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FROM SPEAKING IN SONG (HEARING AND FORGETTING)

TRANSLATED BY DAN BELLM
I gather that in certain lands (the ones that can be spied from the sea) it’s considered a useless fruit, made to be thrown to the compost, too little flesh, too large a pit, rachitic fruity thing you’d only feed an animal. But a voice on the breeze answers, don’t say that: if you spy such a delicate thing, the kind of aroma you could bite into that lasts only a moment, and if you dawdle and hesitate, the birds will win and get there first, and carpet the ground with the seeds, and that’s why they sing so divinely, a pleasure if you’ve never thought in such circumlocution. The ones, anyway, that have the color of a flower. Oval color, hairless skin. Some would go so far as to call it astringent to the palate, meant only for the levantine shores of Spain, though the name of it came from Japan. It grows here. Here’s where I came to know it. I took off its fuzz for fear it would scratch the throats of fascinated children. I’ve always wanted to use it for something I don’t know how to make and never will, like marmalades or jellies, very simple but dangerous because all at once it might bring childhood back. I’d die of happiness. Once again I’d feel little creatures run through my veins, I’d see them again without fear. Which is to say:

In certain lands
that can be seen
by spyglass
from the sea,
it’s a fruit
without much of a use,
made to return to the compost,
with too little flesh
and too large a stone,
a body that offers itself
in reverential fear,
devotes itself in marriage
to the animals,
the fierce or
the merely hungry beasts.
They’re about to come
hailing down,
answers a voice
on the breeze:
if you mean delicate things,
the kind of aroma you could bite into
that lasts only a moment,
no bird could overtake you
or get there first,
or carpet the seedy earth
with little pits
like pupils of a lynx:
everything that glitters is gold.
Instead,
one breeze to the next,
there are oval colors
with hairless skin.
There will always be someone
to scorn
and denounce it, call it
the very definition
of astringent,
insult it in music,
lowlife loquat,
meant only for levantine lands,
strange essence from great distance.
Between bursts of laughter
we all live together in
the infancy of spit,
in the roofs of our mouths.
Not to jump for joy
but to die overwhelmed by it,
for one supreme moment
to see little liquid creatures
come running again,
this time without fear.
III. Avocado

So ordinary that it was only a matter of going out to pick what was hanging from the branches, first as a treat for the one at the head of the table and then for the others. So hard to tell whether it was fruit or vegetable. So unappreciated by the little ones, so heavenly for all the rest. So abundant that you and I used to use them to play-fight, and I nearly put your eye out with one that was not just green but unripe. As green as the envy of anyone who’d dare define the *Tristes Tropiques*. So unmovable from its yard. So gloomily present in that 1940s house, the one I always desired as something deserved, really mine since childhood. That made me stumble over my own identity. I began to harbor the suspicion that desires are only fulfilled by way of tortuous paths, unfathomed and mysterious. That place that the strongest earthquake in history failed even to jostle. The walls swayed as if made of chewing gum or rubber, and even if they were made of concrete nothing cracked, nothing split apart: nothing. A mermaid fell from on high into your hands and sang, that 19th of September. And so the floors of Italian marble, the leaded windows, the spiral stairs, the wrought iron, the gargoyles all shook. And the avocado tree, passing like water through my house and heart, like ivory statues, like pillars of silver and gold, flourishing out on the terrace where we’d go to take the air. Because the weather there was something all its own: noise did not exist; the clouds were white-haired old women of legend over a childhood sky; the water from the tap was blessed. Which is to say:

A mermaid fell
from on high
into your hands.

She sang
the hour,
the day,
the month,
the year.

Everything shook.
The windows shattered.
Bits of cloud
that turned to water
from Lourdes.
Kaleidoscope,

indifferent
in every sense of the word
to the sacred changing past,
the handicapped present,
the pliable so-called future
of many faces,
watered petals,
disjecta membra
(just now I was holding it
between my hands)

See up closer now,
sad binocular, monocle, eyepiece, loupe,
contact lens, hand mirror, framed or not,
window to strain or run visions
and hallucinations through
(I remember a letter)
(I remember insults written by hand)

facing dry remains

when I return for you,
dotting every i,
plotting the path

and what do I have left

tottering like an automaton I went,
no one blocking my way in,
no one looming like a watchman
of the catacombs,
pale grey the labyrinth
announced itself,
opening its cave mouth:
corridors upon corridors
lit up
at the touch of a fingertip or nail,
urging me not
to retreat one inch,
to become a fugitive
as quickly as I could.
The Soul to the Body

To L., beyond

When I managed to lower
the normal volume,
which was itself
too much,
a loudspeaker
turned the wrong way
panted out,
hanging from
a scaffold
by a thread:

“Continue on your way,
compañera,
owner
even of my gloating
on others’ misfortunes”—
and since this was not enough,
I raised your eyebrows
as you lay dying,
peeled back your eyes,
so beautiful,
their burst blood vessels
still brimming with my image,
and I insisted,

“We’ll meet again, beyond.”

And if that wasn’t enough,
I wanted to make
still one more request of you,
_postscriptum_,
one more last hope,
_timor mortis_

“Wait for me, don’t change,
I’ll be there soon,
I’ll reach you in one breath,
I swear.”

My throat closed up
when I closed yours.

*

Today I’ve let the wind stir
your colors one by one
in a circle over what remains,
making a pinwheel of your ashes,
scattering them with the greatest care
into the womb,
into the root
of the ravine.

“Don’t hem me in,”
I shouted at you once
between a rock and a hard place,
threatened
by your deep kindness,
by your gentleness as you drew near
when by rights you should have hurt me,
sunk fangs in me
for daring to interfere
in what was none of my affair,
to raise my voice to you,
to be who I am.

Maybe I’ll have to settle for
letting out a howl of supplication
if there is one
in the pit of my chest,
strange password.
And by imitating you,
make
the body
a soul again.
Return them
to each other.
RACHEL TZVIA BACK

IN THE QUIET HILLS:
LOST & FOUND LYRICS
Because the poem is lonely. 
Lonely and enroute, toward where 
the word pretends faithfulness, then 
forgets and would forgive 
what was never hers 
to forgive: 

    How Time hid 
in the orange groves, amid 
dark blossoming attar of 
an altered embrace, altars 
to the possible – Love 
enduring, it too 
enroute 

toward where, toward 
whom in the heart’s ever expanding 
Absent –
There began the search for 
something  

some things 
in the quiet hills.
**Bird / First Word**

Mouth of sun and stone, lithic and latticed.
Waters unremembered. Driest dust
far beyond sight and sound.
The birds of any song
stayed hidden *in the nests of her hair, in the parched*
hollows as unhallowed to walk I walked
into the hills, looking for the nothing
that is there. And appeared
as though summoned
the solitary silver-winged one, always sudden
to the grief-stunned, she who in flight
slices through clearest skies, to rattle
then unravel in a slight instance all
its quiet lies.
Day

Day that began would always begin with night.
Dusk unto dusk, ever the whole, first three stars
could tell. This first abiding form.
As in Eden
before Eden was formed –
that Dusk, into dark unbordered air
as with intimate infinite care
the spirit first moved over the face
of the Sleeping the quietly
Breathing his infant self and space wholly
undivided. Close by you watch, to measure
each miraculous breath, remnant of the
world before first light: just Dusk
unto Dusk.
Stars

That were jewels in the sky’s blackstone mansion.  
Small temples for the unforgotten.  
Sanctuaries for lost Tidings,  
sent with this plea:  

\[ \text{Give news of me} \]

\[ \text{to she whom I love who} \]

\[ \text{loves me} \]

\[ \text{like no other} \quad \text{Tell her} \]

I am here

Bound by earth thicket, beside  
the Well. I keep watch in the dark

for Dawn’s slender orange skirt, gentle silk  
on more slender self, there where she waited, under  
the gold-domed ceiling, at the top of the glittering stairs.
The Well

What the leaves believed falling
into the Well’s stone-circled depth, what could I know
of that. There was the shimmering light from spiraling
previously unnoticed heights, then

shadows through outstretched boughs, as though
fleeting embrace at now demarcated edge –
and untethered Golden threads
radiant then suddenly gone. In the watery darkness.

It was easy to despair, there were so many tears.

But what if after, when wooden planks were laid
like splintered lids on weary and salt-rimmed
eye, the dark tunnel opened
to expansive caverns and caves
aglow in the Moon’s water-spoken light.
There

At landscape’s edge, where half-circle at horizon
carves a mute path rising through nettles in late
summer’s brittle and silent heat –

There

is where I can see us, there where
we aren’t
climbing to the hilltop.

I watch from my window as we move
past the stone oak, our soft-muscled backs

Side by side in bright
colored t-shirts, yours purple, mine green,
almost touching, there where we are
not I see us ascending – silently
in the distance.
Rain

Then when the rain finally came
we stood at the open doorway and listened.

It was the sound of many
suddenly leaving everything behind, as from
the ancient always, again in flight.

The flow was illusion, each singular met
the parched, the summer-ravaged ground,
and earth was the swollen sound
of stirring toward safety sister home

of the solitary, the family, the still-dreaming
child – she who could ask
in the night: But what does the water want?
and hear the fragrant all
fluid air answer:

To fall, and to fall – unafraid.
NOTES


Bird / First Word: “the nests of her hair” is from Tuvia Ruebner’s “Awakening”: “and the birds / in the hidden nests / of your hair.” In In the Illuminated Dark: Selected Poems of Tuvia Ruebner (HUC and University of Pittsburgh Presses, 2014), p. 55.

For “the nothing / that is there,” see Wallace Stevens’ “The Snow Man,” particularly its final stanza: “For the listener, who listens in the snow, / And, nothing himself, be holds / Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.” Harmonium, 1923 (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), p. 11.

Day: For “the spirit moved over the face…” see Genesis 1:2: “And the spirit of God moved over the face of the waters.” The Jewish day begins at sundown.

MICHÈLE MÉTAIL

FROM EARTH’S HORIZONS

TRANSLATED BY MARCELLA DURAND
An observer limits her point of view to the line
OF A FOLD BORN FROM TORSIONS OF A GEOLOGICAL AGE TOO ANCIENT TO RESIST THE TRANSITIVE EARTHQUAKES CAUSING PLATES TO TREMBLE UNTIL INVASIVE UPLIFTS RESIST PRESSURES FROM A TERRAIN VERY TERRESTRIAL OF CRUST WHOSE SMOOTH BENDING STRETCH FORCES THE DOME OF THE BOW INTO AN INFLECTION AND GLACIALLY SUPERPOSES THE MOTIONS OF ARCHING AS THE REVERSE STRATIFICATION MOVEMENTS OF INTERLACING ELEMENTS BIND THE INCONSTANT AGGLUTINATES INTO DISCORDANT DEPOSITS UNDER LATERAL PRESSURE IN THE TORMENTED ZONE OF STRIATIONS IN WEIGHTY LAYERS OF REPLICAS AND FLOOD WAVE-CUT PLATFORMS THAT ACCENTUATE THE FLEXURE WITHOUT BREAKING ITS LAYERS CONSOLIDATED AT THE BASE BY A PROFUSION OF INVISIBLE ORGANICS THAT INSUBSTANTIAL AND TRANSITIVE PROJECTIONS OF TURBULENCES CONCENTRATE IN SOMBRE FRAGMENTS THAT DETACH UPON CONTACT WITH THE CRYSTALLIZATIONS OF THE DIVIDED GLOBE THAT THE SLOW START DISMANTLED CAUSING SUFFERING THROUGH FAST TRANSLATION AFTER TEMPORARY FLUCTUATIONS AFFECTED BY UNPREDICTABLE DEFORMATIONS WHOSE CRASHINGS CEASE JUST WHEN THE PEACEFUL SIMULACRUM OF A REMISSION COMMENCES NOT LIKE YESTERDAY WHEN EQUILIBRIUMS RUPTURED AT THE ABANDONED SPACE IN A DARK FRACTURE OF ITS PLINTH
AND THUS COMMENCES THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A RELIEF
MODELLED AT THE WILLS OF CONTRASTS FOLLOWING THE
MONOTONOUS CYCLE OF PROFOUND EROSION UNDER DENSE
ACTION OF FRAGMENTING PROCESSES ALTERING WITHOUT
SHATTERING THE WEAK FORMS BLUNTED BY THE ATTACKS
OF TORRENTS IN WHICH EFFLUENT REDISTRIBUTES NUDE
CRACKED SLOPES THAT DISPERSE UNTIL AN UNDERLYING
MATRIX OF RARE INTRUSIONS DETACHES ITSELF FROM A
DEPOSIT AND IS LEVELLED WHILE SMOOTHING THE ROUGH
SURFACE OF A SEDIMENTARY STREAM THAT ACCUMULATED
ON TOP OF THE PROVISIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF A LAYER
OVER WHICH A NEW PILE IS HOLLOWED BY A ROCK FALL
THAT THE TUMBLE NO LONGER HOLDS SOLID AND SHIFTS
IN ENORMOUS OVERTHRUSTS ABANDONING THE RESIDUALS
AS LONG THREADS THAT DETACH AT THE SAME LEVEL AS
TRUNCATIONS OF WHICH AN IRREVERSIBLE DEGRADATION
EFFECTED BY TOPOGRAPHICAL CONFIGURATIONS ALREADY
EXCAVATING AN UNLEVELING THAT AN UNCEASING BASIN
WORKED OVER BY CORROSIVE ACID ERASES IN FAVOR OF
A PERISHABLE LAPSE WHICH GUARANTEES IN DISTENDED
INTERVALS A HYPOTHESIZED DURATION WHICH MOBILITY
REFLECTS IN AN UNCERTAIN TIME FRAME THAT RETURNS
AN ILLUSIONARY EVENTUALITY OF A DEFINITIVE STATE
ALTHOUGH THE MASSIF CONTINUALLY RECOILS FROM THE
PRIMITIVE EXTENSIONS THAT CULMINATE ON IDENTICAL SIDES OF AMPLE SUMMIT RIDGES WITH ROUND OUTLINES INCLINED NORTH TOWARD DEPRESSED AREAS OF ERRATIC CONVERGENCES OF SCREE THAT MOUNTAINSIDES ABANDON TO THE PROFIT OF CRESTS MORE ACCIDENTAL IN THEIR CREATION AS THEY DIVIDE EXUBERANT WATERS FRAYING OVER TERRACED FOOTHILLS WHERE UNDULATING HEIGHTS CLUMSILY DRAW TRAILS THAT DISAPPEAR ON THE FLANK OF THE VALLEY’S OPAQUE AND MYSTERIOUS NORTH SIDE COVERED BY THE EYRIE OF FIERCE VEGETATION ROOTED IN THE STONY ARIDITY OF INCANDESCENT SCRUB WHICH SUDDENLY IGNITES THE FIREBREAK WHEN A DESSICATED FOOTPATH DEFEATED BY ITS OWN MEANDERING TURNS IN THE DIRECTION OF RAVINES CRISSCROSSED BY FURROWS THAT EXTEND PRECIPITOUS GRADIENTS DOWNWARD ALONG THE SURFACES OF OCHRE-COLORED WALLS WITHOUT SOIL TO COVER AND CONCEAL THE ROCKSTREWN DEBRIS WHICH DOMINATES THE RAWBONED PHYSIOGNOMIES REMINISCENT OF DESERTS OF WHICH EVERY EXTREMITY POSTULATES A HORIZON BECAUSE AT THAT DISTANCE A MIRAGE OF THE LANDSCAPE WILL NOT CONTINUE BEYOND THE GRADUALLY INCREASING FUZZINESS OF THE FROZEN ELEVATIONS AT THE FLOWER OF THE BORDER ON THE TRENCH’S EDGE OF EPHEMERALS TORMENTED BY THE ABRUPT WHERE OBLIQUE
STRIATIONS OF EXTRAORDINARILY FINE BEVELLING ARE
TWISTED AFTER THEY PLUNGE INTO THE WHITE OF WORN
LIMESTONE AND WHICH THEN DISINTEGRATE INTO LEVEL
GROUND WHERE THE SCATHING SCAR INITIATES A NOTCH
AT THE FOOT OF THE CONGLOMERATE WHICH APPEARS ON
THE HORIZON OVERLOOKING THE RUPTURES OF VERTICAL
AND OPEN LIPS WHERE ATMOSPHERES RUSH WITH SHOVES
REPEATEDLY VIVACIOUSLY INTENSIFYING INDENTATIONS
OF VALLEYS OFTEN INVADED EPISODICALLY DURING THE
ASCENT BY INNER SEAS TO THE GAPING DOMAIN OF THE
TEAR THAT WIDENED EXISTING CHANNELS THAT OXIDIZE
CURIOUSLY REDDISH COULEES FOR Merging WITHIN THE
INTERSTICES OF THE PRECIOUS RUST ADDING COLOR TO
THE WESTERN HORIZON THAT SUDDENLY INTENSIFIES IN
EXTREMELY INTRICATE CONFINES OF SMALL AND STEEP-
WALLED INLETS SO JAGGED THAT EACH OF THEIR ROCKY
BRAIDS STICKS UP ABOVE THE TURBID WATER WHICH IN
OVERFLOWING SUCCESSION SNEAKILY INFILTRATES TINY
NETWORKS OF FISSURES AND AT THE SAME TIME DROWNS
EACH TRACE OF FOUNDATIONAL ROCK WITH IMPRESSIONS
OF FOSSILS STRANDED BY THE MAGMA INTRUSION WHILE
NARROW CREEKS PERPETUATE A CONTEMPLATION OF ORES
AND ALREADY MILLENIAL FACE ARCHAIC TRANSGRESSION
OF THESE ENCLOSED TERRITORIES PETRIFIED BY DENSE
HAZARDS OF INDENTATIONS SWALLOWED BY WATER CLOSE TO AN EMERGENT LAND MASS WHERE AN OBTRUSIVE CORD TIES ITSELF INTO LESIONS WROUGHT BY OBSTACLES OF BLEACHED DROSS ON THE BUTTE OF THE STARK COASTAL DECOUPAGE CUT BY THE MATTER OF OTHER CONCRETIONS OF MULTIPLE MINERALS SWEPT AWAY LITTLE BY LITTLE BY VORTEXES ALONG AN ERODING SHORE WITH A POROUS AND TROUBLED CRUST DISPERSED BY AIR WELL AND FAR AWAY WITH ITS WEIGHT SUPPLEMENTED BY A LABORIOUS GRAVITY OF RUSHING WAVES THAT FOLLOW A POTENTIAL TRAJECTORY OF SUBSTANTIAL SHOALS ASCENDING ALONG A PRECIPITOUS ESCARPMENT WHERE THE CONTINUITY OF INDECOMPOSABLE MATERIALS IS THUS DISTINGUISHABLE LIKE A SINGLE BODY THAT CAN NOT HINDER INCESSANT LIQUID IN SPITE OF THE MECHANICAL AND REPETITIVE UNDULATIONS WHOSE PROPAGATION IS REINFORCED BY A METEORIC INFLUENCE THAT PRECIPITATES AGAINST THE CLIFFS WITH THE SPEED OF FORTUITOUS CHRONOLOGIES PASSING WITHIN EXPANDING REFERENCES WITHOUT EVER MOLLIFYING EXCEPT WHEN THE EVAPORATION SATURATES THE HYDRATION OF FROTHY AND UNVARYING NEBULOSITY DURING ITS PROGRESSION OVER THE FORESHORE AT THE JUNCTION OF TRIPLE SPHERES EXHAUSTING THE SPRING
UNDER THE TERRAIN OF WAVES OF WASHED-OUT ABYSSES INSCRIBED BY SEAS SURROUNDING A FALLOW CONTINENT WHOSE ENVENOPING SHORES DISINTEGRATE UNTIL SMALL STATIONARY OBJECTS RELEASE UNEXPLORABLE CADENCED AND CONCENTRIC VIBRATIONS THAT ARE NEITHER ALIVE NOR PLACATED AND THAT RETURN A UNIQUE SONAR ECHO OF HYPOTHETICAL DENSITIES SOLELY VERIFIABLE THRU EXPERIMENTAL CONJECTURES AS EVIDENCED BY EXPANSE OF LAND WHICH MANIFESTED EARLY OVER AN ENGULFING MANTLE AT THE TURNING POINT OF COAGULATING TO AN EQUILIBRIUM OF REACTIVATED ALTERNATIVES REJECTED AT PROFOUND DEPTHS AND REMODELED WITH THE PROPER INVERSION OF MECHANISMS FROM AN ANTERIOR TIME OF A GASH WHICH EXUDING AND ENDURES VOLCANIC MAGMAS WHEN THE DORSAL IMMERSION ATTACK ON THE SECTIONS THAT ARE ACTIVE TEARS AT THE BORDERS OF WIDENING GRAVES THAT REFORM THEMSELVES AS ABYSSES PUSHING UP TO THE SUBSOIL VIA THE NODAL PROPAGATED UNDER AN IMPETUS OF ACOUSTICS AND COMPLICATED REMANENT MAGNETIZATION THAT PERMITS DISCOVERING AN ISLAND HOVERING LIKE A SHIPWRECK PRIED OUT OF THE EARTH SO THAT PROXIMITY’S BEACON IS TOUGH TO DETECT ON SUBMERGED SHOALS WHICH DURING THE NIGHT MASK THE ANXIETY OF A WORLD HELD BETWEEN GROUND AND WATER
RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS
FROM NUMBERS
The Fourth Room

"Color itself is a degree of darkness"
   and numbers a degree of light.

the first
   is Goethe

the second
   is who we are,

thus--us.
   Our little scope so hard to be.

