



Aldus,

a journal of translation

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a journal of translation



Issue 1, Spring 2011

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Letter from the Editors

Speaking without fear of repercussions, we can organize contemporary literature around two poles: the literature that marshalls all the faculties of the soul in full cognitive stimulation, the reader's brain lit globally on the screen of an MRI machine; and the literature of completeness, pages already cut, that tries to make story and identity cohere. These poles have always existed; today's inheritors are post-modernism, on the one hand, and the *New Yorker's* fiction section, on the other. The battlelines have been drawn since the end of the last century, yet no one recognizes that today's readers have long ago erased these lines in the sand, rushing to the shore and the ocean, their attention on the mystery of the lands beyond it.

This situation is nothing new. In 1925, when Russian literature found itself in the same predicament, Boris Eikhenbaum wrote about a recent influx of translated literature into the market. Today, he tells us, "translated literature fills a vacuum which has come about in our native literature--only a seeming vacuum perhaps, but for the reader one unquestionably there. The reader is no historian of literature... What he needs is to have an absorbing book on hand for leisurely reading. He needs a finished product, one ready

to use.” And how do works in translation fill the space of uncertainty in the literary marketplace? A translated work is always already finished to us; it presents itself as an emissary from a completed world, removed from the pettiness of one’s own language, literature, and culture--and no matter how it is perceived in its own land, it always appears unified in another language. As such, it stands above contemporary controversies, like a manuscript from antiquity or a message from the future. It brings into view the following: that a different kind of whole is possible.

Now, the most exciting things happening in American literature bear the mark of a translator, and the authors need not be named. For when things get tough for letters, one looks abroad for new exemplars, new reminders.

This volume, brings together authors and translators speaking from across time, place, language, and genre. There is no path, exactly; each work opens up a new height and a new abyss. All together, they superpose a globe and a timeline; grasp them before they collapse.

Timothy Nassau & Matthew Weiss

Since Nine--

by C.P. Cavafy
translated by Peter Kentros and Emily Oglesby, with
assistance from Daniel Mendelsohn
from the Greek

Half past twelve. The time has quickly passed
since nine when I first brightened the lamp
and sat down here. I've been sitting without reading,
without speaking. With whom should I speak,
so alone in this home?

The apparition of my youthful body,
since nine when I first brightened the lamp,
has come and found me and reminded me
of shuttered perfumed rooms
and of pleasure spent--what bold pleasure!
And it also brought before my eyes
streets made unrecognizable by time,
bustling city centers of old

Απ' τες Εννιά --

Δώδεκα και μισή. Γρήγορα πέρασεν η ώρα
απ' τες εννιά που άναψα την λάμπα,
και κάθισα εδώ. Κάθουμουν χωρίς να διαβάζω,
και χωρίς να μιλώ. Με ποιόνα να μιλήσω
κατάμονος μέσα στο σπίτι αυτό.

Το είδωλον του νέου σώματός μου,
απ' τες εννιά που άναψα την λάμπα,
ήλθε και με ήυρε και με θύμισε
κλειστές κάμαρες αρωματισμένες,
και περασμένην ηδονή-- τι τολμηρή ηδονή!
Κ' επίσης μ' έφερε στα μάτια εμπρός,
δρόμους που τώρα έγιναν αγνώριστοι,
κέντρα γεμάτα κίνησι που τέλεψαν,

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theaters and cafes that existed long ago.
The apparition of my youthful body
came and also brought me cause for pain:
family deaths, and divisions;
the feelings of my loved ones, the feelings of
those long dead which I valued so little.

Half past twelve. How the time has passed.
Half past twelve. How the years have passed.

και θέατρα και καφενεία που ήσαν μια φορά.
Το είδωλον του νέου σώματός μου
ήλθε και μ' έφερε και τα λυπητερά:
πένθη της οικογένειας, χωρισμοί,
αισθήματα δικών μου, αισθήματα
των πεθαμένων τόσο λίγο εκτιμηθέντα.

Δώδεκα και μισή. Πώς πέρασεν η ώρα.
Δώδεκα και μισή. Πώς πέρασαν τα χρόνια.

Red Riding Hood

by Aleš Šteger
translated by Brian Henry
from the Slovenian

On no other evening is a walker of the Berlin streets dressed in a coat of thicker solitude than on Christmas. Here and there an afternoon shadow on a window--person or mirage? German precaution with provisions experiences one of its climaxes upon seeing the sole vendors in the shops who melt like February snowmen every moment behind the mute registers. Nowhere even a dog, only a slight misty drizzle comes running toward a human figure in a park, but not completely. Santa Claus with white sneakers and a dangling pom-pom on a red cap at last is gaspingly bringing a sooty message. To whom? And what does he have to say? Lights slowly begin to turn on in windows, like bees filling a honeycomb, and after night falls a soft feeling of holiday vertigo

floods me again. For an instant it's enough, cold all over, I read the street boards in front of me instead of *Wittelsbacherstrasse Weihnachtsstrasse* (Wittelsbach Street Christmas Street). When I wake up a week later, it's as if the last seven days have existed only in a long-forgotten sleep. Since early afternoon human years have flown like rockets into the sky, launched toward the scornful smiles of clouds. Time: although it moves continually toward the end and thus exists on the other side, on the future side, it must slowly run out, is always ahead of me equally. Exactly one year. Still one year. And still one and still, as long as it goes. So it isn't important if a cork bursts its red cap a few minutes early, before there are shouted countdowns popping the remaining corks in *Savigny square*. *Red Riding Hood* champagne is thus like the big bad wolf coming from the east. A rare exception, that in this country, in this town, divided by a common past and future, something solid is coming from the Urals. And the crackling in Berlin came from there on New Year's Eve. While the majority of pyromaniacs in the eastern parts of town *Prenzlauer Berg, Mitte, Friedrichshain, Pankow* have already run out of ammunition before midnight, sly *Neros* from the west were soberly waiting, so that the night is halved, only then did they start their bombarding of the vacant sky. One, who raised her glass of champagne to our company and toasted the vertical hands on the clock, her hand couldn't conceal an inability to forget the bombing of her town in the Balkans ten years before. With an extend-

ed palm, as if she could in this way repel the yet harmless projectile, she ran among smoke screens and empty bottles. Children looked at her surprised as they released their rockets into the air. As if they were sparks which, like poems, cracking for an instant, opened small crevices in the dark sky, looked not only to the future but also at the same time to the past. At the intersection of *Mommsenstraße* and *Leibnizstraße* I felt a blunt blow to the leg. Night pelted me with the spent cartridges of extinguished missiles. A few hours ago an icy Russian northeaster turned around. Snow, which a few days ago had covered the town with fake bulletproof armor, changed into the dirty gray tears of a woman after an evening full of disappointments and deceits. The new year welcomed us with every possible luxurious sight. With the sight of people, who danced sweating through restaurants, with the sight of a man at *Ludwigkirchplatz* who held a woman by the shoulders so she didn't fall forward with her head in the trash while vomiting, with the sight of a cell phone, lost in the blinking red snow, ringing in vain. On the way back to the apartment we admirably threw a bottle with a red cap into a bin. With the burst of a wineglass and the crackling of the vault of the sky, a new time was still beginning. Already at its own beginning it looked like the circles of the car at the square, which danced a few times around its axles and eventually got stuck in a pile of snow. The drunken driver stepped out for a moment to take a look at the damage, but merely swung a fist and returned to the vehicle. As if he were stowed

Red Riding Hood

away safely in the wolf's belly, stretched across the driver's seat and with a thumb dipped in his mouth, he fell asleep.

L.9

by Horace
translated by Jonah Wolf
from the Latin

See how Soracte stands tall and white with snow
and how the forests struggle to bear their loads.

See those and how the streams once fluid
stop still because of the ice of winter.

Dissolve the cold, placing on the hearth some logs;
bring down and pour out into the deepest cups
wine from the Sabine jar, and aged.

Generously, Thaliarchus, do this.

Take care of these: the rest to the gods entrust.
Once they have stopped the winds from their battle with
the seething ocean, cypress trees are
shaken no more, nor the mountain-ashes.

Decline to know what will be tomorrow and
enjoy whichever bounty of days you get
from Fortune. Spurn, boy, neither sweet loves,
nor any dance, for as long as old age

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte, nec iam sustineant onus
silvae laborantes, geluque
flumina constiterint acuto.

Dissolue frigus ligna super foco
large reponens, atque benignius
deprome quadrimum Sabina,
o Thaliarche, merum diota.

Permitte divis cetera; qui simul
stravere ventos aequore fervido
deproeliantis, nec cupressi
nec veteres agitantur orni.

Quid sit futurum cras fuge quaerere, et
quem Fors dierum cumque dabit lucro
adpone, nec dulcis amores
sperne puer neque tu choreas,

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makes not itself, sad, known in the form of white
hairs, which protrude from young Thaliarchus' scalp.

Now let the fields be sought, and play-grounds;
whisperings, soft, at a certain hour, and

a hiding female's treacherous, pleasing laugh
resounding from an intimate corner and
a bracelet snatched from upper arms or
plucked from a barely resisting finger.

donec virenti canities abest
morosa. Nunc et campus et areae
lenesque sub noctem susurri
composita repetantur hora;

nunc et latentis proditor intimo
gratus puellae risus ab angulo
pignusque dereptum lacertis
aut digito male pertinaci.

The Thing

by Kho Tararith
translated by Kho Tararith and Rebecca Leuchak
from the Cambodian

That thing there
Why doesn't it talk all the time?
Why doesn't it know all?
If it were alive it would be so,
That thing there.

If it were alive why does it
Blindly go the wrong way?
If it were a bird why doesn't it fly?
If a fish why not swim?
These things I know.

That thing there is not black or white,
But its heart is not good like the crow.
It pecks and tears at all Khmer around it,
And like a monkey, it is not faithful or modest.
It brags and borrows around the world.

វត្ថុ

និពន្ធដោយ ខូ តាកាបូទ្វី

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>១. បើជាវត្ថុម្តេចស្រដី
តែបើជាមនុស្សក៏មិនត្រូវ</p> <p>២. បើជាបក្សីម្តេចមិនហោះ
មិនខ្មៅមិនសចិត្តដូចក្អែក</p> <p>៣. បើប្រៀបនឹងស្លាក៏ថាបាន
ជាប់បុលជុំជិតយកមកសាង</p> <p>៤. វត្ថុនេះប្រៀបអ្វីមិនចំ
បើនឹងថាមនុស្សម្តេចកោងកាច</p> <p>៥. វត្ថុដែលក្លៀលវិតរុំ
ឃើញតែបំផ្លាញជាតិខេមរា</p> <p>៦. នឹងប្រៀបវត្ថុនេះទៅឈ្មឹង
ជាតិសាស្ត្រដ៏ទៃដែលច្បាមយក</p> | <p>បូបាច់វែងខ្លីដឹងរក់ជ្រៅ
ព្រោះដើរខុសផ្លូវដូចអត់ភ្នែក។</p> <p>រូបរាងទាំងអស់មិនចម្លែក
ខាំកកេរហែកខ្មែរជិតខាង។</p> <p>ចិត្តវាសាមានហើយអ្នកអាង
បារមីគ្រប់យ៉ាងទប់អំណាច។</p> <p>ឃើញតែវាយដំគួរឲ្យខ្លាច
ប្រឹងព្រួសបាចសាចភាពផ្តាច់ការ។</p> <p>បញ្ចេញសារធំក្លិនឫស្សី
បំបាត់សាវតាពីទ្វីបលោក។</p> <p>ជញ្ជក់ឈាមឃើងទៅបំពោក
ខ្មែរធ្វើជម្រកឥណ្ឌូចិន។</p> |
|---|--|

To build its image and power.

That thing there
Can not compare to what we know,
Instead it is always fighting and making people scared.
Spreading its control and dictatorship.
It is always dirty
And carries the stench of jealousy.
It destroys the Khmer nation, country and culture,
Erasing Khmer from history.

That thing there,
Like a leech, sucks our blood
Until it is swollen,
Nourishing other nations but not the Khmer,
Who will be sucked into the body of Indochina.
These things I know.

The Thing

Voronezh

by Anna Akhmatova
translated by Ilya Kaminsky and Katie Farris
from the Russian

--for Osip Mandelshtam

And the whole town is frozen
--glass trees, walls, glass snowdrops,
and on glass, hesitant, I step.
The painted sleigh skids in snow.
And, over Voronezh - crows,
and poplars. And the sky is bright green,
washed, in sun-dust, in smoke.
And the old battle of Kulikovo still
tilts our Russian, glorious land.
And poplars rise their bowls
above us, and ring--as if to our happiness
thousands wedding guests are drinking.

But in the room of banished poet
fear and muse stand watch by turn
and the night is nearing
that knows no dawn.

March 4, 1936

Воронеж

О. М[андельштаму]

И город весь стоит оледенелый.
Как под стеклом деревья, стены, снег.
По хрусталиям я прохожу несмело.
Узорных санок так неверен бег.
А над Петром воронежским - вороны,
Да тополя, и свод светло-зеленый,
Размытый, мутный, в солнечной пыли,
И Куликовской битвой веют склоны
Могучей, победительной земли.
И тополя, как сдвинутые чаши,
Над нами сразу зазвенят сильнее,
Как будто пьют за ликование наше
На брачном пире тысячи гостей.

А в комнате опального поэта
Дежурят страх и муза в свой черед.
И ночь идет,
Которая не ведает рассвета.

4 марта 1936

When a man dies...

by Anna Akhmatova
translated by Ilya Kaminsky and Katie
from the Russian

When a man dies,
His portraits change.
Different eyes stare at us, lips
stir in a stranger's smile.
I noticed this, returning
from a funeral of a poet.
Since then I often checked it,
and my theory has been confirmed.

1940

Когда человек умирает...

Когда человек умирает,
Изменяются его портреты.
По-другому глаза глядят, и губы
Улыбаются другой улыбкой.
Я заметила это, вернувшись
С похорон одного поэта.
И с тех пор проверяла часто,
И моя догадка подтвердилась

1940

People's Statement

*from the Crowds of Midan Tahrir
translated by Andrew Leber
from the Arabic*

Translator's Note:

This statement, from the protestors of Midan Tahrir, was one of many that circulated widely on the internet and on the street during the revolution in Egypt. Beginning on January 25th, demonstrators went out into the streets, protesting the corruption and oppression that were ever-present under the regime of former President Hosni Mubarak. The protests continued until February 11th, when Mubarak finally gave into the protestors' demands and gave up power. This "People's Statement" appeared shortly before the President's departure, at a time when he was trying to convince the Egyptian people to end their protest for the sake of the country's stability and prosperity, promising to enact reforms and withdraw himself from upcoming presidential elections. This document emphatically rejects the claims made by the embattled President, demanding the ousting of the existing regime as the key to any true reform within Egyptian society and politics.

The Egyptian youth have put forth these seven points as their demands and send them to the Vice President. We put them on banners and posters in every corner of Midan Tahrir, and we are now spreading them to every corner of Egypt and the world, in order to let the world gauge the sincerity of the ruling regime in meeting its promises after the Vice President and Prime Minister claimed that 90% of the demands had been met.

Our demands:

1. The removal of the president.....has not happened.
2. Dissolution of the People's Assembly and the Shura Council.....has not happened.
3. Immediate end to the state of emergency.....
.....has not happened.
4. The formation of a national unity government for the transition of power.....has not happened.
5. An elected parliament to revise the constitution.....
.....has not happened.
6. Immediate trial of those responsible for deaths of demonstrators during the revolution.....has not happened.

7. Speedy trial for those who have stolen the nation's wealth.....has not happened.

Therefore, as not one of these seven demands has been met, the President, and the Vice President, and the new Prime Minister are all lying.

For what will happen if the people return to their homes now, under the pressure of “the hunger of the people”, the shortage of food engineered by the regime, the threat to security posed by the regime, the wages and salaries frozen by the regime? To say nothing, of course, of the impact of “Brotherhood” scaremongering, or the foreign agendas, or subversive elements, or the wild emotions of the people, or their pride, or other lies that have been broadcast over state media.

The untrustworthy regime has promised to increase reforms. (Their deceit can be seen in the above points, which have gone 100% unmet.)

Seven results of the regime continuing until September (if the demonstrators return to their homes):

1. The President will take revenge on all of the demonstrators and their supporters, while the world stands by and will never again back their desires.

2. There will be no reform of the Assembly or the Shura. At best there will be a few hearings, and some members will be impeached. However, the majority will hold on to their seats, electoral fraud will return, not one person will turn over his seat, and the opposition will be ignored.

3. The state of emergency will continue forever and the police will take their revenge on the people, especially after it was proved that many of thieves and Bultagiya thugs detained by the police were actually police officers and members of the security services. These people were prepared to redouble their efforts at looting and intimidation, unchecked by morals, ethics or religious principles. They are fiercely protecting all that they stand to gain if the present regime continues.

