

Sui Generis

OF ITS OWN KIND

Spring 2019

BARD COLLEGE
Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

Translations

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SUI GENERIS is created by collecting student translations. I see it as the weaving together of a beautiful tapestry with colorful yarn. The cover I designed is reminiscent of this image. People can't weave a beautiful tapestry without a lot of yarn. In my design, each thread represents the students who study at Bard College, and the vibrant colors stand for the many languages from which they have translated. When students works gather, an amazing tapestry, such as SUI GENERIS, is created. Conflict is an inherent part of the cultural exchange process; however, I believe that people can create an amazing world by sharing their cultures and using their language skills as a force for good, through a platform like SUI GENERIS.

* indicates the translation is an excerpt from a larger work

Note from the Editors

Carmen Hatchell
Florencia Perillo
Jackie Zeller

SUI GENERIS is an annual publication featuring student works of translation. The submissions to the journal reflect the linguistic diversity of the college. In a time where the political sphere feels more polarized than ever, the work of translation stands as a powerful tool for entering into the perspective of the 'other' through language. Translation can dissolve the feeling of foreignness that often surrounds different languages and bring us closer to an atmosphere of empathy, compassion, and mutual understanding. As George Steiner said: "Without translation, we would be living in provinces bordering on silence."

With the privilege of serving as an editor for the journal also comes the responsibility of expressing deep gratitude for all those who helped realize this year's edition. We extend our thanks to each Language Representative for contributing content to the journal. We thank the Language Tutors, student editors, and faculty members whose language skills were indispensable to our editing process. We give much thanks and appreciation to our faculty advisor, Patricia Lopez-Gay, for her guidance and her care in keeping the publication on track.

This year's journal features translations from thirteen languages of works that range from poems, to short stories, to comics. We hope the submissions help you encounter a greater understanding of the 'other'. Please enjoy this year's edition of SUI GENERIS.



Carmen Hatchell



Florencia Perillo



Jackie Zeller

Ancient Greek

STEPHEN DWYER

Πέρσαι

Αισχύλος

Ἄτοσσα

176

πολλοῖς μὲν αἰεὶ νυκτέροις ὄνείρασιν
ξύνειμ', ἀφ' οὕπερ παῖς ἐμὸς στείλας στρατὸν
ἰαόνων γῆν οἴχεται πέρσαι θέλων:
ἀλλ' οὕτι πῶ τοιόνδ' ἔναργές εἰδόμην
ώς τῆς πάροιθεν εὐφρόνης: λέξω δὲ σοι.
ἐδοξάτην μοι δύο γυναῖκ' εὔείμονε,
ἡ μὲν πέπλοισι Περσικοῖς ἡσκημένη,
ἡ δ' αὗτε Δωρικοῖσιν, εἰς ὅψιν μολεῖν,
μεγέθει τε τῶν νῦν ἐκπρεπεστάτα πολύ,
κάλλει τ' ἀμώμω, καὶ κασιγγήτα γένους
ταύτοι: πάτραν δ' ἔναιον ἡ μὲν Ἑλλάδα
κλήρῳ λαχοῦσα γαῖαν, ἡ δὲ βάρβαρον.
τούτω στάσιν τιν', ώς ἐγώ 'δόκουν ὄρᾶν,
τεύχειν ἐν ἀλλήλαισι: παῖς δ' ἐμὸς μαθὼν
κατεῖχε κάπτράυνεν, ἄρμασιν δ' ὑπο
ζεύγγνυσιν αὐτῷ καὶ λέπταδν' ἐπ' αὐχένων
τίθησι. χὴ μὲν τῇδ' ἐπυργοῦτο στολῇ
ἐν ἡνίασι τ' εἶχεν εὔαρκτον στόμα,
ἡ δέσφαδαζε, καὶ χεροῖν ἔντη δίφρου
διασπαράσσει καὶ ξυναρπάζει βίᾳ
ἄνευ χαλινῶν καὶ ζυγὸν θραύει μέσον.

176

Queen Atossa

Night after night I am steeped in dreams.
It's been this way ever since my son rounded up
his army and marched out with one wish:

RAZE IONIAN LAND.

But never have I dreamed a dream
as vivid as the one I dreamed last night.
I will tell it to you.

Two women in beautiful
clothes appeared before my eyes.
Elegant—that's how they seemed to me.
One was dressed in Persian finery,
the other austere, in Doric tunic,
both of them astonishing in stature—
much taller than any modern woman—
and flawless in beauty.

They were sisters of the same race.
One lived in Hellas, the native land
that Fate allotted her; the other,
beyond Greek borders. Then the sisters
began to provoke each other. They
were building something between them.
When my son learned of the conflict
he restrained them, tamed them, and beneath
his chariot yoked them, placing halters beneath
their necks. One towered proud in her new
attire: she let the bridles clench her mouth
and govern it. But the other began
to thrash about—she shredded the harness
and snatched the reins with violent hands,
free of the bit and all constraints,
and shattered the yoke down the middle.

Persians

by Aeschylus

Translated by Stephen Dwyer

πίπτει δ' ἐμὸς παῖς, καὶ πατὴρ παρίσταται
Δαρεῖος οἰκτείων σφε: τὸν δ' ὅπως ὥρᾳ
Ξέρχης, πέπλους ρήγνυσιν ἀμφὶ σώματι.

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ ν ὑκτὸς εἰσιδεῖν λέγω.
ἐπειδ ἀνέστηνκαὶχεροῦνκ αλλιρρόου
ἔψαυσα πηγῆς, σὺν θυηπόλω χερὶ¹
βωμὸν προσέστην, ἀποτρόποιοι δ αίμοσιν
Θέλουσα θύσαι πέλανον, ὃν τέλη τάδε.
όρῶ δὲ φεύγοντ' αἱέτὸν πρὸς ἔσχάραν
Φοίβου: φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος ἐστάθην, φίλοι:
μεθύστερον δὲ κίρκον εἰσօρῶ δρόμῳ
πτεροῖς ἐφορμαίνοντα καὶ χηλαῖς κάρα
τίλλονθ': ὁ δ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο γ' ἡ πτήξας δέμας
παρεῖχε. ταῦτ' ἔμοιγε δείματ' εἰσιδεῖν,
ὑμῆν δ ἀκούειν. εὖ γάρ ἔστε, παῖς ἐμὸς
πράξας μὲν εὖ θαυμαστὸς ἀνένοιτ' ἀνήρ,
κακῶς δὲ πράξας, οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει,
σωθεὶς δ ὄμοιώς τησδε κοιρανεῖ χθονός.

Now out of the chariot falls my son
while his father stands beside him,
Darius, pitying him. Son sees father:
Xerxes tears his clothes to tatters.

I declare I saw this clearly in the night.
And when I awoke I immersed my hands
in a stream's sweet current. With hands
fit for sacred work I approached the altar,
eager to offer the gods who drive away
evil a slab of honey-cake, the mystery
they require. Just then I saw an eagle
fleeing for the hearth of Phoebus—
Friends, I stood there—speechless in fear!
And then I saw a falcon rush upon
the frightened eagle in a blur of wings
and dig its talons in the feathered head.
But the eagle didn't do anything—
it just cowered and gave up its body!

All these sights brought terror
to my eyes. Now they bring terror to your ears.

Understand what I'm saying:
if my son succeeds,
he will become a man all will marvel at.
But if he fails—he cannot be reined in!
He reigns over this land

FOR LIFE!

Arabic

SHIRAZ FAZIL

انطباع ثامن

أحمد مرسى بقلم

ولماذا يقلب الشاعر العائدُ
أجداثَ الْبَحْرِ
دون اكتراثٍ بجحالتِ الموتِ
وهل كان يدرى
أنه حين غادر أسكندريةَ
لم يعُذْ يلقي جسمه
فوق حصباءِ حواريها
أيَّ ظلَّ طويلٍ أو قصيرٍ
كأيَّ جسم غريبٍ
أنكرته الأرضُ فأضحت بلا ظلٍ؟

١٩٩٨ مارس ٢٤

Poem 8

by Ahmed Morsi

Translated by Shiraz Fazil

And why did the returning poet
turn the tombs of the sea
without attending to the glory of death?

And did he know
that upon leaving Alexandria
he would no longer come upon his body
over her chalky gravel
or with any shadow long or short
like any strange body
the earth refused him so he appeared without a shadow?

March 24, 1998

انطباع تاسع

أحمد مرسى بقلم

عُدْتَ لِلنُّفُوشِي
وَلِلمرَّةِ الثَّانِيَةِ اجْتَرَّتْ
حاجَزَ الرَّمَنَ الْمَلْغُومَ
تَخْدُوكَ الرَّغْبَةُ الْغُلْمُ فيِ استِخْلَاءِ جَسْمٍ
أَلْقَى عَلَى الْأَرْضِ ظَلًا

لَمْ تَصِدُّقْ عَيْنِيَكَ
وَالنُّبَسَ الْمَنْتَظُورُ بِاللَا مَنْتُورٍ وَانْتَصَرَ الشَّاكُ

كَنْتَ حَتَّى لِحظَةِ عِودِكَ الْجَهَمَةُ لَا تَدْرِي
أَوْ تَحَاوُلُ أَنْ تَقْنَعْ نَفْسَكُ
أَنْكَ تَمْشِي
مَعِ النَّاسِ عَلَى نَفْسِ الْأَرْضِ
نَفْسِ الْمَدِينَةِ

وَعَلَى حِينَ غَرَّةِ
لَاحَ هَذَا الشَّيءُ
لَكَكَ اضْطُرَّتْ مِنَ الْخُوفِ
وَهَا أَنْتَ الْآنَ وَهَذَا تَمْشِي
فِي الطَّرِيقِ الْمَعْكُوسِ نَحْوَ النَّهَايَةِ...

٢٧ مارس ١٩٩٨

Poem 9

by Ahmed Morsi

Translated by Shiraz Fazil

You returned to Anfushy
and for the second time you traversed
the border of volatile time
the unnamed desire urges you to throw light on a body
which cast a shadow upon the ground.

You did not believe your eyes
as the visible mixed with the invisible and doubt prevailed.

You were until the moment of your grim return unknowing
or trying to convince yourself
that you walk
with people on the same earth
the same city.

And unexpectedly
this thing appeared
but you were perturbed by fear
and here you are now walking alone
on the reversed path towards the end...

March 27, 1998

Chinese

BEI TONG LIU
FRANCIS HUANG
TIANTIAN YANG
BETTY WANG
YIRAN YAO

错误

郑愁予

我打江南走过
那等在季节里的容颜如莲花的开落
东风不来，三月的柳絮不飞
你底心如小小的寂寞的城
恰若青石的街道向晚
跫音不响，三月的春帷不揭
你底心是小小的窗扉紧掩
我达达的马蹄是美丽的错误
我不是归人，是个过客.....

Mistake

by Chouyu Zheng

Translated by Bei Tong Liu

When I passed the southern place
The face that waits in the Season is like the opening and falling of a
lotus flower
Without a spring breeze the cattails of March would not go with the
wind
Your heart is like a little lonely city
Like the blue stone street at nightfall
Without footsteps the curtain of March would not lift
Your heart was a small window that tightly closed
The tick tock of my horse's hooves are a beautiful mistake
I am not the one coming back
I am passing by...

將進酒

李白

君不見見見
黃河之水天上来來，奔流到海海不復回?
君不見見見
高高堂明鏡悲白白髮，朝如青絲暮成雪？
人人生生得意須盡歡，莫使金金樽空對月。
天生生我材必有用用，千金金金散盡還復來來。
烹羊羊宰牛牛且為樂，會須一一飲三百杯。
岑夫子子，丹丹丘生生，
將進酒，君莫停。
與君歌一曲，請君為我側耳聽。
鐘鼓鼓饌玉玉不足足貴，但願長醉不願醒。
古來來聖賢皆寂寞，惟有飲者留留其名。
陳王昔時宴平樂，斗斗酒十十千恣歡謳。
主人人何為言言少錢，徑須沽取對君酌。
五花馬馬，千金金金裘，
呼兒將出換美酒，與爾同銷萬古愁！

Drink with Me

by Li Bai

Translated by Francis Huang

Have you seen?
The water of the Yellow River comes from sky, runs to the sea and never returns!

Have you seen?
The white hair in the mirror of the hall makes people sad, black hair in the morning became white in the dusk!

People should thoroughly enjoy their happiness when they are pleased, and should never let the moon see their empty golden wine cup.

I must be useful because god gave me my talents, the million dollars I spent will come back soon.

Let's cook lots of beef and mutton happily, and drink three hundred cups of wine without a stop. Cen-Xun my friend, Yuan-Dan Qiu my friend!

I will serve you fine liquor, and please never stop drinking.
And I will sing a song for you, please listen with attention and try to understand my mind.

I don't give a shit about the luxurious lives which those rich and powerful families enjoy, I just want to get drunk and never wake up.

All the great people in history will never be remembered, only the drinkers.

King Chen hold a feast long time ago, he spent thousands of dollars to buy a bottle of wine to enjoyed his joy.

Host, why did you say that you have little money only, just go to buy some alcohol and let me drink with you.

Your beautiful horse, your extravagant clothes, ask your son to sell them and buy some good wine, drink with me and we will forget all the sadness!

热爱生命

汪国真

我不去想是否能够成功
既然选择了远方
便只顾风雨兼程
我不去想能否赢得爱情
既然钟情于玫瑰
就勇敢地吐露真诚
我不去想身后会不会袭来寒风冷雨
既然目标是地平线
留给世界的只能是背影
我不去想未来是平坦还是泥泞
只要热爱生命
一切，都在意料之中

Love of Life

by Guozhen Wang
Translated by Tiantian Yang

I don't mind if I can be a success or not
Since I choose the far place
I will be on the way to arrive there regardless of the wind and rain
I don't mind if I can win love or not
Since I love the rose
I will tell my love bravely
I don't mind if there is some cold wind and cold rain behind me
Since my goal is the horizon line
The shadow of my back will be the only thing I leave for the world
I don't mind if the future way is flat or muddy
Only if you love life
Will everything be as expected

五陵少年

余光中诗集

台风季，巴士峡的水族很拥挤
我的水系中有一条黄河的支流
黄河太冷，需要掺大量的酒精
浮动在杯底的是我的家谱
喂！再来杯高粱！
我的怒中有燧人氏，泪中有大禹
我的耳中有涿鹿的鼓声
传说祖父射落了九只太阳
有一位叔叔的名字能吓退单于
听见没有？来一瓶高粱！

千金裘在拍卖行的橱窗里挂着
当掉五花马只剩下关节炎
再没有周末在西门町等我
於是枕头下孵一窝武侠小说
来一瓶高粱哪，店小二！

重伤风能造成英雄的幻觉
当咳嗽从蛙鸣进步到狼嗥
肋骨摇响疯人院的铁栅
一阵龙卷风便自肺中拔起
没关系，我起码再三杯！

末班巴士的幽灵在作祟
雨衣！我的雨衣呢？六席的
榻榻米上，失眠在等我
等我闯六条无灯的长街
不要扶，我没醉！

Noble Descendants

by Guangzhang Yu
Translated by Betty Wang

Typhoon season. Crowded strait.
The blood in my veins is a branch of the Yangzi River.
Blend alcohol into the River to warm it up.
My family tree emerges from the bottom of a cup.
Hey! One more shot of kaoliang spirits!

My anger inspired by Suiren-Shi, tears reflected DaYu.
Drum beats from Zhuolu-county resonate in my ears.
My great-grandfather nailed down nine suns.
One of my uncles scared Shanyu.
You hear me? Hand me a bottle of kaoliang spirits.

My expensive fur coats hang in the show window of the auction house.
The car also sold for money. The only property I have is arthritis.
No more weekends at Hsimenting.
Then, I hide a bunch of chivalry novels under my pillow.
Waiter! Hand me a bottle of kaoliang spirits...

竹里馆

王维

独坐幽篁里，弹琴复长啸。
深林人不知，明月来相照。

The Bamboo Pavillion

by Wang Wei
Translated by Yiran Yao

Sitting alone in the deep bamboo grove,
I'm strumming the lute, singing and howling to heaven;
Deep woods that no one would take notice of,
Where only the soft rays of the moon shine on me.

French

TESS MALOVA
GREG MCALAINE
CARMEN HATCHELL

Les plaisirs de la porte

par Francis Ponge

Les rois ne touchent pas aux portes.

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

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

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

The Pleasures of the Door

by Francis Ponge

Translated by Tess Malova

Kings do not touch doors.

They do not know this happiness: of pushing forward, gently or with force, one of these large familiar panels, of turning around to put it back in its place—of holding a door in one's arms.

... The happiness of grasping the porcelain knob on the belly of one of these tall obstacles before a room; this quick hands-on contact that halts the walk for a moment, the eye opens and the entire body adjusts to its new residence.

In a friendly hand he holds it again, before pushing it decidedly to enclose himself—with a pleasantly assuring click of the powerful, well-oiled spring.

Madame Bovary

par Gustave Flaubert

Une nuit, vers onze heures, ils furent réveillés par le bruit d'un cheval qui s'arrêta juste à la porte. La bonne ouvrit la lucarne de grenier et parlementa quelque temps avec un homme resté en bas, dans la rue. Il venait chercher le médecin; il avait une lettre. Nastasie descendit les marches en grelottant et alla ouvrir la serrure et les verrous, l'un après l'autre. L'homme laissa son cheval, et, suivant la bonne, entra tout à coup derrière elle. Il tira de dedans son bonnet de laine à houppes grises, une lettre enveloppée dans un chiffon, et la présenta délicatement à Charles, qui s'accouda sur l'oreiller pour la lire. Nastasie, près du lit, tenait la lumière. Madame, par pudeur, restait tournée vers la ruelle et montrait le dos.

Cette lettre, cachetée d'un petit cachet de cire bleu, suppliait M. Bovary de se rendre immédiatement à la ferme des Bertaux, pour remettre une jambe cassée. Or il y a, de Tostes au Bertaux, six bonnes lieues de traverse, en passant par Longueville et Saint-Victor. La nuit était noire. Madame Bovary jeune redoutait les accidents pour son mari. Donc il fut décidé que la valet d'écurie prendrait les devants. Charles partirait trois heures plus tard, au lever de la lune. On enverrait un gamin à sa rencontre, afin de lui montrer le chemin de la ferme et d'ouvrir les clôtures devant lui.

Vers quatre heures du matin, Charles, bien enveloppé dans son manteau, se mit en route pour les Bertaux. Encore endormi par la chaleur du sommeil, il se laissait bercer au trot pacifique de sa bête. Quand elle s'arrêtait d'elle-même devant ces trous entourés d'épines que l'on creuse au bord des sillons, Charles se réveillait en sursaut, se rappelait vite la jambe cassée, et il tâchait de se remettre en mémoire toutes les fractures qu'il savait. La pluie ne tombait plus; le jour commençait à venir, et, sur les branches des pommiers sans feuilles, des oiseaux se tenaient immobiles, hérissonnant leurs petites plumes au vent froid du matin.

La plate campagne s'étalait à perte de vue, et les bouquets d'arbres autour des fermes faisaient, à intervalles éloignés, des taches d'un violet noir sur cette grande surface grise, qui se perdait à l'horizon dans le ton morne du ciel. Charles, de temps à autre, ouvrait les yeux; puis son esprit se fatiguait et le sommeil revenant de soi-même, bientôt il entrait dans une sorte d'assoupissement où, ses sensations récentes se confondant avec des souvenirs, lui-même se percevait double, à la fois étudiant et marié, couché dans son lit comme tout à l'heure, traversant une salle d'opérés comme autrefois. L'odeur chaude des cataplasmes se mêlait dans sa tête à la verte odeur de la rosée, il entendait rouler sur leur tringle les anneaux de fer des lits et sa femme dormir...

Madame Bovary

by Gustave Flaubert
Translated by Grey McAlaine

One night, around eleven o' clock, they were awakened by the noise of a horse stopping itself just at the door. The servant threw open the dormer in the attic and parlayed for some time with a man standing in the road below. He had a letter; he had come seeking a doctor. Nastasie went, jingling as she descended the steps, to open the lock and bolt, one after the other. The man dismounted his horse, and, following the servant, entered quickly behind her. Out of his grey and tufted woolen hat he pulled a letter which was enveloped in chiffon, then presented it delicately to Charles, who rested his elbows on the pillow in order to read it. Nastasie, standing close to the bed, put out the light. Out of modesty, Madame continued to face towards the alleyway, her back turned.

This letter, sealed by a little stamp of blue wax, supplicated M. Bovary to please come to the Bertaux farm immediately to heal a broken leg. Mind you, Tostes au Bertaux was a good six leagues away, past Longueville and Saint-Victor. The night was black, and Madame Bovary began to fear that an accident would befall her husband. Thus, it was decided that the stable boy would go ahead, and Charles would leave three hours later, at the rise of the moon. The young stable hand would be sent ahead to meet him so that he could show him the way to the farm and open the gates.

Around four o'clock in the morning, Charles, quite snuggled up in his coat, took off for Bertaux at a gentle trot, still dozy from the heat of sleep. When the animal would stop itself before great potholes that had been dug up around the jagged edges, it would awaken Charles with a start, and he would be quickly reminded of the broken leg, then try to remember all of the fractures he'd ever seen. The rain ceased to fall; the day came as it always did, and on the leafless branches of the apple trees, birds perched like statues, ruffling their little feathers in the cold morning wind.

The flat countryside spread as far as the eye could see, and around the farms, at lengthy intervals, tree branches would cast purple-black smudges across the grey earth, which was lost in the horizon against the tone of the morning sky. From time to time, Charles would open his eyes, then his spirit would fade and sleep came over him again, causing him to enter a sort of drowsiness where, as his recent sensations began to blur into his memories, and he would see double, at the same time studying in school and being married, then sleeping in bed like he always did or crossing an operation room like he always used to. The hot stench of a poultice swirled in his head with the fresh green scent of dew, and he heard their beds rolling across their rings of iron and his wife slept...

Une saison en enfer

par Arthur Rimbaud

Jadis, si je me souviens bien, ma vie était un festin où s'ouvrailent tous les coeurs, où tous les vins coulaient.

Un soir, j'ai assis la Beauté sur mes genoux.—Et je l'ai trouvée amère.—Et je l'ai injuriée.

Je me suis armé contre la justice.

Je me suis enfui. Ô sorcières, ô misère, ô haine, c'est à vous que mon trésor a été confié!

Je parvins à faire s'évanouir dans mon esprit toute l'espérance humaine. Sur toute joie pour l'étrangler j'ai fait le bond sourd de la bête féroce.

J'ai appelé les bourreaux pour, en périsant, mordre la crosse de leurs fusils. J'ai appelé les fléaux, pour m'étouffer avec le sable, le sang. Le malheur a été mon dieu. Je me suis allongé dans la boue. Je me suis séché à l'air du crime. Et j'ai joué de bons tours à la folie.

Et le printemps m'a apporté l'affreux rire de l'idiot.

Or, tout dernièrement, m'étant trouvé sur le point de faire le dernier couac, j'ai songé à rechercher la clef du festin ancien, où je reprendrais peut-être appétit.

La charité est cette clef.—Cette inspiration prouve que j'ai rêvé !

« Tu resteras hyène... » etc., se récrie le démon qui me couronna de si aimables pavots. « Gagne la mort avec tous tes appétits, et ton égoïsme et tous les péchés capitaux. »

Ah ! j'en ai trop pris :—Mais, cher Satan, je vous en conjure, une prunelle moins irritée! et en attendant les quelques petites lâchetés en retard, vous qui aimez dans l'écrivain l'absence des facultés descriptives ou instructives, je vous détache ces quelques hideux feuillets de mon carnet de damné.

A Season in Hell

by Arthur Rimbaud

Translated by Carmen Hatchell

Long ago, if I remember correctly, my life was a feast where all hearts opened, where all wines flowed.

One evening, I sat Beauty on my lap.—And I found her bitter.—And I insulted her.

I armed myself against justice.

I ran away. O sorceresses, O misery, O hate, it is to you that my treasure has been entrusted!

I managed to make all human hope vanish in my mind. Upon all the joy of strangling it, I made the deafening leap of the fierce beast.

I called the executioners, to bite the butts of their rifles as I died. I called the plagues, to choke with the sand, with the blood. Misfortune was my god. I lay in the mud. I dried myself with the air of crime. And I played quite the tricks on madness.

And spring brought to me the dreadful laugh of the idiot.

Yet, only recently, having found myself on the point of making my last caw, I thought of looking for the key to the ancient feast, where I might recover my appetite.

Charity is this key.—This inspiration proves that I have dreamed!

“You will remain a hyena... ” etc., protests the demon who crowned me with such nice poppies. “Take over death with all your appetites, and your selfishness and all the deadly sins.”

Ah! I have taken too much:—But, dear Satan, I implore you, a less irritated pupil! and while waiting for the few little cowardly lapses, you who in the writer love the absence of the descriptive or instructive faculties, I detach you from these hideous pages of my damned notebook.

German

ALEX LYNCH
REAGAN SCHWEPPPE
THEO TROTTER
MERCER GREENWALD
ALEX BEATTY
CORINNA CAPPE

Also sprach Zarathustra

bei Friedrich Nietzsche

Ach, wo in der Welt geschehen größere Torheiten als bei den Mitleidigen? Und was in der Welt stiftete mehr Leid als die Torheiten der Mitleidigen?
Wehe allen Liebenden, die nicht noch eine Höhe haben, welche über ihrem Mitleiden ist! Also sprach der Teufel einst zu mir:
„auch Gott hat seine Hölle: das ist seine Liebe zu den Menschen.“
Und jüngst hörte ich ihn dies Wort sagen: „Gott ist tot, an seinem Mitleiden mit den Menschen ist Gott gestorben.“

Thus Spoke Zarathustra

By Friedrich Nietzsche

Translated by Alex Lynch

Alas, where in the world do such grand follies happen as by the pitying? And what in the world causes more pain than the follies of the pitying? Woe to the living, who don't yet have the loftiness which hangs over the pitying! So the devil once said to me: "even God has His Hell: It is the love He has for man." Recently I've heard him say these words: "God is dead, from His pity for humans God is dead."

Autobahn

bei Kraftwerk

Wir fahr'n fahr'n fahr'n auf der Autobahn

Vor uns liegt ein weites Tal
Die Sonne scheint mit Glitzerstrahl

Die Fahrbahn ist ein graues Band
Weiße Streifen, grüner Rand

Jetzt schalten wir ja das Radio an
Aus dem Lautsprecher klingt es dann:
Wir fahr'n auf der Autobahn!