Our galaxy is not decoded
   mystery. It riddles us.

And our universe
   will eventually run out

on us; we will
   have run down first.

Why does that leave us
   Inconsolable?

Numbers and colors will abide
   and energy to fuel and charge

another startling slide
   or zoom or boom,

another galaxy beyond
   our farther side. Another count.

And numbers will remain.
   Or so we postulate

bravely counting up
   and counting down
   and coloring in.
Proverbs useful for everyday life.

1. Nothing takes only five minutes.
2. Scavenge the exact Edge and but also remain Askew.
3. Study Sybjectivity.
4. Beauty and ugliness are temporary slides of position.
5. Cherish native plants.*

* From five odd trees, the only ones saved from the destruction, orchards with a lovely fruit have grown.
Where do I stand on depth

is a little hard to say. But on redundancy? What I just said.
The commutative

\[ + \]

\[ 3+4 \]
is the same
as \[ 4+3 \].
But not to me.

When I was around seven
(7½, or eight in actual fact),
no one could do anything
to convince me of that.

Those numbers
appeared extremely
different in those different
places, even their shapes were.

And the claim that together
they allegedly produced
the same total
just didn’t add up.

That, anyway, was my opinion,
which, despite little objects
rearranged on a tablecloth,
I held to at inordinate length.

 Doesn’t sequence
have some bearing on fact?
Doesn’t the order of elements
infect their being?

Of course now I acknowledge
that seven is right. But
how can adding or "times-ing"
be "reversible"
when actual time is not?

\[ + \]
\[ x \]
Yan Tan
Thethera Methera

fingerling hand
pentagrammic Pip

Yain Tain
mirror measure

silly methan
sillier pleasure

whither weather
Thethera being

one sheep leaping
cheesy era.

Ena mena
mona mite

Bas cal ora
(olive bite)

onesey twosey
selfie sluff

singlet zagging
ziggurat.

Piles ofnumeri
neated up

uncle uncial
angel pelf

eeno oino
crowning self.
Dark matter

Dark matter exhales this room
and forms another. "The atoms
do not have a place to rest."
We float among themselves, ourselves.
What we must breathe are digits but
past the edges of our hands
numbers begin.
These look like single flatness
but illuminate imponderable accounts
of what we're in:
analyze colors on surfaces,
reckon a large-ish zone incalculate,
granulate atomic textures.
And assign an almost
unhearable breath
to matter's darkness that
hovers "there," stolidly metamorphic,
pulsing sheerly invisible through time as
apparently timeless
during [our] everything and
alongside [our] nothing.
And the universe is built on a little shim of \( \pi \).
This endlessly incalculable makes a "perfect" circle.

The colors
create their own shadow, they
have dimension, they can wait.

Poetry, the opposite, half the opposite, the half-truth of the opposite
will ruin the clarity

already ruined

by ideologies of "the exact."

This was an experiment in opacity
teasing exactness with these endless little shims.

I open the dream.
ALEKSANDR BLOK

ON DEATH

TRANSLATED BY PETER FRANCE
More and more often I wander through the city. More and more often I meet death - and smile a philosophical smile. But what of that? It’s how I am. I like to know that death will come for me in his good time.

I was walking on the road beside the race-track. A golden light dreamed on the piles of gravel, beyond a thick-set hedge the hippodrome gleamed greenly in the sun. The stalks of corn and dandelions, swollen by the spring, dreamed in its warm caresses. In the distance the flat roof of the stand was bearing down on drones and flappers. Little coloured flags were scattered over the scene. And on the railings sat people who had stopped to gawp.

I walked along and listened to the horses galloping over the soft earth - the rapid beat of the hooves. Then... a shout: “He’s fallen! He’s fallen!”, the watchers on the railings shouting. I jumped up on a little stump and all at once I saw it all - jockeys in their bright shirts flashing toward the distant finishing post, and close to them a horse without a rider racing along, the stirrups flying wildly. And just behind the tender, curling foliage of birch trees, close beside me, lay a jockey, all yellow in the green of the spring corn; he lay there on his back, turning his face to the sky’s deep caressing blue as if he’d been lying there a hundred years at ease, his arms stretched wide, his legs bent up. People were already running to where he lay. Far off, sedately, with a flash of spokes, a carriage moved. The people rushed to him and lifted him.
And I could see a leg
helplessly yellow hanging there
in its tight breeches. On his shoulders
somehow his head was lolling down. The carriage
drove up to where he was. On the cushions
all tenderly and carefully they laid
the chicken-yellow jockey, and a man
scrambled up to the running board and froze there,
giving support to head and legs,
and the staid coachman turned the horses’ heads.
And once again the spokes were slowly turning,
the box, the axles and the wings all shining…

To have so good, so free a death...
All his life he had raced, with just one thought,
to be first past the post. And as they galloped,
his panting horse had lost its footing, he
had tried in vain to keep the saddle steady,
the useless stirrups gave beneath his feet,
and he went flying, jolted from its back…
His head struck backwards on the friendly earth
so full of spring, so much his native place,
and in that moment thoughts flashed through his brain,
only the thoughts he needed. They flashed through
and died. And then his eyes died too.
And dreamily his corpse stared heavenward.

So good, so free a death…

One day I was wandering on the river bank.
Workers were wheeling barrows from the barges
with logs and bricks and coal. The river
was bluer still against the foaming whiteness.
The shirts were flung wide open on the brown
of sunburnt bodies, and the men’s clear eyes,
 bright with the soul of free and open Russia,
shone sternly from their blackened faces.
And round about them bare-foot kids were playing,
mixing and stirring piles of yellow sand, 
and making off with bricks or blocks of wood 
or logs and planks. Then they would hide, and you 
could see the light reflected off their dirty heels, 
and mothers - sagging breasts concealed beneath 
their grubby dresses - waited for them, cursing, 
and boxed their ears and took away from them 
the logs, the bricks, the planks. And dragged it off 
into the distance, bent beneath the load. 
And back the children came, a merry gang, 
and once again they started on their games, 
one stealing bricks, another logs…

And suddenly I heard a splash, a shout: 
“He’s fallen! He’s fallen!” they shouted from the barge. 
A workman, letting go his barrow handle, 
was pointing with his hand towards the water, 
a crowd of bright shirts rushing to the place 
where in the grass, among the cobble stones 
right on the river bank, a bottle lay. 
One man carried a boat-hook.

Between the piles 
fixed in the water close by the embankment 
a man was rocking gently in the river, 
wearing just a shirt and ragged gaiters. 
Somebody grabbed him, another lent a hand. 
Together they dragged him up and laid him there, 
a long-limbed body stretched out on the bank, 
with river water pouring off him. 
Clashing his sword against the stones, a policeman 
bent down and laid his ear against the man’s 
damp chest, and listened carefully, no doubt 
to catch the heart-beat. People gathered round, 
and every new arrival thought to ask 
the same inevitable stupid questions: 
when had he fallen, how long was he floating 
there in the river, how much had he drunk?
Then everybody quietly moved off
and I went on my way, but listened
while one impassioned worker, who’d been drinking,
authoritatively held forth to his mates,
informing them that liquor is a killer.

I’ll keep on walking, while the sun stays out,
and while my head is thick with the fierce heat
and my thoughts flounder helplessly. O heart!
it’s you must be my guide, and with a smile
consider death. You also will grow tired,
too tired to bear the kind of merry life
that I am leading. People are not able
to bear the kind of love and hate
that fill my heart.

What I want, constantly,
is to look deep into the eyes of people
and to drink wine, and to kiss women’s lips
and fill the evenings with the rage of passion,
when days are stifling and you cannot dream.
And to sing songs! And listen to the wind!
LU XUN

“THE SHADOW’S FAREWELL”
“SNOW”
“WAKING”

TRANSLATED BY MATT TURNER
THE SHADOW’S FAREWELL

One who sleeps until who knows when will have a shadow that takes leave with these words:

“There is in heaven something that I dislike, so I don’t want to go. There is something in hell that I dislike, so I don’t want to go. There is in your future “golden” world something that I dislike, so I don’t want to go.

“Nevertheless, it’s you I dislike.

“Friend, I don’t want to follow you and I don’t want to stay here.

“I’m unwilling!

“Oh, alas, I’m unwilling - but I’d rather wander in nothingness.

“I’m only a shadow who will leave you and sink into darkness. And however the dark will swallow me, the light will still make me vanish.

“Although I dislike oscillating between light and shade, I’d rather sink into the dark.

“However, in the end I still oscillate between light and shade, and I don’t know whether it’s dusk or dawn. I tentatively raise my ash-black hand and pretend to drain a cup of wine, and when I lose track of time I travel alone.

“Oh, alas, if it’s dusk then the black night will naturally engulf me, and otherwise I’ll vanish in daylight like it’s dawn.

“Friend, the time’s close.

“I’ll turn to the darkness and wander in the nothingness.
“You still expect my largesse. What can I offer you? Ceaseless, it is still darkness and void and - stop. But I’d like only darkness, or to vanish into your daytime; I’d only like void that never seizes your heart.

“I’d like that, friend -

“I travel alone - not only without you, but in darkness without other shadows. Only myself submerged by darkness, that world wholly mine.”

September 24, 1924
SNOW

Rain in warm countries never changes into hard, bright, ice-cold snowflakes. To erudite people this is obvious, but does it, too, not also think this is unfortunate? The snow in Jiangnan can be extremely moist, and striking; it’s the message of the still-blooming youth, and it’s healthy, virgin skin. In the snowy wilds are blood-red mountain camellias, white plum-blossoms tinged with green, and the deep yellow bell-flowers of the immature plum. Under the snow are the cold, green weeds. There are no butterflies. Whether or not bees have come to mine the camellia flowers and plum-flowers for honey, I can’t remember. But it’s as if I can can see it, and it’s as if winter flowers bloom on the snowy wilds, and so many bees are busy flying, and I can hear them buzzing on.

Children breathe into their cold-reddened little hands, purple like ginger buds, and seven or eight of them come and mold a snow arhat. Because they don’t succeed, someone’s father comes and helps. The arhat is molded to be taller than the children, and although it’s a only small pile on a big pile that finally could be a gourd or an arhat, it’s a very pure white, very bright, and it uses its own moisture as a cement, and is illuminating. The children use longan seeds as eyes, and from somebody’s mother’s cosmetics case steal rouge to spread on, as lips. It has turned into a great arhat. And he with his shining eyes and red lips sits on the snowy ground.

On the second day some children call on him. Facing him they clap and nod their heads and laugh out. But, ultimately, he sits there alone. Nice days melt his skin, night freezes another layer on him, transforming him opaque like crystal looks. Clear days continue until he is unrecognizable, and the lips have also faded.

But the northern snowflakes that scatter last are always like powder, like sand, and they never adhere - they scatter on the house, on the ground or on the withered grass. The snow on the house quickly melts because of the warm home fires. The other snow, on nice days, when a gust suddenly comes and whips around; it’s illuminated in daylight, as if a haze concealing a flame, revolving and rising, filling the air with rotating, rising, flashing.

In the boundless, open wilds, under heaven’s bitter cold, the flashes that rotate and rise are the
ghost of the rain....

Yes, it is the lonely snow, the snuffed rain, the ghost of the rain.

January 18, 1925
Planes on a mission to drop bombs, like the start of class at school every morning, fly over Beijing. Everytime I hear the sound of their parts pound the air I repeatedly feel a light tension, as though witnessing a “death” raid. But at the same time intensely feeling the “birth” of existence.

Faintly heard one or two explosions, the buzz-cry as the planes slowly fly off. And maybe there have been casualties, although all under heaven appears more peaceful. Outside the window the white poplar’s tender leaves in the sun emit a dark gold light, and the flowering plum blooms more brilliantly than yesterday. Clear the newspapers scattered all over my bed, wipe off yesterday night’s pale motes on the desk, my small and square study today and still is what you’d call “windows bright with table clean.”

For some reason I start to edit all the manuscripts I’ve accumulated by young writers here; I’ll clean them all up. I work through them in chronological order. And the spirits of the young people that refuse to polish themselves up, stand up before my eyes in turn. They’re graceful, they’re sincere, — but they’re oh so worried, and moan, and are indignant, and finally are rough - as my lovely young people.

Spirits blown around like sand in the wind, roughened. Because this is the human spirit, I love it. I wish to kiss upon the roughness, its formlessness and colorlessness, its bloodiness. In wispy well-known gardens the weird flowers are in full-bloom. Beautiful quiet women are aloof and leisurely, and a crane cries, and dense white clouds arise. This nature charms the spirit, but then I remember I’m living in the world of men.

I suddenly remember an incident: two or three years ago I was in Beijing University’s staff room and saw a young person I didn’t know come in, who silently gave me a package of books, then left. When I opened it there was the journal Low Grass. What a silence, that speaks what I can understand! Oh, what a rich gift! It’s too bad that Low Grass is no longer published; it seems to have turned into The Sunken Bell. And The Sunken Bell is in the wind- and sand-caverns, deep in the human sea, dingling alone at the bottom.
After the wild thistle is nearly crushed to death, one small flower will still bloom: I remember how this once moved Tolstoy, and he consequently wrote a novel. But the plants in the dry desert stretch out their roots to draw from the deep springs to become a dense green forest - nature for nature’s growth, yet the tired, thirsty traveller thinks he’s arrived at a temporary resting place. This is the way to be thankful, but also can be sad.

The Sunken Bell’s “No Heading” — in place of an opening topic — says: “Some say: Our society is a desert. — If it were really a desert, then the wilderness should be silent, then the loneliness should give you a boundless feeling. But what is this chaos and this gloom, and these mutations?”

Yes, young people’s spirits stand up before me. They have already been roughened, or are about to be roughened, but I love those with the bloody, dull pains of the spirit, because they let me know I’m in the world of men, am living in the world of men.

While editing, the sun sets unexpectedly in the west, and the lamp light allows me to continue. All sorts of youth flash before my eyes; around me nothing but dusk. I’m exhausted. I hold a cigarette and quietly think nameless thoughts and close my eyes, have a long dream. Suddenly alert, around me is still all dusk. The smoke rises up through the still air like so many tiny summer clouds slowly forming into indeterminate images.

April 10, 1926
MOVEMENT ON THE HORIZON

The horsemen keep to the road, and in profile. One cannot tell any more how many. Against the night that blocks the way, between the river and the bridge, a weeping spring, a tree that follows you. You could watch the passing crowd and it wouldn't see you. It's a veritable army on the march, or else a dream, a background of a painting on a cloud. The child cries or sleeps. It watches or dreams. All these armies obstruct the sky. The earth shakes. The horses glide along the water; the cortège glides, too, in the water that washes away all these colors, all these tears.
Holes in the wall, holes in the chimney and in my pipe. In the corner, two walking-sticks fight in X formation. Who will pick them up? There’s no one at the table, no one on the bed; the armchairs are empty. Someone wants to get out. But I’m not the one who blew out the lamp, and those are not my footsteps coming down the stairs. What if there’s also a dead man in the house!

**The Glass Key**
THE MIRROR OF INK

The stars coming out of the hearth are more red. The head bows rather close to the flue that seems to be its neck, and those behind watch in the mirror. Mild evening air blows in and out of the bedroom. The country folk and their animals are gone. But the painted scene remains, and the meadow that recalls the summer when night never wanted to fall because no fires were lit. Isn’t the night the winter itself, floating over the chimney-tops?
ALL IS SLEEPING

The tree of the evening, the shade of the lamp, and the key of rest. Everything trembles when the door opens without awakening a sound. The white ray passes through the window and floods the table. A hand reaches through the shadow, the light, the paper on the table. It’s to pick up the lamp, the wide-spreading tree, the hot star escaping. One breath sweeps it all away, snuffs out the flame, and pushes back the ray of light. There’s nothing more to be seen but the dark night and the wall that holds up the house.
BRIAN LUCAS

“THE NIGHT OF WARM ARROWS”
“A SWAN IS A SORT OF HUMAN”
“MY HOME IS IN HONEY”
“GOD STRIPPED TO ITS FRAME”
“LOST LORE OF THAT”
The Night of Warm Arrows

The point is
to make the flight
worth the target

a couple of wings spread
and the lion enters the dead child

I threw candy
as the arrow whizzed by
the clownsuit spewing
artificial language
celebrating dismembered
angels falling
on the contour of life
the trajectory of a disabled star

Pumped full of promises
I limp to the border
certainties abolished
just a freefall into the mouth
of dire wolves
the map in own vomit
my closure versus
your explosion

Gone were the goners
corpse peddlers
in defiance
of sunny innards
eating my slice of eternity
in the Great Divide

Don’t say thank you
just reattach my spine
to the star I let your eagle
pry free
shield my penance
with gobs of human cells
stored in your umbilical-pouch
squeeze pumice from
reptilian brain
my pants aflame
& according to your radar
I’m in slow motion
A SWAN IS A SORT OF HUMAN

A swan is a sort of human
with plastic sword
its loose radar hones in
on drunken animal trace
or a sort of hex put on the skin
Those suns stunned into bursting
the monkey calls home
sinks its teeth into my face
multiplies beetles’ legs
by a gridded pattern of language
The simian skull disco mopped
with a wax
I later found on my ghat
surrounded by those
who placed evil spiders in my pie
another inadvertent fact
they hid in moist towelette
I have a familiar
a sort of human but with fins
teeming with symbiotic bacteria
all-ness in the details
a breeze crossed with rasa
a sac of genetic memory
wrapped in spun layers of teeth
I can’t live without
those cities of worm and gold
where two chromosomes
blow bubbles in ambergris baths
await the promised countdown
to a simpler form of life
when teeth were soggy nubs
and the swan a sort of human
but dumb in the feather
its silver freckles lining the crater
called home
My guise takes me to where the guide
was seen pummeling his torso
with stems of diseased bees
slipt into the dizzy good
seamless parlay in fever spume
befuddled skim over fate's loose bramble
the lilt in a swan voice
its man tongue torched
MY HOME IS IN HONEY

Spun lumen as each step
blackens the body
forces it to convulse at gate
my water breaks the smell like antler
I watch honey embalm
cough-up wildlife with colored grit in my hair
fizzled ship where I rinse-out baubles
with the dust of my growth
The way the lumen speaks to me
ashes filling me up
  my water broke and there you were
ugly as an apple
possessed by a singularity that might induce
nausea or fear
the palace gate a joke among the men
whose pimples form new constellations
they say my home is in honey in the cool of an evening
where gobs of crystal fight against
my blessed strobe
GOD STRIPPED TO ITS FRAME

I left my ectoplasm on the gears
of the body rolled to the gate
all soft legs wrapt
‘round your hide
flipping the star switch
I’m a man grown from data dust
in a multiplex on shellmound
I’ve been buried here before

I’m ready to endure this trip
but if you ask me to disrobe my purpose
I will crumble
sweat and overhaul
the worship machine
that breathes for me
cut into shapes
ignite human oblivion land grab
the everything-dribbles-phosphate command
a broken dendrite branch in the swill
I shake dirty flowers from my
LIGHT RAY
aided & abetted by creep control
LOST LORE OF THAT

Found in a semblance of hands
that once craved spires
taking in
    heated breath
birds gave out
in an organ lost at sea
    My hands that once craved boats
en route to a purple tree
pillar to netherland
filled with composite selves

And I wore this helmet of lost lore
possessed by vagrant incorporeal errors
    And I am the doctor
with hands in the spew
    these amniotic ablutions heard
unseen
other-sensed
I am radio distortion
a landscape peopled by whisper
    where the promise
of overtones calcify
as I listen to you
    listen to me
take dictation
of what I am now saying
in the curl of harmonic fissure
    through an air wave of hot spies
throwing voices into ear

I admit to being a glyph
in the embattled history
of dead blazes and ruin
    where the weight of the sun is a painted bird
beak filled with heads suspended in ice
expressions of false enchantment
    galactic surprise

I wear a wig so I can be myself
floating in a lake of wonder
    suspended time an aspect of sight
where I see things
but never believe them
    This unlimited paraphernalia
picking up frequencies
    through brittle satellite wars
where my money resembles Sumerian accident

I trade paper for pupae at liminal gate
sell tickets to view a sea of clothes
    torn during insurrection
We could lie on its shore
wrapped in wind-filled drones
occupy a space of pure information
destitute and adrift
filled with coarse innards and their demands

We were never able to acclimate
to outer limits as satanic mills abound
censure of all that resounds ceremoniously
in shared cave

Let’s not forget our captors:
those opposed to a broken hex of trees
frightened by tools
modeled on the memory of trees

Fire from previous millennium
pours into a vat that feeds each flicker
read to me as if earth-etched

Two-headed future
from where I return mislabeled
Reduced to a single molecule
I swam through crushed anagrams
my rumored tongue
in a wormhole of sand
The poet César Moro (1903-1956) left Lima, Peru in 1925 and settled in Paris where he befriended André Breton and joined the Surrealists. Moro was the only Latin American member of the original Surrealist group in Paris. Upon Moro’s return to Lima in the mid 1930s he befriended Emilio Adolfo Westphalen (1911-2001). In 1936 they collaborated on a pamphlet that polemicized against the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro. In 1939 they edited the only issue of the literary journal *El uso de la palabra*. Moro moved to Mexico in the 1938 and Westphalen decided to stop publishing poetry.

