais sûre de ne jamais entrer dans son monde. À côté de son cher corps endormi, que d'heures des nuits j'ai veillé, cherchant pourquoi il voulait tant s'évader de la réalité. Jamais homme n'eût pareil voeu. Je reconnaissais, - sans craindre pour lui, - qu'il pouvait être un sérieux danger dans société. - Il a peut-être des secrets pour changer la vie ? Non, il ne fait qu'en chercher, me répliquais-je. Enfin sa charité

est ensorcelée, et j'en suis la prisonnière. Aucune autre âme n'aurait assez de force, - force de désespoir ! - pour la supporter, - pour être protégée et aimée par lui. D'ailleurs, je ne me le figurais pas avec une autre âme : on voit son Ange, jamais l'Ange d'un autre, - je crois. J'étais dans son âme comme dans un palais qu'on a vidé pour ne pas voir une personne si peu noble que vous : voilà tout. Hélas ! je dépendais bien de lui. Mais que voulait-il avec mon existence terne et lâche ? Il ne me rendait pas meilleure, s'il ne me faisait pas mourir ! Tristement dépitée, je lui dis quelquefois : "Je te comprends." Il haussait les épaules.

"Ainsi, mon chagrin se renouvelant sans cesse, et me trouvant plus égarée à ses yeux, - comme à tous les yeux qui auraient voulu me fixer, si je n'eusse été condamnée pour jamais à l'oubli de tous ! - j'avais de plus en plus faim de sa bonté. Avec ses baisers et ses étreintes amies, c'était bien un ciel, un sombre ciel, où j'entraï, et où j'aurais voulu être laissée, pauvre, sourde, muette, aveugle. Déjà j'en prenais l'habitude. Je nous voyais comme deux bons enfants, libres de se promener dans le Paradis de tristesse. Nous nous accordions. Bien émus, nous travaillions ensemble. Mais, après une pénétrante caresse, il disait : "Comme ça te paraîtra drôle, quand je n'y serai plus, ce par quoi tu as passé. Quand tu n'auras plus mes bras sous ton cou, ni mon coeur pour t'y reposer, ni cette bouche sur tes yeux. Parce qu'il faudra que je m'en aille, très-loin, un jour. Puis il faut que j'en aide d'autres : c'est mon devoir. Quoique ce ne soit guère ragoûtant... , chère âme..." "Tout de suite je me pressentais, lui parti, en proie au vertige, précipitée dans l'ombre la plus affreuse : la mort. Je lui faisais promettre qu'il ne me lâcherait pas. Il l'a faite vingt fois, cette promesse d'amant. C'était aussi frivole que moi lui disant : "Je te comprends."

"Ah ! je n'ai jamais été jalouse de lui. Il ne me quittera pas, je crois. Que devenir ? Il n'a pas une connaissance ; il ne travaillera jamais. Il veut vivre somnambule. Seules, sa bonté et sa charité lui donneraient-elles droit dans le monde réel ? Par instants, j'oublie la pitié où je suis tombée : lui me rendra forte, nous voyagerons, nous chasserons dans les déserts, nous dormirons sur les pavés des villes inconnues, sans soins, sans peines. Ou je me réveillerai, et les lois et les moeurs auront changé, - grâce à son pouvoir magique, - le monde, en restant le même, me laissera à mes désirs, joies, nonchances. Oh ! la vie d'aventures qui existe dans les livres des enfants, pour me récompenser, j'ai tant souffert, me la donneras-tu ? Il ne peut pas. J'ignore son idéal. Il m'a dit avoir des regrets, des espoirs : cela ne doit pas me

regarder. Parle-t-il à Dieu ? Peut-être devrais-je m'adresser à Dieu. Je suis au plus profond de l'abîme, et je ne sais plus prier.

"S'il m'expliquait ses tristesses, les comprendrai-je plus que ses railleries ? Il m'attaque, il passe des heures à me faire honte de tout ce qui m'a pu toucher au monde, et s'indigne si je pleure.

"- Tu vois cet élégant jeune homme, entrant dans la belle et calme maison : il s'appelle Duval, Dufour, Armand, Maurice, que sais-je ? Une femme s'est dévouée à aimer ce méchant idiot : elle est morte, c'est certes une sainte au ciel, à présent. Tu me feras mourir comme il a fait mourir cette femme. C'est notre sort à nous, coeurs charitables..." Hélas ! Il avait des jours où tous les hommes agissant lui paraissaient les jouets de délires grotesques : il riait affreusement, longtemps. - Puis, il reprenait ses manières de jeune mère, de soeur aimée. S'il était moins sauvage, nous serions sauvés ! Mais sa douceur aussi est mortelle. Je lui suis soumise. - Ah ! je suis folle !

"Un jour peut-être il disparaîtra merveilleusement ; mais il faut que je sache, s'il doit remonter à un ciel, que je voie un peu l'assomption de mon petit ami !"

Drôle de ménage !

Les colchiques

by Guillaume Apollinaire

*Le pré est vénéneux mais joli en automne
Les vaches y paissant
Lentement s'empoisonnent
Le colchique couleur de cerne et de lilas
Y fleurit tes yeux sont comme cette fleur-la
Violatres comme leur cerne et comme cet automne
Et ma vie pour tes yeux lentement s'empoisonne*

*Les enfants de l'école viennent avec fracas
Vêtus de hoquetons et jouant de l'harmonica
Ils cueillent les colchiques qui sont comme des mères
Filles de leurs filles et sont couleur de tes paupières
Qui battent comme les fleurs battent au vent dément*

*Le gardien du troupeau chante tout doucement
Tandis que lentes et meuglant les vaches abandonnent
Pour toujours ce grand pré mal fleuri par l'automne*

Vacances

By Michel Houellebecq

*Un temps mort. Un trou blanc dans la vie qui s'installe.
Des rayons de soleil pivotent sur les dalles.
Le soleil dort ; l'après-midi est invariable.*

*Dans un bouillonnement d'air moite et peu mobile,
On entend se croiser les femelles d'insectes.
J'ai envie de me tuer, de rentrer dans une secte ;
J'ai envie de bouger, mais ce serait inutile.*

*Dans cinq heures au plus tard le ciel sera tout noir ;
J'attendrai le matin en écrasant des mouches.
Les ténèbres palpitent comme de petites bouches ;
Puis le matin revient, sec et blanc, sans espoir.*

Antique

Translated by Jesse Weiss

Graceful son of Pan! Your forehead, encircled by crowns of little flowers and berries, your eyes, precious spheres, shifting. Stained by brown shit, your cheeks become gaunt. Your fangs gleam. Your chest, a lyre, sparkles circle through your pale arms. Your heart beats in the belly where the double sex sleeps. Walk by night, gently moving that thigh, that other thigh and that left leg.

Antique

From "Illuminations" by Arthur Rimbaud (c. 1873-75)

Gracieux fils de Pan! Autour de ton front couronné de fleurettes et de baies tes yeux, des boules précieuses, remuent. Tachées de lies brunes, tes joues se creusent. Tes crocs luisent. Ta poitrine ressemble à une cithare, des tintements circulent dans tes bras blonds. Ton coeur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe. Promène-toi, la nuit, en mouvant doucement cette cuisse, cette seconde cuisse et cette jambe de gauche.

Eternity

Translated by Jesse Weiss

Found eternity.
It was just she
Going like sea
Sunshine on me.

Sentinel soul
Quietly confess,
Nights just a hole
And days, a mess.

Momentum be
Like human votes.
There you release,
And fly alone.

Since on your own
Satin burns fast.
Duties bemoaned,
Don't say: at last...

There, without hope
Lifted no more.
A misanthrope,
Torture is sure.

Found eternity.
It was just she
Going like sea
Sunshine on me.

Sleeper of the valley

Translated by Jesse Weiss

It's a gap of green where the river sings
Hanging dangling wildly ragged grass
Silver; where the sun and mountain are kings,
Glistening: a valley overflowing with the sunlight's mass.

A young soldier, mouth open, head plain,
The nape of his neck under a watercress shroud
Sleeping; he is stretched out in the grass, under a cloud,
Pale in his green bed where the light falls like rain.

Feet in the flowers, he sleeps. Smiling another
Smile like as a sick child, he asks his mother:
Nature, rock him warmly: he is cold.

The scent of the morning he does not smell; Blessed,
He sleeps in the sun, his hand on his chest
Tranquil. He has two red holes in his right side.

L'Éternité

By *Arthur Rimbaud* (Mai, 1872)

*Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi? — l'Éternité.
C'est la mer allée
Avec le soleil.*

*Âme sentinelle,
Murmurons l'aveu
De la nuit si nulle
Et du jour en feu.*

*Des humains suffrages,
Des communs élans,
Là tu te dégages
Et voles selon.*

*Puisque de vous seules,
Braises de satin,
Le Devoir s'exhale
Sans qu'on dise: enfin.*

*Là pas d'espérance,
Nul orietur.
Science avec patience,
Le supplice est sûr.*

*Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi? — l'Éternité.
C'est la mer allée
Avec le soleil.*

Le Dormeur du Val

By *Arthur Rimbaud* (Octobre, 1870)

*C'est un trou de verdure où chante une rivière
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons
D'argent; où le soleil, de la montagne fière,
Luit: c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.*

*Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue,
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,
Dort; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,
Pâle dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut.*

*Les pieds dans les glaïeuls, il dort. Souriant comme
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme:
Nature, berce-le chaudement: il a froid.*

*Les parfums ne font pas frissonner sa narine;
Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur sa poitrine
Tranquille. Il a deux trous rouges au côté droit.*

Tartuffe: Act V, Scene 1

By Molière

Translation by Matt Lazarus

ACT V

Scene 1 – ORGON, CLÉANTE

CLÉANTE

Hotspur! What could be the grail of this galloping gait?

ORGON

The hell should I know? Stupid, so stupid...

CLÉANTE

It strikes me as a rightful expedient to engage in a holistic enumeration of tactical avenues befitting the regnant circumstances.

ORGON

I'm losing my religion over this box situation... chafin' way more over that than the rest of it.

CLÉANTE

This box then, contains some untold sphinx?

ORGON

Argas, my buddy from college, he dumped it on me awhile back, told me to stash it good. Poor guy's been on the lamb, goin' state to state; last I heard he was in one of the Carolinas. Or it might'a

been the Dakotas. I'm not exactly sure about the charges, but they're definitely lookin' for him, I know that. So he comes to *me* for asylum! All his papers 'n stuff, his whole livelihood, in that box. We're talkin' big time trouble if any of that stuff gets out.

CLÉANTE

I can conceive of no tenable pretext for relinquishing it to another.

ORGON

Yeah, I can see why you would say that... but the stress, it was gettin' to me. I needed a way out. So I went and took it over to that backstabber, just to talk, y'know, get it off my chest, but that two-timin' son of a gun, he got all up in my head and he convinced me to let him have it - for safety's sake. I was nervous back then, you know, I didn't want to deal with no investigation. You know me, I'd be a sittin' duck. So he had the idea, this way I'd have an alibi, I could tell the authorities I didn't have it, 'n still be morally in line with the fact I wasn't lyin'.

CLÉANTE

If I am to lend credence to your delineation, then this quandary is one both vexatious and bleak. First, your pigeon-hearted unbosoming, and later, your celerious forfeiture, are, upon my own expressed valuation, an austere testament to your marked humiliation. His serpentine charms have you displaced and bemuddled, and as his newfound leverage is infallibly trouble, for your sake, a harebrained approach might well render him wild, and you ought to elect one that's suitably mild.

ORGON

It's amazing! I listened to that jackwagon for months... I mean he'd just about make you tear up, talkin' this and that about the

Lord, everlasting faith... unbelievable... underneath all that Bible-totin' flim-flam catamaran: nothin' but a bed of pure evil! And I'm the ding-a-ling that ate it up! Every last lie, I took it down like a bowl o' cheese grits, no questions asked. Well you better believe I'm callin' it quits now, lemme tell ya: no more associatin' with God-fearin' freeloadin' Jesus-junkies. I'm done! Any of those shady religious characters, it could be the Pope himself, I'll still slam a door in his face. Bunch 'o snake in the grasses, I hate 'em more than I ever despised the Devil.

