

Journal
of Italian Translation



Editor Luigi Bonaffini

Volume XII

Number 2

Fall 2017



Journal of Italian Translation



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Journal of Italian Translation is an international journal devoted to the translation of literary works from and into Italian-English-Italian dialects. All translations are published with the original text. It also publishes essays and reviews dealing with Italian translation. It is published twice a year.

Submissions should be in electronic form. Translations must be accompanied by the original texts, a brief profile of the translator, and a brief profile of the author. Original texts and translations should be on separate files. All submissions and inquiries should be addressed to l.bonaffini@att.net

Book reviews should be sent to Paolo Spedicato: pspedicatopdf@gmail.com.

Website: www.jitonline.org

Subscription rates:

U.S. and Canada. Individuals \$30.00 a year, \$50 for 2 years.

Institutions \$35.00 a year.

Single copies \$18.00.

For all mailing abroad please add \$15 per issue. Payments in U.S. dollars. Make checks payable to Journal of Italian Translation, Dept. of Modern Languages and Literatures, 2900 Bedford Ave. Brooklyn, NY 11210 .

Journal of Italian Translation is grateful to the Sonia Raiziss Giop Charitable Foundation for its generous support.

Journal of Italian Translation is published under the aegis of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures of Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

Design and camera-ready text by Legas,
PO Box 149, Mineola, NY 11501

ISSN: 1559-8470

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Each issue of Journal of Italian Translation features a noteworthy Italian or Italian American artist. In this issue we present the work of Vittorio Manno and Angelo Rizzelli.

**Vittorio Manno e Angelo Rizzelli:
Il segno tra memoria e sogno**

Questi coni rovesciati, questi imbuti, si chiamano Sassi: Sasso Caveoso e Sasso Barisano. Hanno la forma con cui, a scuola, immaginavamo l'inferno di Dante. E cominciai anch'io a scendere per una specie di mulattiera, di girone in girone, verso il fondo. La stradetta, strettissima, che scendeva serpeggiando, passava sui tetti delle case, se così quelle si possono chiamare. Sono grotte scavate nella parete di argilla indurita del burrone: ognuna di esse ha sul davanti una facciata; alcune sono anche belle, con qualche modesto ornato settecentesco. Queste facciate finte, per l'inclinazione della costiera, sorgono in basso a filo del monte, e in alto sporgono un poco: in quello stretto spazio tra le facciate e il declivio passano le strade, e sono insieme pavimenti per chi esce dalle abitazioni di sopra e tetti per quelle di sotto...

(Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*)

Carlo Levi ha scritto il suo capolavoro tra il 1943 e 1944, quando Vittorio Manno e Angelo Rizzelli erano ancora bambini, poco meno che scugnizzi. Lo scrisse quando non erano ancora arrivati a Matera, dove, separatamente e in momenti diversi, sarebbero approdati da lì a quindici anni il primo, ancora dopo Rizzelli. Ma era impossibile per due giovani meridionali, cresciuti nel dopoguerra e con l'ambizione inconsueta e osteggiata di fare arte, ignorare la storia di terre al confine con la propria. Da adolescenti avevano sicuramente letto le pagine struggenti di *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, come sicuramente conoscevano le poesie, nobili e accorate, di denuncia e di speranza, di Rocco Scotellaro. Seppur ragazzi, non ignoravano certo lo sgombero dei Sassi ordinato da De Gasperi nel 1952, e la campagna di bonifica della cosiddetta "vergogna nazionale". *E' fatto giorno* era il titolo della raccolta pubblicata da Scotellaro nel '54, dove una delle poesie si intitola "Lucania":

M'accompagna lo zirlìo dei grilli

e il suono del campano al collo
d'un inquieta capretta.
Il vento mi fascia
di sottilissimi nastri d'argento
e là, nell'ombra delle nubi sperduto,
giace in frantumi un paesetto lucano.

Eccoci, all'alba della ricostruzione, dell'emergenza della questione meridionale, con tanta parte del Sud in frantumi quando, appunto, sull'Italia *si era fatto giorno*. Mi immagino due giovani uomini, poco più che ventenni, consapevoli già d'allora che la propria cultura, la propria civiltà, per rinascere davvero dalle macerie della guerra e dall'atavica miseria doveva poter contare anche sulla forza dell'arte, e degli artisti. Non penso all'arte a servizio del partito, o sua ancella, come poteva essere quella del primo Guttuso o di un Treccani; penso invece ad un'arte come quella invocata, e praticata, da Albert Camus, anche lui uomo del sud del mondo, insignito del Premio Nobel per la letteratura nel 1957, solo due anni prima dell'arrivo di Manno a Matera, che nel suo discorso di accettazione del premio ebbe a dire:

L'arte non è ai miei occhi gioia solitaria: è invece un mezzo per commuovere il maggior numero di uomini offrendo loro un'immagine privilegiata delle sofferenze e delle gioie di tutti. L'arte obbliga dunque l'artista a non isolarsi e lo sottomette alla verità più umile e più universale. E spesso chi ha scelto il suo destino di artista perché si sentiva diverso dagli altri si accorge ben presto che potrà alimentare la sua arte e questo suo esser diverso solo confessando la sua somiglianza con tutti: l'artista si forma in questo rapporto perpetuo fra lui e gli altri, a mezza strada fra la bellezza di cui non può fare a meno e la comunità dalla quale non si può staccare.

Così immagino le motivazioni di Manno e Rizzelli, motivazioni giovanili a cui, ho ragione di credere, siano rimasti fedeli nel quasi mezzo secolo che li vede operare ancora tra i Sassi di Matera, nella stamperia storica ubicata in Via dei Sette Dolori, in una stradetta che serpeggia ancora come quelle descritte da Levi. Lì notavo, durante una mia recente visita, che su una parete del loro



laboratorio spicca una locandina di un altro artista, di uno che ha fatto la storia del cinema e, in modo non dissimile da Levi, anche quella di Matera. Siamo nel 1964 quando Pier Paolo Pasolini, col suo *Il vangelo secondo Matteo*, eleva i Sassi ad icona di un mondo al trapasso ma che contiene in sé il germe della propria resurrezione. Voglio pensare che Manno e Rizzelli, già presenti a Matera quando vi mette piede Pasolini, con la loro arte incisoria conosciuta in tutta Europa e non solo, siano tra i veri artefici della resurrezione odierna della città: artefici silenti, operosi, umili, nella tradizione di artisti come li intendeva Camus, che lontani dal chiasso che vuole oggi Matera capitale europea della cultura, nobilitano con i loro segni tale vocazione autentica, e non solo promozionale, della città lucana.

Mentre articolavo con i Maestri il progetto di una loro mostra l'anno scorso presso la Fortezza di Civitella del Tronto, Vittorio mi parlava di come l'arte sua e di Angelo fosse da intendere come un segno che si collocava tra la memoria e il sogno. Ho preso a cuore questa sua indicazione, e senza altri suggerimenti ho voluto tradurla in queste poche riflessioni, tese a recuperare qualche granello di una flebile se non pericolante memoria collettiva. Questo perché si possa intravedere il ponte che unisce i segni sublimi tracciati da Manno e Rizzelli nei loro quarant'anni a Matera e il sogno, incorruttibile come quegli stessi segni, che da sempre li anima.

Anthony Molino

L'OMBRA E LA MEMORIA.

L'arte incisoria di Vittorio Manno e di Angelo Rizzelli

-Rino Cardone -

La tecnica incisoria gode di un'autonomia, tutta propria, all'interno del panorama delle arti figurative. Nata come possibilità di realizzare un multiplo, essa si è evoluta a linguaggio espressivo non condizionato dalla "riproducibilità tecnica". E per questa ragione non intaccato dall'effetto derivato dall'esecuzione seriale dell'opera. A praticare, oggi, la calcografia sono artisti molto raffinati, che apprezzano il piacere dell'elaborazione mentale del dis-



egno (effettuato, in maniera diretta, sulla lastra di rame, o di zinco) e l'esercizio pratico e strumentale del bulino, dei raschietti, dei brunitoi, delle sgorbie e delle matite, predisposte all'ottenimento della puntasecca. Il tutto impreziosito, in una fase successiva, dalle cosiddette "acidature" effettuate dall'artista. E che consistono nei passaggi graduati delle lastre nelle morsure acide - olandesi e bordeaux - e nel bagno del mordente nitrico, o di cloruro di ferro.

Il passaggio successivo è l'inchiostratura della piastra incisa e la stampa, del disegno, sul foglio di carta. Di tutte queste tecniche sono esperti e preparati conoscitori, Vittorio Manno e Angelo Rizzelli: che da quarant'anni portano avanti la *Grafica di via sette dolori* a Matera. Si tratta di una "scuola-bottega" dove si prende dimestichezza con le tecniche calcografiche, cui fanno capo maestri incisori di fama internazionale. Per una loro recente mostra congiunta a Civitella del Tronto, Vittorio Manno ha selezionato una serie d'incisioni in cui ha dato piena centralità alle composizioni ambientali e ai paesaggi urbani. E realizzando - nello stesso tempo - sullo stesso spazio dell'opera, delle impronte antropiche e immaginifiche. Angelo Rizzelli ha posto, invece, la sua attenzione sulle "geometrie fantastiche" assorbite dallo spazio, sui "campi semantici" del segno, sui contrasti di luce, sulla potenza della mente e sugli archetipi universali.

Si tratta di due ricerche creative, assai raffinate, in cui il medium è rappresentato sia dalla conoscenza della tecnica del linguaggio incisivo che dalla sua applicazione pratica sulla lastra di zinco, o di rame, e poi direttamente sul foglio di carta. È in questa fase dell'"elaborazione immaginifica" che i due incisori pongono - sullo stesso asse mentale e costruttivo - la mente, gli occhi e il cuore. Vittorio Manno pone attenzione, in particolare, ai tagli di luce e alle ombre. Angelo Rizzelli pone interesse, invece, alle sagome e alle forme. Le due ricerche si muovono su piani paralleli, che s'incrociano tra loro nella modulazione dei piani. E cioè: sulle altezze, sulle larghezze, sulle profondità e sugli spessori.

In questa maniera, questi due artisti manifestano il loro stile incisivo, che si riconduce a una "marca espressiva" comune. È quella che proviene da una stessa "matrice culturale" e da una medesima "identità creativa" che derivano, innanzitutto, dallo spirito del Salento: cui loro sono testimoni per opportunità di nascita. Vittorio Manno è, infatti, di Squinzano e Angelo Rizzelli,

invece, di Andrano: tutte e due in provincia di Lecce. A questa “aura fantastica” di appartenenza originaria/geografica alla Puglia si aggiunge, poi, quell’atmosfera eterica, emotiva, mentale e astrale della Matera che i due incisori hanno scelto per vivere e per lavorare.

L’alternarsi, sfumato, delle luci e delle ombre - all’interno dello stesso spazio prospettico - riteniamo che sia stato scelto da Vittorio Manno per affermare la distanza che esiste tra l’idea e la realtà, tra la motivazione e l’attività concreta. Nelle opere di Angelo Rizzelli è presente invece - quasi in contrappunto con il suo collega incisore - il senso di una memoria che si fa storia futura, passando da un’interpretazione stoica della realtà materiale e da una destrutturazione delle forme del sogno.

Vittorio Manno (1939) si diploma nel 1957 all’Istituto Statale d’Arte di Lecce per poi stabilirsi a Matera nel 1966, dopo aver iniziato ad insegnare nella provincia materana già nel 1959. Assieme ad altri, tra cui Angelo Rizzelli, fonda a Matera La Scuola Libera di Grafica, che dal 1988 prenderà il nome di Grafica di via Sette Dolori (<http://graficaviassettedolori.blogspot.it>). Organizza e partecipa negli anni a corsi di incisione calcografica tenuti da Maestri quali Guido Strazza, Giulia Napoleone, Peter Willburger e altri, elevando l’Associazione a rango di uno dei maggiori centri europei per la ricerca e la sperimentazione nel campo dell’arte incisori. È premiato nel 1991 con la Medaglia d’Onore alla VII Biennale di Lodz (Polonia), mentre espone in mezzo mondo, da Cuba alla Norvegia, dal Brasile al Giappone. Tra le innumerevoli mostre a cui partecipa citiamo quella più significativa, *Da San Pietroburgo a Matera: Vittorio Manno e Angelo Rizzelli*, tenutasi in Russia nel 2011 e poi a Matera nel 2012.

Angelo Rizzelli (1940) si trasferisce da Lecce a Matera nel 1972, dove insegna in diversi licei locali. Nel 1976 fonda, con un gruppo di amici, La Scuola Libera di Grafica presso La Scaletta di Matera. Qui, negli anni, porta avanti ricerca e sperimentazione sia con colleghi di fama internazionale (Akané Kirimura, Hector Saunier, Marina Bindella, Assadour, Lorenzo Bruno) che con studenti americani e europei attratti dalle attività didattiche e laboratori dell’Associazione fondata assieme a Vittorio Manno. Partecipa già dalla fine degli anni ’80 a rassegne d’incisione in tutta Europa, tra

le quali citiamo l'importante mostra *Da San Pietroburgo a Matera: Vittorio Manno e Angelo Rizzelli*. Molte le sue inclusioni in edizioni d'arte e numerosi i premi e riconoscimenti.

*

Rino Cardone è caposervizio per la Basilicata della Testata Giornalistica Regionale RAI. Critico d'arte, saggista e poeta, ha pubblicato saggi quali *Contemporanea - Appunti per una storia delle arti visive nel Molise dal 1945 al 1992* (Edizioni Vitmar), e *Convergenze - Aspetti dell'arte in Basilicata tra Ottocento e Novecento* (Pinacoteca Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Bernalda-Metaponto). Nell'ambito della "Rete della Cultura" della Provincia di Potenza ha curato tra il 2006 e il 2007 le mostre Michelangelo: splendide anatomie (portando, per la prima volta nel sud Italia, alcuni disegni del Buonarroti); e *Quando i sensi si fanno cielo - Renato Guttuso, dipinti e disegni 1946-1986*. Ha diretto la rivista d'arte contemporanea *Perimetro*; numerose le monografie dedicate a pittori, scultori e fotografi contemporanei.



Essays





Key Cultural Texts in Translation: Shakespeare and Sterne in Italy

by *Alessandra Calvani*

In this article I will discuss the Italian translations of the works of two English authors, William Shakespeare and Laurence Sterne.

Shakespeare's position as a classic author is unquestionable, but he was almost unknown in Italy before the first Italian translations of a selection of his works were published in 1798, and it was several more years before he became popular in Italy, his first nineteenth-century performance at the *Re* theatre in Milan being unsuccessful.

The case of Laurence Sterne is quite different. Well known in England and abroad mainly for *Tristram Shandy*, he soon rose to the role of classic author thanks to Ugo Foscolo's translation of *A Sentimental Journey* in 1813. Already popular at the time, Foscolo's relevance in the target culture interceded positively for Sterne. The English author was soon read as a classic and not retranslated for almost two hundred years.

The analysis of Renier's translations of Shakespeare and Foscolo's translation of Sterne illustrates the importance of the target political and cultural context in the reception and treatment of the source text and the relevance of the translator in the creation of a key cultural text in the new culture.

1. The First Italian Shakespeare, a Premise

Each culture represents itself in its literature and enters into a dialogue with other cultures through literary texts. However, not every text is given the chance to communicate in other languages; only some of the many millions of texts created by one culture for itself will travel across national borders. Many elements can influence the selection process, for example, the political situation at the time, as is the case of Guareschi's translations in America.¹ Even the popularity of the writer/translator in the target culture must be taken into account as it could be argued from Foscolo's translation of Laurence Sterne which I am going to examine below. Nonetheless, texts that are considered literary achievements and gain popularity in their own country are usually given a chance.

1 L. Venuti (1998), *The Scandals of Translation*, London: Routledge.



This is the case in the works of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's works have been translated and performed all over the world, therefore I start my analysis with an author whose role as a classic is unquestionable and whose literary work, following Silverstein and Urban,² may be considered a key cultural text "because it occupies a special position within their culture and has become the focus of multiple realizations." (Silverstein & Urban 1996, 12). However, in Italy, Shakespeare had to wait for centuries to enter into conversation with Italian theatregoers. The dialogue started through translation in 1798, when Giustina Renier, an aristocratic Venetian lady, published her translations of *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*³ in order to give to her daughters "a reading, which can, whenever possible, give both joy and instruction" (Renier 1801, 24), (my translation).

It is possible to find a passing reference to Shakespeare in the eighteenth century by Italian men of letters such as Conti, Algarotti or Goldoni. Goldoni refers to Shakespeare, *Sachspir*,⁴ in two of his comedies, *Il Filosofo Inglese* and *I Malcontenti*.

Furthermore, the reception of the English dramatist in eighteenth-century Italy was compromised by the scarcely flattering comments expressed about him by Voltaire,⁵ who exerted a great influence over Italian scholars.

In this context, the translations of the English dramatist were not guaranteed particular attention. Translation was considered to be second-hand work, lacking originality, and inferior to the original.⁶ Furthermore, the bias attached to women's literary works meant that the appearance of Shakespeare on the Italian stage was not favoured. Women were not considered learned enough to write, and translation, due to its "natural" inferiority, was the only

2 M. Silverstein & G. Urban (eds.) (1996), *Natural histories of dis-course*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

3 G. Renier Michiel (1801), *Ottello o sia il Moro di Venezia, Macbeth e Coriolano, tragedie di Shakespeare volgarizzate*, Firenze.