I first read Moro and Westphalen while researching the Venezuelan poet Juan Sánchez Peláez (1922-2003). Sánchez Peláez was influenced by their publications from the 1930s, which he first encountered while studying in Chile where he was associated with the Mandrágora group of surrealist poets.

The Spanish novelist Enrique Vila-Matas includes Westphalen in his novel *Bartleby & Co.* as an example of a writer who chose to abandon poetry. Westphalen did however return to poetry again in 1980.

“The Lima poet Emilio Adolfo Westphalen, born in 1911, developed Peruvian poetry by brilliantly combining it with the Spanish tradition and creating hermetic poetry in two books which, published in 1933 and 1935, stunned their readers: *Las ínsulas extrañas* and *Abolición de la muerte*.

Following his initial onslaught, he remained in absolute poetic silence for forty-five years. […]

Throughout these forty-five years of silence, everyone would ask him why he stopped writing: they would ask him this on the rare occasions Westphalen would let himself be seen, though he never let himself be seen completely, since in public he would always cover his face with his left hand, a nervous hand with long fingers like a pianist’s, as if it hurt him to be seen in the land of the living.”

CÉSAR MORO

“CLIPPED POEM”
“WESTPHALEN”
“ANDRÉ BRETON”
“THE LIGHT STEP OF THE NOCTURNAL DEMON”
“FLEETING STAR”
“JOURNEY TOWARD NIGHT”
“ALPHABET OF ATTITUDES”

TRANSLATED BY GUILLERMO PARRA
CLIPPED POEM

For the first time
thirteen fugitives
remember
HEROINES
tree leaves
ancient women

THE UNKNOWN AIRMEN
completely inoffensive
crackling

From 61 to 65 years old
I will not die of pneumonia

Crested tulips
some crimpers to curl
A REVOLVER
Apollo and a fig tree
a venomous flower
an olive tree

A CLOCK
a hill full of pockets
a cup
a laurel
a chord
a parrot
one on top
four slight wheels

A COW
the golden West

A leather overcoat
poplar and beech trees
a rag soaked in alcohol
a warrior without a sword
an elephant
three common dancers
a willow tree
a hand in the shade
a Bulgarian photograph
a bucket of water
a doble prism of spar from Iceland
a wagon
the exact reproduction of a drawing as small as we’d like
a PROBABLE photograph
a small room
a laiza of selenium
in a basket
TWO RINGS
a cancer of the mouth
accompanied by pure and delicious victuals
a flask with flint spouts
a young lady with a revolver
dough that’s too dry
semi-crystallized dry dough
dough that’s too big
AND THE STARS OF OPERA UNANIMOMOUSLY
warm up
dreams
Like a watering hole for indelible beasts
Split by the lightning overflowing the water
Reflects the migration of earth birds
In the night of the salubrious earth

A front door closed over a barren field
Refuge of clandestine love
An equality of stone that closes under
The drop of water that rises from the earth

Over hundreds of decapitated heads
A naked woman like a lamp

Makes the eyes of the dead shine
Like fish of trails of argentiferous little fibers
Gold and steel know their destiny
Of rotten earth the pullulating jungle
Accompanies him and pours over the shoulders
Of ghosts familiar arborescent mantles
Cascades of blood and myriads of noses

10 of January of 1938
Like a piano of a horse's tail of a wake of stars
On the lugubrious firmament
Heavy with coagulated blood
Swirling rainbow clouds phalanxes and planets and myriads of birds
The indelible fire advances
The cypresses burn the tigers panthers and the noble animals become incandescent

The care of dawn has been abandoned
And night looms over the devastated earth

The district of treasures keeps his name forever

Mexico, April 1938
THE LIGHT STEP OF THE NOCTURNAL DEMON

In the great contact of oblivion
Certainly dead
Trying to steal reality from you
By the deafening rumor of the real
I lift a statue of such pure mud
Of clay of my blood
Of lucid shadow of intact hunger
Of interminable panting
And you rise like an unknown star
With your hair of black sparks
With your rabid and indomitable body
With your breath of wet stone
With your crystal head
With your ears of drowsiness
With your lantern lips
With your fern tongue
With your saliva of magnetic fluency
With your rhythm nostrils
With your fire tongue feet
With your legs of thousands of petrified tears
With your eyes of a nocturnal leap
With your tiger teeth
With your veins of violin arc
With your orchestra fingers
With your nails to open the heart of the world
And predict the loss of the world
In the heart of dawn
With your warm forest armpits
Under the rain of your blood
With your elastic lips of carnivorous plant
With your shadow that intercepts the noise
Nocturnal demon
This is how you rise forever
Stomping on the world that ignores you
And loves your name without knowing it
And moans after the smell of your step
Of fire of sulfur of air of tempest
Of intangible catastrophe that diminishes each day
That portion in which are hidden nefarious designs and the suspicion
    that twists the mouth of the tiger who spits in the mornings to
make the day
FLEETING STAR

Oh fate always bound
To the splashing to the usury of the wind
Nocturnal appearance of subdued glow
Winter passes the light
With free nails on a heart without armature
Sharpens its lioness claws

Beautiful night of ancient wounds
Rough wind tender darkness
Keep the moveable castle

May a star fall
Over the nacre blood
Over the alabaster breast
Over the lungs of snow
Under the feet of nocturnal fire

Oh free Night to you
Forever Oh word
JOURNEY TOWARD NIGHT

It is my ultimate residence, from whence nothing returns
Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita

Like a mother sustained by fluvial branches
Of fear and inceptive light
Like a skeletal horse
Radiating dusk beams
Behind the dense branching of trees and trees of anguish
The sun-filled path of ocean stars
The gleaming stock
Of data lost in the worthy night of the past
Like an eternal panting if you emerge into the night
As the wind settles wild boars go by
Hyenas sick of pillage
Split lengthwise, the spectacle displays
Bloody visages of lunar eclipse
The body in flames oscillates
Through time
Without changeable space
So the eternal is the unmovable
And all the rocks thrown
To the gales, to the four cardinal points
Return as solitary birds
Devouring lakes of ruined years
Unfathomable spider webs of collapsed and flammable time
Rusty cavities
In the pyramidal silence
Pale blinking splendor
To let me know I still live
Responding through each pore of my body
To the power of your name oh poetry

Lima, the Horrible, 24 of July or August of 1949
Is absence not, for whoever loves, the most efficacious, the most indestructible, the most faithful of presences?
MARCEL PROUST
(Les plaisirs et les jours)

DECEMBER, 1935:

A gypsy girl comes out of an old house, on Avenue Grau, through the open wicket in the big door, closed. The girl, barefoot, heads toward a straw hat, for a man, knocked over a few steps away, the top inverted, in front of the big door. The girl introduces her left foot in the hat. At that moment another girl comes along the street. The gypsy girl stretches her arms out to her and leans her left arm with familiarity on the girl’s shoulder. They remain like that, without speaking a word, for a moment. Then the girl who has arrived leaves smiling at the gypsy girl.

11th OF JANUARY OF 1936

When I proceed to open the door of the place called “Museum” there is a man dressed in a blue work blazer in the clock tower of the hospital. He stands out distinctly over the sphere, his arms in a cross, fixing the clock’s dials. Seconds later, when I open the door, he quickly turns his head: several crows fly in the field of the sphere.

214 ideographic signs
or 2419 or more
any story’s din
climbs the tree from the other side climbs
arrives from the far edge
cleaning the clock’s hours
the little instantaneous man.
JANUARY, 1953:

It’s unexplainable that man tries to fill his solitude with noise: radio, television, modern architecture are abject, abominable. Journalism was already enough as an efficient mechanism of cretinization.

While eternity is constituted by minimal vegetative variations and imperceptible atmospheric alterations shining under a forest of orange trees or cypresses.

The first unbearable revelation of eternal life shone in a leg.

I can speak about eternity better than the Pope.

Every life reaches a crossroads in which torment reigns like a monstrous pullulation: pharisaism, philistinism, the mistaken intended similar opinions, the most nefarious assent that frank opposition, hatred against myth, the abandonment of all ideals drown, mark, crush and debase.

That alternating of obsessive negative thinking with the obsessive pleasant memory is the torment of irrevocable lucidity.

Guilt has no exit, relief, stillness, save in the momentous loss of lucidity.

Man is alone with the sea amidst mankind.

Impotence of desire. While man does not realize his desire the world disappears as reality to transform itself in a nightmare from the cradle to the sepulcher.

Is there no rhythm that is not our own? Suddenly my veins branch out, grow and I live the world’s pulsing.

I dreamed a car was taking me toward eternity. I was able to wake up and I didn’t want to know the hour.

Scorpions guard the horrible subsoil of eternity.

I wake up in the middle of the night and wait for the discrete call. But it’s the wind and nothing else.
“I HAVE FOLLOWED YOU…”
“TRACKER OF THE CLOUDS…”
“THROUGH THE MINUTE PRAIRIE…”
“TOWROPE OF THE CLOUDS…”
“CÉSAR MORO”
“MAGIC WORLD”
“THE DREAM”
I HAVE FOLLOWED YOU LIKE THE DAYS PURSUE US
With the certainty of leaving them behind along the way
Of one day distributing their branches
On a sunny morning of open pores
Swinging from body to body
I have followed you like we sometimes lose our feet
So that a new dawn might light up our lips
And then nothing can be denied
And then everything can be a small world rolling down stairs
And then everything can be a flower bending into itself over blood
And the oars sinking further into the auras
To stop the day and not let it pass
I have followed you like the years are forgotten
When the shore changes its appearance with every gust of wind
And the sea rises higher than the horizon
So as to not let me pass
I have followed you by hiding behind forests and cities
Wearing the secret heart and the sure talisman
Marching over each night with reborn branches
Offering myself to every gust like the flower lays out on the wave
Or the hairs that soften their tides
Losing my eyelashes in the stealth of dawns
When the winds rise and the trees and towers bend
Falling from murmur to murmur
Like the day sustains our steps
To then get up with the shepherd’s staff
And follow the floods that always separate
The vine that’s about to fall on our shoulders
And they carry it like a reed dragged by the current
I have followed you through a succession of sunsets
Placed on the display counters of stores
I have followed you softening myself with death
So that you wouldn’t hear my steps
I have followed you erasing my own glance
And silencing myself like the river when it approaches the embrace
Or the moon placing its feet where there’s no answer
And I have kept quiet as if words couldn’t fill my life
And I will have nothing else to offer you
I have kept quiet because silence puts the lips closer
Because only silence knows how to detain death at the threshold
Because only silence knows how to give itself to death without reservation
And I follow you like that because I know just beyond you won’t pass
And in the rarefied sphere the bodies fall just the same
Because in me you’ll find the same faith
That makes the night tirelessly follow the day
Since eventually it will grab it and won’t release it from its teeth
Since eventually it will stretch it out
Like death stretches out life
I follow you like ghosts stop being such
With the relief of seeing you tower of sand
Sensible to the slightest breath or oscillation of the planets
But always on foot and never further
Than on the other side of the hand
TRACKER OF THE CLOUDS DRAGGED ALONG BY YOUR HAIR
In the lifted silence of two parallel seas
And each limbo forged with your new glances
And each hope free to stir
Marshes and brambles to find the pearls
Covered by seven admirable palms by lozenges
Something else to not call you risky among the fates
The fears gathered the hopes born
The smiles deployed the tassels unwrapped
The teeth flowered the tears tinkling
Amid a crackling of fire against music by a girl against dream
The squealing happiness of seeing you girl and girl
Crashing soft little plates like hands
Trumpets of listen to me because I don’t respond
Under the shadow of birds and golden skies
And tears grown from carrying in their globe
The amorous accords of inaudible joys
According to a growing rumor of waves of rags
Amid large petals more than human stature
And bees sipping from our lips
Like this so as to not understand a curtain between each kiss
The marbles for the doves of grace exhausted
A few cypresses somewhat destined for the other sky
Going around without exhaustion without dropping the glass
A spout fanned by brilliants
Some spinning tops scratched revealing the tides of their hearts
A silk threaded from the honey of your lips
A few birds losing themselves in your hair
Support for the cold your forehead complete crystal
And a cloud stretched out beside trembling silence
Cadence after cadence of eyelids closed after eyelids
In the balanced barques some solitary hands
The auras dispersed with breath from the rivers
And other liquid hands to find ourselves blindly
And something like heads rolling down stairs
And something like fruit rising from circle to circle
To the pleasures the rainbows the breezes trespassing our foreheads
Carefully giving up words and lifting rivers
There were so many nests of sweetness and silence between our mouths
Between our hands such toil to settle in one
The world looked better in your eyes
Bigger and heavier with lilies
Stretched out like a dream or a cloud
The oysters cling to the walls of your dream
The pearls falling from your hands like words
This is how I always see you abandoned on a laughing shore
Amid scarps bathed in our hesitant coins
More fragile girl more fragile than your portrait in the water
Or than you yourself soaring to the clouds
Or than you yourself stretched out in my eyes
The pearls of love counted by your hands were growing like words
O flowers of your laughing tree
O silence of your hands charged with a heavy world of lilies
THROUGH THE MINUTE PRAIRIE OF A VOICE FLOATING IN THE AIRS
With the easy weight of the planets worn by the flowers
Amid the ensigns of the days uprooted and wandering
On a succession of seas marvelously cultivated
With the song of the birds as bed and trench of the barques
And the tail of the peacock as nimbus of the smallest things
The transparent shells the porcelain seaweed
The lopped off fingers of children and the born thimbles
Under the crust of mushrooms in the mud flats
In the tangled hair of a girl in the milky way
In the heart itself of music stepping
With the sun against our chests deepening
Letting blood run like a good river
Because the one I receive and the one you carry are the same
And the same thickets resound in our screams
And the same doves rest on our eyes
And the same flutes traverse us to establish our domain
Turning the moons over villages
And the serpents over forests
Bringing the sky over our venture
Its foam splashing our beaches
The feverish trees continuing their life in our veins
The poplar groves leaning to the compass of our hearts
You as the lagoon and me as the eye
That one and the other interpenetrate each other
So the tree and the breeze so the dream and the world
Taking depth from the night and from the day extension
To what caves fleeing against so much splendor
Day that never moves sky that walks for us
Rivers that don’t know how to wound and barques that crowd our chests
The mouths float like zodiac signs
The arms cross like flowers on water
The foreheads follow the currents and the eyes separate
nothing
It is the flaming glory that rests in our bodies
Lifting over the atrocious battle of darkness and light
The ensign of the holy company and the still glances
It is glory fallen at our feet
It is triumph wounded like a subterranean twilight
Changing seasons in the core of the quicksilver
Like a rose drowned amid our arms
Or like the sea being born from your lips
TOWROPE OF THE CLOUDS DRAGGED FROM YOUR HAIR

In the lifted silence of two parallel seas
And each limbo forged with your new glances
And each hope free to stir
Marshes and brambles to find the pearls
Covered by seven admirable palms by lozenges
Something else to not call you risky among the fates
The fears gathered the hopes born
The smiles deployed the tassels unwrapped
The teeth flowered the tears tinkling
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The auras with river breath dispersed
And other liquid hands to find ourselves blindly
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Or than you yourself soaring to the clouds
Or than you yourself stretched out in my eyes
The pearls of love counted by your hands were growing like words
O flowers of your laughing tree
O silence of your hands charged with a heavy world of lilies
CÉSAR MORO

Through a field of breadcrumbs the little hand of a clock extends itself disproportionally
A pair of crab or serpent eyes alternately light up or turn off on it
Against the light emerges a smoke cloud of embroidered eyelashes
And disposed like a tower that simulates a woman who undresses
Other more familiar animals like the hippopotamus or the elephant
Find their path amid bone and meat
A web of medusa eyes impedes transit
Through the sand that extends like an abandoned hand
At each step an ivory ball says whether the air is green or black
If the eyes weigh the same on a scale crossed by hairs
And locked in an aquarium installed in the heights of a mountain
Sometimes stopping and sometimes tossing like a catapult
Pink or black or green cadavers of children at the eight extremes
Cadavers painted according to zebras or leopards
And that open up so beautifully like a box of trash when they fall
Spread out in the middle of a patio of pink marble
Attracts the scorpions and serpents of air
That buzz like a mill dedicated to love

On the sidelines a man of metal cries facing a wall
Only visible when each tear explodes
MAGIC WORLD

I must give you black and definitive news
All of you are dying
Corpses death with white eyes girls with red eyes
Girls growing younger mothers all my little loves
I was writing
I said little loves
I say I was writing a letter
A letter a dreadful letter
Another one will be written tomorrow
Tomorrow you will all be dead
The untouched letter the dreadful letter is also dead
I always write and I won’t forget your red eyes
Your immobile eyes your red eyes
This is all I can promise
When I went to see you I had a pencil and I wrote on your
   door
This is the house of the dying women
Women with immobile eyes girls with red eyes
My pencil was a midget and it wrote whatever I wanted
My midget pencil my dear pencil with white eyes
But once I called it the worst pencil I never had
It didn’t hear what I said it didn’t find out
It merely had white eyes
Then I kissed its white eyes and he became a she
And I married her because of her white eyes and we had
   many children
My children or her children
Each one has a newspaper to read
The newspapers of death that are dead
Except they don’t know how to read
They don't have eyes neither red nor immobile nor white
I'm always writing and I say all of you are dying
But she is uneasiness and doesn't have red eyes
Red eyes immobile eyes
Bah I don't love her
THE DREAM

The poetic seeds of the dream turned out to be, unlike the poor professors, the miserable realist critics tried to make us believe, a new unattainable paradise, a mirage, but instead noxious and active seeds, useful reagents to corrode despicable reality. The dream is not a refuge, it’s a weapon.

Liberty’s bad instincts dance their diabolical rounds. No more conformity, resignation, mediocrity! May the scoundrels, the exploiters, those who take advantage of others’ misery, and the cursed clergy, and the abominable religious spirit, and the Christian ghosts, and the myths of capital, and the bourgeois family, and the degrading homeland all drown in their black spittle.

Mankind’s liberty, in other words, the dream minted in reality, poetry speaking through everyone’s mouth and fulfilling itself, concrete and palpable, in the acts of everyone.
VIRGIL

FROM THE AENEID, BOOK VII

TRANSLATED BY DAVID HADBAWNİK
[Aeneas, having emerged from his visit with his father in the afterworld, leads his weary men to the shores of Italy at last.]

1. *ac formae magnorum ululare luporum*

And you, Aeneas’ nurse  
gave great fame to our shores  
in death the name  
    **HESPERIA**  
commemorates your bones

one last  
    last rite  
    pious Aeneas performs before  
leaving port. Smooth sailing.  
A friendly breeze, bright moon,  
sea gleaming fore and aft.

They scrape close to the shore of Circe  
the well-off daughter of the sun  
whose closed groves resound with ceaseless  
    song  
fragrant cedar burning in luxuriant halls  
    to sweeten the night  
as Circe passes, twitching  
her many webs.

What’s that?  
The wretched moans of a lion  
chafing at chains, roaring under  
    midnight’s yoke  
raging of boars
and caged bears
    look there!
wolf-shapes raising
    great heads to howl
all of them once men, now dosed
by cruel Circe to grow beastly
    feathers and fur and hides.

But the good guys of Troy
don't suffer such fate.
Neptune blows their sails full
    letting them breeze through
the boiling shallows until
    Dawn turns the sea red and light
rises to fill the sky.

