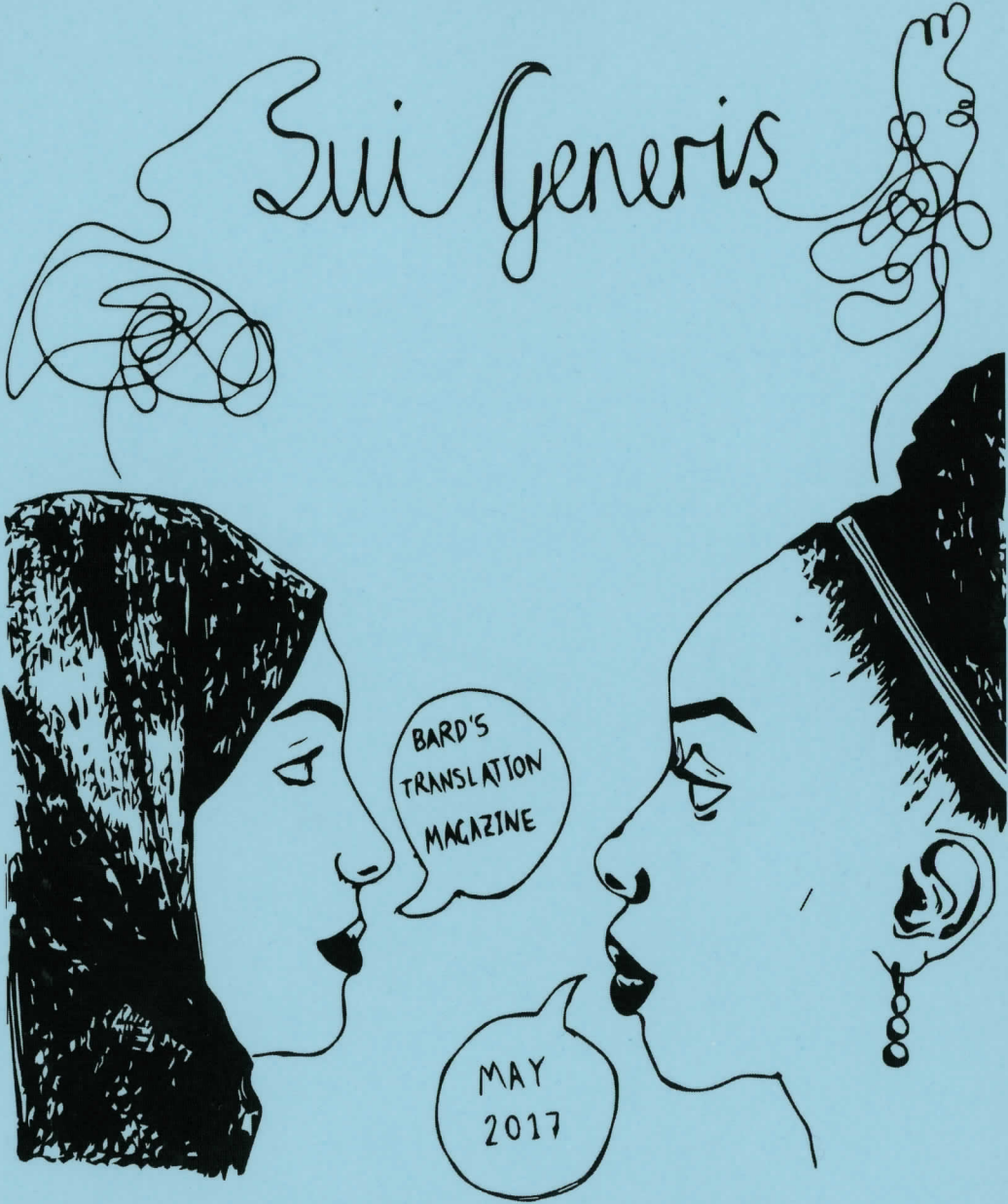


Sui Generis



BARD COLLEGE

2017

SUI GENERIS:

of its own kind

**SUI
GENERIS
2017**

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Bard College

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A Note From the Editors:

Sui Generis is an annual journal that showcases, through students' work, the diversity of languages and cultures at Bard College. While we have the honor of putting our names as the Editors of this edition of *Sui Generis*, in which we take great pride, it would not have come to fruition without the seemingly limitless and ineffable talent, support and energy of many. The challenges and learning curve of being editors provided us with the knowledge that magazines like this one are the result of a collective effort and the praise should be shared. Therefore, we would like to mention a few folks, without whom this edition would never have been possible. Thank you to our Language Representatives and to our entire student Editorial Team. A huge thank you to the Language Tutors who edited most of the submissions. They advocate love for language-learning and push their students to be able to publish. And a very important thank you goes to our faculty advisor, Lauren Curtis, for her guidance and advice throughout.

“*Traduttore, traitore*”—a phrase many translators are familiar with, means: “Translator, traitor”; conveying the idea that the translator will always, in theory, betray the text. However, in translating a work, one must try to avoid losing the text and strive to enrich the work, not through mirrored exchange of words for their counterpart, but in giving the work a new light. We strove to provide light...we hope you enjoy this edition.

— Lydia & Carmen

A professor once told me that translating is like unraveling and then remaking a big ball of wool. The ball of wool I'm left with is never going to be the same as the original, but once I've pulled it all apart and put it back together, even if I can't see it, I know its insides - each twist and turn of the yarn.

I like this analogy because for me, this long piece of yarn also connects me to someone else in some other time and place. When translating, a bridge is created into the world of another person. And through this connection, something radically new is produced. For me, this is the beauty of translation.

ANCIENT GREEK

Ἄτλας, ὁ χαλκίοισι † νῶτοις οὐρανὸν
θεῶν παλαιὸν οἶκον ἐκτρίβων, θεῶν
μῆς † ἔφουσε Μαΐαν, ἧ 'μ' ἐγένετο
Ἑρμῆν μεγίστῳ Ζηνί, δαιμόνων λάτριν.
ἦκω δὲ Δελφῶν τήνδε γῆν, ἴν' ὀμφαλὸν
μέσον καθίζων Φοῖβος ὑμνωδεῖ βροτοῖς
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα θεσπίζων ἀεὶ.
ἔστιν γὰρ οὐκ ἄσημος Ἑλλήνων πόλις,
τῆς χρυσολόγχου Παλλάδος κεκλημένη,
οὐ παῖδ' Ἑρεχθέως Φοῖβος ἔζευξεν γάμοις
βία Κρέουσαν, ἔνθα προσβόρρους πέτρας
Παλλάδος ὑπ' ὄχθῳ τῆς Ἀθηναίων χθονὸς
Μακρὰς καλοῦσι γῆς ἄνακτες Ἀθίδος.
ἀγνώως δὲ πατρί — τῷ θεῷ γὰρ ἦν φίλον —
γαστρὸς διήνεγκ' ὄγκον. ὡς δ' ἤλθεν χρόνος,
τεκοῦσ' ἐν οἴκοις παῖδ' ἀπήνεγκεν βρέφος
ἐς ταύτῳ ἄντρον οὐπὲρ ἠνάσθη θεῷ
Κρέουσα, κάκτιθησιν ὡς θανούμενον
κοίλης ἐν ἀντίπηγος εὐτρόχῳ κύκλῳ,
προγόνων νόμον σώζουσα τοῦ τε γηγενοῦς
Ἑριχθονίου. κείνῳ γὰρ ἡ Διὸς κόρη
φρουρῶ παραζεύξασα φύλακε σώματος
δισσῶ δράκοντε, παρθένοις Ἀγλαυρίσι

5

10

15

20

δίδωσι σώζειν: ὄθεν Ἐρεχθεΐδαις ἐκεῖ
 νόμος τις ἔστιν ὄφεισιν ἐν χρυσηλάτοις 25
 τρέφειν τέκνα. ἀλλ' ἦν εἶχε παρθένος χλιδῆν
 τέκνω προσάψασ' ἔλιπεν ὡς θανουμένω.
 κᾶμ' ὦν ἀδελφὸς Φοῖβος αἰτεῖται τάδε:
 ὦ σύγγον', ἐλθὼν λαὸν εἰς αὐτόχθονα
 κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν — οἴσθα γὰρ θεᾶς πόλιν — 30
 λαβὼν βρέφος νεογνὸν ἐκ κοίλης πέτρας
 αὐτῷ σὺν ἄγγει σπαργάνοισί θ' οἷς ἔχει
 ἔνεγκε Δελφῶν τάμᾳ πρὸς χρηστήρια,
 καὶ θεὸς πρὸς αὐταῖς εἰσόδοις δόμων ἐμῶν.
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' — ἐμὸς γὰρ ἔστιν, ὡς εἰδῆς, ὁ παῖς — 35
 ἡμῖν μελήσει. Λοξία δ' ἐγὼ χάριν
 πράσσων ἀδελφῶ πλεκτὸν ἐξάρας κύτος
 ἦνεγκα, καὶ τὸν παῖδα κρηπίδων ἔπι
 τίθημι ναοῦ τοῦδ', ἀναπτύξας κύτος
 ἐλικτὸν ἀντίπηγος, ὡς ὀρώθ' ὁ παῖς 40
 κυρεῖ δ' ἄμ' ἵππεύοντος ἡλίου κύκλω
 προφήτης ἐσβαίνουσα μαντεῖον θεοῦ:
 ὄψιν δὲ προσβαλοῦσα παιδὶ νηπίω
 ἐθαύμασ' εἴ τις Δελφίδων τλαίη κόρη
 λαθραῖον ὠδῖν' ἐς θεοῦ ῥίψαι δόμον, 45
 ὑπέρ τε θυμέλας διορίσαι πρόθυμος ἦν:
 οἴκτω δ' ἀφήκεν ὠμότητα — καὶ θεὸς
 συνεργὸς ἦν τῷ παιδί μὴ ἔκπεσεῖν δόμων —
 τρέφει δὲ νιν λαβοῦσα. τὸν σπεύραντα δὲ
 οὐκ οἶδε Φοῖβον οὐδὲ μητέρ' ἦς ἔφου, 50

ὁ παῖς τε τοὺς τεκόντας οὐκ ἐπίσταται.
 νέος μὲν οὖν ὦν ἀμφὶ βωμίους τροφᾶς
 ἤλατ' ἀθύρων: ὡς δ' ἀπηνδρώθη δέμας,
 Δελφοί σφ' ἔθεντο χρυσοφύλακα τοῦ θεοῦ
 ταμίαν τε πάντων πιστόν, ἐν δ' ἀνακτόροις 55
 θεοῦ καταζῆ δεῦρ' αἰεὶ σεμνὸν βίον.
 Κρέουσα δ' ἠ τεκοῦσα τὸν νεανίαν
 Ξούθῳ γαμεῖται συμφορᾶς τοιαῦσδ' ὕπο:
 ἦν ταῖς Ἀθήναις τοῖς τε Χαλκωδοντίδαις,
 οἱ γῆν ἔχουσ' Εὐβοῖδα, πολέμιος κλύδων: 60
 ὃν συμπονήσας καὶ συνεξελῶν δορὶ
 γάμων Κρεοῦσης ἀξίωμ' ἐδέξατο,
 οὐκ ἐγγενῆς ὦν, Αἰόλου δὲ τοῦ Διὸς
 γεγὼς Ἀχαιοῦ. χρόνια δὲ σπείρας λέχη
 ἄτεκνός ἐστι, καὶ Κρέουσ': ὦν οὐνεκα 65
 ἦκουσι πρὸς μαντεῖ' Ἀπόλλωνος τάδε
 ἔρωτι παιδῶν. Λοξίας δὲ τὴν τύχην
 ἐς τοῦτ' ἐλαύνει, κοῦ λέληθεν, ὡς δοκεῖ.
 δώσει γὰρ εἰσελθόντι μαντεῖον τόδε
 Ξούθῳ τὸν αὐτοῦ παῖδα, καὶ πεφυκέναι 70
 κείνου σφε φήσει, μητρὸς ὡς ἐλθὼν δόμους
 γνωσθῆ Κρεοῦση, καὶ γάμοι τε Λοξίου
 κρυπτοὶ γένωνται παῖς τ' ἔχη τὰ πρόσφορα.
 Ἴωνα δ' αὐτόν, κτίστορ' Ἀσιάδος χθονός,
 ὄνομα κεκληῖσθαι θήσεται καθ' Ἑλλάδα. 75
 ἀλλ' ἐς δαφνώδη γύαλα βήσομαι τάδε,
 τὸ κρανθὲν ὡς ἂν ἐκμάθω παιδὸς πέρι.

ὄρῳ γὰρ ἐκβαίνοντα Λοξίου γόνον
τόνδ', ὡς πρὸ ναοῦ λαμπρὰ θῆ πυλώματα
δάφνης κλάδοισιν. ὄνομα δ', οὗ μέλλειτυχεῖν,
"Ἴων' ἐγὼ νιν πρῶτος ὀνομάζω θεῶν.

80

*The set: the front facade of APOLLO'S ORACULAR SHRINE AT DELPHI.
A few yards before the building is the altar, upon which sacrifice is performed.*

*The time: early morning. The sun has only newly joined the still-present stars
in the sky.*

The god HERMES enters to deliver the Prologue.

HERMES

You've heard of Atlas, I assume? Who with
his back of bronze wears down the ancient sky-
home of the gods? He fathered Maia, who with
great Zeus gave birth to Hermes, lackey of the gods.
That's me. I've come to Delphi, where the navel
of the earth draws to itself, where Phoibos lies,
who made this place the seat of hymns to all that is,
and chants to mortals all the things which soon will be.

There's a town in Greece that has a bit of fame—
it gets its name from Pallas with her gold-tipped spear:
you'll know it best as Athens, where Erekhtheus'
child was yoked in force by Phoibos at the place
where North-faced rocks, beneath the city's hill,
are called by those who rule there "Tall" and "Long."

I won't couch it in words. That is the place where Kreousa,
daughter of the king, was raped, assaulted by the god.

She couldn't tell her father as within her womb
she carried fruit of hidden godly lust. And when
her time had come, she bore a boy, and stole away
the infant to the cave in which this all began, and
left him by its mouth so he would die. Accordant
with the laws set from from Erekhtheus' day
(for Zeus' child Athena placed beside that
chthonic son two serpents as a two-fold guard,

and gave him to the maidens of the hill to raise; this, my friends, is why those born in Athens swaddle children, in their custom, in pairs of golden snakes). Kreousa in this manner dressed her child to die.

But Phoibos, dearest brother, asked this of me: "Hermes, going to the people, to the city of the goddess that you know, and bringing from the cave the newborn child (and taking too his cradle and the cloth in which he's wrapped), lead him to my Delphic seat of truth, and set him by the doorway of my shrine—" the very one before you now—"all other things will be arranged by us. The child, as you know, belongs to me." I did this favor for Apollo, Who Speaks His Sideways Truths, raising up the wicker cradle, brought it and child to the doorway of the shrine. I even opened up the basket so he might be seen;

—it happened as the ring of sun began its daily hike, and Pythia came in for morning cultic ritual: She marvelled, when she saw the child, that some Delphic girl would dare to leave the proof of secret labor pains within the holy precinct of the god, and moved to throw the child out; but pity came into her breast, the god worked through her lest the child be removed, and she took the boy to raise him, though she did not know Apollo was his father, and did not know the mother, and so the child never learned from whom he came.

When the boy was young he passed the days by playing games about the shrine which nurtured him; as he matured in body and in years, the Delphians set him over both the gold and worldly matters of the god. Within this holy place he led a sacred life.

Kreousa, Athenian mother of a Delphic youth, had married Xouthos through a certain twist of circumstance: through Athens and the Kalkhis of Euboian soil started up a crashing wave of war,

which Xouthos helped to keep at bay; because of this he earned the worthy gift of marrying the daughter of the king, though he was foreign to the land of Athens, a son of Ailos son of Zeus, Akhaien by his birth. Despite the long duration of their union, both their marriage and Kreousa waited barren; it's thanks to this, in their longing for children of their own, that they have sought this prophet of Apollo.

He Who Speaks His Sideways Truths now sets their fortune toward this; nothing has escaped his gaze, no matter how it seems. He will give to Xouthos, when he comes upon the gate of this prophetic shrine, his own child, and he will say the boy was born instead from that man, so when the pair comes home child will be known by mother, though her union with Apollo remains secret, and the youth can enjoy what dues he's owed. And last, Apollo will give to him the name which he will soon be called, father of Asian lands, across all of Greece:

Ion. The one who goes, the "Going" one.
A boy in motion, a man in transit, a state of being without beginning or end.

But I'm getting ahead of what will soon be shown to you.

For now, I will hide inside this rocky laurel glen, so I can learn how all affairs about this boy are settled. I see him now as he comes from the temple of his god, to dust the steps before the shining altar with his boughs of laurel shoots. His name, which soon he will obtain—I, Hermes, am first of the gods to call him it: Ion.

Πρωταγόρας by Plato

νέμων δὲ τοῖς μὲν ἰσχὺν ἄνευ τάχους προσῆπτεν, τοὺς δ' ἀσθενεστέρους τάχει ἐκόσμει· τοὺς δὲ ὤπλιζε, τοῖς δ' ἄοπλον διδοὺς φύσιν ἄλλην τιν' αὐτοῖς ἐμηχανᾶτο δύναμιν εἰς σωτηρίαν. ἃ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν σμικρότητι ἤμπισχεν, πτηνὸν φυγὴν ἢ κατάγειον οἴκησιν ἔνεμεν· ἃ δὲ ἠῦξε μεγέθει, τῷδε αὐτῷ αὐτὰ ἔσφωζεν· καὶ τᾶλλα οὕτως ἐπανισῶν ἔνεμεν. ταῦτα δὲ ἐμηχανᾶτο εὐλάβειαν ἔχων μὴ τι γένος ἀίστωθείη· ἐπειδὴ δὲ αὐτοῖς ἀλληλοφθοριῶν διαφυγὰς ἐπήρκεσε, πρὸς τὰς ἐκ Διὸς ὥρας εὐμάρειαν ἐμηχανᾶτο ἀμφιεννῦς αὐτὰ πυκναῖς τε θριξίν καὶ στερεοῖς δέρμασιν, ἱκανοῖς μὲν ἀμῦναι χειμῶνα, δυνατοῖς δὲ καὶ καύματα, καὶ εἰς εὐνὰς ἰοῦσιν ὅπως ὑπάρχῃ τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα στρωμνὴ οἰκεία τε καὶ αὐτοφυῆς ἐκάστω· καὶ ὑποδῶν τὰ μὲν ὅπλαῖς, τὰ δὲ θριξίν καὶ δέρμασιν στερεοῖς καὶ ἀναίμοις, τούντεῦθεν τροφὰς ἄλλοις ἄλλας ἐξεπτόριζεν, τοῖς μὲν ἐκ γῆς βοτάνην, ἄλλοις δὲ δένδρων καρπούς, τοῖς δὲ ῥίζας· ἔστι δ' οἷς ἔδωκεν εἶναι τροφήν ζώων ἄλλων βοράν· καὶ τοῖς μὲν ὀλιγογονίαν προσῆψε, τοῖς δ' ἀναλίσκομένοις ὑπὸ τούτων πολυγονίαν, σωτηρίαν τῷ γένει πορίζων.

Protagoras, 320d8-321b6

Translated by Kaitlin Karmen

In distributing faculties, Epimetheus dealt some creatures strength without speed, and adorned the weaker with speed. He armed some of the creatures, and as he was giving others an unarmed nature, he devised for them other safety. He invested some with smallness and distributed a winged escape or a subterranean dwelling. Others he increased in size and protected with this trait. And he distributed other things in this way, balancing them evenly. He contrived these things with caution, fearing that some race would be destroyed. After he had supplied the creatures with refuges from mutual slaughters, he devised protection against the seasons of Zeus, clothing animals with both dense hair and solid hides, sufficient to ward off winter and capable of warding off heat. And for those going to their beds, these protections would be fitting, self-grown bedding. He bound some with hooves, others with hair and firm, bloodless skins. From there, he provided nourishment: to some a pasture of the earth, to others the fruits of trees, and, to some, roots. There were some to whom he granted sustenance as the meat of other living creatures. He granted them the production of few offspring, but to those being eaten by others he granted the production of many offspring, furnishing safety for the race.

ARABIC

جندي يحلم بالزنايق البيضاء

محمود درويش

يحلم بالزنايق البيضاء
بغصن زيتون..
صدرها المورق في المساء
يحلم_ قال لي_ بطائر
بزهر ليمون
و لم يفلسف حلمه، لم يفهم الأشياء
إلا كما يحسها.. يشمها
يفهم_ قال لي_ إنّ الوطن
أن أحتمي قهوة أُمي
أن أعود في المساء..

سألته: و الأرض؟

قال: لا أعرفها

و لا أحس أنها جلدي و نبضي

مثلما يقال في القصائد

و فجأة، رأيتها

كما أرى الحانوت.. و الشارع.. و الجرائد

سألته: تحبها؟

أجاب: حبي نزهة قصيرة

أو كأس خمر.. أو مغامرة

_ من أجلها تموت؟

_ كلا!

و كل ما يربطني بالأرض من أوامر

مقالة نارية.. محاضرة!

قد علموني أن أحب حبها

و لم أحس أن قلبها قلبي،

و لم أشم العشب، و الجذور، و الغصون..

أغنية حب - الطيب صالح

كنت دائماً أود أن أغني، لكن صوتي كان نشازاً، ولم
أكن أستطيع أبداً أن أجيد نغمة واحدة، لسوء حظي. إلى
أن لقيتها. قالت إن أردت فعلياً اذاً أن أغني، مهما كان وقع صوتي.

قلت : "لكن صوتي نشاز."

قالت : "غن عن الحب. الناس تستهويهم أغاني الحب
الحزينة."

وهكذا ابتدأت. لم يحفل الناس بي أول الأمر. ثم أخذوا
يصغون. بل أن بعضهم أحب أغاني. كانت عيناها خضراوين
وكان فمها وسعاً وحاجباها نبيلي مقوسي بروعة. كانت
تحبني وتحب العالم كله، ما عدا اليابان، قتل اليابانيون
أخاها في الحرب الأخيرة.

ومع هذا فقد تركتني لأنني ترددت.

أمر محزن، نوعاً ما، لأنني و إن كنت أحب أن يسمع الناس
غنائي، فإبني أغني لها خاصة.

A Love Song

by Tayeb Salih

Translated by Zak Rawle & Julia Gordon

I always wanted to sing, but my voice was so jarring. I was
never able to sing a single note, just my luck. Until I met her.
She said that if I truly wanted to sing, then I must sing,
whatever the effect may be.

I said: But my voice is so jarring.

She said: Sing about love. Sad love songs appeal to
people.

And so I began. The people didn't notice me at first, then
they took to listening and some even like my songs. Her eyes
were green, her mouth was wide, her distinguished eyebrows
arched with splendor. She loved me. She loved the whole
world; well, except Japan. The Japanese killed her brother in
the last war.

Still, she left me because I waited, hesitated.

It's a sad sort of thing, because, although I loved for the
people to hear my songs, I sang especially, for her.

أصلح من جلسته ،وداعب الجريدة المطوية
و قال لي كأنه يسمعي أغنية:
كخيمة هوى على الحصى
و عانق الكوكب المحطمة
كان على جبينه الواسع تاج من دم
وصدره بدون أوسمة
لأنه لم يحسن القتال
يبدو أنه مزارع أو عامل أو بائع جوال
كخيمة هوى على الحصى ..و مات..
كانت ذراعه
ممدودتين مثل جدولين يابسين
و عندما فتّشت في جيوبه
عن اسمه، وجدت صورتين
واحد ..لزوجته
واحد.. لطفله ..
سألته: حزنت؟
أجابني مقاطعا يا صاحبي محمود
الحزن طير أبيض
لا يقرب الميدان و الجنود
يرتكبون الإثم حين يحزنون.
كنت هناك آلة تنفث نارا وردى
و تجعل الفضاء طيرا أسودا
حدثني عن حبه الأول،
فيما بعد
عن شوارع بعيدة،
و عن ردود الفعل بعد الحرب
عن بطولة المذيع والجريدة
و عندما خبا في منديله سعلته
سألته: أنلتني

و كيف كان حبها
يلسع كالشموس ..كالحنين؟
أجابني مواجها:
و سيلتي للحب بندقية
و عودة الأعياد من خرائب قديمة
و صمت تمثال قديم
ضائع الزمان و الهوية!
حدثني عن لحظة الوداع
و كيف أمه
تبكي بصمت عندما ساقوه
إلى مكان ما من الجبهة..
و كان صوت أمه الملتاع
يحفر تحت جلده أمنية جديدة :
لو يكبر الحمام في وزارة الدفاع
لو يكبر الحمام!..
دخن، ثم قال لي..
كأنه يهرب من مستنقع الدماء:
حلمت بالزنابق البيضاء
بغصن زيتون..
بطائر يعانق الصباح
فوق غصن ليمون..
وما رأيت؟
رأيت ما صنعت
عوسجة حمراء
فجرتها في الرمل.. في الصدور.. في البطون..
و كم قتلت؟
يصعب أن أعدهم..
لكنني نلت وساما واحدا
سألته، معذبا نفسي، إذن
صف لي قتيلا واحدا.

أجاب: في مدينة بعيدة
حين ملأت كأسه الرابع

قلت مازحا.. ترحل و.. الوطن؟

أجاب: دعني..

إنني أحلم بالزنايق البيضاء

بشارع مغرّد و منزل مضاء

أريد قلبا طيبا، لا حشو بندقية

أريد يوما مشمسا، لا لحظة انتصار

مجنونة.. فاشية

أريد طفلا باسماء يضحك للنهار،

لا قطعة في الآلة الحربية

جئت لأحيا مطلع الشموس

لا مغربها

ودعني، لأنه.. يبحث عن زنايق بيضاء

عن طائر يستقبل الصباح

فوق غصن زيتون

لأنه لا يفهم الأشياء

إلا كما يحسها.. يشمها

يفهم.. قال لي.. إن الوطن

أن أحتسي قهوة أمي..