4 *In principio fu Sachspir* (1964), in *Sipario, Rivista di teatro scenografia cinema*, 6 (218).

5 See M. Carlson (1998), *Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century*, Greenwood Press; and C.M. Haines (1925), *Shakespeare in France*, Oxford University Press.

6 See Simon, Sherry (1996), *Gender in Translation*, London and New York: Routledge.

literary work that could be considered as appropriate for a woman, provided she did not translate the “classics”. It is this prejudice that Giustina Renier used in order to enter the male literary world. If it is true that due to its “inferiority”, translation could be a woman’s task, it is then also true that to translate means to have authority over both the original text and the translation. It may seem a paradox, but actually the translator experiences the peculiar situation of speaking without being responsible for what he says, his words usually considered to be the words of the original author. Taking for granted the unoriginality of translation and due to the very ignorance of the original language that imposed translation, differences in translation could pass completely unnoticed. Giustina Renier used translation as did other women,⁷ to speak, hiding her own voice behind the words of the original author in comments, additions or omissions that only analysis of the text could reveal. Unfortunately, although a useful means in the past, this worked against her when Shakespeare rose to the ranks of classic in the nineteenth century, her translations scarcely remembered unless not overtly criticised or condemned as translations of translations. And this bias is still in force, so that recently a number of scholars have given to others the kudos of being the first Italian translators of Shakespeare. These include Valentini, Verri and even Gritti.⁸ In fact Valentini, a professor at Siena University, published his *Giulio Cesare* in 1756, but it cannot be considered a translation as he did not speak English. It is Valentini himself who makes this claim, candidly explaining that he did not manage to study English due to his “impatient disposition” (Crinò 1950, 41), (my translation). Furthermore, he did not translate the text using the French or German translations; he just says that “some gentlemen of that illustrious nation that perfectly know the Tuscan language, have been good and patient enough to explain this Tragedy to me” (Crinò 1950, 42), (my translation). Verri wanted to translate *Hamlet* and *Othello* and worked on them between 1769 and 1777. However, he was

7 “A., Calvani (2011), *Translating in a female voice: the case history of Giustina Renier Michiel*, in *Translation Journal*, Editor Gabe Bokor, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 2011 and A. Calvani (2014), *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: from England to Italy in Translation as Literature, Literature as Translation*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.”

8 For reference see A.M. Crinò (1950), *Le traduzioni di Shakespeare*, Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.

not satisfied with his work, as is evident in his letters, therefore did not publish them (Crinò 1950, 43). Finally, in 1774 Gritti translated into Italian Ducis' *Hamlet*, a tragedy written in 1770, "imitée de l'Anglois"⁹ or "imitating the English one by Shakespeare," so again, not a translation, or at least not in the sense that we know it.

Apart from a few references from Renier's scholar friends, among them Ugo Foscolo, who welcomed her as the translator of Shakespeare, Vittorio Malamani,¹⁰ Renier's biographer, was among her first detractors. As others before and after him, he congratulated Giustina Renier for her original work, *Le Origini delle Feste Veneziane*,¹¹ which made her name known. Even the *Quarterly Review* commented on the publication of her six volumes of historical essays as "a work of very considerable research" which we opened under an idea, deduced partly, it must be confessed, from the sex of the writer, of their containing a selection of tales [...]. They proved, in strict accordance with the facts just stated concerning Italian women, less amusing, perhaps, but far more instructive than we had anticipated. (1831: vol. VIII, 499).

In contrast, Malamani refers to Renier's translations as "abridgements" that she was ashamed to sign because "her conscience forbade her to sign works that were not completely her own" (1890, 49), (my translation).

As a matter of fact Malamani's comments about Renier's translations of Shakespeare were prejudiced; this is evident from his labelling Renier's works as abridgements, which is simply wrong. Furthermore, taking for granted that a woman could not be learned enough to translate such a great author, he accused Renier of publishing Cesarotti's translations as her own. These comments influenced later commentators as late as 1950, when Crinò, commenting on Renier's translations, said:

It is of general opinion that Cesarotti worked a lot on correcting those translations, and his collaboration seems to be particularly evident in the preface and in the numerous notes, which display too great a classical education, erudition, to be

9 M. Ducis (1770), *Hamlet*, Gogué Libraire, Paris.

10 V. Malamani (1890), *Giustina Renier Michiel, I suoi amici il suo tempo*, Venezia: coi tipi dei fratelli Visentini.

11 G. Renier Michiel (1817), *Origine delle Feste Veneziane*, Venezia: dalla Tipografia di Alvisopoli.

ascribed to Giustina Renier Michiel (1950, 93), (my translation).

Actually, Cesarotti, a scholar of English, was a close friend of Renier. It is clear from their correspondence that she asked him for advice about her translations, but that very correspondence shows no evidence that she used Cesarotti's material. In fact, it was Cesarotti who, in one of his letters, sought to persuade Giustina Renier to change something in one of her translations, which she refused to do.¹² If this correspondence is not sufficient evidence to free her of his charges, the quotation of a passage in Renier's preface that in Malamani's opinion has a clear "Cesarotti's flavour", again points out his bias against her. The alleged Cesarotti's sentence is the following: "Tenderness and admiration have always joined together the famous poet and the fair sex. Shakespeare loved it with enthusiasm, and Shakespeare could really feel the love he painted so well" (my translation). The comparison between the Italian sentence and the French preface of Le Tourneur's translations of Shakespeare confirms Renier's source and clarifies her translation method and purpose. It is not Cesarotti's work that she used to write her preface to Shakespeare's translations; her source was Pierre Le Tourneur, who published the complete works of Shakespeare in French translation between 1776 and 1782.

Unfortunately, although the discovery of her true source discharges her from the accusations of using Cesarotti's work, the charge of plagiarism holds true. In her defence stands the fact that she "confessed" her debt to Le Tourneur in that very preface.

2. Renier's Translations

The preface reveals Renier's *modus operandi* in translation. The comparison with the French source reveals that she created her introduction by copying and pasting different passages from Le Tourneur's *Discours des Préfaces, Jubilé and Vie de Shakespeare*,¹³ but intermingled between Le Toruneur's words it is possible to find Renier's own words.

As mentioned above, Shakespeare's reputation in Italy was

12 Cesarotti (1884: 27) in one of his letters to Giustina Renier, January 1802, wrote: "Tis I say because I know thou told me not to love using others things. But am I other or thyself?". (my translation).

13 P. Le Tourneur (1776), *Shakespeare traduit de l'Anglais*, Vol. I, Vol. III, Paris.



influenced by Voltaire's opinion. Such a situation allowed a woman to translate the works of Shakespeare as he was not considered a classic and therefore "manageable" by a woman, yet at the same time prevented her translations from being read. Renier was conscious of the bias that haunted her translations and worried about their reception. So in her first sentences she said, "It is hardly surprising that a Lady, reading in the tranquillity of her chamber, and reflecting on Shakespeare, shaken by noble enthusiasm, and by a deep feeling of gratitude, would thus embark on the translation of his works" (Renier 1801, 7), (my translation). Then she talks about the difficulty of translation and apologises for having ventured such an enterprise. Revealing her knowledge of the issues that were discussed at the time, she expresses her opinion about translation under the protection of quotation saying that a translator should "take a proportional mean between too strict a faithfulness which wears out, and excessive liberty which falsifies" (Renier 1801, 8), (my translation). She adds that she will try:

as far as I can, to follow these rules, and not to defraud my readers with some peculiar sentences, which, to comply with our language wit, I have to leave out in translation, I'll quote them at the end of the Tragedy in the exact verbal version. Furthermore I will add some notes, for the most part made by Mr Le Tourneur, who, with great merit, translated all the literary works of Shakespeare into the French language, and who has provided me with nearly all the means to make this author better known in Italy (Renier 1801, 8-9), (my translation).

Stressing again her worries about the reception of a woman's work, she says that she wanted to write in the general preface her own comments about the feelings aroused by the dramatic performances, and to add later in the prefaces to individual works, her comments on the feeling prevailing in each tragedy. But her contempt for her situation as a female scholar and translator emerges in the next sentence, when she says:

This may be the only topic a woman can discuss without fear of the accusations of men. But I could not have done it justice without discussing what a lot of celebrated literary men had already written about it [...] and to make my readers better



enjoy his Work, I think useful to put before, along the lines follow'd by Le Tourneur, the opinion which has been form'd of him by the greatest men of England (Renier, 1801: 9-10), (my translation).

Renier herself is the first to confess that she used Le Tourneur's translations and comments to help her with her own translation, but as a careful scholar she does not limit her study to him and she adds: "Yes in this, as in all the other Prefaces, I will add to others' reflections those of my own, encouraged by the study I undertook on this author to discuss it" (Renier 1801, 10), (my translation).

Finally, apologising again for her intrusion into the male literary world, she tries to justify her presence. As a woman, no man could question her role as a mother so she uses that widely recognised role in society to claim her right to also educate her children, saying:

An almost general custom in Italy denying to Mothers the most welcome care which is their Daughters' education does not leave the Mothers anything but the sweet title. So the sensitive readers will bestow on me some indulgency, if not having a part in the education of my tender daughters, I prepare for them a reading, which can, whenever possible, both give joy and instruction, contributing to their happiness, regulating with examples their growing passion (Renier 1801, 24), (my translation).

If we consider her sentences in isolation from Le Tourneur's words, in the preface Renier is clearly stating her translation project and purpose: she will mainly use Le Tourneur's French translations as reference for her Italian translations and for the notes, but she also says that she will add her own comments and the comments of English scholars who wrote about Shakespeare. She reveals that she omits some sentences in her Italian version but she will quote the omitted passages in notes. Finally, she states that her translations have above all an educational purpose, particularly for women.

In fact, if we examine the selection of plays Renier chose to translate, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*, respectively presented in Le Tourneur's first and third volumes, what emerges is the striking importance of women's roles in these plays. Desdemona,

Lady Macbeth and Volumnia are not secondary characters; they are protagonists and they make choices. It is precisely as a consequence of their “wrong” choices that tragedy ensues. Of course these are not the only plays where it is possible to find strong female characters, but presenting the plays in this order, Renier seems to offer her daughters and all women an example of a woman’s life, from girlhood to maturity. Marriage seems to be the core of their lives with a shift to the mother’s role in her children’s education in the last play. It is not possible to state for certain, but if we connect Renier’s belief in the importance of theatre in education to the opinions she expressed in the notes and the single prefaces to her translations about the role of love in a woman’s life and the ambiguous moral teaching of *Coriolanus*, whose ruin seems to be caused by obedience to his mother’s desire, Renier’s concern for women’s education seems to be the prime objective of her work.

With her motives explained in the general preface, the reader can turn to the prefaces to the individual plays and translations. As Renier said in the general introduction, she wrote a preface for every single play, quoting the Shakespearian source, Giraldo Cinthio, for the story of *Othello* and *Macbeth*, which is the first difference from Le Tourneur version, who quoted Cinthio only for the first one.

Her worries about writing a critical comment are evident since as a woman she was not considered learned enough to do so. That is why she again tries to express her opinions under cover of quotation, intermingling the words of another with her own. If the presence of Le Tourneur is quite apparent in *Othello*, it becomes less visible in *Macbeth* before almost disappearing in *Coriolanus*. As she goes on working, she seems to become more confident in her own skills and ready to abandon her French “tutor”. In fact, in the first play, *Othello*, only the first and the last sentence can be ascribed to Renier. Her first statement is a consideration about the importance of love and marriage and the necessity of moderation, while in the last sentence she talks about Voltaire. She is naturally worried about the negative influence of his opinions on Shakespeare and tries first to contrast it by the quotation of another influential author, Johnson. Furthermore she dares to express a personal consideration on the subject stating that, notwithstanding all his “contempt” (Renier 1801, 49) for the English dramatist, Voltaire took the subject of his *Zaira* from the *Othello*, in part offloading her responsibilities in such a statement through a note where she quotes a few English verses

referring to the topic.

Renier's preface to *Macbeth* still shows the translator's hesitation to clearly express herself. However, her own voice starts to be heard soon after when, having dismissed Le Tourneur's analysis of passions, she finally gets to talk about superstition, a subject she seems to be particularly concerned about and which reveals her as an eighteenth-century woman.

That said, in the *Coriolanus* preface I could not find any trace of Le Tourneur's comments. Stressing again her educational purpose and referring to other scholars to support her own opinions, she argues that the moral lesson of *Othello* resides in the display of immoderate passion while the lesson of *Macbeth* lies in superstitious belief. However, she expresses her doubts about *Coriolanus*:

Coriolanus deserved to be punished for the fury of his revenge, his implacable hatred of his Country: Coriolanus instead is sacrificed by his mercy, he does not meet a fatal end because of what made him detestable, but as a consequence of that action which regained him the love of human and sensitive hearts. If he had been resolute in his first resolution, he would be alive and triumphant. That is how the moral lesson has been spoiled, and the Tragic interest ruined. (Renier 1801, 12, 14-15), (my translation).

Given this opinion of the play, it is difficult to explain her translation of *Coriolanus*. It is possible that considering her work a sort of "theatre course", since she said in the general preface that she wanted to offer an example of what she believed should not be represented or, more in line with the female educational purpose, she wants her daughters to read a play in which the role of the mother in education is on stage.

Comparison with Le Tourneur's version shows her once and for all not guilty of the charge of translating Shakespeare from the French translations. The differences in the numbering of the acts and scenes of the plays from Le Tourneur's texts are the first pieces of evidence that support this. Furthermore, the differences in omissions, quotations and notes reveal the presence of at least one, but probably several, English texts of the plays. Each time she compares the originals with the French versions, she chooses which one to follow according to her particular feeling about each passage. A case in point is offered by the third act of *Othello* where

the eleventh scene starts two lines after the place it starts in Le Tourneur's translation (Renier 1801, 211; Le Tourneur 1776, 156) or the twelfth scene of the same act (Renier 1801, 215), which is the thirteenth in Le Tourneur's version (Le Tourneur 1776, 161). It is worth noting that often Renier refers to English scholars, whose names I did not find in the French text, always favouring the English source, whereas Le Tourneur used sources without mentioning the English author. This happens in Renier's note 2 (Renier 1801, 295), where she mentions Johnson and "Tiirwhitt" in the comment. In the corresponding line of Le Tourneur, there is a note, but the translator restricted himself to stating that he followed the Oxford edition for the passage in question (Le Tourneur 1776, 4), whereas he usually used the Johnson edition. It could be argued that Renier used Johnson's edition as she mentions him in her note, but makes no reference at all to the Oxford edition. Renier seems to proceed by comparing the English and French text. It is thus possible to explain the difference in references. In the comparison she discovered all the notes that Le Tourneur had taken from the English scholars, without clearly stating it and she quotes his true source in the notes to her translations. It is the case of Renier's note 10 and Le Tourneur's corresponding note (Renier 1801, 299; Le Tourneur 1776, 33). It is the eighth scene of the first act. Othello remembers how Desdemona had been impressed by the narration of his adventurous life. Particularly, in reference to cannibals, Le Tourneur adds in a note that such stories had been told by Mandeville, as Johnson reported. Renier has a note in the corresponding passage, but in addition to Mandeville she quotes Warburton and Johnson's comments, partly reported by Le Tourneur in his following note without however mentioning the author's name. In connection with her educational concerns, it is also important to stress the absence of many of Le Tourneur's references to racial attitudes. In particular, Renier eliminates Le Tourneur's note on the inconstancy of the Moors (Le Tourneur 1776, 46) and modifies the French explanation about Desdemona's lack of "repulsion" for Othello's blackness, whose reciprocal love, in her opinion, explains enough (Renier 1801, 299-300, 315; Le Tourneur 1776, 35-36). Furthermore, Renier eliminates a tirade against Hebrews, for whom Shakespeare, in Le Tourneur's opinion, felt a strong dislike (Le Tourneur 1776, 265-266). In order to accomplish her educational task, she omits the passages she thought to be too vulgar and not

suited to her readers, but always declared it in her notes, another important difference from le Tourneur. Moreover, she simplifies the wordy sentences of Le Tourneur, usually substituting the French pronouns with the proper noun, obviously for the sake of clarity. For the same reason she seems to prefer to translate literally or to quote the original whenever she departs from it. She omits or simplifies all the stage directions, very detailed in Le Tourneur, confirming that her translation was not conceived to be performed. Finally she reinstates Desdemona's lines in the fifth act, omitted by Le Tourneur. The French translator explains he eliminated those lines for the sake of realism, but Renier does not want to abandon the pathetic effect of the dying Desdemona's last sentences (Renier 1801, 318; Le Tourneur 1776, 246).

Much of what has been said of the translation of *Othello* is also true of the translation of *Macbeth*. Preceded by a quotation from the *Holinshed Chronicles*, absent in Le Tourneur's text, the *Macbeth* translation presents a difference in the numbering of the acts and scenes in comparison with the French version. Concerned about "decency", Renier does not translate the word "effeminé", used by Le Tourneur, as she did in her *Othello*. She recurs more often than Le Tourneur to the term "macchina" (machine) for "body",¹⁴ relating to that culture of the Enlightenment so present to her (Renier 1801, 171; Le Tourneur 1776, 398). Besides, she reinserts a few lines about marriage in the fifth act, cut by Le Tourneur, while she eliminates the porter's lines, as Le Tourneur does, explaining in a note that "my readers are not like those rude English people of Shakespeare's time, and they reluctantly would read a porter's concepts and his reasoning about wine" (Renier 1801, 218), (my translation).