4. The corrupt ministries will continue to rule, and what they can take in the way of action will support the President's directives. The President himself has said that they have always carried out his will, and so the President is the regime and the regime is the President.

5. The fraudulent people's assembly will promulgate more corrupt laws on the authority of the President of the Republic, just as before, and the humiliation of the people under the law will be complete.

6. Those responsible for demonstrators' deaths will not be tried. Rather, more prominent demonstrators will be killed, while the rest will be used as examples by the internal security apparatus (which will be dissolved after the revolution, God willing).

7. Those who stole the country's wealth through greed or corruption will not be tried, and those who fled with the people's money will not be punished. Rather, they will enjoy their stolen wealth in the most beautiful place on earth. However, they have also unleashed Bultagiya thugs upon the demonstrators and the people in the safest places of most beautiful country in the world, on streets and houses. We will lose all sense of security, and their presence will undermine the very foundations of security. None of us will feel safe or feel secure in our houses after a day of this.

Are you still asking the demonstrators to leave Midan al-Tahrir and return to their prisons (sorry, "return to their houses, temporarily")?

Do you really think that the person who spread this injustice and humiliation, this poverty and sickness for thirty years, the person who stole more than E\$2 trillion for himself and his cronies, is going to undertake reforms over the course of 9 months?

From Areesh to Tunis

From Areesh to Tunis

translated by Cecily Barber, Jason Reeder,
and Andrea Dillon
from the Arabic

Translators' Note:

Our translation is a selection from the Egyptian epic poem, *As-Sira Al-Hilaliyya*. The narrative, which first emerged in the 13th century, tells the story of Abu Zayd, the bastard leader of the Hilali tribe who lead his people from Yemen to Tunisia. The poem is typically performed in nightly installments over the course of the month of Ramadan. While the oral epic is very well known in the Middle East, each poet tells it differently, and no version had been written down until Abd Al-Rahman Al-Abnudi published his interpretation in three volumes in 2002. Our translation is the first from this text into English.

They crossed Areesh and left Palestine.
The next day, they went down into fertile Egypt.
Day and night they walked with camels,
Covering the distant lands.

One day, they went down to Bilbeis,
And hunger wore out their insides.
They searched in the city, finding no bread,
As foreigners, they held no sway.¹

They pawned their belongings and *kaffiyas*,
For lack of money.
They were foreigners without enough,
Their hearts sank with their lot.

Oh God, after lunch,
They crossed into Egypt, walking.
Oh God, banish suffering!
At dawn or in night, they continued on.

And they crossed toward the desert,
And to As Sallum the loved ones walked.
Amidst the mountains and the desert,
They cried, for the heart wore thin.

1 Literally, "their hands were short."

ني طس لف كرتو شيرعلا ىلع ىدع
قدى عسلا رصم اولزن موي يينات
نيري اس نجه لاب راهن سيلو
قدى عبالا دال بلا اووطني

سي بل ب وحن اولزن ام راهن
مه اشح بود عوجل او
شيع اودجوي ام قن يدملا يف اوثحب
مه ادي قري صق ابرغ

تايفكل او مي ام علا اونهر
مه اردلا مدع عم
تايفكل اش مه اع ام ابرغ
مه اردنم مه لب بق حبص

ءادغلا دع ب مالس اي
اوراس رصم ىلع اودع
ءال بلا حيزي الوم اي
اورات لي للا يف رجفلا يف

ءارحصل او وحن اودعو
بي اب حلا اوراس و مولسلا ىلع
ءارحصل او لاب جلا طسو
بي اد بل قلا هيلو يكبي

While Abu Zayd was walking,
His shawl drooped in folds.
On this day, he was hiding a secret,
And he said: “Listen, oh loved ones!”

Abu Zayd called: “Oh, John!²
Long is our journey in distance.
Our skin color and beards have changed,
This is a long and arduous journey.

Oh John, throw pebbles to the sand,
And see what has happened at home.
Tell us of our families and friends,
We have not forgotten our village at all.”

Yehya threw the pebbles—Pray to the Prophet!³
In this bizarre story from the West,
He was void of lies and adultery,
But by night and by day, his heart wore thin.

He told Abu Zayd: “Oh uncle, all of our people are well, But
from God I ask for aid,
For we will be on the trip when our speed will slow,
Let me tell you what will happen to us.

2 Yehya, his nephew named for John the Baptist.

3 Directed to the audience.

راسو يدع امل هير وبا
بي ادع مل ي خار مل اش
راسل ا متاك يد موي يف
بي اب ح اي او ع مسا : لاقو

ي ي ح ي اي : قم الس يدان
ي ر ي س م ل ا ي ف ان راوش م ل اط
ي ح ل ل ا و ن و ل ل ا ر ي غ ت و
ق ر ي ب ك ق ل ح ر و راوش م د

ل ا م ر ا ل ا ب ر ض ا ي ي ح ي اي
ل ص ا ح ي ل ا و ي ر ج ي ل ا ف و ش و
ل ا ج ر ل ا و ا ن س ل ن ي ل ع ي ن ر ب خ ا
ل ص ا و ش ه ي س ا ن ا م ع ج ن ل ا و

ن ي ز ل ا ي ل ع ا و ل ص ه ل م ر ي ح ي ب ر ض
ب ي ا ر غ ل ا ن م ق و د ا ن ي د
ن ي ز ل ا و ب د ك ل ا ن م ي ل ا خ ن ا ك
ب ي ا د ب ل ق ل ا و ق ر ا م ن ق ل ي ل

ر ي خ ن م ه ل ك ب ر ع ل ا ي ل ا ج اي : ه ل ل ا ق
ا ن ا ع م ب ل ط ا ه ل ل ا ن م
ر ي س ل ا ا و د ج ن ا م ل ق ل ح ر ي ف ا ن ح ا و
ا ن ا ع م ي ر ج ي ح ي ل ل ا ك ل ي ر و ا

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

Oh uncle, we are in the distant West.
Listen to my words as I tell you:
I will be stabbed by slaves,
But one cannot reason with death.

And Muraae will fall into a dry well,
And this is God's will.
Injustice lies at the origin of time,
He will be bitten by a snake, but will not die.

And Jonas⁴ will enter palaces,
And will be in the city.⁵
Oh uncle, our reputations will fall short,
And our hearts will become sad.

Oh, how much suffering and degradation we will see!
We have drunk bitter vinegar.
The sand warns of calamity,⁶
Won't you take us back, oh uncle?

Won't you return with us to home?
We've come far enough.
Our families cry in mourning,
Never in my life have I experienced such sadness."

4 Yunis.

5 Tunis.

6 Literally: "Crows leapt in the sand"--a bad omen.

تابورغلا دالب يف ان حا لاخ اي
بواج أيمالك ي غص!
تابولجلا ديبع ينون عطيا اتأ
بيابس ةينملا ل صأو

روج هم دع لزن ي ح ي ع ر م و
يشام برلا هلم ع ي ي لا
روج هيل هل صأ نمزلا ام اي
يشان اوت ي الو ةي ح لا هب ي ص ت

روصق ي ف ش خ ي ح س ن و ي و
ةن ي د م ل ا ة و ج ن و ك ي ح و
روصق ان ع ا ب و ي ل ا خ اي
ةن ي ز ح ان ب و ل ق ح ب ص ت و

ناوهو بل غ اوفوشن ام اي
يلاخ رملانم انبرش
نابرغلا تلج ح لم رلا ي ف
؟يلاخ اي ان ي ب ش د و ا ع ت

حورن ان ي ب ش ع ج ر ت
؟هت ي ض م ي ل ل ا ة ي ا ف ك و
حون ت ي ك ب ت ب ان له أ
؟هت ي ر ا م ي ر م ع م ل ه ل ا

Abu Zayd Al Hilali told him: "Oh John, my nephew, be patient!
Man's ancestors are manifested in the strong.
Throw the burden to God, who veils all,
God willing, we will return safely one day.

God willing, with safety we will return,
Even if it is as old men, we will see our loved ones.
Oh, how the days pass and add up!
But our Lord is present, not absent."

The men traveled and arrived to the West,
Day and night, walking in the desert.
The days were hard as the wing of a crow,
Oh God, solve the hardships!

They crossed to the West, and on the day they arrived,
Hear my speech, oh listeners:
Oh God, when they were about to sell their lives,
The honorable men arrived to the gates of the city.

The honorable men entered Tunis.
Just as the honest man never cheats,
They had been patient through sweetness and bitterness,
Until they came to the land of Tunis.

رابص نوک يتخا دلو اي يحي اي :يلاهلل هل لاق
ديادشلل ايف نابت لاجرلا لصلأ
راتس دحاو ىلع لومحلا يمر!
دياع ريخلاب هللا ءاشنا

دوعن ريخلاب هللا ءاشنا
بيابحلل اوفوشن لجالل لاطن!
دوعتو مايأللي يضمي ام اي
بياغ سيل رضاح كبرو

بورغلل اولصوو لاجرلا اودع
رياس ارحص ييف رامن ليل
بورغلل حانجك مايأ اوفاش
رياسعلل ح يالوم اي

مولصو موي بورغلل ىلع اودع
مني عماس اي لوقلا اوغيص
موعاب رمعلل امل مالس اي
قنيدملا اولصو مارك لاجر

قيرملا اولزن مارك لاجر
شنوخي ام ني مألل اقالح
قيرملا قولحلل ىلع اوربص
سنوت رب اوتأ ىتح

L'Indifférent

by Albert Samain
translated by Pat Snidvongs
from the French

In a misty park where hours dissolve in love,
the satin dresses melt with slender cloaks,
reflected in the lake's unruffled skies:
savour an endless sunset drawing to a close.

Fans are folded; borne on muted winds,
a smooth andante dwindles to a dying fall;
like water filling basins to the brim,
love floods the soul and overflows the eyes.

Long curtained lashes flutter yearningly,
caresses ripple in arpeggios;
yet posing there, sarcastic, languid, solitary,

the libertine, bored stiff of Agnes or Lucile,
with dainty fingers and a dashing flourish, deigns
to sprinkle pinches of his heart onto the stage.

Dans le parc vapoureux où l'heure s'énamoure,
Les robes de satin et les sveltes manteaux
Se mêlent, reflétés au ciel calme des eaux,
Et c'est la fin d'un soir infini qu'on savoure.

Les éventails sont clos ; dans l'air silencieux
Un andante suave agonise en sourdine,
Et, comme l'eau qui tombe en la vasque voisine,
L'amour tombe dans l'âme et déborde des yeux.

Les grands cils allongés palpitent leurs tendresses;
Fluides sous les mains s'arpègent les caresses;
Et là-bas, s'effilant, solitaire et moqueur,

L'Indifférent, oh ! las d'Agnès ou de Lucile,
Sur la scène, d'un geste adorable et gracile,
Du bout de ses doigts fins sème un peu de son coeur.

Antoine Watteau

by Marcel Proust
translated by Pat Snidvongs
from the French

Now twilight powders cheeks and trees
with her blue mantle and amorphous mask,
the dust of kisses misting weary lips...
what's dim seems intimate, what's near, aloof.

That melancholic dream, the masquerade,
makes scenes of love more sad, seductive, false.
A poet's whim, a lover's wariness,
love needs to be embellished skillfully--
so here are picnics, silence, music, skiffs.

Crépuscule grimant les arbres et les faces,
Avec son manteau bleu, sous son masque incertain;
Poussière de baisers autour des bouches lasses...
Le vague devient tendre, et le tout près, lointain.

La mascarade, autre lointain mélancolique,
Fait le geste d'aimer plus faux, triste et charmant.
Caprice de poète - ou prudence d'amant,
L'amour ayant besoin d'être orné savamment -
Voici barques, goûters, silences et musique.

L'Indifférent (Watteau)

by Rainer Maria Rilke
translated by Pat Snidvongs
from the French

Ô naïtre ardent et triste,
mais, à la vie convoqué,
être celui qui assiste,
tendre et bien habillé,

à la multiple surprise
qui ne vous engage point,
et, bien mis, à la bien mise
sourire de très loin.

L'Indifférent (Watteau)

O, born both passionate
and sad, but summoned
before life, well-dressed
and gentle, he attends

the manifold surprise
which leaves him cold,
a dandy smiling at
his lady from afar.

Watteau

by Théophile Gautier
translated by Pat Snidvongs
from the French

Devers Paris, un soir, dans la campagne,
J'allais suivant l'ornière d'un chemin,
Seul avec moi, n'ayant d'autre compagne
Que ma douleur qui me donnait la main.

L'aspect des champs était sévère et morne,
En harmonie avec l'aspect des cieux,
Rien n'était vert sur la plaine sans borne,
Hormis un parc planté d'arbres très vieux.

Je regardai bien longtemps par la grille ;
C'était un parc dans le goût de Watteau :
Ormes fluets, ifs noirs, verte charmille,
Sentiers peignés et tirés au cordeau.

Je m'en allai l'âme triste et ravie ;
En regardant, j'avais compris cela :
Que j'étais près du rêve de ma vie,
Que mon bonheur était enfermé là.

One night, I walked along a worn-out road
to Paris, trudging through the countryside;
I was alone, with no one else besides
my sorrow to hold me by the hand.

The face of every field was grave and sad,
in perfect harmony with heaven's gaze;
no hint of green upon the endless plain
except a park, planted with ancient trees.

I gazed a long time through its gates,
and saw a park recalling Watteau's art:
green arbour, slender elms, dark yews,
the alleys manicured and groomed.

I left, my soul distressed yet full of bliss;
for as I looked, I understood this truth:
my lifelong dream was within reach,
the prison of my happiness.

A Few Chapters from the Guide

by Moses Maimonides
translated by Pedro de Toledo and Matthew Weiss
from the Spanish

Introduction to the Guide

In 1191, in the city of Fustat (Old Cairo), at the height of the Golden Age of Jewish medieval culture, Maimonides finished the *Guide for the Perplexed*. Who were the perplexed? Students of religion and philosophy, literate in both the holy scriptures and the metaphysics of Aristotle, and wavering, unable to reconcile revelation with reason, faith with science. Originally written in Arabic, the work was brought into Hebrew by Samuel ibn Tibbon, who worked directly with Maimonides during the course of the translation. Another Hebrew version was completed by Yehudah Al-Harizi, and from there the work was translated into Latin in the 13th

century. In that form, it was available to St. Thomas Aquinas, whose thought, for example, bears the imprint of Maimonides.

History dealt blow after blow to the health of Jewish thought around the Mediterranean. In the 12th century, the fanatical Almohad sect overran Muslim Spain, making the area barely livable for Jews. Maimonides himself fled to Egypt at that time, and exhorted his fellow Jews to escape as well. Later, after the Christian conquest of Spain, the Jews had to deal with “mob attacks and forced conversions,”¹ which came to a violent head in 1391. By the early 15th century, however, “some kings and distinguished noblemen” began to feel a restless curiosity towards the philosophical and the occult; these Christians, in fact, commissioned translation after translation into Spanish of the great works of Jewish thought from the previous centuries. Many of the translators, in fact, were *conversos*, or New Christians, former Jews who still carried with them the knowledge of Hebrew. Under the rule of Juan II (1406-1454) in Castille and Alfonso V (1416-1458) in Aragon, Jewish thought again flourished, in close contact with the rising Christian intellectuals of the time.

It was in this context that one *converso*, Pedro de Toledo, was commised to translate the *Guide* into Spanish. Of the three parts of the *Guide*, the first two were translated around 1419 in Zafra, and the third in Seville by 1432. Now, not much

¹ All quotations from Moshe Lazar’s introduction to the published Spanish text.

is known about Pedro de Toledo, but that he was the son of Juan del Castillo, an apostate Jew and a man of the generation of 1391. Whether Pedro himself was a physician in addition to being a translator, whether he was the author of a tract in Latin, or the judge of a small community of Jews in Toledo--or even whether, in fact, he was a *converso* or not--has been debated by scholars; what is known for sure is that Don Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, lord of Zafra and Feria in Extremadura, the son of Don Lorenzo of the Order of Santiago, commissioned the *Guide's* translation, but died in 1429, before the translation was completed; it is presumed that Pedro continued under the patronage of Don Gómez's brother-in-law Don Íñigo López de Mendoz, Marqués de Santillana, in whose library the translation was later discovered.

The resulting work was not only the first translation of Maimonides into a European vernacular, and was also the most extensive philosophical text ever to be translated into the Spanish language. Pedro de Toledo claims to have worked with four separate texts, the Judeo-Arabic original, the Hebrew translations of ibn Tibbon and Al-Harizi, as well as "some other medieval translations only alluded to here and elsewhere." Perhaps because of this mix, the work is plagued by scribal errors and confusions caused by discrepancies between the different translations; nevertheless, it can be said: "Pedro de Toledo's enterprise, in spite of some shortcomings as a translator and gaps in his total

mastery of Hebrew, as well as a certain clumsiness in style resulting both from the different translation techniques of Ibn Tibbon and Al-Harizi and from his literal adherence to their versions, offers a testimony to the active interest in Christian circles of his time in Maimonides's work and constitutes a linguistic landmark in the history of the Spanish language."