أن أعود، أمانا مع، المساء

A Soldier Dreams of White Lilies

by Mahmoud Darwish

Translated by Eliza Cornwell

He dreams of white lilies,
Of an olive branch,
Of her breasts blooming in the evening.
He dreams - he told me - of a bird,
Of lemon blossoms.
He doesn't interpret his dream,
He doesn't understand things except
Those that he can feel and smell.
But he understands - he told me - that home is
where I drink my mother's coffee,
And where I return home in the evening.

I ask him: And the land?
He says: I don't know it.
I don't feel it under my skin or in my heartbeat
Like they say in poetry.
Suddenly, I saw it.
Like I see the shop, the street, and the newspapers.
Do you love it?
My love is a short diversion,
Like a glass of wine, a foolhardy risk.
Would you die for it?
No.

The duty that binds me to the land
Is a nationalist article, a lecture.
The taught me how to love its love.
But I never held it in my heart's core.
I do not honor its roots, grass, branches.
I ask: How was its love?
Did it scorch you like suns... like longing?
He faces me, and answers:
My instrument of love is a gun.
My celebration: the return of remains
To families in mourning.
It is the silence of an old statue,
With an identity and an age, both missing.

He tells me about the seconds of farewell.

How his mother cried
In silence when they dragged him
To a place at the front.
It was the voice of his mother's pain
That dug below the surface of his skin:
A new kind of loss.
O, that doves would rise up in the Ministry of Defense!
O, that they would rise up.

He smokes, then says to me,
As though wading through a pool of blood;
I dreamt of white lilies,
Of an olive branch.
Of a bird embracing the morning
Up in a lemon tree.
What did you see?
I saw what I did.
I burst into sand... into breasts... in bellies.
How many people did you kill?
It's difficult to count them.
But I got a medal.
I ask him, torturing myself:
Tell me about someone you shot.

He shifts in his chair, playing with the folded corner of the newspaper,
And says, off-hand, as if reciting lyrics to a song:
One dropped down like a tent onto sand,
Clutching his chest, looking upwards to the shattering sky...
There was a vast crown of blood on his forehead
But his chest had no medals
Because he was not a fighter.
He looked like he was a farmer, a worker, or a salesman.
But he dropped down like a tent onto sand,
His arms outstretched like two dry rivers.
When I checked his pockets
For his name, I found two photographs.
One of his wife.
One... of a young child.
I ask him: Do you regret it?
He answers, interrupting: Mahmoud, my friend,
Regret is a white bird
That is never found on battlefields.
Soldiers sin when they feel regret.
I was there, a machine breathing fire.

I sent a black bird off into outer space.

Later
He tells me about his first love,
Of far away streets,
About heroisms after the war,
About being on TV and radio.
I have filled his glass for the fourth time,
And as he hides his cough in a handkerchief,
I ask him: Shall we meet again?
He answers: Maybe, in a far away city.

I say, joking: You're leaving? What of the homeland?
He answers: Let me...
So I may dream of white lilies,
Of a songbird on a branch,
A home with the lights on.
I want a good heart, not bullets from a gun,
And I want a sunlit morning, not a mad fascist
moment of victory.
I want a child's smiling face - laughter - filling my day,
Not a piece of a war machine.
I came to live, to see the early sun,
Not to see it setting.

And he says goodbye,
Because he is searching
For white lilies,
For a bird that loves the morning
Up in an olive branch.
Because he does not try to interpret his dreams,
He doesn't understand things except
Those he can feel and smell.
He knows - he tells me - that home is
drinking my mother's coffee,
And returning, safe, in the evening.

هَبَطَتْ نَجْمَةٌ . تَمَشَّتْ
خَلْسَةً فِي الزَّفَاقِ الْمُؤَدِّيِ إِلَى بَيْتِنَا ، وَأَعْطَتْ
قَدَمَيْهَا إِلَى عَاشِقٍ ، وَأَعْطَتْ
لِيَدَيَّ نَخْلَةَ شَعْرَهَا .

عَجِبًا !
لَمْ يَكُنْ أَحَدٌ ، فِي الطَّرِيقِ إِلَى بَيْتِنَا ،
يَقْتَنِي خَطْوَهَا .

22.

A star lands, belly first. It touches down
It sneaks into an alleyway on the way to our house.
It dangles its toes to its lover;
A lady, her hair wrapped in a date palm.

How wondrous!

And no one was there on the way to our house
To see its quiet steps.

عزیزتی غادة
صبحا الخیر ..

ماذا تريدین أن أقول لك؟ الان وصلت الى المكتب، الساعة الثانية
ظهراً، لم أنام أبداً حتى مثل هذه الساعة إلا أمس ودخلت مثلما ادخل
كل صباح : استرق النظر إلى أكوام الرسائل والجرائد و الطرود
على الطاولة كأنني لا أريد أن تلحظ الأشياء لهفتي وخيبتني. اليوم فقد
كنت متيقيناً أنني لم أجد رسالة منك، طوال الأيام الـ ١٧ الماضية
كنت أنقب في كوم البريد مرة في الصباح ومرة في المساء. اليوم
فقط نفضت يدي من الأمر كله، ولكن الأقدار تعرف كيف تواصل
مزاحها. لقد كانت رسالتك فوق الكوم كله، وقالت لي : صباح الخير
! أقول لك : دمعت.

منذ سافرت سافرت أني، وإلى الآن ما تزال في دمشق وأنا وحدي
سعيد أحياناً، غريب أحياناً واكتب دائماً كل شيء إلا ما له قيمة..
حين كنت على المطار كنت أعرف أن شيئاً رهيباً سيحدث بعد
ساعات : غيابك وتركك للمحرر¹ ، ولكنني لم أقول لك. كنت سعيدة
ومستثارة بصورة لا مثيل لها وحين تركتك ذهبت الى البيت وقلت
للمحرر أن كل شيء قد انتهى.

إنني أقول لك كل شيء لأنني أفتقدك . لأنني أكثر من ذلك ((تعبتُ
من الوقوف)) بدونك .. ورغم ذلك فقد كان يخيل لي ذات يوم إنك
ستكونين بعيدة حقا حين تسافرين .

¹ (١) جريدة المحرر البيروتية، حيث كان غسان يعمل.

1/20/1967

My Dear Ghada,

Good morning...

What would you like for me to say to you? I've just arrived at the office at two in the afternoon. I have not been sleeping even at such an hour except yesterday. I entered the office as I do every morning: stealing glances at the pile of letters and newspapers and packages on the table, as if I do not want them to notice my distress and disappointment. Only today I was certain I would not find a letter from you. Throughout the past seventeen days I have been digging through the pile of mail once in the morning and once in the evening. Only today I have given up this entire quest, but fate knows how to keep playing games. Your message was on top of the entire pile and it said to me: good morning! I tell you: I was in tears.

Since you have traveled Annie did too, and she remains in Damascus to this day. In solitude, I am content at times, displaced at others and I write about everything even though it is pointless... When you were at the airport I knew something terrible was about to happen in a few hours: your absence and my departure from Al-Muharrir¹. But I did not say anything to you. You were happy, excited as never before. As soon as I left you, I went home and told the editor of Al-Muharrir that I resign.

I am telling you everything because part of me is missing without you. Because I am tired of standing without you². Despite that, I could see a day when you would be far away indeed when you leave.

Your letter has caused me pain, withholding all but one word of love. You were able to last a week or more without me crossing your mind. Oh the disappointment! And despite that, I find myself here writing to you: with Atif, we drank in your honor that night in the May Fair³ and we spoke about you and ate Taskeya⁴ in silence while the owner stared at us as if we were two people who had lost something.

When will you return? When will you write to me? When will you understand that I deserve you; that I have waited, and I am still waiting, and will always beseech you: take me under your eye...

Ghassan

¹The liberator; a Lebanese newspaper in Beirut that Ghassan worked at.

²Tired of standing is an expression in Arabic meaning endurance.

³A coffee shop.

⁴Literal translation: quenching. A famous dish in the countries near the Eastern Mediterranean (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine). Made by placing boiled chickpeas on toasted pieces of bread then pouring the water used to boil the chickpeas on top of the bread (which is where this dish gets its name).

ولقد آلمتني رسالتك . ضننت علي بكلمة حارة واحدة واستطعت ان
تظلي أسبوعاً أو أكثر دون أن أخطر على بالك. يا للخيبة! ورغم ذلك
فها أنا أكتب لك مع عاطف² شربنا نخبك تلك الليلة في الماي فير³
وتحدثنا عنك وأكلنا التسقية⁴ بصمت فيما كان صاحب المطعم ينظر
إلينا نظرته إلى شخصين أضاعاً شيئاً.

متى سترجعين؟ متى ستكتبين لي حقاً؟ متى ستشعرين أنني أستحقك؟
إنني انتظرت، وانتظر، وأظل أقول لك: خذيني تحت عينيك...

غسان

² (٢) عاطف أسمر: صديق حميم من أصدقاء غسان.

³ (٣) مقهى في الروشة.

⁴ (٤) فتة الحمص وكنا نذهب آخر الليل للعشاء في مطعم شعبي يعدها في

(الطريق الجديدة) قرب المقاصد، حتى صار صاحب المطعم يتوقع

حضورنا كل ليلة مع الأصدقاء، ويعاتبنا إذا غبنا!

نوح الجديد

أدونيس

رحنا مع الفلك، مجاديفنا
وعد من الله، وتحت المطر
والوحد، نحيا ويموت البشر...
رحنا مع الموج، وكان الفضاء
حبلا من الموتى، ربطنا به
أعمارنا، وكان بين السماء
وبيتنا، نافذة للدعاء:

يا رب، لم خلصتنا وحدنا
من بين كل الناس والكائنات؟
وأين تلقينا، أفي أرضك الأخرى،
أفي موطننا الأول
في ورق الموت وريح الحياة؟
في ورق فينا، في شرابينا
رعب من الشمس: ينسنا من النور،
ينسنا من غد مقبل
فيه نعيد العمر من أول.

رحنا مع الفلك، مجاديفنا
وعد من الله، وتحت المطر
يعانق الوحل عيون البشر
ماتوا مع الطين، نجونا من
الطوفان والموت، بقينا بذور
في كرة تدور، أو لا تدور

آه، لو انا لم نصر بذرة
للخلق، للأرض وأجيالها

آه، لو انا لم نزل طينة
أو جمره أو لم نزل، بين بين
كي لا نرى العالم، كي لا نرى
جحيمة وربيه مرتين.

يا رب، موتنا مع الكائنات
تقنا إلى الآخر، تقنا إلى
ترابنا، لا، لا نريد الحياة!

لو رجع الزمان من أول
وغمرت وجه الحياة المياه
وارتجف الكون وخف الإله
يقول لي، يا نوح أنتذ لنا
الأحياء، لم أحفل بقول الإله
وجئت في فلكي معي شاعر
وثائر حر
ورحنا معا،

رحنا، ولم نحفل بقول الإله
نفتح للطوفان أعماقنا
نغوص في الوحل، نزيح الحصى
والطين عن حاجر الطائفين
نهمس في عروقهم أننا
عدنا من التيه، خرجنا من الكهف
وغيرنا سماء السنين.

وأنا نبحر، لا ننحني رعبا
ولا نصغي لقول الإله،
موعدنا موت، وشطآننا
يأس ألفناء رضينا به
مجرا جليديا حديد المياه
نعيره نمضي إلى منتهاه
نمضي، ولا نصغي لذاك الإله
تقنا إلى رب جديد سواه

The New Noah

by Adonis

Translated by Kaylee Lockett

We boarded the ark, our oars
promises from God, and in the rain
and mud we lived while humankind died. We
embarked upon the waves, and the sky was
tethered to the dead. It fastened our lives to
the lives of the lost and between heaven
and our ship there was an opening through which to call:

O Lord, why have you saved us alone from
among all people and creation? Where have
you cast us, in your other land? In our first
homeland,
in the foliage of death and the wind of
life? O Lord, in us, in our arteries
courses a fear of the sun:
We have given up on daylight,
we have given up on the next day, in
which life returns to its beginning.

We boarded the ark, our oars
promises from God, and in the rain
mud covered the eyes of the bodies
lost in the clay. We were saved from
the flood and from death, those of us who remained as
dust on a globe, turning or still.

Oh, if only we did not become a seed for
creation, of the Earth and its generations,
oh, if only we remained as clay
or as embers, or what lies in between -
then we would not see this world, we would not see
its hell and its god twice.

O God, Let us die with the rest of
creation, we crave the end, we are
hungry for our soil, no, no - we do not
want to live!

CHINESE

错过时间

哈金

我的笔记本已经保持空白了好几个月
感谢你洗澡的灯光
我周围。我没有用
为我的笔，这是谎言
无忧无虑。

没有比生活更好
一个无情的生活需要
没有意义的写作 -
当我走了，让别人说
他们失去了一个幸福的男人，
虽然没有人能说出我是多么高兴。

Missed Time

by Ha Jin

Translated by Johanna Costigan

My notebook has remained blank for months
thanks to the light you shower
around me. I have no use
for my pen, which lies / languorously without grief.
Nothing is better than to live
a storyless life that needs
no writing for meaning—
when I am gone, let others say
they lost a happy man,
though no one can tell how happy I was.

In the Mood For Love 《花样年华》

by Wong Kar-Wai 王家卫

Translated by Maeve Lazor 卫小梅

In *The Mood For Love* is a Chinese film written and directed by Wong Kar Wai starring Tony Leung as a journalist named Cho Mo-Wan and Maggie Cheung as Su Li-Zhen, a secretary from a shipping company. The original Chinese title is *The Age of Blossoms*, a Chinese idiom for the ephemeral time of youth, beauty, and love. Set in 1960's Hong Kong, the two protagonists are next-door neighbors who begin a secret love affair. The language spoken in the film is Cantonese, and the following text is translated from the Chinese subtitles to English.

《花样年华》是一部中国电影，由王家卫编剧和导演。演员梁朝伟饰演一个名叫周慕云的记者，而张曼玉饰演一个航运公司的秘书。这部电影本来的名字《花样年华》是一个成语，意思是青春、美、和爱情。剧情设定在1960年代的香港，这两个角色是隔壁邻居并秘密的开始谈恋爱。剧中使用的语言是广东话，而这段文字是从中文翻译成英文。

1. (在蘇麗珍的房间里)

周慕云：你猜他们会不会打到天亮？

蘇麗珍：孙太太说只大巴圈。

周慕云：你信不信？

蘇麗珍：不如你瞓睡一会，他们散了我就叫你。

周慕云：那你呢？

蘇麗珍：我先把这段写好。

周慕云：写到哪儿？

蘇麗珍：大嘴侠出场。

周慕云：怎么多了个大醉侠？

蘇麗珍：刚想到的。

1. (In Su Li-Zhen's bedroom)

Su Li-Zhen: They'll play till morning

Cho Mo-Wan: Ms. Su said only eight rounds of *Ma zhong*.

Su Li-Zhen: You believe that?

Cho Mo-Wan: You get some rest. I'll wake you when they leave.

Su Li-Zhen: And you?

Cho Mo-Wan: I have a chapter to finish.

Su Li-Zhen: Where have you gotten to?

Cho Mo-Wan: The drunken master just showed up.

Su Li-Zhen: When did he get written in?

Cho Mo-Wan: Just now.

2. (在街上)

蘇麗珍：你这么晚不回家，你老婆不会问吗？

周慕云：早习惯了，她不管我的。你老公不说什么吗？

蘇麗珍：我想他早睡了。。。我真的说不出口。

周慕云：我明白。事到如今。谁先开口有什么所谓？

蘇麗珍：其实你知不知道你老婆是怎样的人？

(蘇麗珍走了)

2. (Walking on the street).

Su Li-Zhen: It's late. Won't your wife complain?

Cho Mo-Wan: She's used to it. She doesn't care. And your husband?

Su Li-Zhen: He must be asleep by now...I can't say it.

Cho Mo-Wan: I understand. After all, it's already happened. It doesn't matter who made the first move.

Su Li-Zhen: Do you really know your wife?

(Su Li-Zhen walks away).

3. (在蘇麗珍的房间里)

蘇麗珍：有没有帮我打电话会公司请假？

周慕云：打过了。

蘇麗珍：你怎么说的？

周慕云：说你病了。

蘇麗珍：他们有没有问你是谁？

周慕云：没有。。。多半以为我是你丈夫吧。

蘇麗珍：何先生知道他出门了。

周慕云：就说他已经回来好了。

蘇麗珍：都是自己吓自己。平日我也常过来。有什么好紧张的。

周慕云：这很难说，他们突然之间回来。不知道他们会怎么乱想。

蘇麗珍：所以真的不能走错一步。

(蘇麗珍走了)

3. (In Su Li-Zhen's bedroom)

Su Li-Zhen: Did you call the office for me?

Cho Mo-Wan: Yes.

Su Li-Zhen: What did you tell them?

Cho Mo-Wan: That you weren't feeling well.

Su Li-Zhen: Did they ask who you were?

Cho Mo-Wan: No. Probably took me as your husband.

Su Li-Zhen: Mr. Ho knows that he's away.

Cho Mo-Wan: Pretend he's come back.

Su Li-Zhen: Maybe we're being too cautious. I'm always around anyway. We shouldn't have panicked.

Cho Mo-Wan: Well, they did turn up with out warning. What would they assume?

Su Li-Zhen: One can't put down a wrong foot.

4. (在周慕云办公室的外边)

蘇麗珍：我明白天再来看你。

周慕云：我歇两天就没事。

蘇麗珍：不要紧，才一会而功夫。我给你买点吃的，你想吃什么？

周慕云：随便。

蘇麗珍：那我就走了，你早点休息。

周慕云：回去给我个电话。用不着说话，响三声就好。

蘇麗珍：好。

周慕云：我没想过你会来。

蘇麗珍：我们不会跟他们一样的。再见。

4. (Outside Zhen's office).

Su Li-Zhen: I'll come again tomorrow.

Cho Mo-Wan: No need, I'll be all right after some rest.

Su Li-Zhen: It's no trouble. I'll bring you some food. What would you like?

Cho Mo-Wan: Whatever.

Su Li-Zhen: Then I'll leave now. Get some rest.

Cho Mo-Wan: Call me when you get home. Let it ring three times, then hang up.

Su Li-Zhen: All right.

Cho Mo-Wan: I didn't think you'd come.

Su Li-Zhen: We won't be like them. See you tomorrow.

5. (吃晚饭的时候)

蘇麗珍：你老实告诉我，你外面是不是有个女人？

周慕云：神经病。谁跟你说的？

蘇麗珍：你别管。你是不是有了个女人？

周慕云：没有。

蘇麗珍：不要骗我。你看着我。你看着我！我为你，你外面是不是有个女人？

周慕云：是。

(蘇麗珍打周慕云)

周慕云：你怎么了？他已经承认在外面有个女人。你还打得这么经。

蘇麗珍：我没想到他会回答得这么干脆。我不知道该怎么办。

周慕云：再来一次吧。

蘇麗珍：你老实回答我。你外面是不是有个女人？

周慕云：神经病。谁跟你说的？

蘇麗珍：你别管，你是不是有个女人？

周慕云：没有。

蘇麗珍：你不要骗我。你告诉我。你看着我，是不是有个女人？

周慕云：是。你没事吧。

蘇麗珍：我没想到真的会这样伤心。

(蘇麗珍开始哭)

周慕云：我试试而已，又不是真的。就算是真的他也不会认。没的，别这样。

5. (Eating dinner).

Su Li-Zhen: Tell me honestly. Do you have a mistress?

Cho Mo-Wan: You're crazy. Who told you that?

Su Li-Zhen: Never mind who. Do you or do you not?

Cho Mo-Wan: No.

Su Li-Zhen: Don't lie. Look at me. Look at me! I'm asking you, do you have a mistress?

Cho Mo-Wan: Yes.

(Su Li-Zhen slaps Cho Mo-Wan)

Cho Mo-Wan: That's no reaction. If he admits it outright, let him have it.

Su Li-Zhen: I wasn't expecting he would admit it so easily. I don't know how to react.

Cho Mo-Wan: One more time, all right?

Su Li-Zhen: Tell me honestly. Do you have a mistress?

Cho Mo-Wan: You're crazy. Who told you that?

Su Li-Zhen: Never mind that do you or do you not?

Cho Mo-Wan: No.

Su Li-Zhen: Don't lie. Tell me. Look at me. Do you have a mistress?

Cho Mo-Wan: Yes... Are you all right?

Su Li-Zhen: I didn't expect it to hurt so much. (She cries.)

Cho Mo-Wan: This is just a rehearsal. He won't really admit it so readily. It's ok don't, take it so hard.

6. (在街上，晚上)

周慕云：这么巧

蘇麗珍：是啊。上街吗？

周慕云：整晚没吃过东西了，下来吃碗面。你饿不饿？一起啊？

蘇麗珍：不了。

周慕云：这么晚才下班？公司很忙？

蘇麗珍：就是没事做，所以看了场电影。

周慕云：是吗，好不好看？

蘇麗珍：马马虎虎。

周慕云：我从前也爱看电影。

蘇麗珍：你以前倒是挺多嗜好的。

周慕云：自己一个人，大把时间，想做什么就做什么。结了婚就不一样。很多事情，一个人作不了主。对不对？有时候我会想，要是现在还没有结婚。不知会怎样。你也会这样想吗？

蘇麗珍：可能会比较开心吧。。。我以前都没有想到婚姻是这样复杂。如果一个人自己做得好就够了，可是当两个人在一起时，只有自己做得好是不够的。

周慕云：别想太多了。等他们回来再说吧。

蘇麗珍：你没事啊？

周慕云：其实我跟你还不是一样。我只是不去想，又不是我做错。何必每天问自己做错了什么，浪费自己时间。我不想这样下去。

蘇麗珍：你有什么打算？

周慕云：这几天我躺在床上翻试侠小说。我想再写。已经开了头，过两天让你看。

蘇麗珍：好啊。

周慕云：你这么喜欢看试侠小说，我们一起写吧。

蘇麗珍：这怎么行，我只会看，哪里会写？

周慕云：试试看嘛。

蘇麗珍：那好吧，我尽量。

周慕云：还没多谢你的芝麻糊呢。

蘇麗珍：别客气，小意思嘛。

周慕云：说起来真巧。刚好那天我很想吃芝麻糊。

蘇麗珍：是吗？这么巧。

周慕云：是呀，就这么巧。

蘇麗珍：我先去吃吃东西。

6. (Nighttime on the street.)

Cho Mo-Wan: What a coincidence!

Su Li-Zhen: Going out?

Cho Mo-Wan: I'm buying some noodles. I'm starving. Hungry? Will you join me?

Su Li-Zhen: No, thanks.

Cho Mo-Wan: Just off work? You must be very busy.

Su Li-Zhen: Actually, I've been to see a movie.

Cho Mo-Wan: Really? How was it?

Su Li-Zhen: Fine.

Cho Mo-Wan: I used to like going to the movies.

Su Li-Zhen: You had many hobbies before.

Cho Mo-Wan: On your own, you are free to do a lot of things. Everything changes when you marry. It must be decided together. Right? I sometimes wonder what I'd be if I hadn't married. Have you ever thought of that?

Su Li-Zhen: Maybe happier...I didn't know married life would be so complicated. When you're single, you are only response to yourself. Once you're married, doing well on your own is not enough.

Cho Mo-Wan: Don't dwell on it. Maybe he'll be back soon.

Su Li-Zhen: What about you?

Cho Mo-Wan: Actually we're in the same boat. But don't dwell on it. It's not my fault. I can't waste time wondering if I made mistakes. Life is too short for that. Something must change.

Su Li-Zhen: So what's your plan?

Cho Mo-Wan: I want to write a martial-arts serial. Actually, I've started one. I'll show you.

Su Li-Zhen: Great.

Cho Mo-Wan: You'd like them. So why not help me write it?

Su Li-Zhen: I wouldn't know how, I only read them.

Cho Mo-Wan: We could discuss it together.

Su Li-Zhen: Ok, I'll try my best.

Cho Mo-Wan: I never thanked you for the sesame syrup.

Su Li-Zhen: No need, I was making it anyway.

Cho Mo-Wan: Amazing, I was craving some sesame syrup that day.

Su Li-Zhen: Really? What a coincidence.

Cho Mo-Wan: It was.

Su Li-Zhen: I'll go for those noodles.

CZECH

První Parta

by Karel Čapek

Je to bída, bože, je to bída: pět let studovat na reálce, a najednou konec; umře ti teta, která tě krmila aspoň tou šedivou culifindou, a ty se jdi živit sám. Ted' si můžeš dát za čepici ty své logaritmy, deskriptivní geometrii a kde co; už jsi byl zpitomělý strachem a dřením, a ještě to nebylo kantorům dost; prý takový chudý chlapec jako vy, Půlpáne, si má víc vážit vzdělání, kterého se mu poskytuje, a snažit se, aby to někam přivedl — — Snažit se, snažit se, snažit se; a pak prásk, teta si zamane umřít, a je dosnaženo s deskriptivní geometrií. Neměli by chudé kluky dávat na studie. Ted' tady sedíš se svou geometrií a francouzskými slovíčky a loupeš si na dlaních mozoly. Jak že to je? Nejdřív je pšouk od havíře, pak dlouho nic a teprve potom přijde vozač. A pak se řekne snažit se!