CLÉANTE

Oh, Ichabod! Once more I am treated to a trademark deluge of spleenful castigation. Allergic, as it were, to any temperate demeanor, as though rational thought were a gross misdemeanor, you indulge in extremes like Bavarian cream. But now your slip-up rings clear as church bells, and you realize, by dint of your intuent wiles, 'twas facetious zeal that had you beguiled. But if t'wards your own person you seek some contrition, what would make you adopt this puerile disposition, conflating the viperous heart of one traitor with all those who earnestly serve our creator? Guff! As one duped by the ploy of this garish rapscaillon, by sermons that shone like a gleaming medallion, why presume that all others pursue the same model, and that bona fide faith is an obsolete fossil? Cede to the cynics these bovine conclusions; distinguish what's virtue from frothy illusion; take care not to dole out your fealty too promptly; and regard moderation as your one fait accompli. From adhering to cozenage, maintain a firm distance, but wholehearted zeal hardly merits resistance; and if resorting to extremes is your uniform mission, choose a surplus of trust over madcap suspicion.

Tartuffe: ACTE V, Scène première By Molière

ORGON, CLÉANTE. *CLÉANTE Où voulez-vous courir? ORGON Las! que sais-je? CLÉANTE Il me semble Que l'on doit commencer par consulter ensemble Les choses qu'on peut faire en cet événement. ORGON Cette cassette-là me trouble entièrement; Plus que le reste encore elle me désespère. CLÉANTE Cette cassette est donc un important mystère? ORGON C'est un dépôt qu'Argas, cet ami que je plains, Lui-même, en grand secret, m'a mis entre les mains: Pour cela, dans sa fuite, il me voulut élire; Et ce sont des papiers, à ce qu'il m'a pu dire, Où sa vie et ses biens se trouvent attachés. CLÉANTE Pourquoi donc les avoir en d'autres mains lâchés? ORGON Ce fut par un motif de cas de conscience: J'allai droit à mon traître en faire confidence; Et son raisonnement me vint persuader De lui donner plutôt la cassette à garder, Afin que, pour nier, en cas de quelque enquête, J'eusse d'un faux-fuyant la faveur toute prête, Par où ma conscience eût pleine sûreté À faire des serments contre la vérité. CLÉANTE Vous voilà mal, au moins si j'en crois l'apparence; Et la donation, et cette confidence, Sont, à vous en parler selon mon sentiment, Des démarches par vous faites légèrement. On peut vous mener loin avec de pareils gages; Et cet homme sur vous ayant ces avantages, Le pousser est encor grande imprudence à vous, Et vous deviez chercher quelque biais plus doux. ORGON Quoi? sous un beau semblant de ferveur si touchante Cacher un cœur si double, une âme si méchante! Et moi qui l'ai reçu gueusant et n'ayant rien. C'en est fait, je renonce à tous les gens de bien: J'en aurai désormais une horreur effroyable, Et m'en vais devenir pour eux pire qu'un diable. CLÉANTE Hé bien! ne voilà pas de vos emportements! Vous ne gardez en rien les doux tempéraments; Dans la droite raison jamais n'entre la vôtre, Et toujours d'un excès vous vous jetez dans l'autre. Vous voyez votre erreur, et vous avez connu Que par un zèle feint vous étiez prévenu; Mais pour vous corriger, quelle raison demande Que vous alliez passer dans une erreur plus grande, Et qu'avecque le cœur d'un perfide vaurien Vous confondiez les cours de tous les gens de bien? Quoi? parce qu'un fripon vous dupe avec audace Sous le pompeux éclat d'une austère grimace, Vous voulez que partout on soit fait comme lui, Et qu'aucun vrai dévot ne se trouve aujourd'hui? Laissez aux libertins ces sottises*

*conséquences; Démêlez la vertu d'avec ses apparences, Ne hasardez jamais
votre estime trop tôt, Et soyez pour cela dans le milieu qu'il faut: Gardez-
vous, s'il se peut, d'honorer l'imposture, Mais au vrai zèle aussi n'allez pas
faire injure; Et s'il vous faut tomber dans une extrémité, Péchez plutôt encor
de cet autre côté.*

Royalty

From *Illuminations* by Arthur Rimbaud

Translated by Duncan Barile

One fine morning, in the land of a staunchly gentle people, a splendid man and woman were shouting in the public square: "My friends, I want her to be queen!" "I want to be queen!" She was laughing and trembling. He spoke to his friends of revelation, of ordeals at last complete. They swooned on top of each other. In fact they reigned for a whole morning, when the carmined drapes were hoisted atop the houses, and all afternoon, when they advanced to the edge of the palm groves.

Childhood

From *Illuminations* by Arthur Rimbaud

Translated by Duncan Barile

I This false god, black-eyed and yellow-maned, devoid of lineage and court, nobler than the fable, Mexican and Flemish; its domain, brazen azure and verdure, runs over beaches named, by waves without ships, names ferociously Greek, Slav, Celtic. At the edge of the forest—the dreamflowers sound, burst, shed light,—the girl with the orange lip, her knees crossed in the limpid flood welling up from the leas, nudity which the rainbows, the flora, the sea, enshadow, move through, and clothe. Ladies who twirl on the seaside verandas; infants and giants, splendid black women in the aeruginous moss, jewels standing on the miry ground of the thawed thickets and gardens — young mothers and tall sisters with gazes full of pilgrimage, sultanas, princesses hypnotically gaited and dressed, little foreigners and those who are gently unhappy. What ennui, the hour of ‘sweet body’ and ‘sweetheart!’

II That’s she, the little dead girl, behind the rosebush. — The young mum who passed away descends the porch steps. — The cousin’s carriage shrieks on the sand. — The little brother — (he’s in the Indies!) there, before the setting sun, on the lea of carnations. — The old, whom we have buried standing up in the wallflowered rampart. The swarm of gold leaves surrounds the general’s house. They are in the South. — We follow the red path to arrive at the empty inn. The chateau is for sale. The shutters are detached from their frames. — The parish priest will have taken the key to the church. — The guardposts surrounding the park are deserted. The palisades are so high that one can only glimpse the treetops rustling. There’s nothing to see in there anyway. The leas climb toward roosterless, anvilless towns. The floodgate has risen. Oh, the calvaries and mills of the desert, the islands and millstones. Enchanted flowers were buzzing. The slopes cradled him. Beasts of a fabled elegance were circulating. The clouds were amassing on the high sea made of an eternity of hot tears.

III In the woods there is a bird, its song stops you and makes you blush. There is a clock which does not chime. There is a gorge with a nest of white creatures. There is a cathedral which sinks and a lake which rises. There is a little carriage abandoned in the thicket, or which races down the path, enribboned. There is a troupe of costumed child actors, noticed on the route through the edge of the woods. There is, finally, when you are hungry and thirsty, someone who hunts you down.

IV I am the saint, bent in prayer on the veranda,—as the peaceable beasts graze all the way to the Palestine sea. I am the wise man in the somber armchair. The branches and rain barrage the library window. I am the walker of the highway which runs through the shrunken woods; the din of the floodgates drowns out my steps. For a long time, I see the setting sun launder the sky with gold. I would gladly be the child abandoned on the jetty to set off for the high seas, the little footman walking down the tree-lined avenue whose forehead grazes the sky. The paths are arduous. The hills are cloaked with broom. The air is still. How far away the birds and wellsprings are! It can only be the end of the world, advancing.

V Will someone finally lend me this lime-whitened tomb, with lines of cement in relief — deep under the earth. I lean my elbows on the table, the lamp lights up quite brightly these journals which I am an idiot to reread, these vapid books. At an enormous distance above my subterranean salon, houses are implanted, sea-fogs assemble. The mud is red or black. Monstrous city, endless night! Less high up are the sewers. On the sides, nothing but the girth of the globe. Perhaps the azure chasms, the bottomless pits of fire. It is, perhaps, on such maps as these that moons and comets, seas and fables meet. In hours of bitterness, I imagine balls of sapphire, of metal. I am master of the silence. Why does the appearance of a window blanch the corner of the vault?

Sentences

From *Illuminations* by Arthur Rimbaud

Translated by Duncan Barile

When the world is reduced to a lone black wood for our four astonished eyes, — to a beach for two loyal children, — to a musical house for our bright sympathy, — I will find you. Let there be only a lone old man down here, calm and beautiful, surrounded by an “unheard-of luxury,” — and I am at your knees. Let me have realized all your memories, — let me be the one who knows how to yoke you, — I will suffocate you.

•

When we are very strong, — who withdraws? very cheery, — who falters from ridicule? When we are very mean,—what would they do with us? Dress up, dance, laugh. — I will never be able to send Love through the window.

•

My comrade, beggar, monstrous child! How little they matter to you, these unhappy women and these manoeuvres, and my shame. Bond yourself to us with your impossible voice, your voice! the one flatterer of this vile despair.

•

A cloudy morning, in July. A taste of cinders flies through the air; — a smell of wood sweating in the hearth, — the waterlogged flowers, — the commotion of strolls, — the drizzle of the fieldside canals, — why not the toys and the incense yet?

•

I strung ropes from belfry to belfry; garlands from window to window; golden chains from star to star, and I dance.

•

The high waters steam continually. What witch will rise on the white horizon? What blooming violets will descend?

•

While the public funds flow in festivals of brotherhood, he rings a bell of pink fire in the clouds.

•

Arousing an agreeable taste of China ink, a black powder rains gently on my vigil.—I lower the fires of lustre, throw myself on the bed, and, turned on the shadowed side, I see you, my daughters! my queens!

Royauté

By Arthur Rimbaud

Un beau matin, chez un peuple fort doux, un homme et une femme superbes criaient sur la place publique. « Mes amis, je veux qu'elle soit reine ! » « Je veux être reine ! » Elle riait et tremblait. Il parlait aux amis de révélation, d'épreuve terminée. Ils se pâmaient l'un contre l'autre.

En effet ils furent rois toute une matinée où les tentures carminées se relevèrent sur les maisons, et toute l'après-midi, où ils s'avancèrent du côté des jardins de palmes.

Enfance

By Arthur Rimbaud

I

Cette idole, yeux noirs et crin jaune, sans parents ni cour, plus noble que la fable, mexicaine et flamande ; son domaine, azur et verdure insolents, court sur des plages nommées, par des vagues sans vaisseaux, de noms féroce­ment grecs, slaves, celtiques.

À la lisière de la forêt — les fleurs de rêve tintent, éclatent, éclairent, — la fille à lèvres d'orange, les genoux croisés dans le clair déluge qui sourd des prés, nudité qu'ombrent, traversent et habillent les arcs-en-ciel, la flore, la mer.

Dames qui tournoient sur les terrasses voisines de la mer ; enfantes et géantes, superbes noires dans la mousse vert-de-gris, bijoux debout sur le sol gras des bosquets et des jardinets dégelés — jeunes mères et grandes sœurs aux regards pleins de pèlerinages, sultanes, princesses de démarche et de costume tyranniques petites étrangères et personnes doucement malheureuses.

Quel ennui, l'heure du « cher corps » et « cher cœur » !

II

C'est elle, la petite morte, derrière les rosiers. — La jeune maman trépassée descend le perron — La calèche du cousin crie sur le sable — Le petit frère — (il est aux Indes !) là, devant le couchant, sur le pré d'œillets. — Les vieux qu'on a enterrés tout droits dans le rempart aux giroflées.

L'essaim des feuilles d'or entoure la maison du général. Ils sont dans le midi. — On suit la route rouge pour arriver à l'auberge vide. Le château est à vendre ; les persiennes sont détachées. — Le curé aura emporté la clef de l'église. — Autour du parc, les loges des gardes sont inhabitées. Les palissades sont si hautes qu'on ne voit que les cimes bruissantes. D'ailleurs il n'y a rien à voir là-dedans.

Les prés remontent aux hameaux sans coqs, sans enclumes. L'écluse est levée. Ô les calvaires et les moulins du désert, les îles et les meules.

Des fleurs magiques bourdonnaient. Les talus le berçaient. Des bêtes d'une élégance fabuleuse circulaient. Les nuées s'amassaient sur la haute mer faite d'une éternité de chaudes larmes.

III

Au bois il y a un oiseau, son chant vous arrête et vous fait rougir.

Il y a une horloge qui ne sonne pas.

Il y a une fondrière avec un nid de bêtes blanches.

Il y a une cathédrale qui descend et un lac qui monte.

Il y a une petite voiture abandonnée dans le taillis, ou qui descend le sentier en courant, enrubannée.

Il y a une troupe de petits comédiens en costumes, aperçus sur la route à travers la lisière du bois.

Il y a enfin, quand l'on a faim et soif, quelqu'un qui vous chasse.

IV

Je suis le saint, en prière sur la terrasse, — comme les bêtes pacifiques paissent jusqu'à la mer de Palestine.

Je suis le savant au fauteuil sombre. Les branches et la pluie se jettent à la croisée de la bibliothèque.

