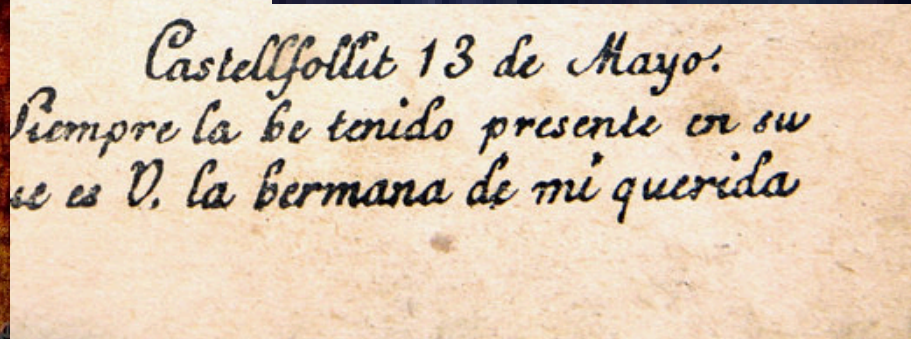
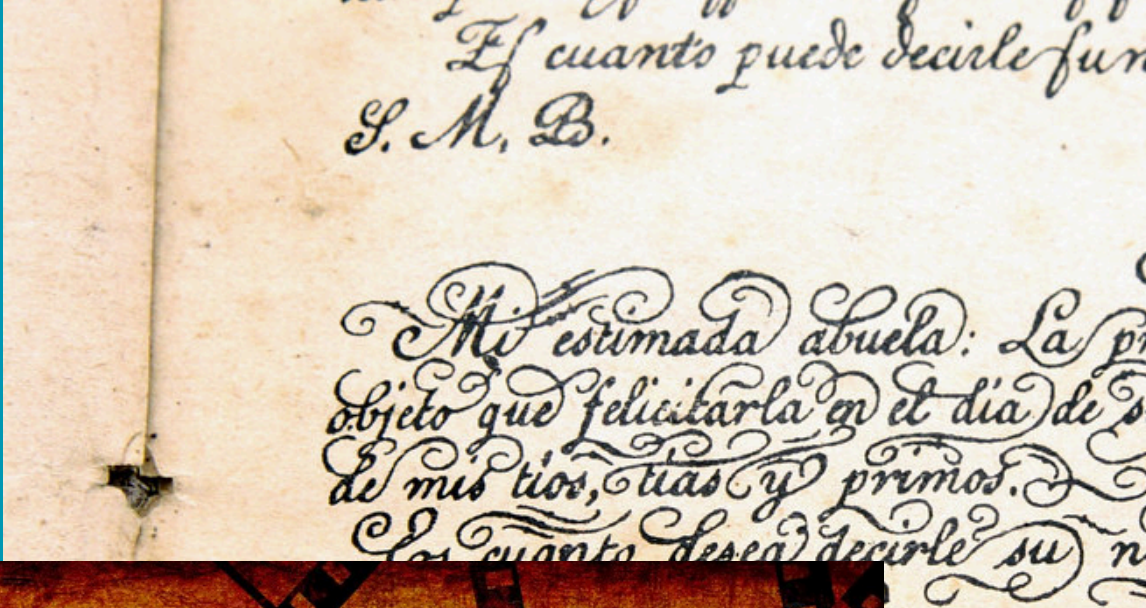
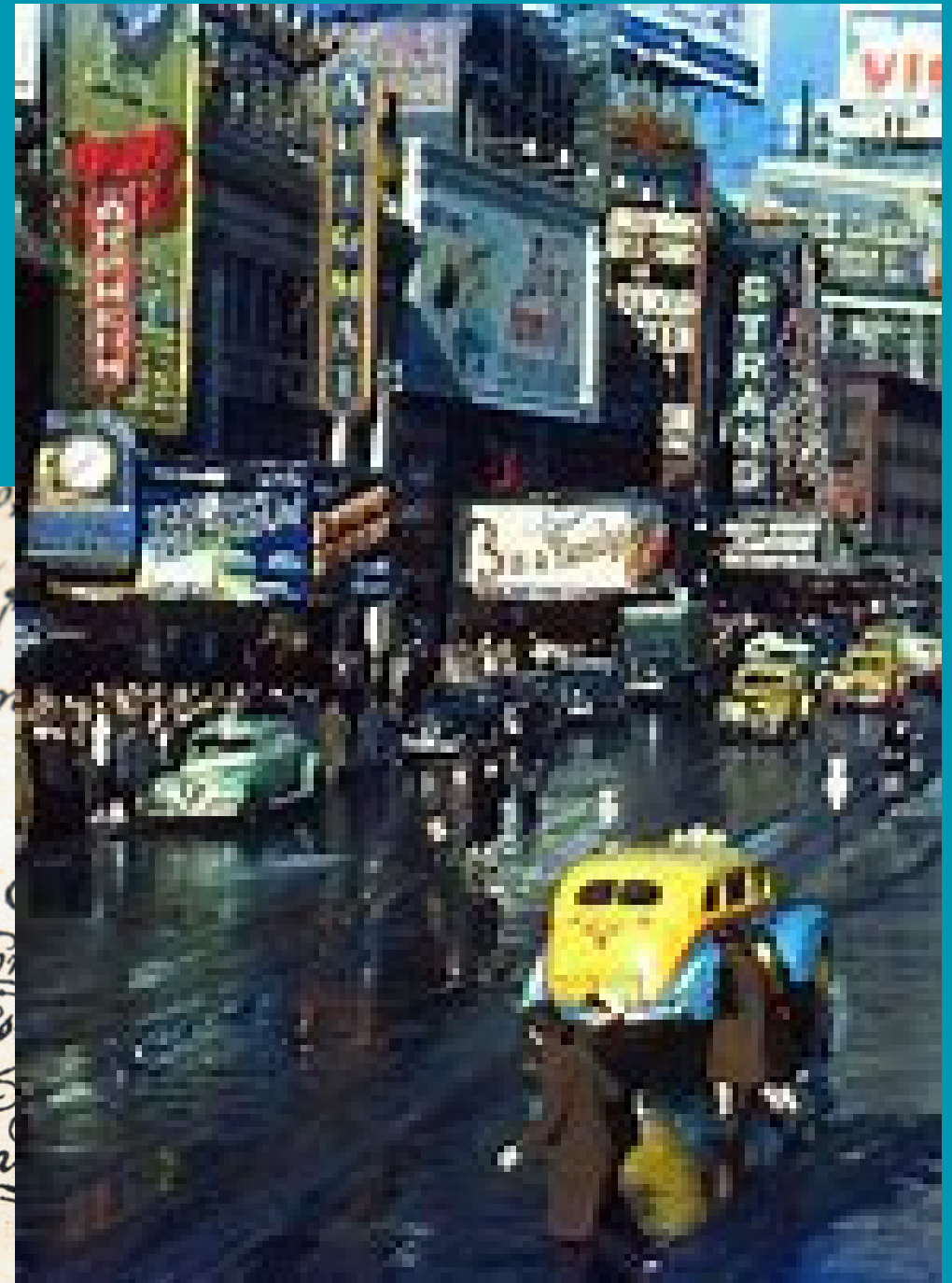


# SUI GENERIS



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# (UN)TRANSLATABLE



# Sui Generis (Un)Translatable

2025

Annandale-on-Hudson,  
New York

*Without Professor Melanie Nicholson, there would be no Sui Generis. We thank her for her incredible work on translation inside and outside the classroom as she retires from a long and fruitful career at Bard College.*

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**Cover art:** Nicole Estefany Sierra

## NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

We are excited to present this year's issue of *Sui Generis* dedicated to the question of (un)translatability; the question that every person faces when learning, speaking and translating another language; the question that paralyzes and stimulates, frustrates and excites. Untranslatability is always in the background of the translation work, and this year we attempted to bring it forward and make visible the effort behind the finished product. For these purposes we encouraged our translators to reflect on their process in the notes to their submissions; we hope that you find it revealing and perhaps relatable.

This issue is an experiment with the selection process aimed at deeper and more thoughtful approaches to submissions, which resulted in there being more multilingual and original pieces than usual. It is also an experiment with form. The following anthology of translations is not organized by the languages of the works: rather it attempts to find a throughline that pieces them together. The process of reading this issue is one of reflection and acceptance and appreciation of differences.

We are incredibly grateful to all of the translators who decided to submit their work. It is only a collective effort that makes this issue so rich and multidimensional. We would like to specifically thank translators from the partner institutions: Smolny College, American University of Cairo, and the University of Trento. It is a joy to see the voices from the different parts of the world coming together.

Enjoy the following, and remember: traduttore, traditore,  
Sui Generis team

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Author & Translator:

Dac Hoang Nguyen (*he/him*)

Bướm ngồi  
Sitting Butterfly

Vietnamese to English

When translating a visual poem, the translator is often bound by the number of characters and syntax to preserve its visual quality. As Bướm Ngồi (2022) is a poem in the form of a chrysalis, I overcome the challenge by offering a loose translation in terms of form and content. The translation Sitting Butterfly (2024) is an emerging butterfly out of its cocoon, suggesting a new idea of translation as metamorphosis.

### Bướm ngồi

Tôi thấy mình ngồi đây  
Xéo tiếng ngáy o o  
Máy lạnh vẫn ì ò  
Trong lòng đang rột roạt  
Tôi thấy mình ngồi đây  
Dưới vầng sáng to tỏ  
Bầu trời rõ ngàn sao  
Và tôi đang nhấp nháy  
Tôi thấy mình ngồi đây  
Sau một ngày ngày một  
Trước ngày mai mai ngày  
Alo, Tao đang Tại Hiện  
Tôi thấy mình ngồi đây  
Xúc xạo một chỉ dẫu  
Một phiếm chỉ: cơn đau  
Để chắc chắn:  
Chuyện con bướm  
cũng ngồi

### Sitting Butterfly

I saw myself sitting  
under the light of the dimly lit  
next to the snores of my roommates  
above the air between my butt's crack  
behind the creaking sound of our door  
in front of a view of the garden  
between me' and me".  
I also saw myself a butterfly  
sitting on the dimly lit body of me  
in the echo chamber of my roommates' snores  
at the Grand Canyon of my natural bottom  
on the D Sharp of our creaking door  
behind the glass of the garden  
out of me' and me".  
I saw myself a sitting butterfly, finally  
out from the blackout of the room of body of me  
into the aurora of the echoes of the snores of roommates of me  
in the weightlessness of black hole of nature of me  
over-tune of the creakiness of the door of me  
under the blue sky of the garden of whom  
beyond me' and me"



Authors & Translators:  
Raffaëlle Conci (*he/him*),  
Charlotte Fernée (*she/her*),  
Celia Vázquez Martínez (*she/her*)

Les yeux, la lengua, le mani  
Eyes, Tongue, Hands

English/French/Spanish/Italian to English

Les yeux, la lengua, le mani

Ladies and gentlemen, the curtain is opening  
Turn off your phones and quiet down  
The show is starting and you will see  
The art of the smile and the art of the frown

I studied all night, I learnt my text  
*je monte sur scène, yeux rivés au plafond*  
when the moment comes I stutter a bit  
*j'essaie de me dire que j'en ai pas pour longtemps*

*Con questo lavoro ho molti malanni,  
nel ruolo di oggi ho legate le mani.*  
One may think I am exaggerating  
but without my hands I can't make money.

Should I use this old tongue and new mask for thee  
This tongue that is not silver not gold not real  
Should I wear this mask and speak any truth  
*Pero si fuera la otra lengua la mía*

Eyes, Tongue, Hands

Ladies and gentlemen, the curtain is opening  
Turn off your phones and quiet down  
The show is starting and you will see  
The art of the smile and the art of the frown

I studied all night, I learnt my text  
I step up on the stage, eyes plastered to the ceiling  
when the moment comes I stutter a bit  
I tell myself that so will pass this feeling

R: Working my job I run into many troubles,  
today I had my hands tied, it's not funny.  
One may think I am exaggerating  
but without my hands I can't make money.

C: Should I use this old tongue and new mask for thee  
This tongue that is not silver not gold not real  
Should I wear this mask and speak any truth  
But If were mine other tongue to speak

*No esta soledad de lengua gris  
Soledad de dientes de llagas de pus  
Yo he sido muchas caras y solo una  
Lengua y ahora soy nada sin thee*

While my hands are bound  
I'm forever stuck in this language.  
May as well play with its sound,  
may as well take advantage.

I can no longer play dead  
*alors je me relève*  
and when the crowd begins to stare  
*je sais de quoi j'ai l'air—*

*La stanza arde, la salle prende feu  
Les yeux, la lengua, le mani are free  
La obra, vous voyez, è comunque a feat  
Les yeux, la lengua, le mani on you.*

C: Not this grey loneliness tongue  
A loneliness made of tooth, stigmata and pus  
I have been many faces, yet just one  
Tongue and now I am nothing without thee

While my hands are bound  
I'm forever stuck in this language.  
May as well play with its sound,  
may as well take advantage.

I can no longer play dead  
so I lift myself from the lines I dread  
and when the crowd begins to stare  
I see a reflection of my air—

The line, the room, it all takes fire  
The eyes, the tongue and the hands are free  
The play, you see, was still quite a feat  
The eyes, the tongue and the hands on you.

Author & Translator:  
미아 Thyme Weiss (*he/she/they*)

## ORIGIN

English/Korean to Korean/English

I wrote this poem to use in my senior project as a way to express my personal and familial connection to themes that are less explicitly present in the show, such as displacement and assimilation due to colonization. I emphasize being unable to speak my mother tongue as I write this poem that shifts between 한국어 Korean, which I am currently studying, and the language my grandparents learned for their life as missionaries: the only language the taught their children.

Sounds that we don't understand still hold meaning. This translation, like the original, is in both English and Korean: filling in the blanks we're able to puzzle together complete translations.



*searching for language  
reaching with raw hands  
deeply into uncharted soul  
in search of answers and healing  
out of anger  
out of love for my people  
grief for my people*

우리는 어느 날 밤 달려왔지  
어떤 백일몽 속에서  
서둘러  
밝고 밝은 흰 빛처럼 조용해지려 했어

이건 내가 말할 수 있는 언어가 아니야  
온 세계에 말을 퍼뜨려야 했어  
“Jesus Christ our lord and savior” 라고  
전쟁과 점령이 우리에게  
그렇게 가르쳤으니까...

언어를 찾아서  
맨손으로  
깊이, 미지의 영혼 속을 더듬는다  
답을 찾아 치유를 찾아  
분노 속에서  
내 사람들을 위한 사랑 속에서  
내 사람들을 위한 슬픔 속에서

We came here running one night  
In some daydream  
And rushed to be  
As quiet as bright bright white

This is not a language I can speak  
Passing through worlds to spread the word  
of “예수 그리스도, 우리의 주님이자  
구세주”  
Because wars and occupation taught us ...

Authors:  
Herbert Newman,  
Stanley R. Lebowsky  
Sung by Patsy Cline

Translator:  
Rachel Smith (*she/her*)

## The Wayward Wind Le vent rebelle

English to French

This is my first translation, and I selected it for the (Un)translatable compilation for its subtle concepts and figurative word usage, which can be challenging to define even in English, like “wayward,” “restless,” and “wandering.” Choosing a song made staying loyal to the melody and pacing a fun and necessary cornerstone for translating.

## The Wayward Wind

Oh, the wayward wind is a restless wind  
A restless wind that yearns to wander  
And he was born the next of kin  
The next of kin to the wayward wind

In a lonely shack by a railroad track  
He spent his younger days  
And I guess the sound of the outward bound  
Made him a slave to his wand'rin ways

Oh, the wayward wind is a restless wind  
A restless wind that yearns to wander  
And he was born the next of kin  
The next of kin to the wayward wind

Oh, I met him there in a border town  
He vowed we'd never part  
Tho' he tried his best to settle down  
Now I'm alone with a broken heart

Oh, the wayward wind is a restless wind  
A restless wind that yearns to wander  
And he was born the next of kin  
The next of kin to the wayward wind  
The next of kin to the wayward wind

## Le vent rebelle

Oh, le vent rebelle est un vent vagabond  
Un vent agité qui a soif d'errer  
Et il est né le proche parent  
Le proche parent du vent rebelle

Dans une cabane solitaire au bord des rails  
Il a passé sa jeunesse  
et je suppose que le son des trains en partance  
ont fait de lui un prisonnier de sa nature errante

Oh, le vent rebelle est un vent vagabond  
Un vent agité qui a soif d'errer  
Et il est né le proche parent  
Le proche parent du vent rebelle

Oh, je l'ai rencontré là dans une ville à la frontière  
Il a promis qu'on ne se séparerait jamais  
et bien qu'il ait fait de son mieux pour s'assagir  
Maintenant je suis seule avec un cœur brisé

Oh, le vent rebelle est un vent vagabond  
Un vent agité qui a soif d'errer  
Et il est né le proche parent  
Le proche parent du vent rebelle  
Le proche parent du vent rebelle

Author: Anri Volokhonsky

Translators:  
Elsa Ralske  
Sasha Vesensky,  
Liesl Tauschinger-Dempsey,  
Zachary Dangor,  
Aslan Vullo,  
Peter Szasz,  
Garrett Collins,  
Sophie Goldman,  
Sabina Pejic

Город золотой  
Golden City

Russian to English



## Город золотой

Под небом голубым есть город золотой,  
С прозрачными воротами и яркою звездой.  
А в городе том сад, всё травы да цветы;  
Гуляют там животные невиданной красоты.

Одно - как желтый огнегривый лев,  
Другое - вол, исполненный очей;  
С ними золотой орёл небесный,  
Чей так светел взор незабываемый.

А в небе голубом горит одна звезда;  
Она твоя, о, ангел мой, она твоя всегда.  
Кто любит, тот любим, кто светел, тот и свят;  
Пускай ведёт звезда тебя дорогой в дивный сад.

Тебя там встретит огнегривый лев,  
И синий вол, исполненный очей;  
С ними золотой орел небесный,  
Чей так светел взор незабываемый...

## Golden City

Under the blue sky there's a golden city,  
With transparent gates and a bright star.  
And in that city, there's a garden - with its grasses and flowers;  
There, animals of unprecedented beauty roam.

One is like a yellow, fire-maned lion,  
Another - an ox with omnipresent eyes;  
With them is a golden eagle of heaven,  
Whose gaze is so bright and unforgettable.

And in the blue sky burns a single star;  
It is yours, oh, my angel, it's always yours.  
He who loves, is loved; he who shines bright is holy;  
Let the star lead you along the road to the miraculous garden.

There you will meet the fire-maned lion,  
And the blue ox, with omnipresent eyes;  
With them, the golden eagle of heaven,  
Whose gaze is so bright and unforgettable...