*Remarks on Translating Philosophy,
and on the Present Translation*

What does it mean to translate philosophy? In normal prose one faces the problem of emulating the style of the author, a rhythm and cadence that extends over pages, and grants story and character coherence; in poetry problems of image and symbol, of compression and line dominate. But in the translation of philosophy, what does one do?

Now, philosophy is the working over of metaphors; it is the drawing of analogies, and the raising into the abstract of the concrete, the later uncovering of hidden relationships implied in concepts, having been produced, those shapes of thought whose architecture is straightened-out and re-curved over the course of an argument. We are taught to feel and hold in our hands the shapes of these thoughts by words. It is not that that words *originate* the shape or concept; rather the word stands in for a certain shape, or philosophical experience, which has always suggested itself already to be understood.

So when we translate philosophy, we are translating not just words, but concepts, the shapes of thought; to bring philosophy from one language into another, then, is to uncover the metaphor at work in the original, and to make that metaphor explicit in the translation. For the metaphor must always be revitalized; to bring the original word directly into the target language with an explanatory footnote or to take refuge in an already existing native word, whose sense is similar, but whose metaphor is different or forgotten, is to rub out the very face of the original thought, and to reduce the philosophy to the churning of opaque symbols. Furthermore, since all philosophical language is metaphor to the utmost degree, and takes on the very immaterial curvature of thinking, a single word in philosophy can refer to the whole mass of a thought-building, and its conjoining words, the the shape of the space within it; therefore, there can never be a one-to-one correspondence of philosophical vocabulary from one language to another.

For this very reason, the English language poses a particular problem for the translation of philosophy. Whereas in other languages, the metaphor of a philosophical term might be written into the structure of the word itself, the philosophical terminology of English is by its nature obscure even to its own speakers, since it is nearly entirely derived from Latin, French, or Greek. Of course, the words themselves are merely the starting point for the philosopher; but one can see immediately that the English speaker con-

fronted with the opaqueness of words like substance, attribute, accident, essence, positive or negative, and so forth, is in a stranger position in regard to a given philosopher than those for whom such words make intuitive sense. It's worth considering, then, that perhaps philosophy appears more abstract in English, more divorced from everyday life and lived experience, because our philosophical words are, in fact, empty symbols for the dead metaphors of other languages.

I would like to draw three small examples from the *Guide's* Spanish in order to illustrate this point, and demonstrate some of the principles used in the translation which follows. Now, Spanish too bears the imprint of the classical philosophical tradition, and Pedro de Toledo's Spanish shows the importation of a number of words, derived from Latin, whose original metaphors are lost (*açidente, esençia*, and so forth). I have translated those words with their English equivalents (accident, essence, etc), without delving into the Latin or Greek roots. Whenever, however, the language presents a metaphorical expression using the mechanics of the Spanish language itself, I translate those metaphors directly rather than search for the standard English equivalent. Whether these metaphors are of Pedro de Toledo's devising, or whether they are adaptations of similarly metaphorical words in Hebrew or Arabic, is not material to the present translation. Rather, I want to convey in English the impression of the Spanish, leaving opaque words opaque,

and bringing out the metaphors which are active. It is particularly important to do so because as the earliest extensive work of philosophy in Spanish, Pedro's language is unusually vivid, if at times, confused.

Three translational cruxes in particular deserve mention, since they are essential to understanding the argument of the excerpted passages. The first is the word *la rreformaçion*. At first glance one would be tempted to translate *la rreformaçion* as *the reformation*; and in fact, insofar as Maimonides is constantly distinguishing commonplace, every-day speech from philosophically proper discourse, one would not be surprised to find him emphasizing the reformative aspect of his teaching. But context makes clear that the word should be analyzed in terms of its component parts: *la rre-formaçion*, or the *re-forming*. The word, in fact, corresponds to the English word *attribute*, the metaphor being this, that a thing, a substance, has a form; this form is re-formed, or formed again, by the things attributed to it, the adjectives predicated on it. The act of re-forming, that is, an attribute, or a forming-again, is what is denoted by *la rreformaçion*.

Now, the key idea in the chapters I have translated is that God is ultimately unknowable; that conventionally, we ascribe various attributes (or, re-formings) to God, based on our understanding of ourselves, but that none of these attributes can be ultimately true in reference to God. They are merely metaphors proper to the understanding of the

masses. Rather than use what are usually translated as *positive attributes*--for example, "God is one"--one must employ *negative attributes*--for example, "God is not multiple," when speaking of the divine. The reasoning is that, in reality, God is *not* one, in our sense of the term. "God is not multiple" captures the fact that what we understand as oneness is always one of some number of things, whereas God's oneness is such that it precludes the possibility of there being anything but one.

Pedro often uses either *un nonbre* (a name) or *una rrefor-maçion* for attribute; but it would be misleading to translate his terms for *positive* and *negative*, *adebdante* and *despojante*, with their English counterparts. The word *positive* comes from the Latin *ponere*, "to put"; *negative* comes from Latin *negare*, "to deny." In English today, however, *positive* and *negative* have lost the sense of their original metaphors. That is not the case in Pedro's Spanish. *Un nonbre adebdante* is Pedro's term for a positive attribute, which literally means, *an obligating name*. *Un nonbre despojante* is his term for a negative attribute, and it literally means, *a stripping name*, or *a name that strips away*. *Un nonbre adebdante*, then, is an attribute that obligates something to be a certain way; whereas *un nonbre despojante* is an attribute that, far from obligating, actually sets a limit on the conception of the thing being described, a limit on the error of our conception. It literally strips away falsity. As we will see, Maimonides exhorts us only to use *nombres despojantes* in regard to God, and never

nonbres adebdantes in order to clear away misunderstanding. Holding this idea in mind, the meaning of the chapters I have translated, chapters fifty-six through fifty-nine from the first part of the Guide, should be clear. I have worked from the edition of Pedro de Toledo's translation edited by Moshe Lazar, published by Labryinthos in 1989, from the manuscript housed in La Biblioteca Nacional of Madrid.

Chapter Fifty-Six¹

There are in re-formings [las rreformaçiones] that which is more profound than we have brought forward already; of what it is to know that being [el eser]² is an accident [açidente], coming alongside that which has being, and, because of this, is a thing added on top of the essence [la quiditat] of that which is. And this is agreed to be the case for all that has its being for a reason [causa], which is a thing added on top of its essence--but that which does not have a reason for its being, which is the praised God, alone in this thing, is what is referred to when one says of God, that it is necessary for Him to exist, because His being is His essence [esençia] and His truth [verdat], and it is not a substance [sustançia] to which being may come by accident; because His being would be a thing added to Him, and also it is necessary for Him to be always, neither newness [noujdat] nor accident happens to Him, and because of this He is and is not in being³, and is alive and not in life, is powerful and not in power, and understood and not in understanding, not in knowing,

1 Chapter Fifty-Seven in Shlomo Pines's translation.

2 I translate *el eser* as *being* since *el eser* is transparently derived from *ser*, to be. In English, however, *being* is can be used to be both existence and essence; *el eser* is used here to denote existence, in contrast with essence.

3 The phrasing employed throughout in Spanish is, for example, *biuo e non en biuez*, which means literally *alive and not in life*. More cleanly in English one might say *living, but not with life*, or, as the standard translation has it *He lives, without possessing the attribute of life*. I have retained the Spanish phrasing throughout.

and also, all returns to one thing without many-ness [muchidat], as will be shown.

And you should know that one-ness [la vnjon] and many-ness are accidents that happen to every thing which has parts, having many-ness or unity [vnjdat], and this is already shown in the metaphysics⁴. And just as the count is not the substance of the counted, and in the same way unity is not the substance of the thing which is one, since all are accidents of divisible quantity [cantidat partible] which come to those beings [los eseres] able to receive these accidents; more, the necessity of being simple [simple] does not follow from composition [conposiçion], just as it is falsity that it follows from the accident of many-ness or unity, I want to say: that unity is not added on top of its substance, also, one is not in unity.

And one cannot clear up⁵ [fol. 27r] these thin⁶ things, which with little effort stop the understanding [entendimiento], with the use of the usual words that are the great cause [cabsa] of mistakes in each language, since one cannot imagine the thing if not with the human mind. And when we should want to show God not being in a crowd [muchedunbre], we cannot not say then “one,” although the one [el vno] is such that the size [el mucho] is from the parts of the quantity; and because of this we should state the thing with the understanding of the truth, saying: “one,

4 The Metaphysics of Aristotle.

5 Literally, *polish*.

6 That is, subtle.

not in unity [qadmōn]⁷” and eternal, showing that he is not created [criado]⁸. And it is known that “ancient” [qadmōn]⁹ is not said here for that which is in time, which is an accident of movement [moujimiento], and is relative [relativo]; because saying “ancient” as an accident of time is like if you were to say large or short as an accident of a line; and that which does not have time is neither ancient nor created [criado], just as it is not said of sweetness unjust or just, nor of the voice salted, nor anything of taste.

These things are known to him whose use understands the truth and clears the truth up through the understanding, not through words. And what the books say, that God is “first” and “last,” is just like saying that He has an eye or ear, whose intention is that He does not have change [demudación] nor renewal [renouación] of anything, nor is God in time, so that there may be some equality between Him and another thing which is in time, and may be first or last, and also all these words are “like the language of the sons of men.” It is like our saying “one,” because He does not have similarity, not because unity is joined to His substance.

7 Qadmōn, meaning *first* or *original*, is slightly misplaced in Pedro de Toledo’s text. Cf. the Friedlander translation: *The same is the case when we say God is the First (Kadmon), to express that He has not been created; the term “First” is decidedly inaccurate...*

8 Literally, *nurtured*.

9 The Spanish has *antiguo*, meaning *old* or *ancient*, but *qadmōn*, as noted, as the sense of *first* or *original*.

Chapter Fifty-Seven

This is more profound than what we have brought forward already. Know that to name God with names that strip away [nonbres despojantes] is true speech, without some deficiency [mengua] in God; and one who calls God with obligating names [nonbres adebdantes] has great error and deficiency [menguar].¹⁰ And we must show that the names which strip away are ways and habits of the Creator in a way, and in what sense they are separated from the obligating names; and afterwards I will show you how we do not have a way of naming if not through stripping [despoiamentos] alone.

And I say it like this: that the re-forming does not distinguish the re-formed [el reformado] at all until that re-forming does not appear with any other, also a form will easily be a form for the re-formed, and although it appears with another, and will not be with it in unity. Example: if you should see a man in the distance, you will say: “who is that?” they have to say to you: “a living thing;” this is a form, and you have not distinguished it from another, also you have given it a boundary [termjno], such that what you have seen is not a vegetable [visitable]¹¹ nor mineral. And if there is a man in a house, and you know that there is a body [cuerpo], also you do not know what it is, and you say: “what is there in this house?” And they tell you that there

¹⁰ Since *deficiency* is Latinate, it would be perhaps better to translate *mengua* as *lack*. But in English a lack is nearly always a lack of something, whereas a deficiency does not have to be specified necessarily.

¹¹ Literally, *visitable*. No doubt a scribal error for “vegetable.”

is not therefore a vegetable body nor a mineral, already you have given it some distinction [singularidad], from that you understand that there is therefore a living thing, and yet you do not know what animal it is. In this way the forms of stripping away [despojaçion] may appear with those of obligation [adebdaçion], in that it cannot be that they are not determined in some distinction of boundary [termjno], although they would not be in it from the determination, except what is prohibited as opposed to what we thought is not prohibited. Also, the way in which the ways of stripping away and the ways of obligation are distinguished, that the forms of obligation, although they are not determined, they describe some part of what is sought to know of each thing, or part of its substance or accident of its accidents, and the re-formings of stripping away do not show us what we seek to know, except if by way of accident, as we have shown by example.¹²

And after this beginning, I say that there is a true proof for God that it is necessary for Him to be without parts [conpusiçion], as we will show, and we do not know Him except for His being, not His essence [quiditat]; and because of this He has no re-formings of obligation. Because He does not have being which leaves the boundary of His essence so that the re-forming shows on (His essence), no more may His es-

¹² For as much as this chapter is not good in both translations, I put it such as it is, without dressing up the words, in order not to err more that what is itself badly dressed. -- Pedro de Toledo, from the original manuscript.

sence be composed in a way that shows the re-forming on (His essence). And so it is like that, He has no obligation in any way. And it demonstrates the meaning of the boundary of that by which man can reach God. Example: already He has been proven by us to have a thing outside of the things sensed and known through the understanding, and saying that He has being, the intention is that He is not proved to be, and we should know that it is not like the being of the elements that have mortality [morteridad], and we say that He is alive, the intention is that he is not dead, nor is it like the being of the heavens [los çielos] that are alive, which because of this we said that He is not a body; and that this being is not like the being of the understanding which is not dead, nor body, nor caused [cabsado]; and that God is ancient because He does not have a reason for his being, and that this being, which is His own, is not abundant, being for Himself alone, but for us and for many beings, nor is it like the heat of fire and the light of the sun, also it is what influences and helps the influenced with firmness [firmeza] and design [aderesçamjento] with the guiding [rregimjento] of the expert designer [aderesçador], and I will show that later. And we say that through these things He can, and He knows, and He wants. And the intention is that He is not lazy, nor crazy, nor disturbed [turuado]¹³. And we say that His existence is abundant, in order to give it to many things; and

that He is not crazy, because He reaches out [alcança]¹⁴, He is alive, since that which reaches out is a living thing; and that He is not disturbed, because things come controlled and governed, and are not created according to design except-through reason [razon] and will [voluntad]. And we said: there is no being like Him; and that He is one, by being far away from many-ness.

And I show it to you that every way in which we put God, or whatever way of action [obra] will be, or deprivation of many-ness; [...]. And they would never use these names which strip away for God except for their being far from the thing which is not in Him, like we should say that a wall does not have will. And you know that we measure these heavens with span and elbow [palmo e cobdo], and we come to know the measure [comparaçon] of their parts and more of their movements, and they have wearied the understandings to know their essence [quidad], and although we know that they have matter and form, it is not like ours, and because of that we cannot describes them with names that are not general, and we will say that the heavens are not light nor heavy, nor passive, nor have taste nor odor, nor receive action [obra] from another. And we say this because we do not know its matter. So how will we understand the simple, separated from matter, finished, necessary to exist, which has no cause, whose perfection is removed of deficiencies? And so we understand that there is a being [eser] who does not

resemble a thing of its creatures, nor has an equality [aparçeria] with them, nor many-ness, nor shortness [cortidat] in making what it wants; and its relationship [comparaçion] with the world, is like the captain of a ship, although it is not a true relationship, except to show that He is ruler of His things, and keeps the rule of His beings, as will be shown completely.

May the Creator be praised, who when the sense is put in His being, one comes up short; and when one wants to understand His works in His will, one's knowledge becomes madness; and when one wants the tongue in praising him, all becomes stupidity [torpedat] to speak.

Chapter Fifty-Eight

The question is, if there is no way of knowing the essence of God, and the ways of obligating are impossible with Him, then do some have an advantage over other knowers [sabidores]? And that which Moysen (Moses), and Salamon (Solomon), reach is that which the junior of students reach? And that which is known and public in those things of law and philosophy, they are in the great advantage of some rather than others. Know that it is the truth of this advantage, that if you should add to the re-formings of that which has them, the truth will be more recognized. And if you should thus add so many more deprivations [priuaçiones] in God, you know the more. And you are the more close than he who does not subtract from God that which is not

in Him. And because of that a man works many years to understand the science [sçiençia] of truth and to distance from God that which is not in Him. And there are others, short of study, because they do not understand this and doubt if there is such a thing in God, or not; and some stupid person puts on Him a thing impossible to be like that, according to which he would show that He does not have a body; or another doubts, he does not know if He is a body or not; and another has it as he has it, he understands that he sees with such faith in his God. Because of this, they see and you will see the improvement that some have over others; that the first has no doubt of being near God; and the second, to be far from Him; and the third, more so when we should put the fourth who proves to be impossible the possibilities in God, until finding a man who may prove the impossibility [ynposibledat] of there being many impossibilities [jnposibledades] and deprivations [priuaçiones] in God which are for us possible to be in Him and to come to Him--if many more of us should believe this necessary thing, he will be that man more perfect than he.