Pravda, byla tu ještě ta dvě léta. Dvě léta ve stavitelské kanceláři. Říká se tomu kreslič a má to pět nebo šest stovek měsíčně, ale člověk ještě může věřit, že po večerech dostuduje a jednou udělá zkoušky, nu, a dotáhne to třeba i na nezaměstnaného inženýra, ne? Ale ty večery, to snad bylo to nejhorší: sedět nad školními knihami a brejlit na vzorce a rovnice — pro pána krále, jak to vlastně je? Kdyby tu byl ten nejhorší pes z profesorského sboru, řekl by na vysvětlenou jen pár slov, a už bys věděl, co je a jak se na ten vzorec přijde; ale takhle na to koukáš hodiny a hodiny, a pořád je ti z toho tíž a vrtohlavěji. Kriste, to byla dvě léta! At' někdo řekne, že jsem se dost nesnažil! Dvě léta, prosím pěkně: každý večer až do noci dřepět nad knížkami a tlouci se pěstí do hlavy, musíš to pochopit, musíš se tomu naučit — to není žádná maličkost, pane. Divné, co člověk vydrží; měl by vlastně dávno chcípat na souchotiny z hladu a beznaděje. A pak se stal firmě ten malér, poroučela se novostavba; inu, okrádalo se na betonu a železech, že už se na to Pán Bůh nemohl dívat; zasypalo to sedm zedníků, a stavitel se raději zastřelil, když ho chtěli sbalit ve jménu zákona. Co dělat, stavitelský kreslič Půlpán Stanislav měl zase dosnaženo; kampak by se hrabal o místo, kdyby se zmínil, že pracoval u té nešťastné stavební firmy? Co vás nemá, mladíku, s tím se moc neohánějte; nikdo nedá práci lidem, kteří byli zaměstnáni při takové lumpárně.

A tož, ve jménu božím, staň se, co bylo souzeno. Nebožtík táta pracoval v koksárně; i bude syn rubat uhlí. S pěti ročníky reálky a po dvou letech nad stavitelskými modráky bude Standa kopat na Kristině. Něčím se člověk musí živit, když mu je pomalu osmnáct let. Asi je to u Půlpánů v rodě: děda byl důlním tesařem, a tatíka dali na koksárnu, když mu to v dole zlomilo nohu. Vy Půlpáni jste tu jen proto, abyste dělali černou práci. Žádné rýsovací prkno, žádná deskriptivní geometrie; s uhlím budeš pracovat, jako že jsi Půlpán. Tak je to, holenku, a z toho se už nevysnažíš. Ne, nevysnažíš; ale aspoň nebýt

dlouho vozačem, hergot, aspoň ty vozíky nemuset pořád strkat! Nikdy se tomu nenaučím, myslí si Standa zoufale; to už je jedno, že od toho bolí kříž a ruce; ale jen kdyby se mi každou chvílí nezasekl hunt na výhybce! A pak jím strkej a lomcuj, až hekáš námahou; ještě tu mrchu vykolejíš, a máš ostudu. ,Koukej, ty vole, to musíš takhle,' ucákne potom Baďura nebo Grygar, a jen tak jednou rukou ti ten vozík postrčí, a už to jede, jako když namaže. Takový jednoduchý fortel je to. Koukej, ty vole, už to jede. Tak nač má člověk pět tříd reálky, nač se mořil s francouzskými slovíčky, nač bylo všechno to kreslení a rýsování! Nač, povídáš? Asi na to, človče, abys ještě víc cítil svou bídu a samotu.

The First Crew

Translated by Harriette Slagle

What a miserable life. God, what a miserable life. Five years of studying in high school and suddenly it was all over. Your aunt died on you, an aunt who at least fed you watery gruel, and you had to go live on your own. You had to wave goodbye to your logarithms, descriptive geometry, and whatever else. You were numb from fear and hard work, and still it wasn't enough for the teacher, who said, "Such a poor boy like you, Půlpáne, you should better appreciate the education that is being granted to you. You should try hard so that you can make something of yourself." You'd think to yourself: try hard, try hard, try hard, and then BOOM! Your aunt decided to die on you, and it was farewell to descriptive geometry. Penniless boys should not dedicate themselves to their studies. Back then you were sitting there with your geometry and your French phrases while peeling the callouses off your palms, and — do you want to know what it's like now? A lowly drags-man, pulling along his coal cart in the mines, is no more important than the fart from the ass of a pitman. And then still they'll tell you to try hard!

True, there were those two years. Two years in an architectural firm. My job title was "draftsman," a job that can pull in five or six hundred a month, but you wouldn't believe that after I finished studying in the evenings and after I took all of my tests I would still have the bright idea to become an employed engineer, right? But those evenings hunched over my textbooks and squinting at formulas and equations, those were in fact the worst. I would wrack my brains: oh for God's sake, what are the answers? Out of all of the teachers in the school, if the biggest asshole of them all explained the problem to you in just a few words, you'd immediately know how to solve it. But there you were, staring at the clock hour after hour, and the problem weighed down on you more and more and you couldn't get the thoughts out of your head. Christ, those were some two years! I dare someone to say that I didn't try hard enough!

Two years, thank you very much. Two years spending every evening until late at night sitting on my ass hunched over my books, cramming knowledge into my head – you must understand, you must learn it – that is no small thing, no siree. It's absurd what a person can endure; one could have croaked a long time ago from hunger and despair. And then you became that draftsman in the firm and almost immediately after that the building designed by the firm went kaput. The brand new building fell to pieces, believe it or not. People stole so much concrete and iron during its original construction that even God couldn't look anymore. Seven masons were buried beneath the fallen rubble and the contractor shot himself when they wanted to bust him for it. That was the end of Stanislav Půlpán's attempts at being a building draftsman. Where could he find himself a new job if he mentioned that he worked for that unlucky architectural firm? No no no, young man, you have to keep it quiet. No one ever gives anyone a job who has been employed at such a ripoff company.

And so, in the name of God, your fate is decided. Your deceased father worked in a coking plant; now his son will be hacking away at coal, too. Even with five years' worth of high school and two years' worth of scrutinizing blueprints, Stani will hack away in a coal mine. A person has to live on something when he's almost eighteen. It probably runs in Půlpán's family: his grandfather was a carpenter in the coal mines, and his father they put on the coking plant after he broke his foot down there. All you Půlpáns exist only to do dirty work. There will be no drawing board, no descriptive geometry. You'll work with coal, simply because you're a Půlpán. That's how it is, kid, and you'll never get out of it no matter how hard you try. No, no matter how hard I try, but at least don't let me be a drags-man forever. Hell, I don't want to have to push those carts for eternity! I'll never learn it. I'm desperate. I don't really care that my back and hands hurt from it all but I wish the cart didn't get stuck constantly on the sliding rails. And then to fix it you have to push it and jerk it around until you're grunting from exertion; and then you derail that damned thing and you embarrass yourself. Either Bad'ura or Grygar growl at you, "Look, you idiot, do it like this," and then with one arm they push it aside and there it goes, like it's just been oiled. They have such a knack for it. "Look, you idiot, it's moving now." So what good is five years of high school experience, and why drudge away at French, and what was all that drawing and drafting for? Why, why, why? Perhaps so you, mister, could feel your own poverty and loneliness.

FRENCH

«Considérons, par exemple, la honte.(...) Elle est conscience non positionnelle (de) soi comme honte et, comme telle, c'est un exemple de ce que les Allemands appellent «Erlebnis», elle est accessible à la réflexion. En outre sa structure est intentionnelle, elle est appréhension honteuse de ce quelque chose et ce quelque chose est moi. J'ai honte de ce que je suis. La honte réalise donc une relation intime de moi avec moi: j'ai découvert par la honte un aspect de mon être. Et pourtant, bien que certaines formes complexes et dérivées de la honte puissent apparaître sur le plan réflexif, la honte n'est pas originellement un phénomène de réflexion. En effet, quels que soient les résultats que l'on puisse obtenir dans la solitude par la pratique religieuse de la honte, la honte dans sa structure première est quelque'un. Je viens de faire un geste maladroit ou vulgaire: ce geste colle à moi je ne le juge ni le blâme, je le vis simplement, je le réalise sur le mode du pour-soi. Mais voici tout à coup que je lève la tête: quelqu'un était là et m'a vu. Je réalise tout à coup la vulgarité de mon geste et j'ai honte. Il est certain que ma honte n'est pas réflexive, car la présence d'autrui à ma conscience, fût-ce à la manière d'un catalyseur, est incompatible avec l'attitude réflexive; dans le champ de la réflexion je ne peux jamais rencontrer que la conscience qui est mienne. Or autrui est le médiateur entre moi et moi-même: j'ai honte de moi tel que j'apparais à autrui. Et par l'apparition même d'autrui, je suis mis en mesure de porter un jugement sur moi-même comme sur un objet, car c'est comme objet que j'apparais à autrui. Mais pourtant cet objet apparu à autrui, ce n'est pas une vaine image dans l'esprit d'un autre. Cette image en effet serait entièrement imputable à autrui et ne saurait me «toucher». Je pourrais ressentir de l'agacement, de la colère en face d'elle, comme devant un mauvais portrait de moi, qui me prête une laideur ou une bassesse d'expression que je n'ai pas; mais je ne saurais être atteint jusqu'aux moelles: la honte est, par nature, reconnaissance. Je reconnais que je suis comme autrui me voit».

“Consider shame, for example. (...) It is a non-positional consciousness of itself as shame and, as such, it is an example of what the Germans call “Erlebnis”, it is accessible to reflection. Furthermore its structure is intentional, it is a shameful apprehension of this something, and this something is me. I am ashamed of what I am. Shame therefore realizes an intimate relationship of myself to myself: I have discovered through shame an aspect of my being. Yet, although some complex and derivative forms of shame may appear on a reflexive level, shame is not originally a phenomenon of reflection. Indeed, whatever results one may obtain in solitude by the religious practice of shame; Shame in its primary structure is shame in front of someone. I have just made an awkward or vulgar gesture: this gesture sticks to me, I neither judge nor blame it, I simply live it, I realize it in the mode for-itself. But now suddenly I raised my head: someone was there and saw me. I realize suddenly the vulgarity of my gesture and I am ashamed. It is certain that my shame is not reflective, for the presence of the Other to my conscience, even as a catalyst, is incompatible with the reflexive attitude; In the field of reflection I can never meet anything but the consciousness which is mine. Now another is the mediator between me and myself: I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other. And by the very appearance of the others, I am put in the position of passing judgement on myself as an object, for it is as an object that I appear to others. But this object, which has appeared to the Other, is not a vain image in the mind of another. This image, in fact, would be entirely attributable to Other, and could not “touch me.” I could feel annoyance and anger in front of her, like in front of a bad portrait of me that lends me an ugliness or meanness of expression that I do not have; But I can not be reached to the marrow: shame is, by nature, recognition. I recognize that I am as the Other sees me.”

La Benne

by Anna-Louise Milne

Lors d'une démolition, les consignes de tri sont aujourd'hui très strictes. Il y a de tout un savoir-faire. Christopher le sait, et sait aussi le mal qu'il se donne à le transmettre à ses gars. Il en a quarante environ sur ce chantier, son premier gros chantier depuis ses études, terminées il y a à peine dix-huits mois. Christopher envisage tout à la première personne. C'est son chantier, sa foreuse, ses hommes, et ses bennes. Quatre bennes, c'est le règlement. Il faut séparer les gravats de la ferraille, du bois et de la terre. Tout le reste, ce sont des déchets divers, papiers, tissus, bouteilles, vieux matelas, seringues, toute la triste archéologie de ces lots longtemps abandonnés avec lesquels Christopher commence seulement à se familiariser. Émane de lui tant de détermination à lutter corps à corps pour résorber ce gaspillage, comme si l'élasticité de ses bras plus beaux encore que son visage allait suffire pour étreindre toute cette laideur, que je me sens tout d'un coup secouée dans l'attachement que j'ai tissé progressivement, depuis des mois, dans ce coin de ville. Je me balançais sur ma fascination pour la mutation en cours, tournoyant sans pivot au-dessus d'un paysage piteux, loqueteux, et voilà que Christopher installe ses grilles et ses bennes, puis m'invite d'un sourire en coin à le rejoindre sur la terre qu'il sait, lui, solide sous ses pieds.

Je n'avais qu'à sauter. Le lieu était déjà devenu un passage habituel dans ma journée, une sorte d'étirement quotidien consistant à pratiquer un chemin dans le désordre, à me frotter aux boursoflures du tissu urbain, curieuse de voir ce qui résulterait de cette métamorphose disgracieuse, heureuse de me suspendre dans l'espace déchiré. C'était une improvisation plutôt qu'un exercice. Parfois éprouvante. Jamais les mêmes obstacles, ni les mêmes appuis. Et pourtant elle s'est imposée subrepticement à moi, devenant un détour nécessaire à l'affût de quelque chose, une direction une sortie peut-être. Car la disposition de cet îlot, quelque part aux confins de l'immense archipel de ville, est bien particulière : on dirait une impasse, sans pour autant qu'elle soit définitivement fermée. C'était bien une rue que j'empruntais quotidiennement, mais réduite à des dimensions strictement minimales. Et il s'en est fallu de peu que je la consigne à la rubrique des rues sans qualités, un simple passage obligé dont je ne voyais pas les tenants et les aboutissants.

Quand j'ai hélé Christopher de l'autre côté de son grillage, un jour en juin, saisie par la lumière de midi et l'envie de l'accueillir dans ce lieu que j'avais adopté, ou qui m'avait adoptée, je ne soupçonnais guère qu'une sorte

d'aventure m'attendait là. Il a suffi d'écartier légèrement le grillage et j'étais dedans, à ses côtés, lui aussi grand que moi, coiffé d'un casque à ressorts qu'il portait à la manière d'une casquette, remonté sur sa tête, ce qui lui donnait un air un peu effronté. Plus loin, au milieu de la boue sablonneuse du chantier, il y avait une table montée sur tréteaux, une bouteille de Clan Campbell ouverte à côté de quelques verres. Derrière, un barbecue bien garni. L'odeur de merguez qui grillent. On nous observe, vaguement. Christopher est de loin le plus jeune sur le chantier. Il fait un effort visible pour ne pas regarder autour de lui, pour ne pas se demander comment il est perçu, à côté de cette femme surgie de nulle part, les mains vides, en robe d'été, aucun dossier, pas l'ombre d'un entourage de techniciens. Je lui explique : je veux savoir quelque chose de ce monde qu'il est en train de baliser. Ma demande flotte un instant. Puis, sans ambages, avec un geste de ses mains encore lisses vers le ciel et la chaleur douce qui se déverse sur nous, d'accord, oui, il veut bien me parler du chantier, je peux même déjeuner. *Avantage du métier*, poursuit-il, taquin, mais il y a autre chose aussi. Quelque chose qui arrive tout juste entre nous. La joie, peut-être. Tout d'un coup elle me semble là, à cueillir. Son sourire, sous son casque, laisse voir des dents très blanches et un peu écartées les unes des autres. J'ai le sentiment de voir ses traits encore en train de se fixer sur l'homme qu'il sera, comme s'il les portait à la manière de son casque, sciemment et un peu maladroit. *Ma foreuse doit repartir du côté de Saint-Étienne tout à l'heure, alors vous voyez, on arrête pour aujourd'hui, autant en profiter, n'est-ce pas, tant qu'on peut. Je vous montre, puis on mange?* Je souriais déjà.

The Dumpster

Translated by Shahong Lee

During a demolition, the sorting instructions are nowadays very strict. It consists of an entire set of expertise. Christopher knows it, and also knows how hard he has to work to convey it to his workers. There are about forty or so of them on this construction site, his first big site since his studies which he finished barely eight months ago. Christopher considers everything by himself. It is his site, his drilling machine, his men, and his dumpster trucks. Four dumpsters, it is the rule. The rubble needs to be separated from the iron scrap, the wood and the dirt. All the rest, are forms of various waste, papers, fabrics, bottles, old mattresses, syringes, all the sad archeology of these lots long time abandoned with which Christopher only begins to familiarize himself with. Emanates from him much determination to fight hand-to-hand in order to reduce this waste, as if the elasticity of his arms still more beautiful than his face would suffice to embrace all this ugliness, that I suddenly feel shaken in the attachment that I had progressively woven, for months, in this city's corner. I swung myself on my fascination for the ongoing mutation, twirling without a pivot above a ragged, pitiable landscape, and now Christopher installs his railings and his dumpsters, then invites me with a smirk to join him on the ground that he knows to be solid under his feet.

All I had to do was jump. The area had already become a habitual course of my day, a sort of quotidian stretch consisting of walking down a path in a state of disorder, to rub myself against the blisters of the urban fabric, curious to see what would result from this unsightly metamorphosis, content to hang myself within the ripped space. It was more of an improvisation than an exercise. Sometimes demanding. Never the same obstacles, neither the same support. Nevertheless, she imposed herself surreptitiously to me, becoming a necessary detour on the lookout for something, a direction, an exit perhaps. For the disposition of this islet, somewhere on the the edge of of the city's immense archipelago, is quite particular: it looks like a dead-end without being definitively closed. It was indeed a street that I took everyday, but reduced to strictly minimal dimensions. I was close to register it to the rubric of streets without quality, a simple prerequisite where I did not see the ins and outs.

When I hailed Christopher from the other side of the fence, a day in June, seized by the afternoon light and the desire to welcome him in the place I had adopted, or that had adopted me, I hardly suspected that a sort of

adventure would await me there. I simply had to slightly separate the wiring and I was inside, by his side, him as big as me, wearing a construction helmet as if it were a cap, boosted up on his head, which gave him a slight cheeky look. Further away, in the middle of the site's sandy mud, there was a table mounted on trestles, an open bottle of Clan Campbell next to several glasses. Behind, a barbecue well garnished. The smell of merguez sausages that are broiling. We are vaguely being watched. Christopher is by far the youngest on the construction site. He is making a visible effort not to look around him, in order not to question how he is perceived, next to this woman who appeared out of nowhere, empty handed, in a summer dress, no record, no shadow of an entourage of technicians. I explain to him: I want to know something of the world that he is delineating. My request floats for an instant. Then, bluntly, with a gesture of his still smooth hands, towards the sky and with the gentle warmth that pours on us, ok, yes, he is willing to speak to me about the site, I can even have lunch. *Advantages of the job*, he continues, teasing, but there is something else as well. Something that just occurs between us two. Happiness, maybe. It suddenly seems to be there, ready to pluck. His smile, under his helmet, highlights his very white teeth, a little spread apart from one another. I have the impression to see his traits still fixing themselves on the man he will be, as if he were wearing them like his helmet, deliberately and a little clumsy. *My drilling machine needs to be returned near Saint- Etienne later, so you see, we are stopping for today, best enjoy it, don't you think, while we can. I show you, then we eat?* I was already smiling.

GERMAN

Ein Traum
by Franz Kafka

Josef K. träumte:

Es war ein schöner Tag und K. wollte spaziergehen. Kaum aber hatte er zwei Schritte gemacht, war er schon auf dem Friedhof. Es waren dort sehr künstliche, unpraktisch gewundene Wege, aber er glitt über einen solchen Weg wie auf einem reißenden Wasser in unerschütterlich schwebender Haltung. Schon von der Ferne faßte er einen frisch aufgeworfenen Grabhügel ins Auge, bei dem er haltmachen wollte. Dieser Grabhügel übte fast eine Verlockung auf ihn aus und er glaubte, gar nicht eilig genug hinkommen zu können. Manchmal aber sah er den Grabhügel kaum, er wurde ihm verdeckt durch Fahnen, deren Tücher sich wanden und mit großer Kraft aneinanderschlugen; man sah die Fahnenträger nicht, aber es war, als herrsche dort viel Jubel.

Während er den Blick noch in die Ferne gerichtet hatte, sah er plötzlich den gleichen Grabhügel neben sich am Weg, ja fast schon hinter sich. Er sprang eilig ins Gras. Da der Weg unter seinem abspringenden Fuß weiter raste, schwankte er und fiel gerade vor dem Grabhügel ins Knie. Zwei Männer standen hinter dem Grab und hielten zwischen sich einen Grabstein in der Luft; kaum war K. erschienen, stießen sie den Stein in die Erde und er stand wie festgemauert. Sofort trat aus einem Gebüsch ein dritter Mann hervor, den K. gleich als einen Künstler erkannte. Er war nur mit Hosen und einem schlecht zugeknöpften Hemd bekleidet; auf dem Kopf hatte er eine Samtkappe; in der Hand hielt er einen gewöhnlichen Bleistift, mit dem er schon beim Näherkommen Figuren in der Luft beschrieb.

Mit diesem Bleistift setzte er nun oben auf dem Stein an; der Stein war sehr hoch, er mußte sich gar nicht bücken, wohl aber mußte er sich vorbeugen, denn der Grabhügel, auf den er nicht treten wollte, trennte ihn von dem Stein. Er stand also auf den Fußspitzen und stützte sich mit der linken Hand auf die Fläche des Steines. Durch eine besonders geschickte Hantierung gelang es ihm, mit dem gewöhnlichen Bleistift Goldbuchstaben zu erzielen; er schrieb: ›Hier ruht –‹ Jeder Buchstabe erschien rein und schön, tief geritzt und in vollkommenem Gold. Als er die zwei Worte geschrieben hatte, sah er nach K. zurück; K., der sehr begierig auf das Fortschreiten der Inschrift war, kümmerte sich kaum um den Mann, sondern blickte nur auf den Stein. Tatsächlich setzte der Mann wieder zum Weiterschreiben an, aber er konnte nicht, es bestand irgendein Hindernis, er ließ den Bleistift sinken und drehte sich wieder nach K. um. Nun sah auch K. den Künstler an

und merkte, daß dieser in großer Verlegenheit war, aber die Ursache dessen nicht sagen konnte. Alle seine frühere Lebhaftigkeit war verschwunden. Auch K. geriet dadurch in Verlegenheit; sie wechselten hilflose Blicke; es lag ein häßliches Mißverständnis vor, das keiner auflösen konnte. Zur Unzeit begann nun auch eine kleine Glocke von der Grabkapelle zu läuten, aber der Künstler fuchtelte mit der erhobenen Hand und sie hörte auf. Nach einem Weilchen begann sie wieder; diesmal ganz leise und, ohne besondere Aufforderung, gleich abbrechend; es war, als wolle sie nur ihren Klang prüfen. K. war untröstlich über die Lage des Künstlers, er begann zu weinen und schluchzte lange in die vorgehaltenen Hände. Der Künstler wartete, bis K. sich beruhigt hatte, und entschloß sich dann, da er keinen andern Ausweg fand, dennoch zum Weiterschreiben. Der erste kleine Strich, den er machte, war für K. eine Erlösung, der Künstler brachte ihn aber offenbar nur mit dem äußersten Widerstreben zustande; die Schrift war auch nicht mehr so schön, vor allem schien es an Gold zu fehlen, blaß und unsicher zog sich der Strich hin, nur sehr groß wurde der Buchstabe. Es war ein J, fast war es schon beendet, da stampfte der Künstler wütend mit einem Fuß in den Grabhügel hinein, daß die Erde ringsum in die Höhe flog. Endlich verstand ihn K.; ihn abzubitten war keine Zeit mehr; mit allen Fingern grub er in die Erde, die fast keinen Widerstand leistete; alles schien vorbereitet; nur zum Schein war eine dünne Erdkruste aufgerichtet; gleich hinter ihr öffnete sich mit abschüssigen Wänden ein großes Loch, in das K., von einer sanften Strömung auf den Rücken gedreht, versank. Während er aber unten, den Kopf im Genick noch aufgerichtet, schon von der undurchdringlichen Tiefe aufgenommen wurde, jagte oben sein Name mit mächtigen Zieraten über den Stein. Entzückt von diesem Anblick erwachte er.

Josef K. was dreaming:

It was a beautiful day and K. wanted to take a walk. But hardly had he taken two steps when he already found himself in the cemetery. There were quite artificial, impractical and winding paths there, but he was gliding down such a path as though on rapid-flowing water in an unwavering, levitating stance. Already from a distance, he caught sight of a newly erected grave mound at which he wanted to pause. This mound had an almost alluring effect on him and he felt that he could not get there fast enough. But sometimes, he hardly saw the mound, as his sight was blocked by flags, the cloths of which were winding and slamming into one another with great force. He did not see the flag-bearers, but it seemed as if great jubilation was happening there.

While he was still gazing into the distance, he suddenly saw the very same grave mound to his side by the path, already almost behind himself. In a hurry, he jumped into the grass. As the path under his leaping foot kept speeding along, he wavered and fell on his knees just before the mound. Two men were standing behind the grave, holding up a tombstone between them. K. had barely just arrived when they rammed the stone into the ground and it stood solid as a wall. At once, a third man, whom K. immediately identified to be an artist, emerged from a bush. He was dressed only in trousers and a poorly buttoned shirt; on his head he wore a velvet cap; in his hand he held an ordinary pencil, which he used to sketch figures in the air as he was still approaching.

The artist now placed the pencil at the top of the stone, which was very tall. He did not have to stoop at all, but he did have to bend forward, for he did not want to step on the barrow, which separated him from the stone. He thus stood on his tiptoes and supported himself on the surface of the stone with his left hand. By means of exceptional skill he managed to create golden letters with the ordinary pencil; he wrote: "Here lies—" Each letter appeared clear and beautiful, deeply carved and in pure gold. When he had written the two words, he looked back at K., who was very eager to see the inscription continue. He barely minded the man, but gazed only at the stone. Indeed, the man was about to keep writing, but he could not do it; there was some kind of obstacle. He dropped the pencil and once again turned back to look at K. Now, K. as well was looking at the artist and realized that the latter was greatly abashed, but could not explain the cause of it. All his

earlier liveliness had vanished. As a result, K. too started to feel embarrassed and they exchanged helpless looks. There was an ugly misunderstanding at hand that no one could resolve. At this untimely moment, a little bell from the chapel now started chiming, but the artist flailed about with his upraised hand and it stopped. After a little while it started again, very quietly this time, and ceased right away without special request. It was as though the little bell was merely trying to test its tone. K. was inconsolable over the predicament of the artist, he began to cry and sobbed for a long time into his hands. The artist waited until K. had regained his composure, and then nonetheless decided, as he found no other solution, to continue writing. The first small stroke that he made was like redemption for K., but the artist evidently only managed it with utter resistance. The writing was also not as beautiful anymore, especially displaying an apparent lack of gold, the stroke continued appearing pale and insecure, only the letter became very large. It was a J, and it was almost completed when the artist angrily stomped his foot into the mound, causing the soil to fly up high all around. Finally, K. understood him; there was no time now to ask his pardon; with all his fingers, he dug into the ground, which was hardly showing any resistance; everything seemed prepared; a thin crust of earth was only set up in pretense; right behind it, a large hole with steep walls opened up, into which K., turned onto his back by a gentle current, sunk down. But while down there he was already being consumed by the impenetrable depths, his head was still tilted upwards by the nape of his neck, and above him his name raced across the stone in mighty ornaments. Delighted by this sight, he awoke.