Author: Al-Tutli

Translator:  
Mariam Girgis (*she/her*)  
American University of Cairo

ضاحكٌ عن جُمانْ  
laughing revealing pearls

Arabic to English

ضاحكٌ عن جُمانٍ  
سافرٌ عن بدرٍ

ضاقَ عنه الزمانُ  
وحواءُ صدري

آه ممّا أجدُ  
شَفَنِي ما أجدُ  
قامَ بي وقعدُ  
باطشَ متئدُ

كلما قلتُ قدُ  
قالَ لي أينَ قدُ  
وانشَى خوطَ بانُ  
ذا مهزٍ نصرٍ

عابَتَهُ  
يَدانُ للصِّبا والقَطْرِ  
ليسَ لي مِنكَ بُدُ  
خذ فؤادي عن يدُ

لم تدعُ لي جلدُ  
غيرَ أني أجهدُ  
مكرعٍ من شَهْدٍ  
واشتياقي يشهدُ

ما لبنتُ الدنانُ  
ولذاك الشَّعرُ  
أين محيا الزَّمانُ  
من مُحيا الجمرِ

laughing revealing pearls  
Unveiling a full moon  
Too vast for time to hold  
Yet my chest its holder

Ah, the ache I feel—  
It has worn me thin.  
You lift me, you pull me down,  
Mighty yet measured.

Each time I say “now,”  
She asks, “Where is now?”  
And a willow branch bent,  
Graceful, ripe with beauty.

Two hands teased it,  
Of the breeze and the rain.  
I have no escape from you,  
Take my heart from my hand.

Drunk on honey,  
And my longing bears witness.  
What is between the wine jar  
And that smile?

Where is the life of time  
Compared to the life of embers?  
Within me is a hidden passion,  
If only my efforts made it succeed.

بِي هَوَى مُضْمَرٍ  
لَيْتَ جَهْدِي وَفَقُّهُ  
كَلِمًا يَظْهَرُ  
فَفؤَادِي أَفَقُّهُ

ذَلِكَ الْمَنْظَرُ  
لَا يُدَاوِي عَشْفُهُ  
بِأَبِي كَيْفَ كَانَ  
فَلِكِي دُرِّي

رَاقٍ حَتَّى اسْتَبَانَ  
عُذْرُهُ وَعُذْرِي  
هَلْ إِلَيْكَ سَبِيلُ  
أَوْ إِلَى أَنْ أَيْسَا

ذَبْتُ إِلَّا قَلِيلُ  
عَبْرَةً أَوْ نَفْسًا  
مَا عَسَى أَنْ أَقُولُ  
سَاءَ ظَنِّي بَعْسَى

وَانْقَضَى كُلُّ شَأْنٍ  
وَأَنَا أَسْتَشِيرِي  
خَالِعًا مِنْ عَنَانٍ  
جَزَعِي أَوْ صَبْرِي

مَا عَلَيَّ مَنْ يَلُومُ  
لَوْ تَنَاهَى عَنِّي  
هَلْ سِوَى حُبِّ رَيْمٍ  
دِينُهُ التَّجْنِي

Whenever it appears,  
Its horizon is my heart.  
That sight  
Its love cannot be healed.

By my father, how it was—  
A celestial, radiant pearl.  
It became so graceful that it became clear  
Its excuse and mine.

Is there a way to reach you,  
Or must I despair?  
I have melted away, save for a little—  
A tear or a breath.

What is there left to say?  
My opinion of 'perhaps' has gone bad.  
Everything has come to an end,  
Yet I go on seeking more.

Casting off the reins  
Of my despair and my patience.  
What blame is on one who reproaches,  
If they would keep away from me?

Is there anything except the love of a gazelle,  
Whose religion is cruelty?  
I wander lost in her,  
While she sings of me



أَنَا فِيهِ أَهِيْمُ  
وَهُوَ بِي يُغْنِي  
قَدْ رَأَيْتُكَ عَيَانُ  
لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ سَتْدِرِي

سَيَطُولُ الزَّمَانُ  
وَسَتَنْسَى ذِكْرِي  
أَمَّا وَجْدِي فَقَدْ عَتَا  
فَلَا أَلْقَى مَلَاذَا

وَلَا أَلْفُ مَهْلًا  
أَحْبِبُ  
بِهِ إِلَيَّ أَحْبَبُ  
مُعْجِبُ

يَا لَهُ وَهُوَ أَعْجَبُ  
يَذْهَبُ  
بِي فِي كُلِّ مَذْهَبُ  
لَمَّا عَنَّا وَعَنَّا

تَصَدَّيْتُ فَلَاذَا  
وَأَقْبَلْتُ مُدَلَا  
تَبَا  
لِنَهْيٍ مَنِ نَهَانِي

لَبَّا  
وَجْدِي مِنَ الْغَوَانِي  
عَضْبِي  
تَقُولُ إِذْ تَرَانِي

I have seen you with my own eyes,  
Yet you remain unaware.  
Time will stretch on,  
And you will forget my memory.

But my yearning has grown wild,  
I find no refuge, no solace.  
Nor do I grow familiar with patience.  
Love—

In her, I must love.  
Marvel—  
For she is more marvelous.  
She goes—

With me in every direction,  
When distance and hardship came between us.  
I stood my ground, yet he sought refuge,  
While I stepped forward, bold with pride.  
Curse  
The prohibition of the one who prohibits me,

Bless  
My passion for the enchanting woman.  
Angry.  
She says when she sees me,

مَهْمَا  
عَيْنَايَ أَوْجَبَتَا  
فَلَنْ يَعْزُوَ هَذَا  
بِالْقُرْبِ ذُلًّا

سُلْطَانُ  
الْحَاظُ جُنُودُهُ  
بِسْتَانُ  
الْفَاظِ بَرُودُهُ

رِيَّانُ  
مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ تَوَدُّهُ  
أَلْمَا  
فَإِنْ تَلَفَّتَا

تَرَى النَّاسَ جَذَاذَا  
فَسَالِمُهُ وَإِلَّا  
أُبْدِعُ  
بَشَادِنِ رَخِيمِ

يَرْتَعُ  
فِي قَلْبِي السَّلِيمِ  
يَطْلُعُ  
مَطَالِحَ النُّجُومِ

No matter  
What my eyes command,  
This heart will never bow  
To closeness in humiliation.

A sultan—  
Her glances are her soldiers.  
A garden—  
Her words are flowing silks.

Drenched—  
With blessings that weigh upon her.  
And when  
She turns to look,

You see people shattered before her,  
So make peace with her—or else  
Be captivated  
By a graceful young gazelle,

Roaming freely  
In my tender heart.  
She rises  
Like the stars at dawn,

يُسَمِّي  
عَمْدًا لِيُنْعَتَا  
كَلَا الْحَائِمَيْنِ حَادَى  
بِهِ ذَاكَ الْمَحَلَا

حَنَّتْ  
إِلَيَّ وَهِيَ تَجَزَعُ  
جُنَّتْ  
لَمْ تَدْرِ كَيْفَ تَصْنَعُ

غَلَّتْ  
وَأُمُّهَا تَسْمَعُ  
مَمَّا  
يَعْشَقُنِي ذَا الْفَتَى

وَلَا تَدْرِي لِمَاذَا  
وَلَا نَقُلُ لَهُ لَا

Named with intent,  
So she may be praised.  
She aligned with both wandering souls,  
Guiding them to that lofty place.

She longed for me,  
While she trembled in fear.  
She went mad,  
Not knowing what to do.

She hid away,  
While her mother listened closely—  
For  
This young boy loves me,

She does not know why.  
And we shall not tell him no.

Author: Lyn Hejinian

Translator:  
Leigh Ivanova (*she/they*)

Chapter 249 from  
Oxota.  
A Short Russian Novel

English to Russian

Translating an abstract poem is difficult, as it requires you to work with images that are unclear, visual, sonic rather than epistemic, particularly when translating into a language, where you are more comfortable, where you have more options. This chapter of a short Russian novel, written in Russia but in English by an American poet, felt like home when I first read it, already missing the city it was written about. I attempted to familiarize it within the language that underlines it.

Leningrad was made of light and my eyes were moths  
They were both  
Floating even rudely—no way to brush them off  
They reverberated whole  
They returned to the skull  
It received them with compassion  
The twilight glowed from within with its own plum blindness  
I climbed a little slope pressed to its birches  
But Leningrad was stayed in light  
A crow rose  
It moved like a puppet night  
A flutter of knees  
Nerves of an oily shadow, a protraction  
There above I didn't remember how I'd been below

Ленинград был сделан из света, и мои глаза были мотыльками  
Они оба  
Зависли в воздухе, даже грубо – никак не отмахнуться  
Они целиком отдавались эхом  
Они вернулись в череп  
Он принял их с сочувствием  
Сумерки сверкали изнутри особенной сливовой слепотой  
Я залезла на маленький холм, прижатый к своим берёзам  
Но Ленинград остался в свете  
Ворона взлетела  
Двигалась как ночь-марионетка  
Дрожь коленей  
Нервы масляной тени, вытяжение  
Там, наверху я не помнила, каково было внизу

Author: Cecilia Vicuña

Translator:  
Celestine Mingle (*they/them*)

Nuevos Diseños  
Eróticos Para Muebles  
New, Erotic  
Designs for Furniture  
Neue erotische  
Entwürfe für Möbel

Spanish to English and German

This translation was a tremendous challenge for me primarily because of the peculiar and edgy nuances embedded in the original poem.

Translating this poem from its original Spanish into German required my making a pitstop in English; all of which ended up being a very laborious challenge. But it has felt like a milestone in my language learning, to at least approach translating a poem I like so much in Spanish into German.



## Nuevos Diseños Eróticos Para Muebles

Soñando con un mundo vasto  
hemos llegado a la certera conclusión  
de que las posiciones del cuerpo  
en el mundo civilizado  
son demasiado limitadas  
de modo que terminaremos  
con la posición  
    “sentada en una silla”  
para proponer distintos muebles  
que ofrezcan multiplicidad  
de movimientos o situaciones corporales  
a la conductora de sus propias carnes.

Esta idea sería de fundamental interés  
para las personas obsesionadas  
u obligadas a permanecer  
durante largo tiempo inmóviles  
como son:

    estudiantes  
    oficinistas  
    operadores de fábricas  
    asistentes a reuniones

## New, Erotic Designs for Furniture

Dreaming with a vast world  
we have come to the certain conclusion  
that the positions of the body  
in the civilized world  
are too limited  
so we will end up  
with the position  
    “sitting in a chair”  
to propose different furniture  
that offers a multiplicity  
of movements or bodily situations  
To the driver of their own flesh

This idea will be of fundamental interest  
for people obsessed with  
or obligated to remain  
still for a long time  
such as:

    students  
    office workers  
    factory operators  
    meeting attendees

Se crearán modelos para personas  
que odien escribir sentadas  
para que puedan hacerlo  
hincadas, de boca, en cuclillas  
o cabeza abajo

Estos muebles irán  
en beneficio de la salud  
y la belleza de todos los interesados  
gracias a la peculiar irrigación  
sanguínea y la repentina  
turgencia de muslos y nalgas  
que sin duda tengo planeadas.

models will be created for people  
that hate writing while being seated  
so that they can do it  
kneeling, with their mouth, squatting  
or head down

This furniture will go on  
in benefit of health  
and the beauty of all who are interested  
thanks to the peculiar rush of  
blood and the sudden  
turgidity of thighs and buttocks  
Which without a doubt I planned.

## Nuevos Diseños Eróticos Para Muebles

Soñando con un mundo vasto  
hemos llegado a la certera conclusión  
de que las posiciones del cuerpo  
en el mundo civilizado  
son demasiado limitadas  
de modo que terminaremos  
con la posición  
    “sentada en una silla”  
para proponer distintos muebles  
que ofrezcan multiplicidad  
de movimientos o situaciones corporales  
a la conductora de sus propias carnes.

Esta idea sería de fundamental interés  
para las personas obsesionadas  
u obligadas a permanecer  
durante largo tiempo inmóviles  
como son:

    estudiantes  
    oficinistas  
    operadores de fábricas  
    asistentes a reuniones

## Neue erotische Entwürfe für Möbel

Neue erotische Entwürfe für Möbel  
Träumend von einer weiten Welt  
sind wir zum sicheren Entschluss gekommen,  
dass die Positionen des Körpers  
in der zivilisierten Welt  
zu eingeschränkt sind  
wieso sodass wir enden werden  
mit der Position  
    “sitzend im Stuhl”  
um andere Möbel vorzuschlagen  
die eine Vielzahl  
von Bewegungen oder den körperlichen Zuständen  
für das eigene Fleisch einer Fahrerin anbieten  
Diese Idee wird von grundsätzlichem Interesse sein  
für Menschen, die davon besessen sind  
oder Menschen, die verpflichtet sind, zu bleiben  
für lange Zeit regungslos zu bleiben  
Wie zum Beispiel:

    Studierende  
    Büropersonal  
    Fabrikarbeiter  
    Versammlungsanwesende

Se crearán modelos para personas  
que odien escribir sentadas  
para que puedan hacerlo  
hincadas, de boca, en cuclillas  
o cabeza abajo

Estos muebles irán  
en beneficio de la salud  
y la belleza de todos los interesados  
gracias a la peculiar irrigación  
sanguínea y la repentina  
turgencia de muslos y nalgas  
que sin duda tengo planeadas.

Modelle werden für Menschen erzeugt,  
die es Hassend sitzend schreiben,  
damit sie schreiben können,  
kniend, mit dem Mund, hockend,  
oder kopfüber.

Diese Möbel werden gehen  
zum Vorteil der Gesundheit  
und der Schönheit von Allen, die interessiert sind  
Dank des eigenartigen Blutrauschs  
und der plötzlichen  
Schwellung von Schenkeln und dem Gefäß,  
das, ohne zu planen, was ich vorgehabt habe.

Author: Mia Couto

Translator:  
Jasper Miller (*he/him*)

Trecho de Terra Sonâmbula  
Extracto de Tierra Sonâmbula  
Excerpt from Sleepwalking  
Land

Portuguese to Spanish and English

The works of Mozambican author Mia Couto contain many regional and/or idiosyncratic peculiarities that make translation difficult.

For example, the excerpt translated here contains several words that do not appear in dictionaries, including the verbs *praiar* (from *praia* - beach), *barrigar* (from *barriga* - belly) and *multiabrir* (from *abrir* - to open). In addition to English, this excerpt is also translated into Spanish, with the intention of highlighting both the striking similarities and the irreconcilable differences between the two languages.

Cerimónia fúnebre foi na água, sepultado nas ondas. No dia seguinte, deu-se o que de imaginar nem ninguém se atreve: o mar todo secou, a água inteira desapareceu na porção do instante. No lugar onde antes praiava o azul, ficou uma planície coberta de palmeiras. Cada uma se barrigava de frutos gordos, apetitosos, luzilhantes. Nem eram frutos, parecia eram cabaças de ouro, cada uma pesando mil riquezas. Os homens se lançaram nesse vale, correndo de catanas na mão, no antegozo daquela dádiva. Então se escutou uma voz que se multiabriu em ecos, parecia que cada palmeira se servia de infinitas bocas. Os homens ainda pararam, por brevidades. Aquela voz seria em sonho que figurava? Para mim não havia dúvida: era a voz de meu pai. Ele pedia que os homens ponderassem: aqueles eram frutos muito sagrados. Sua voz se ajoelhava clamando para que se poupassem as árvores: o destino do nosso mundo se sustentava em delicados fios. Bastava que um desses fios fosse cortado para que tudo entrasse em desordens e desgraças se sucedessem em desfile. O primeiro homem, então, perguntou à árvore: por que és tão desumana? Só respondeu o silêncio. Nem mais se escutou nenhuma voz. De novo, a multidão se derramou sobre as palmeiras. Mas quando o primeiro fruto foi cortado, do golpe espirrou a imensa água e, em cataratas, o mar se encheu de novo, afundando tudo e todos.

Só recordo esta inundaçã enquanto durmo. Como as tantas outras lembranças que só me chegam em sonho. Parece eu e o meu passado dormimos em tempos alternados, um apeado enquanto outro segue viagem.

La ceremonia fúnebre fue en el agua, un entierro en las ondas. Al día siguiente, se dio lo que nadie se atreve a imaginar: todo el mar se secó, el agua entera desapareció en un solo instante. En el lugar de lo que antes playaba lo azul, ahora quedaba una planicie cubierta de palmeras. Cada una se barrigaba de frutos gordos, apetitosos, relucientes. Ni parecían frutos sino calabazas de oro, cada una pesando mil riquezas. Los hombres se lanzaron a ese valle, corriendo con machetes en mano, ya anticipando aquella dádiva. Entonces, se escuchó una voz que se abría paso en ecos, parecía que innumerables bocas se expresaban desde cada palmera. Por solo un momento, los hombres pararon. ¿Podría ser que aquella voz se manifestaba en sueños? A mí no me cabía ninguna duda: era la voz de mi padre. Él pedía que los hombres reflexionaran: aquellos frutos eran muy sagrados. Su voz se arrodillaba clamando que no se tocaran los árboles: el destino de nuestro mundo se sostenía en hilos delicados. Bastaba con que solo uno de esos hilos fuera cortado para que todo entrara en desorden y sucedieran continuas desgracias. El primer hombre, entonces, preguntó al árbol: ¿por qué eres tan inhumano? Solo respondió el silencio. Nunca más se escuchó ninguna voz. La multitud se abalanzó de nuevo sobre las palmeras. Pero cuando el primer fruto fue cortado, el agua inmensa chorreó de golpe y, en cataratas, el mar se llenó de nuevo, hundiendo todo y a todos.

Solo recuerdo esta inundación cuando duermo. Justo como los tantos otros recuerdos que solo me llegan en sueños. Parece que mi pasado y yo dormimos en tiempos alternados, uno apeado mientras el otro sigue el viaje.

Cerimónia fúnebre foi na água, sepultado nas ondas. No dia seguinte, deu-se o que de imaginar nem ninguém se atreve: o mar todo secou, a água inteira desapareceu na porção do instante. No lugar onde antes praiava o azul, ficou uma planície coberta de palmeiras. Cada uma se barrigava de frutos gordos, apetitosos, luzilhantes. Nem eram frutos, parecia eram cabaças de ouro, cada uma pesando mil riquezas. Os homens se lançaram nesse vale, correndo de catanas na mão, no antegozo daquela dádiva. Então se escutou uma voz que se multiabriu em ecos, parecia que cada palmeira se servia de infinitas bocas. Os homens ainda pararam, por brevidades. Aquela voz seria em sonho que figurava? Para mim não havia dúvida: era a voz de meu pai. Ele pedia que os homens ponderassem: aqueles eram frutos muito sagrados. Sua voz se ajoelhava clamando para que se poupassem as árvores: o destino do nosso mundo se sustentava em delicados fios. Bastava que um desses fios fosse cortado para que tudo entrasse em desordens e desgraças se sucedessem em desfile. O primeiro homem, então, perguntou à árvore: por que és tão desumana? Só respondeu o silêncio. Nem mais se escutou nenhuma voz. De novo, a multidão se derramou sobre as palmeiras. Mas quando o primeiro fruto foi cortado, do golpe espirrou a imensa água e, em cataratas, o mar se encheu de novo, afundando tudo e todos.

Só recordo esta inundação enquanto durmo. Como as tantas outras lembranças que só me chegam em sonho. Parece eu e o meu passado dormimos em tempos alternados, um apeado enquanto outro segue viagem.