The notes are also interesting. Special attention must be paid to the presence of Lady Montagu's name, particularly in light of the fact that she was completely ignored by Le Tourneur and most of all considering her concern for women, as she was a so-called "bluestocking". Such a presence further confirms Renier's interest in women's education and her knowledge of the "bluestockings'" writings about it. On the whole, this translation is marked by a less overwhelming presence of Le Tourneur and more fluency due to

14 During the Enlightenment many materialist philosophers, referring back to Cartesius, described men as machines. In particular Julien Offray de La Mettrie published in 1748 *L'Homme Machine*.

her greater autonomy vis-à-vis the French translation.

As far as the *Coriolanus* translation is concerned, the self-confidence displayed in the preface, with her departure from Le Tourneur's comments, is mirrored in the translation where quotations and remarks from Le Tourneur's have been left out in favour of quotations from the original Latin source. The presence of quotations from Plutarch has been used as evidence of Renier not being the author of the translations. As a woman, Giustina Renier had had no access to Latin or Greek, whose study was for men only, so it was easy for her detractors to accuse her. However, once again Renier explains in one of her notes that she read Plutarch in Pompei's translation, choosing to substitute the *Coriolanus* discourse with the original one she read translated (Renier 1801, 294). In this translation she also omits some passages because they were not in keeping with her taste and that of her readers (Renier 1801, 293–294). As in her other translations, she simplifies the stage directions and the French sentences, sometimes even condensing lines (Renier 1801, 59; Le Tourneur 1776, 29). It is clear that she follows her original in the numbering of acts and scenes, not in accordance with Le Tourneur. Sometimes the very attribution of the lines to the characters is different (Renier 1801, 50; Le Tourneur 1776, 20). Le Tourneur had already informed his readers of possible contradictions in the dialogues, due to errors or additions of the actors. As confirmation of the attention paid to her text, she changes the name which indicated the lines of the main character from "Marcius" to "Corio" soon after he assumes such an honorary title. In relation to her aversion for superstitious beliefs, she translates the French expression "Oh Dieux", with "Oh Cielo" (oh Heaven) and prefers to use "cittadini" (citizens) for the "Romains" of the French version. Finally, there is again a concern for the role of the mother. In note 33, she expresses her regret that Shakespeare did not make *Coriolanus* remember his children. She explains that "the separation from them would have been a situation which could increase compassion. The most natural reflection of a mother as I am." (Renier 1801, 195), (my translation).

To conclude, Giustina Renier's Shakespeare is not a translation of the French translation, but a translation from the English original and it is her own original work written for educational purposes. The astonishing silence in which her works have been buried seems to be ascribable mainly to the sense that the work

of a woman does not deserve too much attention. The nineteenth century saw many translators of Shakespeare, among them Michele Leoni, who translated the complete plays of Shakespeare. However, it was only with the first successful performances in the 1850s that Shakespeare became popular in Italy which led to many new translations of the English dramatist. But if the greatness of the original can sometimes reflect a glimpse of light on the translator, in this case not even William Shakespeare managed to tear Renier's translation from the forgotten land. It could be argued that it is not only the importance of the author or his role in the original country that makes the text a classic abroad, but rather the importance of the critics who comment upon that author, the relevance of the publishing house that distributes the work and of course the importance of the translator in the target country that makes a literary work an acknowledged world classic. A case in point may be that of Laurence Sterne in Italy.

3. The Italian Sterne, Didimo Chierico Versus Yorick

Andre Lefevere¹⁵ stressed the importance of what he called "specialists" in the production and circulation of texts, and the literary weight of authors in their original context must be taken into account especially when they are promoters of other authors in their country, as illustrated by the case of Ugo Foscolo, translator of Laurence Sterne.

Laurence Sterne was a well-known writer in nineteenth-century Italy, a remarkable situation given the case of Shakespeare. The Italian context was a difficult one for foreign authors because, apart from translations from Greek or Latin, the Italian intellectuals saw no need to introduce new authors to Italy. The motherland of the Renaissance and the country of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio had no need of foreign writers. Mme de Staël had already accused the Italian scholars of provincialism, and the violent reaction to her article of 1816 on the usefulness of translation to renew the Italian culture, translated by Pietro Giordani and published in the journal *Biblioteca Italiana*, proves it. Mme de Staël denounced the sterility and deficiencies of Italian literature, too limited by the imitation of the classical Roman and Renaissance authors and by the use of

15 A. Lefevere (1992), *Translating Literature*, The Modern Language Association of America.

Latin, a “dead language, not an ancient one”¹⁶ (my translation). The article provoked the fierce reactions of the Italian scholars and opened the way for Romanticism in Italy.¹⁷

It is even more surprising that whereas Sterne’s popularity in Europe is mainly linked to *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Gentleman*, soon translated into French and German, in Italy Sterne is mainly known for *A Sentimental Journey* and through his translator, Ugo Foscolo. If usually it is the original text that is considered worthy of translation, in this case, it is the translation that has risen to the rank of a classic, up to the point that in Italy it was Foscolo’s translation that was read in school with just a few words spent on the original author. The paradox is more evident if we consider that many essays and books on Foscolo’s “Sternism” were born from Foscolo’s *Journey* that far outstripped the interest generated by Sterne, whose *Tristram Shandy* had to wait until 1932 to be translated into Italian.

It could be argued that the asymmetrical power relationship usually posited between original and translation, and between author and translator, has been undermined by the overwhelming power of the translator’s status in the target country. Furthermore, what should have been considered as the key cultural text – in other words the original – actually gave birth to a new key cultural text, the translation, which became the “focus of multiple realizations”, as Urban said and which has stood untouched in its powerful position for almost two centuries.

Ugo Foscolo published his *Viaggio Sentimentale* in 1813, but the story of this translation begins earlier, in 1805, as Foscolo’s correspondence shows. Unfortunately the first version is lost but thanks to Foscolo’s letters, we know something about it. In fact, Foscolo’s translation was not the first Italian translation of *A Sentimental Journey*. The first *Viaggio*, translated anonymously and based on the Frénais’ French version, appeared in 1792 in Venice, and a second anonymous translation presented itself as totally new in 1812. We know for certain that at first Foscolo did not read the English *Sentimental Journey*; in a letter to Mme Bagien dated September 1805 he writes: “Mon ami *Jacopo Ortis* [...] quand écrivait

16 Mme de Staël (1816), *Sulla maniera e la utilità delle Traduzioni*, P. Giordani translator, Biblioteca Italiana, January, p. 10.

17 T. M. Pratt (1985), *Madame de Staël and the Italian article of 1816*, *Comparative Literature Studies* 22: 4. 444–454.

ses lubies n'entendait guère l'anglais".¹⁸ It is possible that he read Sterne in French or in the first Italian translation since in a letter to Bettoni, dated May 1806, he states: "I did the translation of the little book of Laurence Sterne [...] to prove wrong the filthy Italian translation based on the French one"¹⁹ (my translation). Actually Foscolo could have read Sterne many years before. Many scholars in their analysis of *Le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* noted particular letters in which it is possible to find Sterne's influence, but it is in letter XXX that Sterne appears most forcefully. In this letter Foscolo tells the story of Lauretta, which follows closely the Maria episode of the *Tristram Shandy*. Foscolo loved it so much that he inserted the translation of the story of Maria described in the IXth volume of the *Tristram Shandy* within his translation of *A Sentimental Journey*. In a letter to Bartholdy, he says: "I would tear up those fragments of Lauretta's story because they suffered from the inopportunity of the episode and the imitation of the Mary of Lorenzo Sterne"²⁰ (my translation). In his *Piano di Studi* of 1796 there is an entry named *Laura, lettere*. Fasano²¹ thought it was an indication of the very first novel written by Foscolo, whose fragments passed into the *Jacopo Ortis letters*. It is important to stress that Foscolo always mentions his source in quotations, but for the Lauretta episode he does not think it appropriate to do so as he considers the story a free reworking.

Such an obsession for authorship and originality plagued Foscolo through all the years he worked on translating Sterne. It is already manifest in this first lost translation with the creation of the character of Nathaniel Cookman, author of the notes that had to be the character of a novel in the novel, and it was clearly stated in his final version of Sterne's translation, the one of Didimo Chierico, Foscolo's fictional alter ego.

Foscolo's correspondence is full of comments about his trans-

18 "when he wrote his fancies, my friend Jacopo Ortis hardly understood English" (my translation), Letter 340, to Amélie Bagien, September 1805, in *Epistolario vol. II, Edizione Nazionale delle opere di Ugo Foscolo*, P. Carli editor, Le Monnier, Firenze, p. 75.

19 Letter 361, to Niccolò Bettoni, May 1806, in *Epistolario vol. II, op. cit.*, p. 107.

20 Letter 667, to Jakob Salomo Bartholdy, 29th of September, 1808 in *Epistolario vol. II, op. cit.*, p. 485.

21 P. Fasano (1974), *Stratigrafie foscoliane*, Bulzoni, Roma.

lation work and shows the development over time of his reflections about translation. If at the beginning his point of view is one of an author whose main concern is about the closest possible rendering of his work, he soon feels uncomfortable in the role of the “faithful” translator and wants his contribution to be more clearly recognised by his public. As the translation metaphors of the time indicate, translation was considered totally deprived of originality, and Foscolo himself highlights it in a letter saying: “No, no, I was not forged by Mother Nature to serve; and translation is not a slavery suited to a scholar”²² (my translation).

Urban had already noted that “replication is only one among the possible interrelationships between discourse instances, another, of special interest from the point of view of dialogicality, is response” (Silverstein & Urban, 1996, 22). Mirroring the points of view expressed on translation by other scholars of his time, Foscolo seems to see translation as a sort of “replication”, a mechanical work which does not need creativity and historically relegated to the position of discursive inferiority. As Simon says: “the hierarchical authority of the original over the reproduction is linked with imagery of masculine and feminine: the original is considered the strong generative male, the translation the weaker and derivative female” (1996, 1). It is the translator’s experience that makes him feel the unfairness of this belief and it is this experience that makes him react. He does not “replicate” Sterne’s literary work; he responds to it through the creation of a literary character, Didimo Chierico, fictional translator and author of the notes, whose story Foscolo tells in the appendix to his translation.

As mentioned above, this was a time when translation was considered a secondary activity, devoid of authorship, and whose low status made it appropriate for women. Foscolo, an original writer, wanted his name and his “authority” over the text to be recognised. He worked for years on his translation and it is possible to assume the existence of two versions before the publication of the last one in 1813.²³ He was not satisfied by translation work and he claimed that his “faithfulness” in translation made him speak in

22 Letter 1223, to Cornelia Martinetti, 14th of September, 1812, in in *Epistolario vol. IV, op. cit.*, p. 148.

23 For more information about the first versions of Foscolo’s translation see A. Calvani, *The relationship between writer and translator*, in *Babel*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, vol. 59 no 1, 2013.

a type of “Anglo-Italian language”. To make his presence evident in the text he creates his own character, something that did not exist in the original.

Foscolo, so obsessed by the concept of authorship and originality, was fascinated by Laurence Sterne and his ability as a writer, but could not tolerate all the originalities of his style. The Italian cultural context and maybe Foscolo himself were not ready for all the graphic peculiarities, the double entendres, the sexual allusions. Foscolo’s Sterne has been adapted to the Italian context. This is evident in the numbering of the chapters that does not exist in the original, in the removal of the separation into two volumes and in the elimination of some graphical peculiarities of the original such as the very long dashes. Foscolo felt uncomfortable with the unfinished original and was compelled to add a conclusion to the book in which he explained that Yorick went on travelling in Italy but unfortunately died suddenly when he was on his way to London to publish his book.

Foscolo adapts the colloquial style of the original to a complicated Italian language that is almost unreadable for a contemporary Italian reader, the opposite of the simple style of Sterne. The notes at the end of the Italian page slow down the reading and add explanations that in the original were left to the skill of the reader. His fascination for the pathetic story of Mary makes him add the translation of that very episode from the *Tristram Shandy*, justifying his addition with the fact that Italian readers did not know Sterne’s work. Finally, he omits the sentence “what an excellent inn at Moulins”²⁴ present in *Tristram* probably because Foscolo could not understand its presence in such a sad story.

To conclude, notwithstanding the fact that many scholars described Foscolo’s translation as “faithful”, there are many differences between the two. A case in point is the image of the women that emerges from the English and the Italian text. If Sterne’s ladies are usually keen and malicious, Foscolo’s ladies are pure and innocent. It is not that he alters the material facts of the narration, but through the manipulation of small details the final portraits are altered. Consider for example some of the expressions used to describe the Bruxelles lady. The lady of the English version is

24 L. Sterne (1857), *The works of Laurence Sterne -Tristram Shandy*, Derby and Jackson, New York, Book IX, Cap. XXIV, p. 512.

described as “guarded” in the chapter *The remise door Calais* which seems to suggest prudence in her actions, caution, probably dictated by the attention to “reputation”, the main concern for a lady at that time. In Italian the adjective becomes “verecondo”, “modest” in English, that stresses the innocent nature of the lady and does not communicate any hint of the caution of the original.

In the same chapter the expression “seducing slut” is used to refer to “Fancy”, which Foscolo renders as “seducente mariuola”, “seducing rascal”.

In the chapter, *In the street Calais*, the English expression “Heaven forbid indeed!” has been translated as “Certo, Donna Gentile, Dio ne guardi” (certainly, gentle lady, God forbid). With the insertion of “donna gentile” in capital letters Foscolo has added a Petrarchist echo in the Italian version transforming the real lady of Sterne’s into a sort of mythical woman through the use of the word “donna” that is reminiscent of the Latin “domina”. Such changes cannot be attributed to lack of comprehension of the English expressions, but rather to a desire to adapt the image of Sterne’s woman to one more acceptable in Italy at the time.²⁵

We must certainly thank Foscolo for having introduced Laurence Sterne to Italian readers, but it is surprising that his translation has been considered “faithful” by many Italian scholars and one that it was not possible to compete with; no new translation was published until 1991. One of the main explanations of the existence of many different translations of one single original is that a translation grows old and the language used in one period does not seem clear and easily understandable in another. Apart from the fact that if this is true for the translation it could possibly be said for the original too, but in this case the argument fails because of the difficulty of Foscolo’s language.

The position of Foscolo’s translation as a key text seems to be confirmed by Mazzacurati’s translation,²⁶ only preceded by a

25 An example can be found in the chapter, *In the street Calais*, where the English expression “Heaven forbid indeed!” has been translated as “Certo, Donna Gentile, Dio ne guardi” (certainly, gentle lady, God forbid). The insertion of “donna gentile” in capital letters added a Petrarchist echo in the Italian version transforming the real lady of Sterne’s into a sort of mythical woman through the use of the word “donna” that is reminiscent of the Latin “domina”.

26 L. Sterne (1991), *Un Viaggio sentimentale di Mr Yorick attraverso Francia e Italia*, G. Mazzacurati translator, ed. Cronopio, vol. I – II.

disastrous attempt of the translator Ipsevich Bocca, who published his translation in 1932. It was completely unsuccessful and soon retired from print.

Full professor and expert on Sterne, Mazzacurati²⁷ is, however, more concerned about Foscolo than Sterne, as is evident from his preface. He declares his admiration for Foscolo and accuses himself of arrogance and ingratitude. He justifies himself saying that he was compelled to make a new translation, not out of respect but rather to release Foscolo “from the already hard task of accompanying the *Journey* of Yorick”. Thanks to his new translation, Foscolo’s version will be read for its merits and not as a necessary means to read the original. Mazzacurati refers to Foscolo’s translation as the “formal prototype” and the volume of notes full of quotations from the Foscolo’s version and of explanations, deemed necessary whenever he differs from Foscolo in translating something, testifies to the importance and the relevance of the translation in the Italian context that ends up suffocating Sterne. Mazzacurati has the merit of being the first who dares to retranslate Sterne’s *Journey*, but he still suffers too much from Foscolo’s presence to let the original speak.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, in the analysis of those texts that have been considered particularly representative of a culture, and as such have been given a passport to travel beyond the borders of their original country, special attention must be given to the target context and the position of the translator in that context.

The great popularity and the literary worth of the works of an author such as William Shakespeare made him central to English culture and his great success made him known abroad through translation. Unfortunately, the opinions expressed by a key author of the French culture such as Voltaire slowed down his travelling in Italy. The very fact that the first Italian translation of Shakespeare was by a woman at a time when women were not considered able to write literary works further demonstrates this. Furthermore, the very limited popularity of Renier, his translator, could have acted as a further obstacle to the spread of knowledge of Shakespeare.

27 For more information A. Calvani (2004), *Il viaggio italiano di Sterne*, Firenze: Franco Cesati editor.

In contrast, the great importance of Foscolo in Italian culture transformed Laurence Sterne and his *Sentimental Journey* immediately into a key text that gave access to English culture, with many essays and volumes written about it.