Aeneas sees:  a huge wood
with a river (the Tiber)
    winding through, quietly gathering
steam to a mighty rapids throwing
gold spray from rich sand
    delighting the eye.
With a shit-eating grin he orders
the sails trimmed, strange plumes
and birdsong filling the air
as they pass silently
through the woods on the dark water.
Remind me, Erato!
What was the state of play
who were the kings, when that fleet
first hit the Ausonian shores?
Let me unfold the cause of
the first battle, goddess,
    whisper
into the ear of your bard
and I’ll spin
    awful war, battle arrays
    and brave kings rushing
    to death
    the Tyrrhenian bands and all
    Hesperia armed–
to me the greater tale
    is born, the greater
work I’ll now assay.

Old King Latinus held lands and cities
    in a long-lasting peace.
A Laurentine nymph named Marica
    was his mom, his dad Faunus
whose father was Picus and
    his dad, Saturn,
it’s said, ultimate author of that line.

But no sons for Latinus. By fate’s decree
they were all snatched away, cut down
    in youth.
So: only a daughter, grown ripe
for a husband, a sweet,
sweet virgin of perfect age.

Many suitors from Greater Latium
sought her hand. Turnus
the most good-looking of all.
He’d come from potent stock
and the queen was eager
to lock him down in marriage,
make him her son.

But bad omens stood in the way.
Deep in the palace, a laurel tree
preserved many years in sacred awe
which dad had planted when he first
built the compound,
dedicated to Apollo
(from this comes the appellation
“Laurentine”)

a huge buzzing came across the sky
(bizarre as it seems) and
BEES
alighted there, swarming a high branch
the priest, freaked out
called it a sign
that a stranger would come
leading a huge host
and settle just so in the citadel.

Meanwhile in lighting the altars
Lavinia standing beside her dad
FLAME
(for fuck’s sake!) leapt
into her long, bunched-up hair
and consumed her accoutrements, crackling
and burning her queenly crown
the smoke rolling yellow through
the whole house.
Crazy!

Everyone took this as a sign, too
that she’d be lustrous and noble in her own fame
but portend
WAR
to her people.

The King, bugged by all these omens,
sped to the oracle of Faunus
where deep in the forest the priestess
breathes from a sacred font
a dark
cruel
vapor.

This was where everyone in Italy went for answers.
They brought gifts to the priestess
who lied on thick fleece from
slaughtered sheep, dreaming
weird dreams of spirits
flitting about, hearing
weird voices,
conversing with gods and communing
with Acheron in
deepest hell.
It was to her Latinus hurried
offering 100 wooly sheep
in sacrifice, groveling
on their shorn, stretched
hides, and from deep
in the forest her voice
boomed:

“Don't seek, my son, to marry your daughter
among Latin hordes,
nor believe in the mapped-out
wedding plans.
Aliens are coming whose blood
will lift our name and whose kids
will roll the world like a ball
at their feet.”
III. “heus! etiam mensas consumimus”

Latinus, with this word from father Faunus, could not keep it to himself—the rumor spread far and wide, burning through cities up and down the coast when

NOW

Aeneas arrives and after docking his fleet relaxes with his captains and lovely son Iulus under the shade of high trees, laying out a feast, long crisp flat bread (following Jove’s own recipe) with locally grown fruit spread on top.

So when the topping’s eaten, the measliness of the fare drives them to chow down on the flat bread, not sparing a crumb in their hunger

“Ha!” jokes Iulus, “we even ate the tables.”

Ha, indeed!

These words mark the end of long labors—for when Aeneas hears this remark he pricks up his ears,
stupefied, blinking,
looking around at the land
with new eyes.

“Hey!” he says, “this is it—
HOME,
the beloved country
prophesied by my father when he said
‘Starvation will make you eat your tables
and then, tired,
seek no more—
you’ve reached the promised land.’

THIS is that hunger,
HERE the last hurdle
before we should rest at last.

Go at first light,
suss out the lay of the land,
who holds sway,
look everywhere, find the stronghold
of the local folk.
Now let’s pour one out
for Jove, pray
to father Anchises,
and toast our success.”

Aeneas crowns himself
with fronds
wrapped around his temples.

He prays to the Genius
of this place,
the gods and
nymphs and unknown streams
    night and night’s
    rising stars
then Trojan Jove and the Phrygian Mother
(giving all their proper due)
    finally calling to his own
    folks in heaven
    and Erebus.

The Almighty Father thunders
three times from the clear sky
and shakes from his heavenly brow
a cloud flashing gold lightning.

Word flies through the Trojan troops:
the day’s come when they’ve found their new city.
The party kicks off all over again
    at news of this omen—
they set up the bowls and top off each other’s wine.
Next day, having located the capital, Aeneas chooses 100 of the best men and orders them to go there, bearing gifts for the brave king and begging peace for Trojans.

They hurry off, while the remainder dig trenches and mark out walls eagerly making their ragtag camp into a proper settlement.

Those guys see the towers and roofs of the Latins and walk under the walls. Before the city boys and young men are fooling around on horseback, racing or throwing spears or punching each other, half in jest.

A messenger rushes to the king and gives the report:

STRANGERS who look pretty tough, though dressed strangely as well. Latinus orders them brought right in.

He greets them, one cool customer: “Tell me, Trojans – yes, we know who you are – we’ve heard of your city and wanderings over the sea – what do you want? Why are you here? Maybe storms drove you this way,
as it happens to so many sailors.
Relax, though; you’ve reached a safe port.
Don’t scorn our hospitality, for we Latins
come from Saturn, and we’re not nice
out of compulsion, but civilized
by free will and the long custom
of old gods.”

Ilioneus answers him:
“King, superb son of Faunus, it wasn’t by accident
nor the fault of black storms that we wandered
this way – it was by plan, albeit
not of our making. We’re from a realm
that was once the greatest, our race
comes from Jove, from Jove
comes our king: Trojan Aeneas
who sends us to your door.
We’ve sailed through hell and back
over the vast sea, and now we ask
a small bit of land on your shore
and a harmless landing spot, air
and water. We won’t be an embarrassment
to your realm, nor will you go
without proper thanks. By Aeneas
and his strong hand, proven
in arms and war, I swear.
Many peoples and countries have offered
to take us in as allies – in fact, they’ve begged us –
but the will of the gods brought us here.
From here sprang Dardanus, and here
he returns, and Apollo orders us
back to the Tiber, the source.
I bring you these small tokens of former glory taken from burning Troy:
Gold, and Priam’s royal vestments,
his scepter and crown and sacred robes sewn by his daughters.”

Everyone freezes. You could hear a leaf stir in the breeze.
None of the purple words or gifts moves Latinus one bit, but the thought of his daughter comes back to him, her marriage, the prophecy of Faunus.
*This must be the guy from outside who’s supposed to be my son,*
called to the realm as equal—
from this the offspring who’ll rule the whole world.

Latinus smiles.
“The gods bless your intention!
What you want, Trojans, is nothing;
and I won’t turn up my nose at your gifts. As long as I’m king, feel free to come and go as you please, and let Aeneas himself, if he’s so eager for us to be friends, make his way here—he shouldn’t be afraid to meet his new pals—I’m anxious to shake his hand and seal our friendship. Now, go back to your boss with our answer.
...In fact,

tell him I have a daughter
whom the fates say will marry
a guy from another country, whose blood
will raise our name to the stars.
If I’m right, and I think I am, it’s none other
than Aeneas.”

Latinus speaks thus and sends them back
with 300 excellent horses decked out
in purple with gold chains hanging down,
and for absent Aeneas he orders
twin steeds from heavenly stock
breathing fire, bred from a line
skillful Circe had raised.

With such news and gifts
the guys ride to Aeneas.

But wait!
Where’s Juno, the cruel wife of Jove?
She’s flying just now over Argos, and
from a long way off, even from Pachynus in Sicily,
she sees the Trojans
happily

settling down, already
building homes, abandoning ships.
She stands there shaking her head,
unable to believe
what she’s seeing.

“What
the actual
fuck! Why
couldn’t they die
on the Sigean plains, why couldn’t they
have been captured by... someone?
Why didn’t they burn in the fires
of Troy? Instead
they’ve come through the fire
and as for me and my divinity
I’m caput, exhausted.
I’ve unleashed all the power
of earth and sea and it’s not
done shit to stop them. They made it
through Syrtes, Scylla, and Charybis
and now take their ease by the Tiber’s side.”

And dusting herself off, somewhat:

“All right. I’ve left nothing undone,
no gods have helped me, Aeneas,
you’ve beaten me. But
if my powers aren’t great enough,
I won’t hesitate to seek help
wherever I can.

If I can’t rouse heaven,
I’ll raise hell.”
MARCELLA DURAND

“THE DROUGHT POEMS”
“SO MUCH AS IS INHABITED”
“AGAIN, SO NICE...”
“TETRAHEDRON DIFFICULT CAGE...”
THE DROUGHT POEMS

There’s less than we thought, said dropping wire into spring if move rock stop flow as rock weighs soil down to form tunnel through woods then forest then.

We used spectrometer and hypersensometrical poke. Measured pipe diameter, knelt, listened. We tasted—analysis, analysis, analysis. We looked.

Then we knew to start exaggeration and division: much much more, so much more, lots more, yes, so much more flow so much to drink! Ravish the springs that flow separately from the aquifers, the creeks, rivers and ponds that all flow separately from each other: all discrete origins of water.

We disregarded how
the pond looked like
an eye, discarded similarities
and similes—it was all one
and none to us.

It being depth, pressure
and flow, and what those
could bring to us, force
seeds upward to flower
out into trucks speeding,
all we had to offer: petal
pattern to the continent.

Continent flowers from
us as fruits shrink, dryness
becoming enforcable. Sharing
unequally and argue,
mismeasurement
or take for granted
if rock stays and rain
cloud and vapor drawn
back down even over
crumple and height,
even from salt, even
from sea, comes back
in mist and will rain.

Takes for granted
limestone shale
sand granite holds, 
that quartz will 
guide. From this 
river to the other 
river and under 
river another. 
About removing 
rock and replacing 
concrete, about 
banks and levees 
not being beautiful, 
about being strict, 
utilitarian, light 
and not gold-lined.

About washing 
twice or three 
times and the water 
goes back to flower 
bed. Gardens take 
order, separate the 
flowers. Wash the 
pasta and rinse it 
again in the mud. 
Heirloom drench, 
artisanal contamination. 
Removal of metals 
leave water to dry, 
saline rings and unspeakable.
Land tilts one way, lifting left side to dryness and dousing the other. Cities drown while fields parch. Imbalance, but again seen what is wanted to be seen or what makes sense in this order of what we would like to envision. And that would be a spring, in a pipe made by others, origin unknown—just, somewhere else, flowing generously, endlessly toward us.
I love all waste for in the litter
my neighbors leave is the solution of
how they move: people, cities, towns,
portes, promontories, hills, woods,
mountains, valleys, rivers and fountains,
therein contained. Also of seas, with their clyffes,
reaches, turnings, elbows, quicksands, rocks, flattes,
shelves and shores, whatever in which I find them
contained and visible swarming in algorithms feeling
all their mathematical and progressive natures, shells
that accumulate in knowing and mystery, but in
their tidepools, basins and bays, they are sometimes
invisible to me, however decoder I try to be.

The surueye of the Vvorld, or situation of the Earth,
So Muche as Is Inhabited. Once so many fires burned
along the shores and shelves before littoral
zone turned to contagious interaction: the landscape
is unsettled, enormous. Artificial forms travel over
more subtle variations. Polyhedrons with ruins
and strapwork. Wood blocks print over forests
and convey into paper terms I thought I had set
forth through observing equations, indistinct
shapes that signal back, even through
distortions of ink blurring to material.
AGAIN, SO NICE TO HAVE TIME TO ONESELF AT THE LIBRARY
although it is silent and from silence uselessness
springs, although under the library are springs
rerouted to unknown place and still flood in spring
the basements of writers silenced from writing in
obscurity and neglect, loneliness & always more possible
bitterness. The acorn dropping from the trees are bitter
and the old greens in the fridge are bitter. Good health
is bitter and old joy is sorrow. Nostalgia is not a weakness,
but is engine and makes the streetlights at night more
beautiful. The heart beating harder is maybe not healthy,
but facilitates all the sensations we live or would like
to live with every day—remembering all of that which
together, random as they/it are, randomness of everything
that happens to us maybe. Yesterday we confirmed that two
molecules react together over impossible distance and with
memories at either end or moving along the invisible cords
of dark matter and rememberance, the cords and strings
and threads, golden and yet colourless in that gold in painting
is both a dark and a light, a changeable substance that appears
from wishing and desire: the strings crisscross to create
a braid of flexibility, a continuum-like transmission of what
is around us and where that intersection with our feelings is,
because feelings are very often what it is to live in the past,
some forms of life live close to electrons: purely
electric life strange, a “life” barely apprehensive.
“My tetrahedron is open to the night.”
—John Ashbery

TETRAHEDRON DIFFICULT CAGE TO PARSE AS WHETHER
caught within it can lead to many doorways
through column and arch and column. Another
garden, view and prospect, and at the end of
perspective, green arch beckons to another
forest ever receding on the horizon. Inside
dark green line of leaves together creates trees,
and trees together create habitat, and habitat,
continuous, makes a world, a mirage created
by the work about it and plan to area a garden,
a greenery, an open place of light within cloistered
neighborhoods, of getting as close to one another
inside wood and sheets, wound clothes, tenderness
and dimly breathing again breath, and small plants
on windowsills, airshafts and divisions, bricks
and granite, rooms that mirror in their squares
the larger green squares of gardens created for
view and horizons, distance and longing, gardens
of inclusion, enclosure, figures of topiary of
speaking evergreens, tree symbols, mimicking
density and inhabitance, and still one gives way.
nights without the help of temporary personnel.
plus
solution
without?
geographical distances
the luxury of weighing
toward and by

minus
fact
the

notice the lost examples

pure antagonism.
eenie, meenie
zippy-dippy
(other idioms)

thus and otherwise

speakable, yet uncertain

what

why not

signature.
of artificial deviations
such as
however
and what’s quiet
and what words do

Le Bar

and what letters do.
hokum
pokum
sokum
and other companies

notices from the cashier's office

voids
of naked bodies – and the clouds

paratactic lethargy.
u tophia
dis
para
dia
hetero tophia
Ici demeura

De 1822 a 1827

Jean Capodistrias De Corfu
Ministre de Czar Alexandre I
aux Congres de Vienne et de Paris
Gouverneur elu de la Grece affranchie
Citoyen de Geneve et de Lausanne

dissonance

exercises of flexible space vectors

luxury of the diaspora.
time
inflow regardless of the
dream of another language
signals
pandemonium.
mouts
 psi-ψ?
 plastic flowers

 travelers on over-
 passes.
child
Oh!
delirium.
ELKE ERB

HASTE MAKES WASTE

TRANSLATED BY ROSMARIE WALDROP
He was only five when they expelled him from school, kicked him out really, how come, who did, one never knows enough about these things, ever. March-garden-early, early-spring-early, abysmally early, refused him the red kerchief that signaled the pupil in good standing. He had once slyly untied one from the neck of one of those Bernhards — in an excursion bus, kneeling on his mother’s lap, bending forward, he was still in kindergarten then.

Prose is a cross between sun and haze, as in early spring, or sometimes in fall, mile, scarp edge, the bus went out into the country as intended in that form of time, of tours, of busses to mountain pastures, distinct from the ways — praise the Kaiser — the ways of cars, not to mention trucks,

distinct from the gulleys along the road, perhaps tactful blackberry brambles, a mental tangle of forelocks, potato plants in rows (and the broad tailored expanse collapses, A shrinking to a field for unarmed eyes, B to a leap of dammed-up sums, rows) or a subjunctive ripening into a mass of corn cobs bright maize-green on the shoulder of the road.

If they were tactful, the bushes along the road that we don’t question as our eyes shift to the shoulder subjunctive, would it be their poise that distinguishes, objectively, the busses’ form of time and tours from the ways praise the Kaiser of cars trucks combines and steam shovels? Mountains overlook it. Cherry trees contribute nothing, no doubt, or nothing that language can grasp in its simplicity.

Alongside, mile after mile derives waste from haste, the time in the tour bus while one of those Bernhards in the seat before him still has his red kerchief around his neck and time enough, a very eternity in his later life, always remote, a residue, when for example he, I mean Bernhard, just this one example, later stands before the registrar’s desk with a woman, and marriage takes place, a decision where he — summoned by and only by the situation — for a moment imagines god-knows-what, his own fleeting future, as if summoned: this is truly a unique moment, even repeated it is unique again and again, who could gainsay it.

Someone or other carries his neck the way he writes, with arms stretched out in front, levered from the elbows, his hands beginning, with all the signs of expertise, to put their fingers on the material as if on chopsticks, should he write with both hands, prose is a cross between sun and haze,

dreamlike unreal, a timepiece like glass, praise the Kaiser, like freedom — a pine tree chockful of nuts all over — or like a fresh wind rising to see what part of the past was whiled away or thought filed away, or had never been.

Glides through the like of it, the bus — its merry glass panes almost bulging out of the
frames (in the old days they glared more wretchedly out of their grid, frame, crosshatch, just like the starving red republics, right?). Looks like a goggle-eyed insect, the bus, bumble bee, head of a dragonfly almost, though more prudent and portly —

its fair portly glass sheen is in its way praise the Kaiser a bit like the body-build of the contemporary chump VIPs, the way they sit on their asses at dinner or desk, motionless, mastering haste makes waste in a nimbus of achievement that seems nimble in its nimbus — must be those fortified juices.

When the bus retraces the serpentines down the mountain you see it approaching a strip of land some ways from the mountainside, a flat strip of meadow where, perpendicular to the route of the bus, you make out a blazing blue river straight as an arrow,

and it seems, without rhyme or reason, that the narrow perpendicular blue streams straight from your heart, straight as an arrow, streams, unswerving, out and away, like happiness. As if it were happiness. As if happiness were what streams away, crossbolt. And filled with happiness what streams away. Blue within the green. Narrow. This sensation knows what it’s about, more precisely than usual, and will swear to it.

Somewhere then there is a bridge, memorable as expected. Unspannably wide seen from above, it could be in Georgia, near the Black Sea, abstracted, a residue, haste makes waste, one of those Georgian barely-still-mountainbrook-bridges.

The old-timer bus or excursion-truck — hurrah for the rows of sun dresses and parasols on board — that in its way (minutes per haste, praise the Kaiser) competes with mountainroad-climbs and mountainroad-miles,

thunders across — barely leaving the bridge intact — and, whoosh, by our ears the jolt of planks above the rocky turbulent torrent and tourist shrieks.

There is no comparison: where the plains spread, the bridges are wiser, sedate, politely offering piers and railings. Remains the question, prose is a cross between sun and haze, march-garden-early:

is a river of such hearty arrow-straight blue fit to be crossed by a bus merely imagined, by no means its equal, the bus described here? I, if I were the bus, would be stumped. This question, with its charmingly immature attempt at textual theory, we'll now simply leave standing here, a question of manners.

But where has the boy gotten to? It all happened so fast!

A quarrel about time. This bulging-glass-eyed bus hogs all the attention? When it seems to run so regularly, run tours, pass periodically by brainy brambles, potato fields? What
— is someone getting fucked — is this all about?

Him they had already. Hold on, what’s important here? Expelled. (The kerchief was stolen anyway.) Who had? They. Had expelled him from where? From school. Why?

He simply was no longer there. And the school? The school still stood, they were there. That’s how it is. Well in that case. And why had they done it? They were agreed. Or not. But one — does what one can. You understand?

If he was already in school at five — early-spring-early, march-garden-early, abysmally early — then to expel a five-year-old against all custom — haste makes waste, who knows — is more abysmal yet. In their own native-son way praise the Kaiser, they overtake: a headstart.

Born, forlorn, as sown among thorns.

If I had seen — what? A moment on the ground — just curves, hollows, like car hoods, I’d think, raised to the vertical where (ghosts I suppose?) behind their villa walls the alibis tell lies. Above, dust on the eaves, below, blowing leaves. Ten tender toes, soles peeled off the walk and flew. Don’t bother your head with what’s been said.

No wonder. Or the way people lived in Central Europe a century ago: the one room, it’s raining in, the walls the floor the brazen logs how they blaze in the stove cozy smell of wet planks boards wall to wall the room home warming up now coal.

Don’t praise the day before its end.

Traveling: the single red tulip on the raw bare ground of the two-tiered slope between frankly shabby postwar houses when I rode through the Chemnitz Valley back to the hills around Chemnitz, midday-tired. The tulip in full bloom, already beginning to wilt, decay. Shuddered at these people lying in wait for their tulips to bloom, april after april, all their liives. (Daffodils a bit less awful.) Ground, raked.