Altes Medium / Old Medium

by Hans Magnus Enzensberger

Translated by Kaitlynn Buchbaum

Was Sie vor Augen haben,
Meine Damen und Herren,
dieses Gewimmel,
das sind Buchstaben.
Entschuldigen Sie.
Entschuldigen Sie.
Schwer zu entziffern,
ich weiß, ich weiß,
Eine Zumutung.
Sie hätten es lieber audiovisuell,
digital und in Farbe.

Aber wem es wirklich Ernst ist,
mit virtual reality,
sagen wir mal:
Füllest wieder Busch und Tal,
oder: Einsamer nie
als im August, oder auch:
Die Nacht schwingt ihre Fahn,
der kommt mit wenig aus.

Sechszwanzig
dieser schwarz-weißen Tänzer,
ganz ohne Graphik-Display
und CD-ROM,
als Hardware ein Bleistiftstummel –
das ist alles.

Entschuldigen Sie.
Entschuldigen Sie bitte.
Ich wollte Ihnen nicht zu nahe treten.
Aber Sie wissen ja, wie das ist:
Manche verlernen es nie.

What you see before your eyes,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
this jumbled mess,
these are letters.
Forgive me.
Forgive me.
Hard to decipher,
I know, I know,
An imposition.
You would prefer it audio-visually,
digitally and in color.

But to whom it is actually serious,
this virtual reality,
let's just say:
you replenish bush and valley,
or: never lonelier
as in August, or even:
the night sways her flag,
this one barely gets by.

Twenty-six
of these black-and-white dancers,
without any graphic-display
or CD-ROM,
pencil-stub as hardware –
that is all.

Forgive me.
Forgive me please.
I don't want to offend you.
But you know well how it is:
For some, they may never forget.

Herbst 1944 / Fall 1944

by Hans Magnus Enzensberger
Translated by Kaitlynn Buchbaum

Zwar dem, der im Gras lag,
kamen sie herrlich vor,
wie sie hoch oben glitzerten
am wolkenlosen Oktoberhimmel,
die Bomberströme, und schade
war es nicht um die Andenken,
die in der Ferne verbrannten
auf dem modrigen Dachboden:

Sammeltassen und Engelshaar,
Großvaters Pariser Postkarten
(Oh là là!) und sein Koppelschloß
aus einem anderen Krieg,
löchrige Unterröcke, Orden,
Puppenhäuser, Psyche aus Gips
und ein paar vergessene
Gottesbeweise
in einer Zigarrenschachtel –

aber im Keller die Leichen
sind immer noch da.

Indeed to he who lied in the grass,
they appeared so lovely
as they glittered high above
in the cloudless October sky,
the storms of bombs, and pity
fell not on the remnants
that blazed in the distance
on the mildewed attic floors:

collected cups and angel hair,
grandfather's Parisian postcards
(Oh là là!) and his belt buckle
from another war,
petticoats full of holes, medals,
dollhouses, Psyche made of plaster
and a couple of forgotten proofs of
God
in a cigar box –

but in the cellar, the corpses
remain forever.

Antwort eines Fabelwesens / Answer of a Fabled Being

by Hans Magnus Enzensberger
Translated by Kaitlynn Buchbaum

Der drache hat sich mit der nelke
vermählt,
um dich zu erzeugen.
Irgends lebst du, das ist,
wo die krallen ausschlägt im märz,
um zu blühen,
wo der oktoberne donner zart
und zu duft wird. Ruf!
Ich will zu dir kommen,
sag mir wohin,
damit wir einander befragen
und lieben können,
furchtlose Freude,
und gut sein? –
gut sein ist nirgends!

the dragon got married to the
carnation,
to create you.
you live somewhere, that is,
where the claw passes by in march
to bloom,
where the october thunder softens
and perfumes the air. call!
i will come to you,
tell me where to go,
so we can ask and love each other
fearless love,
and be happy? -

there is no happiness!

Werde ich dir einmal begegnen? / Will we ever meet again?

by Unica Zürn
Translated by Kaitlynn Buchbaum

Nach drei Wegen im Regen bilde
im Erwachen dein Gegenbild: er,
der Magier. Engel weben dich in
den Drachenleib. Ringe im Wege,
lange beim Regen werd ich dein.

Like three trails in the rain form
in lucid light your counter-image: he,
the magician. Angels weave you in
the dragon's shape. Circling the path,
long in the storm I will be yours.

Das Ende vom Lied

by Mascha Kaleko

Ich sah dich gern noch einmal, wie vor Jahren
Zum erstenmal. - Jetzt kann ich es nicht mehr.
Ich sah dich gern noch einmal wie vorher,
Als wir uns herrlich fremd und sonst nichts waren.

Ich hört dich gern noch einmal wieder fragen,
Wie jung ich sei ... was ich des Abends tu -
Und später dann im kaumgeborenen «Du»
Mir jene tausend Worte Liebe sagen.

Ich würde mich so gerne wieder sehnen,
Dich lange ansehen stumm und so verliebt -
Und wieder weinen, wenn du mich betrübt,
Die vielzuoft geweinten dummen Tränen.

- Das alles ist vorbei ... Es ist zum Lachen!
Bist du ein anderer oder liegts an mir?
Vielleicht kann keiner von uns zwein dafür.
Man glaubt oft nicht, was ein paar Jahre machen.

Ich möchte wieder deine Briefe lesen,
Die Worte, die man liebend nur versteht.
Jedoch mir scheint, heut ist es schon zu spät.
Wie unbarmherzig ist das Wort: «Gewesen!»

The End of the Song

Translated by Kaitlynn Buchbaum

I would like to see you again, just once, like years ago,
for the first time. - Now I cannot any longer.
I would like to see you again, as before,
as we were then delightfully strangers, nothing more.

I would like to hear you ask, once more,
how young I am ... what I do in the evening -
and later then in the barely-borne "you"
speak to me those thousand words of love.

I would like so much to long for you, again,
Gaze upon you silently, so in love -
and cry again, when you set me in despair,
the dumb, frequently released tears.

- But all that is past ... Something to laugh at!
Are you someone different, or is it my fault?
Maybe neither of us can be blamed.
One often doesn't realize what a couple years can do.

I would like to read your letters again,
the words one only understands while in love.
But it seems to me today is already too late.
How merciless is the word: "gone!"

HEBREW

הַכְּנִיִּי תַחַת כְּנַפְךָ

חיים נחמן ביאליק

הַכְּנִיִּי תַחַת כְּנַפְךָ,
וְהִי לִי אִם וְאָחוֹת,
וְיֵהי חִיקָךְ מִקְלַט רֵאשִׁי,
קוֹן-תְּפִלוֹתֵי הַנְּדָחוֹת.

וּבַעַת רַחֲמִים, בֵּין-הַשְּׂמָשׁוֹת,
שְׁחִי וְאֶגְלֵ לָךְ סוּד יְסוּרֵי:
אוֹמְרִים, יֵשׁ בְּעוֹלָם גְּעוּרִים –
הֵיכֵן גְּעוּרֵי?

וְעוֹד רַז אֶחָד לָךְ אֶתְנַדָּה:
נִפְשִׁי נִשְׂרָפָה בְּלִהְבָּה;
אוֹמְרִים, אֶהְבֶּה יֵשׁ בְּעוֹלָם –
מֵה-זֹאת אֶהְבֶּה?

הַפּוֹכְבִּים רַמּוֹ אוֹתֵי,
הִיָּה סְלוֹם – אֶךְ גַּם הוּא עֶבֶר;
עַתָּה אֵין לִי כְלוּם בְּעוֹלָם –
אֵין לִי דְבָר.

הַכְּנִיִּי תַחַת כְּנַפְךָ,
וְהִי לִי אִם וְאָחוֹת,
וְיֵהי חִיקָךְ מִקְלַט רֵאשִׁי,
קוֹן-תְּפִלוֹתֵי הַנְּדָחוֹת.

Take me under your wing

by Hayim Nahman Bialik
Translated by Arthur Kilongo

Take me under your wing,
and be a mother and sister to me,
let your bosom be a haven for my head,
a nest for my rejected prayers.

In the hour of grace at dusk,
approach and I will tell you the secret of my suffering:
they say, there is youth in the world -
where is my youth?

One more secret to you I will confess:
my soul burns with fire;
they say, there is love in the world -
what is love?

The stars deceived me,
there was a dream - but it too has passed;
now I have nothing in the world -
I have nothing.

Take me under your wing,
and be a mother and sister to me,
let your bosom be a haven for my head,
a nest for my rejected prayers.

ITALIAN

***Cercavo te nelle stelle /
I looked for you in the stars***

by Primo Levi

Translated by Eliana Accomazzi

Cercavo te nelle stelle
quando le interrogavo bambino.
Ho chiesto te alle montagne,
ma non mi diedero che poche volte
solitudine e breve pace.
Perché mancavi, nelle lunghe sere
meditai la bestemmia insensata
che il mondo era uno sbaglio di Dio,
io uno sbaglio del mondo.
E quando, davanti alla morte,
ho gridato di no da ogni fibra,
che non avevo ancora finito,
che troppo ancora dovevo fare,
era perché mi stavi davanti,
tu con me accanto, come oggi avviene,
un uomo una donna sotto il sole.
Sono tornato perché c'eri tu.

I looked for you in the stars
when I questioned as a child.
I asked about you to the mountains,
but they only granted me
loneliness and short peace a few times.
Because you were missing, during long evenings
I pondered the senseless blasphemy
that the world was a mistake of God,
I a mistake of the world.
And when, in the face of death,
I screamed no from every fiber,
that I had not yet finished,
that too much still I had to do,
it was because you were in front of me,
here with me nearby, as is the case today,
a man a woman under the sun.
I came back because you were there.

***Le Citta Invisibili / The Invisible Cities
(Selections)***

by Italo Calvino

Translated by Marisa Finkelstein

Le città degli scambi
The cities of exchanges

1. Eufemia

A ottanta miglia incontro al vento di maestro l'uomo raggiunge la città di Eufemia, dove i mercanti di sette nazioni convengono a ogni solstizio ed equinozio... Non solo a vendere e a comprare si viene a Eufemia, ma anche perché la notte accanto ai fuochi tutt'intorno al mercato, seduti sui sacchi o sui barili o sdraiati su mucchi di tappeti, a ogni parola che uno dice -- come <<lupo>>, <<sorella>>, <<tesoro nascosto>>, <<battaglia>>, <<scabbia>>, <<amanti>> -- gli altri raccontano ognuno la sua storia di lupi, di sorelle, di tesori, di scabbia, di amanti, di battaglie.

At 80 miles into the master wind, the man reaches the city of Eufemia, where merchants of seven nations come together at every solstice and equinox... One does not come to Eufemia to solely buy and sell, but also because at night next to the bonfires all around the market, sitting on sacks or barrels or sprawled out on piles of carpets, at every word that one says -- like "wolf", "sister," "hidden treasure," "battle," scabies," "lovers" -- the others tell their own story of wolves, of sisters, of treasures, of scabies, of lovers, of battles.

2. Cloe

A Cloe, grande città, le persone che passano per le vie non si conoscono. Al vedersi immaginano mille cose uno dell'altro, gli incontri che potrebbero avvenire tra loro, le conversazioni, le sorprese, le carezze, i morsi. Ma nessuno saluta nessuno, gli sguardi s'incrociano per un secondo e poi si sfuggono, cercano altri sguardi, non si fermano.

In Cloe, a big city, the people who move through the streets do not know each other. As they see one another they imagine a thousand things

about each other, the encounters that could happen between them, the conversations, the surprises, the caresses, the bites. But nobody acknowledges the other, their gazes meet for a second and then disappear, they look for other gazes, and they never stop.

3. Eutropia

Entrato nel territorio che ha Eutropia per capitale, il viaggiatore vede non una città ma molte, di eguale grandezza e non dissimili tra loro, sparse per un vasto e ondulato altopiano. Eutropia è non una ma tutte queste città insieme; una sola è abitata, le altre vuote; e questo si fa a turno. Vi dirò ora come. Il giorno in cui gli abitanti di Eutropia si sentono assalire dalla stanchezza, e nessuno sopporta più il suo mestiere, i suoi parenti, la sua casa e la sua via, i debiti, la gente da salutare o che saluta, allora tutta la cittadinanza decide di spostarsi nella città vicina che è lì ad aspettarli, vuota e come nuova, dove ognuno prenderà un altro mestiere, un'altra moglie, vedrà un altro paesaggio aprendo la finestra, passerà le sere in altri passatempi amicizie maldicenze.

Entering in the territory that has Eutropia as the capital, the traveler sees not one city but many, of equal grandeur and not dissimilar, spread through a vast and undulating plateau. Eutropia is not one but all of these cities together; only one is inhabited, the others empty; and with this they take turns. Let me tell you how. The day that the inhabitants of Eutropia feel assaulted by their fatigue, and no one can further stand their job, their relatives, their house and their street, their debts, the people to greet or that they greet, the whole population decides to move to the neighboring city that awaits them, empty and like new, where each person will have another job, another wife, will see another landscape as they open the window, will spend their evenings doing other hobbies like gossiping with friends.

4. Ersilia

A Ersilia, per stabilire i rapporti che reggono la vita della città, gli abitanti tendono dei fili tra gli spigoli delle case, bianchi o neri o grigi o bianco-e-neri a seconda se segnano relazioni di parentela, scambio, autorità, rappresentanza. Quando i fili sono tanti che non ci si può più passare in mezzo, gli abitanti vanno via: le case vengono smontate; restano solo i fili e i sostegni dei fili.

In Ersilia, in order to establish the relationships that sustain the life of the city, the inhabitants hang strings between the edges of the houses, white or black or grey or white-and-black whether they symbolize the relationships of family, exchanges, authority, representation. When the strings are so many that one can no longer pass through the middle, the inhabitants go away: the houses are dismantled; only the strings and the supports of the strings remain.

5. Smeraldina

A Smeraldina, città acquatica, un reticolo di canali e un reticolo di strade si sovrappongono e s'intersecano. Per andare da un posto a un altro hai sempre la scelta tra il percorso terrestre e quello in barca: e poiché la linea più breve tra due punti a Smeraldina non è una retta ma uno zig-zag che si ramifica in tortuose varianti, le vie che s'aprono a ogni passante non sono soltanto due ma molte, e ancora aumentano per chi alterna traghetto in barca e trasbordi all'asciutto. Così la noia a percorrere ogni giorno le stesse strade è risparmiata agli abitanti di Smeraldina.

In Smeraldina, aquatic city, a grid of channels and a grid of streets overlap and intersect. In order to go from one place to another you always have the choice between the one by foot or by boat: and since the shorter line between two points in Smeraldina is not a straight line but a zig-zag which branches out in curvy variations, the streets that open to each passerby are not only two but many, and they still increase for those who alternate between ferryboats and travel by land. This way the inhabitants of Smeraldina are spared from the boredom of traveling the same paths everyday.

Excerpt of "Andurro e Esposito," from *Lo scialle andaluso*

by Elsa Morante

La giornata

Il vecchio Andurro, che non conosceva la propria età, si svegliò nella notte alta, come sempre gli accadeva. Malgrado fosse già sveglio, non poteva però alzarsi fino alla mattina, quando sua nipote Elena veniva per aiutarlo. Da solo, era incapace di alzarsi.

Le ore d'immobilità e di silenzio, fino all'alba, scorrevano per lui senza fastidio né dolore, facili come acqua. Dalla sua camera stretta e quasi sotterranea lui non vedeva di fuori; pure avvertiva il pullulare delle stelle nell'arco celeste e il loro trascolorarsi finché pensava: « Ci siamo ». E, si può dire, nello stesso istante, per le fessure trapelava la prima luce, simile nel colore ad un viso pallido e ancora sbattuto dai sogni.

Il vecchio Andurro pensò: « Fra poco verrà mia nipote Elena mentre prima veniva mia moglie Maria. Era una vecchia ancora così vispa, sempre a chiacchierare e arruffarsi come una gallina, quando già io non potevo fare due passi in fila. Le dicevo: "Con chi borbatterai, Gallinella, quand'io sarò sotterrato?" Invece, guarda, lei è morta e io sono qua ».

Egli rise un poco e scosse la testa. In quel punto arrivò, alta, a piedi nudi, la nipote Elena. Chinando su lui gli occhi neri, che le raggiavano nella fronte come due astri, seria ed esperta lo vestì e lo aiutò a sedersi sul gradino della soglia. Non dimenticò di lasciargli la scodella della zuppa che doveva bastargli per tutto il giorno: una pappa di pane molle e d'erbe tritate, quanto esiste di meglio per un vecchio buono solo a biascicare. E senza rumore, movendo con nobilissima grazia il fianco, la nipote Elena se ne andò.

Seduto sullo scalino della soglia, il vecchio sapeva che il sole si era levato ma, nascosto dalla montagna, non si vedeva. Dai fianchi della montagna ne trapelava l'ardore, finché apparvero i raggi e il vecchio pensò per la millesima volta: « Pare lo Spirito Santo dietro la nuvola ». Questo pensiero lo tenne occupato parecchio tempo; alla fine, libera, lì sulla montagna si versò la meravigliosa corrente d'oro, e I vetturini uscirono per addobbare I loro cavalli e partirono fra gli schiocchi delle fruste. A tutti, Andurro gridava: – Buon viaggio! – ma essendo la sua voce impastata e roca, simile ad un brontolio do tuono, essi non lo capivano.

Alle dieci cominciava il passaggio dei signori che scendevano al mare: – Accomodatevi, signorini, – supplicava il vecchio, – salite sulla mia terrazza, che c'è il bel panorama –. Credendo che il suo scopo fosse il guadagno, I piú

rifutavano. Invece Andurro non voleva compenso, anzi offriva alle signore i garofani della sua terrazza. Non potendo lui stesso salire fin lassù, da dove appariva fino il vulcano e le isole, voleva che almeno qualcun altro godesse al suo posto. – Bello! – gridavano tutti dall'alto. E il vecchio rideva contento per l'onore.

A mezzogiorno, biascicò metà della zuppa, lasciando il resto per la cena. Per alcune ore nessuno passò, fuori dei marmocchi seminudi che si rotolavano nella polvere e di qualche asino portato alla cavezza da una bambina. Buona parte di questo tempo, il vecchio la trascorse con la testa chinata sulle ginocchia o appoggiata allo stipite. Udendo le campane pensò alla canzone « Din don, campanon, fra Simon ». Anche simile canzone ebbe il potere di occupare la sua mente per lunghe ore; al modo di un suono che nasce da un punto, e attraverso una rupe, e un'altra, e un'altra, si ripercuote per amplissimo spazio.

A intervalli, la nipote Elena appariva per offrirgli i suoi servigi. Salutandola con gesto indulgente egli le gridò: – Ce l'hai il damo?

Il sole scese dalla parte del mare, ma il vecchio solo vagamente ne distingueva l'ardente cerchio. Prima che l'umidità vespertina potesse penetrargli nelle ossa, venne la solerte nipote Elena, alta e a piedi nudi; e chinando su di lui gli occhi neri, che le facevano ombra nella fronte come due rose di velluto, lo spogliò e lo mise a letto. Poi, fattogli sul viso il segno della croce, andò via.

Dalla sua camera stretta e quasi sotterranea, di nuovo il vecchio non vedeva fuori; ma avvertiva la prima animazione delle stelle nel crepuscolo del cielo, e il loro accendersi in un punto fisso. « A quest'ora, – pensò, – mia moglie Maria quand'era viva recitava il Rosario, e cip cip, cip cip, non la finiva piú. Se Dio vuole, quella sua canzonetta sarà servita anche per me. Così non dovrò preoccuparmi troppo dell'anima mia. Già ».

Grazie a questo pensiero che gli girava nella mente, la sera camminò facile e benigna sulla veglia del vecchio. Battevano le ore della notte, e la luna, sottile quasi quanto un filo, via via procedeva con quel suono. Quand'essa fu molto alta e quasi al declino, il vecchio Andurro si addormentò.

**Excerpt of "Andurro and Esposito,"
from *The Andalusian Shawl***

Translated by Olivia Goldberg

The Day

Old Andurro, who didn't know his own age, woke up in the middle of the night, as always happened to him. Even though he was already awake, he couldn't get up until morning, when his granddaughter Elena came to help him. He couldn't get up by himself.

The hours of stillness and silence, until dawn, passed without discomfort or trouble, easy like water. From his narrow room, which was almost underground, he couldn't see outside; the swarming of the stars in the arc of the sky and their fading light also warned him until he thought: "Here we go." And it can be said that in the same instant, through the cracks the first light would come trickling in, similar in color to a pale face still battered by dreams.

Old Andurro thought: "Soon my granddaughter Elena will come, when my wife Maria used to come. She was still so lively even in her old age, always chatting and ruffling herself like a hen, when I already couldn't take two steps in a row. I told her: 'To whom will you mutter, Little Hen, when I'm buried?' Instead, see, she's dead, and I'm here."

He laughed a little and shook his head. At that moment his granddaughter Elena arrived, tall and barefoot. Settling on him with her black eyes, which radiated in her face like two stars, serious and with expert hands she dressed him and helped him sit on the doorstep. She didn't forget to leave him the bowl of soup that was to last him all day: a puree of soft bread and chopped herbs, nothing better than that for an old man who can no longer chew. And without a sound, moving her hips with such noble grace, his granddaughter Elena left.

Sitting on the doorstep, the old man knew that the sun had risen but, hidden by the mountain, it wasn't visible. Some of its heat leaked around the edge of the mountain, until its rays appeared and the old man thought for the thousandth time: "It looks like the Holy Ghost behind that cloud." This thought kept him busy for quite some time; finally, liberate, over the mountain spilled the wonderful golden current, and the coachmen came out to adorn their horses and they set off amid the cracking of whips. Andurro shouted to all of them: "Safe travels!" but since his voice was muffled and hoarse, like the rumble of thunder, they didn't understand him.

At ten o'clock the men and women began their walk down to the

seaside: "Make yourselves at home, young people," begged the old man, "come up to my terrace, there's such a beautiful view." Believing that he did this to make money, they declined. Andurro didn't want compensation, though, and he even offered the carnations from his terrace to the ladies. Being himself unable to reach the terrace, where you could even see the volcano and the islands, he wanted at least for someone else to enjoy the view instead. "Beautiful!" they all shouted from up above. And the old man laughed, happy to be honored.

At noon, he slurped up half of the soup, leaving the rest for dinner. For a few hours no one came by, except for the half-naked brats who rolled in the dust and for the occasional donkey led by a little girl pulling its halter. The old man passed a good portion of this time with his head resting on his knees or leaning on the doorframe. Hearing the bells he thought of the song, "Din don, campanon, fra Simon." Even that song could occupy his thoughts for several long hours; the way that a sound starts at one point, and travels across a valley, and another, and another, reverberates over a very wide space.

At intervals, his granddaughter Elena would appear and offer him her services. Greeting her with an inviting gesture, he'd yell at her: "Do you have a boyfriend?"

The sun set on the ocean side, but the old man could only vaguely make out the burning ring. Before the evening's damp cold could get to his bones, his diligent granddaughter Elena would come, tall and barefoot; and resting on him her black eyes, which made shadows on her face like two velvet roses, she undressed him and put him to bed. Then, after having crossed his face, she would leave.

From his narrow room, which was almost underground, he couldn't see outside again; but the first activity of the stars in the dusky sky warned him, as they came on at fixed points. "At this time," he thought, "my wife Maria when she was alive would recite the Rosary, and chip chip, chip chip, she would never finish. God willing, her little song has counted for me, too. That way I don't have to worry about my soul too much. Yes."

Thanks to this thought making its way around his mind, the evening passed easily and kindly over the old man's waking hours. The night hours struck on, and the moon, almost as thin as a thread, moved along with the clock's chimes. When the moon was at its peak and about to descend, old Andurro fell asleep.