Certainly it is shown to you, that if you should prove the names which strip away apply to God, you will be more perfect, and if you should put to him some obligations, you will be far from recognizing him. And in this way one recognizes and one will be near to Him, subtracting that which one should subtract, and not putting on Him too much in His existence or by putting on Him perfection which is such

in us, since every perfection is conditioned [abituación], and not every condition is for all conditioned. And know that if you put in God some things, you distance yourself from him in two ways: the one, that each thing which you should put in him is a perfection for us; and the second that it is not another thing but His own which is His own perfection.

And as always, each man cannot come to recognize what is in his power to recognize if not through deprivation, and the deprivation does not give the understanding of the thing of which we deprive Him which is not in Him, because of this everyone said there is no one who can recognize God, but He Himself, and our recognizing is not enough [cortidat]. And all the philosophers said: He strengthened himself over us and baffled us with His great virtue [onor], and He concealed himself [encubriose] from us his many things to be unconcealed, like the sun is concealed by poor eyes, so they elaborate on this enough. And the strong saying is what David says: “to be quiet is praise to You.” [Ps 56:2] Because each laud and praise is a deficiency [mengua] in God; and quiet is better, so say the perfected: “Speak in your hearts, on your beds, and be quiet always.” [Ps 4:5]

And the noble scholars of the Talmud [talmuditas] said: “that before Rabi Hanina (Rabbi Haninah), they said: God the powerful, the great, the strong, the terrible, the feared, the fortified. Rabi Hanina said to them: have you stopped the praise of our Lord [vnestro Señor]? We do not hear permission to say three of those things, and that only because

Moysen [Moses] and those of the holy house said the rest. Example: how does this seem? To a king who used to have a thousand times a thousand pieces of gold, and they praise him for silver, and this is certainly very ugly to him.”

Here I come to the speech of this good man; and keep in mind that he was being angered by the multiplying of reformings and the assigning of them to God. And if we would have left it to our understanding any more, then we would not speak of them; for the reason that men may have a good imagination [magañacion] and thought, thus they put these on Him, like they said: “The law¹⁵ speaks with the language of men;” therefore they put on God in the way of their own perfections, and (decide) the limit of us who may not put them on Him, recognizing what they are, except in the hour of understanding the law, or in prayer, for the prophets and those of the holy house decreed it so, and we speak it to ourselves like that. And the well spoken man said that for two reasons came these praises and names in our prayer: the first because the law says it, and the second because the prophets decreed it to say the prayer with them. And if not for the first, we would not name them. And if not for the second, we would remove them from their place and not make a prayer with them. And you multiply in Him these formalities?

So this has been shown to you, and because of this, for all such things put on God in the books of the prophets, it is not sloppy of us naming them in prayer, except some which,

because those of the holy house decreed them, therefore we hear them gracefully enough, not like the utterly insane do who multiply prayers and you will say that they decree thus so that their thoughts bring them close to God, and they say to God things which if they were to say them to a man, it would be a lack in his status, because they have not understood these honored things praised by the common sense [los sesos] of the village; also they put on Him that which they thought to be good and convenient for what in this praise they awaken the possibility, according to their thought, and finding in the prophets such words and they judged them according to their simplicity, and they make sayings easily and poems [cantigas], and they think saying poems noble, until saying things which are of their own government and great madness, until one laughs at the thing according to its nature [naturaleza] when one hears them, and one cries at understanding well how such a thing is said in God. And but for piety against giving a fault to the speaker, I tell you already a little of their mistakes which are very clear deficiencies to he who understands.

And it is certain that you knew that thus to put bad reputation and bad name is a great sin, and also it is a greater sin to say of God these things and put to Him these reformings. And I will not say that it is a revelation, but is a dishonor, according to the failings [el yerro] of the common people [comunidat] where they hear it and of that people is such a speaker. And he who recognizes this failure of those

ways of speaking [esos dezires], and speaks of them, is in my eyes one of those about whom it is said: “and the sons of Yrrael [Israel] spoke words which are not like that [asi] about Adonay [Adonai], our God;” [II Re 17:9] And they said in the prophecy: “And by speaking error about Adonay;” [Isa 32:6] and he who thinks to honor his creator [su criador], should not hear them, [...] so much more do his works. And already you know the sin [pecado] of him “who speaks against the high,” and you should not in these matters of God assign Him a thing, except praising him with good sense, nor should you add in prayer and blessings [benediçiones] more than that which they decreed, which is abundant enough, nor add nor subtract, as Rabi Hanjna said. And as for the rest that the prophets put on God and you will go through it for that, and believe it as we say that they are re-formings of actions [obras], or they show stripping away of vilenesses [njchilidades]¹⁶; and the discovery is not for the common people, but for those special ones [singulares], who thus agree not to say more than they understand.

And I will return to speak on the interpretation [la glosa] of Rabi Hanjna, who did not say of the king, “that he used to have a thousand coins of gold and they used to praise him for a hundred,” that then the example would be an sign that

16 Possibly something like “vileness” or “failings,” cf. *Los recogidos: nueva visión de la mística española (1500-1700): obra elaborada en el Seminario Suárez de la Fundación Universitaria Española, Melquíades Andrés Martín*, page 245: “Pedir a Dios no solamente lo que tiene, sino lo que es, para conocerse a sí propio verísimamente en ‘su vileza y nichilidad o nada que es’ y conocer a Dios, en especial su beneplácito.”

his perfection of God would be more than that perfection which we assign to God, which is His kind [espeçia], and is not like that as we show and prove; also the knowledge [sçiençia] of that example, thus says: “coins of gold and they praise him for silver,” is to demonstrate that our perfections are not the kind of the essence [esençia] of God, also they would be a dimunition [mengua] of His highness [alteza], like the given example said of Him: “and certainly the thing was ugly to him.” And already I gave you to understand that what in God you think is a perfection is a dimunition in Him when it should be of that which is for us. And Salamon showed us this abundantly, where he says: “That God is in the heavens and you are on the earth; therefore, let your words be few.” [Ecl. 5:1]

Chapter Fifty-Nine

Thus I want to say to you more so that you may understand that most of one’s habits [costumbres] are by way of deprivations¹⁷, and so that you should begin to distance the way of affirmations in God. Consider a man who knows there is in the world a ship, who has not seen it, nor knows what its name concerns, if a substance or an accident; and another knew that it is not an accident; and another understood that it is not of minerals; and another knew that it is

¹⁷ In context, not in the sense of the re-formings which strip away, which are deprivations in a sense, but deprivations, more broadly, as those affirmations which, in fact, diminish God by ascribing human qualities to him.

not an animal; and another knew that it is not a vegetable [visitable]¹⁸ planted in the ground; and another knew that it is not a body naturally joined together; and another knew that it is not like tables and doors; and another knew that it is not dug like a well; and another knew that it is not round, of a wide part, and falls in roundedness until arriving at a point; and another knows that it does not have roundness nor even feet; and another knows that it is not even. Certainly, it is shown to you that the last knows the form of the ship as there is in each of those forms of deprivation [priuaçon] and as if this were equal to the picture [figuro] in the ways and forms of the formation [firmaçon]. However, the first ones whom we named in that example, each one [fol. 29r] is far from recognizing the ship, more than the one after him, such that the first does not recognize any but one name alone. [...] And because of this make sure that you prove the deprivation, so that you should not have it only by saying; because always by proof you will bring yourself a step closer to God. And in that way there were many close and others far, not because they have closeness or distance according to place, according to how the idiots think. And understand that well and you take advantage of him with joy. And already I have shown to you the way thus that you might bring yourself closer to God and see in this way if you should wish.

The Philosophy Teacher

by the Marquis de Sade
translated by Timothy Nassau
from the French

Of all the sciences with which a child's mind is inculcated when one works at his education, the mysteries of Christianity, while doubtless one of the most sublime parts of that education, are nonetheless not those that enter with the greatest of ease into his young spirit. To persuade for example a young man of fourteen or fifteen that God the father and God the son are but one, that the son is consubstantial with his father as the father is with his son, etc., all this, however necessary it may be for the happiness of life, is more difficult to make understood than algebra and when one wishes for success, one is obligated to employ certain physical turns, certain material explications which, disproportionate as they may be, facilitate nonetheless for a young man an understanding of the mysterious object.

No one was more profoundly penetrated with this method than M. the abbot Du Parquet, tutor of the young

count of Nerceuil, aged about fifteen and with the loveliest figure you could ever see.

-M. abbot, the little count would say to his instructor each day, in truth consubstantiation is beyond me, it is absolutely impossible for me to understand how two people can be but one: expand this mystery for me, I beg you, or at least put it within my reach.

The honest abbot, desiring to succeed in his education, happy to be able to facilitate all that could make him a fine student one day, imagined a fairly pleasant manner of easing the difficulties that embarrassed the count, and this manner taken from nature had to necessarily work. He had a young girl of thirteen or fourteen brought to him and having well educated the mignonne, he conjoined her with his young student.

-Well, he said to him, now, my friend, do you conceive the mystery of consubstantiation: do you understand with less trouble that it is possible for two people to be but one?

-My God, yes, monsieur abbot, said the charming energumen, I understand everything now with an astounding ease; I would not be surprised if this mystery is, as they say, all the joy of celestial beings, as it is quite sweet when we are two to amuse ourselves at being but one.

A few days later, the little count asked his teacher to give him another lesson, because, he claimed, there was still something about this mystery that he did not understand fully and that could only be explained by performing it an-

other time, as he had done once before. The complaisant abbot who was presumably as amused by such a scene as was his student, had the little girl brought back and the lesson began again, but this time, singularly moved by the delicious perspective that the lovely little de Nerceuil presented him while consubstantiating with his companion, could not keep himself from joining in the explication of the evangelical parable, and the beauties that his hands must explore for this soon left him completely enflamed.

-It seems that everything is happening much too quickly, said Du Parquet while capturing the little count by his waist, too much elasticity in the movements, which makes the conjoining, being no longer as intimate, obscure the image of the mystery we must demonstrate here... If we proceeded, yes, in this manner, said the rogue while returning to his student what the latter was giving the young girl.

-Ah! My God, you are hurting me, monsieur abbot, said the young child, and this ritual seems useless; what more does it teach me of the mystery?

-Well dammit, said the abbot gurgling with pleasure, can't you see, my dear friend, that I'm teaching you everything at once? This is the trinity, my child... today I am teaching you about the trinity, five or six more lessons like this and you will be a doctor at the Sorbonne.

A Stroll Through Literature

A Stroll Through Literature

for Rodrigo Pinto and Andrés Neuman

*by Roberto Bolaño
translated by Laura Healy
from the Spanish*

Un Paseo Por La Literatura

para Rodrigo Pinto y Andrés Neuman

Excerpted from *Tres*, forthcoming
from *New Directions*.

1. I dreamt that Georges Perec was three years old and visiting my house. I was hugging him, kissing him, saying what a sweet boy he was.

2. We're underdone, father, not cooked or raw, lost in the grandeur of this endless dump, wandering and going astray, killing and asking forgiveness, manic depressives in your dream, father, your dream that had no borders and that we've disemboweled a thousand times and then a thousand more, like Latin American detectives lost in a labyrinth of crystal and mud, traveling in the rain, seeing movies where old men appear screaming *tornado! tornado!*, watching things for the last time, but without seeing them, like specters, like frogs at the bottom of a well, father, lost in the misery of your utopian dream, lost in the variety of your voices and your abysses, manic depressives in the boundless room of Hell where your Humor cooks.

1. Soñé que Georges Perec tenía tres años y visitaba mi casa. Lo abrazaba, lo besaba, le decía que era un niño precioso.

2. A medio hacer quedamos, padre, ni cocidos ni crudos, perdidos en la grandeza de este basural interminable, errando y equivocándonos, matando y pidiendo perdón, maniacos depresivos en tu sueño, padre, tu sueño que no tenía límites y que hemos desentrañado mil veces y luego mil veces más, como detectives latinoamericanos perdidos en un laberinto de cristal y barro, viajando bajo la lluvia, viendo películas donde aparecían viejos que gritaban *itornado! itornado!*, mirando las cosas por última vez, pero sin verlas, como espectros, como ranas en el fondo de un pozo, padre, perdidos en la miseria de tu sueño utópico, perdidos en la variedad de tus voces y de tus abismos, maniacos depresivos en la inabarcable sala del Infierno donde se cocina tu Humor.

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

3. Underdone, not raw or cooked, bipolars capable of riding the hurricane.
4. In these ruins, father, where archeological remains are all that's left of your laughter.
5. We, the *nec spes nec metus*.

3. A medio hacer, ni crudos ni cocidos, bipolares capaces de cabalgar el huracán.
4. En estas desolaciones, padre, donde de tu risa sólo quedaban restos arqueológicos.
5. Nosotros, los *nec spes nec metus*.

6. And someone said:

*Sister of our ferocious memory,
it's better not to speak of courage.
He who was able to overcome fear
became brave forever.
Let's dance, then, while the night goes on
like a gigantic shoebox
atop the cliff and the terrace
in a fold of reality, of possibility,
where kindness isn't an exception.
Let's dance on the uncertain reflection
of the Latin American detectives,
a puddle of rain where our faces are reflected
every ten years.*

Then came sleep.

6. Y alguien dijo:

*Hermana de nuestra memoria feroz,
sobre el valor es mejor no hablar.
Quien pudo vencer el miedo
se hizo valiente para siempre.
Bailemos, pues, mientras pasa la noche
como una gigantesca caja de zapatos
por encima del acantilado y la terraza
en un pliegue de la realidad, de lo posible,
en donde la amabilidad no es una excepción.
Bailemos en el reflejo incierto
de los detectives latinoamericanos,
un charco de lluvia donde se reflejan nuestros rostros
cada diez años.*

Después llegó el sueño.

7. Next I dreamt I was visiting Alonso de Ercilla's mansion. I was sixty years old and broken by sickness (I was literally falling to pieces). Ercilla was about ninety and was writhing in an enormous canopy bed. The old man was watching me with disdain and then he asked me for a glass of aguardiente. I was searching and searching for the aguardiente but could only find riding gear.

7. Soñé entonces que visitaba la mansión de Alonso de Ercilla. Yo tenía sesenta años y estaba despedazado por la enfermedad (literalmente me caía a pedazos). Ercilla tenía unos noventa y agonizaba en una enorme cama con dosel. El viejo me miraba desdeñoso y después me pedía un vaso de aguardiente. Yo buscaba y rebuscaba el aguardiente pero sólo encontraba aperos de montar.

A Few Fragments

by Archilochus
translated by Becky Willner
from the Ancient Greek

I.

I D. I W.

I am servant the king of war
& the of
I know lovely gift the muses

or

I am the servant of the king of war
&
the muses (for I know their lovely gift)

or

I am an instrument of war
& poetry

εἰμὶ δ' ἐγὼ θεράπων μὲν Ἐνυαλίῳ ἄνακτος
καὶ Μουσέων ἐρατὸν δῶρον ἐπιστάμενος.

II.

74 D. 122 W.

Money is not beyond hope, it's not impossible,
it's not wonderful, since Zeus, father of the Olympians,
made night from mid-day, hiding the light
of the bright sun, as a damp fear came to men.

And so it is with all things that are believed and expected
by men. But don't be surprised if you should happen to see
wild animals bartering with the dolphins for a life
under the sea and the roaring waves becoming
more fond of land, leaving the mountains to sink.

III.

61 D. 101 W.

7 corpses fallen, -- we overtook them on
foot -- 1000 murderers are we

Χρημάτων ἄελπον οὐδέν ἐστιν οὐδ' ἀπόμοτον
οὐδὲ θαυμάσιον, ἐπειδὴ Ζεὺς πατὴρ Ὀλυμπίων
ἐκ μεσημβρίας ἔθηκε νύκτ', ἀποκρύψας φάος
ἡλίου λάμποντος. ὑγρὸν δ' ἦλθ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους δέος.
ἐκ δὲ τοῦ καὶ πιστὰ πάντα κἀπίελπα γίνεται
ἀνδράσιν. μηδεὶς ἔθ' ὑμέων εἰσορέων θαυμαζέτω,
μηδ' ἐὰν δελφίσι θήρες ἀνταμείψωνται νομόν
ἐνάλιον καὶ σφιν θαλάσσης ἠχέεντα κύματα
φίλτερ' ἠπείρου γένηται, τοῖσι δ' ἦι δύνειν ὄρος.

ἐπτά γὰρ νεκρῶν πεσόντων, οὓς ἐμάραξαμεν ποσίν,
χειλίλοι φονῆές εἰμεν.

Etchings

by Paul Verlaine
translated by Keith Waldrop
from the French

To François Coppée.

I

PARIS SKETCH

The moon laid out zinc tints
 In obtuse angles.
Strings of smoke shaped like figure fives
Came dark and heavy where a rooftop slants.

Gray sky. The north wind mourned
 Like a bassoon.
Over there, some cautious, wind-chilled cat
Meowed in a weirdly strident tone.