Fahr'n auf der Autobahn...

Highway

by Kraftwerk

Translated by Reagan Scheweppe

We're drivin' drivin' drivin' on the highway

A wide valley is up ahead
The sun is shining with glittering rays

The lane is a gray line
Striped with white, green outside

Let's turn on the radio now
From the speaker comes the sound:
We're drivin' on the highway!

Drivin' on the highway...

Briefe an eine junge Frau

bei Rainer Maria Rike

Soglio/ Graubünden, Schweiz,
am 2. August 1919

Ich meine, gnädigste Frau, die Zeilen, die sie mir schrieben, nicht besser und auch nicht genauer beantworten zu können, als indem ich ihnen versichere, wie sehr ich den Impuls verstehe, aus dem sie hervorgegangen sind. Das Kunst-Ding kann nichts ändern und nichts verbessern, sowie es einmal da ist, steht es den Menschen nicht anders als die Natur gegenüber, in sich erfüllt, mit sich beschäftigt (wie eine Fontäne), also, wenn man es so nennen will: teilnahmslos. Aber schließlich wissen wir ja, dass diese zweite, zurückhaltende und von dem sie bestimmenden Willen zurückgehaltene Natur gleichwohl aus dem Menschlichen gemacht ist, aus den Extremen des Erleidens und Freuens-, und hierin liegt der Schlüssel zu jener Schatzkammer unerschöpflicher Tröstung, die im künstlerischen Werk angesammelt erscheint und auf die gerade der einsame ein besonderes, ein unaussprechliches Recht geltend machen darf. Es gibt, ich weiß es, Momente des Lebens, Jahre vielleicht, in denen das Alleinsein unter seinesgleichen einen Grad erreicht, den man nicht zugegeben haben würde, wenn er einem in Zeiten unwillkürlicher geläufiger Gemeinschaft wäre genannt worden. Die Natur ist nicht fähig, an einen heran zu reichen, man muss die Kraft haben, sie umzudeuten und anzuwerben, sie, gewissermassen, ins Menschliche zu übersetzen, um ihren mindesten Teil zu sich zu beziehen, das gerade aber ist es, was man, als ein gründlich Vereinsamter, nicht leisten kann: man will dann ja beschenkt sein, bedingungslos, man kann kein Entgegenkommen leisten, wie ein Mensch in einem gewissen Tiefstande seiner Vitalität kaum den Mund öffnen möchte für den dargereichten Bissen- es muss einen das, was zu einem will und soll, überfallen, als ob es Sehnsucht hätte nach einem, als ob es nichts meinte, als sich dieser Existenz zu bemächtigen, um jedes Atom ihrer Schwäche in Hingegebenheit zu verwandeln. Auch dann ist, strenggenommen, nichts geändert, überheblich wäre es, einem Kunstwerk zuzumuten, dass es helfen könne, aber dass die Spannung des Menschlichen, die ein Kunstwerk, ohne sie nach außen zu verwenden, in sich trägt, dass seine innere Intensität, ohne extensiv zu werden, durch ihre bloße Gegenwart, die Täuschung hervorrufen konnte, als ob sie Streben, Forderung, Werbung, werbende hinreissende Liebe, Aufruhr, Berufung sei:

Letters to a Young Woman

by Rainer Maria Rike

Translated by Theo Trotter

Soglio/ Graubünden, Switzerland
August 2, 1919

I believe, madam, I am no better, or more precisely able, to answer the lines that you have written me, than to assure you, how well I understand the impulse from which they come. The art-object cannot alter or mend anything once it exists, it stands in relationship to humanity no differently than nature, fulfilled in itself, engaged with itself, (like a fountain), and if one wants to call it so: impassive. But ultimately we know, that this second nature, restrained, and determined by the will, nevertheless comes from what is human, from the the extremes of suffering and joy - and herein lies the key to every vault of inexhaustible consolation, that appears to be assembled in artistic work, to which the solitary person can claim a particular, an ineffable right. There are, I know, moments in life, in which loneliness among one's peers reaches a degree that one would not have admitted, if it had been recognized in times of compulsory, common society. Even nature is not capable of reaching one, one must have the strength to reexamine and engage it, in a sense to translate it into the human, to relate its smallest part to one's self, but that is precisely what one, as one essentially alone, cannot achieve: one wants to receive gifts with no conditions, one can make no concession, as a person at a certain low point of his vitality can hardly open his mouth for the morsel offered to him- it must assault that which one wants to and should do, as if it had a longing to, as if it intended nothing else than to seize this existence, to transform its every atom of weakness into devotion. Even then, strictly speaking, nothing has changed, it would be arrogant to expect help from a work of art, although the tension of what is human, which is not put to use externally, that a work of art carries within itself, its inner intensity, without becoming extensive through its mere presence, could evoke the deception, that it was an aspiration, a challenge, courtship, attentive love, upheaval, an appeal: that is the good conscience of the art-object (not its occupation), and this deception between it and the solitary person is equal to every priestly deception with which the divine has been advanced since the beginning of time. I carry on tediously, but your letter truly spoke to me, and not to some person whom the writer of this letter arbitrarily gave my name, and so I wanted on my part to be no less precise and confront not a

das ist des Kunst-Dings gutes Gewissen (nicht sein Beruf)- und dieser Betrug zwischen ihm und dem verlassenen Menschen kommt allen jenen priesterlichen Betrügen gleich, mit denen, seit Anfang der Zeiten, das Götliche gefördert worden ist. Ich bin unbescheiden ausführlich, aber Ihr Brief hat ja wirklich zu mir geredet, zu mir, nicht zu irgendeinem, der nur willkürlich vom Briefschreiber mit meinem Namen ausgestattet worden ist, und so wollte ich auch meinerseits nicht weniger genau sein und keine Phrase ihnen gegenüber stellen, vielmehr das wirkliche, tatsächlicher Erlebnis dieses Berührteins.

Dass Sie zuletzt von ihrem Kinde sprechen, gibt ihrem Brief eine Wendung ins Vertrauen, dass ich nicht anders erwidern kann als mit der vollkommenen Bereitschaft, Vertrauen aufzunehmen. Wenn es ihnen je wohl tut, erzählen sie mir von diesem Kinde und von sich, und wären es viele Seiten. Ich gehöre zu den Menschen, den altmodischen, die den Brief noch für ein Mittel des Umgangs halten, der schönsten und ergiebigsten eines. - Freilich muss ich da sagen, dass diese Verfassung meine Korrespondenz zuweilen über das Leistbare hinaus vermehrt,- dass ferneroft für Monate- die Arbeit, öfter noch (wie während des ganzen Krieges) eine unüberwindliche sécheresse d'Âme mich verstummen und stumm bleiben lässt, aber dafür rechne ich auch menschliche Beziehungen nicht mit den Maßen des sparsamen und immerfort zählenden menschlichen Daseins, eher mit denen der Natur-,

: sei dieses, wenn sie so wollen, fortan Verbindung und Verabredung zwischen uns, ich werde lange ausbleiben, aber, wenn es Ihnen Recht ist, immer wieder da sein, wissend, mitwissend, wie ich es heute zuerst habe sein dürfen.

single phrase of yours, but the real, literal experience of being moved.

That you finally speak of your child, gives your letter an expression of trust, which I cannot answer but with the most perfect readiness to receive this trust. If you ever feel like it, write me many pages telling me about yourself and your child. I am among those old fashioned people, that deem the letter to be the most fruitful form of conversation. However I must say, that this kind of correspondence sometimes becomes more than what is manageable, so that in addition,—often for months—work, or more often than not (as during the war) an insurmountable sécheresse d'Âme leaves me speechless, but I count on human relationships not with the measure of frugal and reductive humanity, but with that of nature:

this may be, if you wish, henceforth a union and arrangement between us, as I will be absent for a long time, but if it is all right with you, I will return time and again, knowing, confiding, as I have been permitted to today for the first time.

Corona

bei Paul Celan

Aus der Hand frißt der Herbst mir sein Blatt: wir sind Freunde.
Wir schälen die Zeit aus den Nüssen und lehren sie gehn:
die Zeit kehrt zurück in die Schale.

Im Spiegel ist Sonntag,
im Traum wird geschlafen,
der Mund redet wahr.

Mein Aug steigt hinab zum Geschlecht der Geliebten:
wir sehen uns an,
wir sagen uns Dunkles,
wir lieben einander wie Mohn und Gedächtnis,
wir schlafen wie Wein in den Muscheln,
wie das Meer im Blutstrahl des Mondes.

Wir stehen umschlungen im Fenster, sie sehen uns zu von der Straße:
es ist Zeit, daß man weiß!
Es ist Zeit, daß der Stein sich zu blühen bequemt,
daß der Unrast ein Herz schlägt.
Es ist Zeit, daß es Zeit wird.

Es ist Zeit.

Corona

by Paul Celan

Translated by Mercer Greenwald

Fall eats its leaf out of my hand: we are friends.
We shell time from the nuts and teach it to walk:
Time returns to its shell.

Sunday is in the mirror,
in the dream there is sleeping,
the mouth speaks true.

My eye climbs down to my lover's sex:
we look at each other,
we speak Darkness to each other,
we love each other like poppy and memory.
we sleep like wine in sea shells,
like the sea in the blood beams of the moon.

We stand entwined in the window, they watch us from the street:
it is time that it be known!
It is time that the stone brings itself to bloom,
that unrest may beat like a heart.
It is time that it be time.

It is time.

Der Stein von Werder

bei Jakob von Uexküll

Wir kamen uns in unserer minderwertigen Kutsche wie ausgestoßen vor, da erschütterte ein heftiger Stoß unseren Wagen. Die Pferde des Fürsten Pignatelli waren nicht zu halten gewesen, und ihre große Karosse hatte das Hinterrad unserer Mietkutsche glatt abgerissen.

Es entstand ein wildes Durcheinander. Die Fürstin bat uns, in ihren Wagen umzusteigen. Nun gab es ein allgemeines Vorstellen, und im Handumdrehen waren wir mit dem Adel beider Sizilien bekannt geworden.

Die Tante schwamm in Seligkeit. Hier fand sie endlich, was sie suchte. Leute voller Heiterkeit und Übermut und ebenso wie sie zu jedem Abenteuer aufgelegt.

Es vergingen kaum vierzehn Tage, da hatte Tante Thea ein ganzes Expeditionskorps beisammen, und nun klapperte eine große Kavalkade fröhlicher Herren und Damen über das ehrwürdige Pflaster der Vorstädte am Fuße des Vesuv. Dann ging es unter Scherzen und Lachen den Berg hinan bis zum Aschenkegel. Hier standen ein paar Sänften bereit, um die älteren Damen zum Gipfel zu tragen, da das Waten in der leichten Asche recht anstrengend war.

Dann begann der Anstieg. Allmählich verstummte das Gelächter. Ein jeder hatte genug mit sich zu tun. Besonders wir Damen wußten nicht, wie wir unsere Röcke behandeln sollten, wenn wir bis zur Wade in der warmen Asche versanken. Man wollte doch zugleich zierlich und anständig aussehen.

Dazu kam, daß der Berg lebendig wurde. Das leise Brausen in seinem Innern wuchs zu einem furchterregenden Gepolter an. Der Berg sprach nicht mit Menschenlauten, aber mit seiner Dämonenstimme. Mir wurde unheimlich zumute, wenn er plötzlich aufbrüllte, waren wir alle verloren. Aber er brüllte nicht, sondern hauchte uns bloß mit seinem heißen Atem an und trieb damit das ganze Expeditionskorps in die Flucht.

Vor der breit ausgezogenen Front der Fußgänger, die sich mühsam nach oben bewegten, schwebten die beiden Sänften der Tante und der Fürstin Pignatelli.

Da stieß der Berg einen Rauchring aus, der, wie eine höllische Wolke am Boden klebend, auf uns zu kroch. Als die Wolke uns erreicht hatte, begannen alle zu husten und zu prusten und nach Luft zu ringen, denn der Höllenbrodem war unerträglich heiß und stinkend. Alle wandten sich zur Flucht. Die Träger der Sänften machten zuerst kehrt. Die Fürstin hielt sich schreiend an der Sänfte fest, die in rasender Flucht den Aschenkegel hinabjagte. Der Tante erging es schlimmer. Durch den plötzlichen Ruck verlor

The Stone of Werder

by Jakob von Uexküll

Translated by Alex Beatty

We appeared as outcasts in our meager carriage, which was suddenly shaken by a violent jolt. Prince Pignatelli's horses were not reigned, and their large coach had wrenched our back wheel clean off.

A wild confusion arose. The prince invited us to join him in his carriage. Then there was a general introduction, and in a trice we became familiar with the nobility of both Sicilies.

Auntie swam in bliss. Here she finally found what she was looking for: people full of mirth and wantonness and all else that leads to an adventure.

Hardly fourteen days elapsed before Aunt Thea had assembled an entire expeditionary force, and so a large, joyful cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen clacked over the hallowed cobbles of the outskirts of the city, at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. Then it went, amid great banter and merriment, toward the mountain's ashen summit. Here a pair of palanquins awaited to carry the elderly ladies, for whom the loose ash was too laborious to wade through.

Then began the ascent. Gradually the laughter grew quiet. Each was concerned enough with themselves. We ladies especially didn't know how to attend to our skirts as we sank to our calves in warm ash. After all, one still wishes to appear dainty and civilized.

Then the mountain came alive. The faint rumble in its belly grew into a terrifying roar. The mountain spoke not with the cadences of men, but in its own demonic voice. I was filled with an unearthly terror, thinking if it were to suddenly erupt, we would all be lost. But it didn't erupt. Instead it merely heaved its hot breath and sent the whole expeditionary force in flight.

In front of those of us half undressed, walking tediously by foot, floated the palanquins of both Auntie and Princess Pignatelli.

Then the mountain expelled a ring of smoke which clung to the ground like a hellish cloud, creeping toward us. As the cloud reached us, everyone began to huff and puff, fighting for air, because the fumes from the abyss were unbearably hot and rank. Everyone turned to flee. The bearers of the palanquins reversed their course first. The princess was screaming, clinging dearly to the palanquin, which frantically careened down the ashen summit. Auntie fared even worse. From the sudden jolt she lost her balance and flew, boldly and with great momentum, headfirst into the dust.

The rest of us leaped, dashed, tumbled, and somersaulted—whatever it

sie das Gleichgewicht und flog in kühnem Schwünge den Kopf voran in die aufstäubende Asche. Wir anderen kollerten, sprangen, purzelten und überschlugen uns, nur um möglichst schnell dem Höllendampf zu entgehen. Anstand und Zierlichkeit gingen völlig verloren.

Zum Glück löste sich die Wolke bald in der Luft auf, und als wir am Fuß des Aschenkegels uns wieder zusammen fanden, war die Luft rein.

Kaum hatten sich unsere Lungen gereinigt, ging ein unbeschreibliches Geschnatter und Gelächter los, weil jeder dem andern vormachen wollte, welch klägliche Figur er gespielt habe. Doch glaube ich, daß jeder einen heimlichen Schrecken mit nach Hause nahm. Die Züge der Tante ließen deutlich den Ausdruck des bestraften Vorwitzes erkennen. Eine zweite Partie auf den Vesuv wurde nicht unternommen.

Ich hatte außer dem Schreck noch schmerzhafte Folgen des Abenteuers zu tragen, da ich meinen Fuß verstaucht hatte und längere Zeit an den Liegestuhl gefesselt blieb, während die Tante sich im Strudel des neapolitanischen gesellschaftlichen Lebens äußerst wohl fühlte.

Ich verbrachte die meisten Stunden des Tages im benachbarten Garten unseres Arztes, der einen bezaubernden Blick auf Stadt und Golf gewährte.

Zudem hatte ich Gelegenheit, den naturwissenschaftlichen Studien unseres gelehrten Freundes zuzuschauen.

,Hier sehen Sie', sagte er mit einem einladenden Lächeln, ,ein frisch gewobenes Spinnennetz. Noch hat sich keine Fliege in ihm gefangen, und doch können Sie an der Größe der Maschen, der Festigkeit des Gewebes und der Feinheit des Fadens, der für die Fliege unsichtbar sein muß, ferner an seiner Klebrigkeit die Hauptegenschaften der Fliege erschließen - wie Sie aus dem viel größerem Gewebe der Fischernetze erschließen können, für welche Fischart sie bestimmt sind.

In beiden Fällen sind die Netze zur Beute komplementär gebaut. Nur webt die Spinne ihr Netz, ohne von der Fliege etwas zu wissen. Das nennen wir Naturforscher ein Wunder.

Solche Wunder stoßen Ihnen überall auf, wenn Sie genauer in die Natur hineinschauen. Sehen Sie dies sonderbare Insekt, das einen geraden Rüssel voranträgt, der genau in jene trompetenförmig gebaute Blume hineinpaßt wie der Schlüssel in ein Schloß. Wir dürfen daraus schließen, daß Insekt und Blume von der Natur füreinander komplementär gebaut sind.

Ich kann Ihnen einen Krebs zeigen, der kein gepanzertes Hinterende zeigt wie seine Brüder, sondern seinen weichen Hinterleib in eine leere Schneckschale steckt, die ihn schützt, wie sie einst die Schnecke schützte, von der sie erbaut wurde. Oder sehen Sie sich das Blatt des Eukalyptus hier an, das das Himmelwasser dorthin lenkt, wo es von der Pflanze gebraucht wird.

Dagegen sind die Trockenpflanzen wie der Feigenkaktus nicht zum Regen, sondern nur zur Sonne komplementär gebaut.

So sehen Sie überall das gleiche Walten einer Macht, die Tiere, Pflanzen,

took to escape the fume as quickly as possible. Propriety and civility were completely lost. Luckily the cloud soon dispersed, and when we reached the foot of the slope, we were able to reconvene, the air once again pure.

Scarcely had we caught our breath when an indescribable cackle and laughter arose, because each of us wanted to show the others what pathetic fools we had been.

But I believe that each took home with them a secret fear. The features of Auntie suggested the recognition of a punished prank. A second party to ascend Vesuvius never gathered.

Besides the fright, I had to bear yet another painful consequences of the adventure, because I had sprained my foot and remained anchored to the deckchair. Meanwhile, Auntie excelled in the maelstrom of Neapolitan society life.

I spent most hours of the day in the garden next to our doctor's, which imparted a charming view of the city and the bay.

This gave me the opportunity to observe our scholarly friend's study of natural sciences.

'Here you see a freshly woven spiderweb,' he said with an inviting smile. 'It hasn't yet caught a fly, but you can deduce from the size of the mesh, the tautness of the web, its stickiness, and the delicacy of the threads—which must be invisible to its prey—the essential qualities of the fly, as one can deduce from the coarseness of a fishing net what kind of fish it's designed for.'

'In both cases the nets are complimentary to their prey. Only the spider spins its net without knowing anything about the fly. That's what we naturalists call a wonder.'

'Such wonders are everywhere if only you look closely into nature. Take this peculiar insect, carrying in front of it a straight tube which fits exactly into this trumpet-shaped petal like a key into a lock. We may deduce from this that the insect and the flower are built complimentarily to one another.'

'I can show you a crab which has no armor on its back, like its brother, but instead conceals its soft hindquarters in an empty shell, which protects him as it once protected the snail who built it.'

'Or have a look at the eucalyptus leaf, which channels rainwater to where it's needed by the plant.'

'On the other hand, desert plants such as the prickly pear are built complimentarily not to the rain, but to the sun.'

'So you see that, in general, the equal rule of a great power that binds animals, plants, stars and water to one another can lead to the existence of a higher being. These are the true wonders of God.'

'Would we rather speak of the wonders of nature than the wonders of God, my friend?' a deep voice suddenly resounded from behind us, interrupting the doctor's speech.

Sterne und Wasser aneinander bindet, damit sie gemeinsam ein höheres Dasein führen können. Das sind die wahren Wunder Gottes.'

Sprechen wir lieber von den Wundern der Natur, statt von den Wundern Gottes, mein Freund', erklang plötzlich eine tiefe Stimme hinter uns und hemmte den Redefluß des Arztes.

Ich wandte mich erschrocken um und erkannte sogleich den Eindringling. Es war seine Eminenz Grimani, der Kardinal-Erzbischof in eigener Person, von dessen Weisheit ich schon so viel gehört hatte.

Unser großer Arzt stand trotzig wie ein ertappter Schuljunge vor dem Kirchenfürsten. 'Die Wunder der Natur', sprudelte er heraus, 'sind doch die Wegweiser zu Gott hin.'

'Oder von ihm fort', erwiderte ruhig seine Eminenz.

Ich bemühte mich aufzustehen, um den Erzbischof gebührend zu begrüßen. Er aber

drückte mich lächelnd in meinen Liegestuhl zurück. Ich konnte nun sein glattrasiertes, vornehmes Pferdegesicht mit dem bärtingen klugen Hundegesicht des Doktors vergleichen. Das eine war mir mit einem Schlag klar: der Arzt war klug, aber der Bischof war weise. Seine Eminenz zog sich einen Stuhl heran und begann liebenswürdig mit mir zu plaudern. Neapel habe eine ganz eigenartige Melodie, die man erst vernehmen müsse, ehe man sich ihr einfügen könne, sonst bliebe man einverständnisloser Fremder.

Ich erwiderte ihm, ich begäne bereits, mich in den Lebensrhythmus der Landschaft und des Volkes, die eine wundersame Einheit bildeten, einzuleben. Nur eines bliebe mir völlig unverständlich, das sei der Vesuv. Am Tage ja - da sei das Auge von seiner einzigartigen Form, mit der er die Landschaft kröne, begeistert. Aber in der Nacht, wenn der Mond die weite Bucht in seinen silbrigen Märchenglanz tauche, dann werde der Vesuv zu einem dämonischen Wesen. Wie eine riesige Spinne lauere er über dem Lande und blinzele mit seinem rot glühenden Auge Unheil verkündend zu der von Schönheit umflossenen Stadt herüber.

Wer einmal den Gifthauch des Dämons zu spüren bekomme, wisse, daß er jederzeit imstande sei, die unvergleichliche Schönheit dieser Stadt in Grauen und Elend zu verwandeln. Und doch lebe das Volk dahin in ausgelassener Fröhlichkeit, als befände es sich unter einem sicheren Schilde, der es vor aller Gefahr beschirme.

'Vielleicht ist dieser Schild wirklich vorhanden', lächelte gütig der Kardinal, haben Sie je vom Wunder des heiligen Januarius, dem Heiligen des Feuerberges, gehört, das sich jedes Jahr am ersten Sonntag im Mai vollzieht? Lassen Sie sich von unserer wissenschaftlichen Autorität berichten, was sich dabei ereignet.'

Bedächtig begann der Arzt:

'Das Blut des heiligen Januarius liegt eingetrocknet am Boden einer geschlossenen Hohlkugel.'

Es ist ein farbenprächtiges Bild, wenn Seine Eminenz, die heilige Kugel

I turned, startled, and just as quickly recognized the interloper. It was His Eminence Grimani, the cardinal archbishop himself, whose wisdom I had already heard so much about.

Our great doctor stood defiantly like a guilty schoolboy before the rector. 'The wonders of nature,' he went on, 'are but the way markers leading to God.'

'Or away from him,' replied His Eminence.

I stood up to greet the archbishop properly, but with a smile he bade me to return to my deck chair. I could now compare his smooth-shaven, genteel equestrian face with the clever, bearded canine face of the doctor. It was clear to me in an instant: the doctor was clever, but the bishop was wise.

His Eminence pulled up a chair and began chatting with me amiably. Naples has a unique melody, he said, which one must first examine before he can join, or else he remains an oblivious outsider.

I replied that I had already begun immersing myself in the rhythm of the landscape and the people, who had achieved such a wondrous unity.

Only one thing remained completely unintelligible, and that was Vesuvius. On that day, yes — the eye of its unique form, which crowns the landscape, excited me. But at night, when the wide bay is plunged in its fabled, silvery luster, Vesuvius assumes its demonic nature. Like a colossal spider, it lies in wait over the land and squints ominously with its glowing red eye over the surrounding beauty of the city.

Whoever feels the miasma of the demon just once knows that at any given time he is capable of transforming the incomparable beauty of this City into dread and misery. Yet the people live on in exuberant joyfulness, as if under a secure shield, protecting them from all danger.

'Perhaps this shield actually exists,' simpered the Cardinal good-naturedly. 'Have you ever heard of the miracle of Saint Januarius, the saint of volcanos, who consummates his duties each year on the first Sunday of May? Let's hear from our scientific authority what this entails.'

The doctor cautiously began:

'The dried blood of Saint Januarius lies at the bottom of a locked, hollow sphere.'

'It is a splendidly colorful image when His Eminence strides through with the holy sphere in his hands, under a red canopy borne solemnly by four priests shrouded in white, and he himself is decorated in full red and white.'

'A throng of silvery saints opens the train and assembles around the altar, which His Eminence ascends with the luminous sphere in his hands.'

'Then begin the prayers. The further evening descends, the louder it becomes: "San Genaro ora pro nobis." Until the prayer suffuses the cathedral with a single, powerful sound like an organ, ascending from a thousand

in den Händen, unter einem von vier weiß- gekleideten Priestern getragenen roten Baldachin die weite Halle des Domes durchschreitet. Er selbst in vollem Ornate rot und weiß.

Eine Schar silberner Heiliger eröffnet den Zug und nimmt um den Altar Aufstellung, dessen Stufen Seine Eminenz, die lichte Kugel in den Händen, emporsteigt.

Nun beginnen die Gebete. Je weiter sich der Abend herabsenkst, um so lauter wird das: „San Genaro ora pro nobis.“ Bis das Gebet wie ein einziger, mächtiger Orgelklang, aus tausend gläubigen Herzen emporsteigend, den Dom erfüllt. Die Nacht naht. Immer dringender, immer angstvoller wird der Ruf um Hilfe - denn wenn das Wunder nicht geschieht, dann ist Neapel verloren und der dämonischen Macht des Vesuvs ausgeliefert. Das Blut des Heiligen ist zugleich das Blut des Berges, eine heilige Lava, die flüssig werden muß, wenn der Heilige der Feuerdämonen Herr werden will. So glaubt es das Volk.