Gender also seems to play a very important role in the definition of the relevance of the translated text. The fact that Giustina Renier dared to take her first steps into the literary word is thanks to translation, secondary literary activity, scarcely important, not original and for these very reason feminine, as Lori Chamberlain²⁸ explained. In accordance with this gender bias Renier translates an author who was scarcely popular at the time and her work has therefore been hardly remembered, buried by the popularity of male critics and translators' works of the nineteenth century. Renier tries to justify herself for being a translator, for gaining access to the literary world. Foscolo justifies himself too but for the very opposite reason. As translator, the fatherhood of his work could be contested,²⁹ his translation being the original work of another author. In order to claim his male authorship over the text, he creates the character of Didimo Chierico.

Marguerite Duras said:

«feminine literature» is an organic, translated writing ... translated from blackness, from darkness. Women have been in darkness for centuries. [...] And when women write, they translate this darkness ... Men don't translate. They begin from a theoretical platform that is already in place, already elaborated. (1980, 175)

Taking into account what Gilbert and Gubar said about the women's "anxiety of authorship"³⁰ to describe the situation of women writers in the literary world, with the absence of women authors who refer to that ratified their condition of extraneousness, Duras's words seem to mirror the situations of Renier and Foscolo.

28 L. Chamberlain 1992, *Gender and the metaphors of translation*, in L. Venuti, *Rethinking translation: Discourse Subjectivity Ideology*, London, Routledge

29 See E. Said, in S. Gilbert e S. Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1979.

30 S. Gilbert e S. Gubar, *op. cit.*

Renier has to be a translator to be part of the literary system so that she can rely on a male author. Foscolo cannot be a translator; he is first of all an author and in order to exert his right of possession over his work he must assert his originality, as the imagery of succession, paternity, or hierarchy usually used by writers to assert their place in the literary word testifies.³¹

The treatment of Sterne and the translations of Shakespeare, with Foscolo's work rising to the role of classic and Renier's works unfairly valued and forgotten, is clearly linked to the translator's position in the target culture, but also to gender issues.

Foscolo's and Renier's translations and the reception of their texts seem to be perfectly in line with what Von Flotow called the first paradigm, which:

“reflects the conventional assumption that there are groups of people in each society/culture that can be identified as women and men, and, who, because of this identification and self-identification, are perceived and treated differently, with the group called women usually located in a subordinate position” (2007, 93).

It could be argued that literary texts change position according to the different cultures that read them. Furthermore, the relevance and popularity of an author in a culture can be influenced by elements that are not only literary.

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Translating Football Terminology: Examples in Italian and Persian

Fahim Afarinasadi

"Football is a game of mistakes. Whoever makes the fewest mistakes wins." Johan Cruyff.

"فوتبال بازی اشتباهات است. هرکس کمترین اشتباه را کند برنده می‌شود."
یوهان کرایوف

"Quello del calcio è un gioco pieno di errori. Chi ne commette di meno vince." Johan Cruyff.

Introduction

Football is a popular sport with millions of fans and followers around the world. The media and the public watch, analyze, and comment on football both orally and in writing, translating and in-terpreting what happens on the pitch in national and international leagues across languages and cultures. This ever-growing popularity and interest makes the 'beautiful game' a fascinating field of research in Translation Studies. Translation clearly has an important place in football given that it is a global sport which uses English as its lingua franca. This paper asks what appears to be a simple question, but in reality is rather complex: How does football related terminology travel across languages and cultures? In this case, the languages and cultures under scrutiny are English, the source language, Italian and Persian, the target languages. This corpus-based research has been supported by online sources and the main domain specific dictionar-ies, as well as parallel texts¹. The main purpose of this investigation is threefold: to identify, explain and exemplify the frequency of translation methods and strategies applied by Italian and Persian translators of football terminology.

Findings from previous research (Afarinasadi, 2015) lend support to the claim that the language used in football is one of the classifications of sports language in which there is a relationship

between how football is perceived by people and the way identity is formed in society. As a field of discourse, Lewandowski (2008) states that football involves a number of spoken and written contexts. The first one is communication on the pitch during the game, which is carried out by players, coaches, and referees. The next context is the language used in the media: radio, TV and the internet. Other communicative contexts, identified by Lewandowski, are the Laws of the Game, football literature, training resources, fan reactions, and comments. Metaphors are also used as the substitutions among ideas and concepts to have a better understanding of the utterance. The main challenge, however, lies for the translator who is responsible for grasping the meaning in the source language and rendering it into the target language whether or not metaphor is involved. This challenge has been mentioned several times by some of the Translation Studies researchers such as Charteris-Black (2004), Lewandowski (2010), and Burgh (2011).

This research has been carried out to analyse the translations from an academic perspective and provide useful data for a more conscious and standard approach to football translation rendered in Italian and Persian. Translators and interpreters are those who can benefit from this study since being aware of the translation of football terminology produces a better rendering. In addition, this research investigates whether or not specific translation strategies such as those proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet and Newmark can be traced in the translation process pertaining to football terminology in Persian and Italian. As I have already pointed out, football and its language have acquired widespread popularity. Munday (2001) observes that although Vinay and Darbelnet's study covered English and French, "its influence is much wider" and this broad theoretical framework fits the requirements needed to study the language spoken in this sport. Also, other frameworks can be taken into consideration as suggestions for further research to conduct a comparative study.

Theoretical Framework

This research applies two translation theories introduced by Vinay and Darbelnet as well as Peter Newmark. The former one deals with a comparative study carried out in 1995 to analyse the English and French languages. Also, Vinay and Darbelnet came up with a model of translation strategies and procedures. They introduced two main categories: direct and oblique translation strategies. Direct

translation strategies indicate the fact that the translator can render a literal translation or something similar to that, which encompasses borrowing, calque and literal translation (Munday 2001, P.56). According to Munday (2001, P. 56), borrowing happens when there is a “semantic gap” in the target language, and the word can be transferred directly from the source language into the target language. Calque is considered as a kind of borrowing in which the linguistic structure is transferred from the source language into the target language. Also, replacing word for word of the vocabulary in the source language with those in the target language with equivalent meaning is called literal translation (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995, P. 34). The following exemplifies these strategies in Italian and Persian:

Table 1. *Direct Translation Strategies in Italian*

Procedure	Source Language	Target Language
Borrowing	Computer	computer
Calque	Weekend	fine [della] settimana
Literal Translation	Where are you? [sin/plu]	Dovesei / siete?

Table 2. *Direct Translation Strategies in Persian*

Procedure	Source Language	Target Language
Borrowing	Computer	کامپیوتر (kāmpiuter) ²
Calque	Computer	رایانه (rāyāneh)
Literal Translation	Where are you?	شما کجا هستید؟ (šomā kojā hastid?)

The second category Vinay and Darbelnet introduce encompasses four procedures including transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. The first process deals with changing

the formation of a sentence or part of speech of a word. A common example of the transposition can be changing a verb into a noun. Ingo (2007, P. 70) mentions that there might not be an expression in the target language while translating and by doing transposition the translator can create a new expression. Modulation happens when the translator changes semantics of the source text such as changing space for time, symbol or metaphor between the languages. In Vinay and Darbenlet's words, equivalence means transferring "the same situation" in the target language with "completely different wording". The last step in this regard they present is adaptation, which they refer to as "the extreme limit of translation". It occurs when the cultural reference of the source language does not exist in the target language when it comes to transferring the intended message. Rask (2008, P.9) maintains that the purpose of adaptation is to make the reader feel at home with the text.

Newmark (1988) also mentions eight methods to be used for translation. It should be noted that he draws a line to distinguish procedure versus method. Newmark (1988, P. 81) states that translation methods are used for the whole text, while translation procedures cover sentences and smaller units of the language. With this in mind, Newmark introduces the following methods of translation:

§ Word for word translation: For this method, words are translated one by one with their most common meaning in the target language, which is out of context;

§ Literal translation: The translator converts grammatical constructions of the source language to the nearest ones in the target language. Words are still translated single and out of the context;

§ Faithful translation: In this method, contextual meaning of the source language is produced precisely within the constraints of the target language grammatical structures;

§ Semantic translation: This method is similar to the previous one except in its consideration for the aesthetic value of the source text;

§ Adaptation: This is the freest kind of translation and translators use this method mainly for literary texts;

§ Free translation: In this method, the target text is produced regardless of the style, form, and content of the source text;

§ Idiomatic translation: The translator attempts to reproduce

the message but the nuances of meaning are mostly distorted;

§ Communicative translation: The exact contextual meaning is rendered and both content and the language are acceptable for the reader.

Translation of Football Terminology

All things considered, this research explains that there are two types of methods of translation which can be seen clearly in translating football terminology into Italian and Persian including direct and indirect loan. The first category, direct loans, involves loanwords which have been transferred in Italian and Persian as can be seen in the following examples:

Table 3. *Football Direct Loans in Italian*

English	Italian
Goal	il go[a]l
Defender	il difensore
Stadium	lo stadio
Captain	il capitano
Derby	il derby

Table 4. *Football Direct Loans in Persian*

English	Persian
Offside	آفساید (āfsāid)
Pass	پاس (pās)
Goal	گل (gol)
Penalty	پنالتی (penālti)
Dribble	دریبل (deribl)
Team	تیم (tim)

In comparing Italian and Persian, it is clear that there are a number of differences. Notably, there are some synonyms in English for which there is only one correspondence in Persian, while the

translator can make use of the same number of words in Italian. One of the instances can be seen in the following example:

Both *sides* played cautiously.

Entrambe *le fazioni*³['faction'; 'parties'] sono state sulla difensiva.

(hardo tim bā ehtiyāt bāzi kardand.)

هر دو تیم با احتیاط بازی کردند.

Teams colluded with one another.

*Le[due] squadre*⁴ hanno fatto combine⁵

(timhā bā yekdigar tabāni kardand.)

تیم‌ها با یکدیگر تبانی کردند.

In this case, *side* and *team* are the words for which there is only one equivalence in Persian, while in Italian, *side* is referred to as *parte* and *team* means *squadra*. It should be mentioned that the frequency of these kinds of words in Persian translation should be taken into consideration since the target language, Persian in this case, becomes repetitive as the same word has to be used on each occurrence. Chesterman (2004, P5) notes such a criticism which is lexical impoverishment or loss of lexical variation against translation. However, the only reasonable way to transfer the meaning in Persian is using the target term تیم (tim). This can be seen in the Italian language, as well.

The data yielded by the source materials of this research provide evidence that there are some expressions in English football terminology for which there are the same number of equivalent in Persian, but only one equivalent in Italian. A few examples are shown below:

The opposing team didn't arrive to play the *fixture*, so they automatically forfeited the *match* and had to pay a fine.

La squadra rivale non si è presentata all'*incontro*⁷, perdendo quindi automaticamente la *partita* e dovendo pagare un'ammenda.

(time harif barāye bargozārie mosābegheh hāzer nashod.

Banābarin besurate xodkār bāzi rā bākhteh va majbur be pardākhte jarimeh šod.)

تیم حریف برای برگزاری مسابقه حاضر نشد. بنابراین بصورت خودکار بازی را باخته و مجبور به پرداخت جریمه شد.

Shall we watch the football *game* later?
Guardiamo la *partita* [di calcio] più tardi?

(bāzie futbal rā ba'dan bebinim?)

بازی فوتبال را بعداً ببینیم؟

Are you going to the *match* this Saturday?
Vai alla *partita* sabato prossimo?
(āyā ruze šanbe be mosābeqe miravi?)

آیا روز شنبه به مسابقه 10 می‌روی؟

The examples above shed light that the terms *match*, *game*, and *fixture* have been translated with different words both in Italian and Persian, i.e. indirect loans for both target languages. To put it in another way, the words 'incontro' and 'partita' in Italian, while بازی (bāzi) and مسابقه (mosābeqe) in Persian were used. It should be noted that the use of Italian and Persian translation for *game*, *match*, and *fixture* can be interchangeable depending on the context and formality in Persian and register in Italian. As an illustration, the formal word دیدار (didār), was not used in the translation of the Persian language examples above, while in some formal contexts it can be used. As, for example, in this excerpt:

The fixture was offered to Alireza Faghani ¹¹
L'incontro¹² [il match/la partita] è stato offerto a Alizera Faghani.
(qezāvate didār be alirezā faqāni pišnahād šod.)

قضاوت دیدار¹³ به علیرضا فغانی پیشنهاد شد.

The translation of these English terms can be achieved by means of direct lexical equivalent in Italian, as opposed to Persian. This highlights what Chomsky and Halle refer to as lexical gap among

languages (1965). As Igno (2007, p.76) mentions, when it comes to choosing semantic or stylistic demand, transferring the meaning is the most important task to undertake. As a result, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1958, p.169), translation implies inevitable loss, and in this case, there is variation loss.

In the essay entitled "The Sporting Spirit" by George Orwell (1945), he labels sport a "mimic warfare". He also emphasises the attitude the spectators and the nation behind them have towards sports events, saying "who work themselves into furies over these absurd contests, and seriously believe – at any rate for short periods – that running, jumping and kicking a ball are tests of national virtue" (Orwell, 1945). Moreover, in 2011, Gunnar Bergh published his research paper, introducing a good ground to claim that "football is war" metaphor has high validity by investigating minute-by-minute football commentary.

Many linguistics scholars have based their commentaries on the assumption that there is a considerable amount of war-related terminology in football language¹⁴. According to Newmark (1991, p.84), there are some aspects to take into consideration when it comes to translating metaphors, such as the appropriateness and the frequency of the metaphor in the target language register. Furthermore, some of the "football is war" metaphorical expressions are clear-cut, while others are marginally related to war, as discussed by Bergh (2011, P.84). Some of these marginally metaphorical expressions might not determine any single difficulty in translating from English into Italian or Persian since they could be translated directly into these languages by producing the same image, which follows one of the Newmark's methods. Some of the examples proving that the translated expressions have the same image in the target language are described as below:

Table 5. *Translation of Football Terminology with the Same Image in Italian and Persian*

English	Italian	Persian
Attack	attacco	حمله (hamleh)
Defence	difesa	نفاع (defā')
Shoot	tirare/tiro	شوت (šut)
Kick	calcicare/calcio	ضربه (zarbeh)

The aforementioned words are clearly associated with war.

In other words, as football players attack, defend, shoot or kick, warriors do the same on a battlefield. Positions in football such as *striker* conveys the same image in these languages. The translations presented in the target languages follow the strategy Newmark (1998, PP.108-109) presented. It seems that his strategy, reproducing the same image of the source language metaphorical expression in the target language, could be employed for many football terminology instances. However, what Newmark (1991, P.84) suggests, in terms of appropriateness of the translated expression in the target language, should be taken into consideration as discussed earlier in the previous section.

There are some metaphorical expressions in English terminology of football which require the literal translation method of Newmark (1988, P. 109) to be applied in our target languages for this study. As a result, the examples below deploy literal language method (Newmark, 1988, P.109):

Table 6. *Literal Translation of Football Terminology in Italian*

English	Italian
Empty net ¹⁵	[a] porta vuota
Centre referee	arbitro principale [di campo]
Counter attack	contrattacco [ripartenza]
Disciplinary body	organo disciplinare [also plural]

Table 7. *Literal Translation of Football Terminology in Persian*

English	Persian
Empty net	دروازهی خالی (darvāzeye xali)
Centre referee	کمک‌داور (komak dāvar)
Counter attack	ضد حمله (zedde hamleh)
Disciplinary body	کمیته‌ی انضباطی (komiteye enzebāti)

This table shows us that there are many borrowed words in

the target languages of this study. As a result, the occurrence of the loanwords might be very convenient for Persian translators.

However, as Bergh and Ohlander (2012, P.27) put it, there is the challenge of phonological accordance with the target languages and it seems that the borrowed word of football have been adapted as these words are known by the general public in Iran and Italy. The next set of examples illustrate the frequency of borrowings and calques in both Italian and Persian.

That goal was ruled out by the referee for *offside*.¹⁶
 Quel gol è stato annullato dall'arbitro per *fuorigioco*.
 (ān gōl bedalile āfsaid mardud e'lām šod.)

آن گل بدلیل آفساید 17 مردود اعلام شد.

The *pass* was intercepted by the opponent.
 Il *passaggio*¹⁸ è stato intercettato dall'avversario.
 (ān pās tavasote bāzikone harif beloqe šod.)

آن پاس 19 توسط بازیکن حریف بلوکه شد.

The *cross* from the side of the field went right to the other player.
 Il *traversone*²⁰ è arrivato direttamente all'altro giocatore.

(ān sāntr az ān tarafe zamin dorost be bāzikon resid)

آن سانتر 21 از آن طرف زمین درست به بازیکن رسید.

The soccer players practiced *dribbling* and shooting goals during practice.

I calciatori si sono cimentati in *dribbling*²² e tiri in porta durante l'allenamento.

(bāzikonān deribl va šut zadan rā tamrin kardand.)

بازیکنان دریبل²³ و شوت زدن را تمرین کردند.

What we can infer from the examples examined is that the number of borrowed words in Persian is more than those in Italian. Persian equivalence for the words *offside*, *pass* and *dribble* are

considered to be borrowed, which the translator might not find it challenging. However, when it comes to idiomatic expressions with these words, the translator needs to consult with parallel texts to render an understandable translation. For instance, the word *offside* is sometimes used with the verb *to be caught*. The idiomatic expression *to be caught in offside* cannot be translated literally. It is the translator's responsibility to consult with parallel texts, or even experts in football, to come up with the best rendering. The idiomatic equivalence for *to be caught in offside* in Persian is *گرفتار شدن در تله‌ی آفساید* (*gereftār šodan dar taleye afsāid*) which is a communicative translation. The term *cross* in Italian is *traversone* and in Persian is *سانتر* (*sāntr*) which is originally a borrowed word from French, *centre*.