As for me, I wandered the night
 Dreaming of divine Plato, of
Phidias, of Salamis, of Marathon,
Under flickering eyes of blue gaslight.

Eaux- fortes

A François Coppée.

I

CROQUIS PARISIEN

La lune plaquait ses teintes de zinc
Par angles obtus.
Des bouts de fumée en forme de cinq
Sortaient drus et noirs des hauts toits pointus.

Le ciel était gris. La bise pleurait
Ainsi qu'un basson.
Au loin, un matou frileux et discret
Miaulait d'étrange et grêle façon.

Moi, j'allais, rêvant du divin Platon
Et de Phidias,
Et de Salamine et de Marathon,
Sous l'œil clignotant des bleus becs de gaz.

II

NIGHTMARE

I saw in my dream go by
--Like a hurricane on the strand--
Holding in one hand a knife,
An hourglass in his other hand,
That knight

From old German ballads who
Through countryside and alleys,
From river to mountain,
Forest down to valleys,
On a stallion

Fire-red and black as ebony,
Without bridle, bit or reins,
No whip, no heighho! gallops along
Amid dull sputtering strains
Forever! forever!

A grand hat with a white panache
Shading his eyes which flare
And then fade, as one sees
Through a fog, momentarily, the blue glare
Of a pistol fired;

II

CAUCHEMAR

J'ai vu passer dans mon rêve
--Tel l'ouragan sur la grève, --
D'une main tenant un glaive
Et de l'autre un sablier,
Ce cavalier

Des ballades d'Allemagne
Qu'à travers ville et campagne,
Et du fleuve à la montagne,
Et des forêts au vallon,
Un étalon

Rouge-flamme et noir d'ébène,
Sans bride, ni mors, ni rêne,
Ni hop! ni cravache, entraîne
Parmi des râlements sourds
Toujours! toujours!

Un grand feutre à longue plume
Ombrait son œil qui s'allume
Et s'éteint. Tel, dans la brume,
Éclate et meurt l'éclair bleu
D'une arme à feu.

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

Like the wings of a sea-hawk
Frightened by a sudden storm,
His coat, blown around by
Gusts of snow, enormous,
 Flapped in the wind,

Revealing the glorious sight,
A torso of shadow and ivory,
As in the blackness of the night
There flashed in strident cries
 Thirty-two teeth.

Comme l'aile d'une orfraie
Qu'un subit orage effraie,
Par l'air que la neige raie,
Son manteau se soulevant
Claquait au vent,

Et montrait d'un air de gloire
Un torse d'ombre et d'ivoire,
Tandis que dans la nuit noire
Luisaient en des cris Stridents
Trente-deux dents.

III

SEA PIECE

The loud ocean
Mourning moves
Under the moon's eye
In constant motion,

Even as a jagged
Sinister streak
Rends the sepia sky
In a long zigzag.

And each liquid sheet
Convulsive, flying
Along the reefs
Goes, comes, shines, crying.

Up in the sky
Where hurricanes play,
Thunder grandly
Rumbles by.

III

MARINE

L'océan sonore
Palpite sous l'œil
De la lune en deuil
Et palpite encore,

Tandis qu'un éclair
Brutal et sinistre
Fend le ciel de bistre
D'un long zigzag clair,

Et que chaque lame
En bonds convulsifs
Le long des récifs
Va, vient, luit et clame,

Et qu'au firmament,
Où l'ouragan erre,
Rugit le tonnerre
Formidablement.

IV

NIGHTWORK

Night. Rain. Wan sky cut in strips
By tower, by spire--silhouette of a Gothic town
In open-work, softened to a background gray.
Prairie. A gallows weighted down
With hanged men, pecked at by ravens,
Dancing uncanny jigs in the breezy night,
Their feet a picnic for wolves on the prowl.
Scattered brakes of thornbush and holly
Lift their horrid foliage left and right
Over the roughly sketched murky skein.
After which, around the ghastly naked feet
Of three convicts, comes a detachment of halbardiers
Whose weapons, shaped like harrow blades,
Gleam against the downward spears of rain.

IV

EFFET DE NUIT

La nuit. La pluie. Un ciel blafard que déchiquette
De flèches et de tours à jour la silhouette
D'une ville gothique éteinte au lointain gris.
La plaine. Un gibet plein de pendus rabougris
Secoués par le bec avide des corneilles
Et dansant dans l'air noir des gigues nonpareilles,
Tandis que leurs pieds sont la pâture des loups.
Quelques buissons d'épine épars, et quelques houx
Dressant l'horreur de leur feuillage à droite, à gauche,
Sur le fuligineux fouillis d'un fond d'ébauche.
Et puis, autour de trois livides prisonniers
Qui vont pieds nus, un gros de hauts pertuisaniers
En marche, et leurs fers droits, comme des fers de herse,
Luisent à contre-sens des lances de l'averse.

V

GROTESQUES

Their only steed Shank's mare,
Gold in their eyes all their wealth,
From ceaseless knocking about they've
Ruined their clothing and their health.

Indignant sages upbraid them,
Fools suppose they're crooked;
They get raspberries from kids and
By whores they get mocked.

Well, odious they are, ridiculous,
Rather wicked they do seem,
Giving the impression at twilight
Of a continuing bad dream.

Fist clenched in freedom, strumming
The rasping strings of a guitar,
They sing through their noses songs
Nostalgic, mutinous, bizarre.

The fact is that, fastidious,
Their eyes laugh and their eyes cry

V

GROTESQUES

Leurs jambes pour toutes montures,
Pour tous biens l'or de leurs regards,
Par le chemin des aventures
Ils vont haillonneux et hagards.

Le sage, indigné, les harangue;
Le sot plaint ces fous hasardeux;
Les enfants leur tirent la langue
Et les filles se moquent d'eux.

C'est qu'odieux et ridicules,
Et maléfiques en effet,
Ils ont l'air, sur les crépuscules,
D'un mauvais rêve que l'on fait;

C'est que, sur leurs aigres guitares
Crispant la main des libertés,
Ils nasillent des chants bizarres,
Nostalgiques et révoltés;

C'est enfin que dans leurs prunelles
Rit et pleure--fastidieux--

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

With the love of things eternal,
The long dead, gods gone goodbye.

--So go, perpetual vagabonds,
Cursed and condemned to die,
Wander waterway and chasm
Under Paradise's closed eye!

Nature joins with man
To wreak a proper punishment
On a proud melancholy
That keeps the head unbent,

And avenges on you the blasphemy
Of hopes too vehement and vast,
Marking your cursed foreheads
By the storm's elemental blast.

June burns and December
Chills your flesh to the bone
And fever pierces your legs
Which even reeds have torn.

Everything repels you, breaks your heart,
And when death comes in its turn,
Emaciated, cold, your corpse
Even the wolves will spurn.

L'amour des choses éternelles,
Des vieux morts et des anciens dieux!

--Donc, allez, vagabonds sans trêves,
Errez, funestes et maudits,
Le long des gouffres et des grèves,
Sous l'œil fermé des paradis!

La nature à l'homme s'allie
Pour châtier comme il le faut
L'orgueilleuse mélancolie
Qui vous fait marcher le front haut,

Et vengeant sur vous le blasphème
Des vastes espoirs véhéments,
Meurtrit votre front anathème
Au choc rude des éléments.

Les juins brûlent et les décembres
Gèlent votre chair jusqu'aux os,
Et la fièvre envahit vos membres
Qui se déchirent aux roseaux.

Tout vous repousse et tout vous navre,
Et quand la mort viendra pour vous,
Maigre et froide, votre cadavre
Sera dédaigné par les loups!

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

Excerpts from TRISTE TRISTAN

by Paul Keineg
translated by Rosmarie Waldrop
from the French

Set out in the morning to see the world--
quietly--love in time of war--
to put a posthumous world into French--
a God without a consistent method--
revolt against hierarchy
born of a bed of anger.

Joker of a dog dripping
salt water--across the sea, *tramor*,
a slave to sex
in a stinking land--
death, the world fucked up,
love globalized.

Partis pour voir le monde au matin--
à voix basse--amours de guerre--
rendre en français un monde posthume--
Dieu sans méthode générale--
révolte contre la hiérarchie
née d'un carré de colère.

Chien farceur, dégouttant
d'eau de mer--là-bas, tramor,
asservie au sexe
dans un pays odorant--
la mort, monde mal foutu,
l'amour mondialisé.

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

The blue of oyster beds,
the pink of penned-up pigs--
I don't travel without witness,
I know love by its pathology,
I've no science except nerves--
if you'd seen me hanging
on my mother's arm who was flayed alive
against a backdrop of comforting talk--
I was watching you from the corner of my eye,
sure of your ass, under the apple tree.

In this unfinished world
we see with our soiled hearts--
their truant stammer
(we put those words in their mouths)
will always win out
over history's impotence--
signed: a man hardened
and gross, a fuckhead
thinking of thingumagigs
that reek of the foreign.

Le bleu des parcs à huîtres,
le rose des porcs parqués--
je ne voyage pas sans témoins,
je reconnais l'amour à sa pathologie,
je ne possède de science que les nerfs--
si vous m' aviez vu pendu
au bras de ma mère écorchée vive,
sur fond de dialogues bienfaisants--
moi je vous guettais du coin de l'oeil,
sûr de vos fesses, sous un pommier.

Dans un monde pas fini
qu' on vit la merde au coeur--
leurs balbutiements de gredins
(on leur met de ces mots à la bouche)
auront toujours raison
de l'impuissance historique--
signé : un homme endurci
et grossier dont la tête de noeud
pense à des trucs
qui sentent l'étranger.

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

A fine mess:

Mark in a frothing rage
gets off his *marc'h*, his dead-tired horse,
straightens his aching back, his *kein*,
follows the *riboul*, the path to the *loc'h*,
made of *raden*, of *balan*, of fern and broom--
are we already in hell?
asks Mark,
I'm going to run my sword
through their mugs--
instead
tail between legs, he jumps
on his horse that slams on the brakes.

Hickies

on the beggar's neck--
it's really Tristan,
you've recognized
the young pack o' muscles
who's only after the crown--
endless loop of thighs--
spends his life spying on,
tracking,
straddling the queen's body.

La belle affaire :
Marc au comble de la rage
descend de son marc'h fourbu
redresse son kein qui lui fait mal
emprunte le riboul qui mène au loch
fait de raden, de balan--
sommes-nous déjà en enfer ?
s'interroge Marc,
je m'en vais leur enfoncer l'épée
dans la gueule--
instead
il repart la pine entre les jambes
sur son cheval qui freine.

Sexe en ventouse
au cou du mendiant--
c'est Tristan,
vous l'aviez reconnu
jeune tas de muscles
qui n'en a qu'après la couronne--
cercle des cuisses sans fin--
passe sa vie à épier
à localiser
à enjamber le corps royal.

Aldus, a Journal of Translation

Prefers Iseut to Iseut
and since the Iseut who's not Iseut
is called Iseut he marries her--she
keeps waiting in bed bare-assed
he, prisoner to a name,
can't get it up
for the Iseut who's not Iseut--
simply soft, his penis,
reduced to a proper name.

Préfère Iseut à Iseut
et comme Iseut qui n'est pas Iseut
s'appelle Iseut, il l'épouse--elle,
elle attend cul nu au lit--
il arrive pas à bander
pour Iseut qui n'est pas Iseut,
prisonnier d'un nom--
molle simplicité du penis,
réductible à un nom propre.

Merlin Brings from Stonehenge to *Historia regum brittaniae,* VIII 232-279

England

by Geoffrey of Monmouth
translated by Caroline Hughes
from the Medieval Latin

...to whom Merlin said: “If with a perpetual monument you wish to honor the burial of these men, send for the Giant’s Ring, which is in the mountain Killaraus of Ireland. There is in fact a structure of rocks there which no one of this age could have built, unless he had possessed art and skill. The rocks are large and no one is of such virtue that they may yield: if they are placed around the plateau in this same way that they were positioned, they will stay forever.” At his words Aurelius was moved to a smile, asking how it could be possible that such great rocks from such a far away land could be moved, as though Britain lacked rocks that would be sufficient for the task. To this Merlin said, “You should not waste, king, your vain smile, because I offer my words without vanity. The rocks are magical and healthy with a different kind of medicine. Once upon a time, giants brought them from the far ends of Africa and put them in Ireland,

Cui Merlinus: “Si perpetuo opere sepulturam virorum decorare volueris, mitte pro chorea gigantum quae est in Killarao monte Hiberniae. Est etenim ibi structura lapidum quam nemo huius aetatis constueret, nisi ingenium artem subvectaret. Grandes sunt lapides, nec est aliquis cuius virtuti cedant. Qui si eo modo quo ibidem positi sunt, circa plateam locabuntur, stabunt in aeternum.” Ad verba ipsius solutus est Aurelius in risum, dicens qualiter id fieri posset, ut tanti lapides ex tam longinquo regno adveherentur ac si Britannia lapidibus careret qui ad operationem sufficerent. Ad haec Merlinus: “Ne moveas, rex, vanum risum, quia haec absque vanitate profero. Mistici sunt lapides et ad diversa medicamenta salubres. Gigantes olim asportaverunt eos ex ultimis finibus Affricae et posuerunt in Hibernia dum in ea inhabitarent. . .” Cumque haec audissent Britones, consulerunt pro lapidibus mittere populumque Hiberniae pro-

while they were living there...” And when the Britons had heard these words, they decided to send for the rocks and to attack the people of Ireland in battle, if they should strive to stop them. Finally, Uther Pendragon, the king’s brother, was chosen, and fifteen thousand men-at-arms to prepare for this task. Even Merlin himself was chosen, that the plan might be handled by his genius and advice...Having acquired victory, they marched to the Killaraus mountain and took the rock structure, and delighted and admired it. When everyone was standing around, Merlin approached them and said, “Use great strength, men, so that in taking down these rocks your intelligence may appear as strength or else strength should give place to intelligence.” At his order, they were then altogether stirred to use varied devices and strove to move the Ring. Some prepared ropes, some cords, and others ladders, to achieve that which they were aiming for, but they were not able to achieve anything. Then, because all the men were failing, Merlin was moved to a smile and prepared his own devices. Finally, when he had gotten all his necessary things, more easily than can be believed, he picked up the rocks. Then he made them be moved to the ships and placed inside, and so the people began to return to England amidst rejoicing.

elio infestare si ipsos detinere niterentur. Postremo eligitur Uther Pendragon frater regis et quindecim milia armatorum ut huic negotio pareant. Eligitur et ipse Merlinus, ut upsius ingenio et consilio agenda tractentur...Potiti autem victoria, exegerunt Killaraum montem lapidumque structuram adepti gavisi sunt et ammirati. Circumstantibus itaque cunctis accessit Merlinus et ait: "Utimini viribus vestris, iuvenes, ut in deponendo lapides istos appareat utrum ingenium virtuti an virtus ingenio cedat." Ad imperium igitur eius indulserunt unanimiter multimodis machinationibus et aggressi sunt choream deponere. Alii funes, alii restes, alii scalas paraverunt ut quod affectabant perficerent, nec ulla-tenus perficere valuerunt. Deficientibus itaque cunctis, solutus est Merlinus in risum suasque machinationes confecit. Denique, cum quaeque necessaria apposuisset, levius quam credi potest lapides deposuit, depositos autem fecit deferri ad naves et introponi, et sic gaudio in Britanniam reverti coeperunt.

The Voice

by Charles Baudelaire
translated by Erik-Dardan Ymeraga
from the French

My cradle once leaned 'gainst the library shelves,
Grave Babel, where ribaldries, romances, science,
All mingled with cinders of Latin and ashes
Of Greek. I was hardly knee-high to a folio.
Two voices addressed me: beguiling and firm,
One spoke: "Full of sweetness, the Earth is a cake;
I could (and how boundless your pleasure would be!)
Inspire in you a commensurate hunger."
And the other: "Come! come! O, travel through dreams,
Beyond possibility, beyond all that's known!"
And that second one sang like the winds of the coast,
Wailing phantom, come here from unknowable lands,
Who caresses the ear, yet alarms it in turn.
I answered you: "Yes! O, sweet voice!" And thenceforth
Has dated, alas! what one might call my plague,

La Voix

Mon berceau s'adossait à la bibliothèque,
Babel sombre, où roman, science, fabliau,
Tout, la cendre latine et la poussière grecque,
Se mêlaient. J'étais haut comme un in-folio.
Deux voix me parlaient. L'une, insidieuse et ferme,
Disait: «La Terre est un gâteau plein de douceur;
Je puis (et ton plaisir serait alors sans terme!)
Te faire un appétit d'une égale grosseur.»
Et l'autre: «Viens! oh! viens voyager dans les rêves,
Au delà du possible, au delà du connu!»
Et celle-là chantait comme le vent des grèves,
Fantôme vagissant, on ne sait d'où venu,
Qui caresse l'oreille et cependant l'effraie.
Je te répondis: «Oui! douce voix!» C'est d'alors
Que date ce qu'on peut, hélas! nommer ma plaie

And my fate. For behind all the bright decorations
Of tremendous Being, in that black abyss,
I distinctly behold peculiar worlds,
And, dupe of my own transportive clairvoyance,
I drag with me serpents who strike at my heels.
It's been since that same hour that I, peer of prophets,
Have loved with such tenderness desert and sea;
That I laugh at bereavements, shed festival tears,
And find a rich taste in the bitterest wines;
That I often denounce as a lie what is fact,
And that, eyes to the heavens, I tumble in holes.
But the voice brings me comfort: "Hold fast to your dreams:
Of such beauty as madmen's, the sages have none!"