Je suis le piéton de la grand'route par les bois nains ; la rumeur des écluses couvre mes pas. Je vois longtemps la mélancolique lessive d'or du couchant.

Je serais bien l'enfant abandonné sur la jetée partie à la haute mer, le petit valet, suivant l'allée dont le front touche le ciel.

Les sentiers sont âpres. Les monticules se couvrent de genêts. L'air est immobile. Que les oiseaux et les sources sont loin ! Ce ne peut être que la fin du monde, en avançant.

V

Qu'on me loue enfin ce tombeau, blanchi à la chaux avec les lignes du ciment en relief — très loin sous terre.

Je m'accoude à la table, la lampe éclaire très vivement ces journaux que je suis idiot de relire, ces livres sans intérêt.

À une distance énorme au-dessus de mon salon souterrain, les maisons s'implantent, les brumes s'assemblent. La boue est rouge ou noire. Ville monstrueuse, nuit sans fin !

Moins haut, sont des égouts. Aux côtés, rien que l'épaisseur du globe. Peut-être les gouffres d'azur, des puits de feu. C'est peut-être sur ces plans que se rencontrent lunes et comètes, mers et fables.

Aux heures d'amertume je m'imagine des boules de saphir, de métal. Je suis maître du silence. Pourquoi une apparence de soupirail blémirait-elle au coin de la voûte ?

Phrases By Arthur Rimbaud

Quand le monde sera réduit en un seul bois noir pour nos quatre yeux étonnés, — en une plage pour deux enfants fidèles, — en une maison musicale pour notre claire sympathie, — je vous trouverai.

Qu'il n'y ait ici-bas qu'un vieillard seul, calme et beau, entouré d'un « luxe inouï », — et je suis à vos genoux.

Que j'aie réalisé tous vos souvenirs, — que je sois celle qui sait vous garrotter, — je vous étoufferai.

Quand nous sommes très forts, — qui recule ? très gais, qui tombe de ridicule ? Quand nous sommes très méchants, que ferait-on de nous.

Parez-vous, dansez, riez, — je ne pourrai jamais envoyer l'Amour par la fenêtre.

— Ma camarade, mendiante, enfant monstre ! comme ça t'est égal, ces malheureuses et ces manœuvres, et mes embarras. Attache-toi à nous avec ta voix impossible, ta voix ! unique flatteur de ce vil désespoir.

Une matinée couverte, en Juillet. Un goût de cendres vole dans l'air ; — une odeur de bois suant dans l'âtre, — les fleurs rouies, — le saccage des promenades, — la bruine des canaux par les champs — pourquoi pas déjà les joujoux et l'encens ?

J'ai tendu des cordes de clocher à clocher ; des guirlandes de fenêtre à fenêtre ; des chaînes d'or d'étoile à étoile, et je danse.

Le haut étang fume continuellement. Quelle sorcière va se dresser sur le couchant blanc ? Quelles violettes frondaisons vont descendre ?

Pendant que les fonds publics s'écoulent en fêtes de fraternité, il sonne une cloche de feu rose dans les nuages.

Avivant un agréable goût d'encre de Chine, une poudre noire pleut

*doucement sur ma veillée. — Je baisse les feux du lustre, je me jette sur le lit,
et, tourné du côté de l'ombre, je vous vois, mes filles ! mes reines !*

What Happens

Translated by Violet Primoff

I handed over to you my blood, my sounds,
my hands, my head,
and what's more, my loneliness, that great mistress,
like a day in May so sweet with autumn,
and what's even more, all of my forgetting
so that you might undo it and last through the night,
through the storm, through the disgrace,
and more still, I gave you my death,
I will see your face rise up among the waves of shadows,

and still I can't take you in, you keep growing
like a fire,
and you destruct me, construct me, you are dark
like light

Lo que pasa

by Juan Gelman

*Yo te entregué mi sangre, mis sonidos,
mis manos, mi cabeza,
y lo que es más, mi soledad, la gran señora,
como un día de mayo dulcísimo de otoño,
y lo que es más aún, todo mi olvido
para que lo desbagas y dures en la noche,
en la tormenta, en la desgracia,
y más aún, te di mi muerte,
veré subir tu rostro entre el oleaje de las sombras,*

*y aún no puedo abarcarte, sigues creciendo
como un fuego,
y me destruyes, me construyes, eres oscura
como la luz.*

Small Deaths

Translation by Alejandro Castro

Small deaths

Dreams are small deaths
swindles advances simulations of death
awakening instead seems
a resurrection and just in case
we forget quickly what's been dreamt
even with its fires its caves
its orgasms its glories its frights
dreams are small deaths
so when awakening arrives
and at once the dream has itself forget
maybe it means to say that what we yearn
is to forget death
just that.

Pequeñas muertes

By Mario Benedetti

Pequeñas muertes

*Los sueños son pequeñas muertes
tramoyas anticipos simulacros de muerte
el despertar en cambio nos parece
una resurrección y por las dudas
olvidamos cuanto antes lo soñado
A pesar de sus fuegos sus cavernas
sus orgasmos sus glorias sus espantos
los sueños son pequeñas muertes
por eso cuando llega el despertar
y de inmediato el sueño se hace olvido
tal vez quiera decir que lo que ansiamos
es olvidar la muerte
apenas eso.*

Caro Nonno

Translation by Sean Popermhem

You knew me before I was born,
Before I knew all the things I know now.
I know that you read a lot;
You had read my story before it was written.
It is as if you lived in a universe of words
Where you can't express nothing,
And where silence is the simple voice of divine existence.
But now we are on earth
And we are lost.
Now, I am outside of the circle of your voice,
Distant from the square of your fate,
In America, of a new millennium,
At the fissure of time between you and me.
I don't know—

And I will listen to you. Indeed,
We don't need to struggle in order
To have the feeling of family.
For light travels faster than time,
And love lives longer than words.

Caro Nonno

By Sean Popermhem

*Mi conoscevi già prima che io nascessi,
Prima di sapere tutte le cose che so adesso.
Io so che tu leggi molto;
Hai letto la mia storia prima che fosse scritta.
È come se tu abitassi in un universo di parole,
Dove non puoi esprimere niente,
E dove il silenzio è la voce semplice dell'esistenza divina.
Ma adesso stiamo sulla terra
E siamo persi.
Adesso, io sono fuori dal cerchio della tua voce,
Distante dalla piazza del tuo fato,
In America, di un millennio nuovo,
Alla fessura del tempo fra te e me.
Boh.
Ma io non mi preoccupo di questo.
La vita è un giro per trovare le parole giuste.
E forse il mondo è spezzato, ma io sto ancora cercando le mie radici
Per fiorire. Insomma,
Mi parli da questa barriera,
E io ti ascolterò. Infatti,
Non abbiamo bisogno di lottare
Per avere la sensazione di famiglia.
Perché la luce viaggia più veloce del tempo,
E l'amore vive più delle parole.*

Excerpt from Chapter 7, "Thought and Word," from *Thinking and Speech* (1934)

By Lev Vygotsky

Translation by Amanda Gan

"I forgot the word that I wanted to say, and the unbodied thought will return to the hall of shadows."

We began our research with an attempt to clarify the internal relationship that exists between thought and word in the most extreme stages of phylogenetic and ontogenetic development. We found that the beginning of the development of thought and word, the prehistoric period in the existence of thinking and speech, does not show any definite relationships and dependencies between the genetic roots of thought and word. Thus, it appears that the inner relationship between word and thought that concerns us is neither primordial, nor is it a pre-given value which appears to be a precondition, foundation, and starting point for all further development. Instead they themselves arise and are formed only in the process of the historical development of human consciousness. They themselves do not appear to be a precondition but the product of the formation of mankind.

Even in the supreme point of animal development (the anthropoids), which is quite humanlike in the phonetic relations, the speech is not in any way related to the (also the anthropoid's) intellect. In the initial stage of child development we may undoubtedly ascertain the presence of pre-intellectual stage in the process of speech formation and the preverbal stage in the development of thinking. Thought and word are not inherently related to each other. This bond emerges, changes, and grows in the course of the very development of thought and word.

However, at the same time it would be incorrect, as we have

attempted to clarify at the beginning of our research, to represent thought and speech as two external processes with respect to one another, as two independent forces that flow and function parallel to each other or that intersect in different points of their own path, as well as those that fall into a mechanical interaction. The absence of a primal connection between thought and word does not in any way indicate that this connection can only emerge as an external connection of two diverse forms of the activity of our consciousness. On the contrary, as we tried to demonstrate in the very beginning of our work, the basic methodological flaw of the vast body of research on thinking and speech are the flaws that stimulated the fruitlessness of these works and the flaws that consist precisely in this understanding of the relationship between thought and word that consider both these processes as two independent, separate and isolated elements, from the external unification where verbal thinking emerges with all of its inherent properties.

We have attempted to show that the method of analysis that flows out of this understanding appears to be a failure from the outset as it dissolves this whole into its forming elements, in order to explain the properties of verbal thinking, to speech and thinking that do not contain the characteristics that are inherent to the whole. It thereby closes itself the path ahead towards the explanation of these properties. We compared the researcher who uses this method to one who decomposes water into hydrogen and oxygen in attempt to explain why water extinguishes fire. Surprisingly he observed that oxygen sustains combustion, while hydrogen itself is combustible. We continued to show further, that the analysis that uses the method of dissolution of elements is not essentially the analysis in the purest sense of the word but in terms of its application to the solution of concrete problems in any particular area of the phenomena. Instead, this is a rising of the phenomenon to a more general level rather than the inner partitioning of the phenomenon that is the underlying explanation. By its own nature this method leads more towards a generalization

than it does to an analysis. Indeed, to say that water consists of hydrogen and oxygen is to say nothing similar to all which applies to water in general as well as all of its consistent properties: to the great ocean in the same degree as to a rain drop, to the water's ability to extinguish fire, in the same extent as to Archimedes' law. Precisely in the same way, to say that verbal thinking contains intellectual processes and speech functions (themselves), is to say nothing that leads to verbal thinking as a whole and to all of its separate properties in the same extent. It therefore means that it is to say nothing regarding each particular problem that is faced by the research of verbal thinking.

Hence, we have tried to embark on a new point of view from the beginning by assigning to the whole problem a different direction and applying a different method of analysis in the research. We attempted to replace the analysis, which is based on the method of dissolution into elements, with the analysis that separate the complicated whole of verbal thinking into units, understanding by the latter the kinds of products of the analysis that form the initial aspects of the moments not in relation to phenomenon as a whole, but only in relation to its separate concrete aspects and properties. Further more, similarly, in the distinction from the elements, they do not lose the properties that are inherent to the whole and the properties that are subjected to the explanation. Instead, they contain in the most simple and primitive form, the properties of the whole, for whose sake the experiment is undertaken. The unit, towards which we come into the analysis, contains the simplest form of properties that are inherent to the verbal thinking as a whole.

Excerpt from Chapter 7, "Thought and Word," from
Thinking and Speech (1934)

By Lev Vygotsky

Глава седьмая. Мысль и слово

“Я слово позабыл, что я хотел сказать, И мысль бесплотная в чертог теней вернется.”

Мы начали наше исследование с попытки выяснить внутреннее отношение, существующее между мыслью и словом на самых крайних ступенях фило- и онтогенетического развития. Мы нашли, что начало развития мысли и слова, доисторический период в существовании мышления и речи, не обнаруживает никаких определенных отношений и зависимостей между генетическими корнями мысли и слова. Таким образом, оказывается, что искомые нами внутренние отношения между словом и мыслью не есть изначальная, наперед данная величина, которая является предпосылкой, основой и исходным пунктом всего дальнейшего развития, но сами возникают и складываются только в процессе исторического развития человеческого сознания, сами являются не предпосылкой, но продуктом становления человека. Даже в высшем пункте животного развития — у антропоидов — вполне человекоподобная в фонетическом отношении речь оказывается никак не связанной с — тоже человекоподобным — интеллектом. И в начальной стадии

детского развития мы могли с несомненностью констатировать наличие доинтеллектуальной стадии в процессе формирования речи и доречевой стадии в развитии мышления. Мысль и слово не связаны между собой изначальной связью. Эта связь возникает, изменяется и разрастается в ходе самого развития мысли и слова. Но

вместе с тем было бы неверно, как это мы старались выяснить в самом начале нашего исследования, представлять себе мышление и речь как два внешних друг по отношению к другу процесса, как две независимые силы, которые протекают и действуют параллельно друг другу или пересекаясь в отдельных точках своего пути и вступая в механическое взаимодействие. Отсутствие изначальной связи между мыслью и словом ни в какой мере не означает того, что эта связь может возникать только как внешняя связь двух разнородных по существу видов деятельности нашего сознания. Напротив, как мы стремились показать в самом начале нашей работы, основной методологический порок огромного большинства исследований мышления и речи, порок, обусловивший бесплодность этих работ, и состоит как раз в таком понимании отношений между мыслью и словом, которое рассматривает оба эти процесса как два независимых, самостоятельных и изолированных элемента, из внешнего

объединения которых возникает речевое мышление со всеми присущими ему свойствами.