Praise the Kaiser, look for the group:

FARMSTEAD

The inaccessible farm — locked, abandoned? Sits there, by itself. Nobody’s house? No access. What (outbuildings?) makes a farm into a farmstead, (Unapproachable. Locked? Sits
there!) gives hedge, fence, long outside barn wall their now arrested vibration ready to encircle
the house: What is needed, what’s to be done, for what, with what, and when — once upon?
The inside ghostly. A lonely bit of daylight backs up the ghosts. It, the light, acknowledges
as sufficient the cracked glaze on the concave fragment, the third of a jug. The rest of the jug
carried off by ghostly hands, preserved. The pattern of cracks, typically more jagged toward
the edge of the shard, signals the former customary use of the jug come to nought, turns the
ghostliness into a murmur, a mumble in the ear: the bells of Vineta. Never will the son find his
mother. Never the mother, her son.

I snatch at what’s around, at a pointer from Gregor Laschen:

**THE EAGLE**
The smithy moans and groans in its sleep.
The young roof reaches up to cloudbank edge,
above it now the eagle, all of the abyss
in his white fangs, king of eyes, warm throat
in free fall, the key word all life long:
the way old clowns drop into the sawdust, laugh
deeply buried in order’s noise.
Across the almond cloud, the rape, grape-word
with bloody wings long occupies the frame. The eagle
flies back out to sea and bare as silver
glisten, gleam his feet as he in anger
passes stars and screams while the short lives
below him scatter sparks. Limping,
the old order croaks. Into the green his flight,
red tongue, thin point into my head.

A different sound of bells: although the walrus mostly feeds on mussels (scallops, heart-
& zebra-mussels) which he gets in the shallows by snorting a beam of water into the soft
ground, his tusks are useful as a pickaxe for ice or rocky coasts. He heaves, as it’s called.

But the big bulls also use their tusks to kill: kill seals, squeezing them, what a scene,
with their forepaws. The biggest bull with the longest tusks mounts, in the fight for females, to
predominance.
One fine detail: walrus skin reddens in the sun because the sun widens the veins. Europe didn’t even know the animal when already straps were cut from its skin. Which the Eskimos made into boats, huts….

When the walrus puffs his neck, there is a sound like distant bells.

*Quietly in the dusky air the ringing of bells…*  
(Hölderlin, *Brot und Wein*)

Roam, rove, make for other parts and distance. The leatherback turtle which looks as if it had snatched back the handbag we had snatched from nature — for its own needs as amply demonstrated by the blunted downward point, the inlaid head (eyes, movable mouth) and front flippers — the leatherback turtle gallivants its slow but steady way through all the seas above twelve degrees centigrade.

The early light of day, my wits sharpened by an allegro reading in Oskar Pastior’s books, shows the painstaking farmstead-note above to be scratched into painstakingly smoothed clay:

while the freshly dug up clay, heaped in front of the “house of encounter” in Grosshennersdorf,

— mumbled and menaced — in audibly soundless revolt (ear) (indignation, defoliated)

— the same clay smoothed, wet, sprinkled was already stealing away (its dense gray eying, denying olive-green fraud).

Ubiquitous in the sea, the sea. Languages like roads to everywhere. The word “illusory,” cf. fool. Roads all roads from somewhere to anywhere. Nirvana flicker.

Farmers probably came to Central and Western Europe from Central Asia or Northern Iraq in two migrations: one from the Caucasus via the East-European steppes, the other via Asia Minor, North Africa and the Iberian peninsula. The first as early as the Neolithic, the second in the Bronze Age.

We find *the cradle* of crop cultivation in eight places on earth:

In central mountain valleys or tropical and subtropical plateaus, e.g. in Central and Western China, Nepal *the cradle* of certain beans and *the cradle* of Chinese or Peking cabbage

In Central Asia (Hindu Kush, the Northwestern Himalaya, Afghan-, Tajiki-Uzbekistan)
the cradle of garlic, the cradle of the finegrained fava bean as well as the small pea, lentil, onion, radish, spinach.

Finegrained or plain beans, cultivated by mutation, what brought you to these rougher zones, ladled you out of your cradles?

Festive hall! your floor is the sea, your tables are mountains.
Verily built for a single use eons ago!

(Hölderlin, Brot und Wein)

In the mountainous countries around the Mediterranean stood the cradles of the coarsegrained fava bean, beet, chicory, various cabbages, as well as parsley, artichoke, asparagus, thyme, endive and black salsify.

The integral is written this way: ∫, if at all. Where did the text lose the boy? How old has he gotten outside it? And where? Not in death, I hope. Haste makes waste, perhaps he found a way to fly home? Some crops came to us in decidedly adventurous ways, praise the Kaiser.

Prose is a cross between sun and haze

like early spring.

...

A stranger in the world, you look for your own, maybe peas and beans. Sit in pods, don't look at one another. You find them entwined in the sod with birch rods near or missing. Rods, riders, haste makes waste.

(December 96/97, fragment)
ETEL ADNAN

AT TWO IN THE AFTERNOON

TRANSLATED BY SARAH RIGGS
the sun came out in the night
to take a turn and divinity traversed
the bedroom. the windows open
themselves
writing comes from a dialogue
with time: it is the fabrication
of a mirror in which thought
vanishes and no longer recognizes
itself
in Palermo the men are as
deked out as the horses; or
else they have the shining violence of
flowers
it’s more bearable to think of death than of love
Greek thought has turned around things the way it has turned around the islands
when men will no longer have power over women, over whom will they have it?
all Sicily is painted
by hand from vine
planting
excruciating pain that a teapot
transmutes in inutterable happiness
the Barbary fig trees ripen
on brilliant mornings, with firm flesh,
with certain steps
limits everywhere; how to reconcile soul and body, what to do between two white sheets?
She said, standing in the middle of her ranch:
how black it is,
eternity!
on the other side of the street separated
from the garden's splendor, Issa sits
with a black coffee and speaking of the mother whose
brain starts to invent aberration
me I am sent back to the swamps
in my hesitation's obscurity
the curtain falls on a mass grave. the Babylonian
gods no longer birth just
cadavers
philosophy is a not-knowing:
thought gives pleasure through
measuring its borders
the body is a sacred place
because it bursts with life and lasts
briefly
time recalls to me cemeteries
in which the mountains are swallowed up,
enveloped in their mist
the cock sings  the dog barks
the cat climbs a tree
in between clouds and
the moon ideas
drift . . .
and then the boats keep returning
to port, corn goddesses
protecting them
Shakespeare’s testament was placed in my hand on a bit of yellow paper, a night in London, when I was stricken with hunger.
over there there's nothing besides the rising
paths, a naked horse, clumps
of grass, wind
a permanent eclipse is predicted.
it seems far in the past, but
close in thought
the spider waited a long time though
the fly eventually came
and heat, what can we say of it?
talk to him about cold, too late! about the river? this one is dry. love?
it has the most obvious shape
the season passes a rapid hand
through the trees; don’t believe
the wind is absent-minded,
that sleep is guaranteed
you say that the trains rolled too fast
but your madness unleashed over
my body. was it nothing?
time is untranslatable
your voice in my veins
poisonous plants growing
the roses were watered by
our desires’ black storms
the loved one won’t go to the Night Palace where women and wine are waiting
so as not to accelerate the illness
we pretended not
to love ourselves, knowing anyhow
the days would not come back
NATHANIEL TARN

“OLD FRIEDRICH, SILS-MARIA, 06.30.28”
“AURELIA’S MAIDENHAIR”
FROM EXITUS GENERIS HUMANI
OLD FRIEDRICH, SILS-MARIA, 06.30.28

ONE
Here now to the embraces of the mountains, high tower circles naked above the valleys, rock arms round my life. All dispossessed of family & friendship, abeyance from disaster. Was ever more than this...this total isolation bred into lineage, inheritance, or expectations regarding futures? Ever a father? mother? siblings? I remember nothing save, rising from a grave, assembling back his limbs, his stature to my eyes, a man invisible and preternatural calling me to loss. I see the future. For now however, the deep green childhood meadows: rioting flowers in such profusion no botany encompasses them all. Moment by moment on my long walks, I re-acquaint myself toward kind names, their colors gradually restored by this or that re-visit with a childhood moment -- as when, for instance, I had climbed a mountain torrent, -- a cataract it seemed to me -- my boots sliding from rock to rock and each rock lived on by a flower as I now live on this room. Floating, free of philosophers, historians, artists & poets, mongrels & mongers of every discipline, the uncreative, the competently deathly: free of that whole infernal crowd. Interminable pain even in a ghost's limbs -- but blissfully at work through pain to guarantee my universe release.
A plenitude of orchids – What! Orchids outside tropics? in the blue-green cathedral under the northing iceberg, skyfulls of flute-like, and trombone-gentians lurking on walls sunk to a planet’s crust at the sea’s fundament among the grasses; larkspur; monk’s hood jockeying as if you walked on sand back home in broiling desert for open skies, the purple aquilegia reminiscing rome; as you did, rapt and fiery, through the helling canyons, the clematis -- star of the alps; buttercup gold aflame never have human eyes seen this before, nor ever will and globe-bloom, hoisting will to power over fellows, enter the kingdom some may call of god -- but it is not mustard & cress; stonecrop & saxifrage; and artemisia; of god, it is of distant ancestors who paled at creatures clover & potentilla; rose; iris; sunspark; meadow-saffron; so dangerous they fled in panic to the closest shoreline silene & willow-herb; foxglove; snowbell & crowfoot; and slow, from frightful sinews of maws and tentacles, fireweed; myosotis (O my Nerval!); campanula & fern, shrank and moved on into our arms, legs, uprightness, yarrow; vetch; daisy; edelweiss -- heraldic of the only gods, i.e. our earthly selves, now worth our trouble… But always a catastrophe to our own kind, so nothing gained us out of that mortal sea. And rain engulfs the mountains. Ah! meadows drown. Here beauty reigned, beauty alone, without a menace, only a dream of fields survives -- like bird-calls heard where our last bleak extinction fades away. Deep in the misting jungles the race has done exploring: all the land’s mapped out. Mostly, the wise men say, our species won’t survive.
THREE

My room as simple as it could be, not one item of furniture *de trop*, the writing tools on desk as limited as possible to clarify a mind’s intent. I work against a head in shards, eyes almost blind, vomit in throat at any moment, the fall & sink of nausea, the dizziness, the need unquestioned to crash into my mattress and float till I can parse again. My room a box among these wildernesses, a dream, within a sleep, within a death -- that last to come so soon is my belief -- but “positive!” is a last flag of this my nothingness. Death as a box within this body, room within room and far too deep for anger. I have discredited all the external causes and unsubscribed mankind to all divinities, all outside help for the atrocious misery in which it ferments. On the behalf of spirits, mankind has wasted worlds that it was given, continues trashing them and will go on *idem* until they and mankind enjoy their death together. “Consider the lily of the field” an enemy pronounced: I love my enemies! Consider it indeed and all the tribes of plants and all the tribes of animals that feed on them, consider the whole tree, the central pillar: do we not pull it down? To this proposal I bend my life here, all my activity. Had our time, could we not have prevented more disasters, worked out more cures, dominated hell, returned man/woman back into their garden assuaged the doubts and terrors of our only goddess -- if there be need of gods -- this lonesome earth?
AURELIA’S MAINDENHAIR

All night devouring the streets of Paris,
as if I’d never left the unforgiving city --
city I thought I’d die of if I ever left it.

Maidenhair on the desk. Sixty years since
a book was written over these fronds,
out of these very leaves, [face fallen into
them]: they have never evolved, as this
man has, toward oblivion despite the
stretch of evolution. A fill of sixty years
after such greens hallowed the writing
desk: ready to talk. Between and latterly
they were reviewed along the roadsides
of the emerald Andes. But giant there, so
large you thought one plant could fill a
province. In that southern night, sudden
electric eyes of hope, dead all the mean-
time, opened [opened once only in the
night], [alas for once!] and it was like a
kind of adoration, of recognition -- a thing
I had, maybe had had, & lost in the far past?

But that immense, immeasurable hope,
working on down the ages, the everlasting
& immemorial, & seeming indestructible,
timeless apparently but riddled yet with
time -- it is a lie, no longer living -- kept
moving only by men's insanity, aimed at
giving another a clearer reason to his lives
than even sun hands down in diamonds &
in gold. She had belonged, no, not to me,
never to me, brightest that shines the dead-
lier, but to the other irretrievably & I could
only yield. And since: the dying bloom of
hope. But he is blind from birth on now: he
cannot use those eyes. Hanging from some
lamp-lighting post, gray in the bowels of no
city but in a cruel desert. And hardly singing
from that lost day forever into this other life.
FROM “EXITUS GENERIS HUMANI.” SECTION 1, #1.

1] VISITOR

A) Today, in a passing moment, in the rear garden, sees, hidden back of chamisa, a golden seedling of the dead, something he had not ever planted here -- ambassador from light – a newborn sunflower. Exhilaration. A song rising spontaneous, a song from opera rarely performed, unknown, he owes to Pyotr Ilyich and would embrace him for it were he alive. (Somehow had been most moved by those his sufferings that P. could never share. For songs of love, for melody, this man had few or no competitors). Major discovery late that same morning: no moment dedicated in toto to itself could be other than joyful. Can recognize the word that have not spoken it for eight decades? No “sitting:” with sore back, desperate legs & arms, interminable cramp & dormant buttocks (allegedly existence-in-the-moment): you call that by the holy name of joy? When care has terminated in the realm of meaning (determination to do good to animals, humans, cultures, societies); when it has drowned in the ferocious wind of wounded hope, screaming its rage out at the universe, the whole black misery (life as the preview of the realm of hell); when there is nothing left to do can count achievement in its repertoire; when all’s absurd and thus acceptable -- then and then only, sing the melody by god, by the Illusion! Then and then only can moment and the joy be imbricated on each other: for why condemn off-hand moment to misery? Carpe you imbecile! Why not? What else can there be possibly to do and matter?
B)
That you, who filled a life heavy as lead & mournful with cries and curses, could suddenly love like a lion this dying world, this *pourriture* of time, this perishable race! And suddenly be seen to smile when asked how the hot time of day would sit with you, be heard to answer, it is fine, *f, i, n, e*, as if meaning held in such terms your state of mind, this was akin to “miracle.” Brought by the sunflower. Next a.m. visited is stalk three inches off the ground Flower & leaves all gone. The sunlight smothered. A traveling rabbit ate the show and left no calling card.
7) LUNGS FLOATING, SLICK

i)
Vast lung of the vast earth: right lung now floating. All the indigenous animalcules rising and falling within the wrathful soup – for on this lung and its green brachiates depends duration and their genes. A viscous mass rises from de profundis, carried into the mouths of waiting men (slaves of the floating). No longer food-consumers. Oil-eaters; the excrement of hell they swallow, to then regurgitate for a dependent “loved-one.” Deep forests: indigenous resistance sets barbs will peel criminal snakes back from their spines, scorch them alive. The cruelty of rise and shine! So vast lung sinks and rises in the selfsame moment, with us paying the daily shifting taxes and powerlessly calling for a halt. Resistance calls a halt, flies flags in ancient capitals to warn their chiefs the time has come: thinking they’ve won a battle when they’ve lost a war. Ah Ecuador! Peru! Immense Brazil! While the immortal slick spreads further, in the lung. Paradisal birds fall headlong into it, the bat, the viper fall headlong –even the greater beasts: cats, mammoths, megatheriidae, massive heliovores still lurking in the forest mind, fall headlong to the slick. They have no other hatred deep as this, as all encompassing, those poor, small slaves accumulating wages in the slick, gathering not enough, never the threshold of enough. So hate a slime swining its dividends in distant corporations.
ii) Meantime, in the left lung, a small and noxious pit, the price of ages rises to the surface, the bones of astronomic aeons of past lives float upward through the slick, revealing structures of a forgotten world lived long before the oil. Bird surfaces, with wings spread out, and bat with wings spread out, delicately made of dust here, pasted onto the present so that the future holds their shapes and destinies. (You see, we can insert a line of “poetry.”) Touchingly sweet dead universes of dry selves with all their friends and allies rise in a shower of scales must be humidified so that the fossils do not crumble. A spirit knowing nothing of the smell of meat rises to sing. The earth with its two wounded lungs can breathe again a while (not very long for this is finals) – but little momento so that we may remember how air used to perfume our wilderness of heart in love with sheer existence when it ran free in our free throats… and unpolluted.
71 INDIVIDUALITY, SOLITUDES

Our small, low, tidy bushes of the desert: hardly can they be called by name of tree -- each one an individual, not merging in the mass, into the global and indivisible. Used to such trees now, used to such trees, unable to enjoy tall trees for long in other climates. In the same breath, a terror of our trees, an overwhelming fear of their aloneness -- or rather a division of the self into a multitude cannot be joined together in discourse or in thought. Fear of the sole, one, absolute desire they face from seed to drought (which brings them down so black) under relentless desert suns. And such as well the sight of any crowd, a dagger in the chest at such a thought as “how is, say, one thing among this crowd able all by itself from livid dawn to tarnished dusk, from birth to death, tentacles out, tentacles in, now, now and then, second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour, and day by day, hundreds, thousands of days, how can it be itself out there and nothing other in the dark, that dark – whether of day or night – unending dark night of the body (never “soul”), an unrelenting dark of such a solitude as no known thing, human or animal, kin or affine, parent, child, lover, friend can ever put an end to, how this great crowd of solitudes speaks to our solitude, or does not speak, most times unwilling or unable so to speak, so that we perish at the very end in a distortion can only grow, never diminish and -- choking at thoughts of its own end, sneers even at the vastness of the skies, interminable marching of the
galaxies, the furthest stars, most solitary stars, moving along their paths and out beyond all knowledgeable end horizon to horizon, orb to orb, into the definition of infinity.
The solitudes are set to grow and to expand until they eat, devour, digest all thought we know to be our own (expanded by the prophets we respect and have grown up with). The empty brains of children rattle in their skulls grown dry by much exposure to the sun. The sun, we know will harrow these poor minds until they prove incapable of any further good. O mio ben, the agathos, the good: no serenade, no aria, no song can ever bring to life again that flowerfull potential. The bulb has rotted in the earth, the earth dried in the pot, exposed too long to the relentless master planet. No matter how we move against the stars, escape will be repulsed, frontiers will never be erased, no ship will home in these dead seas.
EILEEN R. TABIOS

BABAYLAN POETICS & THE MDR POETRY GENERATOR
I forgot why lovers destroy children to parse the philosophy of separation—

I forgot my bones became hollow, flutes made from reeds—

—from 44 RESURRECTIONS

An ongoing work, “Murder, Death and Resurrection” (MDR), includes “The MDR Poetry Generator” that brings together much of my poetics and poet tics. The MDR Poetry Generator contains a data base of 1,146 lines which can be combined randomly to make a large number of poems; the shortest would be a couplet and the longest would be a poem of 1,146 lines. Examples of couplets (and longer forms) are available in 44 RESURRECTIONS (http://www.eratiopostmodernpoetry.com/pdfs/44Resurrections.pdf), the first poetry collection emanating from The MDR Poetry Generator. A forthcoming book, AMNESIA: Somebody’s Memoir is an example of a single poem of 1,146 lines.

The MDR Poetry Generator’s conceit is that any combination of its 1,146 lines succeeds in creating a poem. (In the couplet-poem I cite in the above epigraph, I believe an equally valid poem could be generated if one reversed the order of the two lines.) Thus, I can create—generate—new poems unthinkingly from its database. For example, I created several of the poems in 44 RESURRECTIONS by blindly pointing at lines on a print-out to combine. While the poems cohere partly by the scaffolding of beginning each line with the phrase “I forgot…” (a tactic inspired by reading Tom Beckett’s fabulous poem “I Forgot” in his book DIPSTICK (DIPTYCH), Marsh Hawk Press, 2014), these poems reflect long-held interests in abstract and cubist language—partly as a means to interrogate English whose (linear) narrative was used by the United States to solidify its 20th century colonization of my birth land, the Philippines. Through my perceptions of abstraction and cubism, I’ve written poems whose lines are not fixed in order and, indeed, can be reordered (as a newbie poet, I was very interested in the prose poem form and in writing paragraphs that can be reordered within the poem).

Because English was a tool for colonialism, it’s been called by Filipinos to be “the borrowed tongue,” though “enforced tongue” would be more accurate. Whenever I disrupt conventional uses of English—from linear narrative to normative syntax to dictionary definitions—I view the result as poetry for transforming language into its own—and stripped off its past as a tool
for damage—as well as “returning the borrowed tongue” (also the title of an anthology of Filipino and Filipino-American poetry that was edited by Nick Carbo (released by Coffee House Press in 1995).

* 

While the MDR Poetry Generator presents poems not generated through my personal preferences, the results are not distanced from the author: I created the 1,146 lines from reading through 27 previously-published poetry collections—the title’s references to murder, death and resurrection reflect the idea of putting to death the prior work, only to resurrect them into something new: sometimes, creation first requires destruction. But if randomness is the operating system for new poems (i.e. the lines can be combined at random to make new poems), those new poems nonetheless contain all the personal involvement—and love!—that went into the writing of its lines. The results dislocate without eliminating or pretending to eliminate authorship.