Et ma fatalité. Derrière les décors
De l'existence immense, au plus noir de l'abîme,
Je vois distinctement des mondes singuliers,
Et, de ma clairvoyance extatique victime,
Je traîne des serpents qui mordent mes souliers.
Et c'est depuis ce temps que, pareil aux prophètes,
J'aime si tendrement le désert et la mer;
Que je ris dans les deuils et pleure dans les fêtes,
Et trouve un goût suave au vin le plus amer;
Que je prends très souvent les faits pour des mensonges,
Et que, les yeux au ciel, je tombe dans des trous.
Mais la voix me console et dit: «Garde tes songes:
Les sages n'en ont pas d'aussi beaux que les fous!»

‘Pound the Undead’

Comparative Poetics and the Modernist Legacy

by Dore J. Levy

One spring not long ago, I visited Venice with my family. Riding the *vaporetto*, we happened to cruise by the island which harbors the *Cimitero*, the city’s main cemetery. My husband casually remarked that this was where Ezra Pound was buried, did I think I would like to visit the site? I rather shocked my two young daughters, and myself, by declaring that if I did visit Pound’s grave, I would not know whether to spit on the mound for his politics or drive a stake through his heart for his sinology.

We did not get to the *Cimitero* on that trip, but it set me thinking: Pound’s *sinology*?! How can it be, with so many studies, disproofs and rebuttals of Pound’s version of China, that this man can still raise hackles? For most of us, Pound is a delusion of the uninitiated. Students may be drawn to Chinese because of his seductive vision of the poetic possibilities of the language, but they quickly learn how false the vision is. Why, then, are we still compelled to confront Pound’s *sinology*--or his anti-*sinology*, which amounts to the same thing? To understand this, we must remember both the milieu in which he worked and the nature of his achievement.

The creation of an "international" poetics was one of the pillars of literary modernism. As internationalists, modernist artists did not see themselves as pillaging other traditions, but as recasting and re-forming previously unasimilated elements into new aesthetic possibilities, part of the notion of what Earl Miner calls the "changingly new" in the ever-expanding modernist intellectual horizon.¹ Anything and everything was grist for the mill. Links between cultures or cultural forms, no matter how indirect or intuitive, were "right" by definition, so long as they provided a creative stimulus. Even as they attempted to draw on and assimilate other traditions, however, modernist artists were first and foremost bound by the ideology of the tradition they were forming. This kept them from fully apprehending the traditions they studied.

We are accustomed to thinking of modernism as a social or artistic movement, but it is a scholarly movement as well, and that aspect of modernism has defined 20th century sinology in the West. During its heyday in the first half of the twentieth century, modernist scholarship went beyond philological or antiquarian concerns in the hope of bridging the gap, not just of understanding but of appreciation, between the European tradition and others historically separate from it. Despite the danger of confusion or compromise between what the interpreter finds in a foreign culture and what he or she brings to it from the west, the modernist enterprise in scholarship has proven its worth. Its most ob-

vious benefit is in forging links between the specialist and non-specialist communities. In “esoteric” fields like Chinese studies, such links encourage a greater number and diversity of candidates for specialized training than would otherwise volunteer.

There are two particular challenges, however, for those drawn to non-western fields. The first is to “get it right:” to be able to draw on philology, archeology, and textual scholarship to acquire a sense of an alien culture on its own terms. The second is to do this without losing the excitement of meeting a new culture. “Exotic” artifacts are easy to like if we can assimilate them to our own notions of culture. Tribal art is a good example: we appreciate its vigor and expressiveness because modern artists have shown us how “modern” it is. The real challenge is to maintain an outsider’s enthusiasm as we work to acquire an insider’s knowledge. Learning to appreciate an artifact in its own cultural context should not mean the end of trying to fit it into ours, but should lead to a more sophisticated sense of similarities and differences, and of when and why they matter.

Nowhere is this balancing act more difficult than in literary translation. Translation is an art, but because of its responsibility to the original, it also partakes of the nature of scholarship. To be successful, translation must give us the original more or less correctly on the level of philological detail, while at the same time presenting the text as a representative artifact of the original culture in a form we can appreciate. Ideally, a translation makes the reader long

for access to the original text.² In practice, relatively few readers go on to achieve that access. For the majority who continue to rely on translations, the great danger is equating the translation with the original, forgetting that translation is always a kind of interpretation. Modernist translation, like modernist literature in general, declared its independence from established conventions of meter, form and diction. This freedom of style fostered the illusion that, as never before, translation could represent the “real” China, the “real” Japan, the “real” Greece, the “real” Provence. In breaking down the boundaries between scholarship and art, it produced artifacts with vibrant auras of authenticity, even when authenticity was remote.

The case of Chinese and English literature was a crucial one in the development of modernist translation, and it was overshadowed at a crucial moment by the figure of Ezra Pound. Pound’s appropriation of Chinese poetics effectively barred the western literary mainstream from the appreciation of China. He did not just give his western readers a wrong idea about Chinese poetry, which they could correct without too much trouble as their knowledge increased; he gave them Chinese poetry *wrong*. His translations were based on a fundamental misconception about the nature of both Chinese and European poetics.³ Seen in this light, Pound’s cockeyed appropriation of Chinese has something of the character of a hit-and-run accident, with far-reaching and unexpected consequences. It is as if Picasso’s painting, the *Demoiselles d’Avignon*, were widely accepted as a trust-

worthy introduction to the forms and purposes of African art.

The key document of this encounter is a little pamphlet, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, based on a lecture drafted in 1904 by Ernst Fenollosa and edited by Pound after Fenollosa's death. *The Chinese Written Character* was first published in four installments in *The Little Review*, beginning in September 1919.⁴ According to Pound the *miglior fabbro*, the essay by Fenollosa is almost intact: "I have done little more than remove a few repetitions and shape a few sentences."⁵ In his shaping and commentary, however, he encourages a direct application of Fenollosa's description of Chinese poetics to English that the author may not have intended. In Pound's rapturous discovery of Chinese, we see an intuitive grasp of something that is actually there, the fundamental lyricism of Chinese poetics.⁶ Where Fenollosa went off the rails--and took Pound with him--was in ascribing this quality to the Chinese written character itself:

In what sense can verse, written in terms of visible hieroglyphics, be reckoned true poetry? It might seem that poetry, which like music is a *time art*, weaving its unities out of successive impressions of sound, could with difficulty assimilate a verbal medium consisting of largely semi-pictorial appeals to the eye... the question is, how can the Chinese line imply, as *form*, the very element that distinguished poetry from prose?⁷

This possibility of a lyricism intrinsic to the language itself spoke directly to Pound’s aesthetic concerns for English.⁸ What Pound confirmed from Fenollosa’s presentation of Chinese poetics was the centrality of lyric to the Chinese tradition; however, he was quite unable to account for this in purely poetic terms, or even in linguistic terms as traditionally understood in the west, and seized on the Chinese writing system as the explanation. From a Europocentric point of view, indeed from an Indo-European point of view, poetics are fundamentally narrative, stemming from the epic, not lyric.⁹ Therefore to Fenollosa and Pound, if Chinese presents so fundamental a difference, it *couldn’t* be a literary phenomenon--the difference must have something to do with the *visual* character of Chinese.¹⁰

The pictographic character Fenollosa ascribes to Chinese writing gives a poem an intuitive immediacy beyond anything mere written words based on sounds and an alphabet could do. When he applies the theory to poetry, he hopefully posits that the English words equivalent to the Chinese characters, arranged in the same sequence, will have the same intuitive immediacy as the original “visual hieroglyphs,” even if their meaning cannot be apprehended through the visual evocativeness of the words as written on the page. Assuming that the Chinese characters automatically have a similar relation to words in an inflected language such as his own, he finds that the Chinese word order admirably mirrors English. By using a line of Chinese char-

acters as if they were English, Fenollosa made it seem possible for Pound to write English poetry as if he were using Chinese characters. The fact that he found every character to be superendowed with pictorial force was an imaginative leap that had far more to do with his wishes for English poetics than Chinese language. It expressed his hope that by removing inflection and replacing it with pure sensory connection, lyricism could be restored to poetry.¹¹

In this scheme of things, English grammar simply reflects the patterns of nature. Fenollosa even obligingly reinforces a notion of linear sequence that is unself-consciously, not to say cluelessly, divergent from the fundamental character of Chinese poetics:

Perhaps we do not always sufficiently consider that thought is successive, not through some accident or weakness of our subjective operations but because the operations of nature are successive. The transferences of force from agent to object, which constitute natural phenomena, occupy time. Therefore, a reproduction of them in imagination requires the same temporal order.

[*Note from the editor: Style, that is to say, limpidity, as opposed to rhetoric. E.P.*]¹²

In both his art and his polemics, Pound tried to break the narrative-based grip of European poetics, and he saw in the supposed visuality of Chinese poetry a way of doing just that. But he could not break away from his tradition,

from the notion that time is time, and freedom from time comes in moments of intense self-awareness. It is a “self”-centered transcendence in language, individual, and art. In the Chinese tradition, lyrical experience is not equated with *self*-awareness, but with moments when the self is laid aside, beyond time and near vacuity. This is what Pound, working without Chinese on its own terms, could not approach. This is the source of the great divide between Chinese and Pound’s own form of *chinoiserie*.

Pound’s role in blurring that divide is complex. On the one hand, he was susceptible to formulations like this:

We find in poetical Chinese a wealth of transitive verbs, in some ways greater than in the English of Shakespeare. This springs from their power in combining several pictorial elements in a single character. We have in English no verb for what two things, say the sun and the moon, both do together.¹³

On the other hand, Pound was the first to recognize that Fenollosa’s representation of Chinese poetics sounded a clarion call to modernist translators, and he answered it. The results, while still not “right” by sinological standards, command respect as perceptive forays into new territory:

Should we pass formally to the study of Chinese poetry, we should warn ourselves against logicianized pitfalls. We should beware of modern narrow utilitarian means ascribed to words in commercial dictionaries. We should

be ware of English grammar, its hard parts of speech, and its lazy satisfaction with nouns and adjectives. We should seek and at least bear in mind the verbal undertone of each noun. We should avoid "is" and bring in a wealth of neglected English verbs. Most of the existing translations violate all of these rules.¹⁴

As I said, Pound's translations of Chinese poetry unintentionally emphasize what is actually there--the basis of the Chinese tradition in lyric aesthetics. Interpretation of Chinese lyricism as dependent on the supposedly visual quality of Chinese writing meant that the experience of reading was co-extensive, co-temporal, co-everything with the poem being read. The result would be a sort of hyper-lyricism far beyond the scope or capabilities of any Indo-European language. This is not to say that western languages are incapable of lyrical expression--far from it. But the nature of a reader's reception of lyrical experience is different because of the fundamental orientation to narrative, and it was beyond the power even of Pound to get around this. Lyric poetry in inflected languages follows a different path to transcendence, not because of the lack of the visual immediacy of written characters, but because the relation of reader to experience is integrative rather than empathic. In Chinese poetics, moments of lyrical transcendence lay aside poet and reader, and only experience remains. In European lyrics the poet may disappear, but the reader, and time, never.

Critics of European modernism are by now well aware that modern poets have misread Chinese poetry in pursuit of their own artistic ends. Since T.S. Eliot hailed Ezra Pound as “the inventor of Chinese poetry,”¹⁵ scholars such as Achilles Fang, George A. Kennedy, James J.Y. Liu, Hugh Kenner, Eugene Eoyang, Wai-lim Yip and, more recently, Zhang Longxi and Cai Zongqi have studied the implications of Pound’s “inventions” for our understanding of Chinese poetics and their influence on lyric poetry in European languages.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the apparently willful misreading of the nature of Chinese poetry has persisted, from the filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein to the deconstructionist Jacques Derrida. Eisenstein, writing in 1929, had already so completely assimilated Pound’s theory of the expressive quality of the Chinese written character that he posited it as the basis of “a unified system for methods of cinematographic expressiveness that shall hold good for all its elements.”¹⁷ And they continue to have their effect. In part, this is because of the difficulty of separating modernism from the assimilationist impulse which contributed so much to its creation. At the same time, there remains an almost unbridgeable gap between specialists in western modernism and specialists in traditional Chinese studies, so that even critics who know that Pound and his confrères were “wrong” about China do not know *how* he was wrong.

In the study of Chinese modern and postmodern literature, a different story is emerging. Critics such as Leo

Ou-fan Lee and E. Perry Link, writing on the modern era before the death of Mao Zedong had China's long revolution as a great backdrop, and the focus was on the place of literature first in Chinese politics and society, then in the world.¹⁸ In the last decade, Rey Chow and Lydia H. Liu, particularly, have a changed vision of Chinese modernity, and have brought twentieth century Chinese literature and media into modernist and postmodernist discourse by showing how China both participates in, and departs from, the culture of international modernism.¹⁹ The last Nobel laureate in literature of the twentieth century is Gao Xianjian, living in exile in France, snubbed by his homeland's establishment. The importance of China in international affairs has finally brought modern Chinese artistic expression into the international mainstream.

Ironically, Pound has no part in the discourse of Chinese modernity. At the same time, although (or perhaps because) his interpretation of traditional poetics bypasses the distinctive conventions and assumptions of Chinese literary culture, the notion of a "magic key" to Chinese poetry is still hard to resist. Pound could not corrupt or taint the principles of sinology, but he put it on the defensive. He brought traditional Chinese poetry into the global village as a handmaiden to his own modernist vision. With his sense of Chinese poetry's "hyper-lyricism" Pound fixed in the European imagination an image of traditional Chinese literature at best crystalline, abstract and inaccessible, at worst

trivial and precious, which has hampered sinologists’ ability to convey “true” things about China to a non-specialist audience. The Pound legacy kept Chinese studies both ghettoized and self-ghettoizing during what should have been their expansionist, modernist phase, and still resists correction on a large scale. Attempts by sinologists to explain where Pound went wrong seem only to increase the distance between themselves and the lay readership on whose loyalty Pound made such a lasting claim. Pound’s misinterpretation is so attractive that through most of the past half-century people have not wanted to be set right: they cannot imagine a truth good enough to compensate them for what they might be forced to give up.

Pound’s illusions have shown extraordinary stamina, being reincarnated in a new generation of students for whom Pound and Eliot are no more than a couple of dead white males, yet who seem to know just what a Chinese poem is supposed to be. Will Pound survive any number of stakes through the heart? But perhaps that is the wrong metaphor. In trying to correct a harmful but deeply rooted error, we sinologists may have been beating our heads against a brick wall. We need only look around to see that it is but a few feet long. Pound seized an important selection of Chinese literature, it is true--Confucius and the *Shi jing*, for starters.²⁰ But Chinese literature is vast, and recent scholarship, especially recent translation, gives us an opportunity to carry the battle elsewhere.

Intellectually, Pound may truly be undead. His poetics fuse the modernist zeitgeist, the exotic, and the most elusive aspect of literary aesthetics, the lyric: an unassailable combination. Like a fortress on a hill, Pound's China dominates the countryside--but only if you happen to be looking that way. Pedagogically, Pound can be outflanked, *if we switch our initial emphasis from lyric to narrative*. The difference between sinology and Japanology in this century is instructive. Japanese culture is no more compatible with western aesthetics than Chinese, yet Japanese literature is better known in the west, and read with better understanding, than Chinese. In part, this is the difference between Pound and another great modernist translator, Arthur Waley, whose role in our discovery of Japan is comparable to Pound's in our discovery of China.²¹ Waley's translation of *The Tale of Genji* is both brilliantly readable and acceptably accurate.²² Waley's *Genji* conformed both to the western obsession with the novel as the inevitable and supreme achievement of literary art, and the notions of Japanese aesthetics --feminine, exquisite, evanescent--so popular in the visual arts in the late 19th and early 20th century.²³ No contemporary translations of Chinese novels could compare with it, not even Waley's own abridged *Monkey* (1943).²⁴

This is not to say that if Waley had chosen to translate *Honglou meng* instead of the *Genji* he would have succeeded in making an end-run around Pound. But it is a fact that the recent, excellent and complete translations of the classic

Chinese novels, especially those which can be compared to European social or psychological novels, are a breakthrough for comparative literary studies: *The Journey to the West* by Anthony C. Yu, *The Story of the Stone* (a.k.a. *The Dream of the Red Chamber*) by David Hawkes and John Minford, *Jin Ping Mei* by André Lévy, *Three Kingdoms* by Moss Roberts, and David Roy’s *Plum in a Golden Vase*.²⁵ Without conscious plan or program, sinology, or at least that branch of sinology concerned with translation, has prepared the way for a revolution which has the power to bring traditional Chinese literature into the mainstream of comparative literature at last. This new flowering gives us an opportunity to re-introduce the Chinese lyric and lyrical aesthetics, no longer as the product of one man’s brilliant, misguided vision, but in truly comparative terms, as a counterpoint to the more accessible tradition of the novel.