Aber das Wunder geschieht. Das trockene Blut beginnt plötzlich zu brodeln wie flüssige Lava. Hoch hebt der Erzbischof die heilige Kugel empor und zeigt dem Volke das Wunder. Ein Zubel schrei durchreißt die Kirche: »Neapel ist wieder für ein Jahr gerettet.«

„Sie sagen, »so glaubt das Volk«, erklang die tiefe Stimme Grimani. „Was glauben Sie denn selbst, verehrter Åskulap? Leugnen Sie etwa das Wunder?“

„Keineswegs“, erwiderte Erhardt, „ich glaube, daß das heilige Blut in einer für uns unerkennbaren Weise mit der Lava des Vesuvs in Verbindung steht, wie ja auch die Solfatara in Pozzuoli mit ihren feurigen Ausdünstungen den Stand des Feuers im Vesuv anzeigen.“

Von der dämonischen Spinne Vesuv gehen unterirdische feurige Fäden aus, die Neapel wie in einem Netz gefangen halten. Vor allem ist das Herz Neapels, das in der heiligen Kugel ruht, befähigt, den Pulsschlag der feurigen Lavawellen anzuzeigen.

„Sie weichen, wie so oft, mit Hilfe eines unbekannten Naturgesetzes“, sagte sehr ernst der Kardinal, „dem Wunder Gottes aus. Diesmal aber weiß ich Bescheid, denn das eigentliche Wunder vollzieht sich nicht da draußen vor den Augen der Menge, sondern hier drinnen in meiner Seele. Wenn ich betend vor dem Altar liege, die heilige Kugel in den Händen haltend, dann löst sich mein Geist von meinem Körper, und statt meiner ergreift der Heilige selbst die Gewalt über meinen Körper. Ich fühle es deutlich, wie seine jugendlichen Götterarme sich meiner schwachen Greisenhände bedienen, um einen Strom himmlischen Lebens in die Kugel auf sein eigenes Blut zu lenken, das dann aus vienhundertjährigem Schlaf erwacht und zu sprudeln beginnt wie einst.“

Damit tut sich ein Wunder äußerlich kund. Aber das wahre Wunder kenne nur ich allein. Ich weiß dann mit vollkommener Sicherheit, daß der Heilige entschlossen ist, wieder für ein Jahr seinen Schild schützend vor Neapel zu halten, und meine Sicherheit entzündet die Herzen der Gläubigen

faithful hearts. The night draws near. The call for help becomes ever more urgent, ever more fearful—because if the miracle doesn't happen, then Naples is lost and the demonic power of Vesuvius is delivered. The blood of the saint is like the blood of the mountain, a holy lava which must flow freely if the saint of the fire demons is to reign. Such is what the people believe.

‘But the miracle happens. The dried blood begins suddenly to bubble like flowing lava. The archbishop heaves the holy sphere high aloft and shows the people the miracle. A cry of jubilation perambulates the church: “Naples is again saved for one more year.”’

‘You say, “Such is what the people believe”, piped Grimani’s deep voice. ‘So what do you yourself believe? Do you deny the miracle?’

‘By no means,’ replied Erhardt, ‘I believe that the holy blood is connected to the lava of Vesuvius in an unrecognizable way, just as the Solfatara in Pozzuoli, with its fiery exhalations, indicates the condition of Vesuvius.’

‘The demonic spider of Vesuvius spins its fiery, subterranean threads, in which Naples is imprisoned as if in a net. The heart of Naples, which rests in the holy sphere, is capable of revealing the pulse of the fiery lava waves.’

‘As all too often, you elude the miracle of God with the help of unknown natural laws,’ said the cardinal very solemnly. ‘But in this instance I am certain that the real miracle appears not outside, before the eyes of the masses, but here inside my soul. When I pray, lying before the altar, the holy sphere in my hands, my spirit disengages from my body and is seized by the force of the saint himself. I feel it distinctly as his divine, youthful arm takes over my weak grasp to link the current of heavenly life in the sphere with his own blood, which then awakens from a centuries- long slumber and boils as of old.’

‘An external miracle is proclaimed. But only I know the true miracle. I know then with utter certainty that the saint is determined to hold his shield over Naples for a year, and my certainty ignites the hearts of the faithful with the same certitude.’

‘And what do we learn from this beautiful example?’ continued the cardinal after a pause. ‘That our esteemed friend was completely stranded in the sensory world, his soul neglected — and just this is what our Lord meant when he said: “My kingdom is not of this world.” Our great doctor assumes a secret connection between two sensory things, the blood of the mountain and the blood in the glass sphere. He doesn’t see the saint’s connection with my soul, which is the lone throbbing span from blood to blood.

‘So it goes with all things of nature. He sees the complimentary interdependence between the spiderweb and the fly, which is the cause of a hundred flies being caught. But if a single fly isn’t caught, because it has encountered a tattered mesh which leaves the way free, then the naturalist

mit der gleichen Gewißheit.' „Und was lernen wir aus diesem schönen Beispiel?“ fuhr der Kardinal nach einer Pause fort. „Daß unser gelehrter Freund völlig in der Sinnenwelt steckengeblieben ist und die Seelen- welt vernachlässigt - und gerade diese hat unser Herr ge- meint, als er sagte: »Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt.« Unser großer Arzt vermutet eine geheime Verbindung zwischen zwei Sinnendingen, dem Blut des Berges und dem Blut in der gläsernen Kugel. Er sieht nicht die Verbindung des Heiligen mit meiner Seele, die allein die Brücke von Blut zu Blut schlagen kann.“

So geht es ihm mit allen Dingen der Natur. Er sieht wohl den komplementären Zusammenhang von Spinnennetz und Fliege, der die Ursache ist, daß hundert Fliegen im Netz gefangen werden. Aber gesetzt den Fall, eine einzige Fliege werde nicht gefangen, weil sie auf eine zerrissene Masche trifft, die ihr den Weg freigibt, so meint der Naturforscher, das sei Zufall. Woher wissen Sie, daß die zerrissene Masche nicht gerade für diese einzige Fliege komplementär ist?“ wandte er sich schroff zum Arzte.

.Gerade dort, wofür Sie die Welt ins graue Meer des Zufalls zu versinken beginnt - beginnt das Seelenreich des Geistlichen.

Sie kennen nur die komplementären Gesetze zwischen Fliegen im allgemeinen und Spinnnetzen im allgemeinen, wir aber erforschen das Einzelschicksal der Fliege im einzelnen Netze. Ihre Stellung mag für die Fliegen die richtige sein, weil, wenn es Fliegenseelen gibt, so werden sie sich so ähnlich sehen, daß man sie alle über den gleichen Kamm scheren darf. Aber sobald es um die Menschen geht, die lauter einzigartige Seelen besitzen, dann treten wir Geistliche in unserer Recht.

Sie nennen die Wunder der Natur, weil sie sich immer in gleicher Weise von Fliege zu Fliege und von Netz zu Netz wiederholen, Gesetze.

Für uns aber sind die Gesetze, die Gott im Schicksal der Einzelseele verwirklicht, die wahren Wunder.

Sie sind ein ausgezeichneter Beobachter, sonst wären Sie nicht der allverehrte Arzt; deshalb frage ich Sie: Ist Ihnen jemals ein komplementäres Verhalten zwischen der Einzelmasche des Schicksals und dem Einzelmenschen aufgefallen, d. h. ein einzigartiges Wunder Gottes und nicht ein allgemeines Wunder der Natur?

„Ich will mich nicht in einen Disput mit Eurer Eminenz einlassen“, sagte

Erhardt, „denn ich würde sicher den kürzeren ziehen. Ich will aber die Frage Eurer Eminenz offen mit »ja« beantworten. Ich habe ein Erlebnis gehabt, an dem alle meine Versuche, es durch allgemeine Naturgesetze oder durch Zufall zu deuten, gescheitert sind. Ich will es gerne erzählen, denn es dürfte nicht bloß Eure Eminenz, sondern auch unsere schöne Patientin interessieren, die mit glühenden Wangen den Worten Eurer Eminenz gefolgt ist.“

attributes it to happenstance. How do you know that the tattered mesh is not complimentary for just this single fly?“ he turned gruffly to the doctor. ‘Right there, where for you the world begins to sink into the grey sea of happenstance—there begins the divine kingdom of souls.

‘You know only the complimentary laws between flies in the universal and spiderwebs in the universal, but we are investigating the fate of a singular fly in a single web. Your position may be correct for the fly, because if there are fly souls, then they would look so similar that one may lump them all together. But when it comes to humans, who possess vibrant, individual souls, we clergymen enter our domain. You cite the miracle of nature, because it always repeats the laws in the same way from fly to fly and web to web.

‘But for us, the laws which God manifests in the destiny of a single soul are the true wonders.

‘You are an outstanding observer. Otherwise you would not be the all-esteemed doctor; therefore, I ask you: have you ever noticed a complimentary manner between the single mesh of fate and the single individual? That is, a unique miracle of God and not a universal miracle of nature?’

‘I don’t want to engage in a dispute with Your Eminence,’ said Erhardt, ‘because I would certainly pull the short straw. But I do want to answer Your Eminence’s question with a frank “yes.” I had an experience which all of my attempts failed to accord with universal laws or coincidence. I’d be happy to explain, because it might interest not only Your Eminence, but also our lovely patient, who has followed Your Eminence’s words with burning cheeks.’

Effi Briest

bei Theodor Fontane

In Front des schon seit Kurfürst Georg Wilhelm von der Familie von Briest bewohnten Herrenhauses zu Hohen-Cremmen fiel heller Sonnenschein auf die mittagsstille Dorfstraße, während nach der Park- und Gartenseite hin ein rechtwinklig angebauter Seitenflügel einen breiten Schatten erst auf einen weiß und grün quadrierten Fliesengang und dann über diesen hinaus auf ein großes, in seiner Mitte mit einer Sonnenuhr und an seinem Rande mit Canna indica und Rhabarberstauden besetzten Rondell warf. Einige zwanzig Schritte weiter, in Richtung und Lage genau dem Seitenflügel entsprechend, lief eine ganz in kleinblättrigem Efeu stehende, nur an einer Stelle von einer kleinen weißgestrichenen Eisentür unterbrochene Kirchhofsmauer, hinter der der Hohen-Cremmener Schindelturm mit seinem denkmalähnlichen, weil neuerdings erst wieder vergoldeten Wetterhahn aufragte. Fronthaus, Seitenflügel und Kirchhofsmauer bildeten ein einen kleinen Ziergarten umschließendes Hufeisen, an dessen offener Seite man eines Teiches mit Wassersteg und angekettem Boot und dicht daneben einer Schaukel gewahr wurde, deren horizontal gelegtes Brett zu Häupten und Füßen an je zwei Stricken hing - die Pfosten der Balkenlage schon etwas schief stehend. Zwischen Teich und Rondell aber und die Schaukel halb versteckend standen ein paar mächtige alte Platanen.

Auch die Front des Herrenhauses - eine mit Aloekübeln und ein paar Gartenstühlen besetzte Rampe - gewährte bei bewölkttem Himmel einen angenehmen und zugleich allerlei Zerstreitung bietenden Aufenthalt; an Tagen aber, wo die Sonne niederbrannte, wurde die Gartenseite ganz entschieden bevorzugt, besonders von Frau und Tochter des Hauses, die denn auch heute wieder auf dem im vollen Schatten liegenden Fliesengange saßen, in ihrem Rücken ein paar offene, von wildem Wein umrankte Fenster, neben sich eine vorspringende kleine Treppe, deren vier Steinstuften vom Garten aus in das Hochparterre des Seitenflügels hinaufführten. Beide, Mutter und Tochter, waren fleißig bei der Arbeit, die der Herstellung eines aus Einzelquadrate zusammenzusetzenden Altarteppichs galt; ungezählte Wollsträhnen und Seidendonken lagen auf einem großen, runden Tisch bunt durcheinander, dazwischen, noch vom Lunch her, ein paar Dessertsteller und eine mit großen schönen Stachelbeeren gefüllte Majolikaschale. Rasch und sicher ging die Wollnadel der Damen hin und her, aber während die Mutter kein Auge von der Arbeit ließ, legte die Tochter, die den Rufnamen

Effi Briest

by Theodor Fontane

Translated by Mercer Greenwald

In front of the Hohen-Cremmen manor, inhabited by the Briest family since the time of elector Georg Wilhelm, bright sunshine fell on the quiet village street at midday, while on the park and wooded side of the street, a perpendicular wing cast its shadow onto a path of white and green square tiles and beyond it, onto the large circular garden with a sundial at its center and Canna indica and rhubarb blossoms around its perimeter. Some twenty paces farther, parallel to the side wing, ran a churchyard wall, covered entirely in small ivy leaves, interrupted only by a small, white-painted iron door, behind which the shingled Hohen-Cremmen tower rose up, glittering with its newly gilded weather vane. The front building, the side wing, and the churchyard wall formed a horseshoe around a small ornamental garden. In the horseshoe's opening was a pond with a small dock and a boat, and at the edge of the pond, a swing was hanging nearby, whose horizontal board was fastened at each head and foot with two ropes – the posts of the swing's supporting beams were already a bit crooked. Between the pond and the park's edge, half-hiding the swing, stood a few strong old sycamores.

The manor's façade was a ramp decorated with potted aloe plants and a pair of garden chairs, where one could stay on cloudy days with all kinds of distractions, but on days when the sun was beating down, the garden area took preference, especially for the wife and daughter of the house, who were sitting again today on the shady tiled floor, with two open windows whose frames were entwined with wild grapevines. Next to them was a little staircase with four stone steps that led from the garden up into the mezzanine of the side wing. Both mother and daughter were busy making an altar rug out of single squares. Scores of wool strands and silk skeins were spread across a large, round table, and among them were a few dessert plates from lunch and a majolica bowl filled with large, beautiful gooseberries. Both needles flew swiftly and smoothly and in and out, but while the mother's eyes never strayed from her work, the daughter, who had the nickname Effi, from time to time laid down the needle and stood up and went through all kinds of artful bends and stretches in a full regimen of indoor calisthenics. It was obvious that she devoted herself with a special kind of love to the exercises which she deliberately exaggerated for comic effect, and when she stood there slowly raising her arms, palms folded high above her head, even Mama glanced away from her work, but

Effi führte, von Zeit zu Zeit die Nadel nieder und er hob sich, um unter allerlei kunstgerechten Beugungen und Streckungen den ganzen Kursus der Heil- und Zimmerymnastik durchzumachen. Es war ersichtlich, daß sie sich diesen absichtlich ein wenig ins Komische gezogenen Übungen mit ganz besonderer Liebe hingab, und wenn sie dann so dastand und, langsam die Arme hebend, die Handflächen hoch über dem Kopf zusammenlegte, so sah auch wohl die Mama von ihrer Handarbeit auf, aber immer nur flüchtig und verstohlen, weil sie nicht zeigen wollte, wie entzückend sie ihr eigenes Kind finde, zu welcher Regung mütterlichen Stolzes sie voll berechtigt war. Effi trug ein blau und weiß gestreiftes, halb kittelartiges Leinwandkleid, dem erst ein fest zusammengezogener, bronzerfarbener Ledergürtel die Taille gab; der Hals war frei, und über Schulter und Nacken fiel ein breiter Matrosenkragen. In allem, was sie tat, paarten sich Übermut und Grazie, während ihre lachenden braunen Augen eine große, natürliche Klugheit und viel Lebenslust und Herzensgüte verrieten. Man nannte sie die »Kleine«, was sie sich nur gefallen lassen mußte, weil die schöne, schlanke Mama noch um eine Handbreit höher war.

Eben hatte sich Effi wieder erhoben, um abwechselnd nach links und rechts ihre turnerischen Drehungen zu machen, als die von ihrer Stickerei gerade wieder aufblickende Mama ihr zurief: »Effi, eigentlich hättest du doch wohl Kunstreiterin werden müssen. Immer am Trapeze, immer Tochter der Luft. Ich glaube beinah, daß du so was möchtest.«

»Vielleicht, Mama. Aber wenn es so wäre, wer wäre schuld? Von wem hab ich es? Doch nur von dir. Oder meinst du, von Papa? Da mußt du nun selber lachen. Und dann, warum steckst du mich in diesen Hänger, in diesen Jungenkittel? Mitunter denk ich, ich komme noch wieder in kurze Kleider. Und wenn ich die erst wiederhabe, dann knicks ich auch wieder wie ein Backfisch, und wenn dann die Rathenower herüberkommen, setze ich mich auf Oberst Goetzes Schoß und reite hopp, hopp. Warum auch nicht? Drei Viertel ist er Onkel und nur ein Viertel Courmacher. Du bist schuld. Warum kriege ich keine Staatskleider? Warum machst du keine Dame aus mir?«

»Möchtest du's?«

»Nein.« Und dabei lief sie auf die Mama zu und umarmte sie stürmisch und küßte sie.

»Nicht so wild, Effi, nicht so leidenschaftlich. Ich beunruhige mich immer, wenn ich dich so sehe ...« Und die Mama schien ernstlich willens, in Äußerung ihrer Sorgen und Ängste fortzufahren. Aber sie kam nicht weit damit, weil in ebendiesem Augenblick drei junge Mädchen aus der kleinen, in der Kirchhofsmauer angebrachten Eisentür in den Garten eintraten und einen Kiesweg entlang auf das Rondell und die Sonnenuhr zuschritten. Alle drei grüßten mit ihren Sonnenschirmen zu Effi herüber und eilten dann auf rau von Briest zu, um dieser die Hand zu küssen. Diese tat rasch ein paar

only briefly and covertly, because she did not want to show how delightful she found her own child, an impulse of maternal pride to which she was fully entitled. Effi wore a blue-and white striped, half-smocked linen dress with only a bronze-colored leather belt to make a waist; the neckline was free, and a broad sailor's collar fell over her shoulders. In everything she did, she embodied both spirit and grace, while her laughing brown eyes expressed great, natural cleverness, love of life, and goodness of heart. She was called the "little one," which she had to put up with, because her beautiful, slender mother was still one hand taller than her.

Just as Effi had risen again to bend from left to right, her mother, who was looking up from her embroidery, called to her: "Effi, you ought to have been a circus artist. Always on the trapeze, always in the air. I almost think that is what you want."

"Maybe, Mama. But if that were what I wanted, whose fault would it be? Who do I get it from? It can only be from you. Or do you think I get it from Papa? That's a thought anyone would laugh at. So then, why are you putting me in this loose dress, in this boyish coat?"

Sometimes I think I'll be back in short dresses. And when I have them on, then I'll curtsey like a young girl, and when the Rathenower Hussars ride through, I'll sit on Colonel Goetze's lap and ride along, hop, hop. Why not? He is three-quarters uncle and only a quarter suitor. You are to blame. Why don't I get fine dresses? Why don't you make a lady of me?"

"Is that what you want?"

"No." And she ran to her mother, hugged her tight, and kissed her.

"Not so wild, Effi, not so passionate. I am always so very disquieted when I see you like this..." And her mother seemed genuinely willing to continue on expressing her worries and fears. But she did not get very far with it, because at that very moment, three young girls entered the garden from the little iron door in the churchyard wall and walked down a gravel path to the roundabout and the sundial. All three, parasols in hand, greeted Effi and then hurried to Frau von Briest to kiss her hand. She quickly asked a few questions and then invited the girls to join them, or at least Effi, for half an hour, "I still have work to do, and young people are happiest among themselves. Be good." As she spoke, she climbed the stone staircase leading from the garden to the side wing.

And now the children were really alone.

Two of the young girls—short, plump little ladies whose strawberry-blonde hair suited their summer freckles and their good spirits—were daughters of the cantor Jahnke, who swore by the Hanseatic League, and everything Scandinavian, as well as his Mecklenburg compatriot and favorite poet Fritz Reuter, after whose popular novel *Mining and Lining*, Jahnke had given his twins the names Bertha and Hertha. The third young lady was Hulda Niemeyer, Pastor Niemeyer's only child. She was more feminine

Fragen und lud dann die Mädchen ein, ihnen oder doch wenigstens Effi auf eine halbe Stunde Gesellschaft zu leisten. »Ich habe ohnehin noch zu tun, und junges Volk ist am liebsten unter sich. Gehabt euch wohl!« Und dabei stieg sie die vom Garten in den Seitenflügel führende Steintreppe hinauf. Und da war nun die Jugend wirklich allein.

Zwei der jungen Mädchen - kleine, rundliche Persönchen, zu deren krausem, rotblondem Haar ihre Sommersprossen und ihre gute Laune ganz vorzüglich paßten - waren Töchter des auf Hansa, Skandinavien und Fritz Reuter eingeschwarenen Kantors Jahnke, der denn auch, unter Anlehnung an seinen mecklenburgischen Landsmann und Lieblingsdichter und nach dem Vorbilde von Mining und Lining, seinen eigenen Zwillingen die Namen Bertha und Hertha gegeben hatte. Die dritte junge Dame war Hulda Niemeyer, Pastor Niemeyers einziges Kind; sie war damenhafter als die beiden anderen, dafür aber langweilig und eingebildet, eine lymphatische Blondine, mit etwas vorspringenden, blöden Augen, die trotzdem beständig nach was zu suchen schienen, weshalb denn auch Klitzing von den Husaren gesagt hatte: »Sieht sie nicht aus, als erwarte sie jeden Augenblick den Engel Gabriel?« Effi fand, daß der etwas kritische Klitzing nur zu sehr recht habe, vermied es aber trotzdem, einen Unterschied zwischen den drei Freundinnen zu machen. Am wenigsten war ihr in diesem Augenblick danach zu Sinn, und während sie die Arme auf den Tisch stemmte, sagte sie: »Diese langweilige Stickerei. Gott sei Dank, daß ihr da seid.« »Aber deine Mama haben wir vertrieben«, sagte Hulda. »Nicht doch. Wie sie euch schon sagte, sie wäre doch gegangen; sie erwartet nämlich Besuch, einen alten Freund aus ihren Mädchentagen her, von dem ich euch nachher erzählen muß, eine Liebesgeschichte mit Held und Helden und zuletzt mit Entzagung. Ihr werdet Augen machen und euch wundern. Übrigens habe ich Mamas alten Freund schon drüber in Schwantikow gesehen; er ist Landrat, gute Figur und sehr männlich.«

»Das ist die Hauptsache«, sagte Hertha.

»Freilich ist das die Hauptsache, 'Weiber weiblich, Männer männlich' - das ist, wie ihr wißt, einer von Papas Lieblingssätzen. Und nun helft mir erst Ordnung schaffen auf dem Tisch hier, sonst gibt es wieder eine Strafpredigt.«

than the other two, but boring and conceited, a lymphatic blonde, with somewhat protruding, stupid eyes, that nevertheless seemed to be constantly searching for something, which is why Klitzing of the Hussars had said: "Doesn't she look as if she were expecting the Angel Gabriel to appear at any moment?" Effi thought that the somewhat critical Klitzing was all too right, but she nonetheless avoided making a distinction among the three friends. That was the last thing on her mind at that moment, and as she put her arms on the table, she said, "That boring embroidery. Thank God, you're here."

"But we drove your Mama away," Hulda said.

"Not at all. As she told you, she was leaving anyway; she's expecting a visit from an old friend from her youth. I'll tell you more about it later, a love story of hero and heroine, ending in renunciation. You'll be astounded. By the way, I've already seen my mother's old friend over in Schwantikow. He's a district administrator, he cuts a good figure, very masculine."

"That's the most important thing," Hertha said.

"Of course, that's the most important thing, 'women are feminine, men are masculine'—that's one of my father's favorite sayings, as you know. And now help me tidy this table, or else I'll be in for yet another lecture."

Erinnerung

bei Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Willst du immer weiter schweifen?
Sieh, das Gute liegt so nah.
Lerne nur das Glück ergreifen,
Denn das Glück ist immer da.

Memory

by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Translated by Alex Lynch

Do you want to always wander?
Look, the righteous lay so near.
Learn to just let luck ponder,
For then it will all become clear.

Ich schreibe, weil ich schreibe

bei Hilde Domin

Warum einer tut, was er tut

Manchmal hatte ich selbst Gelegenheit, Gedichte von mir 'anzuwenden.' Von einem solchen Fall will ich noch berichten.

Ich fuhr von Ulm, wo ich als Guest von Inge Aicher-Scholl gelesen hatte, zurück nach Seefeld, unserem Ferienaufenthalt. Es war schon sehr spät, außer mir war nur noch eine Person in dem Zweiterklassewagen. Ich glaube, ich las Fahnen. An der österreichischen Grenze kam der Zoll. Der übliche Ritus. "Haben Sie?" "Nein, ich habe nicht." Eine Formssache heutzutage. Der Beamte ging weiter. Plötzlich war es keine Formssache. Die Frau hinten im Wagen mußte ihr Köfferchen öffnen und befringen lassen, wurde strengstens befragt. Ich war aufmerksam geworden bei dieser ungleichen Behandlung. Sie sah sehr armelig aus. Sind die Schlechtangezogenen besonders der Konterbande verdächtig? "Auch keine Geschenke?" hörte ich ihn fragen. "Wem sollte ich den etwas mitbringen?" "Das klang trostlos überzeugend, der Zollbeamte ließ von ihr ab. Ich stand auf und setzte mich auf die Holzbank ihr gegenüber. "Sie sind Flüchtling?" sagte ich. "Lassen Sie mich in Ruhe," sagte sie. "Ich war auch Flüchtling, ich kenne das." "Lassen Sie mich, ich mag nicht reden." "Wir waren zu zweit, wissen Sie. Und sehr, sehr jung. Das war etwas besser. Aber wir mußten weiter fliehen, immer weiter. Wir flohen vor Hitler. Das war schlimmer. Sind Sie ganz allein?" "Ich habe niemanden." Sie war zuhause Schneiderin gewesen, war als Milchmädchen untergekommen, fühlte sich sehr verloren. Eine Frau Ende Dreizig vielleicht, ein Gesicht, das man nicht wiedererkennen würde. Bläß und mürrisch vor lauter Verlorenheit.

"Ich will Ihnen etwas vorlesen," sagte ich. "Ich habe es beschrieben, wie es ist. Ich bin, was man früher einen Dichter nannte."

"Ich bin nur eine Schneiderin," sagte sie, "und jetzt ein Milchmädchen. Ich lese keine Bücher."

"Es ist ganz einfach," sagte ich. "Und wenn Sie es hören wollen, dann lese ich auch öfter. Sie verstehen es dann schon."

Ich las es ihr dreimal vor. Sonst lese ich gewöhnlich zweimal. Gedichte natürlich, Prosa sonst nicht. Ich las ihr das erste Gedicht meines ersten Bandes.