The funeral ceremony took place in the water, a burial amongst the waves. The next day, the unimaginable occurred: the whole sea dried up, all the water disappeared in a fraction of an instant. Where the vast blue used to meet the shore there now stood a flat expanse covered with palm trees, each one swollen with plump, appetizing, glistening fruits. They seemed to be not even fruits but gourds of gold, each worth a thousand fortunes. The men stormed the valley with machetes in hand, eager to partake of this unexpected gift. At this point, a voice was heard, unfurling in echoes. It seemed as if innumerable mouths spoke out from every palm tree. For a brief moment, the men stopped. Could this voice have appeared only as a dream? For me, there was no doubt: this was the voice of my father. He asked the men to reconsider: those fruits were very sacred. His voice, kneeling in prayer, pleaded that the trees not be touched: the destiny of our world hung from delicate threads. If even one of these threads were cut, the world would fall into chaos and tragedies would ensue. The first man now asked the tree: how can you be so inhuman? Only silence answered. No voice was to be heard again. Once again, the crowd descended upon the palm trees. But when the first fruit was cut, there was an immense gush of water and, in a deluge, the sea filled again, submerging everyone and everything.

I only remember this flood when I sleep. Like the countless other memories that come to me only in my dreams. It seems that my past and I take turns sleeping: when one stops, the other continues the journey.



Author: Paul McVeigh

Translator:  
Chiara Polita (*she/her*)

## The Good Son Il figlio buono

English to Italian

The main challenge in translating this excerpt was in rendering the term “Troubles.” In Italian, there is no direct equivalent to the word Troubles; therefore I opted for a more general and less precise term that could still convey a similar sense to the original.

## The Good Son

I was born the day the Troubles started.

‘Wasn’t I, Ma?’ says me.

‘It was you that started them, son,’ says she, and we all laugh, except Our Paddy. I put that down to his pimples and general ugliness. It must be hard to be happy with a face like that. I almost feel sorry for him. I spy a dirty, big love bite on his neck and store this ammunition to defend myself against future attacks.

Steamy, flowery-smellin’ disinfectant fills my nose and joins the sweet tastin’ Frosties in my mouth as Ma passes with the tin bucket and yard brush. Ma only cleans the yard when somethin’s up. That would be Da, as usual.

‘Do you want a hand, Mammy?’ says me.

‘No, son,’ says she, disappearing out the back. She didn’t even look at me. I’m worried about her after last night.

‘D’ya wanna hand?’ Our Paddy says in a girl’s voice. ‘You wee lick.’

‘I’ll tell m’Mammy on you,’ I say.

‘I’m tellin’ Mammy on you . . .’ Paddy mimics me.

I look at Wee Maggie and give her the We hate him, don’t we? look. She gives me the Yes we do, he’s a big, fat pig! look back. I was taught how to give looks by a monk on Cave Hill. I trained like a Jedi Knight but my lightsaber was my face.

## Il figlio buono

Sono nato il giorno in cui iniziarono i disordini.

“Non è così, mamma?” dico io.

“Oh, tesoro, sei stato tu a farli iniziare” dice lei, e iniziamo tutti a ridere, a parte mio fratello Paddy. Sarà per via dei suoi brufoli e della sua bruttezza in generale. Deve essere difficile essere felici con una faccia come la sua. Quasi mi dispiace per lui. Noto un grande e schifoso succhiotto sul suo collo e metto da parte queste munizioni per difendermi da attacchi futuri.

Il profumo denso e floreale del disinfettante mi riempie le narici, mescolandosi al dolce sapore dei cereali Frosties che ho in bocca quando la mamma passa con il secchio di latta e la spazzola da giardino. La mamma pulisce il giardino solo quando c’è qualcosa che non va. Solitamente si tratta di papà.

“Hai bisogno di una mano, mamma?” dico io.

“No, tesoro,” dice lei scomparendo sul retro. Non mi ha nemmeno guardato. Sono preoccupato per lei dopo la scorsa notte.

“Vuoi una mano?” dice Paddy, facendo una vocina da ragazza. “Leccaculo.”

“Guarda che lo dico alla mamma,” dico io.

“Lo dico alla mamma, lo dico alla mamma...” mi imita Paddy.

Guardo la piccola Maggie e le lancio un’occhiata di intesa *Lo odiamo, non è così?* Lei mi risponde con un *Sì, lo odiamo, è un grosso, grasso maiale!* Avevo imparato a lanciare sguardi da un monaco a Cave Hill. Mi allenavo come un Cavaliere Jedi, al posto della spada laser usavo la mia faccia.

I became Look Skywalker. My mission: To defend all weaklin's and youngest ones in families against the evil that is older brothers. Wee Maggie is now my disciple.

To test her telepathy training, I send – Don't worry about him cuz he's gonna be knocked down by a car then a lorry will run over his head makin' his eyes pop out. Wee Maggie smiles. She got it. I think we're actually twins born years apart in some CIA super-genetic-test-tube experiment.

Paddy gets up, leavin' his dirty bowl on the table like he's King Farouk.

'Don't leave that for Mammy,' I say."

'Mammy's boy,' says he."

'Shut up you,' I say. 'At least I don't have a dirty, big love bite.'

Wee Maggie laugh-chokes and Frosties shoot from her mouth onto Paddy's jumper, just like that wee girl in The Exorcist I saw at the Pope John Paul II Youth Club.

Diventai *Look Skywalker*. La mia missione: proteggere gli indifesi e i fratelli minori dai cattivi, vale a dire dai fratelli maggiori. La piccola Maggie è ora la mia discepola.

Per testare i suoi esercizi di telepatia, invio *Non preoccuparti per lui, che sarà investito da una macchina e poi un camion passerà sopra la sua testa facendogli schizzare fuori gli occhi*. La piccola Maggie sorride. L'ha ricevuto. Penso che in realtà siamo gemelli nati in anni diversi da un qualche esperimento di super-genetica-in-provetta della CIA.

Paddy si alza, lasciando la sua scodella sporca sul tavolo come se fosse Re Farouk.

"Non lasciarla lì per la mamma" dico.

"Mammone" dice lui.

"Ma stai zitto tu" dico. "Almeno io non ho un orribile succhiotto".

La piccola Maggie ride e quasi si strozza con i Frosties, che vengono sparati dalla sua bocca al maglione di Paddy; sembra la ragazzina de *L'Esorcista*, che ho visto al Centro Giovani Papa Giovanni Paolo II.

Author: Edmund Snow Carpenter

Translator:

Anastasiia Saganenko (*she/her*)

Saint Petersburg State University (Smolny  
College)

## Eskimo Realities

## Эскимосские реальности

English to Russian

The book ‘Eskimo Realities’ has never been translated into Russian yet, and in my opinion, this is a great omission. Turning to it is not just an exploration of Canadian Eskimo culture, but a radical reconceptualisation of language that differs from the Western European tradition. The words for Canadian Eskimos not only ‘form new worlds’ but also dissolve the boundary between matter and consciousness. I hope that the part of Carpenter’s work that I have translated will not only inspire readers to rethink linguistic discourse, but also increase their interest in the multifaceted nature of the world around us.

## ПОЭЗИЯ

Большую часть года земля покрыта снегом. Он никогда не оттаивает. Ветер превышает семьдесят миль в час. И все же, когда жизнь сводится к самым необходимым вещам, искусство и поэзия оказываются среди них. В эскимосском языке слово «творить стихи» – это слово «дышать»; оба они являются производными от апегса – душа, то, что вечно: дыхание жизни. Стихотворение – это слова, пронизанные дыханием или духом: «Дайте мне подышать этим», – говорит поэт и начинает: «Я упрямил свою поэму на пороге моего языка». «*Моё дыхание*» – так я называю эту песню, – сказал Орпингалик, – «...потому что петь её для меня так же необходимо, как дышать», – и затем начал: «Я буду петь эту песню / Песню, которая сильна...». «Песни, – добавил он, – это мысли, произносимые вместе с дыханием, когда людьми движут великие силы и обычной речи уже не хватает. Человек движется подобно льдине, плывущей по течению то туда, то сюда. Его мысли движет текущая сила, когда он испытывает радость, когда испытывает печаль. Мысли могут нахлынуть на него, как поток, заставляя кровь стынуть в жилах, а сердце замирать. Что-то, подобно ухудшению погоды, будет поддерживать его в тепле. И тогда мы, всегда считающие себя маленькими, почувствуем себя еще меньше. И мы будем бояться использовать слова. Но случится так, что нужные нам слова придут сами собой. А когда слова, которые мы хотим использовать, возникают сами собой – мы получаем новую песню».

## POETRY

The land is snow-covered most of the year. It never thaws. Winds exceed seventy miles-an-hour. Yet, when life is reduced to its barest essentials, art and poetry turn out to be among those essentials. In Eskimo, the word “to make poetry” is the word “to breathe”; both are derivatives of anerca — the soul, that which is eternal: the breath of life. A poem is words infused with breath or spirit: “Let me breathe of it,” says the poet-maker and then begins: “I have put my poem in order on the threshold of my tongue.” “‘My Breath’ —this is what I call this song,” said Orpingalik, “for it is just as necessary to me to sing it as it is to breathe,” and then began: “I will sing this song / A song that is strong...” “Songs,” he added, “are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices. Man is moved just like the ice floe sailing here and there out in the current. His thoughts are driven by a flowing force when he feels joy, when he feels sorrow. Thoughts can wash over him like a flood, making his blood come in gasps and his heart throb. Something, like an abatement in the weather, will keep him thawed up. And then it will happen that we, who always think we are small, will feel still smaller. And we will fear to use words. But it will happen that the words we need will come of themselves. When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves — we get a new song.”

Когда Орпингалик говорит: «И мы будем бояться использовать слова», он не имеет в виду, что боится самих слов. Он имеет в виду, что испытывает благоговение перед их силой, способной привести к существованию вселенной. Слова должны «возникать сами по себе». Они должны возникать естественным образом из переживания. Навязывать свои собственные слова было бы кощунством. «Много слов проносится надо мной, как крылья птиц из тьмы». «Сколько у меня песен, я не могу сказать», – ответил Орпингалик. «Я не веду счёт таким вещам. В жизни бывает так много случаев, когда радость или горе переживаются так, что возникает желание петь; и поэтому я знаю только, что у меня много песен. Всё моё существо – это песня, и я пою, когда делаю вдох».

## ИСКУССТВО

В эскимосском языке нет слова, означающего «искусство», как нет и слова «художник»: есть только люди. Также не делается различия между утилитарными и декоративными предметами. Эскимосы просто говорят: «Человек должен делать все вещи как следует». Я использую оба слова строго по западному образцу: под искусством я имею в виду предметы, которые западный критик назвал бы искусством; под художником я имею в виду любого эскимоса. Резьба, как и пение, – не вещь. Когда вы чувствуете в себе песню, вы её поёте; когда вы чувствуете форму, возникающую из слоновой кости, вы её выпускаете. Когда резчик держит необработанную слоновую кость в руке, поворачивая её то в одну, то в другую сторону, он шепчет: «Кто ты! Кто там прячется!» А затем: «Ах, Тюлень!»

When Orpingalik says, “And we will fear to use words,” he doesn’t mean he’s afraid of the words themselves. He means he’s in awe of their power to bring the universe into existence. Words must “shoot up of themselves.” They must arise naturally out of experience. To impose words of his own would be sacrilegious. “Many are the words that rush over me, like the wings of birds out of darkness.” “How many songs I have I cannot tell you,” said Orpingalik. “I keep no count of such things. There are so many occasions in one’s life when a joy or sorrow is felt in such a way that the desire comes to sing; and so I only know that I have many songs. All my being is song, and I sing as I draw breath.”

## ART

No word meaning “art” occurs in Eskimo, nor does “artist”: there are only people. Nor is any distinction made between utilitarian and decorative objects. The Eskimo simply say, ‘A man should do all things properly.’ My use of both words here is strictly Western: by art I refer to objects which a Western critic would call art; by artist I mean any Eskimo. Carving, like singing, isn’t a thing. When you feel a song within you, you sing it; when you sense a form emerging from ivory, you release it. As the carver holds the unworked ivory lightly in his hand, turning it this way and that, he whispers, “Who are you! Who hides there!” And then: “Ah, Seal!”

Он редко задаётся целью вырезать, скажем, тюленя, но берёт слоновую кость, осматривает её в поисках скрытой формы и, если она не видна сразу, бесцельно режет, пока не увидит её, бормоча или напевая по ходу работы. Затем он вынимает её: тюлень, скрытый от глаз, появляется. Он всегда была там: эскимос не создал его, но освободил; помог ему выйти вперёд. В языке эскимосов нет реальных эквивалентов нашим словам «создавать» или «творить», которые предполагают навязывание «Я». Ближайший эскимосский термин означает «работать над», что также подразумевает волевой акт, но сдержанный. Резчик никогда не пытается заставить слоновую кость принять нехарактерную форму, а реагирует на материал, когда тот пытается быть самим собой, и таким образом резьба постоянно изменяется по мере того, как слоновая кость говорит своё слово.

He rarely sets out to carve, say, a seal, but picks up the ivory, examines it to find its hidden form and, if that's not immediately apparent, carves aimlessly until he sees it, humming or chanting as he works. Then he brings it out: Seal, hidden, emerges. It was always there: he did not create it, he released it; he helped it step forth. I watched one white man, seeking souvenirs, commission a carving of seal but receive instead a carving of a walrus. Another, who wanted a chess set, though his explicit instructions were clearly understood, received a set in which each pawn was different. Ahmi—"it cannot be known in advance" what lies in the ivory. The Eskimo language has no real equivalents to our words "create" or "make," which presuppose imposition of the self. The closest Eskimo term means "to work on," which also involves an act of will, but one which is restrained. The carver never attempts to force the ivory into uncharacteristic forms, but responds to the material as it tries to be itself, and thus the carving is continually modified as the ivory has its say.



Author: Patrick McCabe

Translators:  
Carolina Pezzi (*she/her*) and Corinna Nicastro  
(*she/her*)

Excerpt from The Butcher Boy  
Il garzone del macellaio

English to Italian

An aspect we consider particularly interesting in the translation is the concept of the Irish “bogmen”, which we rendered as *zoticoni*. We experimented with this term by exploring variations such as *zotici* and even coining the non-existent adjective *zoticoso*.

Every day after that off we'd tramp to the bogs with Bubble at the head throwing big cheery smiles at the people of the town standing there gawping after us like we'd marched through the streets without our trousers. The women whispered there they go the poor orphans. I had a mind to turn round and shout hey fuckface I'm no orphan but then I remembered I was studying hard to get the Francie Brady Not a Bad Bastard Any More Diploma at the end of the year so I clammed up and gave her a sad, ashamed look instead. As soon as we got out into the open countryside Bubble relaxed and started swinging his arms and singing Michael Row The Boat Ashore and the bogmen sang Alleloo-yah! all delighted trying to get Bubble to look at them. They said to me isn't Father such and such great. I forget his real name now but it was Bubble they were talking about. Oh yes I said he's an absolutely wonderful singer. Yes, said the bogs, he's my favourite priest in the whole school. Then off they'd go trying to get up to the front to talk to him. But Bubble was all right. I liked the way he always gripped the sleeve of his soutane as he jaunted on alleloooo-ya!, with a red country face on him like a Beauty of Bath apple from all the walking. We'd dig all day long and Bubble would tell us stories about the old days when he was young and the English were killing everybody and the old people used to tell stories around the fire and you were lucky if you got one slice of soda bread to feed the whole family. But what harm did it do us? That's right, says one of the bogmen, being killed did nobody any harm. For fuck's sake!

Ogni giorno da allora ciondolavamo verso la torbiera con Bubbolone in testa lanciando sorrisoni alla gente del paese che se ne stava lì a bocca aperta manco marciavamo per le strade senza pantaloni. Le donne sussurravano eccoli qua i poveri orfani. Mi veniva proprio voglia di girarmi e urlare ehi faccia di merda non sono mica un orfano ma poi mi ricordavo che stavo studiando sodo così a fine anno mi davano il Diploma Francie Brady Non Più un Brutto Bastardo di fine anno quindi me ne stavo zitto e piuttosto le lanciavo uno sguardo triste e pieno di vergogna. Non appena sentivamo l'aria di campagna Bubbolone si rilassava e iniziava ad agitare le braccia e a cantare Michael Row The Boat Ashore e gli zoticoni cantavano Alleluuuu-jaa! tutti felicissimi cercando di farsi notare da Bubbolone. Mi dicevano è proprio bravo Padre tal dei tali, no? Ormai ho dimenticato il suo vero nome ma era di Bubbolone che parlavano. Ma certamente, dicevo è un cantante fantastico. Sì, dicevano gli zotici, è il mio prete preferito di tutta la scuola. E poi se ne andavano cercando di arrivare in prima fila per parlare con lui. Ma Bubbolone era un tipo a posto. Mi piaceva come si teneva stretta la manica della tonaca mentre saltellava a suon di alleluuuu-jaa!, con una faccia da contadino tutta rossa per quanto aveva camminato che pareva una mela di Bath. Ce ne stavamo tutto il giorno a scavare e Bubbolone ci raccontava storie dei vecchi tempi quando era giovane e gli inglesi uccidevano tutti e i vecchi raccontavano storie attorno al fuoco ed eri fortunato se riuscivi ad avere una fetta di pane di soda per sfamare tutta la famiglia. Ma che male ci potrà mai aver fatto? È vero, dice uno degli zoticoni, essere uccisi non ha mai fatto male a nessuno. E che cazzo!

Ah no I was talking about the soda bread says Bubble ha ha. There's nothing like a nice big slice of soda bread Father I said, wiping my brow and heeling a few sods onto the stack. He paused for a minute and licked his lips. He looked at me with his eyes all misty. Running with butter he said. Now you said it Father, I said and went back to my work, whistling away. I could see the bogmen giving me dirty looks because I was talking to Bubble. I smiled at them. Do you know what a good big slice of soda bread is good for I was going to say. Oh we know, they'd say. For making hardy men out of young country fellows like ourselves? No, for driving up your big bogman arses I'd say. But I didn't say it at all. I just smiled again and made out I had a pain in my back. Gosh, my dear fellows, I said, this is hard work indeed. The look on their boggy faces. They didn't know what to say. Oo-er, yes, they said, or something like that. As if they could pretend they were posh, the dirty bog-trotters!

In realtà parlavo del pane di soda dice Bubbolone ah ah. Niente è come una bella fettona di pane di soda Padre, gli ho detto io, asciugandomi la fronte e mettendo qualche zolla sulla pila. Si è fermato per un momento e si è passato la lingua sulle labbra. Mi ha guardato con gli occhi tutti lucidi. Bello colante di burro ha detto. Ben detto Padre, gli ho detto e sono tornato al lavoro, fischiettando. Vedevo quegli zoticoni che mi lanciavano occhiate per perché stavo parlando con Bubbolone. Ho sorriso. Sapete per cosa va bene una bella fetta di pane di soda gli stavo per dire. Ma certo che lo sappiamo, avrebbero detto. Perché così dei giovani campagnoli come noi crescono belli e forti? No, per ficcarvela su per i vostri culoni zoticosi. Ma ovviamente non l'ho detto. Ho solo sorriso di nuovo e finto di avere mal di schiena. Perbacco, ragazzi miei, ho detto, questo sì che è un lavoro faticoso. Che faccia che hanno fatto quegli zotici! Non sapevano che dire. Ehm, sì certo, hanno detto, o qualcosa del genere. Volevano pure fare gli elegantoni, quei luridi zompa-torba!