JAPANESE

烏の北斗七星

宮沢賢治

つめたいいじ（意地）の悪い雲が、地べたに（地面）すれすれに垂れましたので、野はらは雪のあかりだか、日のあかりだか（によってきらめいているのかどうか）判（わか）らないように（く）なりました。

烏の義勇艦隊（かんたい）は、その雲に圧おしつけられて、しかたなくちよつとの間、亜鉛（とたん）の板をひろげたような雪の田圃（たんぼ）のうえに横にならんで仮泊（かはく）ということをやり（し）ました。

どの艦（ふね）もすこしも動きません。

まっ黒くなめらかな烏の大尉（たいい）、若い艦隊長もしゃんと立ったままうごきません。

からすの大監督（だいかんとく）はなおさらうごきもゆらぎもいたしません。からすの大監督は、もうずいぶんの年老としよりです。眼（め）が灰いろになってしまっていますし、啼なくとまるで悪い人形のようにギイギイ云いいます。

それですから、烏の年齢（とし）を見分ける法を知らない一人の子供が、いつか斯こう云ったのでした。

「おい、この町には咽喉のどのこわれた烏が二疋ひきいるんだよ。おい。」

これはたしかに間違まちがいで、一疋しか居おりませんでしたし、それも決してのが壊こわれたのではなく、あんまり永い間、空で号令したために、すっかり声が錆びたのです。それですから烏の義勇艦隊は、その声をあらゆる音の中で一等だと思っていました。

雪のうえに、仮泊ということをやっている烏の艦隊は、石ころのようです。胡麻ごまつぶのようです。また望遠鏡でよくみると、大きなや小さなのがあつて馬鈴薯ばれいしょのようです。

しかしだんだん夕方になりました。

雲がやっと少し上の方にのぼりましたので、とにかく烏の飛ぶくらいのすき間ができました。

そこで大監督が息を切らして号令を掛かけます。

「演習はじめいおいつ、出発」

艦隊長烏の大尉が、まっさきにぱつと雪を叩たたきつけて飛びあがりました。烏の大尉の部下が十八隻せき、順々に飛びあがって大尉に続いてきちんと間隔かんかくをとって進みました。

それから戦闘艦隊が三十二隻、次々に出発し、その次に大監督の大艦長が敵おごそかに舞まいあがりました。

そのときはもうまっ先の鳥の大尉は、四へんほど空で螺旋うずを巻いてしまって雲の鼻っ端ぱしまで行って、そこからこんどはまっ直すぐに向うの杜もりに進むところでした。

二十九隻の巡洋艦じゅんようかん、二十五隻の砲艦ほうかんが、だんだんだんだん飛びあがりました。おしまいの二隻は、いっしょに出発しました。ここらがどうも鳥の軍隊の不規律なところですよ。

鳥の大尉は、杜のすぐ近くまで行って、左に曲がりました。

そのとき鳥の大監督が、「大砲たいほう撃てっ。」と号令しました。

艦隊は一斉いっせいに、ががあがあがあ、大砲をうちました。

大砲をうつとき、片脚かたあしをぶんとうしろへ挙げる艦ふねは、この前のニダナトラの戦役せんえきでの負傷兵で、音がまだ脚の神経にひびくのです。

さて、空を大きく四へん廻まわったとき、大監督が、

「分れっ、解散」と云いながら、列をはなれて杉の木の大監督官舎におりました。みんな列をほごしてじぶんの営舎に帰りました。

鳥の大尉は、けれども、すぐに自分の営舎に帰らないで、ひとり、西のほうのさいかちの木に行きました。

雲はうす黒く、ただ西の山のうえだけ濁にごった水色の天の淵ふちがのぞいて底光りしています。そこで鳥仲間マシリイと呼ぶ銀の一つ星がひらめきはじめました。

鳥の大尉は、矢のようにさいかちの枝えだに下おりました。その枝に、さっきからじっと停とまって、ものを案じている鳥があります。それはいちばん声のいい砲艦で、鳥の大尉の許嫁いいなずけでした。

「ががあ、遅おそくなって失敬。今日の演習で疲つかれないかい。」

「かあお、ずいぶんお待ちしたわ。いっこうつかれなくてよ。」

「そうか。それは結構だ。しかしおれはこんどしばらくおまえと別れなければなるまいよ。」

「あら、どうして、まあ大へんだわ。」

「戦闘艦隊長のはなしでは、おれはあした山鳥を迫りに行くのだそうだ。」

「まあ、山鳥は強いでしょう。」

「うん、眼玉めだまが出しゃばって、嘴くちばしが細くて、ちょっと見掛けは偉えらそうだよ。しかし訳ないよ。」

「ほんとう。」

「大丈夫だいじょうぶさ。しかしもちろん戦争のことだから、どういう張合でどんなことがあるかもわからない。そのときはおまえはね、おれとの約束やくそくはすっかり消えたんだから、外ほかへ嫁いってくれ。」

「あら、どうしましょう。まあ、大へんだわ。あんまりひどいわ、あんまりひどいわ。それではあし、あんまりひどいわ、かあお、かあお、かあお、かあお」

「泣くな、みっともない。そら、たれか来た。」

鳥の大尉の部下、鳥の兵曹長へいそうちょうが急いでやってきて、首をちょっと横にかしげて礼をして云いました。

「があ、艦長殿、点呼の時間でございます。一同整列して居おります。」

「よろしい。本艦は即刻そっこ帰隊する。おまえは先に帰ってよろしい。」

「承知いたしました。」兵曹長は飛んで行きます。

「さあ、泣くな。あした、も一度列の中で会えるだろう。」

丈夫でいるんだぞ、おい、お前ももう点呼だろう、すぐ帰らなくてはいかん。手を出せ。」二足はしっかり手を握にぎりました。大尉はそれから枝をけって、急いでじぶんの隊に帰りました。娘の鳥は、もう枝に凍こおり着いたように、じっとして動きません。

夜になりました。

それから夜中になりました。

雲がすっかり消えて、新しく灼やかれた鋼はがねの空に、つめたいつめたい光がみなぎり、小さな星がいくつか連合れんごうして爆発ばくはつをや、水車の心棒がキキキ云います。

とうとう薄うすい鋼の空に、ピチリと裂罅ひびがはいって、まっ二つに開き、その裂さけ目から、あやしい長い腕うでがたくさんぶら下って、鳥を握つかんで空の天井てんじょうの向う側へ持って行くおとします。鳥の義勇艦隊はもう総掛りです。みんな急いで黒い股引ももひきをはいて一生けん命宙をかけめぐります。兄貴の鳥も弟をかばう暇ひまがなく、恋人こいびと同志もたびたびひどくぶつつかり合います。

いや、ちがいました。

そうじゃありません。

月が出たのです。青いひしげた二十日の月が、東の山から泣いて登ってきたのです。そこで鳥の軍隊はもうすっかり安心してしまいました。

たちまち杜はずかになって、ただおびえて脚をふみはずした若い水兵が、びっくりして眼をさまして、があと一発、ねぼけ声の大砲を撃つだけでした。

ところが鳥の大尉は、眼が冴さえて眠ねむれませんでした。

「おれはあした戦死するのだ。」大尉は呟つぶやきながら、許嫁いいなずけのいる杜の方にあたまを曲げました。

その昆布こんぶのような黒いなめらかな梢こずえの中では、あの若い声のいい砲艦が、次から次といろいろな夢ゆめを見ているのでした。

鳥の大尉とただ二人、ばたばた羽をならし、たびたび顔を見合せながら、青黒い夜の空を、どこまでもどこまでものぼって行きました。もうマジエル様と呼ぶ鳥の北斗七星ほくとしちせいが、大きく近くなって、その一つの星のなかに生えている青じろい苹果りんごの木さえ、ありありと見えるころ、どうしたわけか二人とも、急にはねが石のようにこわばって、まっさかさまに落ちかかりました。マジエル様と叫さけびながら愕おどろいて眼をさましますと、ほんとうにからだ枝から落ちかかっています。急いではねをひろげ姿勢を直し、大尉の居の方を見ましたが、またいつかうとうとしますと、こんどは山鳥が鼻眼鏡はなめがねなどをかけてふたりの前にやって来て、大尉に握手あくしゅしようおとします。大尉が、いかんいかん、と云って手をふりますと、山鳥はピカピカする拳銃ピストルを出していきなりずどんと大尉を射殺いころし、大尉はなめらかな黒い胸を張って倒たおれかかります。マジエル様と叫びながらまた愕いて眼をさましますというあんばいでした。

鳥の大尉はこちらで、その姿勢を直すはねの音から、そのマジエルを祈いのる声まですっかり聴きいて居りました。

じぶんもまたためいきをついて、そのうつくしい七つのマジエルの星を仰あおぎながら、ああ、あしたの戦たたかいでわたくしが勝つことがいいのか、山鳥がかつのがいいのか、それはわたくしにわかりませんが、ただあなたのお考かんがえのとおりです、わたくしはわたくしにきまったように力いっぱいたたかいます、みんなみんなあなたのお考えのとおりですとすずかに祈って居りました。そして東のそらには早くも少しの銀の光が湧わいたのです。

ふと遠い冷たい北の方で、なにか鍵かぎでも触ふれあったようなかすかな声がありました。鳥からすの大尉は夜間双眼鏡ナイトグラスを手早く取って、きっとそっちを見ました。星あかりのこちらのぼんやり白い峠とうげの上に、一本の栗くりの木が見えました。その梢にとまって空を見あげているものは、たしかに敵の山鳥です。大尉の胸は勇ましく躍おどりました。

「があ、非常召集しようしゅう、があ、非常召集」

大尉の部下はたちまち杖をけたてて飛びあがり大尉のまわりをかけめぐります。

「突貫とつかん。」鳥の大尉は先登せんとうになってまっしぐらに北へ進みました。

もう東の空はあたらしく研といた鋼はがねのような白光しろびかりです。

山鳥はあわてて杖をけ立てました。そして大きくはねをひろげて北の方へ遁にげ出そうとしましたが、もうそのときは駆逐艦くちくかんたちはまわりをすっかり囲んでいました。

「があ、があ、があ、があ、があ」大砲の音は耳もつんぼになりそうです。山鳥は仕方なく足をぐらぐらしながら上の方へ飛びあがりました。大尉はたちまちそれに追い付いて、そのまっくろな頭に鋭すどく一突ひとつき食らわせました。山鳥はよろよろとなって地面に落ちかかりました。そこを兵曹長が横からもう一突きやりました。山鳥は灰いろのまぶたをとじ、あけ方の峠の雪の上につめたく横よこたわりました。

「があ、兵曹長。その死骸しがいを営舎までもって帰るように。があ、引き揚げっ。」

「かしこまりました。」強い兵曹長はその死骸を提さげ、鳥の大尉はじぶんの杜もりの方に飛びはじめ十八隻はしたがいました。

杜に帰って鳥の駆逐艦は、みなほうほう白い息をはきました。

「けがは無いか。誰たれかけがしたものは無いか。」鳥の大尉はみんなをいたわってあるきました。

夜がすっかり明けました。

桃ももの果汁しるのような陽ひの光は、まず山の雪にいっぱい注ぎ、それからだんだんに流れて、ついにはそらいちめん、雪のなかに白百合しろゆりの花を咲かせました。

ざらざらの太陽が、かなしいくらいひかって、東の雪の丘おかの上に懸かかりました。

「観兵式、用意っ、集れい。」大監督が叫びました。

「観兵式、用意っ、集れい。」各艦隊長が叫びました。

みんなすっかり雪のたんぼにならびました。

鳥の大尉は列からはなれて、びかびかする雪の上を、足をすくすく延ばしてまっすぐに走って大監督の前に行きました。

「報告、きょうあけがた、セピラの峠の上に敵艦の碇泊ていはくを認めましたので、本艦隊は直ちに出勤、撃沈げきちんいたしました。わが軍死者なし。報告終りっ。」

駆逐艦隊はもうあんまりうれしくて、熱い涙なみだをぼろぼろ雪の上にこぼしました。

鳥の大監督も、灰いろの眼から涙なみだをながして云いました。

「ギイギイ、ご苦労だった。ご苦労だった。よくやった。もうおまえは少佐になってもいいだろう。おまえの部下の叙勲じょくんはおまえにまかせる。」

鳥の新らしい少佐は、お腹なかが空すいて山から出て来て、十九隻に囲まれて殺された、あの山鳥を思い出して、あたらしい涙をこぼしました。

「ありがとうございます。就つては敵の死骸しがいを葬ほうむりたいとおもいますが、お許し下さいますか。」

「よろしい。厚く葬ってやれ。」

鳥の新らしい少佐は礼をして大監督の前をさがり、列に戻もどって、いまマジエルの星の居るあたりの青ぞらを仰ぎました。(ああ、マジエル様、どうか憎にくむことのできない敵を殺さないでいいように早くこの世界がなりますように、そのためならば、わたくしのからだなどは、何べん引き裂かれてもかまいません。)マジエルの星が、ちょうど来ているあたりの青ぞらから、青いひかりがうらうらと湧きました。

美しくまっ黒な砲艦の鳥は、そのあいだ中、みんなといっしょに、不動の姿勢をとって列ならびながら、始終きらきら涙をこぼしました。砲艦長はそれを見ないふりしてました。あしたから、また許嫁いいなずけといっしょに、演習ができるのです。あんまりうれしいので、たびたび嘴くちばしを大きくあけて、まっ赤に日光に透すかせましたが、それも砲艦長は横を向いて見逃みのがしてました。

The Crow's Big Dipper

by Kenji Miyazawa

Translated by Nicholas Chang

Because the cold, petty clouds hovered low across the bare earth, it was impossible to tell whether the fields glowed from the blanket of snow or the sun. The fleet of crows was pushed by the clouds, and with little other options, they lined up horizontally along the snow-covered fields and performed an emergency anchoring.

No ship moved a single bit. The pitch-black, silky-smooth crow captain and the young commander of the fleet stood upright. The archbishop of the crows did not even move or quiver.

The archbishop of the crows was very much of an older age. His eyes had turned grey, and his song was raspy, as if it came from a bad puppet. As such, his one child who had no idea how to differentiate the ages of crows came up to him one day and said,

"Hey, there are two crows in this town with broken throats. Hey!" It had to have been a mistake. After all, there was only one crow like that, and it wasn't even because his throat was bad. He had been up in the sky for a long time giving orders, which caused his voice to deteriorate. As such, the fleet thought of his voice as the best amid all the noises around them.

On top of the snow, the crows working on the emergency anchoring were like pebbles, little sesame-seed-like specks. If one were to look with a telescope, one could see that there were big ones and small ones, just like potatoes.

However, it was starting to become dusk. Because the clouds finally climbed upward a little bit, there was a small gap during which the crows could fly. After that, the archbishop, gasping for breath, issued his command.

"Begin practice! Now! Depart!"

The captain first abruptly struck the snow and pushed off the ground in flight. The captain's subordinates left in eighteen pairs, ascending in order and continuing after the captain and advancing while keeping equal distance from each other. After that, the combat fleet followed them in thirty-two pairs, with the archbishop and the fleet commander solemnly followed behind them. At that time, the captain up at the front had already spiraled ahead four times, went to the edge of the clouds, and proceeded to the forest grove off in the distance. Twenty-nine pairs of cruisers and twenty-five pairs of gunships rose upward. The last two pairs departed together. Here was an irregular spot for the crows' armed forces. The captain immediately went close to the grove and turned left.

"Cannons at the ready! Aim! Fire!" At that time, the archbishop issued his order. The armada simultaneously fired their cannons with a thunderous chorus of booms. When they fired the cannons, the sounds reverberated in the legs of the injured soldiers in the Nidanatora Campaign, causing their legs to twitch. As they circled in the air four times, the archbishop said,

"Split up!"

As he spoke, the archbishop landed in his official residence off in a cedar tree, separating from his line. All of the other lines broke up and returned to their own residences. The captain, however, did not go back to his own home. He went to a honey locust tree by himself.

The clouds were dusky, with only the inner glow emanating from the heavenly abyss atop the western mountain. On top of that, one silver star called Masily by the Crows' Association had started shimmering. He descended the branch like an arrow. Stopping short, there was an anxious crow. The best voice of the gunships, she was the captain's fiancée.

"Caw! Caw! Forgive my tardiness. Are you tired?"

"Ca-caw! You've certainly waited a while. I'm not at all tired."

"Really? Sounds fine. However, this time, I need to break up with you."

"Ah... Why? Well, that's terrible."

"According to the fleet commander, it looks like I'm going to have to go chase a mountain crow away tomorrow."

"Well, isn't the mountain crow strong?"

"Yeah. His eyes always are prying, his beak is slender, and his appearance is really haughty. But he should be easy."

"Really?"

"I'll be fine. But of course because it's war, you don't know what'll go on in which battle. In times like this, since you've already done away with our promise, please go find another man."

"Oh, what to do? The thought simply crushes me! So very cruel! So very cruel! Ca-caw! Ca-caw! Ca-caw! Ca-caw!"

"Don't cry. It's indecent. Someone's coming."

The captain's subordinate, the crows' chief warrant-officer, came hurrying over, tilted his neck slightly, bowed, and said,

"Caw! Captain! It is time for roll-call. I have lined all soldiers up."

"Good. I shall return immediately. Please go ahead."

"Understood." The warrant-officer flew away.

"All right, don't cry. We can meet one more time tomorrow in the lines at roll-call. Stay strong, okay? I should be on parade already, so I'd better leave now. Give me your hand."

The two of them firmly held hands. The captain then kicked the bough and rushed over to his corps. The lady crow, as if frozen directly to the branch, did not move an inch.

It was nighttime. Then it was midnight. The clouds completely vanished, and in the sky of freshly burned steel, a cold, cold light rose, tiny stars united and exploded, and the fleet's axle creaked.

Finally, in the sky of thin steel, a fissure broke, then opened up. Many mysterious, long arms descended from the crack, grabbed the crows, and tried to bring them to the other side of the sky's ceiling. All of the fleet's energy was being expended. Everyone was rushing to put on their black trousers and rush around the sky to the best of their abilities. The senior soldiers had no time to protect their juniors, and even lovers fought viciously amongst themselves.

Or so it's been said. That wasn't the case at all.

The moon was out. The crushed moon of the 20th day wept, climbing from the eastern mountain. The crow army had already completely calmed itself. Suddenly, the forest grove went quiet, and the young, frightened crow sailor who tripped over his feet opened his eyes in shock, let out one "Caw!" with a half-asleep voice, and it was only the cannon firing. However, the captain woke up and couldn't go back to sleep.

"Tomorrow, I'll be killed in action." The captain murmured, turning his head to the grove where his fiancé was.

On the center of the black, smooth, konbu-like twig slept the young voice from the gunship, the captain's fiancée. She was plagued by dreams coming one after the other. In one of her dreams, she and the captain flapped their wings, and while frequently exchanging looks, climbed higher and higher in the bluish-black night sky. The Crow's Big Dipper, called Majiel's star, grew ever larger and closer to the point where even where the apple tree sprouting from the inside of one of the stars could clearly be seen. The two crows, for some reason, suddenly stiffened like steel and went tumbling out of the sky headfirst. When she opened her eyes in shock as she called out to Majiel, she actually was falling off of the branch. Hurriedly spreading her wings and fixing her posture, she looked in the captain's direction, but shortly thereafter, she was dozing off again. In the next dream, the mountain crow appeared before them, putting on his pince-nez glasses, and attempted to shake the captain's hand.

When the captain waved his hands in protest amid cries of "No, no!", the mountain crow suddenly brandished a sparkling pistol and shot him. The captain fell to the floor, holding onto his smooth, black chest. While screaming for Majiel, her eyes opened in a state of fright.

The crow captain clearly heard everything from the flapping of his

fiancée's wings in an attempt to stay on the branch to the sound of her voice and her prayers to Majiel. He sighed to himself and prayed quietly while looking up.

"O Majiel, I no longer know if a victory for me or the mountain crow would be any good for tomorrow's fight. However, it is just as you have prophesized. I will fight with great resolve and great power. Let this, all of this, be what you have prophesized."

Then, a silver light in the eastern sky quickly and suddenly surged. In the distant, cold North, something made a voice so delicate that it could touch even a lock. The crow captain donned his night-vision glasses quickly and got a good glimpse of what it was when he looked there. In the starlight, above the dim white mountain ridge, he could see one lone chestnut tree. He stopped at the treetop, and the figure looking up into the sky was unmistakably his enemy, the mountain crow. The captain's breast danced with courage.

"Caw! Emergency meeting! Caw! Emergency meeting!"

The captain's subordinate suddenly kicked up the bough and rushed around the flying captain.

"Charge!" The captain became the lead and advanced northbound at top speed. The eastern sky had already had the white glow of freshly sharpened steel. The mountain crow confusedly kicked up the bough. Then, he spread his large wings and tried to depart north, but he was already surrounded by a fleet of destroyers.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! The sounds of the cannons became seemingly deafening. The mountain crow, with little other options, flew up, his feet shaking all the while. The captain immediately gave chase and dealt a sharp blow to his pitch-black head. The mountain crow teetered around, unceremoniously crashing to the ground. The warrant officer hit him once more from the side. He closed his grey eyelids, splayed out over the early morning snow of the mountain ridge.

"Caw! Mr. Chief Warrant Officer, take this corpse back to the barracks. Caw! Pull out!"

"Understood."

The strong warrant officer took the carcass up into his arms, and the captain started on the way back to his forest grove home with eighteen pairs accompanying him. The destroyers returning to the forest grove all let out a steamy breath.

"Any injuries? Has anyone gotten hurt?" The captain said comfortingly as he strolled along.

The night glowed brightly. Sunbeams poured onto the snow of the mountain like peach juice, gradually flowing downward, and finally making

the white lilies buried in the snow bloom. The sparkling sun shone somberly, beaming down on the eastern snowy knoll.

“Review has been prepared. Assemble!” The archbishop shouted.

“Review has been prepared. Assemble!” The other fleet commanders shouted.

Everybody lined up on the snowy field. The captain split from his line, quickly extending his legs over the shimmering snow, and went running straight for the archbishop.

“I have a report. This morning, because an enemy ship’s anchorage was confirmed to be atop the Sepila mountain ridge, I dispatched this battalion and sunk the ship. We experienced no casualties. That is all.”

The destroyer fleet was already rather pleased with itself, their hot tears falling onto the crumbled snow. Tears spilling from his grey eyes, the archbishop said,

“Gii! Gii! You have done well. I tip my hat to you. Nicely done. You ought to be a major. I shall leave the conferral of your subordinates to you.” The new major of the crows thought back on his hunger, his departure from the mountain, and the mountain crow’s being surrounded and murdered. New tears began to fall from his eyes.

“Thank you very much! Concerning the enemy’s corpse, I wish to bury it. Permission to bury the corpse?”

“Permission granted. Give him a proper burial.”

The new major of the crows bowed to the archbishop, returned to his line, and looked up into the part of the blue sky where Majiel’s star would normally be.

O Majiel, please let this world become a world where we do not have to slay any more enemies towards whom we cannot feel animosity. For the sake of that goal, I would gladly let my body be rent asunder over and over. As if exactly on cue, Majiel’s star appeared in the blue sky where the major was looking, a blue light softly shining down.

All the while, the beautiful pitch-black gunboat crows continuously cried sparkling, shimmering tears while lined up and unmoving. The gunboat commander did not look. From the day after that and onward, the major could do drills with his fiancée. Because he was so joyful, he would frequently open his mouth wide and pure red sunlight would pass through, lighting it up. However, the gunboat commander turned to face the side and missed it completely.

LATIN

"Flete, canes, si flere vacat, si flere valetis;
flete, canes: catulus mortuus est Pitulus."
"Mortuus est Pitulus? Pitulus quis?" "Plus cane dignus."
"Quis Pitulus?" "Domini cura dolorque sui."
"Non canis Albanus, nec erat canis ille Molossus
sed canis exiguus, sed brevis et catulus.
Quinquennis fuerat; si bis foret ille decennis,
usque putes catulum, cum videas, modicum.
Muri pannonico vix aequus corpore toto
qui non tam muri quam similis lepori.
Albicolor nigris facies gemmabat ocellis."
"Unde genus?" "Mater Fresia, Freso pater."
"Quae vires?" "Parvae, satis illo corpore dignae,
ingentes animi robore dissimili."
"Quid fuit officium? Numquid fuit utile vel non?"
"Ut parvum magnus diligeret dominus.
Hoc fuit officium, domino praeludere tantum."
"Quae fuit utilitas?" "Non nisi risus erat."

"Qualis eras, dilecte canis, ridende, dolende,
risus eras vivens, mortuus ecce dolor.
Quisquis te vidit, quisquis te novit, amavit
et dolet exitio nunc, miserando, tuo.

"Lament, dogs, if there is time to lament, if you have strength to lament;
Lament, dogs: the puppy Pitulus is dead."
"Pitulus is dead, Pitulus who?" "More deserving than a dog."
"Pitulus who?" "The care and grief of his master."
Not an Albanian dog, nor was that dog Molossian,
But a scanty dog, but slight and a puppy.
He was five years old; if that one were twice ten years old,
You might even think him, when you saw him, a small puppy.
His whole body scarcely equal to a Pannonian mouse,
Not so much similar to a mouse than to a hare,
White-colored face begemmed with little black eyes."
"Begotten from where?" "Mother Fresian, Fresian father."
"What strengths?" "Little, enough deserving his body,
Huge spirits with dissimilar brawn."
"What was his work? Was it useful or not?"
"So that his great master might delight in the small.
This was the work, to play such with the master."
"What was his service?" "There was none except laughter."

Such you were, delightful dog, to be laughed at, to be mourned,
Living you were laughter, dead behold grief.
Whoever saw you, whoever knew you, loved
And grieves now by your end, to be mourned.

Copa Surisca, caput Graeca redimita mitella,
 crispum sub crotalo docta movere latus,
ebria famosa saltat lasciva taberna,
 et cubitum raucos excutiens calamos:
“ Quid juvat aestivo defessum pulvere abisse?
 quam potius bibulo decubuisse toro!
sunt topia et kalybae, cyathi, rosa, tibia, chordae,
 et triclia umbrosis frigida harundinibus.
en et, Maenalia quae garrit dulce sub antro,
 rustica pastoris fistula more sonat.
est et vappa, cado nuper defusa picato,
 est strepitans rauco murmure rivus aquae;
sunt etiam croceo violae de flore corollae
 sertaque purpurea lutea mixta rosa
et quae virgineo libata Achelois ab amne
 lilia vimineis attulit in calathis.
sunt et caseoli, quos iunca fiscina siccat,
 sunt autumnali cerea pruna die
castanaeaeque nucesque et suave rubentia mala.
 est hic munda Ceres, est Amor, est Bromius;
sunt et mora cruenta, et lentis uva racemis
 et pendet junco caeruleus cucumis.
est tuguri custos, armatus falce saligna,
 sed non et vasto est inguine terribilis.
“huic calybita veni. lassus iam sudat asellus,
 Parce illi: nostrum delictum est asinus.
nunc cantu crebro rumpunt arbusta cicadae.
 nunc vere in gelida sede lacerta latet:
si sapis, aestivo recubans nunc prolue vitro,
 seu vis crystalli ferre novos calices;
hie age pampinea fessus requiesce sub umbra
 et gravidum roseo necte caput strophio,
formosa tenerae decerpens ora puellae —
 a pereat cui sunt prisca supercilia!
quid cineri ingrato servas bene olentia sarta?
 an ne coronato vis lapide ossa tegi?
pone merum et talos. Pereat qui crastina curat:
 mors aurem vellens ‘vivite’, ait, ‘venio.’”