Storytelling in all media is the most vigorous avenue of comparative literary studies of the end of the twentieth century. Narrative genres offer an invitation to enter a strange world, whereas lyric poetry may seem to embody the strangeness of an unfamiliar world, and so discourage entry. The lyrical aesthetics of Chinese culture underlie the forms of narrative in literature as well as poetry, but are presented in ways more accessible to those with little knowledge of Chinese culture. While deeply engaged with early Chinese, particularly Confucian, philosophy, Pound had no access to Chinese narrative, and showed little interest in

it. But one of the peculiarities of Chinese literature is that, like the Japanese, it is dominated by lyric poetics. This fulfills Pound's dearest wish, of course, but not in the way he expected. Lyrical aesthetics pervade all Chinese literature, including the forms of narrative. Thanks to modern and postmodern scholarship, the notion of the pervasiveness of cultural forms throughout all modes of artistic production is now more accepted, and in the case of China, better understood, than in Pound's day. The new translations of traditional narrative give us an opportunity to show, not tell, our students how to appreciate the unique qualities of Chinese literature, not as a remote exotic, but as part of their ever-expanding world.

Endnotes:

1 Earl Miner, “Inventions of Literary Modernity,” *Clio* 21:1 (1991), 1-22; 21.

2 George Steiner’s *After Babel* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975) is the most comprehensive meditation on the nature and role of translation in the second half of the twentieth century. On the function of translation, see chapter 1, “Understanding as Translation,” 1-48.

3 Although Steiner acknowledges Pound’s ignorance of Chinese, Pound’s influence on literary translation resonates subtly in *After Babel*’s third chapter, “Word Against Object” (110-235).

4 Ernst Fenollosa (Ezra Pound, ed.), *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry: An Ars Poetica*, from a lecture drafted in 1904; extracted, shortened, polished and typed by Ezra Pound in 1914-15; first published in four installments, beginning September 1919 in *The Little Review*, published in its entirety by S. Nott (London, 1936; reprinted San Francisco, City Lights Books, 1969).

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5 *The Chinese Written Character*, 3.

6 For the fundamental lyricism of Chinese poetics, see Yu-kung Kao, "The Aesthetics of Regulated Verse," in Shuen-fu Lin and Stephen Owen, eds., *The Vitality of the Lyric Voice: Shih Poetry from the Late Han to T'ang* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 332-385; and Kao Yu-kung and Mei Tsu-lin, "Syntax, Diction and Imagery in T'ang Poetry," *HJAS* 31 (1971), 49-136.

7 *The Chinese Written Character*, 6.

8 In *Roots of Lyric: Primitive Poetry and Modern Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), Andrew Welsh devotes a chapter to the theory of the ideogram, describing Pound's essay as "one of the high points of modern poetics" (101), although he acknowledges that "Pound's ideogram applies to poetics, to phanopoeia in the language of poetry rather than to the particular discipline of Chinese poetry" (112-113). "Phanopoeia" is apparently a neologism which should mean something like "making luminously distinct." Here it is Welsh's attempt to translate the desired impact of individual words in lyrical expression as per Pound's assumptions about the Chinese poetic language into exclusively European terms. See Chapter V, "Ideogram," 100-132. See also Cai Zong-qi, "Poundian and Chinese Aesthetics of Dynamic Force: A Re-discovery of Fenollosa and Pound's Theory of the Chinese Written Character," *Comparative Literature Studies* 30-2 (1993); 170-187, 170.

9 For the relation of lyric poetics to narrative composition in the Chinese tradition, see Dore J. Levy, *Chinese Narrative Poetry, the Late Han through T'ang Dynasties* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988); 1-7.

10 In "Poundian and Chinese Aesthetics of Dynamic Force," Cai Zong-qi, describes *The Chinese Written Character* as "a comprehensive inquiry into the dynamic force of nature revealed pictorially or otherwise in the Chinese language" (171). This study contrasts with Wai-lim Yip's analysis of lyric poetry's timeless quality as object of consciousness; see *Ezra Pound's Cathay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), chapter 4 ("In Search of Consciousness"), 102-165.

“Pound the Undead”

11 In *Ezra Pound's Confucian Translations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), Mary Paterson Cheadle attempts to reconcile Pound's Chinese translations with sinological critiques. For her discussion of Pound's crucial encounters with “The Chinese Written Character” and the notebooks of Fenollosa, see pp. 35-36, 40-45.

12 *The Chinese Written Character*; 7.

13 *The Chinese Written Character*; 29-30.

14 *The Chinese Written Character*; 28.

15 *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems*, edited by T.S. Eliot (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928), Introduction, p. 14.

16 Achilles Fang, “Fenollosa and Pound,” *HJAS* 20 (June 1957); George A. Kennedy, “Fenollosa, Pound, and the Chinese Character,” *Yale Literary Magazine*, CXXVI (December 1958), 24-26; James J.Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962); Hugh Kenner, “Ezra Pound and China,” *Agenda*, IV (October-November 1965), 38-41, “The Invention of China,” *Spectrum*, IX.12 (Spring 1967), 21-52, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), “The Poetics of Error,” *Tamkang Review*, 6.2 Ind 7.1 (October 1975 - April 1976), 89-97; Eugene Eoyang, “The Confucian Odes,” *Paideuma* 3.1 (Spring 1974), 33-42; Wai-lim Yip, *Ezra Pound's Cathay*; Zhang Longxi, *The Tao and the Logos* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Cai Zong-qi, “Poundian and Chinese Aesthetics of Dynamic Force.”

17 Eisenstein assumes the identity of Chinese with Japanese characters; see “The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram,” in Jan Leyda, ed. and trans., *Film Form: Essays on Film Theory* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), 28-44; 39. This essay was originally published as an “afterward” to a pamphlet by N. Kaufman, *Japanese Cinema* (Moscow: n.p., 1929). For the vagaries of Derrida on China, see Zhang Longxi, “The Tao and the Logos: Notes on Derrida's Critic of Logocentrism,” *Critical Inquiry*, (March 1985), 385-398.

18 Leo Ou-fan Lee, *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), *Voices from the Iron*

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House: A Study of Lu Xun (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); E. Perry Link, Jr., *Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies: Popular Fiction in Early Twentieth-century Chinese Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), *Evening Chats in Beijing: Probing China's Predicament* (New York : Norton, 1992), and Link ed., *Stubborn Weeds: Popular and Controversial Chinese Literature after the Cultural Revolution* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1983), *Roses and Thorns: The Second Blooming of the Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction, 1979-80* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

19 See Rey Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity : The Politics of Reading between West and East* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), *Writing Diaspora : Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1993), *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), *Ethics after Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); and Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity--China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), and Liu, ed., *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

20 Cf. *Cathay: translations by Ezra Pound, for the most part from the Chinese of Rihaku* (London: E. Matthews, 1915); *Confucius: the Great Digest and the Unwobbling Pivot* (New York: New Directions, 1947); and Shih Ching. *The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954).

21 Steiner, *After Babel*, 358. Steiner points to Pound's role as Waley's immediate predecessor; Waley completely assimilated Pound's poetics of translation and put them into action with actual knowledge, ironically crystallizing Pound's crucial influence on translation of Chinese and Japanese literature.

22 *The Tale of Genji*, six volumes (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925-1933).

23 For an exposition of the extraordinary affinity between the Heian Japanese sense of the relation of time and art, particularly Murasaki Shikibu's, to modernist aesthetics, see Miner, “Inventions of Literary Modernity,” 15-21.

24 Arthur Waley, ed. and trans., *Monkey* (first printed London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1942). This delightful book is nevertheless so drastically abridged that it gives a schematic, almost pop impression of one of China's greatest works of allegory, *The Journey to the West*. For a complete translation of the original 100 chapter work, see Anthony C. Yu, *The Journey to the West*, vols. 1-4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1983).

25 David Hawkes and John Minford, *The Story of the Stone*, 5 vols., Bungay [Suffolk], Reading and New York: Penguin, 1973-1986); André Lévy, *Fleur en fiole d'or* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985); Moss Roberts, *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); David Tod Roy, *The Plum in a Golden Vase*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

Gui Xin Yin

by Meng Jiao
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

tears
ink of

blank
ghost

•

tears embers after rice sauce
ink news kites of far

blank loss another now knots
ghost heart over stone tablets

孟郊：
歸信吟

汨墨灑為出
將寄萬里親
書去魂亦去
兀然空一身

Zhongnan Shan wang yu xue

by Zu Yong
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

GAZING UP AT THE REMAINING SNOWS,
ZHONGNAN MOUNTAIN ...

'Ends the South' and over-shades
a mountain range in bloom,
Hordes its snows and spills them over
the banks of the cloud.

Above the forests, it brightens
a clearing sky.
Within the city, it deepens
the sunset chill.

祖咏：
終南山望餘雪

終南陰嶺秀
積雪浮雲端
林表明霽色
城中增暮寒

Shui su wen yan

by Li Yi

translated by John Cayley

from the Chinese

first wind autumn
first geese wind
river suddenly moon
empty in window
empty pairs moon

startling in window
wind startling autumn
wind us river
water empty window
empty alone window

long window wind
window nights autumn
wind rouse moon
river us moon
river alone autumn

first stars river
moon first wind
water filling wind
empty wind window
wind window river

李益：
水宿聞雁

早雁忽為雙
驚秋風水窗
夜長人自起
星月滿空江

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Dong Liu

by Lu Guimeng
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

winterswillows

willowwalk sideswipe wildswain windows
driftsdown barebranches near'nlighten'd riversrill
thisthere iceair blowsbreak outthere
coldgulls startlefly incouple incouple

陸龜蒙：
冬柳

柳汀斜對野人窗
零落衰條傍曉江
正是霜風飄斷處
寒鷗驚起一雙雙

Dongjiao Xingwang

by Wang Bo
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

This one was chosen for the word 'home' writ large, in amongst the strong wild-cursive calligraphy. It is also, as always, a winter poem, and one whose underlying themes-- in so far as I can understand them--resonate with certain aspects of our own celebrations at this time of year. I find that with any poem, no matter how brief or simple, there is always a hole--some gap, something that I am unable to discover. I address myself to this Chinese quatrain, one example of what is known as a 'cut-off' poem (apposite here), but the same could be said if I'd decided to quote another writer's work in English or even if I'd composed my own occasional piece for the card. I don't know whether 'winter suburbs' in the title means what it seems or is a place name, a greenbelt Winterhood, proper or generic, where the poet walks and gazes. The dense dark laurel is obscure to me and the white rock flowers also--real flowers, or metaphor for snow traces on a cliff face, or ? But the reddened leaves in the wood and sparse, denuded pears are slightly more familiar. A title and ten words: already missing so much. Then the cold gaze exhausts itself at or from a river bank. I'm staring into emptiness through December mists beside the Thames at Ham. My dishevelled, ramshackle, would-be-mendicant journeying towards a lean-to utopia is brought up short and judged against seasonal thoughts of 'home,' home-longing, pining for home, by 'homing' even, since this large word is also a verb.

王勃：
冬郊行望

桂密岩花白
梨疏林業紅
江皋寒望近
歸念斷征蓬

Da Pei Di Yi Zhongnanshan

by Wang Wei
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

my story my story
cold
flow
floodsplain

sin king sin king
fall
reign
wintersdark

ungentle question
'your place in the sun?'

all I know

,
some elsewhere
cloudscover

王維：
答裴迪憶終南山

渺渺寒流廣
蒼蒼秋雨晦
君問終南山
心知白雲外

Ji Xue

by Wei Yingwu
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

air push
levy fog

fairy oh
unswept

•

after wind roll emptiness snow's bright
swirl dies river flurry fronds willow lights

from eaves distilled remains lying unshovelled heaps
under open study window evening's perfect whites

韋應物：
霽雪

風卷長空暮雪晴
江煙酒盡柳條輕
檐前數片無人掃
又得書窗一夜明

Baidi xia Jiangling

by Li Bai
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

new dawn
fare well
old king's
white town

(amongst the coloured clouds

the thousand
miles to
river city
in one

(a single day's return

both sides
ape sounds

(non-stop chattering

light skiff
one stroke
what's past
is passed:

(numberless applachians

李白：
白帝下江陵

朝辭白帝彩雲間
千里江陵一日還
兩岸猴聲啼不住
輕舟已過萬重山

Toutuo Seng
by Lu Guimeng
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

deep on a mountain
encircled
by mountains

where I came at length
to know
the travel weary heart

and now sweep snow
to hide the tracks
of deer who live here

afraid that hunters
in the brightening day
may follow them back ...

陸龜蒙：
頭陀僧

萬峰圍繞一峰深
向此長修苦行心
自掃雪中歸鹿跡
天明恐被獵人尋

Guan shan yue

by Dai Shulun
translated by John Cayley
from the Chinese

moon out shine pass peak
fall wind I'm not back
clear light no far near
home tears mid night here

late moon rise
out to shine
over this pass
above this peak

late fall wind
still I'm no
not back from
where we are

so clear this
light that there's
no sense of
far or near

thoughts of home
mean tears this
mid night here
amongst us all

戴叔倫：
關山月

月出照關山
秋風人未還
清光無遠近
鄉淚半宵間

The Wanderer

by Anonymous
translated by Harry Aspinwall
from the Old English

Often the lone wanderer awaits his fortune,
The measurer's mercy, though, heavy hearted, he must
Journey through long water-ways,
And stir with his hands the ice-cold sea,
And trudge the exile paths. Doom is inexorable!
So spoke the earth-stepper, mindful of hardship
Of raging slaughters, and the fall of kinsmen:
"Often have I had to lament my sorrows
By each early light alone. There is no one yet living
To whom I dare tell my deepest thoughts
Openly. I know too well
That there is proud practice in a man,
That he binds fast his soul's coop,
Guards his hoard chamber, and thinks as he will.
Nor may the weary spirit resist fate,
Nor the troubled soul accomplish any good.

Oft him anhaga are gebideð,
Metudes miltse, þeah þe he modcearig
Geond lagulade longe sceolde
Hreran mid hondum hrimcealde sæ,
Wadan wræclastas. Wyrð bið ful aræd!
Swa cwæð eardstapa, earfeþa gemyndig,
Wraþra wælsleahta, winemæga hryre:
“Oft ic sceolde ana uhtna gehwylce
Mine ceare cwipæn. Nis nu cwicra nan
Þe ic him modsefan minne durre
Sweotule asecgan. Ic to soþe wat
Þæt biþ in eorle indryhten þeaw,
Þæt he his ferðlocan fæste binde,
Healde his hordcofan, hycge swa he wille.
Ne mæg werig mod wyrde wiðstandan,
Ne se hreo hyge helpe gefremman.