Author: Roddy Doyle

Translators:  
Aurora Cont (*she/her*)  
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Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha  
Paddy Clarke Ah Ah Ah

English to Italian

We chose this excerpt due to some interesting challenges it poses to the translator, such as referring to food, as well as the word ‘bell’ that can be translated in two different ways with different meanings in Italian. It is also sometimes difficult to understand which character is speaking.

Excerpt from Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha

Sinbad didn't notice the way I did. There had to be shouts and screams and big gaps between them before he knew anything. When it was quiet it was fine; that was the way he thought. He wouldn't agree with me, even when I got him on the ground.

I was alone, the only one who knew. I knew better than they did. They were in it : all I could do was watch. I paid more attention than they did, because they kept saying the same things over and over.

-I do not.

-You do.

-I do not.

-You do, I'm afraid .

I waited for one of them to say something different, wanting it - they'd go forward again and it would end for a while. Their fights were like a train that kept getting stuck at the corner tracks and you had to lean over and push it or straighten it. Only now, all I could do was listen and wish. I didn't pray; there were no prayers for this. The Our Father didn't fit, or the Hail Mary. But I rocked the same way I sometimes did when I was saying prayers. Backwards and forwards, the rhythm of the prayer.

Paddy Clarke Ah Ah Ah

Sinbad se n'era accorto, ma non come me. Prima che notasse qualcosa ci erano volute urla, grida e grandi pause. Quando c'era silenzio, andava tutto bene; ecco cosa gli passava per la testa. Non mi voleva dare ragione, nemmeno quando lo mettevo al tappeto.

Ero solo, l'unico che sapeva. Sapevo più di loro. Era una cosa tra loro: non potevo fare altro che osservare. Prestavo più attenzione di loro perchè continuavano a ripetere sempre le stesse cose:

-Non è vero.

-Sì invece.

-Non è vero.

-E invece è proprio così.

Aspettavo che uno di loro dicesse qualcosa di diverso, lo volevo - sarebbero andati avanti ancora e sarebbe finita per un po'. I loro litigi erano come un trenino che continua a bloccarsi in curva e ti devi sporgere per spingerlo o raddrizzarlo. Solo che ora, non potevo fare altro che ascoltare e sperare. Non pregai; non c'erano preghiere per questo. Il Padre Nostro non andava bene e nemmeno l'Ave Maria. Ma dondolavo proprio come facevo a volte mentre dicevo le preghiere. Avanti e indietro, il ritmo della preghiera.

Grace Before Meals was the fastest, probably because we were all starving just before lunch, just after the bell.

I rocked.

-Stop stop stop stop -

On the stairs. On the step outside the back door. In bed. Sitting beside my da. At the table in the kitchen.

-I hate them this way .

-They're the same as last Sunday.

Da only had a fry on Sunday mornings. We had a sausage each and black pudding if we wanted it, as well as what we always had. At least an hour before mass.

-Gollop it down now, Ma warned me, -or you won't be able to go up for communion.

I looked at the clock. There were nine minutes before half-eleven and we were going to half-twelve mass. I divided my sausage in nine.

-I told you before, I hate them runny .

-They were runny last week.

-I hate them this way; I won't -

I rocked.

-Do you need to go to the toilet?

-No.

-What's wrong with you then?

-Nothing.

La più veloce era la preghiera prima dei pasti, forse perché stavamo tutti morendo di fame prima di pranzo, subito dopo la campanella.

Mi dondolavo.

-Basta, basta!

Sulle scale. Sul gradino fuori dalla porta sul retro. A letto. Seduto accanto a papà. In cucina, a tavola.

-Mi fanno proprio schifo così.

-Sono come quelle di domenica scorsa.

Papà mangiava il fry per colazione solo di domenica. Mangiavamo una salsiccia a testa e se volevamo c'era il black pudding, assieme a quello che mangiavamo di solito, almeno un'ora prima della messa.

-Sbrigati a mangiare, mi avvertì la mamma, -o non riuscirai a prendere la comunione.

Guardai l'orologio. Mancavano nove minuti alle undici e mezza e noi andavamo alla messa delle dodici e mezza. Ce ne misi nove a spezzettare la salsiccia.

-Te l'ho già detto, non mi piacciono così liquide, sembrano crude.

-Anche la settimana scorsa erano così.

-Mi fanno schifo così; non le-

Mi dondolavo.

-Devi andare in bagno?

-No.

-Cos'hai allora?

-Niente.

-Well, stop squirming there like a half-wit. Eat your breakfast .

He said nothing else. He ate everything, the runny egg as well. I liked them runny. He got it all up with about half a slice of bread: I could never do that properly.

The egg just ran ahead in front of the bread when I did it. He cleaned his plate. He didn't say anything. He knew I was watching; he'd caught me rocking and he knew why.

He said the tea was nice.

He was still chewing at half-eleven. I watched for the minute hand to click, up past the six; I watched him. I heard the click from behind the clock. He didn't swallow for thirty-six seconds after that.

I kept it to myself. If he went up for communion I'd see what happened. I knew and God knew.

-Beh, allora smettila di agitarti come un matto. Finisci la colazione.

Non disse altro. Si mangiò tutto, anche l'uovo con il rosso tutto liquido. A me piaceva così. Lo tirava su con mezza fetta di pane; io non l'ho mai saputo fare bene.

Quando ci provavo io, l'uovo scappava sempre via dal pane. Pulì il piatto. Non disse niente.

Sapeva che lo stavo guardando; mi aveva visto dondolare e sapeva il perché.

Disse che il tè era buono.

Alle undici e mezza era ancora lì che masticava. Aspettavo che la lancetta dei minuti si smuovesse dal numero sei; la guardavo. Sentii il tic da dietro l'orologio.

Dopo, non mandò giù nulla per trentasei secondi.

Non lo dissi a nessuno. Se fosse andato a prendere la comunione, avrei visto cosa sarebbe successo. Io lo sapevo, e Dio anche.



Author: Ilse Aichinger

Translator:  
Clarise Reichley (*she/her*)

Auszug von  
Meine Sprache und ich  
Excerpt from  
My Language and I

German to English

To simulate Aichinger's associative sprawl in English, I shifted syntax and added more periods and colons, where first there were commas. Reflexive verbs and relative pronouns recur; these were often untranslatable, thereby removing a referential tone that existed in the original.

## Auszug von Meine Sprache und ich

Da sitze ich dann mit meiner Sprache, nur drei Meter von denen entfernt, die so reden. Aber wir sind durch, wir haben passiert, wir können uns niederlassen, wenn wir atemlos sind. Öde Flecken genug, eine Decke darauf, die Sonne scheint überall. Meine Sprache und ich, wir reden nicht miteinander, wir haben uns nichts zu sagen. Was ich wissen muß, weiß ich, kalte Küche ist ihr lieber als warme, nicht einmal der Kaffee soll heiß sein. Das beschäftigt einen schon. Da hat man zu tun, zu decken, aufzuschneiden, die Kälte zu messen, die Wärme vergehen zu lassen. Während sie aufs Meer starrt. Meine Sprache hat es leicht zu starren, weil ich alles tue. Ich überstürze mich nicht wie zu Beginn, ich streife die Decke ruhig glatt, ich beschwere sie ruhig mit Steinen, wenn es windig wird, aber es ist wahr: ich arbeite und sie starrt. Sie äußert nicht einmal Wünsche. Das wäre nicht das Äußerste, was man von ihr verlangen könnte, aber es wäre doch etwas. Eine gute Sache, ein Dienst an mir, eine Art, mich voranzubringen. Aber daran liegt ihr nichts, gar nichts, so viel habe ich schon heraus. Sie starrt nur oder horcht auf die Brandung, meine Sprache. Wir sind immer in Meeresnähe, dafür Sorge ich. Ich, nicht sie. Ich möchte wissen, was mit ihr geschähe, wenn ich einmal landeinwärts ginge, einfach einböge wie andere Leute auch, uns einen Steintisch zwischen den Mulden suchte, gehobelte Kiefern. Wie sie sich dann verhielte, ob sie mitkäme? Der Küstenwind ist schlecht für meine Ohren, das weiß ich.

## Excerpt from My Language and I

Here I sit with my Language, only three meters distant, from which to speak. But we're through, we've happened, we could settle in, if we're breathless. Dull stains enough, a blanket over top, the sun shines everywhere. My Language and I, we don't speak with each other, we have nothing to say. What I must know, I know: she prefers cold cooking to warm, not even the coffee should be hot. That keeps one busy. Here, there's lots to do: cover, cut open, measure the cold, let the warmth fade. While she stares at the sea. My Language has it easy, staring, since I do everything. I don't rush like I did in the beginning, I smooth the blanket, weigh it down calmly with stones when it gets windy, but it's true: I work and she stares. She doesn't utter a single wish. That would be the least one could ask of her, but it would be something. A good thing, a service to me, a way to move forward. But all that I have already done means nothing to her, absolutely nothing. She only stares or listens to the surf, my Language. I make sure we're always near the sea. I, not she. I would like to know what would happen to her if one day I went inland, simply turned in like other people and searched for a stone table between the hollows and sliced-smooth pines. Then how would she behave, if she came with? I know the coast wind is terrible for my ears.

Manchmal beginne ich zu singen oder mit den Bestecken zu klappern, es wird leiser. Obwohl man bei unserer Küche nur wenige Bestecke braucht, hole ich sie hervor, auch Teller und Gläser. Ich nehme ein Messer und lasse es vorsichtig auf einen Teller fallen, immer aus derselben Entfernung. Es wird seit fünf Wochen leiser. Vor kurzem versuchte ich es einmal, das Messer von etwas höher auf den Teller fallen zu lassen. Es schlug laut auf, ich hörte es deutlich, aber der Teller zerbrach. Meine Sprache blieb ruhig, den Blick aufs Meer geheftet, wie ich glaube immer auf dieselbe Stelle. Sie scheint mir das Gegenteil gewisser Bilder zu sein, deren Blicke einem überallhin nachgehen. Ihr Blick geht keinem nach. Seeungeheuer und Fischkutter wären gleichmäßig an ihr verloren, es kommen auch keine. Ich breite dann unsere kalte Mahlzeit aus, gieße den kalten Kaffee ein, aber vergeblich. Ich habe unsere Decke sorgfältig gedeckt, oft sogar eine Strandblume in die Mitte gelegt, oder neben ihr Gedeck. Sie wendet sich nicht um. Ich nehme ihr Gedeck und lege es vor sie hin, zwischen sie und den Gischt. Meine Freude ist weg, die Hörprobe hat mir den Mut genommen, das Meer ärgert mich. Meine Sprache hatte früher einen lila Schal, aber er ist weg. Ich fürchte, daß wir uns hier die Gesundheit verderben. Wenn meine Sprache die Stimme verliert, hat sie einen Grund mehr, das Gespräch mit mir sein zu lassen.

Sometimes I begin to sing or to clatter the silverware, it becomes quieter. Although in our kitchen one needs few utensils, I take them out alongside plates and glasses. I take a knife and let it fall carefully onto a plate, always from the same distance. Since five weeks ago, it has become quieter. Recently I let the knife fall from a higher place onto the plate. It hit loudly, I heard it clearly— the plate broke apart. My Language remained silent, her gaze stapled to the sea, always in the same spot. It seems to be the opposite of certain portraits whose gaze follows one everywhere. Her gaze follows no one. Sea monsters and fishing trawlers would be equally lost on her, but none come. Then, in vain, I spread out our cold meal, pour out the cold coffee. I've carefully laid out our blanket, often placing a beach flower in the middle or next to her place setting. She doesn't turn around. I take her place setting and lay it before her, between her and the spume. My delight is gone, the hearing test took my courage away, the sea vexes me. Earlier my Language had a purple shawl, but it's gone too. Here I fear we're ruining our health. If my Language loses her voice, she has another reason to stop conversing with me.

Author: Bruno Montané Krebs

Translator:  
Miriam Schwartz

Estrito I  
de *Mapas y escritos*  
Writing I  
from *Maps and Writings*  
Spanish to English

## Estrito 1

Escribir es una de las pocas metáforas  
gestuales que nos recuerda lo pensado.  
Hablamos y escribimos y siempre se habla  
de la vida.

El rigor de lo que pensamos tiene que ver  
con la vida y ella es lo único que sucede,  
lo que cada uno puede hacer mejor,  
más deseable y necesario;  
o todo eso que simplemente es porque  
transcurre más allá del lenguaje,  
porque a veces creemos que eso es  
lo que éste no atrapa y no hace nuestro.  
(Sin duda, este texto es raro.)

La diferencia se halla entre lo inasible  
y aquello que creemos que sí  
podríamos llegar a conseguir.

Una distancia semejante  
a la que late entre el uno y el otro,  
ese viejo aliento que nunca nunca  
se acaba de llenar.

## Writing 1

Writing is one of the few metaphors  
performed that reminds us of what is thought.  
We talk and write and always one speaks  
of life.

The rigor of our thought has to do  
with life and life is the only thing that happens,  
that which everyone can make better,  
more ideal and necessary;  
or all that simply is because  
it takes place beyond language,  
because sometimes we believe that that is  
what this doesn't capture and doesn't make ours.  
(No doubt, this text is strange.)

The difference is found between the ungraspable  
and that which we believe that indeed  
we could come to get.

A distance similar  
to the one that throbs between One and the Other  
that ancient breath that never never  
will cease being filled.

Author: Alexander Vertinsky

Translators:  
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То, что я должен сказать  
What I Must Say

Russian to English

То, что я должен сказать

Я не знаю зачем и кому это нужно  
Кто послал их на смерть не дрожащей рукой  
Только так бесполезно, так зло и ненужно  
Опускали их в Вечный Покой

Равнодушные зрители молча кутались в шубы  
И какая-то женщина с искажённым лицом  
Целовала покойника в посиневшие губы  
И швырнула в священника обручальным кольцом

Забросали их ёлкой, закидали их грязью  
И пошли по домам под шумок толковать  
Что пора положить уже конец безобразию  
Что и так уже скоро мы все начнём голодать

И никто не додумался просто встать на колени  
И сказать этим мальчикам, что в бездарной стране  
Даже светлые подвиги это только ступени  
В бесконечные пропасти к недоступной Весне.

What I Must Say

I don't know why or who needs it  
Who sent them to death with untrembling hand  
Only so uselessly, so evilly, and unnecessarily  
They were lowered into Eternal Rest

Indifferent spectators silently wrapped themselves in fur coats  
And some woman with a distorted face  
Was kissing the deceased on his lips that had turned blue  
And threw her wedding ring at the priest

They covered them with fir tree branches, they covered them  
with dirt  
And headed home quietly murmuring  
That it's time to put an end to this disgrace  
And that so soon we will start to starve

And no one thought of simply kneeling  
And telling these boys that in a talentless country  
Even heroic deeds are only steps into eternal abysses, toward an  
unattainable Spring.

Author & Translator:  
Arinel Paddock (*she/he/they*)

Bimheira veyameinu  
A tkhine far tsurikkern  
אַ תחינה פֿאַר צוריקקערן

English to Yiddish



Bimheira veyameinu

May it return.

May every songbird  
to a quiet sky  
return.

May every herb and shrub and olive tree  
to the field  
return.

May every name  
to its place,  
every key  
to its lock,  
every farmer's child's child  
to their land  
return.

A tkhine far tsurikkern

Es zol kern tsurik.

Yeder foygl  
zol tsu a shtiln himl  
kern tsurik.

Yeder kust un mokh un zayes-boym  
zol tsu dem feld  
kern tsurik.

Yeder nomen  
zol tsu zayn dorf,  
yeder klav  
zol tsu zayn shlos,  
yeder erdarbeters kinds kind  
zol tsu zayn erd  
kern tsurik.

May every tiny shrouded body  
to their mother's arms  
return.

(May we return from denial.  
May we harden our hearts.  
May we be much braver  
than we have been.  
May it somehow  
not be too late.)

May the Land  
be unbloodied, unfenced, unexpropriated, unrobbed,  
rebuilt, resanctified, rematriated, returned,  
rejoiced by reuniting with her exiles, every one,  
speedily and within our lifetimes.  
Amen.

Yeder kleyner ayngehilter mes  
zol tsu zayn mames orems  
kern tsurik.

(Mir zoln fun blindkeyt kern tsurik.  
Mir zoln shtoln undzer hertzer.  
Mir zoln zeyer bahartsiker zayn.  
Got, loz es nisht zayn tsu shpet.)

Dos land  
Zol umfarblutikt, umfarbrokhn, umfarnumen,  
umtseblutikt, umtsebrokhn, untsenumen, umtsekhometst,  
vidergeboyt, vidergekert, vider mekadesh-khadesh zayn,  
vider freyen zikh mit vider fareynikn mit ire pleytim biz einem,  
bimheyro veyomeynu.  
Omeyn.

Bimheira veyameinu

May it return.

May every songbird  
to a quiet sky  
return.

May every herb and shrub and olive tree  
to the field  
return.

May every name  
to its place,  
every key  
to its lock,  
every farmer's child's child  
to their land  
return.

א תחינה פֿאַר צוריקקערן

עס זאָל קערן צוריק.

יעדער פֿויגל  
זאָל צו אַ שטילן הימל  
קערן צוריק.

יעדער מאָך און קוסט און זית-בוים  
זאָל צו דעם פֿעלד  
קערן צוריק.

יעדער נאָמען  
זאָל צו זײַן דאָרף,  
יעדער קלאָוו  
זאָל צו זײַן שלאָס,  
יעדער ערדאַרבעטערס קינדס קינד  
זאָל צו זײַן ערד  
קערן צוריק.

May every tiny shrouded body  
to their mother's arms  
return.

(May we return from denial.  
May we harden our hearts.  
May we be much braver  
than we have been.  
May it somehow  
not be too late.)

May the Land  
be unbloodied, unfenced, unexpropriated, unrobbed,  
rebuilt, resanctified, rematriated, returned,  
rejoiced by reuniting with her exiles, every one,  
speedily and within our lifetimes.  
Amen.

יעדער קליינער איינגעהילטער מת  
זאל צו זיין מאמעס ארעמס  
קערן צוריק.

(מיר זאלן פון בלינדקייט קערן צוריק.  
מיר זאלן שטאלן אונזערע הערצער.  
מיר זאלן זייער באהארציקער זיין.  
גאט, לאז עס ניט זיין צו שפעט.)

דאס לאַנד  
זאל אומפֿארבלוטיקט, אומפֿארבראָכן, אומפֿארנומען,  
אומצעבלוטיקט, אומצעבראָכן, אומצענומען, אומצעחמצט,  
ווידערגעבויט, ווידערגעקערט, ווידער מקדש/מתדש זיין—  
זאל ווידער פֿרייען זיך מיט ווידער פֿאַרייניקן מיט ערע פֿליטים, ביז איינעם,  
במהרה בימינו  
אמן.