The Syrian bartendress, head crowned with Greek cloth,
 taught to move timidly, carried by the beat,
is drunk and dirty dancing at her infamous bar
 and rattling raucous cattails as long as her arm.
“What could please a man worn out from summer dust
 more than reclining on my thirsty couch?
For even in this shack we have wine, roses, flutes, and strings,
 and our bower is cooled by shady reeds.
And look, beneath the Menalaen cavern, chattering sweetly,
 an old-fashioned shepherd’s pipe plays traditional songs.
And there is some flattish wine, newly poured into a jug smeared with pitch,
 and a river rolling by, and the murmuring of rushing waters;
and there are garlands of blossoms with golden violets,
 and saffron entwined with a mixture of purple roses,
and lilies carried in a wicker basket
 strewn by the virgin god of the stream;
and there are little cheeses, dried in rushen punnets;
 and there are waxy plums from autumn days,
and chestnuts and almonds and sweet ruby-red apples.
 Here Ceres is adorned, and Amor, and Bromius.
There are blood-red mulberries, and sticky clusters of grapes,
 and a cerulean cucumber hangs from its stalk.
This hovel has a guard, armed with a willow scythe,
 and his groin is immense but not frightening.
So come hither, hermit. Your little ass is exhausted.
 ‘Spare him: the donkey is sacred to us!’
Now the cicadas with frequent songs rend the trees.
 Now the lizard hides in a cool hiding-spot.
If you are wise, you relax in the summer. Please, use our sparkling goblets—
 or if you wish, a new glass for every drink.
Come here; rest your weary self under the shade of the vines,
 adorn your burdened head with leafy wreathes,
and enjoy the pretty faces of tender girls—
 Death to arrogant prudes!
Why wait until you’re dead to wear flowery garlands?
 Or would you prefer a crown of decorated stone?
Then ready the liquor and dice. Let him perish who thinks of tomorrow.
 Death rings in my ear: “Live!” he says. “I’m coming!”

RUSSIAN

Бессоница, Гомер, тугие паруса.

by Osip Mandelstam

Бессоница, Гомер, тугие паруса.

Я список кораблей прочел до середины...

Сей длинный выводок, сей поезд журавлиный,

Что над Эллагою когда-то поднялся.

Как журавлиный клин в чужие рубежи

На головах царей божественная пена...

Куда плывете вы? Когда бы не Елена,

Что Троя вам одна, ахейские мужи??

И море и Гомер все движимо любовью..

Куда же деться мне? И вот, Гомер молчит..

И море Черное витийствуя шумит

И с страшным грохотом подходит к изголовью...

1915

Insomnia. Homer. Stiff sails.

Translated by Olivia Kennison

Insomnia. Homer. Stiff sails.

I've read the catalog of ships to the middle:
This endless procession, this flight of cranes
That once rose up over Hellas.

Like a flock of cranes flying toward strange seas —
A marine halo on the heads of kings —
Where are you sailing? If not for Helen,
What would Troy mean to you, Achaian men?

The sea and Homer — love moves everything.
Where am I to go? And now Homer is silent
And the Black Sea speaks and whirs
And with a heavy roar approaches my headboard...

1915

**Translations from *Modern flash fiction:*
*Towards an anthology.***

Translated by Nikita Kasay

Наталья ВИКТОРОВА

И вот приходит к нам поэт с Большой Буквой. Он мнетя в передней, и Буква торчит из его кармана. Осторожно он достает ее, но она, выскользнув, падает и разбивается.

Поэт долго ползает, собирая осколки. Потом тщательно склеивает новую Букву. Получилась Буква хотя и скособоленная, но больше прежней. Поэт одевает ее на плечо и выходит на улицу. Прохожие показывают на него пальцем и говорят: Вон пошел поэт с Большой Буквой.

By Natalia Viktorova

And now visits us a poet with a Capital P. He hesitates in the hall, with the letter is sticking out of his pocket. He carefully takes it out, but it slips and falls, shatters.

The poet crawls for a long time, collecting the shards. Then he meticulously glues together a new letter. Even though lopsided, it turns out bigger than before. The poet puts it on his shoulder and walks out onto the street. The passers-by point at him and say: there goes a poet with a Capital P.

Ольга МЕДВЕДЕВА-ПРЕМИНГЕР

Земля

У Олега было две жены. Одна настоящая, а другая просто встретилась ему как-то на улице и решила, что она тоже его жена, несмотря на то, что была замужем и очень любила своего мужа. И вообще она жила в другой стране и занималась своими делами. А Олег почему-то тоже так решил, хотя кроме жены и дочери у него было много разных знакомых девушек, которым он очень нравился и они хотели, чтобы он их иногда навещал. Олег очень много работал и был чрезвычайно занятый человек. И вот он и вторая жена стали звонить друг другу по телефону и посылать друг другу разные вещи, письма, кассеты, книги, пока все ее вещи не оказались в доме Олега, а все его вещи в ее доме, и так они стали жить с вещами друг друга. Это было немножко неудобно, особенно с одеждой. Они носили разные размеры, но самое поразительное было то, что никто на это не обращал ни малейшего внимания. Тогда Олег стал одевать ее юбки и кофточки, которые на нем не

застегивались, а она одевала его брюки, которые с нее падали, и поливала свое лицо пеной для бритья. И ни один человек ни высказал по этому поводу ни одного замечания. Все продолжалось по-прежнему – работа, разные страны, семейная жизнь. Они очень обрадовались и решили, что раз так получается, значит они могут делать все, что хотят, а больше всего на свете им хотелось трахаться друг с другом. И они пошли трахаться друг с другом, и дотрахались до такой степени, что превратились в пыль и улетели легкие-легкие, оставляя за собой переливающийся хвост блесок, а внизу синяя-синяя, с небольшой темной дырой в оболочке, крутилась когда-то такая родная планета Земля.

The Earth

Oleg had two wives. One of them was real; the other just met him on the street and decided that she too was his wife, despite the fact that she was also married and loved her husband. She lived in a different country anyway, and had her own things to do. For some reason, Oleg decided so as well, even though, besides his wife and daughter, he knew many other girls that liked him a lot and wanted him to visit sometimes. Oleg worked a lot, and was in general very busy. And then he and his second wife began calling each other on the phone and sending each other different things, letters, videotapes, books, until all her stuff ended up at Oleg's house, and all his stuff at hers, and thus they've lived with each others' things. It was a little inconvenient, especially with clothing. They wore different sizes, but the most amazing thing was that no one ever paid any attention to this. Then Oleg began wearing her skirts and blouses that wouldn't zip up on him, and she wore his slacks that would fall off her, and doused her face with shaving cream. And no one said anything about it. Everything went on as before – work, different countries, and family life. They were overjoyed and decided that, since it shapes out nicely, they can do whatever they want, and more than anything in the world they wanted to screw each other. And off they went to screw each other, and they screwed so much that they turned into dust and floated away so dainty, leaving behind them a shimmering tail of sparkles, and below them span so blue, with a small dark gap in its atmosphere, once very dear planet Earth.

Перверсии

Олег любил заниматься сексом. Он занимался сексом в самых разных местах – дома и на улице, в машине и в кино, на природе и в лифте. Он даже занимался сексом в колодце, когда одна девушка уронила ведро и Олег полез вместе с ней его доставать. Один раз он зашел к друзьям и увидел у них в спальне привязанную к кровати голую спящую девушку. Друзья куда-то подевались. Олег ее пожалел и закрыл одеялом, но девушка тут же проснулась, скинула одеяло и попросила его заняться с ней сексом. Олег хотел ее развязать, но девушка опять воспротивилась, сказав, что веревки ее возбуждают. Олег задумался – и понял, что не хочет эту девушку. Он ей

об этом деликатно сказал, но девушку его признание возбудило еще больше. От его нежелания она стала страстно извиваться и стонать. Тогда Олег ушел в другую комнату, а девушка так от этого возбудилась, что стала кончать сериями. Олег уже было вышел из квартиры, но испугался, что девушка от его ухода придет в такой экстаз, что нужно будет вызывать скорую, а в доме никого не было. Он остался ждать друзей на кухне, съел все, что у них было в холодильнике, и заснул, а проснувшись – забыл про девушку и ушел. Вспомнив про нее только на следующий день, он сразу же позвонил друзьям – узнать, все ли в порядке. К телефону подошла девушка. Она чрезвычайно обрадовалась его звонку и сказала, что провела вчера один из самых чудесных вечеров в своей жизни и надеется на продолжение. С тех пор взгляд Олега на возможности сексуальных отношений расширился.

By Olga Medvedeva-Preminger

Perversions

Oleg loved to have sex. He had sex in all sorts of places – at home and in the street, in a car and in a movie theater, outdoors and in an elevator. He even had sex in a well once, when one girl dropped a bucket into it, and they both climbed in to fetch it. One time he went to his friends' apartment and saw in their bedroom a naked girl tied to the bed, asleep. The friends were nowhere to be found. Oleg felt sorry for her and covered her with a blanket, but she immediately woke up, kicked off the blanket and asked him to have sex with her. Oleg wanted to untie her, but the girl objected once again, saying that ropes turned her on. Oleg thought about it, and realized that he did not want this girl. He tactfully told her that, but his admission only turned her on even more. His reluctance caused her to passionately twist and moan. Then Oleg went into another room, and that turned her on so much that she began climaxing in sequence. Oleg was about to leave the apartment, but he feared that his departure might bring her to such rapture that an ambulance would have to be called, and no one would be home. He stayed in the kitchen waiting for his friends and ate everything there was in the fridge, and dozed off; when he woke up, he forgot about the girl and left. He remembered about her only the next day and immediately phoned his friends to see if everything was all right. The girl answered the phone. She was extremely pleased that he called, and said that yesterday evening was one of the most wonderful evenings in her life, and that she hoped for more. Since then Oleg's views on possibilities in sexual relations expanded.

Это святое

По понедельникам нас не трогайте. Вечер понедельника забит на два года вперед. Быстрее не получится. Неделя начинается с посещения психоаналитика. Это святое, без этого никак. С семи до восьми никаких деловых свиданий, лирических встреч и романтических путешествий в джаз-клуб. Душа болит, несем ее, бедную на ручках как измученного ребенка. Вручаем ему за умеренную сумму, которую откладываем всю неделю. Возьмите, – говорим, – сделайте с ней что-нибудь, пусть она хоть у вас поплачет, больше-то ей негде. В других местах мы ведь циничные женщины и сдержанные мужчины.

Раньше считалось, что иностранцам не нужны священники, ведь у них есть психоаналитики, а нам не нужны психоаналитики, ведь у нас есть священники. А можно и туда и сюда. Главное – не перепутать, что кому нести. Психоаналитик исправляет сценарий отношений с представителями противоположного пола, священник не дает окончательно загнуться стремлению к духовности. Все в порядке. Надо бы только для полноты программы еще и на лечебную физкультуру записаться или на массаж. Многие, кстати, так и поступают. И очень довольны. Неделя расписана по минутам, проблема свободного времени решена. Понедельник – психоаналитик, вторник – солярий, дальше аэробика или, там, пентбол, воскресенье – исповедь. Это называется, видите, я и так делаю все, что могу. Оставьте меня в покое!

By Elena Mulyarova

This is sacred

Don't disturb us on Mondays. Monday evening is planned out two years in advance. There is no quicker way. The week begins with a visit to a therapist. This is sacred, can't live without it. From seven to eight there will be no business meetings, lyrical dates, or romantic journeys to a jazz club. The soul is hurting: we carry the poor thing, like an exhausted child, in our hands. We hand the soul to him for a moderate sum that we save up for a whole week. Take it, we say, do something with it; at least, let it cry at your place, it has no other place to do it. In other places we are cynical women and reserved men.

Before, some thought that foreigners do not need priests, because they have therapists, and we do not need therapists, because we have priests. But you could go this way and that way. It's essential not to mix up what you bring to whom. A therapist corrects relationship scenarios with the opposite sex, while the priest doesn't let the desire for the spiritual to completely kick the bucket. Everything is in order. It would only be necessary to sign up for fitness, or maybe massages, to

complete the program. Many do exactly that, by the way, and are very pleased. The week is scheduled by the minute; the problem of free time is solved. On Monday – a therapist; on Tuesday – a solarium; next – aerobics, or perhaps paint-ball; on Sunday – a confession. This is called: see, I am doing all that I can. Leave me alone!

Юлия ИДЛИС

Д.Д.

Ты можешь сказать мне всё, что угодно, – всё, кроме звука [p]. Всё, что угодно, но [p] – даже не просите, и (я уверена) не потому, что не получается, а – не хочешь просто, не хочешь произносить такие вещи на людях.

Ну, скажем, по-французски. Вот по-французски ты часто говоришь [p], но я почти ничего не понимаю. А по-русски даже твёрдый знак можешь произнести, естественно, тридцать две буквы русского алфавита, но никогда, никогда. Обходя одну из них ледяным молчанием. Конечно, это хорошо. Ты можешь сказать мне “люблю”, но не можешь – “ревную” (получится “евную”, и это после люблю-то!). Но ты и ребёнком назвать меня не можешь, а я ведь ещё маленькая совсем. И как с тобой, если ты мне всё время чего-то недоговариваешь?

Я поэтому. Не думай ничего и ничего не бойся: всё выйдет само собой. Как-нибудь, когда меня уже год не будет, ты почувствуешь, что вот они все в тебе – недоговорённые, несказанные, толпятся где-то у горла – только нагнись. И ты нагибаешься и бежишь, наталкиваясь повсюду на сосредоточенные лица, и вот на улице уже понимаешь – некуда, некуда, понимаешь, – а они всё мечутся в тебе, их всё больше – и те, которые ты мне не сказал, и те, которые другим... И ты садишься на корточки в чьём-то глухом дворе, испуганный, пьяный, и начинаешь их из себя: rrrrrr... rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr... rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr... раскачиваешься и рычишь. Или воешь.

By Julia Idlis

D. D.

You can say anything to me, anything except the sound [r]. Whatever, but [r] – don't even ask, and (I am sure) not because you can't, but because you simply don't want to, don't like to say such things in public.

Take, for instance, French. You often say [r] when you speak French, but I can't really understand anything. In Russian you can even pronounce the hard sign¹, naturally, all thirty two letters of Russian alphabet, but never, never. Always avoiding one of them with icy silence.

¹ One of the 33 letters of Russian alphabet, the hard sign is silent.

Of course, it's good. You can say to me "lyubly"², but can't "revnyu"³ (it would become "evnyu"⁴, and that's after "love you"!). But you also can't call me "rebenok"⁵ either, and I am still so little. And how can I be with you if you constantly keep back?

This is why. Don't think anything and don't be afraid of anything: all will turn out on its own. Sometimes, when I won't be there for a year, you will feel: there they are inside you – all the unsaid, unfinished, crowding somewhere next to your throat – just bend down. And you will bend down and run, coming across focused faces everywhere, and in the street you will already understand – nowhere to, nowhere to, understand – and they will rush about inside you, more and more of them – the ones you never said to me, and the ones you never said to others. And you will crouch in someone's remote courtyard, scared, drunk, and start them out of you: rrrrrr... rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr... rrrrrr... swaying and growling. Or wailing.

Светлана ЗАГОТОВА

Психея стрижется наголо. У всех есть дурные привычки.

Один поэт любит накручивать на указательный палец прядь чьих-нибудь волос и рожать стих.

Психея стрижется наголо. У поэта хроническая беременность – чья-то непрерывная жизнь. Кто-то не родился, потому и живет вечно.

Поэт же от зависти к неродившемуся рвет на своей маленькой голове последний волос. Только бы породниться с Психеей.

By Svetlana Zagotova

Psyche shaves her head. Everyone has bad habits.

One poet likes to wind a strand of someone's hair onto his finger and give birth to a poem.

Psyche shaves her head. The poet is chronically pregnant – it's someone's ceaseless life. Someone was not born, and thus lives forever.

Of envy to the unborn the poet tears the last hair off his little head. Anything to be akin to Psyche.

Дарья СИМОНОВА

Как есть

Как повторяющийся сон – хромой, пересекающий пути трамвая. Каждый божий день, стоит мне заглянуться в окно, он выходит из дома

2 "Love you."

3 "I am jealous."

4 "Eunuch."

5 "A child."

напротив, чтобы с причудливой грациозной неуклюжестью перейти дорогу и исчезнуть за гаражами. Он движется спокойно, без суеты, не оглядываясь по сторонам, и странно, что в его час на оживленной дороге ни одного шального авто, словно мир давно привык к непонятному ритуалу. С тайной гордыней я думаю, что загадка эта – только для меня, что стоит мне пропустить ежевечернее зрелище – и бедняга окажется под колесами, а значит, я в почетных подмастерьях у Провидения. Иной раз, когда накатит волна меланхолии и вспомнится, что никто не застрахован от участи калеки, я сожмусь от страха и жалости к себе. Порой же просто злюсь на убогость пейзажа. Однако чаще безмолвно приветствую привычную фигуру в окне как славного знакомого. Но какие бы тональности ни владели мной, человек с тростью неизменно проделывает свой путь, презирая зависимость от меня и прочих мелочей мироздания. И остается благодарить хромого бога за то, что учит принимать вселенную без толкований.

By Daria Simonova

As is

Like a recurring dream – a limper, crossing the tramway tracks. Every single day, should I stare out the window, he comes out of the opposite building to cross the road with quaint graceful clumsiness, and disappear behind the garages. He moves calmly, without haste, without looking around, and it's strange that during his hour there isn't one wild car on the busy road, as if the world is used to the strange ritual. With secret pride I think that this mystery is for me only, that should I skip the evening spectacle – the poor fellow will end up road kill, and I, therefore, an apprentice of the Providence. Sometimes, when a wave of melancholy would overtake me, and I would remember that no one is safe from the cripple's lot, I would curl up with fear and self-pity. Occasionally, I just feel angry at the squalor of the scenery. More often, I silently greet the usual figure in the window, like a nice acquaintance. No matter what feeling would overtake me, the man with a cane invariably makes his way, resenting his dependency on me, and on other trifles of the world. The only thing left to do is to thank the limping god for teaching to accept the universe without interpreting it.

Дневники Рукият Атаевой, из «Чечня: Жизнь на Войне»

Ее дом был заминирован во время «зачистки». От взрыва погибли муж Рукият Мовсар и их пятнадцатилетняя дочь Зарема. Рукият живет в Ингушетии. Свой дневник пишет по ночам. Чтобы не потерять рассудок. Начинает тетрадь, бросает, начинает другую. Таких тетрадей у нее скопилось несколько дюжин. Она и сама не знает, какая из них первая, какая последняя... По просьбе самой Рукият имена членов ее семьи в тексте заменены на вымышленные, кроме имени ее дочери Заремы.

Я опять не сплю. Вернее, не сплю — как всегда. Прочитала свои записи: немного стало легче, словно поговорила с кем-то. Как жаль, что я так плохо пишу! Но мне самой нужны эти записи. Они — моя внутренняя жизнь, в каком-то роде самозащита. Что делать? Кто поможет мне? И нужна ли мне помощь? Моей душе не поможет никто. Только в самой себе я нахожу силы. Но часто я думаю: ведь никто обо мне и не вспомнил. Часто читаю про разорванные войной судьбы людей. И, когда нахожу хоть какой-то протест против свершившегося насилия, радуюсь, что есть все-таки страдающие и порядочные люди.

Но нигде и никто не упомянул о моих близких, не указал, что они убиты под развалинами взорванного дома. Что дом этот взорвали федералы. И заложили они тротил в подвал дома во время зачисток.

То ли это был часовой механизм, то ли наступили на растяжки, но взрыв был страшной силы. Полностью разрушился большой дом, были разбиты все строения во дворе и дома, находившиеся по соседству.

Правда, рассказывали тогда, по телевизору передали, что дом взорвался от скопления газа. Где газ мог скопиться?! За неделю зачисток в домах и подвалах не оставили ни дверей, ни окон. Все было основательно разрушено, разграблено. Я ходила по этому дому вместе с Заремой, пытаюсь хоть что-то прибрать. Не было и следа от запаха газа.

Хотя к чему все это?.. Кому это надо? Тот, кто это делал, прекрасно знал, что делает. Но стали ли они от этого взрыва счастливее? Очистили ли они землю, убив мою дочь, Мовсара, Изноура, деда? Какое же надо было совершить преступление, чтобы вот так уничтожить целую семью?

Наверное, эти люди уже где-то у себя дома. В кругу семьи — смеются, шутят, разговаривают. Радуются своим детям и, наверное, расстраиваются, когда у них что-то не ладится. И даже плачут, наверное. Люди... люди?

Иногда слушаешь речи на похоронах военных — сколько слов они для них находят: «геройски погиб», «исполнил долг» и т.д.

Какие они герои? Какой долг? Спросите в любом селе, городе: сколько безвинных людей ими убито?

Кому из них не повезло — убиты, но стали «героями». А кому повезло — вернулись «героями» и стали «чеченцами» — крутыми парнями.

Да, они радуются теперь и тому, что живы, и тому, что у них есть свои семьи. Но мою-то семью они уничтожили! Моей дочери было 15 лет. Она погибла не под бомбежками, не под обстрелом, а под развалинами взорванного вами дома. Меня вы лишили семьи. И за это стали «героями»? Что же у вас в груди вместо сердца? При постоянных «зачистках», которые были в нашем доме, вы наверняка видели мою дочь. Она была очень красива. Ее нельзя было не запомнить. Вы наверняка видели моего свекра — он же ведь мог ходить только на костылях. Ведь вы его несколько часов держали на улице, не разрешая зайти в дом. Значит, вы что-то там делали. Неужели вам не было их жалко? Кому вы мстили? За что?

Где писано такое правило войны: убить ребенка в отместку, убить старика в отместку, убить двух прекрасных братьев в отместку? С кем воюете?

Я — одна оставшаяся в живых под развалинами этого дома. Свидетельство этого преступления — мои бессонные ночи, мои дороги на их могилы. Их много — пять. Единственная радость — посетить их, посидеть с ними, прибрать их. Вот что вы мне оставили в этой жизни!

У весны разные запахи. Теперь мне весна приносит запахи от могильных трав. Я прихожу сюда как домой. Весной здесь много людей — они приходят прибрать могилы. Я купила краску для памятников. Продавщица меня спросила: «Вы продаете памятники — берете так много краски?» «Да, война...» — сразу поняла она, узнав, что я не продаю памятники. Война... но и конкретные преступники. Всевышний Аллах, накажи их!

Ночные налеты. Какие это были страшные моменты! БТРы, на ходу ломая ворота, влетали во двор. Вооруженные до зубов солдаты внезапно врываются в дом, когда все спали, — в каждый дом, в каждую комнату одновременно по 10–15 человек. В масках, с оружием, с выкриками, матом — они крушили кругом все.

В начале войны в доме жило много беженцев, но из-за этих налетов все потихоньку уехали. Один из мальчиков тогда сказал своей матери: «Я не хочу засыпать, как закрою глаза — вижу перед собой автоматчика». Он боялся, что если он уснет, его все равно разбудит этот автоматчик.

Налетчики, не найдя никого, уносили все, что им понравится. Когда уже нечего было уносить, забирали ложки, вилки, ведра, чайники.

Жизнь превратилась в ад. Не знаешь, в какую ночь они придут. Я уже не спала ночами: сидела и прислушивалась, нет ли БТРов поблизости.

Свекровь ругала их, называла мародерами. Одни угрожали ей, другие оправдывались: «Мы выполняем приказ».

Дом и весь двор после них напоминали развороченный улей. У меня опускались руки, хотелось навечно уснуть после такого стресса. Но надо было после них приводить дом в порядок и ждать следующего налета.

И вот в перерывах между налетами шла наша военная жизнь. Надо было и хлеб печь, и воду носить, и еду готовить. И ждать, ждать... когда это закончится, и закончится ли вообще. После очередного налета собирались все вместе. С шутками, с подтруниванием друг над другом рассказывали, как убегали от федералов. Мовсар, смеясь, спрашивал своего друга: «Тебя когда-нибудь выставляла жена из дома? Меня она часто выгоняет». В шутках, веселых разговорах пытались сгладить наше впечатление от пережитого. Но Мовсар при этом лучше меня понимал, на что могут пойти военные.

Мы уже готовились покинуть этот двор и переехать в город. Но военные опередили нас. Во время очередной общей «зачистки», предварительно унеся все, что в нем осталось, дом заминировали. Это была единственная «зачистка», когда нас не было дома, и нас ждал новогодний сюрприз. Зарема пришла в ужас, увидев развороченный дом — не осталось ни одного живого места. Тихо сев в углу, она сказала: «Пусть у тех, кто это сделал, будет всю жизнь такое же настроение, какое теперь у меня».

Как-то разместились, стали убирать дом. Зашел Мовсар. Засунув руки в карманы, не разговаривая, он ходил по дому. Удрученный, подавленный, неразговорчивый он встал у окна. «Что же тебя так долго не было? Я ведь переживала». — «Меня уже не тянет в этот дом. Он стал чужим». Это были последние слова в его жизни. И в этот момент лавина взрыва разбросала нас в разные стороны...

<...>

Section from Diary of Rukiya Ataeva' from "Chechnya: Life During War"

Translated by Sidney Balaban

Her house was mine-studded during the time of the "zachistka."² From the explosion, Rukiya's husband Movsar, and their fifteen year old daughter, Zarema, died. Rukiya lives in Ingushetia.³ She writes in her diary at night, so that she does not lose her sense of reasoning. She starts a notebook, leaves it, and starts another one. She has accumulated a few dozen of such notebooks. She herself does not know which of them she has written first and which last... At the request of Rukiya, the names of the members of her family in the text are fictitious besides the name of her daughter, Zarema.