It is significant that I do not disavow authorship. There are enough forces and would-be aesthetic trends out there (e.g. “the author is dead”) that would erase the subjectivity of a poet (and any other artist) of color. Identity may ever be in flux, but the “I” always exists.

* 

For calculating the number of poems (in math, “permutations”) possible from The MDR Poetry Generator’s 1,146 lines, I asked my son’s high school math tutor, Carl Ericson, for assistance. Carl could not find an explicit formula for evaluating my question. But he did find an approximation formula to apply. His approximated answer to the total poems possible to be generated by the MDR Poetry Generator is a number that has 3,011 digits. Since the number of permutated poems is huge, this means I can keep writing making poems for the rest of my life without having to write new text.

As of this writing, The MDR Project has generated about 132 poems, including those that make up the following poetry collections (parentheticals indicate confirmed publishers, as of this writing):
44 RESURRECTIONS (2014, PostModernPoetry E-Ratio Editions)

I FORGOT LIGHT BURNS (2015, Moria Books)

DUENDE IN THE ALLEYS (2015, swirl editions)


THE CONNOISSEUR OF ALLEYS (2016, Marsh Hawk Press)

AMNESIA: Somebody’s Memoir (2016, Black Radish Press)

HIRAETH: Tercets From the Last Archipelago

Some poems have also generated visual poetry versions, such as “I Forgot Forgetting My Skin Was Ruin”) which inaugurated he&; a journal of visual/concrete poetry curated by Ian Whistle.

One poem, “I Forgot the Plasticity of Recognition,” generated a folio of response poems by John Bloomberg-Rissman, Sheila E. Murphy, Lars Palm, Marthe Reed, Leny M. Strobel and Anne Gorrick. These were published by Otoliths (http://the-otolith.blogspot.com.au/2014/09/6x1-1x6-cover.html), edited by Mark Young, and will be part of AMNESIA.

Since I’m loathe to repeat myself, I’m uncertain as to whether anymore poems will be generated—it undoubtedly will depend on whether future projects can avoid repeating concepts already explored.

*

The MDR Poetry Generator also reflects what I call “Babaylan Poetics”—a poetics based on indigenous Filipino practices. A Babaylan from the Philippines’ pre-colonial times was someone who mediated with the spirit world, was blessed with the gifts of healing, foretelling and insight, and a community leader. The Babaylan is often a source of inspiration to contemporary Filipinos, including myself, who are inspired by the Babaylan’s attributes, including what the
Center for Babaylan Studies in Santa Rosa, CA, call “belief in Sacred Wholeness… [and] the desire to serve their communities in achieving justice and peace.” As regards how I apply the Babaylan’s inspiration to my poetics, there’s an image from pre-colonial Philippine times of a human standing with a hand lifted upwards; if you happened to be at a certain distance from the human and took a snapshot, it would look like the human was touching the sky. In a poetics essay in my book *THE AWAKENING* (theless books, New York, 2013), I’d described the significance of this image as:

“...the moment, the space, from which I attempt to create poems. In the indigenous myth, the human, by being rooted onto the planet but also touching the sky, is connected to everything in the universe and across all time, including that the human is rooted to the past and future—indeed, there is no unfolding of time. In that moment, all of existence—past, present and future—has coalesced into a singular moment, a single gem with an infinite expanse. In that moment, were I that human, I am connected to everything so that there is nothing or no one I do not know. I am everyone and everything, and everything and everyone is me. In that moment, to paraphrase something I once I heard from some Buddhist, German or French philosopher, or Star Trek character, ‘No one or nothing is alien to me.’”

At its simplest level, Babaylan Poetics operates within The MDR Poetry Generator through its insistence that seemingly random topics and references all relate to each other. In addition, *AMNESIA* incorporates a section of poem-responses by other poets because I wish to acknowledge the reader’s significance for my poetry—a literary experience requires a reader as much as a writer.

Ultimately, within this indigenous moment or space where I create poems, issues of authorship and (or versus) the randomness with which the lines are combined from The MDR Poetry Generator are irrelevant—*All is One and One is All*. And aptly so, for poetics can also be the blueprint for how one lives—Babaylan poetics guides me in my behavior beyond the page: to see others as much as I would want others to see me. For a relationship—love—to exist, should not there first be a mutual sighting? And from there? Babaylan Poetics believes that differences cannot erase how we are interconnected with each other—that we all live in the same world. As a poet and a human being, I try to behave accordingly.
ODE TO MAKANDAL

Ayizan

By power of Ayizan Poumgoué negress-Fréda-Dahomey
Negress-cisa-flower-voodoo by power of my laurels
I bring Makandal¹ back from the bottom of the sea
I make him climb right up in my head
Now he’s with us the first in his green progeny
The first poison the first tidal wave
The Black taking more after tree than man
Taking more after lion than royal palm-tree
The first maroon² of his people the first male
To make a sea-use of his seed
Makandal the one-armed with his only arm marring the Whites’ power
Ruining their drinking wells with great draughts of violent poison
Marring their sugar cane fields with great strokes of fire
Ruining their religion with great strokes of Voodoo
Makandal among the Blacks of his time
The first volcano to ally himself with
All that conspires against the white colonist
Makandal the all-powerful fire
The first to blow on our fire-brands of hate
The first one to harbor the plots of the storm And the sea’s great health
And the poison-will unfolding its neckerchief of farewells in the white man’s veins
Splendid Black the first miraculously to plunge white skin into a bath of living leaves!
The first to tan the Whites’ insolence!
Among all the men of his race fraternally the first to bleach white pride till its last sob
Now he’s again the older brother the first wild beast
The animator of our claws the free Black
Who opens for the first time the great white book of our accounts
Makandal half-tree half-tiger half-torrent
Descending for the first time with virile lava-step the slope of négritude
The firedamp-nigger the poison-nigger
The earthquake-nigger the flail-nigger
The nigger-H-Bomb-announcer
The nigger-poisonous-root in the fierce teeth of the white civiliser
Now he’s with us the seed-bearer
The sower of one hundred burning plantations
The sower of entire families suddenly snared by poison’s great loving arms
In the jar of Ayizan now he is with us³
In the deep water his eyes smile at our lamps
And his only man-hand shows us from afar
Victory shooting forth from the depths of our innocence!
ODE TO TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE

Aïda Wèdo

I offer you the star of Toussaint on a plate of gold
He is the star-negro of the open sea with a tree-patience in his red globules
He is the ancestor of everything on this earth that walks towards springtime
Look at him on his horse still galloping towards the light
One day the sea broke at his feet and told him:
   “My Toussaint from now on you will see by my eyes,
   You will hear by my ears,
   And by the strength of my winds you will emerge from yourself,
   To give your country all the sun that there is in you.”
So he appeared in the middle of his slave-people
Bearer in his old body of a new beauty
Toussaint arrived as a piercing cry in a house asleep
As the first bells of recovery in a blood about to die
He arrived with chlorophyll-secrets in his head
And those of thunder in each of his steps
One sees him climbing day and night
The great trees of Black suffering
Where he lays down the fresh eggs of revolt
Sometimes his walk is a tortoise carrying on his back an olive branch
Sometimes it’s a torrent rolling barrels of powder
And over his passage black arms are starving branches
And suddenly hope shines forth
Human sap rises on fire
From the bodies’ depths scars learn
That hands with whip are mortal
That nigger-anger can have giant lungs
Wild-beast pulsations from his wrist
Gestures cyclone-teeming
And germinations as tall as man
Crushing all man’s scandals

“In felling me, you threw down in Santo-Domingo only the trunk of the tree of Black Freedom; it will shoot up again by the roots, because they are deep and numerous!”

After these words of farewell to his island
General Toussaint spoke no more
He had followed all the sea’s counsels
What does the snow matter now that fed on his old bones
What does his great sub-zero sadness matter
On his island far away the whip lost its wings
And for the first time freedom
For the Blacks’ hunger
For the Blacks’ thirst
For the Blacks’ joy
Was planting fruit trees!
ODE TO DESSALINES

Erzili

It’s up to me to tell of Dessalines
It’s up to Erzili goddess of sweet waters
It’s up to me to lift up this torrent of black flames
In the old days of my green leaves
Dessalines carried away my body in his current
One night on this island a night brand new
As was then my woman-blood
Dessalines hurled his running waters under my woman-sun
Dessalines hurled his horse over my woman-paths
Now, it’s up to Erzili the black Venus
Fairy of love and beauty
It’s up to me to thrust Dessalines toward your veins
It’s up to me to parade his blood’s most secret gems before your eyes
He arrived body covered with scars
Eyes red from stifling floods of tears under whip and insult
He was all bristly with claws
Like the sea on a stormy day
Rolling wave after wave
Its justice toward our slave-hands
And suddenly this was his voice:
“Stand up earth more mine than my suffering
Earth more mine than my foam stand up
And be an accusing geyser
Be a chopper of exotic heads
Be an incendiary people
Lift up your phosphorus sails
Towards the wood of their houses
We’re through licking our wounds
Through digging the earth with our knees
Now is the moment to have a single rendezvous before our steps: fire
A single will: fire at the end of our arm’s night!

Chop off their heads
Burn their houses

Make one pile of their hates
One big pile of their dogmas
Bring tar, pine-wood
Lamp-oil
And let all that’s inflammable
Stop sleeping to guide our actions!
ODE TO ANTONIO MACEO

Caridad del Cobre

Negro burning to carry Cuba in his tide
High-sea negro, river negro
Negro of tenderness, negro of action
Platinum negro, green negro
Negro of peace, negro of revolt
It’s up to me to acclaim the resins of his name
Now he awakens, the American woodcutter
Now he mounts an olive-green horse
And a great red cock and new waters
He mounts sugar and bright tobacco
And a crocodile no longer shivering on the map!

He goes forward with the man of seven lamps
He goes forward with the man of seven bells
Then man who has lived seven years under the water
The corn-man of the mountain: Fidel Castro!
Marti is with them and happier than ever
Toussaint and Bolivar, O’Higgins and Juarez
San Martin and Lincoln, John Brown and Peralte
Black heroes, white heroes and indian heroes
Of America here they are bearers of joy
Holding Cuba high and strong in their waves!

Now he’s with us Antonio Maceo⁵
He’s finally at home, in his own element
His sword is no longer hungry, his bones are no longer thirsty
Wherever he turns his head he sees a Cuba
Giving its black and mulatto sons
Sap to drink that rises with the Revolution
He sees his race without scorn or feet in irons
He sees the negro in bloom and the negro who is no longer
Ashamed of his blood accomplice with the sea
He sees a Cuba liberating for everyone
Dream and wisdom, sugar and beauty!
ODE TO CHARLEMAGNE PERALTE

Guédé Mazaka l’Orage

Once there was a shoreless Black
No one knew where his meteor began
Or where his Haitian root ended
When Haiti’s heart opened itself up like a cross
And there was no longer azur in its words
When salt fled from its bread while screaming like a wounded child
When Yankee law appeared on our shores
With its skull and crossbones
When there were no longer birds or butterflies on our hills
When there were no longer creole words
To say we are hungry or sleepy
Can’t breathe or are unemployed
Words too having been kicked in the belly
Then we saw him coming straight from the sun
We could name the fire sparkling in his eyes
We knew that he was Charlemagne Peralte!

He alone knew words still breathing
Words still holding themselves upright
Very straight grenades in hand
Words which could imitate the sea-wind
And carry away our days in their resounding currents!

O brothers kneaded in darkness
Back against the wall of suffering
Let’s face our enemies
Let’s welcome as brothers
The savage dogs howling in us
Let us gladly let their rage spill over into our veins
Let us carry hate in us as the ocean
Carries its fiercest fish
Instead of the heart let’s have a red-hot iron
Already we no longer have hands only claws
We no longer have lips only preying beaks
We’re covered with eagles’ feathers
We can fly, creep, roar
Climbing the trees of revolt
Now we change into tigers Oh! look at
The miracle: we have striped skin
Splendid stripes
We are tiger-niggers
We are Yankee-eaters
Let’s be crazy with rage and freedom
Let’s make one single paw of our gods
To crush their cruel dogmas
Let’s fight to our last
Haitian claw let’s fight to the
Last blade of grass to
The last raindrop to
The last leaf of our forests
Let’s fight to lose forever
This striped coat, these fangs and this hell
This wild beast’s fury in us
Let’s fight to the last grain of corn
As far as the borders of the ants and the stars!
Ode to Patrice Lumumba

Simbi

I am the ever young head of water
I am the dazzled belly of water
Who comes to refresh his face right from the source of my hands?
Which other royal palm-tree of our race will rest its thirst for Africa on my knees?
O Africa patient and good under my dew
Africa fighting from Algiers to the Cape
In this time of my nuptials with your revolt
In this time of living weapons in hand
It’s Patrice Lumumba whom I plunge into the freshness of our green isles!

Look at him this tempest-cock of the Congo
All Africa’s woes are painted on the walls of his soul: a fantastic tattoo of lies and atrocities
Patrice sought beauty for the
Congo’s days and nights
He found all kinds of foreign kings
Pouring out in front of their doors
Diamond and copper Congos
Bauxite and uranium Congos
He found threatening numbers
Tiger-numbers panther-Exchanges
Stocks falling or rising accordingly as joy climbs or descends in the Congo’s heart
He found the MINING-UNION-OF-UPPER-KATANGA
The fiercest African serpent!
Here he is his mouth opening like an abyss with his unleashed waters his greenish foam
He announces violent death
He is a savage, cruel, obscene god signing his crimes M.U.U.K.
He is a billionaire loa who nourishes himself only with metal sprinkled with black-man-
blood
All that cuts and poisons
All that dries up and kills the sweet chant of man
Is in the power of this great sorcerer of the West!

Patrice goes forward towards his giant lava
All the power of the Congo in his eyes
He goes forward with bare hands, pure heart
His childhood still shines in his words
But suddenly his innocence discovers
The-nigger-extortionist-and-seller-of-niggers
The-nigger-tonton-macoute-the-nigger-attached-to-the-foul-navel-of-the-West
The-nigger-cowardice-peddler
The-nigger-struck-with-evil-Tschombé-fever!

It's already too late. Already the groveling species of niggers
Fervently sell stocks in each drop of lumumbian blood
Stocks in his bones, his glands, his gut
Stocks in his voice, his tender looks
And stocks in the green angels
Who were sometimes sobbing in his soul!
So Africa saw him dying
In the smoke of his combat A beacon-negro a star-negro A fruit-tree-negro
Whose foliage towered above
The sea's highest waves
And man's invincible tenderness!
ODE TO MALCOLM X

Grande Brigitte

Once there was a Harlem nigger
He hated liquor and cigarettes
He hated lies, stealing and Whites
His wisdom came from quicklime
His truth shone like a razor
Born to be meek and good he
Preached that hell was the white man
And one night he is all alone with his hatred
With his prophecies and his great sadness
He thinks maybe all Whites
Aren’t wolves and snakes
And Malcolm X the Harlem-lamb weeps
Weeping, he walks his childhood streets
And walking still deeper into the past
His tears cross time and lands
They flow with the oldest rivers
They flow over the walls of Jerusalem
And mingle with the oldest legends
They circle Bible and Koran
Which become islands in the depth of his grief
The sun rises over Harlem and Malcolm
Still following where his tears lead him
Dresses, has a glass of milk
And goes out into the street to tell the world’s story:
“I accuse the Whites of being sowers of hatred!”
And six bullets quickly fall upon his life…
He was Malcolm X a ray of blackness who
Hated tears, chains and hatred!
1. Makandal is a legendary figure in Haitian history. A “marron” chieftan he is regarded as Louverture’s principal forerunner. He conceived a plot to exterminate the Whites and proclaim the independence of the black race. His “poison-plot” was the boldest attempt by the Blacks before the Revolution to throw off the yoke of slavery. “He had thousands of packets of poison distributed among the Negroes of the city, with instructions that on a given day they were to poison any food or beverage the Whites were likely to absorb. When the white population was in the throes of death he would descend from the mountains with his warriors and kill the survivors.” Ralph Korngold, *Citizen Touissant* (London, 1945), pp. 43-44. In March 1758 Makandal was captured and he died at the stake. It is said that he changed himself into a mosquito and flew away.

2. A “maroon” is a fugitive slave. In the days of slavery in Haiti, the “maroons” lived in inaccessible camps in the mountains and attacked lonely plantations, taking the slaves with them. This is known as “marronage” and entails not only escaping from the bonds of slavery, but also attacking and destroying white values and possessions, as an affirmation of this newly attained freedom. Depestre has played on the words “marron” (runaway slave) and “marronant” (the act of sabotaging). Thus I have tried to keep this repetition of sounds by translating “marron” as “maroon” and then “marronnant” as alternatively “marring” and “ruining.”

3. “The jar of Ayizan” refers to her “govi,” the container in which her spirit is stored.

4. General Severin, in charge of the prisoners, has testified that when Touissant boarded the frigate that was to take him to his exile at Fort de Joux, near the Swiss frontier, he uttered these prophetic words: “In overthrowing me they have only felled the tree of Negro liberty in St. Domingo. It will shoot up again, for it is deeply rooted and its roots are many.”

5. Antonio Maceo was a black Cuban patriot and general and fought for Cuban independence throughout the Ten Years’ War. Much of the time between 1878 and 1895 he spent in exile in the United States and Central America. After revolt again broke out in Cuba in February 1895, he returned there to assume command of all rebel forces. A daring leader, he won many skillful victories over larger Spanish forces.

6. In Haiti it is though that there are wizards who have the power to take the life-sorce out of a
person, so that he exists as a “zombi,” a living corpse. He will remain like this as long as his diet contains no salt, for salt is the vital force of nourishment. Janheinz Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of the New African Culture* (New York, 1961), p. 130.

7. Charlemagne Péralte, and irreconcilable “caco” chief, organized armed resistance against the American occupation, and by March 1918 the situation had become so serious that marines had to be sent to reinforce the gendarmerie. Charlemagne was killed in October, but his successor, Benoit Battraville, in a last desperate effort, actually penetrated the city of Port-au-Prince before dawn on January 15, 1920. The repulse of this attack virtually ended the revolt.

These poems and notes were originally published in René Depestre, *A Rainbow for the Christian West*, translated with an introduction by Joan Dayan (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977).
SANTIAGO VIZCAÍNO

“IN THE TWILIGHT”
“NO BRIGHT STARS IN THIS NIGHT”
“DESOLATION”
“FUNERAL”

TRANSLATED BY ALEXIS LEVITIN
IN THE TWILIGHT

Half-asleep,
the slight lifting of his eyebrow hides his torment.
He feels his respiration growing huge like a serpent devouring a deer.
He yawns.
Apparent clarity has turned obtuse.
His vision is a death-rattle.
Far off, anguish clothes itself in tenuous solitude.
He trembles.
His heart hangs from the branches of the cypresses.
From above
his body looks as vulnerable as a lizard’s tail.
Motionless,
before a spectacle of scintillating moles,
he is able to make out the cavern of a fearsome hell,
where an enormous mouth devours the skulls of steer.

Saliva wets his pillow:
the lukewarm mucosity of dogs.
Row after row of rocks
pitying that all-encompassing dark,
that intense cold in which the thorns of cactuses shiver.

Hallucinating a lighthouse beam,
his drunken hands seek somewhere to hold on.

No need to wake up.
There are no bonfires for the trembling.

In the desolation of the universe
there is just a body, quivering.
The sadness of that blind old man eats away at the edge of his sheet. His ancient gaze follows the rhythm of a fly and takes pleasure in the shadow of his shadow.

In his breast, the remains of his food pool to a lake of putrefaction. His jawbone vibrates to the rhythm of a lugubrious march.

Reclining on the spear of his distress, he tries to hide the holes of his repudiation.

His spirit has gone off in search of other flesh, another temple. He is just a man.

Hell is his own, like hunger and cold.

The wheels of his chair touch the horizon and become discouraged. His long nails gather the very earth that will cover him.

Who will wipe away the excrescence of his tears when he can bear no longer the urgency of death?

Who will tremble with the air of his final throes?

His dog licks the gangrene from the big toe of his only leg. Sad dog of the butcher shop, dreaming of the scent of viscera.

In the dawn, one can hear his moaning like someone giving birth to hate. His whole cry spreads pain upon the bed.
Night takes life within its jaws and it begins to rain.

In the street, the roosters crow at six in the morning. He imagines it is time to wake up, make his bed, have some coffee and go off to scrutinize the window.

But there is nothing to see. The nightmare is this returning to himself.
In the room,
a trickle of blood tattoos the floor’s wooden memory;
    mineral blood thick with the panting of the tropics.

When the shadow of the afternoon covers the window,
one can no longer tell the arm from the face,
    the skin from its flesh.

And that is how the suicide’s corpse remains,
in a solitude as dark
    as the muddy waters flowing on the plains.
FUNERAL

Don’t breathe,
the sound of your heart could awaken people’s murmurings.