Мы стремились показать, что вытекающий из такого понимания метод анализа является наперед обреченным на неудачу, ибо он для объяснения свойств речевого мышления как целого разлагает это целое на образующие его элементы — на речь и мышление, которые не содержат в себе свойств, присущих целому, — и тем самым закрывает себе наперед дорогу к объяснению этих свойств. Исследователя, пользующегося этим методом, мы уподобляли человеку, который попытался бы для объяснения того, почему вода тушит огонь, разложить воду на кислород и водород и с удивлением бы увидел, что кислород поддерживает горение, а водород сам горит. Мы

пытались показать далее, что этот анализ, пользующийся методом разложения на элементы, не есть в сущности анализ в собственном смысле этого слова, с точки зрения приложения его к разрешению конкретных проблем в какой-либо определенной области явлений. Это есть, скорее, возведение к общему, чем внутреннее расчленение и выделение частного, содержащегося в подлежащем объяснению 953/феномене. По самой своей сущности этот метод приводит скорее к обобщению, чем к анализу. В самом деле, сказать, что вода состоит из водорода и

кислорода, значит сказать нечто такое, что одинаково относится ко всей воде вообще и ко всем ее свойствам в равной мере: к Великому океану в такой же мере, как к дождевой капле, к свойству воды тушить огонь в такой же мере, как к закону Архимеда. Так же точно сказать, что речевое мышление содержит в себе интеллектуальные процессы и собственно речевые функции, означает сказать нечто такое, что относится ко всему речевому мышлению в целом и ко всем его отдельным свойствам в одинаковой степени, и тем самым означает не сказать ничего по поводу каждой конкретной проблемы, встающей перед исследованием речевого мышления. Мы пытались поэтому с самого начала встать на другую точку зрения, придать всей проблеме другую постановку и применить в исследовании другой метод анализа. Анализ, пользующийся методом разложения на элементы, мы пытались заменить анализом, расчленяющим сложное единство речевого мышления на единицы, понимая под этими последними такие продукты анализа, которые в отличие от элемента образуют первичные моменты не по отношению ко всему изучаемому явлению в целом, но только по отношению к отдельным конкретным его сторонам и свойствам и которые, далее, также в отличие от элементов не

утрачивают свойств, присущих целому и

подлежащих объяснению, но содержат в себе в самом простом, первоначальном виде те свойства целого, ради которых предпринимается анализ. Единица, к которой мы приходим в анализе, содержит в себе в каком-то наипростейшем виде свойства, присущие речевому мышлению как единству.

A rifleman's song for the Latvian girl

Translated by Andrejs Manteniņš

If you have sorrow, my friend,
 Don't go,
 Don't go up, the hill's round café:
 There sit now only ladies,
 whose scent is the finest lip salve,
 eastern essences,
 and their dearest cigars,
 there the gypsy fiddler, far too striking,
 and some youths, tarrying for hours at the single coffee cup,
 covertly glancing at the lonely girls.
 Don't go.

If you have sorrow, my friend,
 come to me.

I have a candle's stub
 in a finished balzam bottle,
 a small, shabby card table,
 which bought yesterday,
 and a glass of sailor's liquor.
 Come.

I'll lay you my coat on the floor,
 for us the moon will shine through the window,
 pigeons will softly coo on the neighbor's roof,
 and I'll sing you songs,
 about birds and water.

Come...

Strēlnieka dziesma latviešu meitenei

By Aleksandrs Čaks

*Ja tev skumji, mans draugs, Neej, Neej augšā, kalna apaļā kafejnīcā: tur vairs
 sēd tikai dāmas, kas smaršo pēc labākās lūpu pomādes, austrumu esencēm un
 savu mīļāko cigāriem, tur vijolists žīds, par daudz skaists, un dažī
 jaunekļi kavējas stundām pie vienīgās kafijas tases, slepeni veroties vientuļās
 jaunavās. Neej. Ja tev skumji, mans draugs, nāc pie manis. Man sveces
 gals izdzertā balzama pudelē, mazs iebrūns pasjansa galds, ko es nopirku
 vakar, un glāze matrožu degvīna. Nāc. Es tev paklāšu mēтели savu uz
 grīdas, mēness mums spīdēs pa logu, uz kaimiņu jumta dūdos paklusi
 dūjas, un es tev dziedāšu dziesmas par putniem un ūdeni. Nāc...*

Canto VIII

From *Der Untergang der Titanic (The Wreck of Titanic)* by Hans Magnus Enzensberger
Translated by Christopher Shea

Salt water in the tennis courts! Why yes, that is irritating,
but wet feet are a far cry from the end of the world.
People always crow too soon about a downfall,
like suicides who seek an alibi, and thereby
lose sight of the details, lose their nerve.
Who likes drowning, and in three degrees below freezing at that?
If the passengers' judgment in the moment of crisis
turns out to be less restrained than would be desirable,
oh well! After all, I myself am sitting here, shivering
on this godforsaken steamer, albeit in first class
and over a vintage port which, incidentally, is remarkable.

But let us suppose that *Titanic* should in fact go under,
which I personally hold to be impossible – I'm an engineer
and my imagination is not all that well endowed –
so what? What comes of it? As a matter of sheer statistics,
there may at any given moment be a few dozen ships in distress,
and no one gives two hoots about them, namely because they're
called *Rosalinda II*
or *Splendid Prospect*, and not *Titanic*! Conversely: think on the tens
of thousands of vessels underway on all oceans of the world, who
will,
even if *we* drown, reach their destinations punctually and
unaffected.

Apart from that, every innovation traces its roots to catastrophe:
new tools, theories, and sentiments – one calls it evolution.
And so I say: Even if we presume, for the fun of it,
that all ships were to sink on one and the same day,

then we would have to dream up something else:
enormous sky yachts, trained whales, iron clouds.
Or live stationary lives. The trees have done that for some time,
evidently with success. And should we come up with nothing –
whole other lifeforms have, after all, died out,
I daresay to our advantage. Where would we be today
had not the flying lizards and mighty dinosaurs at some point
bumped into certain problems that their brains
could not readily sort out. Do you see?

From this I deduce that it's fruitless to observe
each and every incident that one happens to encounter, such as,
for example, one's own death, from too narrow a point of view.
With that I tell you, as port-wine-drinker and engineer,
naturally nothing new, and so I'll go below.

Flying Robert

By Hans Magnus Enzensberger

Translated by Christopher Shea

Escapism, you all snap at me,
reproachful.

What do you expect, I answer,
in this bogweather! –

spread open my umbrella
and rise up with the gusts.

From where you stand,
I grow smaller and ever smaller
until I've disappeared,

leaving behind nothing
but a tale

for stormy days,

which you, green-eyed,
sink into your children's ears
so they don't fly away from you.

Achter Gesand

By Hans Magnus Enzensberger

Salzwasser in der Tennishalle! Ja, das ist ärgerlich,
aber nasse Füße sind noch lang nicht das Ende der Welt.
Die Leute freuen sich immer zu früh auf den Untergang,
wie Selbstmörder, die ein Alibi suchen, und dabei
verlieren sie dann die Übersicht und die Nerven.
Wer ertrinkt schon gern, noch dazu bei minus zwei Grad?
Daß das Urteil der Passagiere im Augenblick der Gefahr
nicht so maßvoll ausfällt, wie das wünschenswert wäre,
naja! Schließlich sitze ich selber hier, schlotternd,
auf diesem gottverdammten Dampfer, wenn auch First Class
und bei einem Vintage Port, der allerdings denkwürdig ist.

Aber gesetzt den Fall, die Titanic ginge tatsächlich unter,
was ich persönlich für ausgeschlossen halte – ich bin Ingenieur,
und meine Phantasie ist nicht allzu reich entwickelt –
na und? Was folgt daraus? Rein statistisch gesehen,
befinden sich jederzeit ein paar Dutzend Schiffe in Seenot,
und kein Hahn kräht danach, weil sie nämlich Rosalinde II
oder Schöne Aussicht heißen, und nicht Titanic! Umgekehrt:
Denken Sie mal an die zigtausend Fahrzeuge, unterwegs
auf allen Weltmeeren, die ihre Bestimmungshafen,
auch wenn wir ersaufen, erreichen werden, pünktlich und ungerührt.

Im übrigen geht jede Innovation auf eine Katastrophe zurück:
neue Werkzeuge, Theorien und Gefühle – man nennt das Evolution.
Deshalb sage ich: Selbst einmal angenommen, spaßeshalber,
sämtliche Schiffe versänken an ein und demselben Tag,
so müßten wir uns eben etwas anderes einfallen lassen:
enorme Himmelssegler, dressierte Wale, eiserne Wolken.
Oder stationär leben. Die Bäume tun das seit längerer Zeit,
offenbar mit Erfolg. Und falls uns nichts einfallen sollte –
ganz andere Lebensformen sind schließlich schon ausgestorben,
ich möchte sagen, zu unserem Vorteil. Wo wären wir heute,

wenn die Flugechsen und die Saurier nicht irgendwann auf gewisse Probleme gestoßen wären, die ihre Gehirne nicht ohne weiteres lösen konnten. Sehen Sie?

Hieraus schliesse ich, daß es zwecklos ist, jeden Zwischenfall, der einen zufällig selber betrifft, wie z. B. den eigenen Tod, aus einem allzuengen Gesichtswinkel zu betrachten. Damit sage ich Ihnen, als Portweintrinker und Ingenieur, natürlich nichts Neues, und deshalb gehe ich unter.

Der fliegende Robert

By Hans Magnus Enzensberger

*Eskapismus, ruft ihr mir zu,
vorwurfsvoll.*

*Was denn sonst, antworte ich,
bei diesem Sauwetter! —,
spanne den Regenschirm auf
und erhebe mich in die Lüfte.*

*Von euch aus gesehen,
werde ich immer kleiner und kleiner,
bis ich verschwunden bin.*

*Ich hinterlasse nichts weiter
als eine Legende,
mit der ihr Neidhammel,
wenn es draußen stürmt,
euern Kindern in den Ohren liegt,
damit sie euch nicht davonfliegen.*

*Note: “Der fliegende Robert” (“Flying Robert”) is a story from *Der Strunwelpeter (Shockheaded Peter)* by Heinrich Hoffmann, an 1845 collection of cautionary tales. Robert decides to play outside during a storm. The wind catches his umbrella and carries him away, never to be seen again.*

HEBREW

Psalms 29 and 99

Translated by Noach Lundgren

Psalm 29

1 A Psalm of David: Attribute to the LORD, sons of mighty ones, attribute to the LORD glory and strength. **2** Attribute to the LORD the glory of His name; bow down to the LORD in the splendor of holiness. **3** The LORD's voice is over the waters; the G-d of glory thunders, the LORD over many waters. **4** The LORD's voice in strength, the LORD's voice in splendor. **5** The LORD's voice breaks cedars; the LORD splinters the cedars of Levanon. **6** He makes them skip like a calf, Levanon and Siryon like a son of bulls. **7** The LORD's voice strikes lightning flashes. **8** The LORD's voice shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the desert of Kadesh. **9** The LORD's voice makes the deer give birth and strips the forests; and in His temple all say 'glory.' **10** The LORD sat over the flood, the LORD sits enthroned, king forever. **11** The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people in peace.

Psalm 99

1 The LORD reigns, the nations shall tremble; He sits throned of the cherubim, the earth shall shake. **2** The LORD, in Tzion, is great, and exalted is He over all the nations. **3** They shall acknowledge Your name, great and awesome, holy is He. **4** Mighty King, loving justice, You have established equity; justice and right You have wrought in Ya'akov. **5** Exalt the LORD our G-d and bow down at His footstool; holy is He. **6** Mosheh and Aharon among His priests, and Shmu'el among those who call His name, they called to the LORD and He answered them. **7** In a pillar of cloud He spoke to them; they observed His precepts and the law He gave to them. **8** LORD our G-d, You answered them; You were a G-d of forgiveness to them, and repaid their misdeeds.