The term "dribble" is considered to be a direct loan in both Italian and Persian and this rendering is the first translation coming to the mind of these two languages' translators.

Football corpora in English provide confirmatory evidence that there are some expressions which require a different method of translation:

Table 8. *Different Translation Method of Football Terminology in Italian and Persian*

English	Italian	Persian
Leaving defenders for <i>dead</i>	Eludendo la difesa	مدافعان را بحال خود رها کردن (<i>modfe' ān rā be hāle xod rahā kardan</i>)
Deep into <i>enemy ter- ritory</i>	Nel cuore della metà-campo av- versaria	در عمق زمین حریف (<i>dar omqe zamine harif</i>)

This table illustrates how football terminology is related to war with respect to the words *dead*, *enemy*, and *territory*. However, in terms of rendering the equivalence in Italian and Persian, the issue of appropriateness introduced by Newmark (1988) should be taken into consideration. Apart from that, the war allusion word of *enemy* could have been rendered as *دشمن* (*došman*) in Persian and *nemico* in Italian. However, according to Newmark's (1991, p. 84)

statement in terms of the appropriateness of the equivalence in the target language, examining parallel texts in both Italian and Persian is required. The researcher came up with the word **حریف** (*harif*) in the Persian language which seems to be more acceptable for followers of football in Iran. In Italian, this expression can be translated as *avversaria*.

It is worthwhile to take one example of a word based on “football is war” metaphor in Italian and Persian, but not in English:

Table 9. “Football is War” in Italian and Persian

English	Italian	Persian
Forward	attaccante	مهاجم (mohājem)

As it can be seen in this table, the word *forward* is not war-related, as it is in Italian and Persian. Instead, the translated alternatives for the target languages are *attacco* and **مهاجم** (*mohājem*) which both mean *attacker* in English. Thus, there is no war-related connotation in English football terminology compared to Italian and Persian. So the allusion to war has been added to the target languages. Since a forward’s orientation on the pitch is actually forward, then orientational metaphor introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, P.14) can be claimed. On the other hand, the word *forward* is also a loan word in Persian, but **مهاجم** (*mohājem*) is much more frequent in football contexts. Being a synonym for forward, the word *striker*, however, has the same level of violence of “football is war” metaphor in English, Italian and Persian, which has been discussed in the football terminology with the same image in these languages.

Conclusion

Football is the most popular sport in Italy²⁴ and Iran²⁵ and carrying out research projects in this field is both interesting and essential. This study aimed to investigate and trace the strategies used in translating football terminology from English into Italian and Persian. In Persian, the use of loan words is very common, while Italian proved to be using calque strategy and only a minority of the loanwords

can be seen in Italian terminology of football. After investigating and tracing the translation theories in the target texts, this study came to posit that it is more appropriate to reduce the images to literal language for the Persian language as in the Italian language indirect loanwords can be found in Italian football terminology. As it can be seen in both languages, the metaphor “football is war” is present in both target languages. Thus, Newmark’s communicative translation strategy (1988), Vinay and Darbelnet’s borrowing and calque strategy (1995) were frequently used methods of translation in football terminology in Italian and Persian.

What has emerged from the set of examples compared and analysed in this essay validates the view that translating football texts can be particularly challenging as a manifestation of football language is code-mixing²⁶. This study has also shed light on how the language of football works, particularly its use of semi-fixed expressions. Furthermore, parallel texts are considered to be an invaluable help for translators in every language so that they can come up with transferring the right meaning²⁷. The opportunity to access parallel texts can be useful for checking the frequency of the synonyms and collocations²⁸ in the target language. Since football is a code-mixing language, translators, interpreters, and commentators need to be aware of the formation of their language production to prevent any mistranslation.

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Notes

¹Both online and print sources have been used for this research. The examples of the source language have been adapted from/based on Ken Bray's *How to Score* (2008) and the online source of wordreference.com. The translations have been also carried out by the author in consultation with Italian and Persian translators. Also, the following online resources have been used:

www.varzesh3.ir
www.repubblica.it
www.90tv.ir
www.calciomercato.com

²Transliteration has been carried out according to Mo'in Encyclopaedic Dictionary (1972)

³See: "CM STADIO: Atalanta-Verona 1-1", (2015, September 20). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

⁴See: "Bologna, oggi l'incontro con l'entourage di Cerc", (2017, June 6). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

⁵See: "COMBINE? NON SAPEVAMO NIENTE", (1984, October 12), *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from <http://repubblica.it/>

⁶See: "FIFA concerned about colluding UAE and Saudi Arabia" (2017, July 11). Retrieved from <http://varzesh3.ir>

⁷See: "Juve-Samp: incontro per Skriniar e Schick, Marotta studia il doppio colpo", (2017, April 14). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

⁸See: "Albania, Bogdani: 'La partita con l'Italia sarà molto importante. Su Hysaj...'", (2017, March 23), Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

⁹See: "We need time to see the best performance of Gareth Bale", (2017, September 19). Retrieved from <http://90tv.ir>

¹⁰See: "Jahanbakhsh Back in AZ Alkmaar Line-up", (2017, September 15). Retrieved from <http://varzesh3.ir>

¹¹Born in 1978, Alireza Faghani is an international referee since 2008 from Iran. (WWW.FIFA.COM)

¹²See: "Bologna, oggi l'incontro con l'entourage di Cerci", (2017, June 6). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

¹³See: "Changes in Referees in Persian League Cup", (2017, August 19). Retrieved from <http://90tv.ir>

¹⁴The main theoretical premises behind this are introduced by Lakoff (1991), Chapanga (2004) and Vierkkant (2008). What they believe in "is not only the game of football tends to be portrayed in terms of warfare, but also that the connection between war and football shows signs of having become undeniable and unavoidable, so much that our understanding of the game nowadays even depends on it." (Bergh, 2011)

¹⁵The context for this example is football and it happens when the goalkeeper is not present to guard the goal during the game.

¹⁶See: "Juvemania: Callejon in fuorigioco, la vera vergogna è non saper perdere!". (2017, March 1). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

¹⁷See: "Lekhwiya 0 Persepolis 1: viva Iran", (2017, May 31). Retrieved from <http://var-zesh3.ir>

¹⁸See: "Barcellona: Neymar, Messi e la notte del passaggio del testimone VIDEO", (2017, March 9). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

¹⁹See: "Tonight as the worst night for Esteghlal:Tabatabaie", (2017, September

19). Retrieved from <http://varzesh3.ir>

²⁰See: "CM STADIO: Verona-Bologna 0-2, Gomez accetta i fischi", (2015, November 7). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

²¹See: "Leonel Messi, an expert in crisis management", (2017, September 10). Retrieved from <http://varzesh3.ir>

²²See: "Juve, Bernardeschi re dei dribbling: ecco la statistica", (2017, July 21). Retrieved from <http://calciomercato.com>

²³See: "Ansarifard: Why we love Queiroz", (2017, June 13), Retrieved from <http://var-zesh3.ir>

²⁴See the book "Calcio. A history of Italian Football" by John Foot (2007)

²⁵See "A Glance at the History of Football in Iran" (2012, July 7). Retrieved from <http://www.yjc.ir>

²⁶See the book "Bilingual speech: A typology of code-mixing" by Pieter Muysken (2000)

²⁷See the paper "Translating Medical Terminologies through Word Alignment in Parallel Text Corpora" by Deleger, Merkel, & Zweigenbaum (2009)

²⁸Crystal (1987) defines synonym as a word that has the same meaning as another word. He also states that collocation is the habitual co-occurrence of lexical items.



FOGAZZARO POETA DUE TASSELLI NELLA SUA FORTUNA ANGLOSASSONE¹

di Cosma Siani

Non molto ricordato oggi in ambito anglosassone, Antonio Fogazzaro ebbe il suo momento di fortuna inglese soprattutto in seguito al clamore suscitato dal suo penultimo romanzo *Il santo*, uscito nel 1905. Tanto è vero che in qualche traduzione (per esempio, quella di *Malombra*, 1907) troviamo scritto in frontespizio “by Antonio Fogazzaro author of ‘The Saint’”. Ma già prima d’allora lo scrittore vicentino viaggiava bene all’estero, come dimostra il repertorio stilato dal suo scrupoloso bibliografo Sebastiano Rumor già nel 1896. Un esempio a conferma sta nel fatto che c’è un saggio intitolato appunto “Antonio Fogazzaro” nella raccolta di Virginia Crawford *Studies in Foreign Literature*, del 1899, che spazia da *Cyrano* a *Guerra e pace*.

Già nel 1886, in effetti, Fogazzaro si meritava una menzione e un brano tradotto dal *Daniele Cortis* nel *Literary World* del 3 settembre. Al qual proposito, in una lettera a Felicitas Buchner datata 17 dicembre Fogazzaro diceva che “nel settembre scorso mi fu mandato un giornale di Londra dove si lodava molto il Cortis e se ne traduceva un brano. La traduzione era fatta bene ma quel brano mi parve proprio detestabile. La chiara, cristallina lingua inglese mi fece vedere, come una buona lente, tutto quello che vi è di falso e di esagerato nel mio stile”.

L’anno seguente, appena un biennio dopo la pubblicazione, il *Cortis* veniva tradotto negli Stati Uniti, e nel 1890 anche in Inghilterra per un altro traduttore e un’altra casa editrice. Era l’inizio della diffusione anglosassone di Fogazzaro. Del resto, l’interesse per il nostro scrittore si concretizzava anche nella versione inglese di due novelle, “Un pensiero di Ermes Torranza” e “Pereat Rochus”, nel 1888, in una rivista inglese che usciva a Roma, *l’Italian Monthly Magazine*; e di saggi, come “Per la bellezza d’un’idea” (conferenza del 1892) e “L’origine dell’uomo e il sentimento religioso” (dis-

1 Desidero ringraziare Elena Cappellaro, di Montegalda (Vi), e Luigi Bonaffini per le preziose informazioni fornitemi sulle traduzioni inglesi di opere del Fogazzaro.



corso del 1893), nella rivista londinese *The Contemporary Review* dell'anno 1895.

Poesie del Fogazzaro entravano in una antologia inglese del 1893 di cui tratteremo oltre. E una di esse, "A sera", appariva anche nel *Leeds Mercury Weekly Supplement* del 14 agosto 1897, tradotta da una baronessa Swift, come ci dice Rumor; e veniva ripresa in una fortunata *Anthology of Italian Authors. From Cavalcanti to Fogazzaro*, apparsa nel 1907 e recante fin nel titolo, come si vede, menzione del nostro autore. Questa consolidata reputazione estera non ci deve sorprendere. In una letteratura italiana uscita oltremarica, *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, a cura di Charles Brand e Lino Pertile (1996), il capitoletto su Fogazzaro comincia così: "Fra i romanzieri italiani del decennio 1880-90, il più europeo in fatto di cultura e formazione fu senza alcun dubbio Antonio Fogazzaro".

Cronologicamente, il *Cortis* è la prima opera tradotta in inglese, seguita alcuni anni dopo da versioni britanniche dei romanzi *Malombra* e *Il mistero del poeta*. Sembra tuttavia che l'interesse pieno delle case editrici sia venuto appunto dopo il clamore collegato a *Il santo*.

Ma osserviamo la cronologia delle opere di Fogazzaro in prima edizione italiana e in prima traduzione inglese:

Prime edizioni:

Miranda	1874
Valsolda	1876
Malombra	1881
Daniele Cortis	1885
Il mistero del poeta	1888
Piccolo mondo antico	1895
Poesie scelte	1898
Piccolo mondo moderno	1901
Il santo	1905
Leila	1910

Prime traduzioni:

1887 Daniele Cortis (trad. C.R. Tilton, New York, Holt; e poco dopo, trad. S.L. Simeon, Londra, Remington, 1890);

- 1893 Greene (Inghilterra), tre poesie in antologia (*Italian Lyrists of To-day. Translations from Contemporary Italian Poetry with Biographical Notices*, London, Elkin & Lane/New York, MacMillan).
- 1896 Malombra (trad. F.Thorold Dickson, London, Fisher Unwin; e in ristampa, col titolo *The Woman*, stesso traduttore, Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1907);
- 1903 Il mistero del poeta (*The Poet's Mystery*, trad. A. MacMahon, verses rendered by Algernon Warren, Londra, Duckworth).
- 1906 Il santo (*The Saint*, trad. M. Prichard-Agnetti, Londra, Hodder and Stoughton; anche, stessa traduttrice, con pref. di William Roscoe Thayer, New York, Putnam's, 1906);
- 1906 Piccolo mondo antico (*The Patriot*, trad. M. Prichard-Agnetti, Londra, Hodder and Stoughton);
- 1907 Piccolo mondo moderno (*The Man of the World*, trad. M. Prichard-Agnetti, Londra, Hodder and Stoughton; col titolo *The Sinner*, stessa traduttrice, New York, Putnam's, 1907);
- 1911 Leila (trad. M. Prichard-Agnetti, Londra, Hodder and Stoughton, e New York, Doran);
- 1974 Tusiani (USA), tre poesie in antologia (*From Marino to Marinetti. An Anthology of Forty Italian Poets*. Translated into English Verse and with an Intr. by Joseph Tusiani, New York, Baroque Press).

Dei sette romanzi di Fogazzaro, cinque vengono tradotti e pubblicati per la prima volta dopo il 1905, anno in cui esce *Il santo*. L'interesse verso lo scrittore italiano era tale che nel biennio 1906-1907 negli USA venivano recuperati alla traduzione anche i romanzi anteriori *Piccolo mondo antico* e *Piccolo mondo moderno*, e ristampato il romanzo d'esordio *Malombra*, già apparso in Inghilterra anni prima.

Simile interesse continuava nei decenni seguenti (*Leila* apparve in inglese subito dopo la pubblicazione in Italia) e si estendeva alla figura stessa dell'autore: nel 1922 veniva tradotta la biografia di Tommaso Gallarati Scotti *La vita di Antonio Fogazzaro*, uscita in Italia solo due anni prima.

Nell'elenco delle versioni sono anche indicati due traduttori di poesia fogazzariana – i due tasselli su cui voglio concentrarmi – in imprese curiosamente omologhe a distanza di ottanta anni.

Il primo dei due, George Arthur Greene (1853-1921), inclu-

deva Fogazzaro fra i trentacinque lirici italiani contemporanei da lui scelti per la sua antologia *Italian Lyrists of To-day* del 1893. Otto decenni dopo Joseph Tusiani, italiano americanizzato, include Fogazzaro nella sua "Anthology of Forty Italian Poets" *From Marino to Marinetti*.

Prima di considerare le traduzioni di questi due antologisti, è bene farci una nostra idea del tenore poetico di Fogazzaro.

Quella che al Greene, a fine Ottocento, sembrava "ricerca di un'espressione affinata", come la chiama (*a poetical style dominated by the search for refined expression*), oggi, a distanza secolare, dopo l'accavallarsi delle poetiche novecentesche che hanno plasmato e mutato il gusto, noi la recepiamo diversamente. Ci imbattiamo in tratti ostici al lettore odierno, che si possono sintetizzare nelle caratteristiche seguenti.

Intanto, il linguaggio dal sapore antiquato, ottocentesco. Nella loro biografia *Fogazzaro* (1970) Donatella e Leone Piccioni ricordano la "insopportabile piovà", che ritroviamo, per esempio, in "Notte indiana": "tace la piovà" (*Poesia dispersa* XIII; questo e tutti gli altri esempi sono tratti dall'edizione complessiva delle *Poesie*, Baldini e Castoldi 1908).

I molti troncamenti in fin di verso e nel mezzo: "Ora mel disse / il dottor": (*Miranda*, "La lettera"); "Sino ai balcon fioriti", "Due remi afferra con man possenti" (*Valsolda*, "Regina").

Certe sonorità cacofoniche, generate dai troncamenti o dall'accostamento di suoni, come le numerose sdruciole in due versi consecutivi: "...Docili / Alla voce ed al pungolo, torceansi / ..." (*Miranda*, "La lettera"); "Al tuon pien di spavento" (*Valsolda*, "Fascino").

Perplessità suscitate dalla prosodia. Fogazzaro ha un inconsueto senso ritmico dell'endecasillabo. Sperimenta tanti metri, e sembra usare talora una metrica accentuativa irregolare. Un esempio è in *Poesia dispersa*, "A mia figlia Gina": "Di poësia nello sguardo lucevi": effetto bruttissimo poiché, per sentire un endecasillabo, bisognerebbe pronunciare "Di-po-e-sià nellò sguardò". Altro esempio, nella sezione *Mistero del poeta* VI: "Alla mia coscienza sei più interna": l'autore preferisce fare l'endecasillabo con dieresi su "cosci-enza" piuttosto che sul più naturale "mi-a". Ancora un esempio: "Quando morrò, una gente curiosa" (*Mistero del poeta* XI): anche qui, dieresi su "curi-osa" e sinalefe cacofonica in "morrò

una", letto quasi "morrùna", anziché sentire più naturalmente la dialefe tra *morrò* e *una* e tre sillabe in "cu-rio-sa".