And yet, no need to worry
about saving someone else or turning to a silent contemplation of your life.

If just once some fool reads your rage and laughs,
if just once someone breaths your good mood and cries,
you will know this loss was not in vain.

Don’t lose control now at the end,
arrival is right there,
you only have to see the miracle of good-bye;
effort that turns to a fiasco is in vain.

You still have time to take a breath.

I drank a lot, that’s true,
the gods have made pissing a joy sublime.
PAUL VERLAINE

FORGOTTEN LITTLE ARIAS

TRANSLATED BY KEITH WALDROP
A breeze over the plain
Holds its breath.
—Favart

Ecstasy’s half-heart,
Loves that tire;
Woods shudder and start
Caressed by the breeze,
Above turning leaves
A chirping choir.

Faint murmured bustle,
Twitter and buzz,
From wind-ruffled grass
The hint of a gasp...
The way, under a stream,
Mute pebbles rustle.

That soul in pain
On this sluggish plain,
It is, isn’t it, our own?
Mine, yes, and yours,
Breathing meek hymns
Through tepid twilight hours.
II

I sense, amid murmurs, some
Subtle vein of voices gone
And, with glimmers of music,
Wan love and a coming dawn.

And my soul, my heart, delirious,
Become a kind of double eye,
Across a troubled day grinds out
A little air, alas, the common cry.

O my frightened Love, I’d like
To die my death alone, my way,
Balance the then and the now,
Teeter-totter away my day.
It rains gently on the town
   —Arthur Rimbaud

Tears in my heart
Like rain on rooftops.
What pining is this
That razes my heart?

Mild ringing of rain
On pavement, on tile.
In a heavy heart
How it sings, the rain.

Tears without cause
In this disheartened heart.
What! Unbetrayed?
Mourning for no cause?

The deepest pain’s
Not to know why,
Empty of love, of hate,
My heart holds such pain.

\[1\] There seems no reason to doubt the authenticity of this line, though the poem is lost.
IV

We must, as you can see, forgive ourselves things
So as to let ourselves be happy, and whether
Or not our life has morose moments
At least, don’t you agree? we can weep together.

Oh that we might, we sister souls,
Mix with our vows the childish art
Of avoiding equally women and men,
Forgetting frankly what sets us apart.

Let us be two children, let’s be two girls
Stuck on nothing—by each thing stunned—even
Beneath chaste arbors paling,
Unaware how all’s forgiven.
Joyful irritating sound from a harpsichord

—Pétrus Borel

The piano, kissed by a delicate touch,
Glow vague in the gray and pinkish dusk,
While with a wing's light whir
An old and faint and quite charming air
Prowls, a bit frightened, in the boudoir
Scented by Her long presence there.

What is this unexpected cradle
Slowly swaddling my soul in pain?
What do you want of me, sweet playful song?
What have you come for, subtle abrupt refrain
Decaying where that window, unlatched,
Opens out across a garden patch?
VII

Sad was my soul, oh sad enough to cry.
And a woman, I tell you, a woman is why.

And my heart has found no consolation,
Not even through renunciation,

Although my heart, my soul as well,
From that woman fled like hell.

But my heart, it found no consolation,
Nothing through renunciation.

And my heart, that feels so much,
Said to my soul, Could it be such?

Could it be — was it in fact —
Really a proud exile, this sad act?

My soul answered my heart: How do we
Know but what in store for you and me

Is exile, but still this same location,
At once presence and renunciation?
In the evermore
Ennui of the plain
Uncertain snow shimmers
Like sand on a shore.

The sky is copper
That's lost its sheen.
The moon's life and death
Can perhaps be seen.

Like clouds in the sky
Float great gray oaks
Obscured by fog
In the woods near-by.

The sky is copper
That's lost its sheen.
The moon's life and death
Can probably be seen.

Rasping crows
And you lean wolves,
In this arctic wind, what
Now, do you propose?
In the evermore
Ennui of the plain
Uncertain snow shimmering
Like sand on the shore.
IX

The nightingale, perched high and seeing his image below, thinks himself fallen into the river. On the top limb of an oak he fears he will drown.

—Cyrano de Bergerac

Shadows of trees on the mist-covered river
Die like smoke blown
While in the air, in actual branches
Mourning doves mourn.

How this pale landscape, traveler, will mirror
Paleness of your own
And how sadly, in the high foliage, your hopes
Weep as they drown!
MERCURY

many have never seen it

it could be
determined lengthwise at
roundly surreptitiously mass his
lips rna-no sound-the rest (this
one) is blue such penalty wind a
cat hunkers down can undo
coil hair ready spring
VENUS

the morning star & the evening star

taut    spotted

salty    plucked

unreachable

written

stellar

speckly

doubled

taupe

flecked

glimpsed
It was a long time since--
She had heard the men were with her
are with her, always (floating phantoms, flesh
to memories) There he was on that bench, gorgeous,
dangerous – she would have him somehow or other,
and yet not (the silky threads hanging after spiders,
his blue boxer shorts, his hairy arms). He, some
of them, the men, they are lonely, lovely
more fragile than the women
a branch between their legs
MARS

eccentric orbit

Flippantly she goes goes
wet and windy and wild
Happily into that dark wood
go she goes
Softly she creeps under the trees, wordy wood wood
Tersely the word, the blood
the place, the wordy place
Lovingly tapping each cock she goes peacock hen a-doo
Tensely they line up
little soldiers in tight rows
Alertly we all stand up
and tilt—are tilted
Blackly into bits of bit light, how how
Lightly, she lifts and enters
simply that hollow fills
JUPITER

not a solid body

Angles & dimensions carry the
thought through lines in the universe
deftly proverbs revolt against adjectives
(the silken how) Facts—rows upon rows of them—
Ja place you’re not likely to linger
nonetheless I found a place to sleep in the L-shape
of your legs
Irksome revelation, feelings also have limits (hold it
tremendous felt hand) Sparkling they are, thousands,
calm, calm, the underfoot, gliding
the grey great the green spreading in your hands
your soul winging ways from skin
the jaws of universe (the sky’s clutch)
Tell, the thought, next to yours astride
all untie, wind surface
weights also instrument
why stars melancholy
and say who who who running
through your hair whispering to the ends,
worlds—it held the tongue the story’s who
the round world was to have edges like a square
and there are choices

Remotely we have felt you (a whispering in your ear) the matter of not
listening, the rain down your forehead, blinkered back by your eyebrows

the performances like all things other—the life, patterns
stories, movements, seemed to have no beginning
and no end—it just went on monotonously and
inexhaustibly till something larger than
time wafted its thread by calling
us away somewhere
URANUS

The seventh planet from the sun.

Half the dream
was you & half was you.
Whole was you with the changes,
stairs, being beside oneself. A whole
half was you. There was nothing left, no
dge of life not yet come to. Everything familiar.
Everyone astonished. That long silence is you. You.
No displacements necessary, no erotic mergings, half-
baked couplings. Just the being. Stripped down. Caught
at the border, naked, the only defense defensiveness.
No chance to save you. Nothing to be fixed. Only
empathy, acceptance, and the continual
movement into life. And if I take your
hand, knowing it is yours. Mine
here, next to your silence.
NEPTUNE

A faint and fragmented ring system

And if we could choose ‘and.’
And square. And museo. And mind.
And Cuba. And Spain. And Geraldine.
And boots. And phalluses. And belly buttons.
And Andalousia. And Pauline. And Eleanora.
And Guernica. And Las Meninas. And Adam & Eve.
And Banyan trees. And stray cats. And Hemingway.
And pears. And grapefruits. And Bing cherries.
And patriarchy. And matriarchy. And a parrot.
And strength. And weakness. And hands.
And holes. And tips. And company.
And Atlas. And here. And @.
And and. And and. And

234
Costanza Varano of Quattrocento Italy: « even when asleep you understand the work better than I »

the inner snail shell opens to its seeming adversaly.

King Pierus’ daughters named after the nine muses—

Radius 1150

they were turned to chattering magpies

The center cannot remove, only move

@@@ time and space

three muses: moving water striking the air

the human voice
On the slopes of Mount Lhahjahti in Pedhjukistan, the spirit is much more visible than the body because its aura radiates very strongly. The size and the intensity of the color vary considerably from person to person. And since a good aura adds a lot to one’s seductive capital, it’s not at all rare, in the weeks before summer vacation, to see young people frequenting libraries, haunting museums, and sitting in on philosophy seminars in order to shine out more brilliantly on the beaches of Pedhjukistan.
One thousand and thirty-four official experiments in telekinesis (the movement of an object by the force of thought alone) carried out in 1958 in the underground laboratories of Novossil-birsk (Soviet Union) under the direction of Professor Boris Nicolaief Bloudjine have conclusively proved that fingers are an extremely efficient way of moving a matchstick.
On the planet Sitara, there are five sexes—maka, fitu, jipu, giminis and gojo. The makas lay the eggs, the fitus make them genetically active, the jipus make them fertile, the giminis sit on them until they hatch, and the gojos feed the larvae until they can live on their own. It’s not really all that complicated except in cases of divorce.
Roberto Catanese of San Patamino (Sicily) was condemned to prison for life in February 1978 for having transformed the celebrated recipe for mozzarella pizza into Sicilian pizza by adding pieces of real Sicilians.
It was on February 13, 1967 at precisely 5:30 in the evening that John Klondenberg of Critchy Gulch (Utah) began to list all numbers in their alphabetical order. He started, of course, with eight, and as of this moment, he’s at eighty billion seven thousand and two (80,000,007,002), and, already, he can hardly wait to get to zero.
Intensive research at the Iowa Disney University has shown that the number of neurons active in the human brain is inversely proportionate to something, and further extensive research is focused on discovering exactly what.
In Outato, the capital of Bazouchistan, after innumerable social reforms, equality has finally been established between female beings and male beings. Only the milking of the bulls remains, at times, a problem.
The people of Okolo, a city whose fortifications are useless because it’s so far back in a lost valley somewhere in northern India, have no temples, no altars, and not even a name for God. When they absolutely must invoke him, they’re forced to resort to whistling.
The philosophically-minded people of the troglydidic city of Johlitu are perfectly aware that one can never know for certain what another really means by “blue,” and yet they manage, despite it all, to gaze up at the sky together—and thoroughly enjoy it.
The inhabitants of the island of Sanapagrata (Indonesia) always tell the truth. On the neighboring island of Pagranasata, they always lie, while the people on Natagrapasa sometimes lie and sometimes tell the truth. The Portuguese missionaries soon got tired of the guess-work and ran them all through with swords.
Τζών Σακκής
Τα Νησιά

Μετάφραση, Θανάσης Φωτιάδης
Λίνα Τσουκαλά και Άγγελος Σακκής
Ενα βράδι, μετά που ευτυχισμένα το δείπνο, μετά που δέν βρέθηκαν μέχρι πολύ αργότερα, αλλά μόνο αυτός που το βρήκε, κάποιος απ’ αυτούς σκεφτόταν το μικρό αυτοκινητάκι που τό ‘φερε στο δέρμα του, που τού ‘χε δωθεί, «να αισθανθείς τις κρύες ρόδες καθώς γυρίζουν» του είπαν «στο χέρι σου, στήν πλάτη σου» του είπαν «έλα στο τραπέζι» «γνώρισε τα ξαδέλφια σου»
Δεν μπορείς να κάνεις ψαράκια με την πέτρα 
μεσ’το σπίτι χωρίς ν’ανάβεις φωτιές

dεν μπορείς να βάζεις φωτιά στην παραλία 
t’απόγευμα χωρίς βάρκες

tο σπίτι ήταν ένας σαλιάρης ασπρός γίγαντας 
πού’σερνε τα σπλάχνα του όλο το καλοκαίρι

η παραλία είναι ίσο έδαφος παιχνιδιού 
για έντομα, ξαδέλφια και βάρκες

στις ταινίες υπάρχουν έρημες παραλίες 
που σημαίνει ότι οι αλάνες είναι βρώμικες μα ακόμα καίνε

το ξενοδοχείο ολοκλήρω προσβάσιμο μόνο 
με βάρκα ή με τα πόδια, ένας ορμίσκος φέρνει 
στις παραλίες νόμο και τάξη

δεν μπορείς να κάνεις ψαράκια με την πέτρα πάνω 
στην αφθονία του νερού χωρίς να εγκαταλείπεις 
το απόγευμα, καθε γεύμα καταλήγει 
να καταστρέφει βάρκες με φωτιές.
Τα δύο αγόρια σαν μια κουρτίνα από γιγάντιες φτερούγες κανονικά πίσω μακριά απ’αυτή την έκφραση-πριόνι «ευτυχισμένα» στήν αλάνα τ’αγόρια παίζουν με συμματόπλεγμα πάνω στο τραπέζι ψαράκι με ψωμί και λάδι βγαλμένα από ταινίες στρώνοντας το μακρύ τραπέζι με τις πορτοκαλάδες τους και κόκκαλα να τους κολάνε στο λαιμό πριν τ’αγόρια κάστουν στις θέσεις τους καθυστερώντας όσο μπορούν κυνηγώντας έντομα στα λιόδεντρα ο δεντρόκηπος έχει αίσθηση δροσιάς και ξύλου στοιμώνοντας την άσπρη ταραμοσαλάτα κατω απ’το σπίτι η λασπή είναι ιδανική για να παίζεις πόλεμο μ’αυτή την κουρτίνα ξηλωμένη με μανία σε κλωστές πίσω απ’την πλάτη τους αυτός ο αραχυοφαντος ιστός που κάνει το τραπέζι να γίνεται κάστρο σε τέσσερα πόδια.
Τα ξαδέλφια τραγουδούσαν μια ποιμενική εντόμων

Τα ξαδέλφια τραγουδούσαν ένα στρέμμα, μια αποθήκη
Μια πέτρα πετάρισε πάνω στην κοιλιά του σκάζοντας
Πυκνή κόκκινη φωτιά, μαζεύουμε σαλιάγκους
Τρώγοντας στον δεντρόκηπο, μάρμαρο
Στο καλοκαίρι στιλπνό σαν λιωμένο χιόνι
Το εξωτικό μεσημεριατικοί ύπνοι και σαλιγκάρια
Που ακόμα βράζουν, φαγητό, πράσινα έντομα τριζοβολούν
Τόσο πολύ που, σαν τον ψαρά
Αναδιπλώνονται σαν μυρουδιά.

Μετάφραση, Θανάσης Φωτιάδης, Λίνα Τσουκαλά και Άγγελος Σακκής, 17 Απριλίου 2015
ROSMARIE WALDROP

DOING
I often don’t know what to do. Or if I want to.

Dawn has long broken while I still drag my feet in the mud inside my head, hope for coffee, make a B-flat moan. To prepare the plunge into action. Or not.

Maybe I want to cast only a passing shadow. Feel like my mother’s “Thank God” when she took off her corset.

But I am worried there’s something I ought to be doing. Afraid I’ll die without having done anything. “Realized” myself, you call it, but wouldn't that just mean limited myself? A cement mixer stuck in one motion, even if it helps build a house?

So I delude myself into thinking I’m doing something when thinking. Or when descending into the night with the cat and dreams of the cat.

You say, no doing without sweat of the face, thorns and thistles, and bringing forth children.

Should I look, instead of worrying about fine distinctions that escape my eyes? Listen, instead of fretting about the size of my ears? But can I cultivate my garden without becoming a cabbage head?

The hand gets ready to write. Could we not call this manual labor? Or a stage in the Great Work of rendering the corporeal cat incorporeal while giving her body to the bodiless word? Even if it’s from despairing of my own body?

You say, my writing is so slow it’s more like gravitational condensation. Or dust gathering on the cleaning supplies.

It’s true I’m dawdling as if I had time to watch the formation of geological layers. Though night already seeps through my brittle bones.

I certainly don’t know what to do to end my days “gracefully.” But the body dies all through our life, thousands of cells every second.

So everything should be very clear.
LARRY KEARNEY

ON TRANSLATION
I was talking to Ben Hollander about translation in general and said in passing, “I think we all need to first prove that we’re capable of translating from English to English.”

The thought stuck with me. So I started doing that, translating from English to English, and a book came in rather quickly, a day or so, and in its final form there were poems from other languages, too, all rendered without reference to the originals. The effort was not to duplicate the objects that were the originals, but to present the translations that occurred in me as poems shed themselves off the originals as transferred substance, like dying leaves off a tree. I take it as a fact that the substance of a poem is poetry, and that poetry comes or goes as it pleases. As Jack Spicer said to me once, ‘there aren’t good poems and bad poems—there are poems and non-poems.’

My access to the poem (more its access to me, really), started with the apples falling in the beginning of Lawrence’s Ship of Death. I can see them now, and over the years they’ve extended themselves in many forms.

So I’ve been translating.

When I think now of translation I think of transmittable substance rather than an occasion of art, and in many ways I think the most valuable traditional translations are the prose paragraphs at the bottoms of the pages in the old Penguin editions.

For me, art is a desperate convenience (or inconvenience when it recognizes an audience and curries favor). It requires a lifetime of attention to matters that the poem itself as it chooses to appear will swallow whole, smirking. One has to be able, however, and the heightened, hinting tactility that art permits has helped many a poem get to the page. As have the poet’s reading, passion, obstinacy, rage, exhaustion and refusal to be initiated.

The job, after all, is to be able to say what the poem wants to say when it wants to say it, and in terms of execution what’s required is everything the mind can hold coupled to a willingness to let go. So not only do I not think I have an obligation to render the particular trappings of art in a poem from another language, I think that the only significant translation is descriptive
of the poem (or poems), the original has left behind. The experience of a poem, as opposed to a non-poem, is poetry. Verse is different, and there are many well-known, well-thought of and well-wrought pieces of verse that are susceptible to traditional translation (which has never much worked, anyway, but that's another matter).

What I mean to say is that the point of the poem is the transmission of poetry and that poetry is pure content the presentation of which requires an initial act of translation from a cloud of unknowing to a cloud of movable words. It takes what you have and uses it, and the result is never adequate to the experience. So to attempt to duplicate what has had to be a failure, however close it's come, seems to me a trivial game and I'd rather try to let the poem do what it does best, i.e. propagate itself. The content of the poem will always be on some level uncommunicable—which is the passion of poetry and the specter of gnosis.

I mean no disrespect to the original poems, traditional translators or to versification, for that matter, but the experience of poetry is an experience of something happening. To the extension of that end, a translation should happen too. The event may involve the living moment, or a proof of the present in form of ghost, or a bent geographic placement in a hallway between two roomsful of voices, but it will always be simultaneously real and unreal and make a demand for words that just aren't available.

A successful translation will open the fugitive doors in the originals. Sometimes the landscapes will be different, but what could be better than that? I think that complaining about a translation would require me to take my flimsy personality a lot more seriously than it deserves. In matters of art, god knows I've put in my time, but in matters of poetry there's just an instant, and it already in the past.

My wife points out that the implication here is that only poets can translate, and while I could be glib and say yeah, I don't really have an answer to the question as it seems to me that while my own intensely democratic cast of mind rejects the implied Calvinism, there is something there.

But I mentioned the refusal to be initiated and taken up into a structure, whether the refusal
is public or private and sly, and there’s something there, too, as if the poem recognizes the available isolatos and proceeds accordingly. But I also think that for every human being there’s a poem somewhere that will render him open and speechless and needing to speak, and to that degree everyone is capable, however unlikely that capability may seem on the surface. A guy in a bar once told me that there was one poem that he thought was the most beautiful thing he ever heard and I asked him what it was and he gave me an extemporaneous reading of a version of the poem that begins “Whither thou goest I will go,” and his version, in the noise and the lights and the smell of the beer, was one of the most beautiful things I’d ever heard. He had translated it, allowing the poem to move around the stuff in his head as it chose. This is as good as it gets, I thought at the time.
Λάρρυ Κέρνυ
Η Μετάφραση
Μετάφραση, Άγγελος Σακκής
Μιλούσα με τον Μπέν Χόλαντερ γιά τη μετάφραση γενικά και μου είπε παρεπιμπτόντως «Νομίζω ότι όλοι πρέπει πρώτα να αποδείξουμε ότι είμαστε ικανοί να μεταφράσουμε απο Αγγλικά σε Αγγλικά.»