9 Exalt the LORD our G-d and worship at the mountain of His holiness, for holy is the LORD our G-d.

A Pompeji Strázsán

By Faludy György

Translated by Tamas Panitz

III.

Let my sin today be nakedness,
from when in a crowd, in this hot clothing,
I wished to expose my delicate
nipples,—why shame?— These nipples are not mine:—
from seeds and from the earth we are born. Our brains
foreign cells and within us women deeper
forces are sent. If we are, so we are,

IV.

like the painted dice in a child's hand,
going here and there in play,
and if put in order: a great forest, a rubbish
town, a princess or a rich palace;—
like those squares, I am arranged from the sea
of my ancestors. I am an echo, who to them
answers on the past. People are cheap puppets
just the soul is born into them.

V.

The story goes: one ancestor was an
alchemist. Deep in the cellars he taught a son,
as long as upon the clean flasks fell the man's
white hair. He had browsed
night's Bible. But morning already stood under it
smoldering and watched, watched the dark
in its vapor—from year to year—when did he
see the sorcerer's stone glare?

ט"כ תההיליים

הבבו ב. ועז כבוד, הליהן הבבו; אלים בנני, ליהנה הבבו: לנדוד, מןמור א
המבנים-על, יהנה קול ג. קדש--בנהדרת, ליהנה השנתתו; שגמו כבוד, ליהנה
יהנה קול; בכח יהנה-קול ד. רבים מבי-על, יהנה; הרעים הכבוד-אל
ו.. להנכבון ארזי--אהת, יהנה, וישכר; ארזים, שכר, יהנה קול ה. כההבדר
חצב יהנה-קול ז. ראמים-כהן כגמו, ושריון. לנכבון; עגהל-כגמו וירקידם
יהנה קול ט. קדש, מדבר, יהנה יחיל; מדכבר יחיל, יהנה קול ח. אש-להבות
יהנה י. כבוד, אמר, כללו--ובנהכבלו: ות, יעבר וישוף---אילות יחולל
מהלהך, יהנה וישהב; ישבב למבול
בשבלום עמו--אהת יבברך, יהנה; יתן לנעמו, עז--יהנה יא. לנעולכם

ט"צ תההיליים

יהנה ב.. הבאברץ ונוט-ת, וכים, כגר ישב; עמים ירגזו, מבלבך יהנה א
קד; ונורא ול גבד, שמגך ו יוד ג. הבעמים-כבל-על, הוא ורם; ול גבד. בנציון
משנפכט; מישברים כוננתב, אהבה: אהבה משנפכט, מהלהך ועז ד. הוא וש
להדם, והשנתתו, אלהינו יהנה, ומנמו, ר ה. עבשית אהבה בניעקב, וצנדקה
קראים; שגמו בנקראי, ושנמואל, בנכהניו, ואהרן משה ו. הוא וש קד: רגבליו
וחק, יו-עדת, ושכמנר; אליהם, ידבר, עבנן בנעמוד ז. יענם והוא, יהנה-אהל
לבההם-הביית, נשא אל: מ-ענית אהבה, אלהינו יהנה ח. לבמו-ן-נת
כי: קדשו, לנהר, והשנתתו, אלהינו יהנה, ומנמו, ר ט. מ-עלילות-על, ונקם
אלהינו יהנה, וש קד

IX.

I see a lone Pannonian
come down an old, Roman road,
he sits in an inn, where between the glass window panes
dead flies lay scattered on their backs,
I see ragged, wind torn orphans
on the hill where wagon wheels
do not tread, to run, until old age, their tents profess
Saturn's red, sky's sinister light.

XVI.

I go, as this world is unhande
and choose the Sahara as my pillow.
I am a Satanist, who beneath the cross
has known virgins
and the road into the far landscape,
because this lamb in unbeautiful,
in the ancient forest, the distant, barbaric world,
in the tree's hollows I say Mass.

XVIII.

I am the Angelic Doctor; meditating
I see I am in the devils vicinity:
I kiss Lucricia Borgia's blonde
hair and see 7 blue violets;—
I am a painter and don't see how to return there,
like one who's made a ladder to the heavens,
and I'm beginning to weep, like Leo Batista,
as if stopped before the beautiful mountains.

XXXII.

I slid into Assisi, where in the high sky
I sat: a yellow lizard crawled from my shoe,
while the old cemetery slowly
made its pilgrimage to my cypresses;
and the twilight, when I saw Genzano below

in the deep and Rome far under
so seemed, like twice-hundred conch shells,
you have sown by your beach, my sea.

XXXII.

Allow me to cite, Vienna 1903:
The snow fell, ring-wise, like on Cotillo.
So I see it now, like an Anderson story.
Europa peaceful and confident.
There I read Anatole France and already saw
the next come near the narrow street.
In the autumn night I stood struggling
and stabbed them, like puppets.

XLI.

But say, watchman: where will you run and to where divide yourself
who brandished this flag, If you escape?
Here you were in September's colored
foliage, so to whom are your hearts hundred strands bound
but the words of your friends. In vain they run
for further lands; language is not released
from here: this curse is sprung from the ground
otherwise you would not know it, like Hungarian.

XLII.

Because it lived here. Here you heard your love
first. You illustrated your lush
adolescence here and here you went to the dark
groves, to the greenery beneath the trees.
Here you waited for death and kind lips
here was sweet and musty sustenance;
the city you saw at its end was here, that brown
diamond like the spring meadow grape.

Catullus V

Translated by Alexander D'Alisera

Let us live, O Lesbia my own, and let us love,
and let us judge all rumors of dry old men
to be valued at not but a penny!
Suns can rise, and suns can set in perpetuity;
yet for us, once the brief light has faded,
we must spend one endless night together!
Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred,
then another thousand, then a second hundred,
then, forever, another thousand, and another hundred;
then, once we have shared in these many thousands,
we shall lose count, and confound ourselves,
so that no man, filled with envy, could look cruelly upon us,
knowing the total summation of our shared love.

Catullus VII

Translated by Alexander D'Alisera

You truly wish to know, my Lesbia, how many
of your kisses would be enough for me?
Count every last grain of sand
in the bountiful Libyan lands,
from the waterless house of Jupiter,
to the aged tomb of the bygone king;
and when night falls still, number the stars
in their multitude, gazing upon the secret loves of men:
That is the number of kisses I need from you!
Only that would save your love-struck Catullus!
Too many kisses for the watchful to note,
too many kisses for the evil to hex!

Catullus V

*Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis!
Soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
Da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,
deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.
Dein, cum milia multa fecerimus,
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.*

Catullus VII

*Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes
tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque.
Quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae
lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis
oraclum Iovis inter aestuosi
et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum;
aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox,
furtivos hominum vident amores:
tam te basia multa basiare
vesano satis et super Catullo est,
quae nec pernumerare curiosi
possint nec mala fascinare lingua.*

The Swift West Wind Rises

Anonymous, from the *Cambridge Songs*
Translated by Luisa Barbano

The swift west wind rises,
So too the warm sun proceeding;
Already the earth reveals its folds,
It is dissolved in its own sweetness.

Spring has left as royalty;
It assumed its adornments,
Sprinkled the earth with flowers,
The woods with foliage.

Four-footed ones arrange dens,
Sweet winged-ones nests;
Between blooming trees
They sing out their delights.

While I see that with my eyes,
While I hear that with my ears,
Alas, for such great joys
I heave such great sighs.

When I sit down to myself alone
And pondering these things, I grow pale;
Thus by chance do I lift my head,
And I hear nothing, and I see nothing.

You, at least, with Spring's grace,
Listen and look closely to
The foliage, flowers, and grasses,
For my spirit is listless.

Levis exurgit Zephirus

Anonymous, from the *Cambridge Songs*

*Levis exurgit Zephirus,
et sol procedit tepidus;
iam terra sinus aperit,
dulcore suo diffluit.*

*Ver purpuratum exiit;
ornatus suos induit,
aspergit terram floribus,
ligna silvarum frondibus.*

*Struunt lustra quadrupedes,
et dulces nidos volucres;
inter ligna florentia
sua decantant gaudia.*

*Quod oculis dum video,
et auribus dum audio,
heu, pro tantis gaudiis
tantis inflor suspiriis.*

*Cum mihi sola sedeo
et hec revolvens palleo;
sic forte caput sublevo,
nec audio nec video.*

*Tu saltim, Veris gratia,
exaudi et considera
frondes, flores, et gramina,
nam mea languet anima.*

PORTUGUESE

Possible Dialogues with Clarice Lispector

From *Manchete* by Clarice Lispector

Translated by Melanie Mignucci

MARIA MARTINS: “The youth is always right”

Translator’s note: This dialog between two leading female Brazilian cultural figures of the time – the author Clarice Lispector (“The Hour of the Star”) and the sculptor Maria Martins – serves as a window into the mindset of Brazil’s cultural elite immediately after the tumultuous events of 1968. Four years into military dictatorship, 1968 was marked by massive student protests sparked by the death on March 28th of secondary school student Edson Luís de Lima Souto at the hands of Rio de Janeiro’s military police. Lispector and Martins’ conversation shows not only the strange and beautiful language for which Lispector is famous in her writing, but also the priorities and perspectives of two cultural icons as their country experienced one of the most violent periods of its modern history. (Originally published in Manchete, Dec. 21, 1968.)

How do I start this interview with my friend, Maria Martins, the sculptor and ambadress Maria Martins, whose husband, Carlos Martins, has had one of the most illustrious careers in Itamaraty? Well, I think however we end up, we’ll touch upon the important aspects of a person with many dimensions, all accomplished. As well as what she loves, too – beyond a surprising youth, a youth at turns more youthful than the hard-souled kids you see these days – the truth is that, jumbled up with the confidence that one sees in a strong personality, she has in her a special sweetness and a lack of pride.

Clarice Lispector: Maria, tell me, if you can, what you think about diplomatic life. Already, I’ve eaten many times at your table and you perhaps know how seldom you saw me in my own “career” as the ex-wife of a diplomat. What was your secret?

Maria Martins: You’ve asked me two questions. The diplomatic life seemed formerly a blessing because being a representative of one’s government meant this: the total responsibility of a diplomatic representative was to decide in an hour what was best for one’s country. Today diplomacy is a drug. A diplomat doesn’t choose a career traveling to sell coffee, nylon stockings, etc., and when you have a political victory, if ever, the victory is for your government. When you fuck up, that’s your fault, the diplomat’s. One good side of the work is that in every new place one encounters interesting people in the arts, in the sciences, in politics. No one knows why, but a diplomat fascinates. And you, Clarice, what was your experience in diplomacy, as an intelligent woman?

CL: I’m not intelligent, I’m compassionate, Maria. And, in response to your question, I took refuge in writing.

MM: My secret is hosting, as you asked, or meeting up with my intelligent friends, although they have to be from entirely opposite fields.

CL: How did you conserve spontaneity, following a long career as a diplomat’s wife, or is that rare?

MM: I’ll respond as you did: because I took refuge in art.

CL: So you picked up sculpture, and I picked up writing. What a mutual miracle. I think, personally, that we achieved so much thanks to very intense callings, and the lack of fear of being considered “different” within the diplomatic social sphere. What do you think?

MM: That’s reasonable. I always divide my life in two parts: from seven in the morning until six in the afternoon I live closed-off in my studio, completely invested in these problems of form, of colors, and in this isolation I’m afterwards permitted an immense

happiness at reuniting with good friends. You, like me, though no one believes us, are shy. Why won't anyone believe our shyness?

CL: The same way that they don't accept our humility. Beyond this the majority of people are stereotyped, and won't admit to a pure heart, or being an individual.

MM: But, Clarice, you already overcame this phase; you are a sacred monster, and there's nobody in Brazil incapable of seeing how you are: luminous and melancholy.

CL: One thing that makes me upset is this history of the sacred monster: others fear me in vain, and others stop fearing me by choice. The truth is that some people create a myth surrounding me, which confuses me greatly: I avoid these people and create myself in solitude. But you know that I have to treat many things simply, while at the same time my soul is complex.

CL: How did you discover that you had a talent for sculpture?

MM: I didn't discover it. One day I wanted to play with wood and make an object that I loved. And after that day I surrendered myself body and soul into sculpture. First in terracotta, then marble, then in lost wax, which has no limitations.

CL: And what is lost wax?

MM: It's an old process, from the time of the ancient Egyptians. Beeswax mixed with a little bit of fat to make it more malleable. And there you go onto infinity, because it has no limitations.

CL: Is this material durable? Excuse my ignorance.