Hence the glory-eager often bind fast
Desolate thoughts in the hollow of their breast;
“So have I, often distraught, torn from my homeland
And far from my noble kin, had to bind
My deepest reflections in fetters,
Ever since I covered over my lord years ago
In earth’s concealing darkness, and, desolate,
I bore away in wintery sorrow over the waves’ surface.
Homeless and aching, I sought for a treasure giver
And some place far or near where I could find
In mead hall someone who might know of my kin,
Or wish to comfort me, friendless one,
And harbour me joyfully. He who knows it well
Is aware how cruel a companion sorrow is
To him that has few beloved friends:
The exile’s path takes hold of him, not wound gold;
His soul’s hollow bitter cold, no earthly wealth.
He recalls hall warriors and treasure giving,
How in youth his lord would welcome him
To the feasting. Such joy, all fallen!
For he who must go long without
The spoken counsels of his beloved lord knows
That when sorrow and sleep together as one
Ensnare the wretched outcast,
In his mind it seems that he embraces his liege
And kisses him and upon those knees lays
His hands and his head, as often before,

Forðon domgeorne dreorigne oft
In hyra breostcofan bindað fæste;
“Swa ic modsefan minne sceolde,
Oft earmcearig, eðle bidæled,
Freomægum feor feterum sælan,
Siþþan geara iu goldwine mine
Hrusan heolstre biwrah, ond ic hean þonan
Wod wintercearig ofer waþema gebind,
Sohte sele dreorig sinces bryttan,
Hwær ic feor oþþe neah findan meahte
Þone þe in meoduhealle min mine wisse,
Oþþe mec freondleasne frefran wolde,
Weman mid wynnum. Wat se þe cunnað,
Hu sliþen bið sorg to geferan,
Þam þe him lyt hafað leofra geholena.
Warað hine wræclast, nales wunden gold,
Ferðloca freorig, nalæs foldan blæd.
Gemon he selesecgas ond sinþege,
Hu hine on geoguðe his goldwine
Wenede to wiste. Wyn eal gedreas.
Forþon wat se þe scal his winedryhtnes
Leofes larcwidum longe forþolian,
Ðonne sorg ond slæp somod ætgædre
Earmne anhogan oft gebindað.
Þinceð him on mode þæt he his mondryhten
Clyppe ond cysse, ond on cneo lecge
Honda ond heafod, swa he hwilum ær

When in days long gone, he would gain from the gift-seat.
“Then the friendless man awakes once more,
And sees before him fallow waves,
And bathing sea birds, preening their feathers,
And falling ice and snow mixed with hail.
Then from this his heart wounds are the heavier,
Sore, yearning after loved ones. Sorrow is made new
When remembrance of his kinsmen passes through his mind.
He greets them joyfully, and eagerly searches through
The companions of men; and always they drift away.
The spirit of seafarers does not often bring there
Familiar speech. Care is made new
For him who must eternally send his weary heart away
Over the surface of the waves.
I cannot think why my contemplations
Do not grow dark when I consider
All the life of men throughout the world,
How fleet the bold thanes
Departed the floor. And so, each and every day
This earth fails and falls. For man cannot become
Wise before he has borne a number of winters
In the realm of earth. The wise man must be patient,
He must not be hot-hearted, nor quick-worded,
Nor must he be a yielding warrior, nor reckless,
Nor too fearful, nor too joyful, nor covetous,
And never quick to boast, before he is truly aware.
When he has uttered a vow, stout-minded man

In geardagum giefstolas breac.
“Ðonne onwæcneð eft wineleas guma,
Gesihð him biforan fealwe wegas,
Baþian brimfuglas, brædan feþra,
Hreosan hrim ond snaw, hagle gemenged.
Ponne beoð þy hefigran heortan benne,
Sare æfter swæsne. Sorg bið geniwad,
Ponne maga gemynd mod geondhweorfeð;
Greteð gliwstafum, georne geondsceawað
Secga geseldan. Swimmað eft on weg.
Fleotendra ferð no þær fela bringeð
Cuðra cwidegiedda. Cearo bið geniwad
Þam þe sendan sceal swiþe geneahhe
Ofer waþema gebind werigne sefan.
Forþon ic geþencan ne mæg geond þas woruld
For hwan modsefa min ne gesweorce,
Ponne ic eorla lif eal geondþence,
Hu hi færlice flet ofgeafon,
Modge maguþegnas. Swa þes middangeard
Ealra dogra gehwam dreoseð ond fealleþ,
Forþon ne mæg weorþan wis wer, ær he age
Wintra dæl in woruldrice. Wita sceal geþyldig,
Ne sceal no to hatheort ne to hrædwyrde,
Ne to wac wiga ne to wanhydig,
Ne to forht ne to fægen, ne to feohgifre
Ne næfre gielpes to georn, ær he geare cunne.
Beorn sceal gebidan, þonne he beot spricedð,

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Must wait until he fully knows
Which way the heart's purpose wishes to turn.
The shrewd warrior must perceive how horrifying it will be,
When all this world's wealth stands ruined,
As now, manifold throughout this earth,
Walls stand, blown upon by wind;
Shrouded in ice, the structures snow-swept.
Those halls have crumbled, and the lords lie dead,
Shorn of happiness; the attendants all
Have perished by the wall. Some, war took,
And bore them forth; some, a bird carried off
Over the gloomy sea; some, the hoary wolf
Offered up to death; some, sad-faced,
Concealed their lord in earthen grave.
So the shaper of men laid waste to this dwelling place
Until, devoid of the people's celebrations,
The ancient works of giants stood forsaken.
He who has thought wisely upon this foundation,
And contemplates this dark life deeply,
Experienced of spirit, has often remembered
The vast host of slaughters from afar and spoken these words:
"Where has the horse gone? Where the young man? Where
the treasure-giver?
Where has the seat of feasts gone? Where are the celebrations?
Alas the bright cup! Alas the byrned warrior!
Alas the prince's glory! How that age has passed,
And darkened under the cover of night, as though it never was.

Oþþæt collenferð cunne gearwe
Hwider hreþra gehygd hweorfan wille.
Ongietan sceal gleaw hæle hu gæstlic bið,
þonne ealre þisse worulde wela weste stondeð,
Swa nu missenlice geond þisne middangeard
Winde biwaune weallas stondaþ,
Hrime bihrorene, hryðge þa ederas.
Woriað þa winsalo, waldend licgað
Dreame bidrorene, duguþ eal gecrong,
Wlonc bi wealle. Sume wig fornom,
Ferede in forðwege, sumne fugel oþþær
Ofer heanne holm, sumne se hara wulf
Deaðe gedælde, sumne dreorighleor
In eorðscræfe eorl gehydde.
Yþde swa þisne eardgeard ælda scyppend
Oþþæt burgwara breahmta lease
Eald enta geweorc idlu stodon.
Se þonne þisne wealsteal wise geþohte
Ond þis deorce lif deope geondþenceð,
Frod in ferðe, feor oft gemon
Wælsleahta worn, ond þas word acwið:
“Hwær cwom mearg? Hwær cwom mago? Hwær cwom
maþþungyfa?
Hwær cwom symbla gesetu? Hwær sindon seledreamas?
Eala beorht bune! Eala byrnwiga!
Eala þeodnes þrym! Hu seo þrag gewat,
Genap under nihthelm, swa heo no wære.

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Now a wall, wondrously high, stands in the wake
Of that beloved band, wrapped in serpent tendrils.
The lords were overcome by might of spears
The weapon of the blood-ravenous, that magnificent doom,
And storms hammer these stone cliffs.
The fallen snow binds the earth,
Winter's tumult; when darkness comes,
The shadow of night grows dark, and sends in malice
A looming hailstorm out of the north upon brave men.'
"All is full of hardship in the realm of earth.
The shape of fate changes the world under the heavens.
Here money is fleeting, here friends are fleeting,
Here man is fleeting, here kinsmen are fleeting.
All this world has become a desolate foundation."
So spoke the wise man in his mind, as he sat apart in reflection.
He is good who holds his faith, and man must never make known
The bitterness in his breast too quickly, unless he already knows
 its remedy,
To act with courage, a hero. It is well for him that seeks fortune,
And solace in our father in heaven, where all that is eternal
 awaits us.

Stondeð nu on laste leofre duguþe
Weal wundrum heah, wyrmlicum fah.
Eorlas fornoman asca þryþe,
Wæpen wælgifru, wyrd seo mære,
Ond þas stanhleoþu stormas cnyssað,
Hrið hreosende hrusan bindeð,
Wintres woma, þonne won cymeð,
Nipeð nihtscua, norþan onsendeð
Hreo hæglfare hæleþum on andan.’

“Eall is earfoðlic eorþan rice,
Onwendeð wyrda gesceaft weoruld under heofonum.
Her bið feoh læne, her bið freond læne,
Her bið mon læne, her bið mæg læne,
Eal þis eorþan gesteal idel weorþeð.”
Swa cwæð snottor on mode, gesæt him sundor æt rune.
Til biþ se þe his treowe gehealdeþ, ne sceal næfre his torn

to rycene

Beorn of his breostum acyþan, nemþe he ær þa bote cunne,
Eorl mid elne gefremman. Wel bið þam þe him are seceð,
Frofre to fæder on heofonum, þær us eal seo fæstnung
stondeð.

The Translators

Harry Aspinwall is a senior at Brown University. He studies Linguistics and Literary Arts.

Cecily Barber is a senior at Brown University. She studies Classics and Medicine.

John Cayley is a professor of Literary Arts at Brown. A poet, translator, and publisher, he is notably trained in Chinese culture and language, and renowned for his work in networked and programmable media, which is accessible on his website, *programmatology.shadoof.net*.

Andrea Dillon is a junior (II.5) at Brown University. She studies International Relations and Arabic.

Katie Farris graduated from Brown University last year. Her poetry, fiction, and translations have appeared in numerous journals. She currently teaches Comparative Literature and Creative Writing at San Diego State University.

Laura Healy is a Brown graduate and translator whose work has appeared in a number of publications. Her translation, *The Romantic Dogs*, was the first collection of Roberto Bolaño's poetry to appear in English. *Tres*, the second collection of his poems she has translated, will be published in September by New Directions.

Brian Henry is a poet, translator, literary critic, and editor. He has written ten collections of poetry, most recently *Lessness*, which appeared in March. His translation of Aleš Šteger's *The Book of Things* was awarded the Best Translated Book Award for Poetry in 2011. His translation of Šteger's prose collection *Berlin* is forthcoming.

Caroline Hughes is a junior at Brown University. She concentrates in Classics and Medieval Studies.

Ilya Kaminsky is a Russian-American poet, critic, translator and professor. *Dancing in Odessa*, his second collection of

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poems in English, won several prizes including the Whiting Writers' Award and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Metcalf Award. Recently, he co-edited the *Ecco Anthology of International Poetry*.

Peter Kentros is a freshman at Brown University. He studies English and History.

Andrew Leber is a junior at Brown University. He studies International Relations.

Rebecca Leuchak is a Professor of Art and Architectural History at Roger Williams University.

Daniel Mendelsohn is an author, critic, and professor at Bard College. His translations of C. P. Cavafy's collected and unfinished poems were recently published.

Timothy Nassau is a junior at Brown University. He studies Comparative Literature.

Emily Oglesby is a sophomore at Brown University studying Greek and linguistics within a Classics concentration.

Jason Reeder is a senior at Brown University. He studies Linguistics.

Pat Snidvongs is a senior at Brown University. He studies Literary Arts.

Keith Walrop is retiring from 43 years of teaching at Brown University. Founder and co-editor of Burning Deck Press with his wife, he has published over twenty books of poetry, prose, and translations. His *Transcendental Studies: A Trilogy* won a National Book Award in 2009.

Rosmarie Waldrop is a poet and translator. With her husband, she founded and co-edits the Burning Deck Press. She has published over twenty books of poetry, translations, and criticism, as well as two novels. In 2008 she received a PEN Award for Poetry in Translation.

Sophia F. Wang is a freshman at Brown University. She intends to study International Relations.

Matthew Weiss is a junior at Brown University. He studies Literary Arts.

Rebecca Willner is a junior and a Classics (Ancient Greek & Latin) concentrator at Brown University.

Jonah Wolf is a junior at Brown University. He studies Classics.

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Erik-Dardan Ymeraga is a junior at Brown University. He studies Comparative Literature.

The Authors

Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966) is one of the greatest Russian poets of the 20th (or any other) century. Condemned and censored by Stalinist authorities, she authored a wide variety of poems in her highly original voice, from short lyrics to elaborately constructed poetic cycles.

Archilochus (c. 680-645 BC) was a Greek poet from the island of Paros, who lived in the 7th century B.C during the Archaic period. Only fragments of his poetry survive, but these short fragments still exhibit his numerous innovations in meter and subject--particularly personal experience

and emotions--which greatly influenced subsequent poetic traditions.

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) was one of the foremost 19th century French poets, known for his collections *Les Fleurs du mal* and *Le Spleen de Paris*. An essayist and art critic as well, his translations of Edgar Allen Poe, to whom it might be said he bore a resemblance, are considered among the best.

Roberto Bolaño (1953-2003) was a Chilean novelist and poet, perhaps best known for his two monumental novels, *The Savage Detectives* and *2666*. As a young man in Mexico City, he founded the *infrarealist* group with Mario Santiago; in the mid 70's, he left Mexico, eventually settling in Blanes, Spain. In the 1990's, he began writing novels, in addition to his poetry, allegedly to support his wife and children. He died in 2003 due to complications from a liver condition.

Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933) is one of the most renowned modern Greek poets. Unrecognized during his lifetime, and despite a moderately small oeuvre, he was instrumental in the 20th century revival of Greek poetry.

Dai Shulun (732-789) was a poet from the Tang Dynasty. He wrote about the seclusion of a quiet life and the daily difficulties of those around him. His grave is marked as being that of a great poet.

Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65-8 BC) was, according to Wikipedia, “the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus.”

Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) was a Romantic author and painter. He wrote plays, poetry, novels, and criticism while influencing the major French literary movements of his time, notably Parnassianism, Symbolism, and Decadence. He advocated, famously, art for art’s sake.

Paol Keineg (1944-) is a poet and playwright from Brittany, France. He received a PhD from Brown in 1981 and now teaches at Duke University. He is the author of over twenty books in French and Breton.

Kho Tararith (1974-) is a Cambodian visiting fellow with Brown’s International Writers Project, which provides creative writers a haven for free expression that is limited in their home countries. He is a writer of poetry and short fiction, as well as an activist engaged in social and environmental work in Cambodia.

Dore Levy is a professor of Comparative Literature at Brown University. She received her B.A. in Chinese Language and Literature from Yale, a Certificate of Diligent Study in Oriental Languages from Cambridge University, and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Princeton.

Li Bai (701-762) is considered one of the greatest poets of the Tang Dynasty. His inimitable poems, known for their celebration of drinking, fantastic imagery, and formal innovation, had a large influence on American Imagist and Modernist poetry while insuring his esteem in China through the present day.

Lu Guimeng (?-c. 881) was a reclusive poet from the Tang Dynasty. He lived in seclusion near Suzhou where two ginkgo trees that he planted still mark his grave.

Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) remains one of the best known figures in Judaism. Born in Spain, he settled in Cairo, where he spent the most of his life as a teacher, writer, community leader, and physician. As of 2011, Jews the world over still affectionately call him the Rambam.

Meng Jiao (751-814) was a poet of the Tang Dynasty. A life of poverty did not hamper his success as a poet, and several of his works rank among the most famous Classical Chinese poems.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1100-1150) wrote the popular Latin chronicle *Historia regum britanniae*, or *History of the Kings of Britain*. With stories that are generally more legendary than historical, the work contains an early Latin version of the

mythical founding of Britain by Brutus, the story of King Lear and his daughters, and the reign of King Arthur. The *Historia* was the basis of some of the most popular works of the Middle Ages, including the overwhelmingly influential *Brut* chronicle.

Marcel Proust (1871-1922) is the foremost French modernist author. Although best known for his life's work, the seven-volume *In Search of Lost Time*, his first published book was a collection of poems. He would later try to block its reprinting.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) is one of the most important modern German poets. Famous for such works as his *Duino Elegies* and *Letters to a Young Poet*, he also wrote several hundred poems in French, dedicating them to his adopted homeland, the canton of Valais in Switzerland.

The Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) was a French author and philosopher. Infamous for his portrayals of violent and deviant sexuality, his works have been consistently controversial, though he is today considered one of the foremost figures of the Enlightenment.

Albert Samain (1858-1900) was a French Symbolist poet. Living in Paris at the end of the 19th century, he frequented the avant-garde circles of the time, helped found several impor-

tant journals and presses, and read his poems at the trendiest cafés.

Aleš Šteger (1973-) is a Slovenian poet and editor. He has written four volumes of poetry and is an editor at the renowned publishing house Študentska založba. *Berlin*, a collection of his prose, is forthcoming in English translation.

Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), considered one of the most important 19th century fin de siècle writers, was a French symbolist poet and lover of Rimbaud. His most famous works include *Poèmes saturniens*, *Fêtes galantes*, and *Sagesse*.

Wang Bo (650-676) was a poet from the Tang Dynasty and one of the Four Literary Eminences in Early Tang. An advocate of a richly emotional style, his *Teng Wang Ge Xu* is still studied by middle school students in China today.

Wang Wei (701-761) was a poet, painter, musician, and statesman from the Tang Dynasty. One of the most famous artists of his time and of considerable influence on future generations both Eastern and Western, he is best known for his quatrains that reflect on a misty nature removed from human presence.

Wei Yingwu (737-792) was a poet from the Tang Dynasty, writing profoundly simple and direct poems about nature

and the political events of his time. Throughout his life he held several governmental positions without incident or acclaim.

Zu Yong (699-746) was a poet of the Tang Dynasty. Although he once held a government position, he ended up in exile due to his unconventional lifestyle: chanting his poetry and preaching the hermit lifestyle. Apocryphally, Zu Yong tried to paint color pictures with his poetry.