Αυτό μου έγινε έμμονη ιδέα. Άρχισα λοιπόν και γω να μεταφράζω απο Αγγλικά σε Αγγλικά, και ένα βιβλίο προέκυψε σχετικά γρήγορα, σε μια-δυό μέρες, και στο τελικό του σχήμα είχε και ποιήματα από άλλες γλώσσες, όλα σε κάποια απόδοση χωρίς αναφορά στο πρωτότυπο. Η προσπάθεια ήταν όχι να αντιγράψω το συγκεκριμένο αντικείμενο που ήταν το πρωτότυπο, αλλά να παρουσιάσω τις μεταφράσεις που προέκυψαν κάπως σαν ποιήματα που μεταφέροντας την ουσία άφησαν τα πρωτότυπα να πέσουν, σαν νεκρά φύλλα που πέφτουν από το δέντρο. Θεωρώ ως γεγονός ότι η ουσία ενός ποιήματος είναι η ποίηση, και ότι η ποίηση έρχεται και φεύγει όπως το θέλει. Όπως μου είπε κάποτε ο Τζακ Σπάϊσερ, «δεν υπάρχουν καλά ποιήματα και κακά ποιήματα—υπάρχουν μόνο ποιήματα και μη-ποιήματα».

Η πρόσβασή μου προς το ποίημα (ή μάλλον η πρόσβασή του σε μένα) άρχισε με τα μήλα να πέφτουν στην αρχή του ποιήματος του Λώρενς «Πλοίο Θανάτου». Ακόμα τα βλέπω τώρα, και σ’όλα τα χρόνια που πέρασαν έχουν εκταθεί σε πολλά σχήματα.

Έχω λοιπόν μεταφράζω ασταμάτητα.

Όταν σκέπτωμαι τώρα για τη μετάφραση σκέπτωμαι περισσότερο για μεταβιβάσιμη ουσία παρά για μια περιπτώση τέχνης και για πολλούς λόγους σκέπτωμαι ότι οι πιο πολύτιμες παραδοσιακές μεταφράσεις είναι οι υποσημειώσεις γραμμένες σε προζα στις παληές εκδόσεις Πένγκουιν.

Γιά μένα η τέχνη είναι μια απελπισμένη ευκολία (ή μια δυσκολία όταν ξεχωρίζει ένα ακροατήριο και προσπαθεί να το δελεάσει). Απαιτεί την προσοχή μιάς ολόκληρης ζωής και αρχικά παρά για μια περιπτώση τέχνης και για πολλούς λόγους σκέπτωμαι ότι οι πιο πολύτιμες παραδοσιακές μεταφράσεις είναι οι υποσημειώσεις γραμμένες σε προζα στις παληές εκδόσεις Πένγκουιν.
η άρνησή του να μυθεί.

Η υπόθεση, τελικά, είναι να μπορεί κανείς να πεί αυτό που το ποίημα θέλει να πεί όταν το ποίημα θέλει να το πεί, και ως προς την εκτέλεση, αυτά που απαιτούνται είναι όλα αυτά που μπορεί κανείς να χωρέσει στο μυαλό του συνδεδεμένα με μια προθυμία να τ’αφήσει να φύγουν. Έτσι λοιπόν δεν νομίζω μόνο ότι έχω υποχρέωση να αποδώσω τα συγκεκριμένα στολίδια της τέχνης ενός ποιήματος από μιάν άλλη γλώσσα, αλλά νομίζω επίσης ότι η μόνη σημαντική μετάφραση περιγράφει το ποίημα (ή ποιήματα) που το πρότυπο έχει αφήσει πίσω. Η εμπειρία ενός ποιήματος, σε αντίθεση με ένα μη-ποίημα, είναι η ποίηση. Η στιχουργία είναι κάτι διαφορετικό, και υπάρχουν πολλοί πασίγνωστοι καλομελετημένοι και καλογραμμένοι στιχοί που είναι πρόσφοροι για παραδοσιακή μετάφραση (η οποία ποτέ δεν λειτουργήσει και παρά πολύ καλά, αλλά αυτό είναι άλλο θέμα).

Αυτό που θέλω να πω είναι ότι ο σκοπός ενός ποιήματος είναι η μετάδοση της ποίησης και ότι η ποίηση είναι καθαρό περιεχόμενο του οποίου η παρουσίαση απαιτεί μιά αρχική πράξη μετάφρασης από ένα σύννεφο γλώσσας προς ένα σύννεφο κινούμενων λέξεων. Απαιτεί να δώσεις όλα ότι έχεις και δεν έχεις τα οποία και χρησιμοποιείς, αλλά το αποτέλεσμα δεν είναι ποτέ ανάλογο με την εμπειρία. Έτσι το να προσπαθείς να επαναλάβεις ότι δεν μπορείς να είναι μιά αποτυχία, όσο κοντά και να έφτασε σε επιτυχία, μου φαίνεται σάν ένα μάταιο παιχνίδι και προτιμώ καλύτερα να αφήσει το ποίημα να κάνει αυτό που κάνει καλύτερα απ’οτιδήποτε του να αναπαράγει τον εαυτό του. Το περιεχόμενο ενός ποιήματος θα είναι πάντοτε αμεταβλητό σε κάποιο επίπεδο—κάτι που είναι και το πάθος της ποίησης και το φάσμα της Γνώσης.

Δεν εννοώ καμιά έλλειψη σεβασμού για τα πρότυπα ποιήματα, για τους παραδοσιακούς μεταφραστές ή ακόμα και για τη στιχουργία, αλλά η εμπειρία της ποίησης είναι η εμπειρία ότι εδώ κάτι συμβαίνει. Με κατεύθυνση αυτό το στόχο, μιά μετάφραση θα πρέπει επίσης να είναι κάτι που συμβαίνει. Το γεγονός πρέπει να συνεπάγεται τη ζωντανή στιχογραφία, η κάποια απόδειξη του παρόντος σε σχήμα φάσματος, ή ένα γεωγραφικό ρήγμα σ’ένα διάδρομο μεταξύ δύο δοματίων γεμάτων φωνών, αλλά πάντα θα είναι ταυτοχρόνος και πραγματικό και πλασματικό και θα απαιτεί λέξεις που δυστυχώς δεν είναι διαθέσιμες.
Μια επιτυχημένη μετάφραση θα ανοίξει τις φευγαλέες πόρτες στα πρότυπα. Μερικές φορές το τοπίο θα είναι διαφορετικό, αλλά τι καλύτερο απ’αυτό? Νομίζω ότι για να διαμαρτύρωμαι για μια μετάφραση θα έπρεπε να πάρω το ευθραυστό εγώ μου πολύ πιο σοβαρά απ’ότι του αξίζει. Σε θέματα τέχνης, Κύριος οίδε, έχω ξοδέψει αρκετό από το χρόνο μου, αλλά σε θέματα ποίησης υπάρχει μόνο μία στιγμή, κι αυτή είναι ήδη στο παρελθόν.

Η γυναίκα μου επισημαίνει ότι η επαγωγή εδώ είναι ότι μόνο ποιητές μπορούν να μεταφράσουν ποίηση και μολονότι θα μπορούσα να κάνω τον έξυπνο και να πώ, ε, ναι, στην πραγματικότητα δεν μπορώ να απαντήσω στην ερώτηση γιατί μου φαίνεται ότι αν και το έντονα δημοκρατικό καλύπτει τον μυαλό μου απορρίπτει τον υποφώσκοντα Καλβινισμό, υπάρχει ουσία σ’αυτή την ιδέα.

Αλλά έχω ήδη αναφέρει την άρνηση να μυηθεί κανείς και να γίνει μελος και μέρος κάποιας δομής, είτε η αρνηση είναι δημόσια είτε ιδιωτική και κρυφή, και υπάρχει ουσία επίσης και σ’αυτό, λες και το ποίημα αναγνωρίζει το διαθέσιμο μονήρες άτομο και προχωράει αναλόγως. Αλλά επίσης νομίζω ότι για κάθε άνθρωπο υπάρχει κανονικό όπως θα τον ανοίξει τελείως και θα τον αφήσει άφωνο με την ανάγκη να μιλήσει, και σ’αυτό το επίπεδο ο καθένας είναι ικανός, όσο απίθανη και αυτή την επιφάνεια αυτή την ικανότητα. Κάποιος τύπος σ’ένα μπαρ μου είπε κάποτε ότι υπάρχει ένα ποίημα που πίστευε ότι ήταν το πιο όμορφο πράγμα που είχε ακούσει ποτέ. Τον ρώτησα ποιό ήταν και μου έδωσε μια αυτοσχέδια ερμηνεία του ποίημα που είχε ακούσει ποτέ. Τον ρώτησα ποιό ήταν και μου έδωσε μια αυτοσχέδια ερμηνεία αυτού που λέει «όπου πας και γω θα πάω...» και η ερμηνεία του, μέσα στο θόρυβο και τα φώτα και τη μυρουδιά της μπύρας, ήταν ένα απ’τα πιο όμορφα πράγματα που έχω ακούσει ποτέ. Το είχε μεταφράσει, επιτρέποντάς στο ποίημα να τιγυρίζει όπως ήθελε μέσα στο μυαλό του. Δεν γίνεται τίποτα καλύτερο, είχα σκεφτεί τότε.

Μετάφραση, Άγγελος Σακκής, 21 Ιουλίου 2015.
LAURA MORIARTY

FROM LATE MOURNING
IN YOUR BOOK

Your line
“spectral mosaic”
taken from life
examples of death

“paradoxical hero of
an instant that endures
without a future”

Desiccated iris scent
Senseless

Made into words
in lines that break
or didn’t or don’t

Age after age
You never leave
Or I stay

But find today
Flowers

Left by me
Against the page
STAYING ON ALONE

“… those who mourn
As if they were not mourning”

Say instead
“So we were together”

Bourne up by the presence
Of you in the house and

Me in the world
Going to work

Wrote by day and
Dreamed by night

Or died
Staring into nothing

Whether Alice B. Toklas
Her lover or me you

Remembered the book as *Going*
But didn’t go

Didn’t want to know
The words
JOHN OLSON

“THE ALOUD IN THE SPOON”
“THE BEAUTIFUL WEATHER OF GERUNDS”
If I get wet in the city looking for a buckle I will have the eye of an artist and the nose of a plumber. If I write thicken on a piece of paper it caresses an image of currents. Winds make hockey. This is how to bare itself on impact. Bas-relief is personal. And abstractions smell of consciousness. Conquest is rudimentary. But suppose a lounge crawls with meat. Wheel the embroidery into the next room, but only when I dribble. The thesis bombed through a fish. I like to pound this into phantoms. I blow through propulsion. Henna is incongruous if it all does is convulse with architecture. It is through natural investigation that my insistence drifted inside the thumb. The space was full of mosaic. I pocketed the napkin and pierced a willow. A war below the boat tasted of elevators. Our paint moved over your wildcat interior and thus made sonic monotony turn completely red. The altitude sat beside the chronological linen weeping a few entomologies into circulation. Many were alive. It should be obvious. The swimming is salient because my interior is full of proverbs and my exterior is aluminum siding and weathered shingles, a form of ontological argument based on gardenias. I threw the more logical vegetables into the cabbage kinetic and kind, as if resistance were called for, then abandoned. There was a sophisticated airport for the aristocracy and it was available with the proper inquiry. We folded ourselves into airplanes and played Bach on the moss. If we do not rob the bank the bank will give us a propeller of jelly. They did this last time, and we were made glad, and talked long and wildly into the evening. The afternoon oozed out of a legacy of strife, almost oblivious, another day almost. There's a trace of whipped cream on my pants. This is a reference to structure. And so we got engaged in life. We lift the branches which puzzle the scorching wind and all the leaves indicate teeming, each in their own way, each ad-libbing a palace of photosynthesis. The chemistry of sensation surprises itself on a thing and yet does not seem to abolish clouds. So to orbit a poem is to soften and to age there and become artless and benign. Put a structure in flour. There is an extravagant simulacrum that whispers through a creosoted railroad tie and is joined to braille which results in sequoias. Their seeds are surprisingly small, light and delicate. The carving of a drink stirs on a flower. I’m not sure. I think it's a virgin mimosa. I authorize rising and rise. I find wisdom will first roll toward orange then burst into an aurora in a bistro. The coffee tasted bravely above the singing, and although the song was long and arduous, it had to get done. The breath issues forth while the tongue rubs against the palate and teeth proud to be a pastel. I hereby clapboard this converging palace.
It’s a plump morning fog in which to feel the joy of intrigue. What changes change besides liniment? Propane shooting flames against the wood. The search for identity in words strung together like the mind of a house. The remembrance of miniskirts among the bleachers. The squeak of shoes. The aloud in a spoon.
THE BEAUTIFUL WEATHER OF GERUNDS

What physical presence does not taste of heat? I think of pipes in basements, dripping and cold, and don’t really mean to derive energy from that. I prefer to catch a taxi. All the hardening I’ve been learning to medicate may now retire on its own terms and have a blast representing envy. I’m done with embarrassment. That’s for youth. What I want is solitude. Maybe a walk would do me some good. My blood is stirring. Powwows and popcorn exist without approval. You know? Some things just are. Others are propelled by a mood of yearning, treading architectures of hope and filigree. Not many people read these days, I mean really read, you know? The kind of reading that results in canvas, paint, ruffled necks and big hats with silver buckles. I’m often entranced by the postcards one sees displayed on drugstore racks. This kind of reading requires the tools of chronology and a head like a world. It isn’t difficult to find continents of thought in your head or kings sculpted in granite if you provide yourself with a little time and a rawhide vest. There’s a parable of value in each and every eye. Mirrors are even wilder. The reflections are elusive, difficult to hug, but grapple with consciousness like the rest of us, those of us still flesh and blood, getting wrinkled, bald, but knowing just how to set up a stepladder and paint a ceiling without getting paint everywhere. That takes a certain skill. The journey doesn’t end with a dock and a group of people greeting you as you remove your life jacket. It makes a segue into another thousand themes of dogs and engravings. There’s no way you can expand a circle without spreading your wings and dropping a regret or two on somebody’s head. The elegance of maturity begins with a monstrous recognition of mud, what it is, how it congeals, how much of it there is, how it never ends, but sticks to the shoes and is left with imprints, the tread of tires, the patterns on the bottoms of running shoes, which become a text. Heraclitus was right about change. It’s swollen and textured, incongruous and unpredictable. Hence, poetry. Burning and migration, intestines and leaves. Paper existed long before the computer, and is best savored in a spirit of resistance. Whatever else you think about potato chips, the friction of life is what cultures pearls. Every time I crack an egg I feel sublime. Though it’s mostly when I’m thirsty, and there’s plenty of juice in the refrigerator, and none of my opinions matter anymore. Just the screws I’ve written into a sentence to hold everything together, the rain against the window, the keys on the table, the mercury in the thermometer serving us conversation and numbers, as if a religion crawled out to be born, inspiring architecture and plays, oblivion and self-effacement. Puddles. Bob Dylan. Beggars and groans. The
beautiful weather of gerunds, brimming with imagery and voyage. Why, I continually ask, is there something instead of nothing? Nothing pleases or puzzles me more than life. Just don’t ask me to fix anything electrical. It’s enough that I shave, get dressed, and occasionally offer my friends something stereophonic. Life is a tale of dusky migration. Ask anyone. They will tell you what a gerund is. That it turns brown with age, and will attract a great many words, describing coffee, describing romance, describing blue.
SARA TUSS EFRIK

GLAND

TRANSLATED BY JOHANNES GÖRANSSON
(Automatic rite of Kim Yideum *A Stain in the Shape of a Star*)

I stand dressed in black in the opening of my mother’s mouth. When she opens the cap of the water bottle I am washed into her inner. Now she has an aged daughter in her heart. I go for a walk in her red body with my hockey trunk. The hockey trunk is full of stolen goods and poked out eyes. I cling to a vessel in her red body. My mother gets short of breath and coughs. She gives birth to me backwards. But she has known that would happen all along. One October night she saw a star fall in black despair, and at that point she knew that her daughter was a lost cause. It’s my job to cheer her up now. I take her hand. The room we step into is full of foam. The bathtubs are lined up. My gangster dad has sorted the women according to skin color and age. I make love to the youngest of them. Her brother is a soldier who has gone up in smoke. I hold her hand. I ask mom for the cannula she has hid. She picks it out of his knee-high boot broom. I inject the young whore with a urine colored liquid. In the quiet room, I squeeze a lemon over her foaming-apart head. Not even the mother notices constantly nimble fingers.

It is time now mother, I say.
For what?
You know.

My mother takes a deep breath. She gets ready. She stabs my right thigh with a kitchen knife. It happens in an instant. I barely have time to react. Blood runs out, hot and throbbing. She leans forward and kisses that which is pouring out of me. She smiles with her red mouth when she looks at me, blood covering her face. She looks like a newborn clown. I take her in my arms.

The young whore I had just injected takes a photograph of us. She prints the photograph and frames it. The photograph is placed on the mantelpiece in the mausoleum of a buried king. Knee-girls stand in line. They have already smeared their black nails with butter.

Then it’s snipping time.
Appendix:
I do not believe the girl with the dark mind. Her comforters and failures is a success story. Just like the whore's life. Their smoked-up existence is an sunshine ideal. During the night and the shame I become absolutely convinced that I have to take my life. Instead, I force myself to create miniature worlds in my mind for one more day because I cannot bring myself to kill myself, not now. Things were better before. When the knee-girl was a junkie and energetic instead of this hypersensitive and paranoid impression-body.
WILL ALEXANDER

FROM CONCERNING THE HENBANE BIRD
Concerning The Henbane Bird is uttered by the other worldly voice of Andean Hillstar the 2nd largest hummingbird on Earth. This is the first poem in The Combustion Cycle. The second poem in the cycle is entitled On Solar Physiology uttered by an Angolan shaman, and the 3rd is The Ganges uttered by an untouchable. Thus South America, Africa, India and the cosmos are explored.
"...I am proof that the transpersonal exists
that inscrutable exorcism remains

my wings first populated
by distillation from meteors

yet now
human beings as assembled subjects stored by territorial flaw
as if trying to interpret from Anarctica
bluish hails from China

because I sense these levels
the hails
the flaws
the African Sanservieria
the dust from Babylonian land waves
as I am unified by smokeless solar foundation
with superior fuliginosity
which expands & re-emits the galaxies from nothingness

perhaps at lowered concentration
I am seen as a blemished sand demon
simply scavenging from debris

but I know in my rawness
that eternity is freedom from periodic habit
from biology as quotidian symbiotic measured from one mirrored distance to another

everything swirls
mountains dim
grasses develope
the Sun glistens
through the optical transfer of instinct
my battle is against dreary modifying templates
against the pronoun which resists dispersion
so gravity no longer lurks with virtuosic terror

as living nigredo I flew before there was death
from cosmic wells to roundelays of earthlight
elliptically entranced by Andean Peru by the cold transfixion of Ecuador

being a bastion of dissimilar species
I am akin to the Nasturtium
in that my colours are a transported magnet
setting marshes ablaze
like a hive of flailing pentads

being Juniper leanings
which at times structures the seasons commingling with sparks from blank rubidium jetties

which suffices at one level
according to duration as minimum yield
& at another level according to transhuman spiral

I am an avian who extends its yield with defective circling
around proto-epic stupas
being one of my auras
projected through the glass that is India
like a free standing meteor
advancing scope after persistent electrical scope
being shock as transparent equation

so that my plumage becomes bewildering stasis

a patternless holding grain
hovering day after uncounted day
so that progression is blurred as a specious in-canonical counting
not unlike corroded daybreak foundries
that register deficits through enfeebled firmaments
being creatures wandering
burning
uncreated
faceless
in league with genetic myopia

yet
I’ve wandered from seeming liquidation
as an incandescent signal
wafting from Alpha Centauri combining a superior vocal carbon with freshly harvested
monerons
alive by means of restless imporiosity

I have occured from a blank diakos predicted by all the entities
factored from an osmotic codex
far beyond a fixed or strangling relation with soil

I’m speaking of dialectic with dialectic of mirror with mirror
being alive with ghostly oxygen levels
primal as thirstless cosmological fire

neither the instinctual mind nor matter
but energy more fundamental than living
& it is in this zone from which I trembled through undoing

I was a precocious Datura in blackened lightning valleys
divinized by smell
by leakage
by chromosomal quaking

a perfect seance by velocity
by sudden neutron seas simultaneous as deltas
& from this velocity
I will attempt to mine vectors
from intrinsic pollutional ailments imbibing henbane litres
so as to transmute the various toxins of the world

these infelicitous toxins
alive
like a rose improperly rooted
going deeper into unfit sturgeon & squid
seeing by dyplopia
being ghost ponies as whales

for instance
in the Black Sea*
'Copepods' vanished
gastropods no longer members of life 'oysters reduced to 'remnant populations''
as if one could speak of cleansed uranium trees
of algae flourishing amidst invasive detergents
devastated
the Black Sea horse mackeral
the Atlantic bonito
'three species of grey mullets'

seals
killed by 'organo Chlorines'
the 'white-tailed sea eagle'
overcome by contaminents
hovering
floating back & forth over death stunned by ether from corpses..."
GLOSSARY

Black Sea- In recent years the depths of the Black Sea "have become oxygen starved deserts, riddled with pockets of hydrogen sulfide gas. Fishermen often report seeing sheets of flame on open waters..."