Again I can't sleep. To be more precise, I can't sleep like always. I read over my entries. I start feeling a little better, as if I talked to somebody. What a shame that I write so poorly! But these entries are most necessary for me. These entries are my inner life and some form of self-defense. What can be done? Who will help me? And do I even need help? No one is able to help my soul; only within myself can I find strength. But I often think that, indeed, nobody remembers me. I often read about how the war has destroyed people's lives. And, when I find some sort of protest against the recent violence, I become glad that there are actually some compassionate and decent people out there.

But nowhere and no one has made mention of those close to me. No one pointed out that they were killed under a falling, blown up house — that the house was blown up by the Federal troops,⁴ that they laid TNT⁵ in the basement during the time of a *zachistka*.

Whether it was a timed mechanism, or whether they stepped on a trip wire, either way, the explosion was of terrible power. Our large house was destroyed, and all the structures in the yard as well as the houses in its close vicinity were completely leveled. Although they claimed on a television program that the house had exploded from an accumulation of gas. Where could have the gas accumulated?!

Come a week from the onset of the *zachistka*, no doors and no windows were left in our houses and basements. Everything was thoroughly destroyed and looted. I would walk around the house together with Zarema trying to tidy up. There was not a single trace of gas in the air.

But what purpose did this all serve... Who needs this? The one who did this knew precisely what he was doing. Did this explosion make them any happier, though? Have they picked the ground clean sufficiently,⁶ by killing my daughter as well as Movsar, Iznowur, and Grandpa? For what purpose was it necessary to commit this crime, to wipe out an entire family in such a way?

These people are probably back at home already, surrounded by their families. They are laughing, joking, talking, enjoying their children, and, probably,

getting upset when something doesn't go well, and probably even crying. People... but are they human?

Sometimes you hear conversations about fallen [federal] soldiers. They find so many words to write about them: "died heroically," "fulfilled his duty," etc.

What kind of heroes are they? And what sort of duty? Ask around in any of our villages or cities: how many innocent people have they killed?

Those soldiers for whom it did not go so well and who were killed became "heroes." And those for whom it did turn out well, returned home as "heroes." They became "Chechentsy"⁷ — cool guys.

Yes, they rejoice now because they are alive and because they have their families. But they have erased my family! My daughter was fifteen-years-old. She did not die from a bombardment or from crossfire, but from a falling house that you blew up. You have left me without a family. And have you become "heroes" for this? What exactly is inside your chest in place of a heart? You probably saw my daughter during the *zachistkas* that constantly took place in our house; she was very pretty. You could not have forgotten her. You probably saw my father-in-law who was only able to walk on crutches. You kept him outside the house for a few hours, not allowing him to enter, which means that you were purposefully doing something to the house. Was it not possible to feel pity for them? For whom did you take revenge? What was your purpose?

Where did you see this law written for a war: kill a child in revenge, kill an elderly man in revenge, and kill two wonderful brothers in revenge? Who are you fighting against?

Me — I am the only one left who survived the collapse of that house. I am the evidence of this crime, with my sleepless nights, my trips to their graves — there are five of them. Now, my one and only joy is to visit them, sit there with them, and keep the graves clean. This is what you have left for me in this life!

Spring has many different smells. To me, it now brings the smell of cemetery grass. I go there as if I go home. A lot of people go in the spring to tend to the graves. When I bought paint for the tombstones, the saleswoman asked me: "Do you sell tombstones? You buy so much paint." "Well, the war..." She immediately understood, knowing that I didn't sell tombstones. The war... Specific offenders do exist. Almighty Allah, punish them!

Nighttime raids. Those were such scary moments!⁸ Armored infantry vehicles, breaking our gates, rushing into the yard. About ten to fifteen soldiers at once, armed to their teeth, would suddenly burst into the house when everyone was asleep, into every house, into every room. Wearing masks, carrying their weapons, shouting and cursing, they destroyed everything around them.

Many refugees lived at our house at the start of the war, but everyone quietly started to move out because of these raids. One of those boys said to his mother back then: "I don't want to fall asleep. I will see a machine-gunner in front of me the moment I close my eyes." He was scared that if he did fall asleep, the

gunner would wake him up anyway.

Having found no one, the raiders would then steal anything to their liking. When there was no longer anything they wished to take, they would grab spoons, forks, buckets, or kettles.

Life became hell. You could not know on which night they would come. I already couldn't sleep during the night; I would be sitting and listening, trying to figure out whether the raiders were close by or not.

My mother-in-law cursed at them, calling them marauders. Some threatened her, others tried to explain themselves: "We are just fulfilling our orders."

After they'd leave, the house and the entire yard would look like a torn-up hive. My hands would get heavy, and I would long to fall asleep forever after such stress, but, I needed to bring the house back to normal after they had left and wait for the next raid.

We carried on with our wartime lives during the breaks in between the raids... I had to bake some bread, and to carry the water, and to prepare food. And to wait and wait... until this all ended, if it ever would. After yet another raid, we would all come together. With joking and teasing, we would tell one another about how we escaped the federals.⁹ Movsar, laughing, would ask his friend: "Did your wife ever throw you out of the house? Mine often kicks me out." Through jokes and warm conversation we tried to smooth out the impact of those experiences. But Movsar, even in such conversations, still understood better than I did, what the militants were capable of.

We were already preparing to let go of our place and to move to the city but the militants were a step ahead of us. When the next "*zachistka*" began, they had initially carried away whatever remained of their loot, and then planted mines in our house. During that very "*zachistka*" when we were not home; a New Year's surprise awaited us. Zarema was horrified, seeing the house torn up: not a single livable space remained. Quietly sitting down in a corner, she said: "Let those who did this feel like I do right now for their entire lives."

We settled in somehow and started to clean up the house. Movsar came in, his hands in his pockets, and walked around the house in silence. Dispirited, crushed, and taciturn, he came to the window. "How come you came so late? I was worried." — "I don't want to come back to this house anymore. It has become unfamiliar."

These were his last words in this life. At that moment, the explosion, like an avalanche, threw us apart into different directions...

<...>

1 The author's name and surname were changed.

2 Zachistka can be translated as a "sweep operation" in the current, historical context. The term can also be used as an ordinary term: to clean out; wipe clean. In another sense, the word could connote a "cleansing" in a graphic sense of cleansing people. This term started being used by Russian Federal soldiers during the First Chechen War when they would talk about military operations, and, soon afterwards, it became colloquial in regular public talk about these Russian Federal operations in Chechnya, and the War in general. During a sweep operation, Federal soldiers would check households in Chechnya for terrorists or terrorist sympathizers. The sweep operation could also involve checkpoints set up around a city or village for the same purpose. Zachistiki could be brutal and extremely violent in their execution.

3 Ingushetia is a neighboring republic of Chechnya.

4 She refers to troops of the Russian Federation.

5 In Russian, it is called by a shortened version of the chemical compound in TNT, trotyl (Trinitrotoluene), which can also be referred to in the same way in English, but, the term TNT is fitting because it is more colloquial.

6 Ochistit', which means "to clean," is most likely used here as a derivative of the same meaning from the word zachistka, just in verb form. Ochistit' also signifies a similar intensity of the word zachistka, in that it signifies a complete and thorough cleaning.

7 During the Russian intervention in Afghanistan in the 80's, soldiers who would come back would sometimes be called "Afghantsy." This term was used in a colloquial informal fashion. In the same sense, Russian Federal soldiers could then sometimes be called "Chechentsy."

8 This diary refers to the past before the house collapsed on Rukiya's family. This flashback narrative is characteristic of her patchy writing.

9 Russian Federal Soldiers.

Кошки / *Cats*

by Daniel Kharmis / Даниил Хармс

Translated by Benjamin Lorber

Однажды по дорожке
Я шел к себе домой;
Смотрю и вижу: кошки
Сидят ко мне спиной.

Once on the road
I was walking to my home;
I looked and what do I see?: cats,
Sitting with their backs turned
toward me.

Я крикнул: <<Эй, вы, кошки,
Пойдемте-ка со мной,
Пойдемте по дорожке,
Пойдемте-ка домой.

I cried: "Hey, you cats!
Why don't you come with me?
Let's go down the road,
Let's go home.

Скорей пойдемте, кошки,
А я вам на обед
Из лука и картошки
Устрою винегрет>>.

Let us go quickly, cats
And I, for you, for lunch
From onions and potatoes in sacks,
Will arrange a vinaigrette."

- Ах, нет! – сказали кошки.
Останемся мы тут! –
Уселись на дорожке
И дальше не идут.

"Ah, no!" said the cats.
We will rest here."
So, they sat on the road
And forward they did not go near.

Российский Вертер

by Mikhail Vasilyevich Sushkov

Introduction:

Mikhail Vasilyevich Sushkov (1775-1792) is a peripheral figure in Russian literature, his poetry occasionally read in Russian schools but virtually unknown otherwise. Until now, there have been no English translations of his work, but I've chosen to translate his Russian Werther, which was posthumously published in 1801. Much like his protagonist, Sushkov died at his own hand at a young age. Through translation we may begin to resurrect him.

От издателя

При издании сих писем мое намерение состоит в том, чтоб представить глазам общества странного молодого человека, описывающего с непонятным для меня хладнокровием собственный свой характер, почти все обстоятельства своей жизни и наконец смерти! Всякий, читая строки сии, сочтет их вымыслом самого автора, но увы!.. уже более осьми лет он обратился в прах; окончив добровольно жизнь свою на 17 году от рождения, и точно таким же образом, как он описал конец мнимого Вертера.-- Многие знают его несчастную историю, но я не желаю напоминать имя его, боясь раскрыть тем раны его семейства.

От сочинителя

Я читал Российскую Памелу, и мне представилась мысль Российского Вертера; а как с романов пошлин не платят, то я исполнил по ней без замедления. Вот сей Вертер который, без сомнения, ниже подлинника*; но ежели время трех дней, употребленное на их сочинение, может извинить недостатки оною, то читатель найдет его в том состоянии, в каком он вышел из моего пера, без малейших переправок -- и кто может положиться на вторые мысли в том, что в первом жару воображения написано худо?

Здесь представляется молодой человек пылкого сложения, чувствительного сердца и, может быть, весьма рано начавший питать свой разум философией, словом, такой, каков был ближе к моему нраву. Я следовал за ним постепенно в различные обстоятельства его жизни и заставлял его говорить то, что сказал бы всякий человек его свойств в подобном положении. Те, которые довольно счастливы, чтобы жить, не чувствуя бремени жизни, те, конечно, не развратятся его примером; а кто думает сходно с Вертером, того не переуберят все писания сорбонских учителей*. Итак, господа нравоучители, не хмурьтесь, а не читайте сей книги, и дело обойдется без спора. Многие охотники пространных повествований спросят, что за Вертер, который как будто свалился с неба, которого и самое имя неизвестно и который при том думает поселить участие?

Государи мои! Какая вам нужда знать его благородство и родословие, когда меж вас немногие только похвалятся дедовскими заслугами, а своими никто? Что же касается до имени, то в нем немного нужды там, где описывается человеческий нрав; но если вы непременно хотите на свой вкус книги, возьмите старинные французские повести, где найдете около пятидесяти действующих лиц с исправным описанием дней их рождения и именин; возьмите еще те из российских сочинений, в которых нравы познаются только из имен: как здравосудовы, вертопраховы и пр. А я буду доволен, коль малое число читателей не почтут_ потерянную четверть часа, употребленную на прочтение сих писем; и еще более, коль два счастливые сердца среди взаимного веселия вздохнут над участью Вертера и Марии.

Приписание

Госпоже...

Мне сердце, мысли все безделки сей внуша,
Сказало, что тебе одной я должен ею:
Итак, пускай твоя чувствительна душа
Мне будет судиею.
Я благосклонности надеяться не смею,
Но коль сильнейша страсть то может заслужить,
Скажу, что Вертера все чувства я имею,
Когда б хотела ты его Марией быть;
Но красотой ее умевши превзойти,
Ужели нежностью ты не сравнишься с нею?

Письмо I, от 6 июля

Любезный друг!

Наконец, мы притащились в деревню, и на другой день приказчик с старостою и со всеми крестьянами пришли нас поздравить. За ними следовала толпа молодых баб в праздничном платье, в золотых сороках и в щегольских сапогах. Позади их подвигались старухи, а отборные девки замыкали шествие. Ты не можешь вообразить их смешной важности, их грубого вида, который ваши нравоучители называют невинностию; словом сказать... я чувствую, что никогда не привыкну к деревенской жизни, где все должен снискивать в одном себе. Не подумай, чтобы я имел жестокие чувства; нет, моя чувствительность обнаруживается часто; но чтобы находить удовольствие, смотря на трудящегося пахаря, на пчелку, сосущую цветочек, это свойственно бредить одним стихотворцам, когда они в сильнейшем градусе своего исступления. Я сам также умел расхвалить то, что меня

нимало не прельщало, и для того-то сомневаюсь в истине их восторгов.

Когда случалось в конце поставить речки,
Для рифмы, пить туда стекались овечки,
И если заходил я в темные леса,
То скоро излетал на ясны небеса.

Прости, желаю, чтобы ты проводил время не скучнее меня.

Письмо II, июля 13

Приятный твой ответ, с приложением рассуждения на случай смерти... я получил. Ты удивляешься, что я описываю не с лучшей стороны мою жизнь и потом желаю тебе проводить время не скучнее меня. Но разве ты не знаешь, что я нигде не бываю отменно весел и ничем много не скучаю. Нет, друг мой, отчаяние несродно человеку семнадцати лет и который притом составил себе особливую систему мыслей. Когда я пишу, что никогда не привыкну к деревенской жизни, это не значит, что я не привыкну к уединению,-- я уже люблю вкушать удовольствия оно, и для меня приятнее быть одному, нежели с глупым товарищем, вчера приезжали к нам все соседи, но я познакомлю тебя с ними после, а теперь скажу свое мнение о присланном тобою сочинении. Я не нашел в нем ничего, кроме выписок из псалмов, которые помещены довольно некстати; да я б и не дивился, если б сие понравилось некоторым ханжам, некоторым старушкам, коим нужен пустой звук слов, хотя б он был без смысла; но ты пишешь, что целая столица читает бред сей и восхищается. Разве люди переродились по моем отъезде? Между прочим, велемудрый сочинитель признается, что бог, предвидя вред, могущий произойти от него обществу, наказал, или паче, наградил его несколькими ударами.-- Какой вздор! Какое противоречие! Конечно, последний удар поразил его в мозг.

Однако ж продолжай описывать мне ваши новости, а я уведомяю тебя, каков родился горох.

Письмо III, июля 17

Лучшая моя забава беседовать с дворянами нашего околотка. Сего дня мы были у них. Какие разные лица! Нет, никакой актер не может больше увеселить. Хозяин, который нас угощал, отставной капитан, и хотя служил только в обозе, но теперь завоевал весь уезд. Все прочие считают его высоким господином и не иначе говорят с ним, как с почтительным протяжением шеи и растопыря пять пальцев между толикого же числа камзольных петель. Супруга его могла бы быть приятной в обществе ежели б не родилась, не выросла и не жила с мужиками. Она слыхала, что наши госпожи боятся грому, гор, кошек, мышей и пр., пр., чего исчислить недостало бы ни память,

ни места,-- слыхала и вознамерилась того же бояться; но притворство так в ней заметно, так неприлично к ее поступкам, что она настоящая обезьяна, которая дразнит человека. Сего не довольно. Чтобы поддержать свою знатность, то со всеми она, обходится надменно, заставляет гостей дожидаться ее по несколько часов, говорит с ужимками и не иначе приглашает их, как сказав на общее лицо*, что завтра будет дома. Когда мы к ним приехали, то муж и жена выскочили в сени, и сколько перед прочими горды, столько пред нами были низки. В будущем письме узнаешь последствие, а теперь скажу только, что я в существе вижу комедию Недоросля. Муж дурак, жена злая, сын крестьянский повеса, в другой семье настоящий Скотинин, и хотя нет здесь Софьи, однако, также по человеколюбию воспитывают простенькую сиротку, которой небольшой доход попечителя еще уменьшают.

Прости, уже скоро полночь, и сон велит мне покинуть перо.

The Russian Werther

Translated by Benjamin Malinski

From the publisher

With the publication of these letters my intention is to present to the eyes of society a strange young man describing with cold-blooded unintelligibility his own personal character, nearly all of the facts are of his life, and even his very death! Anyone reading these lines will consider them the fantasy of the author, but alas!...It has already been more than eight years since he turned to dust, having voluntarily ended his own life seventeen years from birth, and in exactly such a manner how he described the imaginary Werther's end. Many know his unfortunate story, but I do not wish to remind you of his name, fearing to uncover his family's wounds.

From the author

I read *Russian Pamela* and the idea of *The Russian Werther* presented itself to me; and because we don't pay tax on novels, I then carried it out without delay. Here is this Werther who, without question, is beneath the original; but if three days' time spent on my writing of Werther can pardon the drawbacks thereof, then the reader will find him in that same condition, in which he originated from beneath my pen, without the least correction—after all, who would rely on a second thought, that what was written in the first flame of imagination was, in fact, written badly?

Here appears a young man of ardent spirit, of a sensitive heart, as well as the one who began very early to nourish his mind with philosophy. In short, a man who is to my liking. I followed him gradually through the various circumstances of his life and compelled him to say what any man of his character would have said in a similar position. They who are happy enough to live not feeling the burden of life—they, of course, won't be corrupted by his example. And who thinks similarly with Werther will not be convinced otherwise by the writings of all Sorbonne teachers taken together. So, gentlemen moralizers, do not frown, and do not read this book, and the matter will be resolved without an argument... Many enthusiasts of moralistic narration will ask, who is this Werther, appearing as if out of thin air, he of the least known name, and who, in spite of that, dares to inspire sympathy?

My sires! Why do you need to know his nobility and pedigree, when among you only a few would brag of their grandfathers' achievements, and nobody can of their own? As for the name, there is a little need in it when human character is described; but if you absolutely want to have books to your taste, then take old French novellas, where you will find around fifty personages, whose birthdays and name days would be laboriously described; or else, take those Russian works, in which character can be learned from the name alone: like *Zdravosudovs*¹, *Vertoprakhovs*², etc. While I will be content if a small number of readers did not regret the quarter of an hour they spent on reading these letters; and still more, if a couple of happy hearts in the midst of common merriment would sigh over the fate of Werther and Maria.

A Dedication

To the lady...

My heart, having inspired all the thoughts within this trifle,
Has told me that I am indebted for it to you alone.
Therefore, let your sensitive soul
Be my only judge.
I do not dare to expect favors
But if the strongest suffering can earn it,
I will say that I have all of Werther's feelings,
Had you wished to become his Maria;
But, having been able to surpass her beauty,
Won't you be able to be just as tender-hearted as she?

Letter 1 from July 6

Amiable friend!

Finally, we have dragged ourselves to the village, and the next day, the steward, the church elder and all the peasants came to welcome us. A crowd of young women in festive dress, golden headgear and fancy boots followed. Old women moved behind them and choicest wenches went last in procession. You cannot imagine their ridiculous pomp, their coarse appearance, which your moralizers refer to as innocence; in a word...I feel that I will never get used to village life, where I must look for everything within myself. Do not think that I possess cruel sentiments; no, my sensitivity reveals itself often; but only poets are capable of finding pleasure while watching a working laborer or a bee sucking at a flower. It is this kind of delirium that is characteristic of the strongest degree of their revelry. Likewise, I myself once knew how to praise what did not really captivate, and that's why I do not doubt in the reality of their rapture.

When I had a chance to place the word rivers at the end [of a sentence],
For a rhyme, the sheep would gather to drink thither,
And if I went to dark woods,
Then soon to clear heavens out I flew.

Farewell, I hope that you're passing time in a less boring fashion than I am.

Letter 2, July 13

Your pleasant answer, with an addendum of a reflection on death...I received it. You're surprised that I'm not describing my life from a better perspective, and even I wish for you to pass time in a manner that is no more boring than mine. But then don't you know that I am never perfectly happy, and I don't miss anything much. No, my friend, despair is not typical of a man who is seventeen years old, and moreover the one who has invented a special system of ideas. When I write that I will never get accustomed to

countryside life, it doesn't mean that I won't get accustomed to solitude—I already love to partake of its pleasures, and for me it is more pleasant to be alone than with a stupid friend. Yesterday all the neighbors came to visit us, but I will introduce you to them afterwards, and now I will state my opinion concerning the essay you sent me. I found nothing in it, except extracts from the Psalms, which are cited rather helter-skelter; I would've not been surprised since this would please some hypocrites and certain old ladies, who always need the hollow sound of words, although without a meaning; but you write that the whole capital reads this gibberish and applauds. Perhaps people have degenerated after my departure? By the way, this wise writer admits that God, having foreseen the harm that he would inflict upon society has already punished, or even rewarded him with several blows,—what rubbish! What a contradiction! Of course, the final blow has struck his brain. Still, continue to describe to me your news, and I will notify you how well the peas have sprouted.

Letter 3, July 17

My best past time is to converse with noblemen of our neighborhood. Today we visited them. Such different faces! No, no actor can amuse me more. The squire who was entertaining us was a retired captain, and though he served only in the pack train, by now he has won the entire district. Everyone is considering him a gentleman of nobility and speak with him in no other manner than by stretching their necks to a considerable length, spreading all of their five fingers over the same number of frock-coat buttonholes. His wife could have been pleasant in society had she not been born, grown up, and lived with among peasants. She has heard that our ladies are afraid of thunder, mountains, cats, mice, and other such things, numerous to the point of being incalculable—there wouldn't be enough memory or place to list it all,—she heard about them and decided to be afraid as well; but thus the pretense is so prominent in her, it is such an indecent part of her behavior that she appears to be a real monkey who imitates a real person. And that is not all. In order to maintain her own grandeur, she then treats everyone arrogantly, forces guests to wait for her for a few hours, speaks with grimaces and engages them in no other way than by saying—without addressing anyone directly—that tomorrow she will be at home. But when we arrived, the husband and wife leaped out into their entryway, and as much as they had been arrogant toward others, as much they bowed low in front of us. From my next letter you will find out the consequences of all that, but now I will only tell you that I see a lot of the *Nedoros*¹ comedy in this creature. The husband is a fool, the wife is wicked, the son is a peasant playboy—and in a different family there is a real Skotinín, and although there is no Sofia, still, there for humanity's sake they do rear a little simpleton orphan here too, whose tiny revenue the benefactors keep making even smaller.

Forgive me, it will already soon be midnight, so sleep orders me to abandon my pen.

1 Men who think clearly, exercise good judgment.

2 Featherbrains.

3 *Nedoros*¹ or *The Minor* (1783) by Denis Ivanovich Fonfizin, a popular comedy of the time.

SPANISH

Los pequeños cantos / Little Songs

By Alejandra Pizarnik

Translated by Lydia Herrick

I

nadie me conoce yo hablo la noche
nadie me conoce yo hablo mi cuerpo
nadie me conoce yo hablo la lluvia
nadie me conoce yo hablo los muertos

II

sólo las palabras
las de la infancia
las de la muerte
las de la noche de los cuerpos

III

el centro
de un poema
es otro poema
el centro de centro
es la ausencia

en el centro de la ausencia
mi sombra es el centro
del centro del poema

IV

una muñeca de huesos de pájaro
conduce los perros perfumados
de mis propias palabras que me vuelven

V

la agonía
de las visionarias
del otoño

VI

grietas en los muros
negros sortilegios
frases desolladas
poemas aciagos

VII

Cubres con un canto la hendidura.
Creces en la oscuridad como una ahogada.

I

nobody knows me I speak the night
nobody knows me I speak my body
nobody knows me I speak the rain
nobody knows me I speak the dead

II

only words
those of childhood
those of death
those of the night of the bodies

III

the center
of a poem
is another poem
the center of center
is absence

in the center of absence
my shadow is the center
of the center of the poem

IV

a doll with a bird's bones
leads the perfumed dogs
of my own words that return to me

V

the dying moments
of the visionaries
of fall

VI

cracks in walls
black spells
phrases torn to shreds
fateful poems

VII

You cover the crevice with a song.
You grow in darkness like a drowned woman.

A Jean

For Jean

Oh cubre con más cantos la fisura, la
hendidura, la desgarradura.

VIII

en el mediodía de los muertos
princesa-paraje-sin-sol
come cardo
come abrojo

IX

mi canto de dormida al alba
¿era esto, pues?

X

el que me ama aleja a mis dobles,
abre
la noche, mi cuerpo,
ver tus sueños,
mi sol o amor

XI

oh los ojos tuyos
fulgurantes ojos

XII

cuervos en mi mente
sobre su querido cuerpo

es el gran frío de la noche
lo negro

pasión de nuestros señores
los deseos

XIII

una idea fija
una leyenda infantil
una desgarradura

el sol
como un gran animal oscuro

no hay más que yo
no hay que decir

XIV

qué es este espacio que somos
una idea fija
una leyenda infantil

Oh, cover the fissure with more songs, cover
the crevice, the break.

VIII

in the midday of the dead
princess-desert-without-sun
eat brambles
eat thistles

IX

my song of the sleeping woman at dawn
was this it, then?