Author: Antonio Fossati

Translator:  
Ezra Calderon (*they/she*)

Lettere di condannati  
a morte della Resistenza  
italiana

Italian to English

Carissima Anna,

eccomi a te con questo mio ultimo scritto, prima di partire per la mia condanna.

Io muoio contento d'aver fatto il mio dovere di vero patriota. Mia cara, sii forte. Dal cielo pregherò per te, perché tu per me sei sempre stata l'unica consolazione. In questi momenti di grande dolore, mi confortavo solo con il pensiero di te. Quando venivi a trovarmi, mi sembrava che la vita diventasse più bella. Mi sentivo sollevato, come se tutto passasse davanti a me.

Ti ricordi, Anna, quel giorno in cui mi hai visto piangere? Anche tu lasciasti cadere grosse lacrime dai tuoi occhi, mia piccola e cara Anna... I tuoi capelli hanno asciugato quelle lacrime dai miei occhi.

Cara, ora ti racconto un po' della mia vita.

Il giorno 27 fui arrestato e portato a Vercelli, in prigione. Passai due giorni senza interrogazione. La mattina del 29 fui chiamato davanti a tutti i fascisti di Vercelli. Non risposi mai alle loro domande. Le uniche parole che dissi furono: "Non so niente, non sono partigiano." Ma loro cercarono in mille modi di farmi confessare. Non uscì una parola dalla mia bocca, pur sapendo che avrei potuto morire.

Il giorno 31 subii la prima tortura: mi strapparono le ciglia e le sopracciglia.

Il giorno 1, la seconda: mi strapparono le unghie delle mani e dei piedi e mi esposero al sole. Non puoi immaginare il dolore, ma sopportavo con pazienza, senza un lamento.

Dearest Anna,

Here are my last words to you prior to my sentencing.

I die happy to have done my job as a Vero Patriota. My dear, trust that I will pray for you from above, that you have always been my only solace in these moments of great pain you were my only comfort. Your presence made my life more beautiful, I felt uplifted, I felt as though I could overcome anything.

Remember Anna the day that you saw me cry, you also shed heavy tears from your eyes my sweet and dear Anna, your hair strands dried those tears from my eyes.

My dear I will tell you a bit about my experience and I will start now:

on the 27th I was captured and taken to the prison in Vercelli where I passed without interrogation. The morning of the 29th I was called before all of the fascists of Vercelli. I did not answer any of their questions; my only words were these "that I don't know anything and that I am not a partisan." But they put me through many things to force me to say yes but not a single word left my mouth and I feared that I would die.

On the 31st, they tortured me for the first time and they ripped out my eyelashes and my eyebrows. On the 1st, the second round of torture, "they ripped out my nails, the nails from my hands and feet and they left me under the sun more than you can imagine, but I had patience and uttered no words of lament."

Il giorno 2, la terza tortura: mi legarono a una sedia e mi misero ai piedi delle candele accese. I capelli mi sono diventati tutti grigi, ma ancora non parlai.

Il giorno 4 fui portato in una sala. Mi stesero su un tavolo e mi strinsero un laccio al collo con la corrente elettrica per dieci minuti. Così continuarono fino al giorno 6.

La sera del 6, alle ore 5, mi chiesero se avevo finito di scrivere tutto ciò che sentivo. Ma non risposi. Volevo sapere la mia fine, per potertela raccontare, cara Anna. E allora mi dissero quella tremenda condanna. Cercai di mostrarmi orgoglioso. Ma quando fui riportato nella mia cella, mi inginocchiai, piansi, stringendo la tua foto tra le mani. Non si riconosceva più il tuo volto, per le lacrime e i baci che ti avevo dato.

Cara Anna, perdonami. Sii forte e sopporta questo orrendo delitto. Fatti coraggio: avrai il tuo amore fucilato alla schiena. Ma Dio paga, non solo il sabato, ma tutti i giorni. Fa' il bene, Anna. Il tempo passa e non torna più. La morte si avvicina.

Ti prego solo una cosa: promettimi che saprai vendicare il sangue di un innocente, che grida vendetta contro i fascisti. Nel tuo cuore non ci deve essere dolore, ma l'orgoglio di un patriota. Ti prego anche di conservare, come ricordo, il mio nastrino tricolore. L'ho sempre portato sul cuore, per dimostrarmi un vero italiano.

Anna, non piangere per me, che hai avuto il tuo caro papà morto. Io, dal cielo, ti guarderò ovunque andrai e ti seguirò.

On the 2nd, the third round of torture "they put me at the foot of lit candles and I found myself tied to a chair, all of my hair turned grey but I didn't speak and it passed."

On the 4th I was taken to a room where there was a table on which they put a noose around my neck for 10 straight minutes and I was taken for 3 days until the 6th at 5 o'clock in the evening they asked me if I had finished writing everything I needed to write but I still haven't replied and I want to know what I must do at my end, to tell my dear Anna and they gave me that terrible sentence and I made myself seem very proud but when I was taken in that terrible cell again I fell to my knees and I started crying. I had your picture in my hands but your face was unrecognizable because of the tears and the kisses I have given it, forgive me for this dear Anna, be strong in tolerating this horrendous crime, take courage, you will have your love shot in the back.

But God pays not only on Saturday but everyday, do right Anna, as time passes and we cannot get it back and death becomes closer.

Dear Anna you must promise me only one thing: that you will know to avenge the blood of an innocent person who cries for vengeance against the fascists. In your heart there should not be pain but pride to be a Patriota and I also ask you to keep my tricolor ribbon in memory of me, always wear it on your heart to show me you are a true Patriota.

Anna don't cry for me, as your dear father is also dead. From heaven I will look after you wherever you go and I will follow you everywhere.

Ora sono nelle mani dei carnefici. Se mi vedessi, Anna, non mi riconosceresti più: sono molto magro, grigio... sembra tuo nonno. Ma questo non è ancora il peggio. Domani sera sarà l'ultimo senza poter avere un soccorso da te, né dai miei genitori, senza poter rivedere più nessuno. Quale dolore sarà per la mia mamma...

Ti prego, Anna: a guerra finita, va a Torino da mia sorella. Raccontale tutto ciò che è avvenuto nei giorni della mia prigionia. Dille che per lei ho affrontato questa morte. Le auguro di non soffrire quanto me, ma anche per lei verrà il giorno della riscossa. Dirà che è stata colpa mia.

Anna, sii forte. Sopporta questa croce pesante che dovrai portare fino al cielo.

Ora devo davvero terminare. Le mani mi fanno molto male e mi sanguinano.

Saluti e baci. Prega per me, che io dal cielo pregherò per te.

Antonio Fossati

I find myself in the hands of the Carnefici if you saw me Anna you wouldn't recognize me anymore because I have become very thin, grey, I resemble your grandfather; all this is not the worst of it, the worst will be tomorrow when I am without rescue from you and my parents without seeing anyone anymore, there will be so much pain for my mother.

I beg you Anna once the war is done, go to my sister's in Turin and tell the story of what took place during the days I was in prison and that I died for her and that I hope they do not hurt her as they did her brother and that there will be a day of redemption for her as well; she will say it is my fault.

Anna be strong in carrying this heavy cross that you'll have to bear until the top of the sky.

Now I must really finish because my hands are hurting and bleeding.

Greetings and kisses, pray for me as I will pray for you from above.

Antonio Fossati



The translation that you are about to read is from June Jordan's *Intifada Incantation: Poem, #8 for b.b.L.*, which is a passionate and politically charged piece that merges the personal with the collective. The poem addresses themes of resistance, love, and justice and makes use of repetition and incantation-like rhythm to express longing not just for a person, but for a world free from oppression. Through the recurring line "I said I loved you and I wanted," Jordan reveals how intimate desire and revolutionary hope are deeply intertwined. The poem speaks to the power of language and love as tools for liberation, invoking both tenderness and defiance. Please note that the capital letters in the original text are the author's choice. For this reason and for the meaning this brings to the poem, I did not want to alter it. I spaced a bit more between the stanzas so that one can easily find which translated section corresponds to which stanza. The issues of translating this poem are certainly the attempt to maintain the versification, which is difficult for several reasons, such as the pronoun omission in Italian (in case the pronoun is a subject). The lack of the pronoun inevitably causes a difference in the density of the poem. Moreover, the lexical choices are at times tough to render in Italian, if one also wants to keep the phonetic counterpart of the source text. Other difficulties concern phrases like "affirmative action", which carry very specific historical and cultural weight in the U.S. context. Rendering this into Italian risks either flattening it with a generic equivalent (*azione positiva*) or requiring explanatory baggage that disrupts the flow. The asymmetries between Italian and English also imply that lines like "I commit / to friction and the undertaking / of the pearl" are layered—friction may evoke sex, conflict, struggle; undertaking could mean both labor and burial; the pearl suggests pain transformed into beauty. These ambiguities are delicate and easily lost in translation without footnotes, which poetry resists. As a final example: English allows impactful phrasing at the end of lines ("I wanted / JUSTICE UNDER MY NOSE") — a punch that Italian tends to dilute because of verb-final or article-initial phrasing.

Author: June Jordan

Translator:  
Davide Marcadent (*he/him*)  
Università di Trento

Intifada Incantation: Poem,  
#8 for b.b.L.  
Il fascino dell'Intifada: poesia,  
#8 per b.b.L.

English to Italian

Intifada Incantation: Poem, #8 for b.b.L.

I SAID I LOVED YOU AND I WANTED  
GENOCIDE TO STOP  
I SAID I LOVED YOU AND I WANTED AFFIRMATIVE  
ACTION AND REACTION  
I SAID I LOVED YOU AND I WANTED MUSIC  
OUT THE WINDOWS  
I SAID I LOVED YOU AND I WANTED  
NOBODY THIRST AND NOBODY  
NOBODY COLD  
I SAID I LOVED YOU AND I WANTED I WANTED  
JUSTICE UNDER MY NOSE  
I SAID I LOVED YOU AND I WANTED  
BOUNDARIES TO DISAPPEAR

I WANTED  
NOBODY ROLL BACK THE TREES!  
I WANTED  
NOBODY TAKE AWAY DAYBREAK!  
I WANTED  
NOBODY FREEZE ALL THE PEOPLE ON THEIR  
KNEES!

Il fascino dell'Intifada: poesia, #8 per b.b.L.

Ho detto che ti amavo e desideravo  
che il genocidio si fermasse.  
Ho detto che ti amavo e desideravo  
azione positiva e reazione,  
ho detto che ti amavo e desideravo  
musica che traboccasse dalle finestre.  
Ho detto che ti amavo e desideravo  
nessuna sete insaziabile, nessun  
freddo a inibire il calore.  
Ho detto che ti amavo e desideravo desideravo –  
giustizia proprio sotto il mio naso,  
ho detto che ti amavo e desideravo  
la scomparsa dei confini.

Desideravo  
che nessuno riportasse indietro gli alberi!  
Desideravo  
che nessuno portasse via l'alba!  
Desideravo  
che nessuno congelasse tutte le persone  
sulle ginocchia!

I WANTED YOU  
I WANTED YOUR KISS ON THE SKIN OF MY SOUL  
AND NOW YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME AND  
I STAND  
DESPITE THE TRILLION TREACHERIES OF SAND  
YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME AND I HOLD THE LONGING  
OF THE WINTER IN MY HAND  
YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME AND I COMMIT  
TO FRICTION AND THE UNDERTAKING  
OF THE PEARL

YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME  
YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME

AND I HAVE BEGUN  
I BEGIN TO BELIEVE MAYBE  
MAYBE YOU DO

I AM TASTING MYSELF  
IN THE MOUTH OF THE SUN

Ti desideravo,  
volevo un tuo bacio sulla pelle della mia anima,  
e ora dici che mi ami e io resisto  
nonostante un trillione di tradimenti di sabbia.  
Dici che mi ami e io serbo nella mano  
il desiderio profondo dell'inverno.  
Dici che mi ami e mi abbandono  
all'attrito e all'impegno  
che rivela la perla.

Dici che mi ami,  
dici che mi ami.

E io ho cominciato,  
inizio a credere forse –  
forse davvero mi ami.

Sto assaporando me stesso  
nella bocca del Sole.

Author: Elena Guro

Translator:  
Maya Davydova (*she/her*)

Стрекоза  
Dragonfly

Russian to English

I tried to translate the playfulness and magic of Guro's writing to the best of my ability. I also referred to the dragonflies with personal pronouns, like in Russian, to illuminate their animation in this text.

## Стрекоза

Но, ведь ты голубей неба, стрекоза. — Я царица!  
— Небо синее. Слышен густой пчелиный звон, он пахнет  
мёдом и смолой. Небо синее. Как поёт земля и дышит  
лес! С золотых стволов шелестят чешуйки. Точно от  
солнца откололись. И от жары всё кругом хочет радостно  
расколоться, как вот эта щепка с танцующим звуком.

Стрекоза на пне, под наплывом солнца, разгибает  
стеклянные крылья, и по ним, блестя, льётся жар.

Растянулся ничком охотник созвучий и мыслей и —  
жарится. Стрекоза, драгоценность, царица покачалась над  
его плечами и грациозно села ему пониже спины, приняв  
эту часть за холмик. И блестит драгоценным рубином на  
его панталонах. Он и не подозревает об украшении, — да  
ещё этот хохолок на его лбу вдобавок. Это вместе придало  
ему вид одуроченный и милый. Стрекоза сверкает рубином  
на его драных панталонах, а перед его широкими, точно  
впервые очарованными глазами другая, синяя, опускается и  
поднимается, качаясь на медовых летних волнах.

## Dragonfly

But you are bluer than the sky, dragonfly. — I'm a  
tsarevna! — The sky is blue. A thick hum of bees is heard, and  
it smells like honey and tar. The sky is blue. How the earth  
sings and the woods breathe! The scales rustle from the gold-  
en trunks. As if they broke off from the sun. And everything  
around wants to break apart joyfully, like this splinter, with a  
dancing sound.

The dragonfly on the stump, flooded with sunlight,  
straightens her glassy wings, and the heat pours over them,  
shining.

The hunter of consonances and thoughts stretched out,  
face down, roasting. The dragonfly, a jewel, a tsarevna, hovered  
over his shoulders and landed gracefully below his back, mis-  
taking this part for a hillock. And she shines like a precious  
ruby on his pantaloons. He's unaware of the jewel, and that tuft  
on his forehead, too. Together they gave him a sweet and foolish  
look. The dragonfly shines like a ruby on his raggedy panta-  
loons, and before his wide eyes, as if enchanted for the first  
time, another, a blue one, flies up and down, rocking on the  
honey summer waves.

For a language so heavily inflected as Latin, translating poetry can be tricky. Ancient poetry also has distinct metrical structure that is nearly impossible to render in English without sacrificing other elements of the work. Catullus 11 is written in Sapphic strophe, a meter which he only employs in one other poem that is inspired by a work of Sappho herself. I have not attempted to replicate the meter in any way, but have instead amplified the alliterative elements of the original Latin in my translation.

Nevertheless, I find this poem one of the easiest of Catullus' to translate according to meaning. Beleaguered by his unrequited love for Lesbia, Catullus finally accepts that he is not enough for her. Her world is as wide as an empire, while he is only one flower in a field of many. Particularly in the fifth stanza we see allusions to their relationship's happier past taken in a new, defeated meaning; the use of the jussive subjunctive in *vivat* (let her live) harkens back to the hortatory subjunctive *vivamus* of the euphoric Catullus 5 (let us live). Similarly, in Catullus 51 he uses the word *identidem* in the context of watching Lesbia *dulce ridentem* (sweetly laughing), while in 11 she is *identidem omnium ilia rumpens* (literally: bursting the groins of them all).

The final stanza is one of the most remarkable creations in Catullus' canon. Not only does it devastatingly illustrate the punch-in-the-gut indifference Lesbia feels towards Catullus, it also subverts ancient gendered norms of agency and passivity. Therefore, I have intentionally chosen the last word of my translation to be "plow," just as Catullus must have poignantly (almost) concluded with *aratro* in his Latin.

Translator:  
Peter Fields (*he/ him*)

## Catullus 11

Latin to English

Fūrī et Aurēlī, comitēs Catullī,  
 sīve in extrēmōs penetrābit Indōs,  
 lītus ut longē resonante Eōā  
 tunditur undā,

sīve in Hyrcānōs Arabēsve mollēs,  
 seu Sagās sagittiferōsve Parthōs,  
 sīve quae septemgeminus colōrat  
 aequora Nīlus,

sīve trāns altās gradiētur Alpēs,  
 Caesaris vīsēns monimenta magnī,  
 Gallicum Rhēnum, horrible aequor, ultī-  
 mōsque Britannōs,

omnia haec, quaecumque feret voluntās  
 caelitum, temptāre simul parātī,  
 pauca nūntiāte meae puellae  
 nōn bona dicta.

Cum suīs vīvat valeatque moechīs,  
 quōs simul complexa tenet trecentōs,  
 nūllum amāns vērē, sed identidem omnium  
 īlia rumpēs;

nec meum respectet, ut ante, amōrem,  
 quī illius culpā cecidit velut prātī  
 ultimī flōs, praetereunte postquam  
 tactus arātrō est.

Furius and Aurelius, friends of Catullus,  
 If ever she'll enter the Indus,  
 Where the coast is crushed by the early-morning wave echoing  
 elsewhere

Or into Iranians or arid Arabians,  
 Or into Scythians or arrow-clad Arsacids,  
 Or seas stained by the sevenfold Nile,

Or if she steps across the august Alps,  
 Surveying Caesar's mighty monuments,  
 The Gallic Rhine, that grisly sea, the backwoods Brittons,

Wherever the will of the heavens will have her,  
 Prepare to try all these places at once  
 And profess a few displeasing words to my girl:

Let her live and let her be happy with her three-hundred liai-  
 sons,  
 Whom she holds in an embrace all at once,  
 Loving none of them really, yet fucking them all again and  
 again.

Let her not look back, like before, at my love,  
 Which died by her hand like a flower at the furthest part of the  
 field  
 Once touched by an indifferent plow.

Author: Jacques Roubaud

Translator:  
Carlie Thornton (*she/her*)

Poème de tour Eiffel  
Poem to the Eiffel Tower  
Poème à la tour Eiffel

French to English to French

Yasmine Seale and Robin Moger's *Agitated Air* features translations of Ibn Arabi's Arabic poetry into English. They mailed their respective translations back and forth to one another, exploring the realm of translation through conversation, and the possibilities of new poems that lie within the basis of translation. Loosely inspired by this practice, the following set of poems features a translation of one of Jacques Roubaud's poems from his collection *La forme d'une ville change plus vite, hélas, que le coeur des humains* into English - though it is not an exact translation, and instead translated with the goal of creating a new French poem upon a re-translation.