I Write Because I Write

by Hilde Domin

Translated by Corinna Cappe

Why one does what one does

On occasion, I myself had the opportunity 'to apply' my poems. There is one such case on which I still want to report.

I drove from Ulm, where I had given a reading as a guest of Inge Aicher-Scholl, back to Seefeld, our vacation stay. It was already very late; aside from me, there was only one person in the second-class cabin. I think I was reading proofs. At the Austrian border came customs. The usual rite. "Do you have anything?" "No I don't have anything." A formality in today's age. The officer moved on. Suddenly it wasn't a formality. The woman in the back of the cabin had to allow her suitcase to be opened and rifled through and was interrogated. This unequal treatment caught my attention. She looked very destitute. Are those who aren't well-dressed particularly likely to be carrying contraband? "No gifts?" I heard him ask. "For whom should I bring anything?" That sounded so bleakly convincing that the customs officer moved on. I stood up and went to sit on the wooden bench across from her. "Are you a refugee?" I asked her. "Leave me alone," she said. "I was also a refugee, I'm familiar with that." "Leave me alone, I don't want to talk." "There were two of us, you know. And we were very, very young. That made it a bit better. But we had to continue to flee farther, increasingly farther. We fled from Hitler. That made it worse. Are you all alone?" "I don't have anyone." She was once a seamstress back home, became a milkmaid, and felt very forlorn. A woman in her late thirties, maybe, a face that one would never recognize again. Pale and sour from so much forlornness.

"I want to read something to you," I said. "I wrote it the way it is. I am what one used to call a poet."

"I am only a seamstress," she said, "and now a milkmaid. I don't read any books."

"It is very simple," I said, "And if you want to hear it, then I'll read it several times. I'm sure you'll understand it then."

I read it to her three times. Typically, I read twice. Poems of course, not prose. I read her the first poem of my first collection.

Man muß weggehen können
und doch sein wie ein Baum:
als bliebe die Wurzel im Boden,
als zöge die Landschaft und wir stünden fest...

Und dann las ich ihr ein Stück aus dem Zweiten Paradies. Und obwohl es Prosa war, las ich es dreimal hintereinander, denn sie wollte es mehrfach hören, ganz wie meine Zuhörer in Ulm ja auch. Das war, was ich ihr vorlas:

Sie selber erinnerte sich noch deutlich, mit welchem Mitgefühl sie in der Schule von den Vertriebenen und Verfolgten früherer Jahrhunderte gelernt hatte, unmenschliche Geschehen, aus den Tagen, wo es noch Krankheiten wie Pest und Lepra gab. Man war davon durch einen tiefen Graben getrennt, wie von den Raubtieren im Zoo...Sie wie die andern Kinder der Klasse. Sie waren in Sicherheit, kleine Mädchen mit Locken oder Zöpfen, und lernten alles das, so weit zurücklag, daß es kaum wahr gewesen sein konnte. Sie dachten nicht, daß sie in Sicherheit waren. Sie waren in Sicherheit. Daß eines oder zwei von ihnen schon bestimmt waren, den Raubtieren vorgeworfen zu werden, daß schon ausgelost war, wer von ihnen um sein Leben rennen müsse und wer Zuschauer bleiben dürfe, und daß in Wahrheit von einem schützenden Graben keine Rede sein konnte, das wäre ein unnatürlicher Gedanke gewesen. Nicht einmal, als sie später, schon als Studentin, einen jungen Russen beim Anblick blühenden Flieders vor Heimweh weinen sah, hatte sie etwas anderes als Mitgefühl mit einem fremden, peripheren Geschick. Nichts, wovon man selbst bedroht sein könnte. "Merkwürdig," hatte sie gedacht, "genau wie diese unglücklichen Verfolgten, die ich mir als Kind so zu Herzen nahm. Und jetzt sehe ich einen." Sie erinnerte sich noch genau an die Schulbank, an ihren Platz, den zweiten rechts neben dem Fenster, das schwarzbraune Holz des Pults, und was sie empfunden hatte, als sie zum ersten Mal im Leben von Verfolgungen gehört hatte. Menschen waren lebendig verbrannt worden, in Scheunen und anderen Gebäuden, wo man sie zusammengetrieben hatte. Einige flohen, alles zurücklassend, erfuhren viel später, irgendwo, durch Zufall, von dem Tod der Ihren. Sie machte schüchterne Versuche, den jungen Russen zu trösten, aber er schüttelte den Kopf und sprach von etwas anderem, und sie verstand, daß es keinen Trost für ihn geben konnte.

Sie hatte eine fast ehrfürchtige Scheu vor diesem unheilbaren Unglück. Seit er wegen des Flieders geweint hatte, war ihr immer zumute, als gehe sie neben einem Blinden, den man nicht am Arm zu fassen wagt, um ihn nicht an sein Blindsein zu erinnern. Und doch geht man nebenher, für den Fall, daß er eine Stütze braucht. Dabei rechnet doch keiner selbst mit dem Erblinden. Man kann es fürchten wie ein Äußerstes, allenfalls. Der nie Verstoßene fürchtet das Verstoßenwerden nicht. Der nie Verfolgte nicht

One must be able to go away
and yet be like a tree:
as if the roots stayed in the earth
as if the landscape moved and we stood fast...

And then I read her a piece from the Second Paradise. Even though it was prose, I read it three times in a row, because she wanted to hear it several times, exactly like my audience in Ulm. This is what I read:

She herself still remembered with clarity the compassion she felt when, in school, she learned about the displaced and persecuted people from earlier centuries, inhumane instances from the days when there were still illnesses like the plague and leprosy. One was separated from those times by a deep moat, like from beasts of prey at the zoo...She, just like the other children in her class. They were safe, little girls with curls or braids, and they learned about everything that was so far back in the past that it hardly felt like it could have happened. They didn't think about being safe. They were safe. To think that one or two of them had already been destined to be thrown before the beasts of prey, that this had already been decided, who of them would have to run for her life and who would get to remain a spectator, and that in reality there was no such thing as a protective moat—that would have been an unnatural thought. When later, as a student, she saw a young Russian weeping from homesickness at the sight of blooming lilacs, she felt something other than compassion for this foreign, peripheral fate. It was not something to feel threatened by oneself. "Strange," she had thought, "just like those unfortunate, persecuted people I took to heart as a child. And now I see one." She still remembered the exact school bench, her seat, the second to the right, next to the window, the black-brown wood of the desk, and what she had felt when she learned about persecution for the first time. People had been burned alive, in barns and in other buildings into which they had been herded. Some of them fled, leaving everything behind, and found out much later, somewhere, by coincidence, about the deaths of their loved ones. She made timid attempts to comfort the young Russian, but he shook his head and talked about something else, and she understood that there could be no comforting him.

She had an almost awed reverence toward this incurable misfortune. Since he had wept because of the lilacs, she always felt like she was walking next to a blind man whom one didn't dare touch on the arm, so as not to remind him of his blindness. And still one walks by his side in the event that he needs support. But, in doing so, no one expects that they might go blind themselves. At best, one can fear it the way one fears the worst. Someone who has never been cast out does not fear being cast out. Someone who has never been persecuted does not fear persecution.

die Verfolgung. Heute ist das vielleicht anders, heute ist eine große Brüderlichkeit unter den Menschen. Jeder weiß, daß es ihm widerfahren kann. Weiß es jeder? Es ist an so vielen Beispielen vorgeführt worden, dies Spiel vom Jedermann.

"Wenn man deinen Nachbarn rasiert, seife dein Kinn ein," sagen die Spanier, die das Unglück Auge zu Auge kennen. "Etwas, was Ihnen geschehen ist und Ihnen wieder geschehen könnte," sagen bei uns die Leute vielleicht noch immer und fühlen sich unantastbar. Wie sie selber sich unantastbar gefühlt hatte bis zu dem Tage, wo sie dazugehörte, zu der immer größer werdenden Bruderschaft der Verfolgten. Sind sie nicht—heute—die Mehrheit?

"Da bin ich mit drin," sagte die Frau. Das war nicht mehr dieselbe Frau, mürrisch vor Heimweh und Einsamkeit, ein totes Gesicht, ohne Alter, aber ohne Jugend. Sie strahlte. "Da bin ich mit drin!" Der Zug hielt. Sie sagte weiter nichts, vielleicht sagte sie nicht einmal 'danke,' vielleicht nickte sie nur, strahlend vor Freude. Dann lief sie ins Dunkel in eine Richtung, ich in die andere.

Früher nannte man das den 'Trost der Kunst.' Heute ist der 'Trost,' fast so sehr wie das 'Schöne,' in Verruf geraten, wir sind allergisch gegen die Verschönerung der Realität. Diese Frau aber war keinesfalls ein Konsument schöner Literatur. Nicht der ästhetische Genuß hatte sie erheitert. Sondern, daß sie sich wiedererkannt hatte in dem Erfahrungsmuster, daß sie erlöst war aus ihrer Isolierung, eingefügt in ein gesellschaftliches und politisches 'Muster.' In anderen Worten, daß sie ihre Situation von außen sah und verstand. Das, was man Objektivierung nennt. War diese Frau jetzt eher fähig, ihre Situation zu 'verändern,' als vorher, als sie dumpf an ihr litt? Wer ehrlich ist, weiß, daß sie weder vorher noch nachher 'ändern' konnte, was die Politiker seit Jahrzehnten verdorben haben. Ich sehe sie zur Wahlurne gehen als eine Frau, die die Situation verstanden hat, und intelligenter wählen als im dumpfen Schmerz des nur Leidenden, der auf jede Parole hereinfällt. Aber das ist nicht einmal die Hauptsache. Die Hauptsache ist, daß sie sich eingegliedert fühlen konnte in das große Muster, von dem wir alle nur Teil sind. Und das wir als Modell, vielleicht, durch rationale Anstrengung verbessern werden.

Das machte meine Lesung nachts in dem leeren Zweiterklassabteil zu etwas Sinnvollem. Und deswegen hatte ich mehr Freude dabei als bei Leseabenden vor einem großen, literaturverständigen Publikum.

Nachträglich also bekommt, was man geschrieben hat, weil man es schreiben mußte, das heißtt, um sich die eigenen Erfahrungen zu objektivieren und sie auf ihr Exemplarisches zu bringen, eine Art gesellschaftlicher Funktion. Schreiben ist ohne 'Zweck.' Die 'Zwecke' wachsen dem Geschriebenen zu: auf seinem Weg vom Autor zum Leser.

Maybe it is different today; today there is a great brotherhood among people. Everyone knows that it could happen to them. Does everyone know? It has been performed so many times, this play about the everyman.

"When someone shaves your neighbors, lather your chin," say the Spaniards, who have looked misfortune in the eye. "It is something that has happened to you and could happen again," our people say, perhaps still, and yet they feel immune. The same way she had felt immune until that day, when she belonged to the ever-growing brotherhood of the persecuted. Aren't they—today—the majority?

"I also belong to that group," said the woman. It was not the same woman, sullen from homesickness and loneliness, with the dead look on her face, ageless, but without youth. She beamed. "I also belong to that group!" The train stopped. She didn't say anything else, maybe she didn't even say 'thank you,' maybe she just nodded, radiating joy. Then she walked into the darkness in one direction, and I in the other.

Formerly, one called this the 'comfort of art.' Nowadays, 'comfort' has been discredited almost as much as 'beauty;' we are allergic to the embellishment of reality. But this woman was no consumer of beautiful literature. It was not the aesthetic pleasure that had cheered her up. Rather, it was the fact that she had recognized herself in this pattern of experience, that she was liberated from her isolation, that she was included in a social and political 'paradigm.' In other words, that she saw her situation from the outside and understood it. We call this objectification. Was this woman now more capable of 'changing' her situation than before, when she suffered, numb from pain? Whoever is honest knows that neither beforehand nor afterwards could she 'change' what politicians have corrupted for decades. I see her going to the ballot box as a woman who has understood the situation at hand and voting more intelligently than someone who feels the dull ache of long-suffering and falls for any catchy slogan. But this is not the main point. The main point is that she could feel integrated into the big pattern of which we each are only a part, and that, as a model, we will perhaps improve through rational efforts.

All this turned my reading in the empty second-class cabin that night into something meaningful. And for this reason, it brought me more joy than the evening readings in front of large, well-read audiences.

Subsequently, what one has written because one had to write it—that is, in order to objectify for oneself one's own experiences and to establish their model character—gains a type of social function. Writing is without 'purpose.' The 'purposes' grow toward the written word: on its way from the author to the reader.

Hebrew

ASAPH WAGNER
ARTHUR KILONGO

אהוב להיות בבית

מילים: אריק איינשטיין
לחן: מיקי גבריאלוב

יש אנשים שמטפסים על הרים
יש אנשים שצנונים מבקרים
יש אנשים שוכבים על סוסים
ויש כאלה שאגונאים מרוחקים

אבל אני אהוב להיות בבית
עם התה והليمון והספרים הישנים
כן, אני אהוב להיות בבית
עם אותה האהובה ועם אותן הרגלים
אהוב להיות בבית

יש אנשים שצדדים נמרים
יש אנשים שחווילים פנויים
יש אנשים שבונים מגדלם
ויש כאלה שאסירים חדיםם

אבל אני אהוב להיות בבית
עם התה והليمון והספרים הישנים
כן, אני אהוב להיות在家
עם אותה האהובה ועם אותן הרגלים
אהוב להיות在家

יש אנשים שתמיד מփשים
יש אנשים שתמיד מגילם
יש אנשים שהווילים בגודל
לא מותרים וורצים את המל

אבל אני אהוב להיות在家
עם התה והليمון והספרים הישנים
כן, אני אהוב להיות在家
עם אותה האהובה ועם אותן הרגלים
אהוב להיות在家

Love Being Home

by Arik Einstein & Mickey Gabrialov
Translated by Asaph Wagner

There are those that climb up mountains
There are those that jump down from heights
There are those that ride on horses
There are those that speed over miles

But I, I like being home
With the tea and the lemon and the old dusty books
Yeah, I love being home
With the same lover and the same quirks
Love being home

There are those that hunt down tigers
There are those that dive deep for pearls
There are those that build up towers
There are those that feast for ages

But I, I like being home
With the tea and the lemon and the old dusty books
Yeah, I love being home
With the same lover and the same quirks
Love being home

There are those that are always on the look out
There are those that always find out
There are those that are never going small
Never giving up and wanting all

But I, I like being home
With the tea and the lemon and the old dusty books
Yeah, I love being home
With the same lover and the same quirks
Love being home

עוף גוזל

מלחין: אריק איינשטיין
לחן: מיקי גבריאלוב

הגוזלים של עזבו את הקן
פשו כבאים ועוֹפָה
אני ציפור קנה נשרת בקן
מקווה מאוד שהכל יהיה בסדר

תמיד ידעתי שיבוא היום
שבו צור ליהפוך
אל עשיין זה ככה אבל פתאום
از מה הפלא שאני קצת דוגא

עוף גוזל
חתוך אוֹת השמיים
טוו לאוֹן שבא לֵר
רק אל תשכח
יש נשר בשמיים
גור לֵר

עשיין נשארנו לבדנו בקן
אבל אהנו בחוץ
תקפי ווּתְחַקְתִּי תְּגִיאֵי לֵר
אל דוגא בירוד כף להזדוננו

עוף גוזל
חתוך אוֹת השמיים
טוו לאוֹן שבא לֵר
רק אל תשכח
יש נשר בשמיים
גור לֵר

אני יודע שככה זה בטבע
וגם אני עזרתי קן
אבל עשיין כשבגרה הרעה
אל מחני קצת בגרון
מחניך קצת בגרון

עוף גוזל
חתוך אוֹת השמיים
טוו לאוֹן שבא לֵר
רק אל תשכח
יש נשר בשמיים
גור לֵר

Fledgling Fly

by Arik Einstein & Mickey Gabrialov
Translated by Asaph Wagner

My nestlings left the nest
Spread their wings and flew
And I'm an old bird, staying in the nest
I deeply hope all will be well

I always knew the day would come
In which we need to say goodbye
But it came to me now swiftly
So no wonder I'm a little concerned

Fledgling fly
Soar up to the heights
Ascend to where you wanted to
Just don't forget
There's a vulture in the heavens
Watch yourself

Now we stayed alone in the nest
But we remain together
Hug me hard, and whisper to me, yes,
don't worry, it's fun to grow old as one

Fledgling fly
Soar up to the heights
Ascend to where you wanted to
Just don't forget
There's a vulture in the heavens
Watch yourself

I know it's like this in nature
I left a nest as well
But now that the moment has come
It's a bit hard to breathe
A bit hard to breathe

Fledgling fly
Soar up to the heights
Ascend to where you wanted to
Just don't forget
There's a vulture in the heavens
Watch yourself

תַּנְיָה יִד

יד יוני רכטר

תני לי יד
 און ליל מלבך עוד בית
 און ליל מלבך עוד אף אחד
 תני לי יד.

תַּנְיָה יִד
 כדי שלא אפחד בדרכ
 כדי שלא אהיה יותר בלבד
 תַּנְיָה יִד.

זה רק אנחנו שניים
 זה רק אני ואת
 והעולם אינם נגדנו
 ולא בונן.

וככה לפוי יגולתנו
 יחד נאהב ונכאב
 אני ואת, ואת...

תַּנְיָה יִד
 כדי שלא אפחד בדרכ
 כדי שלא אהיה יותר בלבד
 תַּנְיָה יִד.

זה רק אנחנו שניים
 זה רק אני ואת
 גם במרחב בין ובין
 את לא בלבד.

וככה כפוי יגולתנו
 יחד נאהב ונכאב
 אני ואת, ואת...

תַּנְיָה יִד
 כדי שלא אפחד בדרכ
 כדי שלא אהיה יותר בלבד
 תַּנְיָה יִד...

Give Me a Hand

by Yoni Rechter
 Translated by Arthur Kilongo

Give me a hand
 I have no other home but you
 I have no one but you
 Give me a hand.

Give me your hand
 So that I would not be afraid on the way
 So I will not be alone anymore
 Give me your hand.

It's just us both
 It's just me and you
 And the world is not against us
 And not for.

And so according to our ability
 Together we love and suffer
 Me and you, and you...

Give me your hand
 So that I would not be afraid on the way
 So I will not be alone anymore
 Give me your hand.

It's just us both
 It's just me and you
 Even in the distance between you and me
 You are not alone.

And so according to our ability
 Together we love and hurt
 Me and you, and you...

Give me your hand
 So that I would not be afraid on the way
 So I will not be alone anymore
 Give me your hand...

Hungarian

SZILU SCHROFF
REA ABEL

Karácsony

Endre Ady

Harang csendül,
Ének zendül,
Messze zsong a hálánekn,
Az én kedves kis falumban
Karácsonykor
Magába száll minden lélek.

Minden ember
Szeretettel
Borul földre imádkozni,
Az én kedves kis falumba
A Messiás
Boldogságot szokott hozni.

A templomba
Hosszú sorba
Indulnak el ifjak, vének,
Az én kedves kis falumban
Hálát adnak
A magasság Istenének.

Minthá itt lenn
A nagy Isten
Szent kegyelme súgna, szállna,
Az én kedves, kis falumban
Minden szívben
Csak szeretet lakik máma.

Christmas

by Endre Ady

Translated by Szilu Schröff

Bell heard
Singing heard
Far away, a ding-dong, a thanks song
In my nice, little village
At Christmastime
All souls fly into themselves.

Every person
With love
Crouches to the ground to pray
In my nice, little village
The Messiah
Is bringing happiness.

In the church
In a long line
Youngsters and elders start off
They give thanks
For the God of greatness.

Dawn is here like
The great God's
Holy grace may be whispering, flying
In my nice little village
In every heart
Lives just love today.

Körúti hajnal

Toth Arpad

Vak volt a hajnal, szennyes, szürke. Még
Üveges szemmel aludtak a boltok,
S lomhán sőpörtek a vad kővidék
Felvert porában az álmos vicék,
Mint lassú dsinnek, rosszkedvű koboldok.

Egyszerre két tűzfal között kigyúlt
A keleti ég váratlan zsarátja:
Minden üvegre száz napocska hullt,
S az aszfalt szennýén szerteszét gurult
A Végtelen Fény milliom karátja.

Boulevard Dawn

by Toth Arpad

Translated by Rea Abel

The dawn was blind, impure, grey. The
Grocery stores still sleeping with glazed eyes
The sleepy sleepy custodians swept sluggishly in
The whipped dust of the wild stone field
Like slow djinns, glum goblins.

Abruptly, between two firewalls
The sudden ember of the east sky lit up:
A hundred little suns fell down into each glass
And the Endless Glare's million carats spiraled over
On the dirt of the asphalt.

Italian

JACKIE ZELLER

Le città invisibili

di Italo Calvino

Se toccando a terra a Trude non avessi letto il nome della città scritto a grandi lettere, avrei creduto d'essere arrivato allo stesso aeroporto da cui ero partito. I sobborghi che mi fecero attraversare non erano diversi da quegli altri, con le stesse case gialline e verdoline. Seguendo le stesse frecce si girava le stesse aile delle stesse piazze. Le vie del centro mettevano in mostra mercanzie imballaggi insegne che non cambiavano in nulla. Era la prima volta che venivo a Trude, ma conoscevo già l'albergo in cui mi capitò di scendere; avevo già sentito e detto i miei dialoghi con compratori e venditori di ferraglia; altre giornate uguali a quella erano finite guardando attraverso gli stessi bicchieri gli stessi ombelichi che ondeggiavano.

Perché venire a Trude? mi chiedevo. E già volevo ripartire.

– Puoi riprendere il volo quando vuoi, – mi dissero, – ma arriverai a un'altra Trude, uguale punto per punto, il mondo è ricoperto da un'unica Trude che non comincia e non finisce, cambia sólo il nome all'aeroporto.

Invisible Cities

by Italo Calvino

Translated by Jackie Zeller

If, landing in Trude, I hadn't read the name of the city written in big letters, I would have believed I'd arrived at the same airport from which I had taken off. The suburbs they took me through were not different from the others, with the same light yellow and light green houses. Following the same turn signals, I went around the same flower beds in the same piazzas. The streets of the city center showed off merchandise, packages, signs that didn't change at all. It was the first time that I had come to Trude, but I already knew the hotel in which I wound up settling; I had already heard and said my conversations with buyers and sellers of scrap metal. Other days the same as this one had finished watching the same swaying navels through the same drinking glasses.

'Why come to Trude?' I asked myself. And I already wanted to leave.

"You can take the flight again when you want," they told me, "but you'll arrive at another Trude, identical detail for detail. The world is covered by a single Trude that never begins and never ends; only the name of the airport changes."

Japanese

DANHUI CHEN
MIKIKO YAMANAKA

ありがとう

作: 谷川 俊太郎

私 ありがとう
限りない世界に向かって私は咲く
私に私をくれたのは?
でも誰だろう 何だろう

一度つきりしか言わなければ
口に出すのは照れくさいから
私も生んできれて
お母さん ありがとう
明日は散ってしまうかも知れない
でも匂いも色ももう私の一部

花 ありがとう
今日も咲いていてくれて
空 ありがとう
今日も私の上にいてくれて
曇っていても分かるよ
宇宙へと青くひろがっているのが

Thank you

by Shuntaro Tanikawa

Translated by Mikiko Yamanaka

Sky. Thank you.
For being above me again today.
Even if it's cloudy, I know
Your blue spreads into the universe.

Flower. Thank you.
For blooming again today.
You may fall down tomorrow.
But your scent and color are already part of me.

Mother. Thank you.
For giving birth to me.
I'm too shy to speak, so
I say it only once.

But who, what
gave myself to me?
I whisper to the unlimited world.
For me. Thank you.

羅生門

作: 芥川 龍之介

Rashōmon

by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa
Translated by Danhui Chen

ある日の暮方の事である。一人の下人が、羅生門の下で雨やみを待っていた。

広い門の下には、この男のほかに誰もいない。ただ、所々丹塗の剥げた、大きな円柱に、蟋蟀が一匹とまっている。羅生門が、朱雀大路にある以上は、この男のほかにも、雨やみをする市女笠や揉烏帽子が、もう二三人はありそうなものである。それが、この男のほかには誰もいない。

何故かと云うと、この二三年、京都には、地震とか辻風とか火事とか饑饉とか云う災がつづいて起った。そこで洛中のさびれ方は一通りではない。旧記によると、仏像や仏具を打碎いて、その丹にがつたり、金銀の箔がついたりした木を、路ばたにつみ重ねて、薪の料しろに売っていたと云う事である。洛中がその始末であるから、羅生門の修理などは、元より誰も捨てて顧る者がなかった。するとその荒れ果てたのをよい事にして、狐狸が棲む。盜人が棲む。とうとうしまいには、引取り手のない死人を、この門へ持って来て、棄てて行くと云う習慣さえ出来た。そこで、日の目が見えなくなると、誰でも気味を悪るがって、この門の近所へは足ふみをしない事になってしまったのである。

その代りまた鴉がどこからか、たくさん集って来た。昼間見ると、その鴉が何羽ともく輪を描いて、高い鷹尾のまわりを囁きながら、飛びまわっている。ことに門の上の空が、夕焼けであかくなる時には、それが胡麻をまいたようにはっきり見えた。鴉は、勿論、門の上にある死人の肉を、啄みに来る所以である。——もっとも今日は、刻限が遅いせいか、一羽も見えない。ただ、所々、崩れかかった、そうしてその崩れ目に長い草のはえた石段の上に、鴉の糞ふんが、点々と白くこびりついているのが見える。下人は、七段ある石段の一番上の段に、洗いざらした紺の襖の尻を据えて、右の頬に出来た、大きな面疱にきびを気にしながら、ぼんやり、雨のふるの眺めていた。

作者はさっき、「下人が雨やみを待っていた」と書いた。しかし、下人は雨がやんでも、格別どうしようと云う当ではない。ふだんなら、勿論、主人の家へ帰る可き筈である。所がその主人からは、四五日前に眼を出された。前にも書いたように、当時京都の町は一通りならず衰微していた。今この下人が、永年、使われていた主人から、眼を出されたのも、実はこの衰微の小さな余波にほかならない。だから「下人が雨やみを待っていた」と云うよりも「雨にふりこめられた下人が、行き所がなくて、途方にくれていた」と云う方が、適当である。その上、今日の空模様も少からず、この平安朝の下人のSentimentalismeに影響した。申の刻下がりからふり出した雨は、いまだに上るけしきがない。そこで、下人は、何をおいても差当り明日の暮しはどうにかしようとして——云わばどうにもならない事を、どうにかしようとして、とりとめもない考えをたどりながら、さっきから朱雀大路にふる雨の音を、聞くともなく聞いていたのである。

雨は、羅生門をつんで、遠くから、ざあっと云う音をあつめて来る。夕闇は次第に空を低くして、見上げると、門の屋根が、斜につき出した甍の先に、重たくす暗い雲を支えている。

どうにもならない事を、どうにかするためには、手段を選んでいる違いとはまはない。選んでいれば、築土ついじの下か、道ばたの土の上で、餓死にをするばかりである。そうして、この門の上へ持てて来て、犬のように棄てられてしまうばかりである。選ばないとすれば——下人の考えは、何度も同じ道を低徊していかいした揚句に、やっとこの局所へ逢着した。

This story takes place one day during the evening. A servant was waiting for the rain to stop, under the the Rashōmon gate.¹

Under this large gate, there was no one besides the servant. Only a cricket remained on a big pillar with its red paint peeling off. At the Rashōmon gate located on Suzaku Avenue, there usually would be two or three women or men, wearing straw hats² or headgear³ waiting for the rain to stop. Yet, there was nobody other than the servant.