X

he who loves me distances my doubles,
opens
the night, my body,
to see your dreams,
my sun or love

XI

oh your eyes
radiant eyes

XII

ravens in my mind
on his beloved body

it's night's great chill
blackness

passion of our lords
desires

XIII

an *idée fixe*
a children's story
a breaking

the sun
like a great dark animal

there's nothing more than I
no need to speak

XIV

what is this space that we are
an *idée fixe*
a children's story

A Alain de Vermont

For Alain from Vermont

hasta nueva orden
no cantaremos el amor
hasta nuevo orden

XV

niña que en vientos grises
vientos verdes aguardó

XVI

hablará por espejos
hablará por oscuridad
por sombras
por nadie

XVII

A Diana

instruidnos acerca de la vida
suavemente
imploraban los pequeños seres
y tendían sus brazos
por amor de la otra orilla

XVIII

palabras reflejas que solas se dicen
en poemas que no fluyen yo naufrago
todo en mí se dice con su sombra
y cada sombra con su doble

XIX

triste músico
entona un aire nuevo
para hacer algo nuevo
para ver algo nuevo

until further notice
we won't sing love
until rearrangement

XV

little girl who in gray winds
awaits greenish winds

XVI

she will speak for mirrors
she will speak for darkness
for shadows
for no one

XVII

For Diana

teach us about life
gently
implored the little beings
and they opened up their arms
for love of the other shore

XVIII

reflected words that speak themselves alone
in poems that don't flow I flounder
everything in me is said with its shadow
and every shadow with its double

XIX

saddened musician
intone a new air
to do something new
to see something new

Madrugadas / Dawn

By Olive Esther Kuhn

Translated by Olive Esther Kuhn

Sinopsis:

El amor puede destruir el objeto del amor; el amor de una palabra puede destruir dicha palabra.

Abril, 2005

Cada madrugada, me levanto-
mejor dicho que un fantasma
me levanta- mejor dicho que soy
un fantasma que se levanta

cada oscura madrugada.
Me levanto a causa de que tengo
un unicornio a quien no le gusta
la gente. Mejor dicho que es un

dibujo de un unicornio incompleto.
Todavía tiene dos piernas
de plata, y dos piernas delineadas
con lápiz. Me toma mucho tiempo

porque mi unicornio sólo existe
solo, y porque soy un fantasma
de la madrugada con las manos
de una niña.

Noviembre, 2012

En la insolencia de la madrugada
no veo nada que no es azul.
Mi mundo total está atrapado

por los pétalos de una violeta.
No permite que pase otro color:
ni verde, ni naranja, ni la plata
tímida de la luna.

Synopsis:

Love can destroy the object of love; love for a word can destroy said word.

April, 2005

Every early morning, I awake-
better said that a ghost wakes me up-
better said that I am a ghost
who wakes up

every dark early morning.
I awake because I have
a unicorn who does not like
people. Better said that it is

a picture of an incomplete
unicorn who still has two legs
of silver, and two legs outlined
in pencil. It takes a lot of time

because my unicorn only
exists alone, and because I am
a ghost of the early morning with the
hands
of a small girl.

November, 2012

In the insolence of the early morning,
I see nothing that is not blue
The entirety of my world is trapped

between petals of a violet
permitting no other color
to pass: neither green nor orange
nor the timid silver of the moon.

Aun así, el autobús amarillo
troza mi madrugada como el diente
del ciervo que mata a la violeta
y el mundo azul se vuelve gris.

Salgo de mi casa sin
asombro, pues la madrugada ha
perdido
su insolencia, su silencio
azul.

Dos inviernos

Hay casos- aunque sean escasos-
en que ocurre una madrugada afuera
de la madrugada.

Esta noche es una madrugada.
Todo el día era nieve, nieve,
nieve como mirar un film anciano.
Lo llamaron una emergencia;

estoy de acuerdo. En la nieve
los años desaparecen como aves
heladas. Soy dos aves. Vuelo hacía
el futuro; vuelo hacía el pasado.

En el futuro, estoy cocinando
frijoles para mi mejor amigo(a)
y esta noche la madrugada de nieve
nos encierra como un abrazo.

En el pasado, estoy cortando
mi piel con una cuchilla rosa
en la esquina de la alcoba blanca
en la esquina de diciembre.

El agosto pasado

Camino por la calle mojada
que estrecha hasta el río
cuyo pecho corta la madrugada
120

Even so, the yellow school bus
bites my early morning like a
deer's tooth kills the violet
and the blue world returns to gray.

I leave my house without
wonder, as the early morning has lost
its insolence, its blue silence.

Two winters

There are cases- the rarest
of cases- in which an early
morning occurs outside of
itself.

Tonight is an early morning.
All of the day was snow, snow
like watching an ancient film.
They called it an emergency;

I agree. In the snow, the years
disappear like frozen birds.
I am two birds. I fly towards
the future; I fly towards the past.

In the future, I am cooking
beans for my best friend and tonight
the early morning encloses us
as an embrace.

In the past, I am cutting my skin with a
pink knife in the corner
of a white room in the corner
of December.

Last August

I walk the soaked street
that stretches towards the river
whose chest cuts the early morning

con un cuchillo amarillo.

No veo ningún unicornio; ningún
autobús amarillo; ningún ave
helada. He perdido mis monstruos-
mejor dicho, me han abandonado

mis monstruos de la madrugada.
Ya no tengo nada sino las piernas
de silencio, un vaso tibio de café,
y un camino largo hacía el día

que me espera con brazos sin interés.

with a yellow knife.

I see no unicorn, no yellow
school bus, no frozen bird.
I have lost my monsters;
better said, I am abandoned

by my early morning monsters.
Now all I have are legs
of silence, a tepid glass
of coffee, and a long walk
up to the day

that awaits me with uninterested arms.

El libro de los abrazos /
The Book of Embraces, selected stories

By Eduardo Galeano
Translated by Olivia Goldberg

Celebración de la voz humana/2

Tenían las manos atadas, o esposadas, y sin embargo los dedos danzaban, volaban, dibujaban palabras. Los presos estaban ecapuchados; pero inclinándose alcanzaban a ver algo, aliguito, por abajo. Aunque hablar estaba prohibido, ellos conversaban con las manos.

Pinion Ungerfeld me enseñó el alfabeto de los dedos, que en prisión aprendió sin profesor:

— Algunos teníamos mala letra — me dijo. — Otros eran unos artistas de la caligrafía.

La dictadura uruguaya quería que cada uno fuera nada más que uno, que cada uno fuera nadie: en cárceles y cuarteles, y en todo el país, la comunicación era delito.

Algunos presos pasaron más de diez años enterrados en solitarios calabozos del tamaño de un ataúd, sin escuchar más voces que el estrépito de las rejas o los pasos de las botas por los corredores. Fernández Huidobro y Mauricio Rosencof, condenados a esa soledad, se salvaron porque pudieron hablarse, con golpecitos, a través de la pared. Así se contaban sueños y recuerdos, amores y desamores; discutían, se abrazaban, se peleaban; compartían certezas y bellezas y también compartían dudas y culpas y preguntas de esas que no tienen respuesta.

Cuando es verdadera, cuando nace de la necesidad de decir, la voz humana no hay quien la pare. Si le niegan la boca, ella habla por las manos, o por los ojos, or por los poros, o por donde sea. Porque todos, toditos, tenemos algo que decir a los demás, alguna cosa que merece ser por los demás celebrada o perdonada.

Celebration of the human voice/2

Their hands were tied, or handcuffed, and still their fingers danced, flew, drew words.

The prisoners were hooded, but tilting their heads they were able to see something, a little something, down below. Even though speaking was forbidden, they conversed with their hands.

Pinio Ungerfeld taught me the finger alphabet, which in prison he learned without a teacher:

“Some of us had bad handwriting,” he told me. “Others were calligraphy artists.”

The Uruguayan dictatorship wanted each one to just one, wanted each one to be no one: in prisons and cells, and in the whole country, communication was a crime.

Some prisoners spent more than ten years buried in solitary dungeons the size of a coffin, hearing no voices other than the clang of bars or the sound of boots down the hallways. Fernández Huidobro and Mauricio Rosencof, condemned to this solitude, saved themselves because they were able to speak to each other, with little knocks, through the wall. In this way they told each other dreams and memories, loves and losses; they discussed, they hugged, they fought; they shared certainties and beauties and they also shared doubts and guilts and questions which had no answer.

When it is true, when it is born of the necessity to tell, the human voice can be stopped by no one. If they deny it a mouth, it speaks with its hands, or with its eyes, or through its pores, or with whatever. Because all of us, every last one, have something to tell each other, something that deserves to be celebrated or forgiven by everyone else.

No nos da risa el amor cuando llega a lo más hondo de su viaje, a lo más alto de su vuelo: en lo más hondo, en lo más alto, nos arranca gemidos y quejidos, voces de dolor, aunque sea jubiloso dolor, lo que pensándolo bien nada tiene de raro, porque nacer es una alegría que duele. Pequeña muerte, llaman en Francia a la culminación del abrazo, que rompiéndonos nos junta y perdiéndonos nos encuentra y acabándonos nos empieza. Pequeña muerte, la llaman; pero grande, muy grande ha de ser, si matándonos nos nace.

The Little Death

Love doesn't make us laugh when it reaches the deepest depth of its journey, the highest height of its flight: in the depth, at the height, it tears moans and groans from our throat, voices of pain, albeit jubilant pain, which when you think about it isn't strange at all, because birth is a joy that hurts. In France they call the culmination of an embrace the little death, which in breaking us binds us, and in losing us finds us, and in ending us lets us begin. Little death, they call it; but it must be big, very big, if in killing us it births us.

Noche/2

Arránqueme, señora, las ropas y las dudas. Desnúdeme, desnúdeme.

Night/2

Strip me, lady, of my clothing and my doubts. Undress me, undoubt me.

Tienen el mismo nombre, el mismo apellido. Ocupan la misma casa y calzan los mismos zapatos. Duermen en la misma almohada, junto a la misma mujer. Cada mañana, el espejo les devuelve la misma cara. Pero él y él no son la misma persona:

--Y yo, ¿qué tengo que ver? --dice él, hablando de él, mientras se encoge de hombros.

--Yo cumplo órdenes --dice, o dice:

--Para eso me pagan.

O dice:

--Si no lo hago yo, lo hace otro.

Que es como decir:

--Yo soy otro.

Ante el odio de la víctima, el verdugo siente estupor, y hasta una cierta sensación de injusticia: al fin y al cabo, él es un funcionario, un simple funcionario que cumple su horario y su tarea. Terminada la agotadora jornada de trabajo, el torturador se lava las manos.

Ahmadou Gherab, que peleó por la independencia de Argelia, me lo contó. Ahmadou fue torturado por un oficial francés durante varios meses. Y cada día, a las seis en punto de la tarde, el torturador se secaba el sudor de la frente, desenchufaba la picana eléctrica y guardaba los demás instrumentos de trabajo. Entonces se sentaba junto al torturado y le hablaba de sus problemas familiares y del ascenso que no llega y lo cara que está la vida. El torturador hablaba de su mujer-insufrible y del hijo recién nacido, que no lo había dejado pegar un ojo en toda la noche; hablaba contra Orán, esta ciudad de mierda, y contra el hijo de puta del coronel que...

Ahmadou, ensangrentado, temblando de dolor, ardiendo en fiebres, no decía nada.

They have the same first name, the same last name. They live in the same house and wear the same shoes. They sleep on the same pillow, with the same woman. Every morning, the mirror shows them the same face. But he and he are not the same person:

"And me, what do I have to do with it?" he says, talking about him, while he shrugs his shoulders.

"I follow orders," he says, or he says:

"That's what they pay me for."

Or he says:

"If I don't do it, someone else will."

Which is like saying:

"I'm someone else."

In the face of the victim's hatred, the executioner is stupefied, and feels a certain injustice: after all, he's a civil servant, a simple civil servant who follows his schedule and carries out his tasks. At the end of the exhausting workday, the torturer washes his hands.

Ahmadou Gherab, who fought for Algerian independence, told me. Ahmadou was tortured by a French official for several months. And every day, at 6 p.m. sharp, the torturer would wipe the sweat from his brow, unplug the electric prod, and put away his other work tools. Then he would sit with the tortured man and talk to him about his family problems and the promotion he still hadn't gotten and how expensive life is. The torturer would talk about his insufferable wife and his newborn son, who wouldn't let him get a wink of sleep all night; he spoke against Oran, this shitty place, and against the son of a bitch of the Colonel who...

Ahmadou, covered in blood, shaking with pain, burning with fever, would say nothing.

Los banqueros de la gran banquería del mundo, que practican el terrorismo del dinero, pueden más que los reyes y los mariscales y más que el propio Papa de Roma. Ellos jamás se ensucian las manos. No matan a nadie: se limitan a aplaudir el espectáculo.

Sus funcionarios, los tecnócratas internacionales, mandan en nuestros países: ellos no son presidentes, ni ministros, ni han sido votados en ninguna elección, pero deciden el nivel de los salarios y del gasto público, las inversiones y las desinversiones, los precios, los impuestos, los intereses, los subsidios, la hora de la salida del sol y la frecuencia de las lluvias.

No se ocupan, en cambio, de las cárceles, ni de las cámaras de tormento, ni de los campos de concentración, ni de los centros de exterminio, aunque en esos lugares ocurren las inevitables consecuencias de sus actos.

Los tecnócratas reivindican el privilegio de la irresponsabilidad:

--Somos neutrales --dicen.

The bankers of the great world bank, who practice monetary terrorism, are mightier than kings and marshals and the Pope of Rome himself. They never get their hands dirty. They don't kill anyone; they just clap for the show.

Their civil servants, international technocrats, are in charge in our countries: they aren't presidents, or ministers, they haven't been voted for in any election, but they decide the levels of wages and of public spending, investments and disinvestments, prices, taxes, interest rates, subsidies, what time the sun rises and how often it rains.

They don't deal, however, with prisons, or torture chambers, or concentration camps, or extermination centers, even though that's where the inevitable consequences of their acts occur.

Technocrats claim the privilege of irresponsibility:

"We are neutral," they say.

*Transcript of Interview with Charlotte Mandell
Conducted by Ivan Ditmars
(This interview has been edited for brevity)*

~Charlotte Mandell is an Annandale-based translator of French poetry and prose. She graduated with a B.A. from Bard in 1990. Her most recent work has been on Mathias Énard's *Compass*. She gave a moment to Sui Generis for a discussion which covered her relationships with authors, living and dead, the influence of Buddhism on her writing practice, and the responsibilities of a translator in so monolingual a culture as ours.~

Ivan Ditmars: The first work that you did professionally was *The Work of Fire* by Maurice Blanchot and you've come back to do more Blanchot throughout your career. How have you progressed in your relationship to that author? How does your approach to translating a particular author change, in the course of your career?

Charlotte Mandell: That was kind of a strange case because I had graduated maybe a year before and I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do yet. I knew that I really liked translating and I knew that I didn't want to go to graduate school. I got into a couple but at that time they were very theory oriented and I didn't really like that kind of reading very much. I was mostly interested in reading and translating. So what happened was the translator and poet Pierre Joris, who also went to Bard, was asked by Stanford University Press to translate *The Work of Fire*. He didn't have any time and so he recommended me. I was just totally unknown but I had translated a book of poetry for Bard—that was my senior project—by a contemporary poet named Jean-Paul Auxeméry. So the editor at Stanford asked me to send in a sample chapter from *The Work of Fire* and so I did. She just really liked the nonacademic way that I approached Blanchot because... I don't know if you've read Blanchot?

ID: No, I suppose I'm a strange choice for this interview. I can't read French and I haven't read Blanchot...

CM: He's interesting in that he never comes to a conclusion — he sort of explores a lot of different theories but he never really... it's not like an American essay where there's a statement and then a development and then a conclusion. They're all sort of ... development. And I kind of like that, that sort of open ended way of looking at something. So anyway, I sent the chapter in and I was just trying to translate as straightforwardly as possible. I wasn't trying to add any footnotes or make it more complicated than it had to be because actually, Blanchot, his vocabulary is not that big. He uses sort of simple words but in very complex sentences. So my theory, at that time and still I think, is just to follow the text as much as I can and not to insert myself. And she liked that. It sounded like Blanchot and not like me-doing-Blanchot. Her name was Helen Tartar and she was the head editor at Stanford. I

INTERVIEW

ended up doing three more books of Blanchot for Stanford.

ID: So from the first translation of Blanchot that you did to the last one, over the course of a 12 year period, did your approach change in any way or did that original conception to follow the order of the words as closely as possible stand you in good stead throughout?

CM: It really did. I pretty much stayed the same. I haven't really, I mean I've thought about it, but I haven't changed much as a translator over the years.

ID: I read a couple of your essays about Blanchot and in one of them you said that one thing you'd like to be able to do is to translate a single book in various ways "to catch up with or precipitate ways of reading." What other sort of theories or methods of translation would you imagine for a prospective project like that? What would be the manifesto for other possible universes of translating?

CM: I guess one way would be to be much freer. I tend to be very literal and so another way would be—I mean maybe not for Blanchot because its very hard to be idiomatic with him—but with a novel or something I've sometimes thought that if I could translate something again I would probably take more liberties than I usually do. I just feel so bound by the text. I feel like I have an obligation to the text to say what it says.

ID: I break up translations in my mind into three categories: ones that go by the letter; that go by the spirit; and maybe a third category that goes by the time. With ancient texts some people approach it as, 'We need an Ajax for the Vietnam War.' What are the different values that those kinds of approached have?

CM: I guess those kinds of things don't appeal to me, so much. For instance, with Mary Jo Bang's translation of Dante, I don't like that at all. I think that if you're going to do Dante you should also be faithful to the time. You can't just superimpose modern American idiom onto his language. It's just a totally different thing. I think she should have done her own interpretation but not call it a translation. I don't approve of that.

ID: Anne Carson is an interesting example where sometimes she'll go very far from the text like with *Antigonick*, but at other times she'll translate fairly directly throughout but then introduce, in an isolated simile, instead of 'he headed his chariot into a wall,' as a symbol for hybris, something like 'he sped his black sports car very very fast and flipped.' Those moments of sudden breaking of the idiom can be very exhilarating.

CM: She's a poet so she can take more liberties. I tend to be very literal.

ID: Equally so with poetry and with prose?

CM: I take more liberties with poetry, I mean you have to. It would sound pretty awful if you just translated it word for word, but I wouldn't change the idiom like that. I feel its kind of a sacred practice. Translation is when you are taking it upon yourself to express that author in your language. For me its a kind of obligation to be faithful to the author, I mean to what I think the author wants to say. I take that very seriously. All writing is a form of translation because you are always translating your thoughts into words.

ID: Are you trying to make yourself transparent or to obfuscate yourself?

CM: I think to make yourself transparent, its like being the medium, like you are channeling a voice and you have to be as true to that voice as you can. Its hard because you are sort of traveling a fine line between expressing it believably in your language but then also listening. When I was talking to Ben Hale's class the other day I was just saying that translation is a form of listening. You are listening very carefully and then writing what you hear. So I think really good translators are really good listeners.

ID: It's usually thought that poetry is more difficult to translate than prose. Are there any peculiar difficulties that you find to prose?

CM: I find poetry easier. I feel freer. I don't feel as bound by the sentence structure in poetry. Although I do feel bound by word order more with poetry. I don't know if I can remember this... but there was an interesting study, a psychological study, about something called 'priming.' They had a picture of a jungle with a tiger in it and there were two different groups of people. They would show the word 'ice-cream' to one group and then they would show the picture of the jungle with the tiger. To the other group they would show the word 'tiger' and then they would show the same jungle. The group that saw the word 'tiger' saw this tiger more clearly than the group that saw the word 'ice-cream,' because they were primed for it; they're ready to see it because they've seen the first one already. So I think in poetry especially, it's important to keep that visual order of things.

So much of poetry is very subconscious. I'm doing Surrealist poetry right now by Breton and that's totally bizarre. It makes no sense at all but if I stay true to the word order then it makes more sense because it's so visual. You are seeing things one at a time. Our usual custom is to make things make sense, to put 'subject, verb, object' but a lot of times in Surrealist poems it's like 'object, object, object, subject, verb.' If you keep that in English, its actually much more direct I think, much more visceral. But in prose I can't obviously do 'object, object, verb,' or whatever. I have to make it make sense, so I feel a little bit more constrained.

There was one book that I translated, *Zone* by Mathias Énard, that was a five hundred page sentence. It was one long sentence. That was the most fun I've

ever had translating because it was just stream of consciousness. The narrator is on a train from Milan to Rome. It has the same number of chapters as the Iliad and the same number of pages as the kilometers from Milan to Rome. It's 517 pages and one sentence and as the narrator is sitting on the train he's getting drunker. The narrative gets sort of drunk near the end. That sort of resonated with the way I translate. I don't read ahead so I'm totally inside the narrative as I'm translating.

ID: How far will you allow yourself to wander ahead before you pull yourself back to what you have already translated? A page; two pages?

CM: No, not even, maybe just a few sentences. I have to be sort of inside of it and that way I feel more like I'm writing it; like I'm more a part of the creative process. If I had read it, I would give up. I wouldn't think that it was possible to translate it. The writer can't read his book before he writes it. The translator is a writer. All the English language is mine, all the English words are mine so, if I don't know what's about to happen in the narrative, it can be more immediate when I'm translating it.

ID: Given that initial process, what does editing then look like for you?

CM: Yes, there's a lot of revision. I'll just do an initial draft really quickly. I try to work quickly and not think about it too much as I'm doing it but then I'll go over and I'll do maybe four different versions of a book. I also have to compare it to the French to make sure that I didn't make a lot of terrible mistakes because I work so fast.

ID: What kinds of relationships have you established with an author? Do you have living authors that you work with each time they publish something?

CM: I do, yes. In French there's a phrase, traducteur attitré, which means like a special translator for that person. I'm the translator for Mathias Énard who wrote *Zone* and Jonathan Littell who wrote *The Kindly Ones*. He's interesting because he's half-American, half-French. He's the only author I've ever worked with who was bilingual and so he had a very definite idea about how he wanted his book translated. We would have interesting discussions and arguments. Sometimes I would disagree with him, especially about the ending. Some passages he said he dreamt and he knew like five years before he wrote the book how he wanted it to be in English.

ID: Yikes, that's a lot of pressure.

CM: It was! It's a thousand page novel and the narrator is a Nazi, an unrepentant Nazi. That was I think the most intense experience I've ever had translating but I've actually developed a really good relationship with both Jonathan and Énard. I've just finished the third novel by Énard. It's called *Compass* and that's coming out

next week.

ID: We're on the eve of a new book!

CM: Yes, and I just found out today that *Compass* made the longlist for the Man Booker International Prize! I'm so excited about that. I also just found out that the 1000-page biography of Jean Cocteau that I co-translated with Lauren Elkin is a finalist for the French-American Foundation Translation Prize.

So Énard is really helpful. I'll email him things and he'll answer back. We've come to interesting things that way. In *Zone*, there's a phrase that keeps repeating, 'when I became an adult.' In French it's like, "when I reached the adult age" or something. I just translated that literally in English, but he didn't want the word 'adult' in English so I had to think of an alternative. I remembered in Shakespeare (I think it's in *Twelfth Night*) that fool's song where he says, 'the rain it raineth every day, and when I came to man's estate...' and he goes through the three different ages of man. I took that phrase. And Mathias said "Oh yeah that's perfect" so that was the phrase that we used. "Once I reached man's estate..." I wouldn't have come to that by myself. That was through conversation.

ID: How do you think your relationship with texts by dead poets would have changed if you could have interacted with them?

CM: Blanchot actually was alive when I was translating him but he was a recluse and he was famous for not meeting people, going out, and just being very private and I wanted to respect that. I found that there wasn't actually much with Blanchot that I would have wanted to discuss with him because the texts were so clear to me.

And poetry... I haven't actually translated that many dead poets, I'm trying to think. I guess Breton is the one I'm working on now. I kind of like it that they're dead... because that way it gives me more freedom. It can just do whatever I want. Actually there are some living poets that I've worked with that have been not helpful at all. Where they just didn't know English very well but they thought they did. That made things harder. They tried to change things for the worse and I would have to fight for what I wanted.

ID: You've done prose translations and poetry translations. Do you do a lot of original poetry?

CM: No, people always ask me this. I just feel like translating is what I want to do. I don't feel the need to write my own things. I feel like I'm really lucky that I can speak in all these different voices, like poetry and prose and all of these things, and essays. I just don't feel like I need to write anything on my own. When you translate something really well you are creating something really authentic. Some people think that it is like transcribing and it's not like that. I mean you really have to reimagine it in your language.

ID: In our correspondence, you mentioned that your mornings are devoted to meditation. Of course you are not trying to think about anything while you are meditating, but is the quick movement through a text you are translating anything like being in a meditative state? How are those two practices of yours related?

CM: Meditation is very similar to translating. You have to be totally present to that text at the time and you can't be distracted. So when you are meditating, basically it's just doing nothing but not being distracted. You're not reading, you're not watching TV, or anything. You're just sitting and doing nothing which sounds really simple but it's not. You have to be totally present to the text. It actually helps for me to meditate and to have a clearer head for when I translate.

Also, in meditation, you have to empty out the self and sit in an ego-less state, which is very similar to translating — when I translate I feel completely free of myself, completely open to the text at hand, so in that way it's a very Buddhist practice.

ID: One last thread. With more formal classical French poetry as opposed to modern surrealist poetry, have you found registers of English that can approximate each of those?

CM: I would never translate Racine. I'm not good at meter and they've been done. There've been a lot of really good translations of Racine and the classical French authors and they don't interest me so much. I would be more interested in more contemporary poetry. Especially things that haven't been translated. All the really worthwhile people have been done pretty well.

ID: I'm just curious, since America has less of a culture of multilingualism than other countries, how does the role of an American translator differ from the role of a translator in Germany or France? What's the different valence of a translator around the world?

CM: I guess Americans have a little more responsibility because most Americans can't read these things in the original. The funny thing is when you translate for a French author, they always distinguish between British and American. So I'm described as an American English translator.

ID: Will they get translators in each if they can?

CM: No, but they'll always say 'translated into the American' or 'into the British.' There is a difference I guess. The book I just translated, *Compass*, is being published at the same time in the U.K. by Fitzcarraldo and here by New Directions, and Fitzcarraldo had to change a lot of phrases. They had to make 'highway' into 'motorway' and 'apartment' into 'flat' and things like that. It's too bad that Americans

are so monolingual that they can't compare it to the original and since they can't you feel like you really have to get it right because they have no way of knowing. One of the questions in Ben Hale's class was 'how can you tell a good translation?' It's hard. If you don't know the language, you are judging it sort of intuitively, you have to trust that it is what the author is saying.