Fogazzaro inoltre non è fatto per i canti epici, per i motivi civili, per le celebrazioni, per la dimostrazione razionale in poesia, per la costruzione allegorica. Il poemetto "Eva", da *Ultimo ciclo*, è una lungaggine – dieci pagine – dal linguaggio cerebrale e oscuro, senza alcuno spunto felice, né armonia prosodica. Ma l'autore è al peggio quando vuole trattare motivi civili: "Se l'òra spira sul Garda frangono / A Riva l'onde sclamando: Italia!" (*Poesia dispersa* xxvii; e si veda ancora "Novissima verba", in *Valsolda*), oppure celebrativi (valga il citato "A mia figlia Gina", in *Poesia dispersa*).

Il mondo poetico di Fogazzaro è fatto di sensazioni vaghe, incanti serali, magie di momenti sospesi, filtratissimo erotismo di figure eteree. E il poeta è al meglio quando si scorda i suoi scrupoli religiosi, e non lascia trapelare le sue istanze morali. I brani più convincenti, in effetti, non sono quelli in cui si impegna come pensatore, né quelli in cui dà sfogo romantico alla passione amorosa ("Il libro di Enrico", da *Miranda*), e furoreggia o titaneggia. Più lineare, comunicativo, gradevole egli riesce nei toni semplici, descrittivi, sottilmente (anche se non eccelsamente) lirici. Quando il poeta si scorda della sua preparazione classica e mette da parte la retorica, abbiamo versi lisci, naturali nel linguaggio e scorrevoli nella prosodia (cfr. "Il libro di Enrico" rispetto al "Libro di Miranda": elucubrazione rispetto a schiettezza di percezioni e sentimenti).

È in fondo l'ottica in cui lo stesso Francesco De Sanctis vedeva la raccolta *Miranda*, quando in una lettera del 1874 all'amico Mariano, padre di Antonio, diceva che "Il meno interessante è Enrico. Il suo *Libro* non ci mostra che velleità di poeta e di amante e nessuna potenza a essere l'uno o l'altro", e ravvisava che "Questi difetti organici producono una monotonia che giunge talora sino alla stanchezza e l'ine eloquenza".

Con più chiarezza Benedetto Croce, trattando dello scrittore nella sua *Letteratura della nuova Italia*, poté così sintetizzare: "l'arte del Fogazzaro, tutte le volte che si mette al servizio delle sue idee, decade a un'arte inferiore o esteriore che si voglia dire".

È proprio in quest'ottica che il primo dei traduttori di poesia sopra menzionati recepisce il poeta Fogazzaro a fine Ottocento.

George Arthur Greene è un antologista coscienzioso. È correttamente informato sullo sfondo storico e letterario; ha contatti



con l'Italia, e dice di aver ottenuto informazioni direttamente dagli autori. Seleziona trentacinque presenze poetiche della "Nuova Italia", e lo fa a ragion veduta, rendendosi conto che la scelta non esaurisce l'intero panorama di un periodo italiano, che definisce prolifico. Dei suoi trentacinque autori non tutti si sono rivelati caduchi; sette di essi non compaiono in un grande panorama come quello curato per la Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli da Ettore Janni, *Poeti minori dell'800*, che abbraccia 269 nomi per tutto il secolo (gli autori inclusi da Greene ma non contemplati da Janni sono Alfredo Baccelli, Ersilio Bicci, Augusto Ferrero, Renato Fucini, Armando Perotti, G. Targioni-Tozzetti, Antonio Zardo).

Greene dimostra inoltre sensibilità poliedrica, perché include fra i poeti anche i librettisti di Mascagni Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti e Guido Menasci, e ne riporta un brano, il "Coro delle donne", dall'opera mascagnana *I Rantzau*. Mentre non include Zanella, maestro di Fogazzaro, anche se lo menziona nel cappello introduttivo alle poesie di quest'ultimo. A un D'Annunzio già affermato e presente con dieci composizioni, contrappone un Pascoli ancora non ben profilato nel suo apporto al rinnovamento della poesia italiana (ne include tre sole poesie). Tutti i testi sono tradotti di sua mano.

Nell'antologia abbiamo tre poesie del Fogazzaro: "Mi grandeggia nell'ombre della sera" e "A sera", da *Valsolda*, e "In San Marco di Venezia", da *Poesia dispersa*. Il traduttore le introduce con un cappello sull'autore, breve ed esattamente informato. Presenta lo scrittore vicentino come "uno dei romanzieri più insigni e più popolari" nell'Italia di allora; menziona i suoi romanzi *Malombra*, *Daniele Cortis*, *Il Mistero del Poeta*, e anche *Fedele* "e altri volumi di racconti". Greene capta gli elementi del mondo poetico di Fogazzaro con molta sensibilità:

I laghi con il loro avvicinarsi di sole e bruma nei periodi dell'anno; le alture di Monte Generoso, dove crescono folte e incolte aquileghe e giunchiglie; la musica dei torrenti che scorrono e il loro rombo quando cadono in cascata: sono queste le acute influenze che hanno ispirato la sua Musa settentrionale. Il sentimento della Natura così come appare ai sensi in lui è sempre vivificato e reso mistico dalla sempre avvertita presenza di un principio ideale che sta al di sopra e oltre la Natura, ma di cui la Natura è specchio. A questo atteggiamento mentale necessariamente corrisponde uno



stile poetico costantemente alla ricerca di un'espressione affinata, e una istintiva ripugnanza nei confronti dei metodi grossolani e volgari di certe scuole. Ma quando Fogazzaro si confronta con il lato brutto della vita, sa magistralmente mettere in uso una delicatezza di tocco tutta sua, così da renderlo evidente senza che sia oltraggioso.

Il riferimento a scuole e metodi "grossolani e volgari" è verisimilmente rivolto alle tendenze positivista, naturalista e verista, e all'acceso dibattito cui diedero luogo nella seconda metà dell'800, così ben veicolato in un libro di successo dell'epoca, *Alla scoperta dei letterati*, di Ugo Ojetti (1895), raccolta di ritratti e colloqui includente lo stesso Fogazzaro.

Greene chiude l'introduzione generale alla propria antologia accennando ai principi che ha seguito nel tradurre: essenzialmente, "riprodurre con esattezza il metro della poesia originale", poiché una rigorosa adesione ad esso, "per il mio orecchio, è fondamentale". Con eccezioni, naturalmente. Il traduttore, per esempio, si rifiuta di rendere le "cosiddette rime sdrucchiole", in quanto "disarmoniche all'orecchio inglese", e addirittura chiamate *an un-English form*, una configurazione non conforme al carattere inglese. Per la poesia "A sera" di Fogazzaro afferma di essersi prese "alcune piccole libertà necessarie a interpretare lo spirito della poesia in una congrua forma inglese". In aggiunta alla stretta osservanza metrica, Greene afferma di aver tentato di trasferire nella lingua sua e dei suoi lettori "una qualche eco delle peculiarità melodiche appartenenti all'originale", e di rendere familiari in inglese "certi elementi impercettibili della poesia italiana, come l'uso frequente dell'elisione vocalica".

Questi principi di poetica del tradurre collegano il primo al secondo traduttore, l'americano Joseph Tusiani. Nato in Italia come Giuseppe, ed emigrato irreversibilmente verso gli Stati Uniti nel 1947, a ventitré anni, è stato docente universitario di letteratura italiana a New York, è divenuto poeta e scrittore di lingua inglese negli anni Cinquanta, ed è autore d'una mole enorme di traduzioni di classici della poesia italiana. Fra l'altro, si devono a lui le versioni inglesi di opere complete mai prima tentate: tutte le rime del Machiavelli, il *Ninfale fiesolano* del Boccaccio, *L'America libera* dell'Alfieri, *Le Grazie* del Foscolo, *Il mondo creato* del Tasso,



il *Morgante* del Pulci.

Tusiani espone le proprie convinzioni sul tradurre poesia nel saggio "The Translating of Poetry", del 1963. In esso argomenta che la poesia è un insieme di pensiero, sentimento, colore, ritmo, mescolati nella maniera talora più illogica, per riuscire a una logica e limpida unità; che il traduttore deve rifare tale insieme nella nuova lingua, ricomponendo gli elementi non allo stesso modo ma nello stesso spirito; e che deve conoscere in profondità la lingua da cui traduce, non solo per non incorrere in errori di intendimento, ma affinché il senso naturale dell'idioma possa guidarlo alle scelte più congrue nella lingua di arrivo. In realtà Tusiani non intende fornire traduzioni di aiuto alla comprensione (e infatti i suoi testi non hanno l'originale a fronte), ma traduzioni poetiche, tendenti quasi a vita artistica autonoma.

Tusiani include tre poesie di Fogazzaro nel suo *From Marino to Marinetti. An Anthology of Forty Italian Poets* (1974), terzo volume di una vasta scelta di poesia italiana da San Francesco in poi, in traduzione inglese interamente sua. In una breve nota introduttiva al poeta vicentino, il traduttore afferma che la sua poesia "presenta una vena melodica esile ma sicura".

Delle tre poesie, due sono le stesse tradotte anche da Greene, "A sera" e "In San Marco di Venezia", la terza è "Quando morirò, una gente curiosa", dalla sezione *Mistero del poeta*.

Entrambi i traduttori privilegiano "A sera", un componimento lungo, e a dire il vero mediocre, da *Valsolda*. Greene può averlo scelto per associazione con un autore inglese. Dice infatti: "Chi ha letto 'Diana of the Crossways' di George Meredith ricorderà le campane sul lago di Lugano; lo stesso argomento, ma con molte differenze, ha trattato Fogazzaro nel brano intitolato 'A sera'". Tusiani potrebbe avere scelto di tradurre lo stesso brano o perché conosceva l'antologia di Greene, o forse - io credo - per memoria personale, poiché questo motivo delle campane poteva ricordargli il proprio umile ambiente d'origine, il Gargano, e poi una poesia di E.A. Poe a lui cara, "The Bells".

Nel raffrontare i due traduttori, vanno stabilite delle differenze. Greene era un nativo della lingua inglese formatosi nel secondo Ottocento, e conosceva l'italiano come lingua acquisita. Tusiani si è formato nella prima metà del '900 in una zona periferica dell'Italia d'allora, attraverso un curriculum scolastico e universitario



tradizionale. A New York si è naturalizzato nella lingua inglese, raggiungendo uno stato di completo bilinguismo. Usa un inglese decoroso, formale, con qualche tratto desueto.

In linea con i loro principi, Greene e Tusiani si preoccupano del metro e della rima, e non esitano a distaccarsi dal senso stretto dell'originale, a immettere più rime di quante ne compaiano in italiano, a inserire aggiunte per far collimare i versi e assicurarne la lunghezza giusta (anche se non lo fanno mai a tal punto quanto un altro traduttore dell'epoca, Algernon Warren, con i versi inclusi nel romanzo *Il Mistero del poeta*, reinterpretati e alterati con bell'effetto di musica e metrica).

Il metodo dei traduttori Greene e Tusiani appare evidente fin dal primo componimento, "A sera". Gli "spiriti mali" che compaiono nelle prime strofe diventano in Greene *spirits of evil* con l'aggiunta del verso *From Death and the Devil* per la rima; in Tusiani i "mortalì" si espandono in *the men of dying day* per rima col seguente *pray*. Entrambe le aggiunte sono zeppe metriche, tuttavia non estranee al contesto: *Death and Devil* elabora il precedente "spiriti mali", e *of dying day* si riconnette all'ora del tramonto nel primo verso.

Spesso i due traduttori giungono a riprodurre con buon effetto il ritmo dell'originale. Nella seconda delle sezioni chiamate "Tutte le campane", la sequenza di quinari "Pietà, Signore!/ Tutto il dolore ecc." è rifatta da Greene con versi a tre accenti, che possono essere considerati dei trimetri, e assicurano una cadenza accettabile; e da Tusiani con l'equivalente metrico, il dimetro, a due accenti come nell'originale.

L'altra poesia che Greene e Tusiani hanno in comune, come abbiamo visto, è il sonetto "In San Marco di Venezia", da *Poesia dispersa*.

In Greene ritornano tratti antiquati e retorici: i poetici *fane* per *temple*, *mine* come possessivo per *my*, *ope* per *open*; l'arcaico *thy* per *your*; le desuete apocopi poetiche per contenere la lunghezza del verso: *o'* per *of*, *i'* per *in*, *thro'* per *through*, *ne'er* per *never*. Il traduttore inoltre interpreta ed espande laddove rende "odor di mare" con "aliti della laguna salmastra", *whiffs o' the salt lagoon*; e aggiunge di sana pianta *sunlit hopes*, "speranze solatie", per rima col precedente *opes* (= *opens*). Tusiani suona più aderente alla lettera dell'originale e ovviamente più moderno nella dizione.

I due traduttori hanno delle espressioni in comune. In "A

sera", la rima *say/pray*; i versi *The light is born and dies*, e *From the heights and from the deep*; le aggiunte simili *beneath the loam / beneath the earth*. E nel brano "In San Marco di Venezia": *And thy mosaics' mingled shadow and gold* (Greene), *and your mosaics' mingled shade and gold* (Tusiani); *that I mo[u]ld*, al terzo verso, nella variante grafica britannica con *u*, e americana senza *u*; *tomb-like silence of my heart*, al quarto verso; *And so to me, at times*, al terzultimo verso. Dal che si penserebbe ancora che il traduttore moderno potrebbe aver tratto spunti dal precedente.

Le terza poesia tradotta da Greene è "Mi grandeggia nell'ombra della sera", da *Valsolda*. Vi ritroviamo caratteristiche già dette: *through gathering gloom* è una variazione del precedente *in the vesper shades* aggiunta arbitrariamente per rima con *room*; la preoccupazione metrica e rimica ritorna nello schema AABB del traduttore rispetto ad ABCC del Fogazzaro; sistematica la resa dell'endecasillabo fogazzariano con un pentametro inglese a base giambica. Il gradevole ritmo del pentametro e il buon grado di letteralità dimostrano che il Fogazzaro meno cerebrale e più legato al paesaggio e a propri moti intimi ben dispone il traduttore, che qui dà sicuramente il meglio di sé.

Anche la terza poesia di Tusiani, "Quando morrò, una gente curiosa", è la migliore delle sue tre versioni fogazzariane. Viene reintitolata "Autopsia", e questo sembra accentuare il tanto di cerebralità barocca che contiene. Vediamo tornare qui un espediente usato da Tusiani per rendere anche altri metri: l'uso misto di versi sciolti e rimati. Infatti, la quartina a rima incrociata ABAB del Fogazzaro è rifatta con una quartina di due versi sciolti e due rimati ABCC, misura adoperata altrove anche dal Fogazzaro, come abbiamo visto. Del resto, è metodo del Tusiani rendere anche strofe più ampie, quali l'ottava, con versi sciolti e due finali rimati, sia per non disperdere del tutto l'effetto della rima, sia per non essere costretti dalla rima stessa ad alterare troppo la letteralità.

La familiarità con Joseph Tusiani mi ha consentito di chiedergli di tradurre due altre poesie del Fogazzaro, fra quelle che personalmente più mi convincono: "Non son ita coll'altre al Camposanto" e "Anche qui dentro nella chiusa stanza", rispettivamente XXI e XLVI della terza parte di *Miranda*.

Sapevo che Tusiani è un traduttore rapido, ma non mi aspettavo una sua risposta rapidissima. Mi disse anzi di aver impiegato "21

minuti” per la traduzione, poi attenuando: “Mi sono puerilmente vantato dei ventun minuti, ma la verità è che ho subito vissuto in me (e condiviso) due istanti di vera poesia”.

Tusiani rende gli endecasillabi sciolti degli originali con il tradizionale equivalente del pentametro giambico inglese, e lo fa con quel senso dell’armonia ritmica che è tutto suo.

Ma considerando la prima delle due poesie, la breve composizione *xxi*, colpisce, nella seconda parte, l’acuminarsi dei sensi e delle sensazioni di una persona reclusa in casa, in una stanza. Ci fa tornare alla mente il caso di Emily Dickinson, che reclusasi volontariamente per anni fra quattro mura nella sua casa di Amherst, nel Massachu-

setts, scrisse quasi 1800 frammenti poetici che contribuirono a fondare la poesia americana moderna.

Naturalmente, la Dickinson è poetessa molto diversa da Miranda-Fogazzaro; molto più cerebrale, e talora di una oscurità scintillante, fascinosa. Ma alcuni tratti sembrano proprio ravvicinarla a questa Miranda reclusa in stanza. E forse il confronto testuale fra autore e autrice andrebbe esteso.

Ma senza andare così lontano, dobbiamo notare quei versi: “Udii cadere / Una foglia, l’udii posarsi a terra”. È l’esatta sensazione, pur meno affinata nel lessico, del Pascoli di “Novembre”, in *Myricae*: “odi lontano [...] di foglie un cader fragile”. “Novembre” fu pubblicata la prima volta nel 1891; questa strofa di Fogazzaro è pubblicata in *Miranda* nel 1874. Sembra un anticipo di stati d’animo e sensibilità. E se in Pascoli l’uso di simili sensazioni è messo al centro dell’espressione poetica, Fogazzaro sembra abbia bisogno di legare questo tipo di sensibilità a una storia personale e all’alternarsi degli stati d’animo che detta – in questo caso, le vicende di una passione amorosa.

Non solo qui, ma anche in altri luoghi notiamo questo assottigliarsi delle percezioni. Nella chiusa del brano *xlvi*, “Serenò. Par che l’aria stessa brilli”, dello stesso “Libro di Miranda”, esso è addirittura dichiarato:

Cresce in me del paro
D’ogni senso l’acume; il tocco lieve
Talor d’un filo d’erba m’addolora.