## Poème de tour Eiffel

Tour Eiffel! Je suis venu pour voir  
et je vois  
mais voir ce qu'on voit n'est pas si facile  
en mots qui n'ont qu'une demi-douzaine de référents  
au mieux  
ce que je pourrais dire que je vois ne fait pas le poids  
devant ce que je vois que je n'ai pas dit  
et ne dirai pas ne sachant comment dire  
ce que d'ailleurs je peux pas montrer non plus  
tour Eiffel! Je ne te vois pas  
toi que je suis venu voir afin de dire ce voir  
dans le cadre de ma campagne de poésie  
j'estime que cela fait partie de mon devoir  
de poète  
il serait difficile en effet  
de dire de Paris sans dire de la tour  
Apollinaire lui-même...  
pourtant je ne pense pas que Réda lui prête grande attention

## Poem to the Eiffel Tower

Eiffel Tower, it's you I've come to see!  
and I do see,  
but seeing what I do is not easy  
words, only half a dozen reference points each  
at their best  
what I say I see does not uphold  
the weight in front of which  
I see all I haven't said  
and won't, not knowing  
some things are best not shown  
Eiffel tower! It's not you I see  
you, who I've come to  
in hopes of finally taking what I see  
to frame my poetic campaign  
a part of my work -  
the work of a poet  
it would be difficult  
to speak of Paris, without speaking of her tower  
as Apollinaire....  
yet, Réda pays you no mind

dans *Les Ruines de Paris*  
ni Queneau dans *Courir les rues*  
ils la trouvent peut-être trop voyante  
ou bien  
ils l'ont tellement vue qu'ils ne la voient plus  
quoi qu'il en soit  
ils s'abstiennent de tout commentaire  
mais Apollinaire, je m'en souviens  
la traite de bergère  
(juste avant de la traiter de «ô»)  
en tant que bergère elle aurait aujourd'hui à s'occuper  
plutôt que des ponts  
de ces curieux moutons  
jeunes filles et jeunes gens qui envahissent niaisement  
l'espace entre ses pieds

et se répandent sur toute l'étendue de l'esplanade  
en préparation des bêlements qu'ils vont bientôt pousser  
en l'honneur de la venue d'un pape  
qui n'est certainement pas le plus sympathique de tous les papes  
qui se sont succédé à la tête de l'église de Pierre  
(si vous permettez à un agnostique de porter un tel jugement)

je n'ai peut-être pas choisi le meilleur moment  
pour un poème de tour Eiffel

in *The Ruins of Paris*  
nor Queneau in *Hitting the Streets*  
maybe they found you too obvious,  
too  
visible, something they've seen so much they  
no longer remember to look  
they refrained from commenting  
but Apollinaire, I remember  
called you a shepherdess  
before lamenting, "Oh"  
today shepherdess you need deal  
with much more than bridges  
with the curious sheep,  
With young girls, youth who naively invade  
the space between your feet

Stretching themselves through the entire esplanade  
while listening for the bleating soon to come  
honoring the arrival of a pope,  
who is not the most agreeable  
of those who anyways succeed as head of Peter's church  
if you'll allow an agnostic to make such a judgment

perhaps, I have chosen the wrong moment  
for a poem for you, Eiffel tower

## Poem to the Eiffel Tower

Eiffel Tower, it's you I've come to see!  
and I do see,  
but seeing what I do is not easy  
words, only half a dozen reference points each  
at their best  
what I say I see does not uphold  
the weight in front of which  
I see all I haven't said  
and won't, not knowing  
some things are best not shown  
Eiffel tower! It's not you I see  
you, who I've come to  
in hopes of finally taking what I see  
to frame my poetic campaign  
a part of my work -  
the work of a poet  
it would be difficult  
to speak of Paris, without speaking of her tower  
as Apollinaire....  
yet, Réda pays you no mind

## Poème à la tour Eiffel

Tour Eiffel, c'est toi que je suis venu voir!  
et je vois  
mais ce n'est pas facile de voir ce que je vois  
les mots, seulement une demi-douzaine de points de référence  
à leur meilleur  
ce que je dis que je vois ne fait pas  
le poids devant  
ce que je vois mais que je n'ai pas dit  
et ne le ferai pas, ne sachant pas  
certaines choses qu'il vaut mieux ne pas montrer  
tour Eiffel, ce n'est pas toi que je vois!  
toi, que je suis venu voir  
avec l'espoir de prendre enfin ce que je vois  
pour encadrer ma campagne poétique  
une partie de mon travail  
le travail d'un poète  
il serait difficile  
de parler de Paris sans parler de sa tour  
comme Apollinaire....  
pourtant, Réda ne s'en préoccupe pas

in The Ruins of Paris  
nor Queneau in Hitting the Streets  
maybe they found you too obvious,  
too  
visible, something they've seen so much they  
no longer remember to look  
they refrained from commenting  
but Apollinaire, I remember  
called you a shepherdess  
before lamenting, "Oh"  
today shepherdess you need deal  
with much more than bridges  
with the curious sheep,  
With young girls, youth who naively invade  
the space between your feet

Stretching themselves through the entire esplanade  
while listening for the bleating soon to come  
honoring the arrival of a pope,  
who is not the most agreeable  
of those who anyways succeed as head of Peter's church  
if you'll allow an agnostic to make such a judgment

perhaps, I have chosen the wrong moment  
for a poem for you, Eiffel tower

dans Les Ruines de Paris  
ni Queneau dans Courir les rues  
peut-être qu'ils t'ont trouvée trop évidente  
trop  
visible, quelque chose qu'ils ont tellement vu  
qu'ils ne se souviennent plus de regarder  
ils s'abstiennent de tout commentaire  
mais Apollinaire, je me souviens  
t'appelait bergère  
avant de se lamenter « ô »  
aujourd'hui, bergère, tu dois t'occuper  
de bien plus que les ponts  
des moutons curieux  
des jeunes filles, jeunesse qui envahit naïvement  
l'espace entre tes pieds

qui s'étend tout au long de l'esplanade  
tout en écoutant les bêlements à venir  
en honneur de l'arrivée d'un pape  
qui n'est pas le plus sympathique,  
mais qui réussira quand même à diriger l'église de Pierre  
si tu permits à un agnostique de porter un tel jugement

il est possible que j'aie choisi le mauvais moment  
pour un poème pour toi, tour Eiffel

Author: Mary Oliver

Translator:  
Celestine Mingle (*they/them*)

Wild Geese  
Wildgänse  
Gansos salvajes

English to German and Spanish

I decided to translate this poem to join the two languages I have been studying into conversation with one another. This translation was a challenge for me, with Spanish being the language I have been studying for longer and German being the language I have most recently dedicated my attention to. This was a challenge of my comprehension of each language that I gladly embraced for such a sweet and kind poem.

## Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting —  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

## Wildgänse

Du brauchst nicht gut zu sein.  
Du brauchst nicht auf den Knien zu gehen  
hundert Meilen lang durch die Wüste, Buße tun.  
Du brauchst nur das sanft Tier deines Körper lieben lassen,  
was es liebt.  
Erzähl mir von Verzweiflung, deiner,  
und ich werde von meiner sprechen.  
In der Zwischenzeit geht die Welt weiter.  
Zwischenzeitlich ziehen die Sonne  
und die klaren Kieselsteine des Regens  
über die Landschaften,  
über die Prärien und die tiefen Wälder,  
die Berge und die Flüsse.  
In der Zwischenzeit machen sich die Wildgänse,  
hoch in der klaren blauen Luft,  
wieder auf den Weg nach Hause.  
Wer auch immer du bist, ganz gleich, wie einsam,  
die Welt öffnet sich deiner Fantasie,  
ruft nach dir, wie die Wildgänse, hart und aufregend —  
immer wieder deinen Platz bekanntgeben  
in der Familie der Dinge.

## Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.  
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.  
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting —  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

## Gansos salvajes

No necesitas ser bueno.  
No necesitas caminar en tus rodillas  
para cien millas a través del desierto arrepintiéndose.  
Solamente necesitas dejar el suave animal de tu cuerpo,  
amas lo que amas.  
Dígame sobre tus desesperaciones, y yo te digo las mías.  
Mientras tanto, el mundo continúa.  
Mientras tanto, el sol y las piedrecitas cristalinas de lluvia  
se mueven a través de los paisajes  
encima de las praderas y los profundos árboles  
las montañas y los ríos.  
Mientras tanto, los gansos salvajes, altos en el puro, azul aire  
están volando a la casa otra vez.  
Cualquiera que eres, no importa que solitario,  
el mundo ofrece sí mismo a tu imaginación,  
te llama que los gansos salvajes, duro y emocionante —  
una y otra vez anunciando tu posición  
en la familia de hechos.

Author: Mahmoud Darwish

Translator:  
Nafisa Arjum Deya (*they/them*)

أنا من هناك  
I am from there

Arabic to English



أَنَا مِنْ هُنَاكَ. وَلِي ذِكْرِيَاتُ. وَلِدْتُ كَمَا تُولَدُ النَّاسُ. لِي وَالِدَةٌ وَبَيْتٌ كَثِيرُ  
النَّوَافِذِ. لِي إِخْوَةٌ. أَصْدِقَاءُ. وَسَجْنٌ بِنَافِذَةٍ بَارِدَةٍ. وَلِي مَوْجَةٌ خَطَفَتْهَا النَّوَارِسُ.  
لِي مَشْهَدِي الْخَاصُّ. لِي عُشْبَةٌ زَائِدَةٌ

وَلِي قَمَرٌ فِي أَقَاصِي الْكَلَامِ، وَرِزْقُ الطُّيُورِ، وَزَيْتُونَةٌ خَالِدَةٌ مَرَرْتُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ  
قَبْلَ مُرُورِ السُّيُوفِ عَلَى جَسَدٍ حَوَّلُوهُ إِلَى مَائِدَةٍ.

أَنَا مِنْ هُنَاكَ. أُعِيدُ السَّمَاءَ إِلَى أُمِّهَا حِينَ تَبْكِي السَّمَاءَ عَلَى أُمِّهَا، وَأَبْكِي  
لِتَعْرِفَنِي غَيْمَةٌ عَائِدَةٌ.

تَعَلَّمْتُ كُلَّ كَلَامٍ يَلِيْقُ بِمَحْكَمَةِ الدَّمِ كَيْ أَكْسِرَ الْقَاعِدَةَ.

تَعَلَّمْتُ كُلَّ الْكَلَامِ ، وَفَكَكْتُهُ كَيْ أَرْكَبَ مُفْرَدَةً وَاحِدَةً.  
هِيَ: الْوَطَنُ...

I am from there. I hold memories. I was born how people are  
born. I have a father and a house with many windows. I have  
brothers, friends and a jail with a cold window. I have a wave  
snatched by the seagulls. I have my own scene. I have an extra  
herb

and I have a moon, where I learned all speech, the bird's for-  
tune, and an immortal olive. I walked over the earth before the  
swords passed over a body that they turned into a feast

I am from there. I return the sky to its mother when the sky  
weeps for its mother, I cry so that you may know me as a re-  
turning cloud.

I learned all the speech befitting the blood court in order to  
break the rule,

I learned all the speech, and deconstruct them in order to as-  
semble a singular word,  
It is: The homeland...

Author: Yuhanon Qashisho

Translator:  
Ferouz Chamoun (*she/her*)

Moth Bethnahrin  
Mein Heimatland,  
Bethnahrin  
My homeland Bethnahrin

Neo-Aramaic to German and English

Bethnahrin is the Neo-Aramaic word for Mesopotamia. “Moth Bethnahrin” was written by the Assyrian author and poet Yuhanon Qashisho in the late 20th century. Through his poetry, he captured the struggles, resilience, and aspirations of the Assyrian people, inspiring a sense of unity and pride among Assyrians worldwide. His poems, often recited at national gatherings and protests, became powerful tools for cultural and political awareness.

## Moth Bethnahrin

مِنْهُ تَجَسَّدَ  
مِنْهُ تَجَسَّدَ  
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا كَفُوًا

۞ اِنۡسُفۡ لَکُمۡ اَنۡ تَعۡبُدُوۡا اِلٰهًا غَیۡرَ اللّٰهِ ۚ کَمَا کُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡبُدُوۡنَ اِلٰهَکُمۡ مِّنۡ قَبۡلِ ۚ فَتَعۡبُدُوۡنَ اِلٰهًا غَیۡرَہٗ ۚ کَمَا کُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡبُدُوۡنَہٗ ۚ فَاَنۡتُمۡ تَعۡبُدُوۡنَہٗ ۚ کَمَا کُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡبُدُوۡنَہٗ ۚ

وَلَا تَقْرَأُ الْكِتَابَ طَرَفًا مِّنْهُ  
وَلَا تَسْمَعُ الْغَيْبَ مَنكُم مَّنْ يُنَادِي بِالسَّامِ

# Mein Heimatland, Bethnahrin

Mein Heimatland, Bethnahrin,  
mein Heimatland, Bethnahrin;  
ich werde es nicht vergessen – bis zum Tod.

Dieses Seufzen –  
wann wird es fortgehen?  
Und die Hand der Fremden –  
wann wird sie unser Heimatland verlassen?  
Ich habe geschworen, dass ich kommen werde – o Heilig –  
und deine Flagge erheben werde,  
gesegnetes Heimatland,  
und deine Feinde niedertreten werde  
mit einem gebrochenen Bein,  
und deine Ehre wiederherstellen werde,  
geliebtes Heimatland.

Und deine Feinde niedertreten werde,  
mit einem gebrochenen Bein,

# Moth Bethnahrin

ܡܘܬ ܒܝܬܢܗܪܝܢ  
 ܡܘܬ ܒܝܬܢܗܪܝܢ  
 ܕܢ ܢܬܝܬ ܕܢ ܕܡܘܬ ܕܡܘܬ

ܐܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܘܬ ܕܡܘܬ ܕܡܘܬ  
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# My homeland Bethnahrin

My homeland, Bethnahrin,  
 my homeland, Bethnahrin;  
 I won't forget it – until death.

This sigh – when will it go away?  
 And the foreigners' hand – when will it leave our homeland?  
 I have sworn that I'll come – O Holy –  
 and raise your flag,  
 blessed homeland,  
 and trample down your enemies  
 with a broken leg,  
 and restore your glory,  
 beloved homeland.

And trample down your enemies  
 with a broken leg,  
 and restore your glory,  
 beloved homeland.

Author: Claire Krähenbühl

Translator:  
Leigh Ivanova (*she/they*)

## A corps perdu Risking Our Necks

French to English

The title of the poem can be literally translated as “To the Lost Body”, but at the same time it is an idiomatic expression, meaning doing something with a great risk. I attempted to translate it, keeping the metaphor of the body in there to keep the viscosity of it, oscillating between Going on a Limb and Risking our Necks. In the original also there is a shift from *vous* to *tu*, a formal you to informal you, that I wish I could have kept, as the shift in the relationship is crucial.

## A corps perdu

Bien sûr vous troubler vous surprendre  
aussi vous transporter  
à huis clos jouer l'impossible théâtre  
en flammes     juste pour vous et moi  
échanger nos rôles pour voir  
pour rire le temps d'un incendie

Je serais le feu    tu serais  
le rideau rouge qui tombe dans le noir

plus tard le vous reviendrait  
comme une épée

## Risking Our Necks

Of course to bother you surprise you  
And also to transport you  
Behind the closed doors to play the impossible theater  
In flames                     just for you and me  
Swap our roles to see  
To laugh during the fire

I would be the fire     you would be  
A red curtain falling into the dark

Later you would return  
Like a sword

Author: Hai Zi

Translator:  
Ogs & Mrm (*we/us*)

女孩子  
Girl

Mandarin to English

## 女孩子

她走来  
断断续续走来  
洁净的脚印  
沾满清凉的露水

她有些犹豫  
往往用泥草筑起的房屋  
望望父亲  
她用双手分开黑发  
一支野樱花斜插着默默无语  
另一只送给了谁  
却从没人问起

春天是风  
秋天是月亮  
在我感觉到时  
她已去了另一个地方  
那里雨后的篱笆像一条蓝色的小溪

## Girl

She walks this way  
Stopping and going this way  
The clean footprints  
Covered in icy crystal dew

She's a little melancholic  
Looking at the house built from mud and grass  
Looking at father  
She splits the black hair with two hands  
One wild cherry flower nestled at an angle wordless  
Who was the other stem given  
Yet no one ever asked

Spring is wind  
Autumn is moon  
By the time I felt it  
She had already gone to the other place  
Where after rain fences look like a blue  
Brook



Author: Rachel Bluwstein

Translator:  
Oliver Abrams (*he/him*)

רַק עַל עֵצְמִי לְסַפֵּר יָדַעְתִּי  
I could only talk about myself

Hebrew to English

Rachel Bluwstein lived a very hard life as an immigrant and a woman in Palestine trying to build up a “room of her own.” I cannot capture that feeling in its fullness. But I felt joy in trying to capture her clever, “pedestrian” voice that speaks back to the world we wish to change.

רק על עצמי לספר ידעתי  
 צר עולמי כעולם נמלה,  
 גם משאי עמסתי כמוה  
 רב וכבד מכתפי הדלה.  
 גם את דרכי – כדרךך אל צמרת –  
 דרך מכאוב ודרך עמל,  
 יד ענקים ודונה ובושחת,  
 יד מתבדחת שמה לאל.  
 כל ארחותי הליו והדמיע  
 פחד טמיר מיד ענקים.  
 למה קראתם לי, חופי הפלא?  
 למה כזבתם, אורות רחוקים?

I could only talk about myself  
 My world was narrow like the world of an ant,  
 and I carried my load just like one,  
 too large and heavy for my shoulders that just can't.  
 And my way — as the way to the top —  
 a painful way and a way of toil,  
 a hand of giants, wicked, secure,  
 a teasing hand that wants to foil.  
 It warps and makes all my attempts cry,  
 unrevealed fear from the giants' hand.  
 Why did you call me, miracle shores?  
 Why did you lie, far-away lights?

Author: Mahmoud Darwish

Translator:  
Yazan Abu Shamla (*he/him*)

كمقهى صغير هو الحبّ  
A Small Café on Stranger  
Street

Arabic to English

It was interesting to translate how love is described like a small café that changes with the weather. I also liked how the poem shows two people waiting for each other without knowing it.

## كمقهى صغير هو الحب

كمقهى صغير على شارع الغرباء -  
هو الحب... يَفْتَحُ أبوابه للجميع.  
كمقهى يزيد وينقُصُ وَفْقُ المناخ:  
إذا هَطَلَ المطرُ ازداد رُؤَادُهُ،  
وإذا اعتدل الجوُّ قَلُّوا وَمَلُّوا..  
أنا ههنا - يا غريبه - في الركن أجلس  
[ما لون عينيك؟ ما أَسْمُك؟ كيف  
أناديك حين تَمَرُّين بي، وأنا جالس  
في انتظاركِ؟]  
مقهى صغير هو الحب. أطلب كأسَي  
نبيذٍ وأشرب نخبي ونخبك. أحمل  
قُبْعَتَيْنِ وشمسيَّةً. إنها تمطر الآن.  
تمطر أكثر من أيِّ يوم، ولا تدخلين.  
أقول لنفسي أخيراً: لعلَّ التي كنت  
أنتظرُ انتظرتني... أو انتظرتُ رجلاً  
آخر - انتظرتنا ولم تتعرف عليه / عليّ،  
وكانت تقول: أنا ههنا في انتظاركِ.  
[ما لون عينيك؟ أيَّ نبيذٍ تحبُّ؟  
وما أَسْمُك؟ كيف أناديك حين  
[تمرُّ أمامي]  
كمقهى صغير هو الحب...