MM: Lost wax is a mode of expression. After you cover the wax with silica and plaster and put it in the oven so that the wax melts, it leaves a negative. There you see the most beautiful thing in the

world: bronze liquid like flame that takes the form of what the wax left.

CL: Where do you have exhibitions and where can one see your works?

MM: I've had many individual exhibitions in New York, Paris, in Rio [de Janeiro], in São Paulo. In groups in almost every capital in Europe. My works are in museums in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, etc., and Paris, São Paulo and Rio. And in different private collections.

CL: How do you see your sculptures, as figurativist or abstractionist?

MM: I am anti-isms. They say I'm surrealist.

CL: What is your best memory as a sculptor?

MM: My best memory is when I start a sculpture. In the middle I get a little discouraged, but at the end nothing is as I wanted it, and it gives me hope for the next one.

CL: What is your best memory as a diplomat's wife?

MM: Going to Japan. That post most interested me, because everything was completely new.

CL: And your books?

MM: Writing for me, Clarice, is such a pleasure that I don't have to explain it, and is less painful than sculpting. But nothing comes quite close to saying what I wanted.

CL: What do you think of today's youth?

MM: I think, Clarice, that the youth is always right and trying to make robots out of them will never work; they won't submit to that. That's my hope.

CL: And what would you say to me, Maria, about the worldwide student movement?

MM: I think it's a very interesting phenomenon, very extraordinary, very human. Having the same movement in socialist as well as democratic countries is an evident signal that the youth is right.

CL: If you had to start your life over again, what fate would you choose, if you could decide fate?

MM: I would be an artist as I am, free and liberated.

CL: Maria, life is difficult. Is it worth it to live?

MM: It's worth it, Clarice. Because death, at the end, is the only place people can go to where they can't come back. Despite everything, I think life is beautiful.

A Body's Memory

By Ahlam Mustghanmi

Translated by Muntaha Abed

I still remember what you said that day: "Love is everything that happened between us. Literature is everything that didn't." Today, since everything ended, I can say: "Congratulations; literature witnessed our catastrophe, and how large it is that didn't happen between us. What didn't happen is large enough to write a book, maybe more than a book. Congratulations to love, too." How beautiful was what happened between us, how beautiful was what didn't happen and how beautiful is what won't ever happen. I've always believed it was impossible for us to write about our lives before our wounds healed. For only then, we could touch these wounds without getting hurt once more; we can look behind, for once, without nostalgia, madness and grudges also. Is it really possible? We can never heal from our memory. That's why we write, and that's why we draw, and that's why some of us die too. -'do you want coffee?' Atika's voice comes hollow; as if she's asking someone other than me, her voice apologizing subliminally, directed to the sad mask I have worn days ago and haven't taken off yet. My voice fails me, so I just nod. She leaves only to come back with a pot on a tray, cups, a sugar basin and a plate full of sweets. In other cities, coffee is served ready in a cup, placed next to a spoon and one sugar cube and that's all. However, Constantine is a city that dislikes brevity in anything. This city always displays everything it has, as it wears everything in its wardrobe and tells all of its secrets. That's why even sadness is made to be a public feast in this city.

I gather the papers spread in front of me to make space for my cup of coffee, as if I'm creating space for you. On the table, there are old drafts and also blank pages, they've been waiting for decades for a few words to spread life in their corners, to turn them from papers into days. I've been waiting too, for a couple of words that

would help me pass silence to speech, memory to amnesia, but... I leave the sugar aside and drink my coffee; as bitter as your love was. I think of the irony of this delicious bitterness of coffee. Just now, I realize I'm able to write about you, so I light a nervous cigarette and begin chasing smoky words that have chased me for years, without being able to turn off their flames for once on a blank sheet of paper. Can papers be ashtrays for memories? As we leave the ashes of the last nostalgic cigarette and the final disappointment on them. Who among us lights or puts off the other?

I don't know, because before you I haven't written anything worth mentioning, I'm only starting to write with you, for you. That's why I need to find the words I'll use to write myself too. Today, it is my right to choose how to be written; today I will choose the story. A story that might have been someone else's if destiny hadn't placed you at every curb of its details. Where did all this confusion come from?? And how did all these white papers magically matched the sizes of all these white canvases that I still have on a wall that was my atelier once?

How did letters leave me, like colors did before? Why did the universe turn into an old television streaming images only in black and white? Playing an old memory tape similar to a silent movie in a theatre?

I used to envy them; painters who transferred between writing and painting without the least effort; as if they were moving from one room to the other inside themselves, as if they were moving between two women without the least manners. Me; I had to be a man for one woman!

There it is then, the most explicit and the most hurtful; the pen. It doesn't know how to be manipulative, how to cover things with shadows or how to spray colors on a wound that just got exposed for happiness. Here are the words that I was deprived from; naked as desired, painful as wanted... then why is fear paralyzing me?

Stopping me from writing? Am I realizing now, and only now that that my brush is being replaced by a dagger? That writing to you is as murderous as your love?

I sipped your coffee with a suspicious lust this time. I felt that I was about to find a first sentence to begin this book with. A sentence that could be as spontaneous as a beginning of an informal letter, as to write for example: "I'm writing you from a city that still looks like you, a city that I'm becoming to look like. Birds are still crossing bridges hurriedly and I'm becoming another hanging bridge here, stop liking bridges after this day." Or I could say something like: "In the presence of a coffee cup, I remembered you. You should've placed a sugar cube in my cup, if only once, at least once. Why is this tray too big and only holds one bitter cup of coffee?"

I could've written anything. In the end; novels are nothing but letters and postcards. We write them for declared occasions, to publish our mental forecast, for those who care.

لحم مره قهوتي وارثشفت ,جانبا السكتر تركت .. ولكن ,النسيان
 . المرة للقهوة العذب الطعم هذا غرابه في فكرت . حبك عودني
 فأشعلت عنك الكتابة على قادر أنني شجرت ,فقط ولحظتها
 منذ أحرقتني التي الكل مات دخان أطارد ورحت ,عصبية سيجارة
 مظفأة الورق مل . صفحه فوق مرة حرائقها أطفئ أن دون ,سنوات
 وبقايا , الأخيذة الحنين سيجارة رماد مرة لكل فوقه نترك للذاكرة؟
 فقبلك ... ادري لا ؟ الآخر يشعل أو يطفئ منا من . . الأخيذة الخيبة
 بدول . الكتابة سبدا فقط معك ... الذكر يستحق شيئا يكتب لم
 أختار أن حقي فمن ,بها سأنكتب التي الكل مات على أخيراً أعثر أن
 أن يمكن كان قصه . القصة تلك اختر الذي أنا . أن يكتب كيف اليوم
 عند ,مصافه مره لكل القدر يضعك لم لو ,قصتي تكون لا
 تطابقت وكيف الارتباك؟ ماذا جاء أين من . فصولها من عطفات
 الشاسعة المساحة بتلك ,المستطيلة البيضاء الأوراق مساحة
 كان مرسوم جدار مسنده زالت وما .. بعد ترسم لم للوحات البيضاء
 . الألوان قبلها غادرتني لحم الحروف غادرتني وكيف ؟ مرسومي
 بالأسود الصور ييبث ,عتيق تلفزيون جهاز إلى العالم وتحول
 أفلام تعرض لحم ,للذاكرة قديما شريطا ويعرض ؟ فقط والأبيض
 كانوا الذين الرسامين أولئك ,نمأدا أحسدم كنت . الصامتة السنين
 غرفه من ينتقلون وكانهم ,جهد دون والكتابة الرسم بين ينتقلون
 لا كان .. كل فنة دون امراتين بين ينتقلون كأنهم . داخلهم أخرى إلى
 بوح الأكثر .. إذن القلم هوذا ! واحدة لامرأة لرجل أكون الابد
 كيف يعرف ولا , المراوغة يتقن لا الذي ذا هو . ّ جرحا والأكثر
 الجرح على الألوان ترش كيف ولا . الأشياء على الظلال تواضع
 لحم عارية , من حرمت التي الكل مات هي وه . للفرحة الم عروض
 من وتمن عني , يدي تشل الخوف رعشة قلم , أردتها لحم موجعه , أردتها
 استبدلت أنني , فقط اللحظة مده في أعني تراني الكتابة؟
 ارتشفت . كحبهك .. قاتله إليك الكتابة وأن . سكيناً بفرشاتي
 أن وشك على أنني شجرت . المرة مده مشبووه بمتعه , المرة قهوتك
 في تكون قد جملة . الكتابة هذا به ابدأ ,أولى جملة على اعشر
 ما مدينه من إليك أكتب : " مثل أقول كأن . رسالة لكل مات تعلقاوية
 الجسور هذه تعبر الطيور زالت ما . أشبهها وأصبحت ,تشبهك زالت
 بعد الجسور تحببي لا . من معلقاً آخر جسرا أصبحت وأنا ,عجل على
 أن بدل لا كان .. ذكرك قهوة فنجان أمام " : مثل آخر شيئا أو .. اليوم
 من .. الصينية هذه لكل لم اذا . قهوتي في سكر قطعة مرة ولو تضعني

أقسم الذي قسنطينة ابن .. حداد مالك إلى ... إهداء مستغانمي أحلام
 فاغثاته .. لغته ليست بلغة يكتب الأجزاء استقلال بعد
 شهيد ليصبح صمته بسلطان متأثرا ومات .. البيضاء الصفحة
 وإلى . لها وعشقا وقهراً صمته يموت أن قرر كاتب وأول ,العربية اللغة
 هذا أخيراً له في قرأ , العربية يتقن من " هناك " يجد عساه ... أبي
 . كتابه ... الكتاب

أحلام

الأول الفصل

كل هو والأدب . بيننا حدث ما هو الحب " : يوم ذات قولك أذكر زلت ما
 هنيئا : أقول أن شيء لكل انتهى ما بعد ,اليوم يمكنني . "يحدث لم ما
 تصلح إنها . يحدث لم ما مساحة الكبر فمما إذن فجي عتنا على للأدب
 حدث الذي أجمل فمما ... أيضا للحب وهنيئا . كتاب من لأكثر اليوم
 ,اليوم قبل . يحدث لن الذي أجمل ما ... يحدث لم الذي أجمل ما ... بيننا
 منه نشفي عندهما إلا حياتنا عن نكتب أن يمكن لا أننا اعتقد كنت
 أخرى مرة نتالم أن دون , بقلم القديمة جراحنا نلمس أن يمكن عندهم .
 حقد ودون ,جنون دون ,حنين دون خلفنا النظر على نقدر عندهم .
 ,نكتب نحن ولهذا . ذكرتنا من نشفي لا نحن ؟ حقا هذا أي يمكن . أيضا
 يأتي ؟ قوه اتريدي . أيضا بعضنا يموت ولهذا ,نرسم نحن ولهذا
 غيري شخص على السؤال يطرح وكأنه ,غائب عتيقة صوت
 يخذلني . أيام منذ أخلعه لم للحزن وجه على ,اعتذار دون معذرا .
 لتعود فتنسحب . فقط راسي من بإشارة أجب ... فجأة صوتي
 إبريق ,عليها كعبيرة نحاسيه قهوة بصينية ,لحظات بعد
 مدن في . للحلويات وصحن ,الزهر لماء ومرش ,وسكريه ,وفن اجين
 وقطعة معلقه مسبقاً جواره وضعت ,فنجان في جاهزة القهوة تقدم أخرى
 إنها . شيء لكل في الإيجاز تكلمه مدينه قسنطينة ولكن . سكر
 ما لكل وتقول . تم لك ما لكل تلبس لحم تاما . دائما عندهما تفرد
 الأوراق أجمع . المدينة هذه في وليهم الحزن حتى كان ولهذا . تعرف
 لك مكانا أفسح وكانني القهوة لفنجان مكاناً لأترك , أمامي المبعشرة
 أيام منذ تنتظر بيضاء أوراق وأخرى ,قديمة مسودات بعضها ..
 إلى ورق من وتتحول ,الحياة فيها تدب كي ... فقط الكل مات بعض
 إلى والذاكرة ,الكلام إلى الصمت بها أجتاز ,فقط كل مات . أيام

ليست، النهاية ففني ... شيء أي أقول أن يمكن كان . "؟. مرة قهوة أجل
..المعلنة المناسبات خارج نكتبها، وبطاقات رسائل سوى الروايات
. أمرنا يهمهم لمن، النفسية نشرتنا لنعلن

CHINESE

Refusal

Translated by Joshua Hodge

There is no need to stock up, no need
for a bumper crop. Those wind blown fruits,
those shoals of fish burnt red, are just a flock of birds
hitting the forehead of our sufficient lives.