The reason why is that during the past two or three years, Kyoto had continually experienced disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and famines. As a result, the city had become desolate. According to old records, people sometimes went to the Rashōmon gate and destroyed the statue of Buddha inside, took the wood coated in crimson paint and gold foil, and sold it alongside the road as firewood. Phenomena like this happened frequently in the city, so nobody wanted to repair the Rashōmon gate anymore. Thereupon, Rashōmon became ever more desolate, so first came the foxes, and then the thieves, to build their settlements by the gate. In the end, people even took corpses that no one claimed and dumped them at the gate—this behavior became routine. Because of this, out of fear, after sunset nobody would go near the Rashōmon gate.

As there were less humans, many crows, which no one knew where they came from, started to gather around the Rashōmon gate. In the daytime, these crows circled and chirped around the edge of the gate. In the nighttime, the shape of crows looked almost like black sesame seeds scattering across the sky. They were coming to peck at the corpses at Rashōmon. However, on that day, there were no crows to be found nearby since it was getting late. Only the white, spot-like excrement of the crows could be seen everywhere on the broken rocks, where grass was growing out from the cracks. The servant sat on the top of the seven-level stone steps, wearing his old dark blue coat, which had faded from being washed too many times and used one of his hands to cover the pimple on his right side of

1 “羅生門”: a gate that was built at the southern end of Suzaku Avenue in the city of Heijō-kyō (Nara) and Heian-kyō (Kyoto)

2 “市女笠”: a type of straw hat worn by upper class women during the Heian period in Japan.

3 “揉烏帽子”: a black-lacquered headgear originally worn by court nobles in ancient Japan

しかしこの「すれば」は、いつまでたっても、結局「すれば」であつた。下人は、手段を選ばないという事を肯定しながらも、この「すれば」のかたをつけるために、当然、その後に来る可き「盗人となるよりほかに仕方がない」と云う事を、積極的に肯定するだけの、勇気が出でにいたのである。下人は、大きな嘘をして、それから、大儀そうに立上った。夕冷えのする京都は、もう火桶が欲しいほどの寒さである。風は門の柱と柱との間を、夕闇と共に遠慮なく、吹きぬける。丹塗にぬりの柱にとまっていた蟋蟀も、もうどこかへ行ってしまった。下人は、頸をちぢめながら、山吹の汗衫かざみに重ねた、紺の襷の肩を高くして門のまわりを見まわした。雨風の患れえのない、人目にかかる惧のない、一晩楽になられそうな所があれば、そこでともかくも、夜を明かそうと思ったからである。すると、幸い門の上の樓へ上がる、幅の広い、これも丹を塗った梯子はしごが眼についた。上なら、人がいたにしても、どうせ死人ばかりである。下人はそこで、腰にさげた聖柄の太刀たちが鞘走らないように気をつけながら、藁草履をはいた足を、その梯子の一番下の段へふみかけた。

cheek as he looked dimly out at the rain.

I just wrote, "A servant was waiting for the rain to stop," but I would say this servant had no particular idea of where he could go after the rain stopped. Normally, he would go back to his master's house, but he was fired four or five days ago. As I mentioned before, at that time, the whole condition of the city of Kyoto had fallen into dispair. Fired by a master he had been working for so long was also a result of the economic decline. Therefore, rather than saying, "The servant was waiting for the rain to stop," it is more correct to say, "Since he was troubled by this sudden rain, he had no place to go, and therefore no choice but to stay under the gate of Rashōmon." Moreover, this weather also influenced the Sentimentalism⁴ of this Heian servant. The rain had started raining at the hour of the monkey and it didn't look like it would stop. The servant kept thinking about where he could live another day and what he should do with his life as he listened to the rain fall on Suzaku Avenue.

The rain arrived and wrapped around the Rashōmon gate, blustering with a furious voice. The dusk gradually lowered from the sky, as if the heavy, shadowy clouds were propped up by the cornice of the inclined roof tile.

If people want to do something for things that is almost impossible to be done, people must do whatever is necessary. If one does not do what is necessary, you will probably die from starvation on the side of a random road and be tossed like a dog at the Rashōmon gate. If he end up stealing... He kept struggling and made several detours in his mind and finally he got to an conclusion that he would become a robber. But no matter how much he struggled with questions like, "If I do this," "If I do that," in the end they were all just possibilities. He admitted to himself that he would do anything that he needed to survive, but since there was always an "if" inside his mind, when he thought of becoming a robber, he found he didn't have enough courage to actually do so.

He sneezed loudly and languidly stood up. At night the city was cold enough for people to use their wooden braziers to warm themselves. The wind came with the darkness, aggressively blowing through every gap between the pillars. The cricket, which had previously been perched upon the big red pillar, also disappeared and went without a trace.

The servant shrank his neck down into his bright yellow shirt, adjusted his dark blue coat on his shoulders, and took a look inside the gate. If there was a place free from rain and people's attention, he could stay there through the night until morning. He found a big, red staircase that connected to an upper floor. He thought that there must be many dead bodies on the upper floor. He was mindful of his sword hanging from his waist, as he didn't want it to fall onto the floor. He stepped up onto the first stair with the straw sandals on his feet.

4 Sentimentalisme: the exact French word used in the original text

Latin

KAITLIN KARMEN

Annales

Tacitus

4.32-4.33

Pleraque eorum quae rettuli quaeque referam parva forsitan et levia memoratu videri non nescius sum: sed nemo annalis nostros cum scriptura eorum contendenter qui veteres populi Romani res composuerent. ingentia illi bella, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges, aut si quando ad interna paeaverterent, discordias consulum adversum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatum certamina libero egressu memorabant: nobis in arto et inglorius labor; immota quippe aut modice lassitata pax, maestae Urbis res et princeps preferendi imperi incuriosus erat. non tamen sine usu fuerit intropiscere illa primo aspectu levia ex quis magnarium saepe rerum motus oriuntur.

Nam cunctas nationes et urbes populus aut primores aut singuli regunt: delecta ex iis et consociata rei publicae forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest. igitur ut olim plebe valida, vel cum patres pollerent, noscenda vulgi natura et quibus modis temperanter haberetur, senatusque et optimatum ingenia qui maxime perdidicerant, callidi temporum et sapientes credebantur, sic converso statu neque alia re Romana quam si unus imperitet, haec conquiri tradique in rem fuerit, quia pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum eventis docentur. ceterum ut profutura, ita minimum oblectationis adferunt. nam situs gentium, varietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum: nos saeva iussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium et easdem exitii causas coniungimus, obvia rerum similitudine et satietate. tum quod antiquis scriptoribus rarus obtrectator, neque refert cuiusquam Punicas Romanasne acies laetius extuleris: at multorum qui Tiberio regente poenam vel infamias subiere posteri manent. utque familiae ipsae iam extinctae sint, repieres qui ob similitudinem morum aliena malefacta sibi obiectari potent. etiam gloria ac virtus infensos habet, ut nimis ex propinquuo diversa arguens. sed ad inceptum redeo.

Annals

by Tacitus
Translated by Kaitlin Karmen

4.32-4.33

I am not unaware that many of the things which I have related and which I will relate seem perhaps small and trivial to mention. But may no one compare our annals with the writing of those men who composed the old histories of the Roman people. Those men recounted enormous wars, the storming of cities, the routing and seizing of kings, or, if ever they turned to internal affairs, they recounted in a free digression the strife of consuls against the tribunes, land and grain laws, the struggles of the common people and the nobility. But our task is undistinguished and limited. For in fact peace was steadfast or disturbed only slightly. But the affairs of the city were grim and the leader of the expanding empire was negligent. To examine those things which are trivial at first glance but out of which the movements of great things often arise, will not have been without use.

Now the people, either leaders or individuals, rule all peoples and cities. The system of the republic, having been selected and joined out of those matters, is more easily praised than invented — or if it comes to be, it is hardly able to be permanent. Then as it was once necessary when the plebeian class was strong to know the nature of the common people and how to control it moderately, or when the patricians were thriving, those who had best learned the natures of the senate and the aristocracy were believed to be experts of the times and wise, so too is it now, since the public order has been changed and the Roman republic is nothing else than one man ruling. For these matters to be collected and recounted could be advantageous, because few people distinguish through wisdom the honorable from the base, the useful from the harmful. Many people are taught by the events of other people. But although these matters will be beneficial, nevertheless they bring the smallest enjoyment. For the locations of families, the variety of battles, the renowned deaths of leaders hold and refresh the mind of readers. We unite the cruel orders, uninterrupted prosecutions, deceptive friendships, the harm of innocent people and the same causes of the same outcomes, despite the monotony and abundance met in these matters. Then again, it is the case that a critic of ancient writers is rare, and it doesn't matter to anyone whether you discuss more favorably the Carthaginian or the Roman battle lines. But the descendants of many who endured punishment and disgraces during the reign of Tiberius remain. And although those families are now deceased, you will still find those who think that, because of similarity, others' evils are charged against them. Even glory and virtue have opponents, because they censure things different by so small a margin. But I return to what I have begun.

Etiam si bella externa et obitas pro re publica mortis tanta casuum similitudine memorarem, meque ipsum satias cepisset aliorumque taedium expectarem, quamvis honestos civium exitus, tristis tamen et continuos aspernantium: at nunc patientia servilis tantumque sanguinis domi perditum fatigant animum et maestitia restringunt. Neque aliam defensionem ab iis quibus ista noscentur exegerim quam ne oderim tam segniter pereuntis. ira illa numinum in res Romanas fuit, quam non, ut in cladibus exercituum aut captivitate urbium, semel edito transire licet. detur hoc inlustrium virorum posteritati, ut quo modo exequiis a promisca sepulcra separantur, ita in traditione supremorum accipient habeantque propriam memoriam.

Even I were recounting wars in others lands and deaths met on behalf of the republic with so great a monotony of misfortunes, weariness of excess would have overcome even me, and I would wait for the repugnance of others, who would despise the sad and unending deaths of the citizens, however honorable they might be. As it is, servile endurance and such great wasting of blood at home exhausts the mind and oppresses it with grief. And I could not demand any other defense from those who will come to know these matters than that I do not hate those perishing so feebly. That was the anger of the gods against the Roman republic, which is not able to be ignored after publishing it once, as is the case in the destructions of armies or in the occupation of cities. Let this be given to the descendants of the distinguished men that, just as in funeral rites they are distinguished from the indiscriminate burial, so in the record of their final moments they receive and hold a special remembrance.

Latvian

FRANCIS KARAGODINS

Latviešu tautas dziesmas

Baltu linu grožus viju,
Sudrabā mērcēdams;
Cik grožoju kumelīnu,
Tik rociņas nomazgāju.

II

Labāk malu timsiņāji:
Timsā Dievs palīdzēja;
Timsā sēd miļa Laimē
Dzirnu galda galiņā.

III

Šķil uguni Pērkonīts
Sausas egles virsaunē:
Izmirkuši, sasaluši
Liela kunga darbinieki.

Latvian Folk Verses

by an unknown author
Translated by Francis Karagodins

Reins I wreathed with linen white,
Dipping them in silver;
As many horses as I reined,
As many hands I washed.

II

Better in the dark I ground,
For God assisted in the dark,
And in the dark dear Fortune sat,
At the milling-table's head.

III

The darling mighty thunder god
Strikes fire upon the pine tree dry:
A great lord's workers wet and cold.

Russian

ALEXANDR FEDCHIN
ANDRES MERAZ
SILVIE LUNDGREN
MORGAN BIELAWSKI
TESS MALOVA

Деление на ноль

Горчев Д.А.

Когда я ещё был маленький мальчик, мне было очень интересно, почему нельзя делить на ноль.

То есть меня не удивлял сам факт запрета — уже тогда мне было понятно, что в этом мире вообще ничего нельзя делать интересного и приятного, а наоборот, нужно делать скучное и противное. Умываться, например, нужно, а побрызгаться уже нельзя. Но мне было интересно, что же будет, если всё же на этот ноль разделить? Ничего не будет, отвечали взрослые, потому что нельзя делить, понимаешь, НЕЛЬЗЯ. Ну так я понимаю, что нельзя. В розетку, например, пальцы тоже совать нельзя, но всё равно ведь можно сунуть, и тогда убьёт током. И вообще, как правило, все идиотские запреты взрослых как-то всё же обосновывались — глисты там подхватишь или дядя будет ругаться. А тут нельзя делить, и всё. Видимо, думал я, тогда произойдёт что-то такое страшное, что даже взрослые боятся об этом говорить.

А потом, гораздо позже, я узнал, что если разделить на ноль, получится бесконечность. И ничего в этой бесконечности нет страшного — так просто, циферка, восьмёрка на боку. Бывает плюс бесконечность, бывает минус. Её даже можно складывать и вычитать. Только бесконечность плюс бесконечность всё равно будет бесконечность, хотя чисто по ощущениям, две бесконечности, конечно, больше, чем одна. И бесконечность минус бесконечность тоже будет бесконечность, небольшая, но всё равно без конца и края.

И совершенно непонятно, зачем от меня это так долго скрывали. Видимо, люди ничего вообще не понимают в бесконечности, а когда они чего-то не понимают, то это сразу нельзя.

Dividing by Zero

by Dmitry Gorchev

Translated by Aleksandr Fedchin

When I was a little boy, I kept wondering why you are not allowed to divide by zero.

That is, it was not that the prohibition itself surprised me: by that time I already knew that in this world nothing pleasant or interesting is allowed; no, on the contrary, you are only supposed to do the boring and disgusting things. You have to wash your own face, for instance, but you must not splash somebody else's. But I was still wondering, 'What would happen if I did try to divide by zero?' "Nothing," the adults answered, "because you can't divide by zero, do you understand? YOU CANNOT." Well, I get it, I know that it is not allowed. Now, you are not allowed to put your fingers in a light socket, but you could do that and would get an electric shock and die. As a rule, all those stupid prohibitions have an explanation: you'll get worms or someone else will get angry. But with this, just don't do it and that's the end of it. It must be the case, I thought, that something terrible will happen. Something that even adults are afraid to talk about.

And then, much later on, I learned that if you do divide by zero you'll get infinity. There is nothing terrible in this infinity: it's just a number, an eight on the side. There is plus and minus infinity. You can even add two of them together or subtract one from itself. It is only that infinity plus infinity is still infinity, even though intuitively it must be two infinities, certainly more than one. And infinity minus infinity is also an infinity, a small one, but still one without limits.

And it is absolutely unclear why they kept this a secret from me. Apparently, people don't understand anything about infinities, and when they don't understand something, they prohibit it.

ДОН-ХУАН

Сильвия Лундгрен

На заре морозной
Под шестой березой
За углом у церкви
Ждите, Дон-Хуан!

Но, увы, клянусь вам
Женихом и жизнью
Что в моей отчизне
Негде целовать!

Нет у нас фонтанов,
И замерз колодец,
А у богородиц —
Строгие глаза.

И чтобы не слышать
Пустяков — красоткам,
Есть у нас презвонкий
Колокольный звон.

Так вот и жила бы,
Да боюсь — состарюсь,
Да и вам, красавец,
Край мой не к лицу.

Ах, в дохе медвежьей
И узнать вас трудно,
Если бы не губы
Ваши, Дон-Хуан!

19 февраля 1917 г.

Don Juan

by Marina Tsvetaeva

Translated by Andres Meraz

At the frosty dawn,
Beneath the sixth birch,
Beyond the corner by the church,
Wait for me, Don Juan!

But alas, I swear to you,
On my fiancé and my life,
In my fatherland,
There is nowhere to kiss!

We have no fountains,
And the well has frozen over,
And the Virgin Icons —
They have stern eyes.

And so the beauties
Do not hear nonsense,
We have the ringing
Toll of the bells.

That is how I would live.
But I am afraid — I am growing old,
And you, my handsome one —
My country does not suit you.

Ah, and in a bearskin coat,
It would be hard to recognize you,
If it were it not for those lips —
Your lips, Don Juan!

19 February 1917

Я приехала в Петербург :: Учёба за границей

Сильвия Лундгрен

Вот я в Питере,
пролетев через моря,
провожу время в kraю мостов,
чтобы через старо-новое окно
взглянуть на обширный мир.

I Came to Petersburg :: Study Aboard

by Silvie Lundgren
Translated by the author

Here am I in Piter,
Having flown across the sea
To spend a while in this land of bridges
And, through an old-new window,
This expansive world to see.

Небезопасно!

Сильвия Лундгрен

УВАЖАЕМЫЕ ПАССАЖИРЫ!
ДЕРЖИТЕСЬ ЗА ПОРУЧНИ!
ИНАЧЕ ВЫ ВСЕ УПАДЁТЕ,

И ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫЙ ТРАНСПОРТ
МОЖЕТ СКОРО ПРИВЕЗТИ
К ОБЩЕСТВЕННОЙ СМЕРТИ.

Not Without Danger!

by Silvie Lundgren

Translated by the author

DEAR PASSENGERS,
PLEASE HOLD ON TO THE HANDRAILS,
OR ELSE YOU WILL ALL GO TUMBLING

AND THIS PUBLIC TRANSPORT
MIGHT SOON GREATLY COME
TO RESEMBLE A PUBLIC MORT.

Inspired by the constant announcements made in both Russian and English in many Petersburg buses, trolley buses and metro cars, and by the occasion of helping a woman on a bus who had lost her balance.

Шутливоэ стихотворение

Сильвия Лундгрен

Ела я с белкой,
которая ела вилкой
миску щей со сметаной
в лесной комнате уютной.

Спросила я белочку:
— Ты ешь так странно, почему?
И удар получила я по носу.
— Нет ни одной ложки в лесу!

Squirrely Poem

by Silvie Lundgren

Translated by the author

Ate I with a squirrel
Who was eating with a fork
A bowl of cabbage soup with sour cream
In a cozy woodland room.

Asked I of the little squirrelly,
“Why are you so eating strangely?”
And received I a whack upon the nose.
“Not even one spoon is there in the woods!”

Одноногий кролик

Морган Белавски

Утро было таким холодным, что было мято во рту. Я сидел на переднем крыльце. Зябликов не было, и смотреть было не на что. Снег, как пустыня, продолжался вечно. Пустыня в комочках. Когда я встал, чтобы войти в дом, то скрипнул. Будто статуя ожила.

Мать делала пельмени. Вокруг поднимался пар. «И что?» спросила она меня. «Ничего», — ответил я. «Холодно».

«Масла нет. Сходишь?» спросила она, не отводя глаз от пельменей. «Зачем тебе масло?»

«Надо, Николай Андреевич, надо».

Надо так надо. Я пошел. На дворе было несколько кроличьих следов. Я их сосчитал: пятнадцать. Почему пятнадцать? Кролик, что ли, одноногий?

«Доброе утро!» Это я постучал в дверь. Снежинки все еще падали. Петр Иванович высунулся за дверь, а за ним — запах его табака.

«Ну?» сказал он. «Мать масла просит».

Петр Иванович ушел, вернулся с маслом. Я отдал ему деньги и спросил, видел ли он одноногого кролика.

«А, этого. Видел. Тоже масла просил». Дверь закрылась.

Яшел и искал следы. Потом мать выглянула за дверь и закричала: «Масло-то сегодня нужно, герой». Пришлось идти домой. Там я приkleился к окну.

Беда с этими снежными кроликами. Они точно, как снег. Белые. Легкие. И молчат. Поймать их рукой невозможно. Какой он, мой кролик? Быстрый, как все? Такой же невидимый? Или невидимый совсем, потому что одноногий? Нет, он изящный и пропорчный, я знаю. И я таким тоже буду.

Когда мать залаяла на меня, я не стал рычать в ответ. Я только носом дернул и побежал. Дом у нас маленький, поэтому я не мог убежать лишь недалеко. На чердак. Там только я, кровать и круглое окно. Матери там нет.

Но она позвонила мне. «Николай, обедать пора». Я ей ничего не ответил. На улице темнело.

Я сидел на кровати и смотрел в мутное круглое окно. И тогда что-то мелькнуло в снегу. Это был он! Мой кролик! Двуногий, правда. «И что мне теперь делать?» Подумал я. Стало грустно.

«Давай, спускайся-ка вниз», — сказала мама. «Не глупи, Николай Андреевич. Иди сюда, попробуй. Вот торт к твоему дню рождения испекла».

The One-Legged Rabbit

by Morgan Bielawski

Translated by the author

Morning was so cold, it almost tasted minty. I sat on the front porch but there were no finches and nothing to look at. The snow, like a desert, went on forever in lumps. When I stood up to go inside I creaked like a statue come to life.

Inside, my mother made dumplings and steam rose around her. “So?” she asked me.

“Nothing,” I answered. “It’s cold out.”

“I don’t have any butter. Will you go get it for me?” She asked, not looking up from the dumplings.

“Why do you need butter?”

“I just need it, Nikolai Andreevich.”

Needs must. I left. Outside there were a few rabbit tracks. I counted them: fifteen. How could there be fifteen? Could there be a one-legged rabbit?

“Good morning!” I knocked on the door. Snowflakes kept falling. Peter Ivanovich opened the door and brought the smell of tobacco with him.

“What is it?” he asked.

“My mother needs butter.”

Peter Ivanovich left and returned with butter. I gave him the money and asked if he had seen a one-legged rabbit.

“Oh him! Yes. I saw him. He came and asked me for butter.” He closed the door.

I left to look for rabbit tracks. Then my mother leaned out of her door and shouted, “I need the butter today, hero!” So, I went home, but I kept my eyes fixed on the window.

Here’s the trouble with snow bunnies: they are exactly like snow. They are white. They are lightweight. They are quiet. And you cannot catch them with your hands. What of my rabbit? Is he quick like the others? Invisible like the others? Or not invisible at all, due to his set back. No, he is elegant and agile, I know. And I will be just like him.

When my mother barked at me, I did not growl back. I just twitched my nose and ran. Our house is small; I could not run far, so I ran up to the loft. There it was only me, my bed, and the round window. No Mother.

But she called up to me, “Nikolai, it’s time to eat lunch.” I didn’t answer. It was getting dark outside.

I sat on my bed and looked out the foggy, round window. Then, suddenly, something flashed by in the snow. It was him! My rabbit! But underneath him were two feet. “What will I do now?” I wondered, overcome with sadness.

“Come on, come down,” said my mother, “Don’t be silly, Nikolai Andreevich. Come down and try your birthday cake.”

Роза

Иван Тургенев

Последние дни августа... Осень уже наступала.

Солнце садилось. Внезапный порывистый ливень, без грому и без молний, только что промчался над нашей широкой равниной.

Сад перед домом горел и дымился, весь залитый пожаром зари и потопом дождя.

Она сидела за столом в гостиной и с упорной задумчивостью глядела в сад сквозь полураскрытую дверь.

Я знал, что свершалось тогда в ее душе; я знал, что после недолгой, хоть и мучительной, борьбы она в этот самый миг отдавалась чувству, с которым уже не могла более сладить.

Вдруг она поднялась, проворно вышла в сад и скрылась.

Пробил час... пробил другой; она не возвращалась.

Тогда я встал и, выйдя из дома, отправился по аллее, по которой — я в том не сомневался — пошла и она.

Всё потемнело вокруг; ночь уже надвинулась. Но на сырому песку дорожки, ярко алея даже сквозь разлитую мглу, виднелся кругловатый предмет.

Я наклонился... То была молодая, чуть распустившаяся роза. Два часа тому назад я видел эту самую розу на ее груди.

Я бережно поднял упавший в грязь цветок и, вернувшись в гостиную, положил его на стол, перед ее креслом.

Вот и она вернулась наконец — и, легкими шагами пройдя всю комнату, села за стол.

Ее лицо и побледневло и ожило; быстро, с веселым смущением бегали по сторонам опущенные, как бы уменьшенные глаза.

Она увидала розу, схватила ее, взглянула на ее измятые, запачканные лепестки, взглянула на меня — и глаза ее, внезапно остановившись, засияли слезами.— О чем вы плачете? — спросил я.

— Да вот об этой розе. Посмотрите, что с ней стало. Тут я вздумал выказать глубокомыслие.

— Ваши слезы смоют эту грязь, — промолвил я с значительным выражением.

— Слезы не моют, слезы жгут, — отвечала она и, обернувшись к камину, бросила цветок в умиравшее пламя.

— Огонь сожжет еще лучше слез, — воскликнула она не без удали, — и прекрасные глаза, еще блестевшие от слез, засмеялись дерзостно и счастливо.

Я понял, что и она была сожжена.

The Rose

by Ivan Turgenev

Translated by Tess Malova

The last days of August... Autumn was coming.

The sun was setting. A sudden and impetuous downpour, without thunder and lightning, had just rushed over our wide valley.

The garden by the house was burning, drenched with the fire of dawn and flood of rain.

She was sitting at the table in the living room and with stubborn perverseness stared into the garden through the door left ajar.

I knew what was happening then in her soul; I knew that after a short yet tormenting struggle she was in that very moment surrendering to a feeling she could no longer keep at bay.

Suddenly she rose, quickly walked into the garden and was hidden.

The clock struck one hour, then struck another; she would not return.

Then I got up and, leaving the house, headed down the path that—I had no doubt—she had walked on, too.