## A Small Café on Stranger Street

Like a small café on Stranger Street  
Love is... it opens its doors to everyone  
Like a café that swells and shrinks with the weather:  
When rain falls, its visitors increase,  
And when the sky clears, they grow few and bored...  
Here I am - O stranger - sitting in the corner.  
[What color are your eyes? What's your name?  
How shall I call you when you pass by,  
While I sit here waiting for you?]  
Love is a small café. I order two glasses  
Of wine and drink to my own health—and yours.  
I hold two hats, and an umbrella. It's raining now.  
It's raining more than ever today, and still you don't come in.  
I say to myself at last: perhaps the one  
I was waiting for was waiting for me...  
Or perhaps she waited for another man  
She waited for us both and didn't recognize him / me,  
And she said: I'm here, waiting for you.  
[What color are your eyes? What wine do you love?  
And what is your name? How shall I call to you  
As you pass before me?]  
Love is like a small café...

Author & Translator:  
미야 Thyme Weiss (*he/she/they*)

## CREATION

Korean to English

떠있어 떠있어  
활기찬 물길  
땅을 미끄러지듯 기어가  
떨어져 떨어져  
별들 속으로

Floating floating Vibrant waters  
Slithering through earth  
Falling falling  
Into the stars

Author: Enheduanna

Translator:  
Ferouz Chamoun (*she/her*)

## The Hymn to Inana Die Hymne an Inana

English to German

I chose to translate a little excerpt of a poem by the world's first poet – Enheduanna (daughter of Sargon of Akkad). The version here is shortened according to Helle's edition. Enheduanna lived around 2300 BC and was a high priestess in Ur – a city in modern-day Iraq. She marks “the earliest known appearance of authorship: the idea that there is a person behind the text, speaking to us across time” (Helle 2023, p. vii). The poem is a hymn to Inana (also known as Ishtar) – the ancient Mesopotamian goddess of war, love, change, and destruction. As I'm of Assyrian descent, I am interested in Mesopotamian mythology and wanted to share an old – still existing culture in the diaspora and the homeland – that many might not be aware of.

## The Hymn to Inana

To destroy and  
to create, to plant  
and to pluck out  
are yours, Inana.

To turn men into women, to turn  
women into men  
are yours, Inana.

[.....]

To step, to stride,  
to strive, to arrive  
are yours, Inana.

To turn brutes  
into weaklings  
and to make the  
powerful puny  
are yours, Inana.

To reverse peaks  
and plains, to raise  
up and to reduce  
are yours, Inana.

To assign and allot  
the crown, throne,  
and staff of kings  
are yours, Inana.

## Die Hymne an Inana

Zu zerstören,  
zu erschaffen, zu pflanzen  
und herauszureißen,  
obliegt Dir, Inana.

Männer in Frauen zu verwandeln,  
Frauen in Männer zu verwandeln,  
obliegt Dir, Inana.

[.....]

Zu treten, zu schreiten,  
zu streben, anzukommen,  
obliegt Dir, Inana.

Bestien  
in Schwächlinge zu verwandeln  
und die Mächtigen mickrig zu machen,  
obliegt Dir, Inana.

Gipfel  
und Ebenen zu vertauschen,  
zu erheben und zu erniedrigen,  
obliegt Dir, Inana.

Anzuweisen und zuzuweisen –  
die Krone, den Thron  
und den Stab der Könige –  
obliegt Dir, Inana.



Author: Claire Keegan

Translator:  
Giada Polita (*she/her*)  
Università di Trento

## Foster Un Estate

English to Italian

The most challenging part of this translation was rendering “candlewick spread” into Italian, as this kind of bedspread is not very common in Italy. Eventually, I translated the expression as “copriletto di ciniglia”.

Beyond the kitchen, carpeted steps lead to an open room. There's a big double bed with a candlewick spread, and lamps at either side. This, I know, is where they sleep, and I'm glad, for some reason, that they sleep together. The woman takes me through to a bathroom, plugs the drain and turns the taps on full. The bath fills and the white room changes so that a type of blindness comes over us; we can see everything and yet we can't see.

"Hands up," she says, and takes my dress off.

She tests the water and I step in, trusting her, but this water is too hot.

"Get in," she says.

"It's too hot."

"You'll get used to it."

I put one foot through the steam and feel again the same hot scald. I keep my foot in the water, and then, when I think I can't stand it any longer, my thinking changes, and I can. This water is deeper and hotter than any I have ever bathed in. Our mother bathes us in what little she can, and sometimes makes us share. After a while, I lie back and through the steam watch the woman as she scrubs my feet. The dirt under my nails she prises out with tweezers. She squeezes shampoo from a plastic bottle, lathers my hair and rinses the lather off. Then she makes me stand and soaps me all over with a cloth. Her hands are like my mother's hands but there is something else in them too, something I have never felt before and have no name for. I feel at such a loss for words but this is a new place, and new words are needed.

Oltre la cucina, dei gradini foderati conducono ad una stanza aperta. C'è un grande letto a due piazze con un copriletto di ciniglia e lampade su entrambi i lati. So che qui è dove dormono e, per chissà quale motivo, sono felice che dormano insieme. La donna mi porta in un bagno, chiude lo scarico e apre i rubinetti al massimo. La vasca si riempie e la stanza bianca cambia così che veniamo colpite da una sorta di cecità; riusciamo a vedere tutto eppure non vediamo niente.

"Alza le braccia," dice, e mi toglie il vestito.

Verifica la temperatura dell'acqua e io entro, fidandomi di lei, ma è troppo calda.

"Entra," mi dice.

"È troppo calda."

"Poi ti abitui."

Metto un piede nel vapore e sento di nuovo lo stesso calore ustionante. Lascio il piede nell'acqua e, quando credo di non potercela più fare, il mio pensiero cambia e riesco a sopportarlo. Quest'acqua è la più profonda e calda in cui io abbia mai fatto il bagno. Nostra madre ci fa il bagno con quel poco che ha e ogni tanto ci fa condividere l'acqua. Dopo un po', mi stendo e attraverso il vapore guardo la donna che mi strofina i piedi. Lo sporco sotto le mie unghie lo tira via con delle pinzette. Spreme lo shampoo da una bottiglietta di plastica, mi insapona i capelli e sciacqua via la schiuma. Poi mi fa mettere in piedi e mi insapona ovunque con un panno. Le sue mani sembrano quelle di mia madre, ma allo stesso tempo hanno qualcosa di diverso, qualcosa che non ho mai provato prima e per cui non ho un nome. Non riesco a trovare le parole giuste, ma questo è un posto nuovo e per un posto nuovo servono nuove parole.

“Now your clothes,” she says.

“I don’t have any clothes.”

“Of course you don’t.” She pauses. “Would some of our old things do you for now?”

“I don’t mind.”

“Good girl.”

She takes me to another bedroom past theirs, at the other side of the stairs, and looks through a chest of drawers.

“Maybe these will fit you.”

She is holding a pair of old-fashioned trousers and a new plaid shirt. The sleeves and legs are too long but she rolls them up, and tightens the waist with a canvas belt, to fit me.

“There now,” she says.

“Mammy says I have to change my pants every day.”

“And what else does your mammy say?”

“She says you can keep me for as long as you like.”

“Ora i tuoi vestiti,” dice lei.

“Non ho nessun vestito.”

“Certo che non ne hai.” Fa una pausa. “Per il momento ti vanno bene alcune delle nostre vecchie cose?”

“Non mi importa.”

“Ben detto.”

Mi porta in una camera da letto vicino alla loro, dall’altro lato delle scale, e guarda in una cassetiera.

“Forse questi ti stanno.”

In mano ha un paio di pantaloni vecchio stile e una camicia a quadri nuova. Le maniche e le gambe dei pantaloni sono troppo lunghe, ma per far sì che mi stiano le arrotola e stringe la vita con una cintura di tessuto.

“Ecco,” dice.

“La mamma dice che devo cambiare le mutande tutti i giorni.”

“E cos’altro dice la tua mamma?”

“Dice che potete tenermi per tutto il tempo che volete.”

Author: Claire Keegan

Translators:  
Chloe Belle Boocock  
Luca Raufer  
Diana Cica  
Università di Trento

Foster  
Un Estate

English to Italian

Beyond the kitchen, carpeted steps lead to an open room. There's a big double bed with a candlewick spread, and lamps at either side. This, I know, is where they sleep, and I'm glad, for some reason, that they sleep together. The woman takes me through to a bathroom, plugs the drain and turns the taps on full. The bath fills and the white room changes so that a type of blindness comes over us; we can see everything and yet we can't see.

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She tests the water and I step in, trusting her, but this water is too hot.

"Get in," she says.

"It's too hot."

"You'll get used to it."

I put one foot through the steam and feel again the same hot scald. I keep my foot in the water, and then, when I think I can't stand it any longer, my thinking changes, and I can. This water is deeper and hotter than any I have ever bathed in. Our mother bathes us in what little she can, and sometimes makes us share. After a while, I lie back and through the steam watch the woman as she scrubs my feet. The dirt under my nails she prises out with tweezers. She squeezes shampoo from a plastic bottle, lathers my hair and rinses the lather off. Then she makes me stand and soaps me all over with a cloth. Her hands are like my mother's hands but there is something else in them too, something I have never felt before and have no name for. I feel at such a loss for words but this is a new place, and new words are needed.

Al di là della cucina qualche gradino tappezzato porta ad una camera aperta. C'è un grande letto matrimoniale con un copriletto ricamato e per ciascun lato una lampada. È qui che dormono e, per qualche ragione, sono contenta che dormono insieme. La donna mi guida attraverso la camera fino a un bagno, mette il tappo alla vasca e apre i rubinetti al massimo. L'acqua aumenta e nella stanza bianca ci travolge una specie di cecità; ci vediamo, ma allo stesso tempo non si vede.

'Su le braccia' mi dice, e mi toglie il vestito.

Prova l'acqua con la mano e io ci entro, fidandomi di lei, ma l'acqua è bollente.

'Su, entra,' mi dice.

'È bollente.'

'Fra un po' ti sembrerà meno bollente.'

Attraverso il vapore immergo un piede e sento di nuovo che scotta. Tengo il piede nell'acqua e poi, quando penso di non poter più resistere, improvvisamente ce la faccio. Quest'acqua è più profonda e più bollente di quelle in cui avevo fatto il bagno finora. Nostra mamma ci lava in quel poco che può e a volte ci fa fare il bagno insieme. Dopo un po', mi appoggio indietro e attraverso il vapore vedo la donna che mi strofina i piedi. Mi stacca lo sporco da sotto le unghie con un paio di pinzette. Spreme shampoo da una bottiglia di plastica, mi insapona i capelli e li risciacqua. Dopo mi fa alzare e mi insapona tutta con un panno. Le sue mani sono come quelle della mamma ma c'è anche qualcosa di diverso in loro, che non ho mai sentito prima e per cui non c'è un nome. Mi sento davvero senza parole, ma questo è un nuovo posto, ne servono di nuove.

"Now your clothes," she says.

"I don't have any clothes."

"Of course you don't." She pauses. "Would some of our old things do you for now?"

"I don't mind."

"Good girl."

She takes me to another bedroom past theirs, at the other side of the stairs, and looks through a chest of drawers.

"Maybe these will fit you."

She is holding a pair of old-fashioned trousers and a new plaid shirt. The sleeves and legs are too long but she rolls them up, and tightens the waist with a canvas belt, to fit me.

"There now," she says.

"Mammy says I have to change my pants every day."

"And what else does your mammy say?"

"She says you can keep me for as long as you like."

She laughs at this and brushes the knots out of my hair, and turns quiet. The windows in this room are open and through these I see a stretch of lawn, a vegetable garden, edible things growing in rows, red spiky dahlias, a crow with something in his beak which he slowly breaks in two and eats, one half and then the other.

'Come down to the well with me,' she says.

'Now?'

'Does now not suit you?'

Something about the way she says this makes me wonder if it's something we are not supposed to do.

'E ora mettiti i vestiti,' mi fa.

'Ma non ne ho vestiti.'

'E certo che no.' Fa una pausa. 'Vanno bene per ora alcuni dei nostri vecchi vestiti?'

'Non è un problema.'

'Bravissima.'

Mi porta in un'altra camera da letto, al di là della loro, al lato opposto delle scale e cerca in una cassetiera.

'Forse questi ti stanno.'

Tra le mani ha un paio di pantaloni fuori moda e una camicia di flanella. Le maniche e le gambe sono troppo lunghe, ma me le rimbocca, e con una cinta stringe bene il girovita.

'Ecco qui,' mi dice.

'Mamma dice che devo cambiarmi le mutande ogni giorno.'

'E che altro dice tua mamma?'

'Dice che mi puoi tenere finchè vuoi.'

Lei ride, spazzola via i nodi dai miei capelli e sta in silenzio. In questa stanza le finestre sono aperte e fuori vedo uno scorcio di prato, un orto, diverse cose commestibili piantate in fila, delle dalie rosse con i petali a punta, un corvo con qualcosa nel becco che lentamente spezzetta in due, mangiandone un pezzo e poi l'altro.

'Vieni con me giù al pozzo', propone.

'Adesso?'

'Non ti va bene adesso?'

Lo dice come se in realtà non dovremmo andarci.

'Is this secret?'

'What?'

'I mean, am I not supposed to tell?'

She turns me round, to face her. I have not really looked into her eyes, until now. Her eyes are dark blue pebbled with other blues.

'There are no secrets in this house, do you hear?'

I don't want to answer back – but feel she wants an answer.

'Do you hear me?'

'Yeah.'

'It's not "yeah."

It's "yes." What is it?'

'It's yes.'

'Yes, what?'

'Yes, there are no secrets in this house.'

'Where there's a secret,' she says, 'there's shame – and shame is something we can do without.'

'Okay.' I take big breaths so I won't cry.

She puts her arm around me. 'You're just too young to understand.'

As soon as she says this, I realise she is just like everyone else, and wish I was back at home so that all the things I do not understand could be the same as they always are.

'È un segreto?'

'Che cosa?'

'Cioè, non devo dirlo a nessuno?'

Mi gira verso di sé. Non l'ho guardata veramente negli occhi finora. I suoi occhi sono blu scuro, pezzato da altre sfumature di blu.

'Non esistono segreti in questa casa, va bene?'

Non voglio rispondere, ma sento che aspetta una risposta da me.

'Hai capito?'

'Mm-hmm.'

'Non "mm-hmm".'

'Si dice "sì". Quindi?'

'Si dice sì'

Dove ci sono segreti', dice, 'c'è vergogna – e la vergogna non serve a nulla'

'Okay.' Faccio respiri profondi per non piangere.

Mi mette il braccio attorno.

'Sei troppo piccola per capire.'

In quel momento capisco che anche lei è come tutti gli altri e vorrei essere a casa, dove tutte le cose che non capisco sono le stesse di sempre.

Author: Murakami Haruki

Translator:  
Fátima Vidal Rivera (*she/her*)

ゾンビ  
Zombie

Japanese to English



男と女が道を歩いていた。墓場のとなりの道だった。真夜中だ。霧まで出ていた。彼らだって真夜中にそんなところを歩きたくはなかった。でもいろんな事情でそこを通らざるをえなかったのだ。二人はしっかりと手をにぎりあって、足早に歩いていた。

「まるでマイケル・ジャクソンのビデオみたい」と女が言った。

「うん、墓石が動くんだ」と男が言った。

そのときどこかでギイッという重いものが動くような軋みが聞こえた。二人は歩をとめて思わず顔を見合わせた。

男が笑った。「大丈夫さ、そんなに神経質になることはない。木の枝がすれたんだよ。風か何かで」

でも風なんか吹いてはいなかった。女は息をのんであたりを見回した。すごく嫌な感じがした。邪悪なことが起こりそうな予感がした。

ゾンビだ。

でも何も見えなかった。死者が蘇った気配もなかった。二人はまた歩き始めた。

男の顔が妙にこわばったように感じられた。「どうして君はそんなみっともない歩き方をするんだろうな」と男が唐突に言った。

「私？」と女は驚いて言った。「私、そんなにみっともない歩き方するかしら？」

「ひどいよ」と男は言った。

「そう？」

「がにまただ」

A man and a woman were walking down a road. It was the road next to the graveyard. It was the dead of night. Even fog swirled around. They did not want to walk through such a place in the dead of night. Yet, due to many circumstances, they had to traverse through the place. The two tightly grabbed each others' hands and walked swiftly.

The woman said, "It's just like that Michael Jackson video."

The man said, "Hm, 'cuz the graves are moving."

At that moment, they could hear a rumble somewhere, that went geeeshh. The two stopped walking and without thinking looked at each other.

The man laughed. "It's fine, you know, there's no need to be that nervous. It was just a tree branch rustling. Must've been the wind or something."

But the wind was not really blowing. The woman held her breath and looked around. A feeling of unease grew in her. She had a hunch that something wicked may happen.

It was a Zombie.

But she saw nothing. There was also no indication that the dead had risen. The two began walking again.

It felt like the man's face had strangely stiffened.

He said abruptly: "Why do you walk like that?"

"Me?" The woman said surprised. "I...am I really walking in such an unsightly way?"

"It's horrible." He said.

"Really?"

"You're bowlegged."

女は唇を噛んだ。たしかに少しそういう傾向はあるかもしれない。靴の底がいくらか片減りするのだ。でもわざわざそんなことを正面きって言われるほどひどくはない。

でも彼女は何も言わなかった。彼女は男を愛していたし、男だって彼女を愛していた。二人は来月に結婚することになっていた。つまらない喧嘩はしたくなかった。私は少しがにまたかもしれない。それでいいじゃない。

「がにまたの女とつきあったのなんて、初めてだ」

「そう?」と固い笑いを浮かべて女は言った。この人酔ってるのかしら? いや、今日はお酒はぜんぜん飲んでいないはずだ。

「それから君の耳の穴の中に、ほくろがみつつある」と男が言った。

「あらそう?」と彼女は言った。「どっちかしら」

「右だよ。右の耳のすぐ内側に、ほくろがみつつある。すごく下品なほくろだ」

「ほくろは嫌い?」

「下品なほくろは嫌いだよ。そんなものを好きな奴がどこの世界にいる?」

彼女は唇をもっともっときつく噛んだ。

「それからときどきわきがが臭う」と男はつづけた。「前から気になってたんだ。もし初めて君にあったのが夏だったら、僕は君となんかつきあわなかった」

彼女は溜め息をついた。そしてつないでいた手を離れた。

「ねえ、ちょっと待ってよ。そういう言い方はないんじゃない? あまりにもひどいわよ。あなたってこれまでそんな……」

「ブラウスの襟だって汚れている。今日、今着てるやつのことだよ。どうしてそんなにだらしないんだ。どうしてまともなことひとつできないんだ?」

女はじっと黙っていた。腹が立って口もきけなかったのだ。

The woman bit her lips. That's right, maybe she did have a slight tendency to do that. After all, the sides of her shoe soles were somewhat more worn out than the rest. But it was still not so bad that he had to come and say that straight to her face. She said nothing. She loved the man; the man, too, loved her. It was decided that the two would be married next month. She did not want to have any meaningless fights. She may be bowlegged, just a bit. But wasn't that fine?