Really there is no need to mature, no need
to live forever. Lives that come from our bodies' days
are brushing against another day, returning to soil.
Gently brushing tears and cheeks,
they are brushing the sinking roof within the waves.

Warnings from our insides come like clenched fists
that hold firmly, brandished in our heads. But there is no need
for consideration, no need to comply.
The knife blade curls around our innocent tongues,
since truth is as unbearable as a stomachache
and there is no reason to swallow.
There is no need to travel back and forth midst the honking.

Truly there is no need for pledges, no need
for eulogizing. The loudspeaker of rhetoric threatens
the world. It menaces and conspires
in the ear, drawing out from
matters of maintenance, making it tremble,
making it feeble from
the angry rebuke of spirituality. There is no need for strength.

There is no need to be eulogized by another name
or to be cursed by it. No need for remembering.
The heart that stops pulsing in all people's minds
centralizes authority in our bones,

modeling after our own blood. There is no need
to only use the remnants of a few boney beliefs to punish this body.

There is no need to forgive, no need
to take pity. Drifters will forever drift,
planters will reap nothing. There is no need
to consecrate, no need to receive.

As hunger strikes suddenly like a whip,
there is no need to flog the corn of conscience,
or seek a tear drop on its behalf,
or a rosebush seed. There is no need
to use our hunger to exchange for the corn son,
and watch him it betray his own kin.

April 5, 1990

Butterfly

Translated by Joshua Hodge

Butterfly, with fire of self-pity unrelated to time
an enormous emptiness comes from a small, delicate body,
helplessly begging, without an ounce of energy leftover.
You dream of shedding butterflies,
but butterflies themselves are also dreams, even deeper than our own.

Secluded solitude came after losing a brooch.
It used to be pinned on your chest, so that in early evening
you were able to hear warm words, to reread a few worn letters.
But you don't remember the look of people who wrote those letters.
Is there

anyone among them dying with the speed of writing,
or entering in a needle's pace? You read the letters in the night when
the brooch was already lost. A butterfly
first flew away then returned as an omen,
bringing that hard-to-explain material in the body.
The attempt to break away from matter as a butterfly is futile.
Matter is absolute and has no appearance of forgetting.

Butterflies are a day's long romance.
If you tack on a night, it will be reduced to a single kiss.
You have no way of knowing which of the two is more fleeting:
are you a single life, or a butterfly for twenty-four hours?
Butterfly, you are too beautiful and too cruel.

December 19, 1988

An evening of Chopin

Translated by Joshua Hodge

To listen to only one piece of Chopin's,
for this piece alone do I retain my ears.
A piece of his is already enough for the world.
Who dithers through the night this way on a piano?

One can take an already played nocturne and play it once more,
just as if it had never been performed.
Playing it over and over throughout the night,
then never again for the rest of one's life.
One could
die from an evening with Chopin,
then slowly use a lifetime to come back to living.

One could perform Chopin as if there were mistakes.
Or just play the chords of a hollowed melody,
repeat a single phrase, which would be like a long journey across the
moon.
Just play a feeble tone like summer's forgotten sunlight,
or accidentally remember a small darkness in its bright rays.
One could play soft notes as if they were an open field,
or like snow reluctant to fall.
One could have died for many years but feel as if they had just
passed.

One could
play Chopin as if there were no Chopin,
a night of it could exorcise demons in sunlight,
as if expressing that within ears there is a heart without practical
purpose.
No need to listen, for the heart cannot hear,
if somebody listened to him, their body would turn and leave.
This is not his era,
That homesick, nostalgic, heroes-and-castles era.

One could play Chopin as if there wasn't playing.
Softer and softer
not letting the fingers make contact with air and tears.
A jolting regret - our souls' sturm und drang condition -
can be
very soft, very tender.

November, 1988

Sunset

Translated by Joshua Hodge

The setting sun rushes forth from the throat,
as if it were a piece of candy being sucked.
This sign of sweetness, ecstasy, and salivation surrounds
the concentric circles of all things, of degradation and kisses-
a drop of ink is enough to blot this all out.
Like a pitch-black hand covering my two eyes.

Oh exhausted, attempted, invisible fire,
this is all almost fake.
I see the last glimmer of its disfigured beauty.

The setting sun points to impressions from my early years.
The fear they reflect undulates within verbs,
like a gale that scrapes rooftops shingle by shingle,
in the posture of dancers, it drapes over the shoulders of trees.
From etymologies I enter the setting sun directly,
and see an old man burn like he has not been loved by anyone.
He once stood within my body,
because of an occasional brilliant light that has disoriented him all his
life.

The setting sun is a nominal display between two legs,
the sinking body's unbordered detainment.
But other than hot blood, there is nothing darkening-
other than those dead bones, no one was once a beauty.
A single kiss makes my whole body frigid-
the world is falling downward and the sun sets higher beyond
question.

November 21, 1988

拒绝

并无必要囤积，并无必要丰收。那些被风吹落的果子，那些阳光燃红的鱼群，撞在额头上的众鸟，足够我们一生。并无必要成长，并无必要永生。一些来自我们肉体的日子，在另一些归于泥土的日子里吹拂，它们轻轻吹拂着泪水和面颊，吹拂着波浪中下沉的屋顶。而来自我们内心的警告象拳头一样紧握着，在头上挥舞。并无心要考虑，并无必要服从。当刀刃卷起我们无辜的舌头，当真理象胃痛一样难以忍受和咽下，并无必要申诉。并无必要穿梭于呼啸而来的喇叭。并无必要许诺，并无必要赞颂。一只措辞学的喇叭是对世界的一个威胁。它威胁了物质的耳朵，并在耳朵里密谋，抽去耳朵里面物质的维系。使之发抖使之在一片精神的怒斥声中变得软弱无力。并无必要坚强。并无必要在另一个名字里被传颂或被诅咒，并无必要牢记。一颗心将在所有人的心中停止跳动，将在权力集中起来的骨头里塑造自己的血。并无必要用只剩几根骨头的信仰去惩罚肉体。并无必要饶恕，并无必要怜悯。飘泊者永远飘泊，种植者颗粒无收。并无必要奉献，并无必要获得。种植者视碱性的妻子为玉米人。当鞭子一样的饥饿骤然落下，并无必要拷打良心上的玉米，或为玉米寻找一滴眼泪，一粒玫瑰的种子。并无必要用我们的饥饿去换玉米中的儿子，并眼看着他背叛自己的血统。

蝴蝶

蝴蝶，与我们无关的自怜之火。庞大的空虚来自如此娇小的身段，无助的哀告，一点力气都没有。你梦想从蝴蝶脱身出来，但蝴蝶本身也是梦，比你的梦更深。幽独是从一枚胸针的丢失开始的。它曾别在胸前，以便怀华灯初上时能听到温暖的话语，重读一些旧信。你不记得写信人的模样了。他们当中是否有人以写作的速度在死去，以针的速度在进入？你读信的夜里胸针已经丢失。一只蝴蝶先是飞离然后返回预兆，带着身体里那些难以解释的物质。想从蝴蝶摆脱物质是徒劳的。物质即绝对，没有遗忘的表面。蝴蝶是一天那么长的爱情，如果加上黑夜，它将减少到一吻。你无从获知两者之中谁更短促：一生，还是一昼夜的蝴蝶？蝴蝶太美了，反而显得残忍。

一夜肖邦

只听一支曲子。只为这支曲子保留耳朵。一个肖邦对世界已经足够。谁在这样的钢琴之夜徘徊？可以把已经弹过的曲子重新弹过一遍，好象从来没有弹过。可以一遍一遍将它弹上一夜，然后终生不再去弹。可以死于一夜肖邦，然后慢慢地、用整整一生的时间活过来。可以把肖邦弹得好象弹错了一样，可以只弹旋律中空心的和弦。只弹经过句，象一次远行穿过月亮。只弹弱音，夏天被忘掉阳光，或阳光中偶然被想起的一小块黑暗。可以把柔板弹奏得象一片开阔地，象一场大雪迟迟不敢落下。可以死去多年但好象刚刚才走开。可以把肖邦弹奏得好象没有肖邦，可以让一夜肖邦融化在撒旦的阳光下。琴声如诉，耳朵里空无一人。根本不要去听，肖邦是听不见的，如果有人听他就转身离去。这已经不是肖邦的时代，那个思乡的、怀旧的、英雄城堡的时代。可以把肖邦弹奏得好象没有在弹。轻点，再轻点，不要让手指触到空气和泪水。真正震撼我们灵魂的狂风暴雨，可以是最弱的，最温柔的。

落日

落日自咽喉涌出，如一枚糖果含在口中。这甜蜜、销魂、唾液周围的迹象，万物的同心之圆、沉没之圆、吻之圆一滴墨水就足以将它涂掉。有如漆黑之手遮我双目。哦疲倦的火、未遂的火、隐身的火，这一切几乎是假的。我看见毁容之美的最后闪耀。落日重重指涉我早年的印象。它所反映的恐惧起伏在动词中，像抬级而上的大风刮过屋顶，以微弱的姿态披散于众树。我从词根直接走进落日，他曾站在我的身体里，为一束偶尔的光晕眩了一生。落日是两腿间虚设的容颜，是对沉沦之躯的无边挽留。但除了末日，没有什么能够留住。除了那些热血，没有什么正在变黑除了那些白骨，没有谁曾经是美人一个吻使我浑身冰凉。世界在下坠，落日高不可问。

The God of Bears

By Hiromi Kawakami

Translated by Yuko Okamura

A bear invited me to go for a walk down to the river. It takes about twenty minutes on foot from here. I have been there only to watch snipes in early spring, but never in the hot season and with a lunch box. It might be better to call it a hike rather than a walk.

The bear was a full-grown, male bear, so he is really big. He had just recently moved to apartment 305 on the third floor, which is three doors down from mine. Unlike people who move nowadays, he gave buckwheat noodles to everyone on our floor, and also passed out ten postcards to each of them - the old-fashioned custom of moving into a new residence. Even though I thought he went a little too far, since he is a bear he may need to pay extra attention to those around him.

As it so happens, when I received his noodles, we found out that we are not complete strangers from our conversation. The bear looked at my nameplate and asked me, "Excuse me, but are you from such-and-such town by any chance?"

When I replied yes, I am, he started to tell his story. In the past there was a man who took very good care of the bear. That man's uncle worked at a town office as the town official's assistant. The assistant's family name is the same as mine, and by following these connections, apparently the assistant turned out to be my father's second cousin. Though it is not a terribly strong connection, the bear expressed his impression of all this quite deeply, using such words as "fate" when he spoke of it. Considering his way of greeting new neighbors and speaking, the bear seemed to be an old-fashioned sort of bear.

Whether it's something like a hike or a walk, I was going to go on it with that bear. I am not an expert with animals, so I have

no idea if he's a black bear, brown bear, or Malay bear. I thought it would be too rude if I asked him face-to-face. I did not know his name either.

So I asked him how I should address him, and after he confirmed that there were no other bears nearby, he replied, "Well, so far I have no name, and seem to not need one from now on because I am the only bear here. I prefer "Dear" when you address me, yes, with a capital "D" it is. When you call my name, please think of the capital letter, not the lowercase. In any case, please call me whatever you like."

Overall, he seemed like an old-fashioned bear. Even more than that, he seemed fond of logic.

The road to the river was lined with rice-paddies. It was a paved road, and sometimes cars passed by. Every car slowed down just in front of us, and steered past us slowly. No one walked past us. It was terribly hot. No one seemed to be working in the rice-paddies. There was only the well-regulated sound crunch, crunch of the bear's feet walking on the asphalt.

"Aren't you hot?" I asked.

"No, I'm not, but walking on this long asphalt road is making me tired." He continued, "I am fine. It is not so far away to the river so it's ok. But thank you for asking."

Then he added, in thoughtful detail, "If you feel too hot, shall we go to a highway, and take a rest at some rest house?"

Because I was wearing a hat and I don't mind the heat so much, I declined his offer. But perhaps the bear had actually hoped to have a break. For a while we just walked without speaking.

The sound of water, which could be heard from a distance, was getting louder and louder until finally we reached the river. There were many people swimming and fishing. We put down our bags, and wiped the sweat off with towels. The bear was huffing and puffing with his tongue hanging out. While we just stood there, two men and a child came up to us. They were all in swimming suits. One of the men had on sunglasses and the other had a

snorkel hanging from his neck.

"Dad, look! It's a bear!" the child said loudly.

"Right, well done!" the snorkel replied.

"That's a bear!"

"Yeah, you're right."

"Daddy, look! A bear!"