All had darkened; night had descended. But in the wet sand of the path, bright red even in the haze around, I could see a round object.

I bent over... It was a young, barely blooming rose. Two hours ago I had seen the same rose on her chest.

Carefully I picked up the flower that had fallen in the dirt and, back in the living room, put it on the table by her chair.

So she returned, finally—and crossing the room with light steps, sat down at the table.

Her face grew pale and came alive; quickly, with cheerful embarrassment, her lowered eyes glanced around the room.

She noticed the rose, grabbed it, saw its wrinkled, dirtied petals, then looked at me—and suddenly her eyes stopped, shone with tears.

"What are you crying about?" I asked.

"About this rose here. Look what's happened to it."

Now I decided to express my thoughtfulness.

"Your tears shall wash away this dirt," I uttered with a look of significance.

"Tears do not wash, tears burn," she responded and, turning to the fireplace, threw the flower into the dying flames.

"The fire will burn better yet than tears," she exclaimed with vigor,—and her beautiful eyes, still sparkling with tears, laughed boldly and happily.

I realized that she, too, had been burned.

Spanish

NOHAN MEZA
MARÍA ORTEGA AMUSCO
FLORENCIA PERILLO
CARMEN HATCHELL
PROF. GRACIANO'S 10TH GRADERS
NICHOLAS BENNING

Axolotl

de Julio Cortázar

Hubo un tiempo en que yo pensaba mucho en los axolotl. Iba a verlos al acuario del Jardin des Plantes y me quedaba horas mirándolos, observando su inmovilidad, sus oscuros movimientos. Ahora soy un axolotl.

El azar me llevó hasta ellos una mañana de primavera en que París abría su cola de pavo real después de la lenta invernada. Bajé por el bulevar de Port Royal, tomé St. Marcel y L'Hôpital, vi los verdes entre tanto gris y me acordé de los leones. Era amigo de los leones y las panteras, pero nunca había entrado en el húmedo y oscuro edificio de los acuarios. Dejé mi bicicleta contra las rejas y fui a ver los tulipanes. Los leones estaban feos y tristes y mi pantera dormía. Opté por los acuarios, soslayé peces vulgares hasta dar inesperadamente con los axolotl. Me quedé una hora mirándolos, y salí incapaz de otra cosa.

En la biblioteca Sainte-Geneviève consulté un diccionario y supe que los axolotl son formas larvales, provistas de branquias, de una especie de batracios del género ambistoma. Que eran mexicanos lo sabía ya por ellos mismos, por sus pequeños rostros rosados aztecas y el cartel en lo alto del acuario. Leí que se han encontrado ejemplares en África capaces de vivir en tierra durante los períodos de sequía, y que continúan su vida en el agua al llegar la estación de las lluvias. Encontré su nombre español, ajolote, la mención de que son comestibles y que su aceite se usaba (se diría que no se usa más) como el de hígado de bacalao.

No quise consultar obras especializadas, pero volví al día siguiente al Jardin des Plantes. Empecé a ir todas las mañanas, a veces de mañana y de tarde. El guardián de los acuarios sonreía perplejo al recibir el billete. Me apoyaba en la barra de hierro que bordea los acuarios y me ponía a mirarlos. No hay nada de extraño en esto porque desde un primer momento comprendí que estábamos vinculados, que algo infinitamente perdido y distante seguía sin embargo uniéndonos. Me había bastado detenerme aquella primera mañana ante el cristal donde unas burbujas corrían en el agua. Los axolotl se amontonaban en el mezquino y angosto (sólo yo puedo saber cuán angosto y mezquino) piso de piedra y musgo del acuario. Había nueve ejemplares y la mayoría apoyaba la cabeza contra el cristal, mirando con sus ojos de oro a los que se acercaban. Turbado, casi avergonzado, sentí como una impudicia asomarme a esas figuras silenciosas e inmóviles aglomeradas en el fondo del acuario. Aislé mentalmente una situada a la derecha y algo separada de las otras para estudiarla mejor. Vi un cuerpecito

Axolotl

by Julio Cortázar

Translated by Nohan Meza

There was a time when I thought a lot about the axolotl. I would go see them at the Jardin des Plantes' aquarium and watch them for hours, observing their immobility, their dark movements. Now I am an axolotl.

Chance linked us one spring morning while Paris blossomed after the slow winter. I went down Port-Royal boulevard, took St. Marcel and L'Hôpital, saw green amidst so much gray, and I remembered the lions in the zoo. I was friends with the lions and panthers, but had never entered the dark and damp buildings of aquaria. I leaned my bicycle against a fence, and went to look at tulips. The lions looked ugly and sad and my panther slept. Deciding upon the aquarium, I went and skipped past regular fish until unexpectedly landing upon the axolotl. I watched them for an hour and left, incapable of anything else.

In the Sainte-Geneviève library I consulted a dictionary and learned that the axolotl are larval stage salamanders, equipped with gills, from an amphibian species of the genus *ambystoma*. I already knew they were Mexican from just looking at them, at their small, pink Aztec faces and the sign above the tank. I learned that some specimens found in Africa were capable of living on land during droughts, and that they continued their marine life once raining season arrived. I found its Spanish name, *ajolote*. I learned they were edible and that their oil was used (though not anymore) like cod liver oil.

I didn't consult works dedicated to them, but I returned the next day to the Jardin des Plantes. I began to go every morning, sometimes in the mornings and afternoons. The aquarium guard would give me a confused smile when I showed him the ticket. I would rest against the iron bar that surrounded the tanks and would start watching them. There was nothing strange in this, since I knew from the first moment that we were connected, that something infinitely lost and distant was nonetheless uniting us. It had been enough to stop that first morning by a glass pane where some bubbles ran through the water. The axolotl stacked themselves upon each other in the narrow and paltry (only I can know how narrow and paltry) mossy stone-floor of the tank. There were nine specimens, and the majority rested their heads against the glass, gazing at those who came close with their golden eyes.

Disturbed, almost ashamed, I found it offensive to approach these mute and immobile figures agglomerated in the back of the aquarium.

rosado y como translúcido (pensé en las estatuillas chinas de cristal lechoso), semejante a un pequeño lagarto de quince centímetros, terminado en una cola de pez de una delicadeza extraordinaria, la parte más sensible de nuestro cuerpo. Por el lomo le corría una aleta transparente que se fusionaba con la cola, pero lo que me obsesionó fueron las patas, de una finura sutilísima, acabadas en menudos dedos, en uñas minuciosamente humanas.

Y entonces descubrí sus ojos, su cara, dos orificios como cabezas de alfiler, enteramente de un oro transparente carentes de toda vida pero mirando, dejándose penetrar por mi mirada que parecía pasar a través del punto áureo y perderse en un diáfano misterio interior. Un delgadísimo halo negro rodeaba el ojo y los inscribía en la carne rosa, en la piedra rosa de la cabeza vagamente triangular pero con lados curvos e irregulares, que le daban una total semejanza con una estatuilla corroída por el tiempo. La boca estaba disimulada por el plano triangular de la cara, sólo de perfil se adivinaba su tamaño considerable; de frente una fina hendedura rasgaba apenas la piedra sin vida. A ambos lados de la cabeza, donde hubieran debido estar las orejas, le crecían tres ramitas rojas como de coral, una excrescencia vegetal, las branquias supongo. Y era lo único vivo en él, cada diez o quince segundos las ramitas se enderezaban rígidamente y volvían a bajarse. A veces una pata se movía apenas, yo veía los diminutos dedos posándose con suavidad en el musgo. Es que no nos gusta movernos mucho, y el acuario es tan mezquino; apenas avanzamos un poco nos damos con la cola o la cabeza de otro de nosotros; surgen dificultades, peleas, fatiga. El tiempo se siente menos si nos estamos quietos.

Fue su quietud la que me hizo inclinarme fascinado la primera vez que vi a los axolotl. Oscuramente me pareció comprender su voluntad secreta, abolir el espacio y el tiempo con una inmovilidad indiferente. Después supe mejor, la contracción de las branquias, el tanteo de las finas patas en las piedras, la repentina natación (algunos de ellos nadan con la simple ondulación del cuerpo) me probó que eran capaz de evadirse de ese sopor mineral en el que pasaban horas enteras. Sus ojos sobre todo me obsesionaban. Al lado de ellos en los restantes acuarios, diversos peces me mostraban la simple estupidez de sus hermosos ojos semejantes a los nuestros. Los ojos de los axolotl me decían de la presencia de una vida diferente, de otra manera de mirar. Pegando mi cara al vidrio (a veces el guardián tosía inquieto) buscaba ver mejor los diminutos puntos áureos, esa entrada al mundo infinitamente lento y remoto de las criaturas rosadas. Era inútil golpear con el dedo en el cristal, delante de sus caras no se advertía la menor reacción. Los ojos de oro seguían ardiendo con su dulce, terrible luz; seguían mirándome desde una profundidad insonable que me daba vértigo.

Y sin embargo estaban cerca. Lo supe antes de esto, antes de ser un

One of them caught my eye, standing to the right, somewhat separated from the rest, and I mentally isolated her in order to study her better. I saw a little pink body, almost translucent (I thought of those Chinese statuettes made of milky glass), similar to a small five-inch lizard, ending in a fish's tail of extraordinary delicacy. It is the most delicate part of our body. Along its back ran a transparent fin that that turned to tail, but I obsessed over the little hands, with their delicate subtleness that ended in precisely carved fingers, in nails meticulously human. And then I discovered the eyes, the face. A fixed countenance, lacking any traits beyond the eyes, two orifices like the heads of needles, entirely of a transparent gold, lacking all life yet staring, allowing themselves to be penetrated by my gaze, which seemed to pass through the auric dot only to lose itself in a diaphanous internal mystery. The thinnest of black halos surrounded the eye carving it into the pink flesh, into that pink, stony head, vaguely triangular, but with curved sides and irregularities that gave a total similarity to a statuette corroded by time. The mouth feigned its size on the triangular face and only revealed its size from a profile view; from the front a fine cleft barely etched itself into the lifeless stone. On both sides of its face, where the ears should've been, grew three coral-like branches, a vegetal protuberance. The gills, I supposed, the only thing alive in him. Every ten or fifteen seconds, the little branches would straighten up and then lower again. Sometimes a paw almost moved—I could see the the miniature fingers gently resting against the moss. We don't like moving much, and the tank is so meager; we can barely move before bumping into the head of another one of us, causing difficulties, fights, fatigue. We feel time less if we stand still.

It was this very same stillness that inspired my fascination for the axolotl. Darkly, I thought to understand their secret will: to abolish space and time through indifferent immobility. I came to know better. The contraction of the gills, the probing of rocks with their fine paws, the sudden swimming (some of them swim with a simple ondulation of the body), proved to me they were capable of evading that mineral trance in which they spent entire hours. Their eyes, above all, obsessed me. Next to them, in the other tanks, various fish showed me the simple stupidity of their gorgeous eyes, similar to ours. The eyes of the axolotl told me of the presence of a different life, of another way of looking. Gluing my face to the glass (sometimes, the guard would cough nervously), I hoped to better see those tiny golden dots, the entry point into the infinitely slow and remote world of the pink creatures. It was useless to tap on the glass in front of their faces; never gave even the smallest reaction. Those auric eyes kept on burning with their sweet, terrible light; they kept on looking at me from an unprobed depth that awakened vertigo within me.

And nonetheless they were close. I knew it before this, before becoming an axolotl. I knew it even the first time I approached them. The

axolotl. Lo supe el día en que me acerqué a ellos por primera vez. Los rasgos antropomórficos de un mono revelan, al revés de lo que cree la mayoría, la distancia que va de ellos a nosotros. La absoluta falta de semejanza de los axolotl con el ser humano me probó que mi reconocimiento era válido, que no me apoyaba en analogías fáciles. Sólo las manecitas... Pero una lagartija tiene también manos así, y en nada se nos parece. Yo creo que era la cabeza de los axolotl, esa forma triangular rosada con los ojitos de oro. Eso miraba y sabía. Eso reclamaba. No eran animales.

Parecía fácil, casi obvio, caer en la mitología. Empecé viendo en los axolotl una metamorfosis que no conseguía anular una misteriosa humanidad. Los imaginé conscientes, esclavos de su cuerpo, infinitamente condenados a un silencio abisal, a una reflexión desesperada. Su mirada ciega, el diminuto disco de oro inexpresivo y sin embargo terriblemente lúcido, me penetraba como un mensaje: «Sálvanos, sálvanos».

Me sorprendía musitando palabras de consuelo, transmitiendo pueriles esperanzas. Ellos seguían mirándome inmóviles; de pronto las ramillas rosadas de las branquias se enderezaban. En ese instante yo sentía como un dolor sordo; tal vez me veían, captaban mi esfuerzo por penetrar en lo impenetrable de sus vidas. No eran seres humanos, pero en ningún animal había encontrado una relación tan profunda conmigo. Los axolotl eran como testigos de algo, y a veces como horribles jueces. Me sentía innoble frente a ellos, había una pureza tan espantosa en esos ojos transparentes. Eran larvas, pero larva quiere decir máscara y también fantasma. Detrás de esas caras aztecas inexpresivas y sin embargo de una crueldad implacable, ¿qué imagen esperaba su hora?

Les temía. Creo que de no haber sentido la proximidad de otros visitantes y del guardián, no me hubiese atrevido a quedarme solo con ellos. «Usted se los come con los ojos», me decía riendo el guardián, que debía suponerme un poco desequilibrado. No se daba cuenta de que eran ellos los que me devoraban lentamente por los ojos en un canibalismo de oro. Lejos del acuario no hacia mas que pensar en ellos, era como si me influyeran a distancia. Llegué a ir todos los días, y de noche los imaginaba inmóviles en la oscuridad, adelantando lentamente una mano que de pronto encontraba la de otro. Acaso sus ojos veían en plena noche, y el día continuaba para ellos indefinidamente. Los ojos de los axolotl no tienen párpados.

Ahora sé que no hubo nada de extraño, que eso tenía que ocurrir. Cada mañana al inclinarme sobre el acuario el reconocimiento era mayor. Sufrián, cada fibra de mi cuerpo alcanzaba ese sufrimiento amordazado, esa tortura rígida en el fondo del agua. Espiaban algo, un remoto señorío aniquilado, un tiempo de libertad en que el mundo había sido de los axolotl. No era posible que una expresión tan terrible que alcanzaba a vencer la inexpresividad forzada de sus rostros de piedra, no portara un mensaje de

anthropomorphic traits of a monkey reveals, contrary to popular belief, the gap that exists between them and us. The total lack of similarity between the axolotl and humans proved to me that I was right, that I didn't rely on easy analogies. Only those little hands . . . But a lizard has hands like those, and yet in no way resembles us. I think it was the axolotl's head, that triangular shape with the golden eyes. That watched and knew. That insisted. They weren't animals.

It seemed easy then, even obvious, to turn to mythology. I began to see in the axolotl a metamorphosis incapable of denying a mysterious humanity. I imagined them conscious, slaves to their own bodies, condemned to an eternal, abyssal silence and desperate reflexion. Their blind gaze, the golden discs tiny and inexpressive, and yet terribly lucid, penetrated my eyes like a message: save us, save us. I surprised myself whispering sweet nothings filled with false hope. They kept looking at me, immobile; every now and then, the little branches would straighten up. At that moment I would feel a numb pain. Perhaps they could see me, understood my efforts to penetrate their impenetrable lives. They weren't human beings, but in no animal did I ever find a relationship as deep. The axolotl were like witnesses to something, and sometimes felt like terrible judges. I felt impure before them; a terrible purity lived within those transparent eyes. They were larvae, but larva means both mask and ghost. Behind those Aztec faces, inexpressive and yet hiding an insatiable cruelty, what image awaited their time?

I feared them. I believe that if I hadn't felt the proximity of other visitors and the guard, I wouldn't have dared to stay alone with them. You eat them with your eyes, the guard would tell me while laughing, probably thinking I had some mental problem. He didn't realize that it was them who slowly devoured me through their eyes with a golden cannibalism. Even far from the aquarium, my mind was consumed by them, as if they could pervade my thoughts from a distance. I got to the point where I was going every day, and at night I imagined them still in the darkness, slowly moving a small hand forward that would suddenly come in contact with another. Perhaps their eyes could see in the night, and daytime went on for them indefinitely. The axolotl have no eyelids.

This had to happen. I now know there was nothing strange about it. Encroached over the tank every morning, the connection grew stronger and deeper. They were suffering. Every bone of my body quivered with that binding suffering, that rigid torture in the depth of water. They were spies of a remote reverie long dead, a time of freedom in a world that had once belonged to the axolotl. It was impossible for such a terrible expression, capable even of breaking through their stony faces to lack a message of pain. It was proof of that eternal sentence, of that liquid inferno they endured. In vain I told myself that my own sensibilities, projected onto the axolotl, were

dolor, la prueba de esa condena eterna, de ese infierno líquido que padecían. Inútilmente quería probarme que mi propia sensibilidad proyectaba en los axolotl una conciencia inexistente. Ellos y yo sabíamos. Por eso no hubo nada de extraño en lo que ocurrió. Mi cara estaba pegada al vidrio del acuario, mis ojos trataban una vez mas de penetrar el misterio de esos ojos de oro sin iris y sin pupila. Veía de muy cerca la cara de una axolotl inmóvil junto al vidrio. Sin transición, sin sorpresa, vi mi cara contra el vidrio, en vez del axolotl vi mi cara contra el vidrio, la vi fuera del acuario, la vi del otro lado del vidrio. Entonces mi cara se apartó y yo comprendí.

Sólo una cosa era extraña: seguir pensando como antes, saber. Darme cuenta de eso fue en el primer momento como el horror del enterrado vivo que despierta a su destino. Afuera mi cara volvía a acercarse al vidrio, veía mi boca de labios apretados por el esfuerzo de comprender a los axolotl. Yo era un axolotl y sabía ahora instantáneamente que ninguna comprensión era posible. Él estaba fuera del acuario, su pensamiento era un pensamiento fuera del acuario. Conociéndolo, siendo él mismo, yo era un axolotl y estaba en mi mundo. El horror venía -lo supe en el mismo momento- de creerme prisionero en un cuerpo de axolotl, transmigrado a él con mi pensamiento de hombre, enterrado vivo en un axolotl, condenado a moverme lúcidamente entre criaturas insensibles. Pero aquello cesó cuando una pata vino a rozarme la cara, cuando moviéndome apenas a un lado vi a un axolotl junto a mí que me miraba, y supe que también él sabía, sin comunicación posible pero tan claramente.

O yo estaba también en él, o todos nosotros pensábamos como un hombre, incapaces de expresión, limitados al resplandor dorado de nuestros ojos que miraban la cara del hombre pegada al acuario. Él volvió muchas veces, pero viene menos ahora. Pasa semanas sin asomarse. Ayer lo vi, me miró largo rato y se fue bruscamente. Me pareció que no se interesaba tanto por nosotros, que obedecía a una costumbre. Como lo único que hago es pensar, pude pensar mucho en él. Se me ocurre que al principio continuamos comunicados, que él se sentía más que nunca unido al misterio que lo obsesionaba. Pero los puentes están cortados entre él y yo porque lo que era su obsesión es ahora un axolotl, ajeno a su vida de hombre. Creo que al principio yo era capaz de volver en cierto modo a él -ah, sólo en cierto modo-, y mantener alerta su deseo de conocernos mejor. Ahora soy definitivamente un axolotl, y si pienso como un hombre es sólo porque todo axolotl piensa como un hombre dentro de su imagen de piedra rosa. Me parece que de todo esto alcancé a comunicarle algo en los primeros días, cuando yo era todavía él. Y en esta soledad final, a la que él ya no vuelve, me consuela pensar que acaso va a escribir sobre nosotros, creyendo imaginar un cuento va a escribir todo esto sobre los axolotl.

proof of an nonexistent consciousness. They and I knew. That's why there was nothing strange in what came next.

My face was glued to the aquarium glass, my eyes trying once again to penetrate the mystery behind those golden eyes that had no pupil, no iris. I was watching very closely the face of an axolotl standing still by the glass. Without transition, without surprise, I watched my face against the glass; instead of the axolotl I saw my face pressed against the glass. I watched it outside the aquarium, I saw it on the other side of the glass. Then my face pulled away and I understood.

Only one thing was strange: to keep thinking like before, to know. Realizing that was, at first, like the horror of a premature burial victim awakening to his fate. Outside, my face again approached the glass, watched my thin-lipped mouth hoping to understand the axolotl. I was an axolotl and knew instantly that no comprehension was possible. He was outside the aquarium. His thoughts were ones that came from outside the aquarium. Knowing him, being him, I was an axolotl, and I was in my own world. The horror rose—I knew that very moment—from believing myself prisoner inside the body of an axolotl, transmigrated to him with my human thoughts, buried alive in an axolotl, condemned to walk lucid among insensible creatures. But that ceased when a hand grazed my face, when upon shuffling to the side, I saw an axolotl next to me that stared, and I knew that he knew, without any communication, but so clearly. Or I was also within him, or all of us were capable of thinking like humans, incapable of expression, limited only to the golden splendor of our eyes that gazed upon the face of the man glued to the aquarium glass.

He came back many times, though he does so less often now. Weeks go by without any sign of him. I saw him yesterday. He stared at me for a long time before leaving abruptly. It seemed to me he wasn't as interested in us, just following habit. Since the only thing I do is think, I was able to think a lot about him. I believe that at first we still connected, that he felt closer than ever to the mystery he obsessed over. But the bridge between him and I has burned, because what once was his obsession is now an axolotl, and if I think like a human it's because every axolotl thinks like one within its rose-stone image. I think I was able to communicate some of this, those first few days, when I was still him. And in this final loneliness to which he no longer returns, it consoles me to think that perhaps he'll write about us. Believing he's imagining a story, he'll write all of this about the axolotl.

El Aburrimiento

de Rafael Alberti

Me aburro.
Me aburro.
Me aburro.
¡Como en Roma me aburro!
Más que nunca me aburro.
Estoy muy aburrido.
¡Qué aburrido estoy!
Quiero decir de todas las maneras
lo aburrido que estoy.
Todos ven en mi cara mi gran aburrimiento.

Innegable, señor.
Es indisimulable.
¿Está usted aburrido?
Me parece que está usted muy aburrido.
Dígame, ¿adónde va tan aburrido?
¿Que usted va a las iglesias con ese aburrimiento?
No es posible, señor, que vaya a las iglesias
con ese aburrimiento.
¿Que a los museos -dice- siendo tan aburrido?
¿Quién no siente en mi andar lo aburrido que estoy?
¡Qué aire de aburrimiento!
A la legua se ve su gran aburrimiento.
Mi gran aburrimiento.
Lo aburrido que estoy.
Y sin embargo... ¡Ooooh!
He pisado una caca...
Acabo de pisar -¡santo Dios!- una caca...
Dicen que trae suerte el pisar una caca...
Que trae mucha suerte el pisar una caca...
¿Suerte, señores, suerte?
¿La suerte... la... la suerte?
Estoy pegado al suelo.
No puedo caminar.
Ahora sí que ya nunca volveré a caminar.
Me aburro, ay, me aburro.
Más que nunca me aburro.
Muerto de aburrimiento.
No hablo más...
Me morí.

Boredom

by Rafael Alberti

Translated by María Ortega Amusco

I'm bored.
I'm bored.
I'm bored.
As in Rome I'm bored!
More than ever I'm bored.
I am so bored.
How bored I am!
I want to say in every possible way
how bored I am.
Everyone sees on my face my great boredom.

Undeniable, sir.
It's undisguisable.
Are you bored?
It looks to me that you are very bored.
Tell me, where are you going bored like this?
That you go to churches with this boredom?
It is not possible, sir, that you go to churches
with that boredom.
That you go to museums, you say, being this bored?
Who doesn't feel in my walking how bored I am?
What an air of boredom!
You can see from a mile away his great boredom.
My great boredom.
How bored I am.
And nevertheless... Oh!
I stepped in poop...
I have just stepped -holy God!- in poop...
They say that brings you luck to step in poop...
That it brings a lot of luck to step in poop...
Luck, gentlemen, luck?
The luck... the... the luck?
I'm stuck to the floor.
I can't walk.
Now for real I won't ever be able to walk.
I'm bored, ay, I'm bored.
More than ever I'm bored.
Bored to death.
I won't talk anymore...
I died.

Emma Zunz

de Jorge Luis Borges

El catorce de enero de 1922, Emma Zunz, al volver de la fábrica de tejidos Tarbuchi y Loewenthal, halló en el fondo del zaguán una carta, fechada en el Brasil, por la que supo que su padre había muerto. La engañaron, a primera vista, el sello y el sobre; luego, la inquietó la letra desconocida. Nueve diez líneas borroneadas querían colmar la hoja; Emma leyó que el señor Maier había ingerido por error una fuerte dosis de veronal y había fallecido el tres del corriente en el hospital de Bagé. Un compañero de pensión de su padre firmaba la noticia, un tal Fein o Fain, de Río Grande, que no podía saber que se dirigía a la hija del muerto.

Emma dejó caer el papel. Su primera impresión fue de malestar en el vientre y en las rodillas; luego de ciega culpa, de irreabilidad, de frío, de temor; luego, quizás ya estar en el día siguiente. Acto continuo comprendió que esa voluntad era inútil porque la muerte de su padre era lo único que había sucedido en el mundo, y seguiría sucediendo sin fin. Recogió el papel y se fue a su cuarto. Furtivamente lo guardó en un cajón, como si de algún modo ya conociera los hechos ulteriores. Ya había empezado a vislumbrarlos, tal vez; ya era la que sería.

En la creciente oscuridad, Emma lloró hasta el fin de aquel día del suicidio de Manuel Maier, que en los antiguos días felices fue Emanuel Zunz. Recordó veraneos en una chacra, cerca de Gualeguay, recordó (trató de recordar) a su madre, recordó la casita de Lanús que les remataron, recordó los amarillos losangos de una ventana, recordó el auto de prisión, el oprobio, recordó los anónimos con el sueldo sobre "el desfalco del cajero", recordó (pero eso jamás lo olvidaba) que su padre, la última noche, le había jurado que el ladrón era Loewenthal. Loewenthal, Aarón Loewenthal, antes gerente de la fábrica y ahora uno de los dueños. Emma, desde 1916, guardaba el secreto. A nadie se lo había revelado, ni siquiera a su mejor amiga, Elsa Urstein. Quizá rehuía la profana incredulidad; quizás creía que el secreto era un vínculo entre ella y el ausente. Loewenthal no sabía que ella sabía; Emma Zunz derivaba de ese hecho infírmico un sentimiento de poder.