(E non sfugga la vicinanza tra quel verso iniziale del brano e l'incipit della menzionata poesia pascoliana, "Gemmea l'aria, il sole così chiaro")

La stessa reazione abbiamo di fronte al brano XLVI, quando Miranda, ancora reclusa nella stanza, sente acutamente la fragranza e la vita segreta degli abeti:

Anche qui dentro nella chiusa stanza,
Sento sin nelle viscere l'aroma
Degli abeti. Dovunque il guardo io volgo
Dalle finestre, nereggiar li vedo
A selve, a gruppi, or densi ora dispersi.
Come si aman gli abeti! Cupi, austeri,
Drizzano al ciel la folla delle punte,
Nè l'un vèr l'altro piegansi giammai.
Ma giù sotterra le radici snelle
Si cercano, si abbraccian, si avviticchiano
Con mille nodi insieme avidamente.

Torno per un attimo alla Dickinson. C'è un brano in cui Emily, come Miranda, dalla finestra guarda gli alberi, uno in particolare; e dice, con fantasia alata:

By my Window have I for Scenery
Just a Sea - with a Stem -
If the Bird and a Farmer - deem it a "Pine"
The Opinion will do - for them -

Dalla finestra posso vedere
Solo un mare - su uno stelo -
Se l'uccello e il colono lo chiamano "pino"
Va bene - è il loro parere -

L'ombrella del pino è un mare, e il tronco uno stelo, diceva acuminando le proprie percezioni la poetessa Dickinson a metà dell'800 in una plaga della provincia americana.

Queste riflessioni, questi incroci intertestuali ci consolidano nell'idea che "Il libro di Miranda" contenga la migliore poesia di Fogazzaro, tanto nell'intera novella in versi *Miranda* che nella restante sua produzione poetica.

In fatto di traduzione, le due recenti poesie rese da Joseph





Tusiani quasi quarant'anni dopo le sue prime versioni fogazzariane ribadiscono l'abilità consumata del traduttore nell'affidarsi soprattutto alla linea melodica del verso, ma anche – ciò facendo – nel conservare ragionevolmente il senso globale.

Con tutte le riserve ammesse per quell'opera ineluttabilmente approssimativa che è la traduzione, voglio chiudere questa rilettura della poesia fogazzariana proprio sulle due ultime versioni, fino a ieri inedite, quale omaggio di un traduttore rinomato al nostro autore.





TESTI

FOGAZZARO

A SERA (da *Valsolda*)

LE CAMPANE DI ORIA

Ad occidente il ciel si discolora,
Vien l'ora — delle tenebre.
Dagli spiriti mali,
Signor, guarda i mortali!
Oriamo.

LE CAMPANE DI OSTENO

Pur noi, sull'onde
Moviam da queste solitarie sponde,
Voci profonde.
Dagli spiriti mali,
Signor, guarda i mortali!
Oriamo.

LE CAMPANE DI PURIA

Pur noi remote ed alte
Fra le buie montagne
Odi, Signore.
Dagli spiriti mali
Guarda i mortali!
Oriamo.

ECHI DELLE VALLI

Oriamo.

TUTTE LE CAMPANE

Il lume nasce e muore;



Che riman dei tramonti e delle aurore?
Tutto, Signore,
Tranne l'eterno, al mondo
È vano.

ECHI DELLE VALLI

È vano.

TUTTE LE CAMPANE

Oriamo, oriamo in pianto,
Dall'alto e dal profondo,
Pei morti e pei viventi,
Per tanta colpa occulta e dolor tanto.
Pietà, Signore!
Tutto il dolore
Che non Ti prega,
Tutto l'errore
Che Ti diniega,
Tutto l'amore
Che a Te non piega,
Perdona, o Santo.

ECHI DELLE VALLI

O Santo.

TUTTE LE CAMPANE

Oriam per i dormenti
Del cimitero,
Che dicon rei, che dicono innocenti,
E Tu, Mistero,
Solo Tu sai.

ECHI DELLE VALLI ,

Solo Tu sai.



TUTTE LE CAMPANE

Oriam per il profondo
Soffrir del mondo
Che tutto vive e sente,
Ama, dolora,
Giudizio arcano dell'Onnipotente.
Sia pace al monte, all'onda.
Al bronzo ancora
Sia pace.

ECHI DELLE VALLI

Pace.

L' ONDA DEL LAGO

Dorme la sponda
Che m'innamora?
Con rotta lena
Mia lunga pena
Le piango omai.
Sì, dorme, tace.
Solo un accento,
Solo un lamento,
Solo un sospiro
Ancora, un bacio!
Silenzio, pace.
Le stelle ridono
Vaghe del nitido
Speglio sereno;
Mi trema e palpita Vespero in seno.
Silenzio, pace.
Solo un accento,
Solo un lamento,
Solo un sospiro,
Un bacio.



LA CASCATA DI RESCIA

Quest'onda non ha pace,
 Quest'onda mai non tace,
 Ognor trabocca e piomba
 E senza fine romba
 Sulle deserte prode.
 Il lago posa ed ode;
 Odo i monti bui;
 Ogni quiete gode
 Del mio remoto pianto.

GREENE

EVENING

THE BELLS OF ORIA

Westward the sky o'ergloometh.
 The hour of darkness cometh.
 From spirits of evil,
 From Death and the Devil,
 Keep us, O Lord, night and day!
 Come, let us pray.

THE BELLS OF ÒSTENO

O'er waters waste we too must sound,
 From lonely shores where echoes bound,
 Our voice profound.
 From spirits of evil,
 From Death and the Devil,
 Keep us, O Lord, night and day!
 Come, let us pray.

THE BELLS OF PURIA

We too, remote and high,

From the dark mountains cry:
Hear us, O Lord!
From spirits of evil,
From Death and the Devil,
Keep us, O Lord, night and day!
Come, let us pray.

Echoes from the Valleys

Let us pray I

ALL THE BELLS

The light is born and dies,
Enduring never:
Sunset follows sunrise
For ever;
All things, O Lord All-wise!
Save Thine eternity,
Are vanity.

Echoes from the Valleys

Vanity!

ALL THE BELLS

Come, let us pray and weep,
From the heights and from the deep,
For the living, for them that sleep.
For so much sin unknown, and so much pain.
Have mercy, Lord!
All suffering and pain
That does not pray to Thee;
All error that in vain
Does not give way to Thee;
All love that must complain,
Yet yields no sway to Thee,

Pardon, O Holy One !

Echoes from the Valleys

O Holy One !

ALL THE BELLS

Pray we, and toll the bell
 For the dead beneath the loam,
 Whom Earth hath gathered home
 Guilty or guiltless, as vain men opine.
 Thou, Mystery Divine!
 Alone canst tell.

Echoes from the Valleys

Alone canst tell!

ALL THE BELLS

Let us pray for the immense
 Pain of the universe.
 That lives its life intense,
 Loves, suffers Thine adverse
 Inscrutable decrees.
 Peace to the wave, to the hill
 These voices, too, be still:
 O beat o' the bronze, be still!
 Peace!

Echoes from the Valleys

Peace!

THE WAVE

Dost thou sleep, fair shore
 That the waters adore?

With quivering breath
 My pain lingereth
 As I sing, as I weep;
 And my love is asleep!
 One accent alone,
 One murmur, one moan.
 One sigh – only this –
 As thy pebbles I kiss.
 Be silent, O deep !
 The stars as they smile
 Fall in love for awhile
 With my mirror serene:
 In my bosom bright Vesper reflected
 is seen.
 Silence and sleep!
 One accent alone,
 One murmur, one moan.
 One sigh – only this
 One kiss.

THE WATERFALL OF RESCIA

My waves have no peace;
 My waves do not cease –
 They murmur and roar
 Through silences lonely
 On a desolate shore.
 The silent waves hear;
 The dark mountains hear;
 They list, and hear only
 My murmurs austere.

TUSIANI

Bells at Evening

THE BELLS OF ORIA

The sun is fading slowly in the west,
and the dark hour is coming fast.

Keep, Lord, from evil
the men of dying day!
Let's pray.

THE BELLS OF OSTENO

We, too, upon
the waves from lonely shores must, one by one
with deep voice run.

Keep, Lord, from evil
the men of dying day!
Let's pray.

THE BELLS OF PURIA

Us too, among these far
mountains that darken,
now hear, O Lord.

And keep from evil
the men of dying day!
Let's pray.

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Let's pray.

ALL THE BELLS

The light is born and dies:
what's left of dawn and sunset in the skies?
All that has birth,
save Your eternity, O Lord, on earth
is vain.

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Is vain.



ALL THE BELLS

Let's pray, let's pray and weep,
from the height and from the deep,
for the dead and for the living,
for so much hidden sin and so much grieving.
Mercy, O Lord!
All grief and terror
that still despise You,
all human error
that still denies You,
all love by You
not blest nor won,
forgive, O Holy One!

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

O Holy One!

ALL THE BELLS

Let's pray for those who sleep
beneath the earth,
both for the guilty and the innocent,
for only You, mysterious Mind,
can know the truth.

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Can know the truth.

ALL THE BELLS

Let's pray for the whole world
that deeply grieves,
that feels and lives,
and grieves and loves,
as the Omnipotent's deep Will decrees.



Peace to the mountains and the seas,
and to all bells,
oh, peace!

ECHOES FROM THE VALLEYS

Oh, peace!

THE WAVE OF THE LAKE

And is the shore asleep,
whose love I in me keep?
With panting breath
my long dismay
to her I'll say.
She's still, asleep.
Only one word,
only one cry,
only one sigh,
and one more kiss.
Be still, oh, peace!
The stars are smiling
in this clear mirror,
calm and beguiling;
and Vesper trembles,
and beats fast
upon my breast.
Be still, oh, peace!
Only one cry,
only one sigh,
and one more kiss.

THE WATERFALL OF RESCIA

These waves have no more peace,
these waves can no more cease:
they ever flood and fall,
and ever rush and roar
upon the lonesome shore.



The lake is still and hears,
and each dark mountain heeds;
and all this quiet feeds
on all my distant tears.

FOGAZZARO

IN SAN MARCO DI VENEZIA (da Poesia dispersa)

Freddo è qual te il mio spirto, o cattedrale.
I tuoi mosaici misti d'ombra e d'oro
Somigliano i fantasmi ch'io lavoro
Del core nel silenzio sepolcrale,

Dove l'amor tace sepolto, quale
Il tuo di gemme inutile Tesoro.
All'Ideal che spero, al Dio che adoro
V'arde sola una lampada immortale.

Talora per la tua porta che geme
Entran lume di cielo, odor di mare,
Qualche figura taciturna e mesta;

Ed anche in me, talora, entrano insieme
Un folle ardor vitale che dispare,
Un dolce viso tenero che resta.

GREENE

IN ST. MARK'S AT VENICE

Cold is my soul like thee, O glorious fane!
And thy mosaics' mingled shadow and gold
Are like the shapes that I in fancy mould
Mid tomb-like silence of my heart's domain,

Where love lies buried, love that shone in vain,



Like thy gemmed treasure, useless and untold;
 And to the hoped Ideal, the Faith I hold,
 One lamp lifts up a light that ne'er shall wane.

Yet sometimes thro' thy gate that moaning opes
 Sunlight comes in, whiffs o' the salt lagoon,
 Sad silent forms that linger for awhile;

And so to me, at times, come sunlit hopes,
 Quick fever-fits of life that vanish soon,
 Or a sweet, tender face that stays to smile.

TUSIANI

IN ST. MARK'S AT VENICE

Cold, O cathedral, is my soul like you,
 and your mosaics' mingled shade and gold
 resemble all the phantoms that I mold
 within the tomb-like silence of my heart,
 where all my love lies buried, like your old
 treasure of gems, so useless and so bright.
 To the Ideal and to the God I love
 one lamp still glows with its immortal light.

At times through this your door, which seems to moan,
 fragrance of sea and glimpse of heaven pass,
 or some sad person, silent and forlorn.
 And so to me, at times, together come
 a frantic warmth of life that quickly wanes
 and a sweet face that tenderly remains.

FOGAZZARO

IV (da Valsolda)

Mi grandeggia nell'ombre della sera



La vòta stanza. Fuor da ogni finestra
Nel chiaror delle nebbie il lago appare,
Quale deserto, sconfinato mare.

Uscir vorrei per questo mar deserto,
Navigar solo, navigar lontano,
E, spenta la veduta di ogni sponda,
Abbandonarmi ai miei pensieri e all'onda.

All'aperto uscirebbero i fantasmi
Che più gelosamente il cor nasconde.
Io sederei a poppa ed essi a prora;
Senza parlar ci guarderemmo allora.

GREENE

Now in the vesper shades my vacant room
Looms larger to mine eyes through gathering gloom.
Beyond, the lake appears in misty night,
Like a deserted, boundless sea at night.

Could I sail out upon this desert sea,
Sail out alone, sail out afar and free;
And, when the vanishing shores are lost to view,
Yield to my thoughts and to the waters blue!

Then phantoms would i' the open sea appear
Which still the heart conceals with jealous fear.
I seated aft, they to the fore would rise,
Each silent, gazing in the other's eyes.

FOGAZZARO

XI (da *Mistero del poeta*)

Quando morrò, una gente curiosa
Mi vorrà in fronte con l'acciaio aprir,



Per veder dove sia la vena ascosa
 Onde le altere fantasie fluir.

Troveranno la breve arte che appresi,
 Sorrideran del picciolo saper;
 Invano invano all'opra cruda intesi,
 Frugheranno le celle del pensier.

Allor, diletta mia, sdegnosamente
 Mi spezzeran, pria di lasciarmi, il cor;
 E ne uscirà in quel punto finalmente
 Una luce dei tuoi capelli d'ôr.

Mirando i fini tuoi capelli d'oro,
 Gli occhi pensosi, fondi come il mar,
 Ecco, diranno, il dolce suo tesoro,
 Ecco le perle ove sapea trovar.

TUSIANI

AUTOPSY

When I am dead, some curious men will wish
 to cut my forehead open with their steel,
 eager to find where the deep vein may be
 whence all my visions flowed so loftily.
 And they will see the bit of art I learned,
 and smile at such a little knowledge found;
 and when in vain they will have sought and sought,
 they will explore the cells of every thought.

And then, before they leave me, with disdain
 they will, my darling, open this my heart,
 and out of it will dazzle then and there
 the deep-stored sunshine of your golden hair.

Looking at last at your fine hair of gold,
 and at your pensive eyes deep as the sea,



"Here's," they will say, "his treasure left behind,
and here is where his pearls he came to find."

FOGAZZARO

XXI (da *Miranda*, "Il libro di Miranda")

Non son ita coll'altre al Camposanto
Mamma nol volle. Dalla mia finestra
Vidi passar la gente sulla via
Di là dai prati. Si sentiano i canti ;
E dopo, che silenzio! Udii cadere
Una foglia, l'udii posarsi a terra.
È strano adesso come intendo i suoni.

TUSIANI

I did not join the others to the church-yard.
Mother forbade it. From my window, though,
I saw so many people on the road
Beyond the meadow. Feeble songs were heard.
And then, what silence! One small falling leaf
I even heard as on the ground it lay.
Strange, I can hear now every little sound.

FOGAZZARO

XLVI (da *Miranda*, "Il libro di Miranda")

Anche qui dentro nella chiusa stanza,
Sento sin nelle viscere l'aroma
Degli abeti. Dovunque il guardo io volgo
Dalle finestre, nereggiar li vedo
A selve, a gruppi, or densi ora dispersi.
Come si aman gli abeti! Cupi, austeri,



Drizzano al ciel la folla delle punte,
 Nè l'un vèr l'altro piegansi giammai.
 Ma giù sotterra le radici snelle
 Si cercano, si abbraccian, si avviticchiano
 Con mille nodi insieme avidamente.
 Era un giorno così. Noi vivevamo
 L'un presso all'altro. Gelido fu il viso,
 Gelide e rade furon le parole;
 Ma per mille reconditi pensieri
 Non detti mai, compresi, eran congiunte
 Le nostre vite. Voi felici, abeti!
 Confitti negli abissi dei burroni
 Dove sole non penetra, protesi
 Sulle cascate candide, sublimi
 Sulle torri scoscese ove non giunge
 Nemico piede, voi felici, abeti!
 Vivervi oscuri e solitari accanto
 Non Vi pesa né tentanvi altri sogni,
 Sotto la neve, che del sol venturo.
 Son commossa. Vorrei di qua levarmi,
 Non posso. Come mai da questa penna
 Escon sì novi ed infocati accenti?
 Pensa egli forse a me, passa nel mio
 Spirito un soffio dell'ardor che ispira
 I suoi canti? O saria l'amor soltanto,
 Questo amor di cui muoio, che attraverso
 Le selve e le montagne a sé costringe
 Parte di lui? Mio Dio, pietà, ho paura!