This was repeated over and over. The snorkel glanced at me, but never looked at the bear's face directly. The sunglasses hardly said anything but kept standing there. The child pulled the bear's hair and kicked it until finally he struck the bear's stomach while screaming "puuu-nch!" and then ran off away. The men ambled off after the child.

"Oh, dear!" the bear said after a while.

"Children are so innocent, aren't they?"

I just kept silent.

"Well, you know, there are all kinds of people...right? However all children are innocent," said the bear and before I could answer he walked off towards the river's edge.

Small fish were swimming. Cool air from the river blew refreshingly on my flushed face. Watching the fish carefully I noticed they swam over and over again upstream and then downstream within a fixed width. They seemed to be tracing a narrow rectangle. Perhaps the rectangle is their turf. The bear also stood gazing at the river. What was he watching? Do things in the water appear to a bear's eyes in the same way humans see them?

Suddenly, the bear sent up a spray as he entered the water with a loud splash. He stopped in the middle of the river and briefly dipped his right palm into the water and brought up a fish. The thing looked three times bigger than the long, thin fish swimming along the shoreline.

"I must have startled you." the bear came back and said to me.

"I apologize. Suddenly my feet took off without me... Anyway, isn't it big?"

The bear held the fish up in front of my face. The fish's fin caught the sun and sparkled. The men fishing were pointing in our

direction and saying something. The bear looked very proud of himself.

"I'm giving this to you to commemorate our day today," the bear said and opened the bag he brought. From inside the wrapped parcel that he pulled out from his bag came a small knife and cutting board. The bear handily cut open the fish with the knife and added a dash of coarse salt, all of which seemed to be prepared for in advance. Then he put the fish on a leaf.

"If we turn it over a few more times, then it will be a good dried fish by the time we leave here."

There seemed to be nothing that escapes the bear's attention.

We sat down on the grass and ate our lunch while watching the river. The bear ate French bread with pate and radishes inserted into slits here and there and I ate rice bowl with pickled plum. Both of us ate an orange after lunch. The bear was slow to finish.

"If you don't mind, can I have your orange peel?" he asked.

When he received it he turned his back to me and ate it quickly.

The bear went over to where the fish lay to turn it over and washed the knife, cutting board, and cups in the river. After he dried them with a cloth, he took a big towel from his bag and handed it to me.

"Please use this for your nap time. I will stroll around here a bit. If you like I can sing a lullaby for you before I do?" he asked seriously.

When I replied, "I think I can fall sleep without a lullaby" the bear took on a look of disappointment, but then he walked away upriver.

When I woke up the shadows of trees had grown longer, and the bear was lying sleeping by my side. There was no towel on his body. He was snoring gently. Just a few people were left at the river. Everyone was here for fishing. I put the towel on the bear and when I walked over to turn the fish, there were two more fish.

"That was a great walk," the bear said while he took the key to room 305 from his bag.

"I would like to have another occasion like today."

I nodded. Then I thanked him for the dried fish and everything. The bear answered with a big wave of his hand,

"Oh, no, it's nothing!"

"Then, see you later" I said and as I got up to leave the bear said, "Um..." Waiting for his next words I looked up at the bear, but he hesitated, keeping silent. I realized how big he really was. The big bear was making sounds in the back of his throat: Urhhhh, while looking embarrassed. When he spoke, he enunciated the way humans do, but when he just made a sound or laughs, he used his original bear voice, as one would expect.

"Would you permit me to give you a hug?" the bear asked. "This is our custom when we say goodbye to close friends. If you don't like it, however it's perfectly fine."

I accepted.

The bear took one step closer to me, opened his arms big and wide, put those arms around my shoulders and pressed his cheek to mine. He smelled of bear. The bear pressed his other cheek to mine and hugged me tight again. His body was colder than I expected.

"I really enjoyed today. I feel like I just came back from a long trip. May blessings from the God of Bears rain down upon you. And the dried fish won't last long, so I recommend that you eat it tonight."

When I got back to my room and fried the dried fish, took a bath, and wrote in my diary before going to bed, I tried to imagine what the God of Bears looks like, but I didn't have the slightest idea. It wasn't a bad day.

くまに誘われて散歩に出る。川原に行くのである。歩いて二十分ほどのところにある川原である。春先に、鴨を見るために、行ったことはあったが、暑い季節にこうして弁当まで持って行くのは初めてである。散歩というよりハイキングといったほうがいいかもしれない。

くまは、雄の成熟したくまで、だからとても大きい。三つ隣の305号室に、つい最近越してきた。ちかごろの引越しには珍しく、引越し蕎麦を同じ階の住人にふるまい、葉書を十枚ずつ渡してまわっていた。ずいぶん気の遣いようだと思ったが、くまであるから、やはりいろいろとまわりに対する配慮が必要なのだろう。

ところでその蕎麦を受け取ったときの会話で、くまとわたしは満更赤の他人というわけでもないことがわかったのである。

表札を見たくまが、

「もしや某町のご出身では」

と訊ねる。確かに、と答えると、以前くまがたいへん世話になった某君の叔父という人が町の役場助役であったという。その助役の名がわたしのものと同じであり、たどってみると、どうやら助役はわたしの父のまたいここに当たるらしいのである。あるか無しかわからぬような繋がりであるが、くまはたいそう感慨深げに「縁」というような種類の言葉を駆使していろいろと述べた。どうも引越しの挨拶の仕方といい、この喋り方といい、昔気質のくまらしいのではあった。

そのくまと、散歩のようなハイキングのようなことをしている。動物には詳しくないので、ツキノワグマなのか、ヒ

グマなのか、はたまたマレーグマなのかは、わからない。面と向かって訊ねるのも失礼である気がする。名前もわからない。なんと呼びかければいいのかと質問してみたのであるが、近隣にくまが一匹もいないことを確認してから、

「今のところ名はありませんし、僕しかくまがないのなら今後も名をなめる必要がないわけですね。呼びかけの言葉としては、貴方、が好きですが、ええ、漢字の貴方です、口に出す時に、ひらがなではなく漢字を思い浮かべてくださればいいんですが、まあ、どうぞご自由に何とでもお呼びください」

との答えである。どうもやはり少々大時代なくまである。大時代なうえに理屈を好むとみた。

川原までの道は水田に沿っている。舗装された道で、時おり車が通る。どの車もわたしたちの手前でスピードを落とし、徐行しながら大きくよけていく。すれちがう人影はない。たいへん暑い。田で働く人も見えない。くまの足がアスファルトを踏む、かすかなしゃりしゃりという音だけが規則正しく響く。

暑くない？と訊ねると、くまは、

「暑くないけれど長くアスファルトの道を歩くと少し疲れます」

と答えた。

「川原まではそう遠くないから大丈夫、ご心配くださってありがとう」

続けていう。さらには、

「もしあなたが暑いのなら国道に出てレストハウスにでも入りますか」

などと細かく気を配ってくれる。わたしは帽子をかぶっていたし暑さには強いほうなので断ったが、もしかするとくま自身が一服したかったのかもしれない。しばらく無言で

歩いた。

遠くに聞こえはじめた水の音がやがて高くなり、わたしたちは川原に到着した。たくさんの人が泳いだり釣りをしたりしている。荷物を下ろし、タオルで汗をぬぐった。くまは舌を出して少しあえいでいる。そうやって立っていると、男性二人子供一人の三人連れが、そばに寄ってきた。どれも海水着をつけている。男の片方はサングラスをかけ、もう片方はシュノーケルを首からぶらさげていた。

「お父さん、くまだよ」
子供が大きな声で言った。

「そうだ、よくわかったな」
シュノーケルが答える。

「くまだよ」
「そうだ、そうだ」
「ねえねえくまだよ」

何回かこれが繰り返された。シュノーケルはわたしの表情をちらりとうかがったが、くまの顔を正面から見ようとはしない。サングラスの方は何も言わずにただ立っている。子供はくまの毛を引っ張ったり、蹴りつけたりしていたが、最後に「パーンチ」と叫んでくまの腹のあたりにこぶしをぶつけてから、走って行ってしまった。男二人はぶらぶらと後を追う。

「いやはや」
しばらくしてからくまが言った。
「小さい人は邪気がないですなあ」
わたしは無言でいた。

「そりゃいろいろな人間がいますから。でも、子供さんはみんな無邪気ですよ」

そう言うと、わたしが答える前に急いで川のふちへ歩いて行ってしまった。

小さな細い魚がすいすい泳いでいる。水の冷気がほてった顔に心地よい。よく見ると魚は一定の幅の中で上流へ泳ぎまた下流へ泳ぐ。細長い四角の辺をたどっているように見える。その四角が魚の縄張りなのだろう。くまも、じっと水の中を見ている。何を見ているのか。くまの目にも水の中は人間と同じに見えているのであろうか。

突然水しぶきが上がり、くまが水の中にざぶざぶ入っていった。川の中ほどで立ち止まると右掌をさっと水にくぐらせ、魚を掴み上げた。岸部を泳ぐ細長い魚の三倍はありそうなものだ。

「驚いたでしょう」
戻ってきたくまが言った。

「おことわりしてから行けばよかったのですが、つい足が先に出てしまいました。大きいでしょう」

くまは、魚をわたしの目の前にかざした。魚のひれが陽を受けてきらきら光る。釣りをしている人たちがこちらを指さして何か話している。くまはかなり得意そうだ。

「さしあげましょう。今日の記念に」

そう言うと、くまは担いできた袋の口を開けた。取り出した布の包みの中からは、小さなナイフとまな板が出てきた。くまは器用にナイフを使って魚を開くと、これもかねて用意してあったらしい荒塩をぱっぱと振りかけ、広げた葉の上に魚を置いた。

「何回かひっくり返せば、帰る頃にはちょうどいい干物になっています」

何から何まで行き届いたくまである。

わたしたちは、草の上に座って川を見ながら弁当を食べた。くまは、フランスパンのところどころに切れ目を入れてパテとラディッシュをはさんだもの、わたしは梅干し入りのおむすび、食後には各自オレンジを一個ずつ。ゆっくり食べおわると、くまは、

「もしよろしければオレンジの皮をいただけますか」

と言い、受け取ると、わたしに背を向けて、いそいで皮を食べた。

少し離れたところに置いてある魚を引っくり返しに行き、ナイフとまな板とコップを流れて丁寧に洗い、それを拭き終わると、くまは袋から大きいタオルを取り出し、わたしに手渡した。

「昼寝をするときにおつかいください。僕はそのへんをちょっと歩いてきます。もしよかったらその前に子守歌を歌ってさしあげましょうか」

真面目に訊く。

子守歌なしでも眠れそうだとわたしが答えると、くまはがっかりした表情になったが、すぐに上流の方へ歩み去った。

目を覚ますと、木の影が長くなっており、横にくまが寝ていた。タオルはかけていない。小さくいびきをかいている。川原には、もう数名の人しか残っていない。みな、釣りをする人である。くまにタオルをかけてから、干し魚を引っくり返しにいくと、魚は三匹に増えていた。

「いい散歩でした」

くまは305号室の前で、袋から鍵を取り出しながら言った。

「またこのような機会をもちたいものですな」

わたしも頷いた。それから、干し魚やそのほかの礼を言うと、くまは大きく手を振って、

「とんでもない」

と答えるのだった。

「では」

と立ち去ろうとすると、くまが、

「あの」

と言う。次の言葉を待ってくまを見上げるが、もじもじして黙っている。ほんとうに大きなくまである。その大きなくまが、喉の奥で「ウルル」というような音をたてながら恥ずかしそうにしている。言葉を喋る時には人間と同じ発声法なのであるが、こうして言葉にならない声を出すときや笑うときは、やはりくま本来の発声なのである。

「抱擁を交わしていただけですか」

くまは言った。

「親しい人と別れるときの故郷の習慣なのです。もしお嫌ならもちろんいいのですが」

わたしは承知した。

くまは一步前に出ると、両腕を大きく広げ、その腕をわたしの肩にまわし、頬をわたしの頬にこすりつけた。くまの匂いがする。反対の頬も同じようにこすりつけると、もう一度腕に力を入れてわたしの肩を抱いた。思ったよりもくまの体は冷たかった。

「今日はほんとうに楽しかったです。遠くへ旅行して帰ってきたような気持ちです。熊の神様のお恵みがあなたの上にも降り注ぎますように。それから干し魚はあまりもちませんから、今夜のうちに召し上がるほうがいいと思います」

部屋に戻って魚を焼き、風呂に入り、眠る前に少し日記を書いた。熊の神とはどのようなものか、想像してみたが、見当がつかなかった。悪くない一日だった。