No durmió aquella noche, y cuando la primera luz definió el rectángulo de la ventana, ya estaba perfecto su plan. Procuró que ese día, que le pareció interminable, fuera como los otros. Había en la fábrica rumores de huelga; Emma se declaró, como siempre, contra toda violencia. A las seis, concluido el trabajo, fue con Elsa a un club de mujeres, que tiene gimnasio y pileta. Se inscribieron; tuvo que repetir y deletrear su nombre y su

Emma Zunz

by Jorge Luis Borges

Translated by Florencia Perillo

On returning from the Tarbuchi and Loewenthal textile mills on January 14th 1922, Emma Zunz found a letter at the far end of the hallway, dated in Brazil, from which she found out that her father had died. At first sight she was deceived by the stamp and the envelope; the unknown handwriting worried her. Nine or ten blurred lines were determined to fill the sheet of paper; Emma read that sir Maier had taken a strong dose of veronal by mistake and had died on the third of the current month at the Bagé hospital. The letter was signed by a fellow from the boarding house where her dad was staying, a mister Fein or Fain, from Río Grande, who could not have possibly known that he was addressing the dead man's daughter.

Emma dropped the letter. Her first impression was of uneasiness in her stomach and knees; then of blind guilt, unreality, cold, fear; then she wished it was already the next day. Immediately she realized that that wish was useless, since her father's death was the only thing that had happened in the world, and it will continue to happen endlessly. She picked up the letter and went to her room. Furtively she put it away in a drawer, as if somehow she already knew the following events. Maybe she had already started to foresee them; she had already become the person she would be.

In the growing darkness, till the end of that day, Emma cried over the suicide of Manuel Maier, who in the good old days used to be Emanuel Zunz. She recalled summer vacations on a small farm, near Gualeguay, recalled (tried to recall) her mother, recalled the little house in Lanús that had been auctioned off, recalled the yellow lozenges of a window, recalled the warrant for arrest, the disgrace, recalled the poison-pen letters with the small article on "the cashier's embezzlement", recalled (but that she never forgot) that her father, on the last night, had sworn to her that the thief was Loewenthal. Loewenthal, Aarón Loewenthal, former manager of the mills and now one of its owners. Since 1916, Emma had been keeping the secret. She hadn't revealed it to anyone, not even to her best friend, Elsa Urstein. Perhaps she shunned the profane incredulity; perhaps she thought that the secret was a bond between her and the absent man. Loewenthal did not know that she did know; this negligible fact derived a feeling of power from Emma Zunz.

She did not sleep that night, and when the first ray of light of sunshine defined the window's rectangle, her plan was already perfect. She made sure that that day, which she thought was endless, would be like the other

tuvo que festejar las bromas vulgares que comentan la revisación. Con Elsa y con la menor de las Kronfuss discutió a qué cinematógrafo irían el domingo a la tarde. Luego, se habló de novios y nadie esperó que Emma hablarla. En abril cumpliría diecinueve años, pero los hombres le inspiraban, aún, un temor casi patológico... De vuelta, preparó una sopa de tapioca y unas legumbres, comió temprano, se acostó y se obligó a dormir. Así, laborioso y trivial, pasó el viernes quince, la víspera.

El sábado, la impaciencia la despertó. La impaciencia, no la inquietud, y el singular alivio de estar en aquel día, por fin. Ya no tenía que tramar y que imaginar; dentro de algunas horas alcanzaría la simplicidad de los hechos. Leyó en *La Prensa* que el *Nordstjärnan*, de Malmö, zarparía esa noche del dique 3; llamó por teléfono a Loewenthal, insinuó que deseaba comunicar, sin que lo supieran las otras, algo sobre la huelga y prometió pasar por el escritorio, al oscurecer. Le temblaba la voz; el temblor convenía a una delatora. Ningún otro hecho memorable ocurrió esa mañana. Emma trabajó hasta las doce y fijó con Elsa y con Perla Kronfuss los pormenores del paseo del domingo. Se acostó después de almorzar y recapituló, cerrados los ojos, el plan que había tramado. Pensó que la etapa final sería menos horrible que la primera y que le separaría, sin duda, el sabor de la victoria y de la justicia. De pronto, alarmada, se levantó y corrió al cajón de la cómoda. Lo abrió; debajo del retrato de Milton Sills, donde la había dejado la antenocche, estaba la carta de Fain. Nadie podía haberla visto; la empezó a leer y la rompió.

Referir con alguna realidad los hechos de esa tarde sería difícil y quizá improcedente. Un atributo de lo infernal es la irreabilidad, un atributo que parece mitigar sus terrors y que los agrava tal vez. ¿Cómo hacer verosímil una acción en la que casi no creyó quien la ejecutaba, cómo recuperar ese breve caos que hoy la memoria de Emma Zunz repudia y confunde? Emma vivía por Almagro, en la calle Liniers; nos consta que esa tarde fue al puerto. Acaso en el infame Paseo de Julio se vio multiplicada en espejos, publicada por luces y desnudada por los ojos hambrientos, pero más razonable es conjeturar que al principio erró, inadvertida, por la indiferente recova... Entró en dos o tres bares, vio la rutina o los manejos de otras mujeres. Dio al fin con hombres del *Nordstjärnan*. De uno, muy joven, temió que le inspirara alguna ternura y optó por otro, quizás más bajo que ella y grosero, para que la pureza del horror no fuera mitigada. El hombre la condujo a una puerta y después a un turbio zaguán y después a una escalera tortuosa y después a un vestíbulo (en el que había una vidriera con losangos idénticos a los de la casa en Lanús) y después a un pasillo y después a una puerta que se cerró. Los hechos graves están fuera del tiempo, ya porque en ellos el pasado inmediato queda como tronchado del porvenir, ya porque no parecen consecutivas las partes que los forman.

¿En aquel tiempo fuera del tiempo, en aquel desorden perplejo de

ones. At the mills there were rumors of a strike; Emma, as usual, declared herself against any kind of violence. At six, after work, she went with Elsa to a women's club, which had a gymnasium and a swimming pool. They signed up; she had to repeat and spell out her name and last name, had to laugh at vulgar jokes cracked during the check-up. With Elsa and the youngest of the Kronfusses, she discussed which movie they would see on Sunday afternoon. Then came up the subject of boyfriends and no one expected Emma to say a word. In April she would turn nineteen, but men still inspired an almost pathological fear in her... Back home, she made some tapioca soup and some vegetables, had an early supper, went to bed and forced herself to sleep. In this laborious and trivial way, Friday 15th went by.

On Saturday, impatience awoke her. Impatience, not restlessness, and the peculiar relief of being finally on that day. She no longer had to plot or to imagine; within some hours, the simplicity of the events would take place. She read on *La Prensa* that the *Nordstjärnan*, from Malmö, would sail from dock 3 that night; she phoned Loewenthal, hinted that she wanted to communicate—without the other women knowing—something about the strike and promised she would go to the office in the evening. Her voice was trembling; the tremor belonged to that of an informer. No other eventful thing happened that morning. Emma worked till twelve and settled the ins and outs of the Sunday's outing with Elsa and Perla Kronfuss. She went to bed after having lunch and went over, her eyes closed, the plot she had devised. She thought that the final stage would be less awful than the first one and that it would offer her, undoubtedly, the taste of victory and justice. Suddenly, she got up alarmed and ran to the chest of drawers. She opened it; beneath the portrait of Milton Sills, where she had left it the night before, was the letter from Fain. No one could have seen it; she started to read it and tore it up.

To tell with some reality the events of that afternoon would be hard and perhaps, inappropriate. An attribute of the infernal is unreality, an attribute that seems to mitigate its terrors and that perhaps aggravates them. How can one make plausible an action in which the one who carried it out almost did not believe in? How can one retrieve that brief chaos which today Emma Zunz's memory repudiates and confuses? Emma lived in Almagro, on Liniers Street; we know that that afternoon she went to the port. Perhaps in the infamous Paseo de Julio, she saw herself multiplied in mirrors, exposed by lights and stripped by starving eyes, but it is more reasonable to assume that at the beginning she wandered, unnoticed, through the indifferent passage... She entered two or three bars, saw the routine or the techniques of other women. At last, she found some men from the *Nordstjärnan*. She feared that one of them could arouse in her some tenderness as he was too young, so she chose another one, perhaps

sensaciones inconexas y atroces, pensó Emma Zunz una sola vez en el muerto que motivaba el sacrificio? Yo tengo para mí que pensó una vez y que en ese momento peligró su desesperado propósito. Pensó (no pudo no pensar) que su padre le había hecho a su madre la cosa horrible que a ella ahora le hacían. Lo pensó con débil asombro y se refugió, en seguida, en el vértigo. El hombre, sueco o finlandés, no hablaba español; fue una herramienta para Emma como esta lo fue para él, pero ella sirvió para el goce y él para la justicia.

Cuando se quedó sola, Emma no abrió en seguida los ojos. En la mesa de luz estaba el dinero que había dejado el hombre: Emma se incorporó y lo rompió como antes había roto la carta. Romper dinero es una impiedad, como tirar el pan; Emma se arrepintió, apenas lo hizo. Un acto de soberbia y en aquel día... El temor se perdió en la tristeza de su cuerpo, en el asco. El asco y la tristeza la encadenaban, pero Emma lentamente se levantó y procedió a vestirse. En el cuarto no quedaban colores vivos; el último crepúsculo se agrava. Emma pudo salir sin que lo advirtieran; en la esquina subió a un Lacroze, que iba al oeste. Eligió, conforme a su plan, el asiento más delantero, para que no le vieran la cara. Quizá le confortó verificar, en el insípido trajin de las calles, que lo acaecido no había contaminado las cosas. Viajó por barrios decrecientes y opacos, viéndolos y olvidándolos en el acto, y se apeó en una de las bocacalles de Warnes. Paradójicamente su fatiga venía a ser una fuerza, pues la obligaba a concentrarse en los pormenores de la aventura y le ocultaba el fondo y el fin.

Aarón Loewenthal era, para todos, un hombre serio; para sus pocos íntimos, un avaro. Vivía en los altos de la fábrica, solo. Establecido en el desmantelado arrabal, temía a los ladrones; en el patio de la fábrica había un gran perro y en el cajón de su escritorio, nadie lo ignoraba, un revólver. Había llorado con decoro, el año anterior, la inesperada muerte de su mujer -¡una Gauss, que le trajo una buena dote!-, pero el dinero era su verdadera pasión. Con íntimo bochorno se sabía menos apto para ganarlo que para conservarlo. Era muy religioso; creía tener con el Señor un pacto secreto, que lo eximía de obrar bien, a trueque de oraciones y devociones. Calvo, corpulento, enlutado, de quevedos ahumados y barba rubia, esperaba de pie, junto a la ventana, el informe confidencial de la obrera Zunz.

La vio empujar la verja (que él había entornado a propósito) y cruzar el patio sombrío. La vio hacer un pequeño rodeo cuando el perro atado ladró. Los labios de Emma se atareaban como los de quien reza en voz baja; cansados, repetían la sentencia que el señor Loewenthal oiría antes de morir.

Las cosas no ocurrieron como había previsto Emma Zunz. Desde la madrugada anterior, ella se había soñado muchas veces, dirigiendo el firme revólver, forzando al miserable a confesar la miserable culpa y exponiendo la intrépida estratagema que permitiría a la Justicia de Dios triunfar de la

shorter than her and rude, lest the purity of the horror should not be mitigated. The man led her to a door and then to a murky hallway and then to a winding staircase and then to a hall (where there was a window with lozenges identical to the ones at the house in Lanús) and then to a door closed. The serious facts are out of time, either because in them past remains as if from the future or because the parts do not seem consecutive.

In that time out of time, in that perplexing chaos of disjointed and atrocious feelings, did Emma Zunz think once about the dead who motivated the sacrifice? I believe she did think once, and in that very moment her desperate objective was in danger. She thought (she could not help thinking) that her father had done to her mother that same awful thing that someone was doing to her now. She thought of it with weak amazement and took refuge, immediately, in vertigo. The man, a Swede or Finn, did not speak Spanish; he was a tool for her as she was for him, but she was used for pleasure and he for justice.

When she was alone, Emma did not open her eyes at once. On the bedside table, there was the money that the man had left: Emma sat up and tore it up as she had done with the letter. Tearing money up is an impiety, like throwing bread away; Emma regretted it as soon as she did so. An act of arrogance and on that day... The fear disappeared in the sadness of her body, in the disgust. Disgust and sadness enchained her, but slowly Emma stood up and got dressed. In the room there were no longer lively colors; the last sun was setting. Emma managed to get out unnoticed; on the corner she got on a tramway, which was heading west. She chose, in keeping with her plan, the closest seat to the front, so that no one could see her face. Perhaps, in the hustle and bustle of the streets, it comforted her to verify that what had happened hadn't contaminated things. She traveled through declining and dull neighborhoods, seeing and forgetting them immediately, and got off at one of the crossroads of Warnes street. Paradoxically, her fatigue was a kind of strength, since it forced her to focus on the details of the adventure and hid the real purpose.

Aaron Loewenthal was, to everyone, a serious man; to his inner circle, a miser. He lived by himself on the top floor of the mills. Settled in the dismantled slum, he feared thieves; in the patio of the mills there was a big dog and in his desk drawer—everyone knew that—a gun. Last year, he had duly mourned the unexpected death of his wife—a Gauss, who brought him a good dowry!—, but money was his real passion. With innermost shame, he knew himself capable of earning it than of keeping it. He was very religious; he thought he had a secret pact with God, which exempted him from righteousness, in exchange for prayers and devotions. Bald, stocky, dressed in mourning, with *pince-nez* and blond beard, he stood by the window waiting for the confidential report of Zunz.

He saw her push the gate (which he had deliberately left ajar) and cross

justicia humana. (No por temor, sino por ser un instrumento de la Justicia, ella no quería ser castigada.) Luego, un solo balazo en mitad del pecho rubricaría la suerte de Loewenthal. Pero las cosas no ocurrieron así.

Ante Aarón Loewenthal, más que la urgencia de vengar a su padre, Emma sintió la de castigar el ultraje padecido por ello. No podía no matarlo, después de esa minuciosa deshonra. Tampoco tenía tiempo que perder en teatralerías. Sentada, tímida, pidió excusas a Loewenthal, invocó (a fuer de delatora) las obligaciones de la lealtad, pronunció algunos nombres, dio a entender otros y se cortó como si la venciera el temor. Logró que Loewenthal saliera a buscar una copa de agua. Cuando este, incrédulo de tales aspavientos, pero indulgente, volvió del comedor, Emma ya había sacado del cajón el pesado revólver. Apretó el gatillo dos veces. El considerable cuerpo se desplomó como si los estampidos y el humo lo hubieran roto, el vaso de agua se rompió, la cara la miró con asombro y cólera, la boca de la cara la injurió en español y en ídisch. Las malas palabras no cejaban; Emma tuvo que hacer fuego otra vez. En el patio, el perro encadenado rompió a ladrar, y una efusión de brusca sangre manó de los labios obscenos y manchó la barba y la ropa. Emma inició la acusación que había preparado ("He vengado a mi padre y no me podrán castigar..."), pero no la acabó, porque el señor Loewenthal ya había muerto. No supo nunca si alcanzó a comprender.

Los ladridos tirantes le recordaron que no podía, aún, descansar. Desordenó el diván, desabrochó el saco del cadáver, le quitó los quevedos salpicados y los dejó sobre el fichero. Luego tomó el teléfono y repitió lo que tantas veces repetiría, con esas y con otras palabras: Ha ocurrido una cosa que es increíble... El señor Loewenthal me hizo venir con el pretexto de la huelga... Abusó de mí, lo maté...

La historia era increíble, en efecto, pero se impuso a todos, porque sustancialmente era cierta. Verdadero era el tono de Emma Zunz, verdadero el pudor, verdadero el odio. Verdadero también era el ultraje que había padecido; solo eran falsas las circunstancias, la hora y uno o dos nombres propios.

the sombre patio. He saw her make a little detour when the chained dog barked. Emma's lips moved like those of someone who mutters a prayer; wearily they repeated the sentence that Mr. Loewenthal would hear before his death.

Things did not happen as Emma Zunz had foreseen. Since that morning, she had been dreaming many times that she was wielding the steady gun, forcing the man to admit his despicable guilt and exposing the intrepid stratagem which would allow Divine Justice to prevail over human justice. (Not because of fear, but because she was an instrument of justice, she did not want to be punished). Then, a single bullet in the center of his chest would seal Loewenthal's fate. But things did not happen that way.

Regarding Aaron Loewenthal, rather than the urge to avenge her father, Emma felt the need to inflict punishment for the outrage she had suffered. She could not allow herself not to kill him, after that thorough dishonor. Nor did she have time to spend in theatrical displays. Sitting down, shyly, she apologized to Aaron Loewenthal, invoked (as an informer) the duties of loyalty, uttered some names, hinted at others and cut herself off as if overcome by fear. She made Loewenthal look for a glass of water. When he, unconvinced of such fuss, but indulgent, came back from the dining room, Emma had already taken the heavy gun out of the drawer. She pulled the trigger twice. The considerable body collapsed as if the shots and the smoke had broken him, the glass of water shattered, the face looked at her with amazement and anger, the mouth of the face swereed at her in Spanish and Yiddish. The cursing would not cease; Emma had to fire again. In the patio, the chained dog broke out barking and some sudden blood gushed out of his obscene lips and stained his beard and clothes. Emma began the accusation she had prepared ("I have avenged my father's death and I will not be punished..."), but she did not finish it, because Sir Loewenthal had already died. She never knew whether he managed to understand.

The tense barks reminded her that she could not rest yet. She messed up the couch, unbuttoned the dead man's jacket, took off his *pince-nez* and left them over the filling cabinet. Then she picked up the receiver and repeated what she would repeat so many times, using those and other words: "Something incredible has happened... Sir Loewenthal made me come over on the pretext of the strike... He raped me, I killed him."

The story was incredible, indeed, but everyone believed it, because it was substantially true. True was Emma Zunz's tone of voice, true was her shame, true was her hatred. True was the outrage she had suffered, too; only the circumstances, the time and one or two proper names were false.

Idiotizadas, un cuento de empoderhadas

de Moderna de pueblo



Stupefied, an Empowering Fairytale

by Moderna de pueblo
Translated by Carmen Hatchell

We grew up on stories all beautified
and now we're stupefied.

"On love's hook you will get caught,
and your world you will leave behind
without second thought."

THE LITTLE FISHED MERMAID

The dreadful story of a girl
who renounces her voice
in exchange for love.



“In the mirror you will look,
and your body confidence will be shook.”

Mirror mirror on the wall
take your opinion and shove-it,
once and for all.

SNOW THICC

A girl who is sick of having
to swallow poisonous apples.

“By 12 be back at your front door,
or you'll be known as the town whore.”

TINDER-ELLA

The story of an open-legged girl
in a close-minded society.

La historia de Cenicienta

de Rosa Lander & Maia Crichlow

Había una vez una chica que se llamaba Cenicienta. Tenía una mamá, pero ella murió cuando Cenicienta era muy pequeña. Su papá se casó con otra mujer, y ella fue la madrastra de Cenicienta. Cuando su papá estaba vivo, su madrastra y sus hijas, las hermanastras de Cenicienta, eran simpáticas, y Cenicienta estaba contenta con su vida. Pero cuando su papá murió, su vida comenzó a ser una historia de horror. Su madrastra y sus hermanastras eran terribles con ella, y le decían que ella tenía que limpiar la casa todos los días, cocinar cada noche, y hacer vestidos para ellas.

Un día, el príncipe mandó una invitación a todas las casas en el reino para el baile en el palacio, donde quería escoger una esposa. La madrastra de Cenicienta le prohibió ir, y dijo que ella necesitaba coser vestidos elegantes para sus hermanas. Cenicienta lloró durante mucho tiempo, y sus únicos amigos, los ratones de la casa, la miraron y le preguntaron por qué estaba llorando. En secreto, los ratones le hicieron un vestido muy elegante. Cenicienta estaba muy contenta de poder ir al baile. Cenicienta fue a hablar con su madrastra sobre el baile, porque tenía un vestido, entonces claro que debería ir al baile. Pero cuando su madrastra vió el vestido, ¡ella lo rasgó! La madrastra y las hermanastras salieron para el baile, y Cenicienta lloró una vez más.

Repentinamente, una mujer estaba al lado de Cenicienta, y le dijo "no te preocunes, chica, estoy aquí". Cenicienta estaba confundida, con razón, y ella le preguntó "¿quién eres?". "Soy tu hada madrina, y estoy aquí para ayudarte a ir al baile". Primero, la hada madrina convirtió el vestido que su madrastra había rasgado en el vestido más bonito del mundo. Era azul y tenía una falda muy larga. La hada madrina hizo un carro de un zapallo, y caballos de los ratones. Ella le dio zapatos de cristal a Cenicienta, y le dijo que podía ir al baile, pero necesitaba regresar a la casa antes de medianoche, porque en ese momento, el hechizo iba a romperse. Cenicienta se probó los zapatos y le quedaron perfectos.

Cenicienta fue al baile, y el príncipe se enamoró de ella a primera vista.

The Story of Cinderella

by Rosa Lander & Maia Crichlow

Translated by Theo Brandt, Kevin Carchi, Max Eastwood, Sylvie Goldner, Eva Keller, Zuri Kwesi, Lizette Pedrero, Andres Panafiel, Jennifer Romero, Juan Bosco Sodi, Rivka Stasavage, Charles Stacey and Esmeralda Torres (10th grade Spanish class at BHSEC Manhattan with Prof. Graciano).

There once was a girl named Cinderella. She had a mom, but she died when she was very little. Her father married another woman, and she was the stepmother of Cinderella. When her father was alive, her stepmother and her daughters, Cinderella's stepsisters, were nice, and Cinderella was happy with her life. But when her father died, her life became a horror story. Her stepmother and stepsisters were horrible to her, and they would tell her to clean the house every day, cook every night, and make dresses for them.

One day, the prince sent an invitation to all of the houses in the kingdom for the ball in the palace, where he wanted to find a wife. Cinderella's stepmother prohibited her from going, and said that she needed to make elegant dresses for her sisters. Cinderella cried for a long time, and her only friends, the mice of the house, saw her, and asked her why she was crying. In secret, the mice made her a very elegant dress. Cinderella was very happy that she could go to the ball. Cinderella went to talk to her stepmother about the dance because she had a dress, so of course she could go to the dance. But when her stepmother saw the dress, she ripped it! The stepmother and stepsisters left for the ball, and Cinderella cried once more.

Suddenly, a woman was next to Cinderella and said, "Don't worry, girlie, I'm here." Cinderella was confused and asked with reason, "Who are you?" "I am your fairy godmother, and I am here to help you get to the ball." The fairy godmother transformed the dress that Cinderella's stepmother had ripped into the most beautiful dress in the world. It was blue, and it had a very long skirt. The fairy godmother made a carriage out of a pumpkin and horses out of mice. She gave Cinderella crystal slippers, and told her that she could go to the ball, but that she needed to return to the house before midnight because then the spell was going to break. Cinderella tried on the shoes, and they fit perfectly.

Cinderella went to the ball, and the prince fell in love with her at first

Él dijo que quería casarse con ella, pero Cenicienta le dijo que quería ir a la escuela, y después ella iba a casarse con él. Cuando ella salió del baile, perdió uno de los zapatos de cristal.

Cenicienta fue a la universidad y se hizo abogada. Ella encontró el testamento de su padre y decía que la casa y todo su dinero eran para ella. Cenicienta les dijo a su madrastra y a sus hermanastras dos cosas: "Esta es mi casa, y ustedes necesitan irse ahora, o yo voy a ir al tribunal". Sin sus hermanastras y su madrastra, la vida de Cenicienta era perfecta. Muchos años después del baile, el príncipe estaba buscando a Cenicienta, y cuando la encontró, el zapato todavía le quedaba. Vivieron felices para siempre, medio tiempo en el palacio, y medio tiempo en la casa de Cenicienta.

sight. He told her that he wanted to marry her, but Cinderella said that she wanted to go to school, and after that she would marry him. When she left the dance, she lost one of her crystal slippers.

Cinderella went to college and became a lawyer. She found her father's will, and it said that the house and all of his money belonged to her. Cinderella said to her stepmother and stepsisters two things: "This is my house and you need to leave now, or I'll go to court." Without her stepsisters and her stepmother, Cinderella's life was perfect. Many years after the dance, the Prince was looking for Cinderella, and when he found her, the glass slipper still fit. They lived happily ever after, half the time in the palace and half the time in Cinderella's house.

To practice the differences between the Preterite and the Imperfect in Spanish we wrote original versions of Cinderella. This one was written by Rosa Lander and Maia Crichtow in Spanish and then translated to English by Theo Brandt, Kevin Carchi, Max Eastwood, Sylvie Goldner, Eva Keller, Zuri Kwesi, Lizette Pedrero, Andres Panafiel, Jennifer Romero, Juan Bosco Sodi, Rivka Stasavage, Charles Stacey, and Esmeralda Torres (10th grade Spanish class at BHSEC Manhattan with Prof. Graciano).

También eso era el verano

de Isabel Cadenas Cañón

Antes

Las voy seleccionando por la parte de atrás, la que no se mira. Abro la caja verde para encontrar una imagen de ellos, antes, pero pronto aparecen estas fotos en las que sólo está él.

Son del 72, de cuando la mili, y algunas, pocas, llevan escritos mensajes que él le mandaba a lo largo de ese año en que estuvieron separados.

Elijo hablar de ellos a partir de esta imagen, en la que no hay más que uno. Así empieza, por debajo de la descripción, una tarea de reconstrucción de las miradas de ella, de su manera de sujetar estos pedazos del otro entre las manos.

Éste es de una playa. El blanco y negro no deja ver si la arena es blanca o gris, lo que permitiría saber si se encuentra al norte o al sur de la isla, de permiso o escabulléndose del trabajo.

Se habían conocido poco antes de que él tuviera que viajar, así que estas fotos son los más cercano a sus primeras citas.

Está apoyado en un barco de pesca varado. Al fondo, más barcos y algunos toros que salen del agua. Más cerca juegan grupos de niños, tres sillas vacías, desperdigadas.