"It's my first time going out with a woman who's bowlegged."

"Yeah?" The woman said with a stiff smile. Is this person drunk? No, he shouldn't have had any drinks today.

The man said. "You also have three moles inside the hole of your ear."

"Oh really?" she said "Which one?"

"The right one. You have three moles on the immediate inside of your right ear. They're really vulgar moles."

"You don't like beauty marks?"

"I hate vulgar moles. Where in the world would there be a guy that likes stuff like that?"

The woman bit her lip even harder.

"Plus, sometimes your armpits reek."

The man continued. "I've been thinking about it for a while. But if I'd met you during summer, there's no way we would've gone out."

She sighed, and let go of his hand.

"Hey, wait a second. You don't have to say it that way, right? It's pretty horrible. Until now you ...."

"Even the collar of your blouse is dirty. Yeah, that thing you're wearing now, why do you look so sloppy? Why can't you do a single thing well?"

The woman was stoically quiet. She was angry, her mouth remained shut.

「いいか、君に言いたいことは山ほどあるんだ。がにまた、わきが、襟の汚れ、耳のほくろ、こんなのはほんの一部だ。そうだ、どうしてそんな以合わないイヤリングつけるんだよ。それじゃまるで売春婦じゃないか。いや、売春婦の方がまだずっと品がいいぜ。そんなものつけるくらいなら、鼻に輪っかでもつけときゃいいんだ。君の二重顎にはぴったりだよ。うん、二重顎で思い出した。君のお母さんな、あれは本当の豚だ。ぶうぶうの豚だ。あれが二十年後の君の姿だ。食い意地のはったところなんか親子そっくりだよ。豚だ。ほんとうにがつがつ食いやがる。父親もひどいや。ろくに漢字も書けないじゃないか。このあいだ家の親に手紙書いたらしいけど、みんなで笑ってたぜ。字もろくに書けないってさ。小学校も出てないんじゃないのか、あいつ。ひでえ家だ。文化的スラムだ。あんなもの石油かけて燃やしちまえばいいんだ。脂肪でじゅうじゅう燃えるぜ、きっと」  
「ねえ、そんなに気にいらないんなら、どうして私と結婚なんかするのよ？」

男はそんなことには取り合わなかった。「豚だ」と彼は言った。「それから君のあそこね。あれは本当にひどいぜ。僕はあきらめてやってるけど、もうなんだか伸びきった安物のゴムみたいだ。あんなものつけるくらいだったら、僕なら死んでるね。僕が女で、あんなものつけてたらさ、恥ずかしくて死んでるよ。どんな死に方でもいい。とにかくさっさと死んでしまう。生きてるのが恥だ」

女は茫然としてそこに立っていた。「あなたよくもそんな……」

“Listen! There’s a mountain of things I want to say to you. Your bowlegs, your armpit stench, the dirty collar, your ear moles, they are just a portion of that. Oh, that’s right, why are you wearing earrings that look so bad on you? They just make you look just like a prostitute. Nah, actually, a prostitute would look more elegant, for sure. If you have to wear that sorta stuff, might as well just go for a nose ring. But you? A nose ring would fit perfectly with that ugly double chin. Hm yeah, can’t forget that double chin. I mean, your mom, now that’s a real pig. A huffing and puffing pig. That’s gonna be your shape in 20 years. You’re all exactly the same, you do nothing but pig out. Just pigs. You really have some nerve to gorge on food like that. And yer dad is just as horrible. He can’t even spell decently can he? I heard he wrote a letter to my parents and they, heh, they just laughed. You know, even the simplest letters weren’t decent. Did that guy even graduate from elementary school? What a fucking horrible family. It’s a cultural slum. Someone should just go throw oil on it and burn it to the ground. All that pig fat will sizzle when you burn it, for sure.”

“Hey, why are you going to marry me, if you hate us that much?”

The man was not paying attention to her.

“A pig.” He said. “Yours is just like that. That’s really fucking terrible. I already gave up for you a while ago, but it really looks like a cheap condom that got stretched out. If mine was like that, I would have killed myself. If I were a woman and my thing was like yours, I would be dead because of the embarrassment. Whatever way to die would be fine. In any case, I would just quickly die and be done with it all. Living would just be an embarrassment.”

そのとき、男は突然頭を抱えた。そして苦しそうに顔を歪めて、その場にしゃがみこんだ。爪でこめかみをかきむしった。「痛い!」と男は言った。「頭が割れそうだ。たまらない。苦しい」  
「大丈夫?」と女は声をかけた。  
「大丈夫じゃない。我慢できない。なんだか皮膚が焼けるみたいにちりちりする」

女は男の顔に手を触れた。男の顔は焼けるように熱かった。彼女はそれをさすってみた。すると皮膚は薄皮を剥くようにずるっとはがれた。そしてそのあとにはぬめっとした赤い肉が現れた。彼女は息をのんでうしろにとびのいた。

男は立ち上がった。そしてにやっと笑った。彼は自分の手で顔の皮膚をどんどんはがしていった。眼球がどろんと下に垂れた。鼻はただのふたつの暗い穴になった。唇が消えて、歯がむきだしになった。その歯がにっと笑った。  
「俺がお前と一緒にになったのは、お前の豚みたいな肉を食うためだ。それ以外にお前なんかとつきあう意味があるもんか。それくらいなんでわからないんだ。お前は阿呆か。お前は阿呆か。お前は阿呆か。へへへへへへ」

そしてそのむきだしの肉のかたまりが彼女の後を追ってきた。彼女は走りに走った。でもその背後の肉のかたまりから逃れることはできなかった。墓地の端でぬるっとした手が彼女のブラウスの襟をつかんだ。彼女は思いきり悲鳴をあげた。

The man suddenly grabbed his head with his hands. His face seemed to twist in pain. He squatted down. Claws scratched and tore off his temple.

“AH!” the man cried. “It’s like my head is splitting in two. Ugh, it ‘s too much. It hurts.”

“Are you ok?” The woman called out.

“Like Hell. I can’t stand it. My skin feels like it’s burning. It stings.”

The woman touched the man’s face with her hands. His face felt like it was burning up. She tried massaging that area. As she did, the skin, the weak skin, seemed to peel off, and slid away. His whole face had begun peeling. Soon after, glistening red flesh appeared. She caught her breath and jumped back.

The man rose to his feet and laughed at last. He repeatedly grabbed at the remaining skin in his face. His eyeballs fell out and hung from his sockets. The nose became two dark holes and the lips disappeared, leaving his teeth exposed. That grinning mouth smiled back.

“We are dating, so I can eat a piece of pork like you. Do ya think there’s any meaning in going out with you other than to eat you?! Why can’t you understand even that?! Are you a moron? Are you a moron? Are you a moron? Hehehehehehe.”

That lump of naked muscles chased her. She ran and ran and ran. But she could not escape the lump of muscles running behind her. Near the end of the cemetery, a slimy hand grabbed onto the collar of her blouse. She screamed with all her strength.

男が彼女の体を抱いていた。  
彼女は喉がからからになっていた。男はにっこりとして彼女を見ていた。  
「どうしたの？悪い夢を見たの？」  
彼女は体を起こして、まわりを見回した。二人は湖のそばのホテルのベッドに寝ていた。彼女は頭を振った。  
「叫んだ、私？」  
「すごく」と彼は笑って言った。  
「ものすごく大きな悲鳴だった。ホテル中の人が聞いたんじゃないかな。殺人があったと思わなければいいけれどね」  
「ごめんなさい」と彼女は言った。  
「いいさ、別に」と男は言った。「嫌な夢だった？」  
「想像できないくらい嫌な夢だった」  
「聞かせてくれる？」  
「話したくない」と彼女は言った。  
「話したほうがいいんだよ。誰かに話せば、そのバイブレーションみたいのは消えちゃうからさ」  
「いいのよ。今は話したくない」  
二人はしばらく黙っていた。彼女は男の裸の胸に抱かれていた。遠くで蛙の鳴く声が聞こえた。男の胸はゆっくりと誰かな鼓動を繰り返していた。  
「ねえ」と女はふと思いついて言った。「ちょっと聞きたいんだけど」  
「なんだい？」  
「私の耳にひょっとしてほくろがある？」  
「ほくろ？」と男は言った。「ひょっとしてそれは、右の耳の中にある品のないみっつのほくろのことかな？」  
彼女は目を閉じた。つぶいているのだ。

The man was hugging her body.  
Her throat had dried up. The man was looking at her as he sweetly smiled.  
“What’s the matter? Did you have a bad dream?”  
She raised her body, and looked at her surroundings. The two of them were sleeping in the bed of a lakeside hotel. She shook her head.  
“Did...I scream?”  
“A lot.” He laughed and said, “It was one loud shriek. I wonder if the people in the hotel heard it. I hope they didn’t think it was a murder.”  
“Sorry.” She said.  
“It’s ok. Don’t worry.” The man said. “Was it a bad dream?”  
“It was a nightmare, terrifying to the point I can’t even imagine it.”  
“Can you tell me?”  
“I don’t wanna talk.” She said.  
“It’s better to talk. If you talk to someone, it’ll be like the bad juju will disappear.”  
“It’s alright. I don’t want to talk now.”  
The two were quiet for a while. She was held by the man’s naked chest. A frog’s croaking was heard in the distance. The man’s chest beat comfortably again and again.  
“Hey.” The woman was suddenly hit by an idea and said,  
“There’s something I wanna know.”  
“Sure thing, what is it?”  
“By any chance, do I have moles in my ears?”  
“Moles?” the man said. “Are you talking about the three vulgar beauty marks on your right ear?”  
She closed her eyes. It wasn’t over.



## CLOSING ESSAY

### *Writing as the Final Translation of Language Across Aspects of Communication*

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's 1985 essay "The Language of African Literature" and Chinua Achebe's 1965 essay "English And the African Writer" offer diverging answers to the "question of language" (Achebe, 342) as it pertains to African Literature. This divergence can only be understood prior to understanding the commonality the divergence is born from, which raises the question: what is the role of writing as imparted communication? Thiong'o considers writing as a means to "ensure unity" (127) for the nation, while Achebe considers writing to be an "offering" (348) of the writer "coming out of Africa" (347). When these two understandings of writing are taken together, their disagreements provide contour for a greater characterizing of writing as communication. In order to evidence writing's importance to the nation Thiong'o outlines a theory of "language as communication" (116), which consists of "three aspects" (116) that language is translated across as communication evolves. Walter J. Ong 1975 essay "The Writer's Audience Is Always Fiction," while not concerned with African Literature, is from this distance able to otherwise aid mediation between Thiong'o

and Achebe by examining closely the difference between speech and writing—two of Thiong'o's aspects. This examination, with its isolation from the particular nuances of African literature, is able to provide an objective lexicon which refines means and effects of translation across the three aspects of language as communication. With this established theory and lexicon, Achebe's inverse understanding of writing is able to complement the definition Thiong'o's theory has provided for writing as the final aspect of language as communication. By assuming Thiong'o's three aspects of language as communication as truth, and closely examining the means and effects of the translation across these three aspects, it can be understood what role writing occupies when imparted as communication.

Thiong'o's first aspect of language as communication is marked by a term borrowed from Karl Marx: "the language of real life" (Thiong'o, 116), which is reference to communication that is "specifically human" (116). For Thiong'o, the language of real life is the "origin" (116) of language, concurrent with "human community" (116) as a "community of cooperation in production" (116). Thiong'o traces the "development" (116) of language to production as: "production is cooperation, is communication, is language, is expression of a relation between human beings" (116), effectively defining the language of real life as an act of relation, or, an immersion in the human community language has its origins in. Therefore, the communication brought forth by the language of real life "mediates between human beings and nature" (116), as human beings are in relation when communicating with the language of real life and do not require intermediation. However, the relationship to the human community is altered in the translation of the language of real life into the second aspect of language as communication: "verbal signpost" (116), or, "speech" (116). Thiong'o recognizes

speech as a means to “reflect and aid... the relations established between human beings”(116), translating communication from an immersion in human community into a tool which can “mediate between”(116) human community. This alteration of the communication brought forth by language as it is translated across aspects of language as communication is evidence of a growing separation of language from the human community it has its origins in as it is translated away from the language of real life. This separation is stretched to its furthest within the final translation of language of communication to “the written signs”(116). Walter J. Ong contributes substantial discourse on the increasing isolation of language from human community as it applies to speech and writing in his 1975 essay, “The Writer’s Audience Is Always Fiction.” While the essay has as its primary subject the differences only of the final two aspects or elements of Thiong’o’s language as communication, “oral and written verbalization”(9, Ong), the concept of “actuality”(10, Ong) is introduced by Ong and can be read in adjacency with Thiong’o’s language of real life. Actuality is most closely defined by Ong as, “the total situation”(10) and “relation to man’s body and to its interaction with its surroundings”(10), the necessary relation to uncover, actuality is parallel to the act of immersion in the human community at the origin of language which constitutes the language of real life. Actuality should then be understood as the realm in which this immersion is possible. Further adjacency can be drawn with examination of the barrier Ong imposes between actuality and oral and written verbalization. This barrier is metonymized by Ong with the employment of “masks”(20, Ong), which are representative of the “persona”(20, Ong) or “justification to narrative”(20, Ong) that veils “every-one who uses language”(20) from actuality. The word use here implies that language is made a tool, such as that Thiong’o

proposed speech is made in order to mediate between human beings. The further definition Ong’s actuality provides to Thiong’o’s language of real life proves translation across the aspects or elements of language as communication alters the nature of communication, as the immersive prerequisite of language is sacrificed in translation from the language of real life, and in turn communication is exceedingly more able to be imparted with origins in the individual.

Ong’s employment of masks is an ideal metonymy of the separation between the language of real life and Thiong’o’s preceding two aspects or elements of language as communication, because it inverts the capabilities and incapacities of language in accordance with the translation across aspects or elements of language as communication. While the language of real life is present in actuality, it is masked from a vastness awarded to speech and writing which Thiong’o recognizes as “the universality of language”(118), which are inadvertently veiled from actuality. Within Thiong’o’s theory, communication and culture are “products of each other”(Thiong’o, 118) as culture is described as a “gradual accumulation of values”(117), and communication as “the basis and process”(117) of this “evolving culture”(117). Culture, like communication, has “three important aspects” (117): one, culture is a “reflection” (117) and “product”(117) of both “history” and “human community” (117); two, culture is an “image forming agent”(117) by which “our whole conceptions of ourselves as people, both individual and collective is based on” (117) and “therefore mediates” (117) between the self, others, and nature; and third, by means of “spoken and written language” (117) “mutual comprehension”(118) becomes possible, enabling culture to “impart images of the world (and reality)” (117) – this is the universality of language and can be understood as the antithesis of actuality. These are then the two

poles which language as communication operates between.

The employment of masks by Ong between the first and the final two aspects of language as communication establishes a common grounding for speech and writing that Ong moves forth from to investigate the differences between these two aspects or elements. Ong is able to measure the separation between speech and writing by considering the reception of the communication imparted to an “audience”(9): a term which embodies Thiong’o’s universality of language as in order for language as communication to be received through speech or writing there must be mutual comprehension of language, this is the basis of contact of the communicator to actuality. Ong’s comparison of the relationship of the speaker versus the writer to this audience is then effectively an examination of the growing separation between imparted communication and actuality as it is translated across aspects or elements of language as communication. In order to impart spoken communication, the communicator and the “one or ones whom”(10) communication is imparted to must be “simply present”(10) so relation can be achieved “existentially”(10). The necessity of presence in order to communicate with speech is equivalent to the necessity of immersion necessary for communication by language of real life; these are the bases of contact speech and the language of real life have to actuality. Speech is positioned in the middle of the two poles which language as communication operates between and therefore can function within the universality of language while still having “within it a momentum that works for the removal of masks”(20) as it has “meaning established”(10) in “circumambient actuality”(10). Writing however, “comes provided with no such present circumambient actuality”(10). For the writer, the audience is simply “further away, in time or space or both”(10) and therefore communication must be a

“transcription”(12) or “imagined”(12) “oral narrative”(12) forcing the writer is to “fictionalize”(12) an audience to which they may impart communication. Fictionalizing is the contact the writer has to actuality, this distinguishes writing from the language of real life and speech as this contact is “not two-way”(16). Writing is the pole opposite to the language of real life; and from this position can “never bring us beneath to actuality”(20), and inversely is always operating within the universality of language.

In the “English And the African Writer,” Achebe’s understanding of writings role as imparted communication aligns with Thiong’o’s proposal of it as a means to enact universality of language, as Achebe believes writing reaches its full potential when it has the largest “potential audience”(343). This is revealed in Achebe’s ultimate argument within the essay for an understanding of African Literature as a “national literature”(343), as opposed to an “ethnic literature”(343), because a national literature is not limited in reception to “one ethnic group within the nation”(343), but has a potential audience “throughout its territory”(343); Achebe favors national literature as it is “more profitable”(344). The emphasis on quantity of reception versus on the community which is receiving the communication, is evidence that Achebe believes writing should be considered entirely as a means of enacting the universality of language, and in turn, should make no attempt to uncover actuality. An assumption which can be taken as truth as this essay has already established that writing will never bring us beneath to actuality, and the language of real life – in equal yet inverted inhibition – will never function within the universality of language. These are the poles which language as communication is translated across, and translation across the aspects of language as communication is the only means to adjust these abilities of communication. Achebe’s understanding of writing’s role



avoids longing for actuality, and instead calls for writing that can “carry the weight”(347) of “experience”(347); experience can be understood as the two-way means of contact speech and the language of real life have actuality, compared to carry(ing), which is not two-way and therefore how writing can interact with actuality. Writing as carrying the experience of actuality is then how writing can impart an “offering”(348) from the human community which language has its origins in beyond actuality. Writing is then a proliferation of this human community and the conditions of actuality which have informed written communication.

In summary, as language as communication is translated from the first aspect, the language of real life, into the preceding two aspects there is a growing separation of imparted communication from the human community language has its origins in. Ong’s actuality is the realm in which relation to this human community is possible, and as language as communication is translated across aspects imparted communication is exceedingly less able to uncover actuality and invertedly, excitedly more able to impart culture by enacting the universality of language. Actuality and the universality of language are then the poles which language as communication functions between: with the language of real life confined to actuality, speech having a momentum that allows for communication to traverse a range between these two poles, and writing confined to operate always within the universality of language. Writing therefore, can never reach its fullest potential when longing for actuality, it instead should be understood as an offering imparted from actuality and the human community that composes it. When understood in this role, written communication is able to proliferate the human community at the origin of language by carrying information from this community forth. The role

that writing occupies as the final translation of language as communication is one which is able to free language from the confines of its community by translating the intimate meaning of its antecedents into an imparting of communication that then has unlimited potential for reception.

Grace Biggs

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