Él trabajaba en la sección de Hojas y Archivo; por eso la mayoría de los mensajes son mecanografiados, indicando primero la fecha y el lugar, como si fueran parte de un inventario. Unos pocos están escritos a mano, en esta tinta azul invariablemente mayúscula.

That Was Also Summer

by Isabel Cadenas Cañón

Translated by Nicholas Benning

Before

Without looking at the images, I select the upside-down photographs. I open the green box in order to find an image of them. Suddenly I see photographs of only him.

They are from 1972; they are from his service in the military and have little handwritten notes that he used to send to her throughout the year they were away from each other.

I choose to talk about them from this image, where there is no more than one of them. And so begins my task, through description, of reconstructing her gazes, the way she held these pieces of her beloved in between her hands.

This is from the beach. The black and white does not let us see if the sand is white or grey. That little detail would let us know if he was in the North or South of the island, with or without permission.

They had met shortly before he had to leave for the military, so these photos are the closest to their first dates.

He leans against a beached fishing boat. Behind him more ships and bodies leaving the water. Closer to him groups of children are playing, three empty seats scattered around.

He worked in the archives, so the majority of his letters to her are typewritten, indicating first the place and date as if they were part of an inventory. A few are handwritten in this blue ink and always capitalized.

Todo eso está quieto, sucede en otro plano, de manera ajena a él, que mira hacia el suelo mientras la mano izquierda está a punto de apagar un cigarrillo contra el remolque que sostiene el barco. No sé si posa.

En casa no se guarda ninguna respuesta de ella, no hay cartas ni retratos de aquella época que tengan letras suyas. Quizá sintiera vergüenza ante lo apabullante de las palabras de él, una chica de pueblo recién llegada al norte. Pero puedo imaginar sin dificultad de qué se llenaban los espacios entre cada carta que recibía.

A la agitación de encontrar una en el buzón la seguiría la lectura atropellada, la necesidad -¿no satisfecha?- de responder, el análisis exhaustivo de cada palabra primero y de lo no dicho después, la mirada atenta en los niños que se divierten al fondo, en la orilla. Más tarde sería la electricidad suave al releerla, las frases aprendidas de memoria para aplacar la espera de la siguiente, imaginarse que llegaba, el miedo a que hubiera sido la última. Como citas. Construir la historia a partir de lo poco que el otro muestra y eso que uno desea, ir llenando la caja verde con imágenes proyectadas de una vida común.

All of this is still, happening on another realm, outside of him, who looks towards the floor while his left hand prepares to put out a cigarette against the trailer holding the boat. I don't know if he is posing or not.

At home, none of her responses are saved. There are no letters or portraits from that time to show her handwriting. As a village girl who recently arrived in the North, maybe she felt shy before his overwhelming words. I can easily imagine how she spent her time as she waited for each letter. The excitement of receiving one in the mailbox, after she would read in a rush. The need—not satisfied?—of responding to him, followed by her profound attention to every word and what was unsaid after.

Her eyes attentive on the children playing in the background, on the shore. Later she would feel the soothing electricity as she reread every letter, each line learned by heart in order to calm her during the wait for the next one. She would imagine its arrival. She feared that it would be the last. Like dating. Constructing their history from the little that the other shows and what one desires, going on to fill the green box with images projected from a common life.

Ribera, c. 1987

Es verano. Estamos tumbadas en la hamaca del corral.

La hamaca era la señal de que empezaba el calor y de que habíamos llegado a Ribera. La atábamos a dos árboles separados exactamente para que entrase allí, bajo la sombra de la higuera. Escribo sombra de la higuera y pienso entonces que al menos uno de los árboles tiene que ser eso, una higuera, pero no alcanzo a ver las hojas. Por el tronco no sé. También estaba la sombra de la parra, pero creo que eso fue después.

Detrás de nosotras hay sol. Los gallineros viejos, que ya no están, y matas de plantas malas, altísimas, ahí, como anunciando esa desaparición. Dividiendo el sol y la sombra, la mesa de madera, celeste, larga, con bancos incorporados.

Se llenaba de humo. A la izquierda había -¿hay?- una parrilla excavada en la pared de adobe y piedras. Los asados los hacían los hombres, vestidos con buzos mrahón y gorras de publicidad de Ferralla o de Goodyear. Las mujeres llevaban batas y zapatillas negras, de abuela, o delantales con flores y trapos en la cabeza. No cabíamos en la mesa, había que apretar se contra un cuerpo familiar, intentar emerger entre el criterio, pelearse por un costilla de cerdo y ganar siempre por ser la pequeña.

También eso era el verano.

Sobre la mesa celeste hay un cinicero.

Ella ya no fumaba cuando yo nací.

Él dejó de fumar después.

En el suelo están sus alpargatas,

ella siempre llevaba alpargatas de esparto en vacaciones, me sé de memoria sus tobillos, y montones blancos, como pelusas de oveja recién esquilada.

Nunca hubo ovejas en el corral. Sólo a veces traían un corredizo y lo dejaban allí un día, dos, hasta que. Para entonces yo ya había dormido abrazada a él, había intentado imitar los movimientos torpes de sus patas dobladas hacia dentro.

Ribera, circa 1987

It is summer. We are lying on a hammock in the farmyard.

The hammock was the first signal of the heat and that we had arrived to Ribera. We tied it to two trees separated perfectly so that it fit below the shadow of the fig tree. I write "shadow of a fig tree" and think that at least one of the trees must have been that, a fig tree, but I can not even see the leaves, nor can I recognize its trunk. There was also the shadow of a grapevine, but I believe that appeared later.

The sun is behind us. The old chicken coops, that are no longer there, and clumps of weeds, towering above us, there, as if to announce the disappearance of the coops. The long wooden table, sky-blue, with benches attached, separates the sun from the shadows.

Filling itself with smoke, to the left there was - is it still there? - a grill carved into the stone and adobe wall. The men used to barbecue, wearing nankeen overalls and caps advertising Feralla or Goodyear. The women wore their house robes with black slippers, like grandmas, or floral aprons with cloths tied around their heads. All of us couldn't fit on the table, so we had to squeeze together against familiar bodies, intending to emerge victorious from the uproar, fighting for a pork rib, and always winning because we were the little ones.

That too was summer.

On the sky-blue table there is an ashtray.

She had stopped smoking when I was born.

He stopped after.

Their slippers rest on the floor,

she always wore straw slippers during vacations, I know her ankles by heart, and mountains of white, like the fluff of sheep recently sheared.

There were never any sheep in the farmyard.

Sometimes they brought a tiny lamb and left him there for a day or two, until. By that time I had already slept hugging him. I tried to imitate the clumsy movements of his legs bent inwards.

Hay dos envoltorios de caramelos, rojos.

Estoy en su regazo. Quepo entera.

Su mano me acaricia levemente la pierna, contrastan nuestros colores de piel, yo blanquíssima y ella siempre morena; lleva una alianza.

La recordaba mirando a la cámara y yo con la boca abierta, en señal de juego, la cabeza girada hacia arriba, mirándola a ella;

pero en realidad no llego a ver si tiene los ojos abiertos o cerrados y la única que mira claramente a la cámara soy yo. La boca está abierta, sí, y también mi brazo derecho está donde lo recordaba: completamente estirado hacia ella, como el de un muñeco rígido, sin articulaciones.

Me descubro, ahora, tocándome los dedos, como para asegurarme de que era la mano derecha. Ha sido un movimiento inconsciente.

Estos dedos de ahora son los que agarran la barbillita de ama. Tienen el rastro táctil de ella, no hay entre ellos ningún pensamiento y por eso la cercanía parece más entera. Y más real, por no esperada.

No la agarro, la barbillita. Tengo la mano en el air, tal vez la rozo apenas. Ella también tiene la boca abierta, también sonríe.

Tiene los pies pequeños, los dedos son bolitas alineadas que forman la mitad de una parábola. Tiene las piernas cruzadas y estampadas con retazos de luz.

En la esquina superior derecha hay una sombra de un dedo.

Hoy ya no hay sombras en las fotos.

Es mi padre.

No hay ningún dato objetivo que pruebe que es mi padre, pero decidí que lo es, que nos sorprende en la hamaca, después de la siesta, y sólo con la posición torpe de su dedo la imagen queda encerrada en nuestra intimidad, es casa.

There are two red candy wrappers.

I am sitting in her lap, fitting perfectly.

Her hand lightly caresses my leg. Our skin colors contrast—mine so white and hers always tanned; she is wearing a wedding ring.

I remember her looking at the camera while I, with an open mouth, a playful gesture, raised my head up to look at her;

but actually, I cannot see if she has her eyes opened or closed and the only person looking clearly at the camera is me. My mouth is open, yes, and my right arm is where I remember it: completely stretched around her, like a stiff doll, motionless.

I describe myself right now, touching my fingers, as if to assure myself that it was my right hand. It has been an unconscious movement. These fingers from the present are the same ones that grabbed the chin of ama. They have her tactile trace, there is no thought between them so their closeness seems more whole. And more real because it is spontaneous.

I do not grab it, her chin. I have my hand in the air, perhaps I am barely brushing against it. She has her mouth open too, smiling.

She has small feet, her toes are lined up little balls, forming half of a parabola. She has her legs crossed and patterned with rays of light.

On the upper right corner there is the shadow of a finger.

Today there are no shadows in photos.

It is my father's.

No objective data proves that it is my father, but I've decided that it is him, that he surprises us in the hammock, after his nap, and only with the silly position of his finger does the image remain enclosed in our intimacy, it's home.

Utopía

de José Antonio Delgado

Difiero de ti, sé bien lo que estás pensando,
debo sonreír o acabaré gritando.
No me mires más esperando que lo acepte,
no voy a cambiar tu futuro por mi presente.

Si mi boca se equivoca, eso es problema mío,
prefiero morir de pie a vivir siempre escondido,
porque el canto que yo canto de mi alma es el vestido,
prefiero sacar la voz y gritar que sigue vivo.

El deseo de mejora de esta tierra
acomodada entre mentira y tanta mierda,
que la conciencia de los hombres tiene vida,
poco a poco va sanando y creciendo día a día,

que el mañana importa hoy es el secreto
para subirnos al tren y empezar a dar remedio
a este mundo tan cansado y tan herido.
Si hace falta un corazón... aquí tienes el mío.

Utopia

by José Antonio Delgado
Translated by María Ortega Amusco

I beg to differ, I know well what you are thinking,
I must smile, otherwise, I'll end up screaming.
Stop staring, waiting for me to accept it,
I ain't going to change your future for my present.

If my mouth is wrong, that is my problem,
I'd rather die standing, than live forever hiding myself,
because the song that I sing is the clothing of my soul,
I'd rather speak up and yell that it still lives.

The desire for improvement of this land
settled between lies and so much trash,
that the men's conscience is alive,
and it's healing, little by little, and growing, day by day.

That tomorrow matters, today is the key
to hop on that train and to begin to remedy
this world that is so tired and so hurt.
If you are in need of a heart... here you have mine.

On Translation

MORGAN BIELAWSKI
NATASHA AYAZ

Language is Like Honeycomb

Notes on My Experience Translating Russian to English

by Morgan Bielawski

Before I became a photographer, I regarded the artform as the process of framing something that had already done the work itself—Nature photographers stole the work of mountains, portrait photographers relied on the idiosyncrasies of their subjects, et cetera—but in developing my craft, I found a thousand decisions required of the artist at every step. There is a rift valley between the subject and the art, which is filled by thoughtful consideration (or instinctual moves) of the artist. All this adds up to a final product. The translator, like the photographer, must do an artful accounting of meaning which results in something independent of the subject or text in its original language.

There has been some talk of reconsidering the requirements of Written Arts as a major at Bard. Currently, studying a language is required (in addition to “Introduction to Literature”), but I would argue that experience with translation is the most useful part of whatever language the writer chooses to study and should be added to the writing program in some form.

Translation looks at language at an atomic level. When you spend twenty minutes deciding between “faint-heartedness” and “cowardice” you make friends with the words and you understand them differently—they no longer seem rigid and dutiful; they seem malleable and expressive. Also, Chekhov, or Pasternak, Tolstoy, or Tsvetaeva, did not make their sentences out of wrought iron. The genesis of the original work was not in complete sentences, complete chapters, or fully thought-out story arcs. The original work was, itself, a work of translation. It traveled from abstract ideas, emotions, sensations, dreams, and other fragments of the mind into language. Where the abstractions that inspired the work were fluid, multifaceted, and elusive, language required that the artist make choices. Certain aspects had to be severed for the sake of making sense. Hopefully, the result in language is still multifaceted and surprising. What was lost in that translation? Where does what was lost go?

The translator’s work requires an ear. She must be aware of another’s tone, rhythm, lexicon, and sub-lexicon (the ideas that a particular word carries with it, even though the word does not explicitly represent these ideas). As animals, we used to rely on our senses to survive. Most of us no longer hunt in the forest or sleep outside on a regular basis, but our ears are

sharp, trainable tools.

It is possible that an author’s ideas are better expressed in one language than another. Different languages have access to different words, to signifiers for certain concepts that are unnamed in other languages, to the predominant sounds of one language, its rhythms, or its turns of phrase, which aid the artistic transmission of an idea. So do different people have access to their own experience of life, their own linguistic habits, and their own relationship to the text. For example, when my grandfather was young he read an amazing Polish translation of Balzac. As I understand it, the book inspired many of his views of life, and even some events in it. This year he read the stories in English and found them mediocre. It could be that the content is less relevant to him now, or, (more likely to me) one translator was an artist and one was a transmitter. In my own experience, I often find myself struggling between precision and “flow” in a translation. Sometimes the “best,” most accurate word acts as a sea anchor on a poem or story and must be sacrificed in favor of a more elegant word that allows the story to move. When you are working, it is (somehow) easy to forget that the final product is all people will see. They will not see your research, or your ideas about one sentence or another. So it is necessary for the final product to bear that effort inside of it. And, more importantly, with all the weight of doing a good, accurate job, the final product must be cohesive and readable. It cannot be a Frankenstein of dictionary words (unless it was written by the original author that way for some reason...).

Translator and socialite Moura Budberg jokes about this idea of improvement in her essay “On Translating From Russian”.

The late and incomparable James Thurber once met a fervent French admirer. “I am fortunate,” said the admirer, “because I speak English well enough to appreciate—and to love—your stories. But,” he went on, “I have also read them translated into French and, believe me, they are even better in French.” Thurber, with his usual modesty, gave an understanding nod. “I know,” he said. “I tend to lose something in the original.” (p. 15)

While the admirer’s statement bears some ridiculousness, it also suggests a phenomenon that sometimes does occur. Translating a work of literature from one language into another resolves multiple creative problems, which allows the translator to relax in a certain way that is conducive to imaginative thinking. The translator is not responsible for the plot. She is absolved of the responsibility of character development. She need not concern herself with inventing the perfect symbol or metaphor in the background of the text. She has only one duty: to transmit. Later, when the translator is a writer, she will be responsible for all these things again. But the ease around those aspects of a good text—plot, characters, and symbols—will be present in the process of making the new text and useful

to its success.

In the class Russian Translation with Marina Kostalevsky I started showing the work behind my translations in something I called “logic pages.” In them, I recorded and defined unfamiliar words in both Russian and English and then made attempts at full English sentences. The “logic pages” were usually three to four times longer than the actual translated product, but they allowed me to skirt the translator’s problem of only showing the result. This record of my thinking process was useful to my development as a translator because I was often misguided or wrong, and my professor could correct me.

For example, the first story we worked on in that class was Шуточка, “Little Joke”, by Anton Chekhov. I loved the decisions involved in the first sentence, “Ясный, зимний, полдень...”, (you cannot start a story in English “Clear, wintery morning.”), but here, while I was busy falling in love, I also read over a major aspect of the story. At first, I didn’t understand the title “Little Joke” because I interpreted the main character to be acting in earnest; I thought he was too shy to tell Nadia straightforwardly that he loved her. It wasn’t until I was in the class that I understood he was playing a trick on her psyche. Even though I nominally understood what each sentence meant, I couldn’t put together the greater meaning. This kind of misunderstanding is why it is beneficial to corroborate with native speakers who can understand the subtleties. It also suggests a danger of reading translations: the translator may not fully understand text.

Language, like honeycomb, is highly structured. It has rules that govern the way words fit together; rhythm and syntax become predictable making language appear monotonous, like something we use in order to communicate instead of for the joy of speech. However, focusing on individual capsules, individual words, can renew the mystic of language. The focus and interest required by translation punctures through the waxy skin of language and releases the honey held inside words.

A Conversation with John Burns

Associate Professor of Spanish at Bard College

Conducted by Natasha Ayaz

John Burns is a poet, translator, and an associate professor of Spanish at Bard. His work as a translator has included the writing of Mexican poets Gerardo Beltrán, Rubén Medina, and César Rodríguez. John took some time for a conversation with Natasha regarding his experiences abroad, his thoughts on the ethics of translation, and his own poetry book *El mismo río dos veces* (or *The Same River Twice*).

Natasha Ayaz: I know you've spent some time translating the works of other poets. Could you talk a little bit about how your relationship to a particular work or writer changes through the process of translating?

John Burns: That's a great question. If you're talking about a living author, that's where it gets more interesting because you can actually consult them. It's more difficult with a dead author. How much wiggle room I give myself in terms of not doing a super literal translation depends on how well I get along or my affinities with the writer. I translate primarily Latin American literature, mostly poets from Chile and Mexico. The risk I think you run with somebody in the United States translating a writer from Latin America is playing into this idea of the writer checking boxes about what a Latin American writer is supposed to be. You can unintentionally be committing an act of cultural sacking, or saqueo cultural, where you go in and raid - trying to create a writer that corresponds to your idea of what a writer from that region should be. I'm thinking in particular if you go back in history and you look at the earliest translations of Pablo Neruda, some of them are kind of loose and free, particularly if you look at the journal *The Sixties*. Robert Bly ran the journal, and I don't think Bly spoke a whole lot of Spanish, but he took a crack at translating some of these poets and, I think, took some liberties that were maybe too great. So, from an ethical posture of thinking about translating writers, especially from the position of U.S. academia, I try to tread very carefully. However, if it's a writer that I have a great affinity with or I happen to know well enough that I can say to them, "Hey, I have an idea about this verse," then that may be different. Sometimes we get trapped in this idea that we have the decision to either do a very literal translation or take a great deal of license. Sometimes there is a middle ground that can be negotiated. I just try to tread carefully if I go

into that middle ground, and also, I like to leave some of the roots hanging off, to paraphrase Charles Olson. I try to find a way I can stretch the syntax or vocabulary in English to let it happen, not making it a domesticated text but leaving some of the foreignness, if you will, hanging off it so that you can intuit the difference and not just make everything homogenized, while still respecting the original text and the poet.

NA: I was going to bring up the question of literal versus free translation and the inhibitions that duty to the writer can impose on the translation, but it sounds like you've found a way to strike a balance between everything.

JB: I try to. I think that it's not out of the realm of the possible for a writer to overstate their claims in terms of the text. I think the text once it's out there is free, and the author's intentions don't matter as much, which is not to say that you can interpret a text however you want, but what's more important to me are the cultural boundaries and the reasonable expectations one could have of reading a text.

NA: I imagine that serving as a translator of your own poetry would be an entirely different experience, and it sounds like it would be even more enjoyable to me. When you were translating your work did you write the poems in Spanish and translate into English or vice versa or maybe both?

JB: Mostly English into Spanish. I think the first things I ever published were in Spanish. I ended up in an anthology for Patagonian poets. It was a very generous editor. I did a foreign exchange year in Chile. I did it after I had already graduated from high school in the states, so I could do whatever I wanted. The Economics teacher would stand up in front of the class and read out of a book, and it was the last class of the day, so I would sneak out and go to a local college for a writing workshop. My Spanish was horrible at the time, but they were very patient, and they let me do the best I could, so I had a couple of poems that came out of the anthology that was a product of that workshop. I learned so much in terms of the regional literature, particularly Chilean poetry. So, I have a handful of things written in Spanish, but I mostly write in English and then translate into Spanish.

NA: What degree of fluency would you say you need to have in a language to write a poem in that language?

JB: As a language teacher, I find poetry happens all the time in the mistakes of students. I actually had a poem that came out—it wasn't intended to be mean-spirited at all—but in grad school, we had a little

journal, and in one of the first issues, I just compiled all of the hilarious things that students had said in 101 by mistake. That's how we learn a language; we make mistakes; we progress. But there were some gems, I mean absolute gems, and it ended up being a found poem of little things I would write down in a notebook and eventually I got a pretty hilarious poem out of it.

NA: That's awesome.

JB: Yeah, so it can happen. Poetry can happen by mistake.

NA: As you know, I don't speak Spanish fluently, but while I was reading your work I was careful to read the Spanish translation aloud to get a feel for the words and the differences in rhythm. I found that I could pick up on inherent differences in rhythm and phonetic flavors between the Spanish and English. So, how do you combat that or maybe naturally let it come in when you're translating?

JB: That's a great question. With some of the poems, especially the little, pithy things, it's inevitable that there's going to be a gloss that happens in the translation. But there is one poem called "Mumbleings of My Self," where I was a little bit more careful trying to get the rhythm as similar as possible. I wanted something in Spanish that was roughly equivalent. So, with that one there was so much wordplay that trying to capture it in Spanish was fun and playful but also an act of futility. In English, do you know words that don't have a rhyme?

NA: Well, orange, as you mentioned in your poem.

JB: Right, so if I had put in a Spanish translation "there is something in me that almost rhymes with orange," it wouldn't work because there are things that rhyme in Spanish. So, I had to track down words that don't have a rhyme. So, things like that make it sound entirely different in translation but convey the right meaning. Trying to make the end of that poem play the same way that it did in English was a real challenge. When I read the two versions back to back, I was pleased with the way the music panned out, but you're right it is different.

NA: Well, I, of course, thought both were beautiful and musical but I think the languages themselves are just different, no?

JB: Yeah, something is different inevitably. You're absolutely right.

NA: This I think brings me to the thing I was most curious about while reading your work, which is how, in your writer's heart of hearts, do you conceive of each of these poems? Are they one poem in two iterations or are they two separate poems for you, the English and the Spanish?

JB: They're the same poem in a different iteration I would say. They're different texts, but I think of them as not identical twins but...

NA: Fraternal twins?

JB: Fraternal twins, yeah.

NA: That's what I was thinking, too. Moving more specifically into the content of your work, I feel like your poems deal a lot with memory, return, the intersectionality between the mundane and the profound, and the search for something essential while navigating those things. And also solitude, silence, and language, as you mentioned. All of these things made me feel while reading that this was very much a writer's book - not to place too much of my own interpretation on your words - in the sense that it was a book of poetry that felt like it on some level was about the experience of moving through the world as a writer. Would you say that that's inaccurate?

JB: No, I mean, it's flattering. One of the first Spanish language poets that I really, really loved was Jorge Teillier, a Chilean poet from Southern Chile. He was a member of a loosely knit group of poets who practiced a style of poetry that was rooted in defamiliarizing the familiar. Usually, this poetry was rooted in more rural settings, and I think that it's one of the most resonant styles of poetry that I've come across. It still haunts me to this day. When you mentioned the relationships with poets I've translated, Raúl Hernández, the Chilean poet I've translated, is sort of an urban version of that. He's all set in Santiago, but his sensibility is so similar to Teillier that I grabbed him once and told him, "you sound like an urban Teillier." I think that's why with that particular poet I felt more license to play around with one of the books that I translated and that's why I felt such an affinity for his work because that's what I'm attempting to do in the work that I've published. The work is looking for, like you said, the unfamiliar in the mundane or everyday. Just finding a slightly different perspective on things.

NA: Another thing I wanted to bring up was the intertextuality of your work, which is another way that the writerly disposition came through.

JB: Right, I have a whole poem where I'm talking to my bookshelves.

NA: Exactly. So, could you talk a little about some of the writers you chose to reference and even converse within your poems?

JB: Well, with "The South" by Borges, I can't even tell you how many times I've taught that. With a good enough textbook with footnotes, even an intermediate student of Spanish can get through that story. My favorite moment when students read it is when they have that "Aha!" moment when they realize the whole thing could have been a dream but also could have functioned perfectly well if it were not. I picked that because it's a story that I think about a lot and Borges cracks me up as a literary character. A writer who turns into a literary character who is a caricature of himself. One of the other authors I reference is Vallejo, who is probably the greatest Spanish language poet of the twentieth century. Absolutely incredible. I'm playing a little bit in my poem with an untranslatable book of Vallejo's called *Trilce*. The title itself is always left as is because it is impossible to translate. It's triste, it's dulce, it's all these words combined. It has so much meaning that it can't be brought across the bridge of language in any effective way. It's so dense and untranslatable, and I absolutely love it.

NA: For me, having never translated anything but speaking as an avid reader, when I hear about something untranslatable it kind of breaks my heart a little bit. At risk of sounding extremely pessimistic, do you ever feel in the work of translation that it's a futile, sad pursuit?

JB: Oh, yes. When I was an undergraduate, my thesis was a translation of Galician poetry. I translated an avante-garde, creationist poet. It was an urban movement that this poet was doing in a rural setting in Galicia. Galicia is a part of Spain in the northwest where most of the people at the time would have lived in more rural settings. There were certainly speakers in the city as well, but it is a language, for example, that wouldn't have a word for "sidewalk" because there weren't sidewalks in a rural setting. So, he's trying to use this language to do this really avante-garde, out there poetry. There was one poem that had one word that was only used in his village. So, I had to go there. You had to meet someone from that particular village because people in even the next village over wouldn't know the word. But, I think the most depressing experience in terms of translation was when I was an undergraduate in Spain. I went to the library; I don't know why but I had a John Donne kick, and I wanted to read "The Flea." I read the translation in Spanish, and I wanted to fall off my chair; it was so horrible. It had lost everything. So, that was an experience reading English language poetry in Spanish translation where I realized things can go so wrong. It was a revelation.

NA: That would frustrate me a lot. I'm often sad about not being able to read certain things or fully understand certain things because of linguistic barriers.

JB: I've been sounding like I'm speaking ill of translation, but the idea from an academic standpoint of the impurity of translation or that it's tainted drives me nuts. I'm enjoying teaching literature in translation right now, but there are a lot of institutions where this might not necessarily be an option. There's an idea that if you teach *Don Quixote* in translation, it's the worst thing in the world. I think isn't it a worse thing that you could get through your university education and not have been exposed to that? That's equally problematic, if not more so.