TUSIANI

Here, too, in the enclosure of a room,
 Deep in my very being I can smell
 The fir-trees' scent. Where'er I turn my glance
 Down from the windows their dark hues I see
 In tangles and in shrubs, now dense, now scattered.
 How fir-trees love each other! Bleak, austere,



They raise their crowded needles to the sky,
Never towards each other ever bending.
But underneath, their slender roots are eager
To search, embrace, and strengthen one another,
In countless knots commingled avidly.
It was like this one day. We used to live
One near the other. Still our looks were cold,
And still our words were also cold and few;
But through a thousand deeply hidden thoughts,
Unsaid yet understood, our lives were bound.
O fir-trees, happy fir-trees! Nailed and stuck
Down in the depth of every precipice
Where sunshine does not enter, springing up
Over white-foaming cascades, and sublime
Above steep, rugged towers where no foe
Sets ever foot, O happy, happy trees!
Living together in dark solitude
Suits you, nor are you pricked by other dreams,
Under the snow, save of the future sun.
I am confused. From here I'd like to flee,
Yet I cannot. How from this very pen
Do such new ardent syllables come out?
Am I perhaps this moment in his thoughts
Or is my soul now touched by the warm breath
Kindling his songs? Or is it only love,
This love whereof I die, and which through forests
And mountains keeps a part of him reserved
For him alone? Have mercy, God! I tremble.







Translations





Anecdotes by Piovano Arlotto

Translated by Sherry Roush

Sherry Roush (Ph.D., 1999, Yale University) is a Professor of Italian at Penn State University at University Park and a newly minted Bread Loafer (having participated in the Middlebury College Bread Loaf Writers' Conference in Advanced Literary Translation in June 2017). She is the author of *Speaking Spirits: Ventriloquizing the Dead in Renaissance Italy* (2015) and *Hermes' Lyre: Italian Poetic Self-Commentary from Dante to Tommaso Campanella* (2002), and the editor and translator of the *Selected Philosophical Poems of Tommaso Campanella* in two volumes (2011). Her translations have appeared previously in *The Journal of Italian Translation*, as well as in *Gradiva* and *YIP: Yale Italian Poetry*.

Piovano Arlotto (Arlotto Mainardi, 1396-1484) traveled widely as chaplain of the Florentine mercantile flotilla before settling down to his parish of San Cresci a Maciuoli (not far from Uccelatoio) in the diocese of Fiesole, outside Florence's city walls. He was an acquaintance of Lorenzo de' Medici and Angelo Poliziano, both of whom mention him in their works (in the *Beoni* and in the *Bel libretto*, respectively). His spirited sense of humor was on display, even well beyond the comic exempla that peppered his sermons, as evidenced by the painter Volterrano, who figured Piovano in animated dinner conversation (https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pievano_Arlotto#/media/File:Baldassarre_Franceschini_-_One_of_Father_Arlotto%27s_Tricks_-_WGA08091.jpg). Ever the jokester, Mainardi composed the epitaph for his own tomb in Florence, which in Italian reads: I had this tomb built for myself and for anyone else who might like to join me inside it.

The Collection of Piovano Arlotto's Quips and Jokes

The *Motti e facezie di Piovano Arlotto* were compiled by an anonymous friend of Arlotto Mainardi and appeared in its first Florentine edition in 1511, edited by Bernardo Pacini. The two anecdotes translated for the first time into English here are num-

bered 30 and 65 out of a total of 218 brief witticisms and jests that have been published in the original Italian in various subsequent editions, including a digital reproduction at: https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Motti_e_facezie_del_piovano_arlotto, as well as the usefully annotated volume edited by Gianfranco Folena (Milan: Ricciardi, 1995).

The force behind the humor of such examples of early Italian popular literary prose often hinges on linguistic wordplay, including puns or sophisticated quips. Sometimes, as in the first case here, they implicitly critique the beliefs or behaviors of characters representing the cultural elite. *Facezie* tend to be far shorter with less character and narrative development than the typical *novella*, and their messages are not aimed at moral edification, oftentimes deliberately satirizing such writings, so they are not usually stated as explicitly as the lessons in *exempla* or *favole*, for instance. Among other Italian writers of *motti* and *facezie* are Franco Sacchetti (1332-1400) in his *Trecentonovelle*, as well as Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) and Giovanni Pontano (1429-1503), who wrote their anecdotes in Latin.

I have chosen these two examples from Mainardi's collection out of a continued interest in the rhetorical use of ghostly visions. In the first *facezia* translated here, Piovano claims to have seen a spirit who is made to speak a message closer to the author's own perspective than anything the historical Leonardo Bruni has been documented as believing. In the second, there is no indication that a ghost actually appeared to Zuta; he seems to invent and improvise the story of having just had a dream vision of Arlotto's dead father with the aim of bumming some wine off his friend and customer. While I did not analyze the *Motti e facezie di Piovano Arlotto* in *Speaking Spirits*, I refer readers to it for examples of the myriad ways that other Renaissance Italians feigned ghostly voices for their own purposes.

The protagonist of the first translated anecdote is Lionardo, the soul of Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444). Although originally from Arezzo, Bruni rose to become the Florentine *Cancelliere della Repubblica* from 1427 until his death. He is esteemed among the great Renaissance Italian humanists for his scholarly contributions, which include the *Historiae florentini populi* in twelve volumes, his two *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histum*, the *De interpretatione recta*, biographies of Dante and Petrarch, and translations from Greek

into Latin of various works by Plato and Aristotle.

Here Mainardi effectively denounces Bruni for his perceived sin of greed by fictionally representing the charge as a self-accusation made by the roving spirit. But further critiques of Bruni and/or of his intellectual milieu lurk in this piece. Mainardi calls into the question the value of “la sapienza, la scienza, la dottrina, la eloquenza delle lettere greche e latine [e] il modo del dir ciceroniano” (the wisdom, learning, doctrine, and eloquence in Greek and Latin letters, [as well as] those speeches worthy of Cicero), which cannot guarantee even a “mezzetta” of wine, let alone a place among the blessed in the afterlife. He implies that the imperious Muses are ultimately unreliable. Lionardo laments that they have abandoned him; they do not provide for his every necessity in the “in-between” world in which the revenant roams.

In the end, Arlotto does not offer the requested drink to Bruni’s spirit. Arlotto neither comes across as heartlessly cruel, nor at all religiously abstemious; his act of withholding wine from the equally etiquette-challenged ghost of the humanist may suggest that Arlotto finds Lionardo to be exaggerating the urgency of his thirst. I debated at length the translation of the two instances of “io ispasimo di sete,” literally “I am spasming/writhing of thirst.” The closest English equivalent in tone and significance (“I am dying of thirst”) presents the unfortunate image of a dead man melodramatically claiming to be on the verge of dying. Nevertheless, I opted for this translation, which captures the hyperbole with a similarly colloquial tone, but also tickles the awkwardness of a ghost complaining of a bodily necessity. When the same expression is repeated, I offer, “I’m extremely thirsty.” After sustained exposure to Piovano’s collected anecdotes, it is difficult not to begin to imagine plays on words, even where there quite possibly may not be any; but if readers see a similar intentionality in the translation (thirsty beyond a state *in extremis*?), it may fit the spirit of the original work. The verb “ispasimo,” along with the litany of “triemo, aghiaccio, ardo,” are also deliberately recognizable from a Petrarchan vocabulary. Just as Petrarch trembled, froze, and burned out of love of Laura, so Bruni responds to his own passion, which is notably not for the state of his soul.

Unlike many other literary encounters between the living and the dead in early Italian literature (perhaps most famously Dante’s

"*Miserere di me*" at the first sight of Virgil's shade in *Inferno* 1.65), the living man expresses no shock or fear at the sight of the spirit or when he learns that the figure with which he converses is already dead. Instead, Arlotto is "tutto spaventato e ... attonito" for a full fifteen minutes only after Lionardo's departure, perhaps because he is still processing all of the implications of the mandate to enjoy oneself in this world. It is likely an incongruous message in the mouth of the learned and high-cultured Bruni, at least to Arlotto's ears, since, according to Folena (xxviii), Mainardi is the champion of common sense and a practical morality.

Another esteemed historical figure mentioned in this *facezia* is Jacopone da Todi (c. 1230-1306). He was the Franciscan friar who composed pious lauds, primarily in veneration of the Virgin Mary. The lines attributed here to Jacopone da Todi do not exist in any of his lauds known to us today, but are likely intended to resemble his devout verses because there is a deliberate play on words. "Tanto è mio / quanto io godo e do per Dio" present in the rhymed couplet a willful ambiguity, which depends on how much emphasis is placed on "mio" and how one interprets "tanto" and "per Dio." It is difficult to render this difference in English, but the meaning roughly corresponds in a pious tone to: 'Everything is mine / that I enjoy and give on behalf of God,' and in this case, one might mistakenly attribute it to Jacopone da Todi for the simplicity of the recognition that what one possesses has derived from God and is rightfully shared with/returned to Him. But in a different tone or with a different emphasis, the same lines can sound greedy and possessive, akin to: 'By God, in any case, all is mine that I enjoy and give.' The great challenge in translating this passage is in rendering the possibility of both interpretations in one breezy quip, preferably in rhyme.

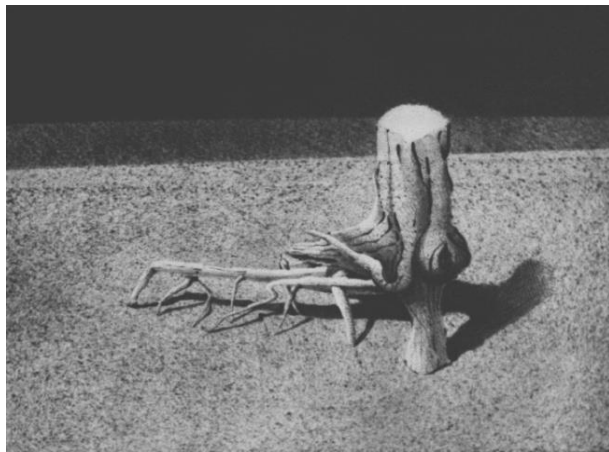
The second anecdote presents its own translation dilemmas, primarily in the form of idiomatic expressions, but also a similarly rhymed incantation to dispel the morning fog, that is the brain fogginess of the hangover that Nastagio and Zuta appear to be experiencing after over-imbibing the previous night. The first idiom is "fante isturato" in the sentence Nastagio speaks, "You'll never succeed because Piovano is a clever talker." In this context, *isturato* describes, according to Folena: "'accorto, furbo', e *fante* nel senso di 'uomo' come in altre espressioni simili, *lesto fante*, ecc." (408),

so a clever guy, like the wily servant characters in contemporary comedies. Given the narrative context (Piovano is one who can talk his way out of any situation) and the deeper etymology related to speech of *fante* (one with the capacity of speech; an infant, in fact, is a being who does not yet speak), I emphasized this aspect in the translation: Piovano is a clever and consummate *talker*.

Another idiomatic expression is *non tenne la pania* (something did not go as expected), which is similar to *cadere nella pania* (to fall into a trap), in that case, something akin to: their trap did not work the way they had intended. In fact, Nastagio and Zuta originally aimed to get Piovano to pay for their wine, but they instead pay for Malvasia for all three of them in order to learn how the clever Piovano casts a spell to dispel their fog.

The incantation rhymes in the original Italian, but it is awkward: “Nebbia nebbia mattutina che vien sempre la mattina, / una tazza di malvagia contro a te è vera medicina.” A (too) close literal translation might read: “Fog morning fog that always comes in the morning, / a cup of Malvasia against you is a true medicine.” My rendering loses the explicit sense of the pharmaceutical prescription, although something about the couplet also brings to my mind the proverb, “an apple a day keeps the doctor away,” hence my choice to maintain the rhyme as “Fog oh fog that comes early each day, / a sip of Malvasia will surely take away.”

I recognize that many of the verb tenses in both examples do not correspond precisely to the originals, which jump from the *passato remoto* to the present tense (i.e. the first two verbs of #65, “si scontrarono...Dice”) and with a frequency that might strike the Anglophone reader as awkward in translation (“they ran into each other...he tells”), even though I aver that some English speakers also move between verbal tenses in similar spoken colloquial contexts. It is a choice that I fretted at far greater length than will appear on the page. I am grateful to Linda Lee, Tim Kirk, Michele Rossi, Gino Belloni, and my fellow translators of the 2017 Middlebury Bread Loaf workshop for their excellent questions and suggestions that kept me pondering deeply the process of rendering culture and language between contexts.



Manno - ...il nido non c'è più, 2006, rotella, maniera
nera e puntasecca su zinco, mm 300x400.



Transcriptions of Piovano Arlotto's Originals

Facezia XXX fatta sopra alla morte di Lionardo Aretino

Passa il Piovano Arlotto dallo Uccellatoio e parla con Agnolo oste di sue facende; e poi iscende da cavallo e va nella istalla e giugne uno tutto affannato e pieno d'ansietà e saluta il Piovano e dice:

“Per lo amore di Dio, pagatemi una mezzetta ché io ispasimo di sete.”

Maravigliossi forte il Piovano e disse: “Non siete voi messer Lionardo d'Arezzo?”

Rispose: “Sì, sono.”

Rispose il Piovano: “Che fate voi qui sì a buona ora, e che vòle dire voi siate così solo e con tanto affanno?”

Risponde: “Non vedi tu ch'ì sono morto, cammino via e non posso istare con voi; e sono in tanta calamità che io ispasimo di sete e non ho di che pagare uno poco di vino? Sicché, soccorretemi.”

Dice il Piovano: “Può egli esser questo, che in questa morte voi abbiate lasciato, secondo che è oppinione di molti, tante possessioni e case che ascendono alla somma di ducati ventimila e tra libri, masserizie e gioie e veste di valimento di più che XXV mila e di ducati contanti più che XXX mila? Dove è la sapienza, la scienza, la dottrina, la eloquenza delle lettere greche e latine? Dove è il modo del dir ciceroniano il quale illustrava tutto il mondo? Può egli essere che la Fama e queste tante Muse vi abbandonino, le quali tutte vi obbedivano, e che voi ve ne andiate ora in tanta calamità?”

Risponde l'anima di messer Lionardo: “Piovano mio, i' ho lasciato molto più roba ancora e più tesoro che voi non dite, e promet-tovi in tutto che da ognuno in tutto sono abbandonato e di là non posso portare tanto di valore che vaglia uno solo picciolo; e lascio il corpo e ogni mio avere. Sì che voi che rimanete, vi conforto che voi attendiate a istare bene con Dio e a darvi piacere e buon tempo in mentre che vivete in cotesto mondo, perché alla vostra morte voi non ne potrete portare cosa alcuna. Vedete come è avvenuto a me. Oh me misero! Pensate come io istò. Io me ne vo, e non so dove io mi abbia ancora a essere giudicato, perché io non sono ancora ito dinanzi al giudice. Triemo, aghiaccio, ardo, né so ancora chi è che mi abbi a giudicare: forte dubito del fatto mio, perché io so



Two Anecdotes from The Collected Witticisms and Practical Jokes of Piovano Arlotto

Anecdote XXX: On the Death of Leonardo Bruni from Arezzo

Passing through Uccellatoio, Piovano Arlotto paused to exchange a few words about business with Agnolo the innkeeper there. Then he dismounted and was leading his horse into the stable when somebody - highly agitated and in a terrible hurry - called out to him: "For the love of God, buy me a drink for I am dying of thirst!"

Piovano was greatly amazed and said: "Aren't you the renowned Lionardo Bruni d' Arezzo?"

He responded, "Yes, I am."

Piovano asked, "What are you doing here so early, and why is it that you are all alone and so out of breath?"

Then he, "Don't you see that I am dead, that I'm walking a long way and can't stay with you, and that I am in such a fix that I'm extremely thirsty and I haven't anything with which to buy a bit of wine? You must help me!"

Piovano replied, "Can it be that you are the gentleman who in death has left, in the estimation of many people, houses and holdings worth more than 20,000 ducats, and in books, furnishings, jewels, and fine clothing another 25,000 minimum, plus more than 30,000 ducats in cash? What has become of that wisdom, learning, doctrine, and eloquence in Greek and Latin letters of yours? Where are those speeches worthy of Cicero that dazzled the entire world? Can it be that Fame and all the Muses who once bowed before you have now abandoned you so that you find yourself in this fix?"

The soul of Lionardo responded, "Piovano my dear, I left much more and even greater treasures than the ones you mentioned, and I assure you that I have been stripped entirely of every last one because I can't take with me there anything worth even one measly coin. I leave my body and all my possessions. Since you who remain here don't get to go with God for a while, seek pleasure and good times now while you live in this world because at your death you will not be able to take anything with you. See what has become of me. Woe is me! Think of how I feel. I'm going, though I don't yet know where because I still haven't gone before the judge.



che vita io ho tenuto, e massime del peccato della avarizia, ché per acumulare roba e danari ho fatto ogni tristo contratto, ho durato assai fatica e mai non mi trassi una voglia e lascio ricchi i figliuoli miei e sa Iddio quanto la terranno. Fatevi con Dio, Piovano mio, rimanete in pace, godete, datevi buon tempo e non fate come ho fatto io"; e partissi.

Rimase il Piovano tutto spaventato e istette tutto attonito per ispazio d'uno quarto d'ora, e ritornato in sé montò a cavallo e venne a Firenze e giunto in casa si rivestì prestamente e andò a trovare ser Domenico da Figghine e il Luta, che sono dua buoni compagni, e narrò tutto il caso, sempre piangendo e dolendosi in che modo era incontrato a messer Lionardo; e disse: "Pigliamo essempro alle ispese altrui, attendiamo a godere e fare e perseverare in bene. Vedete che poi alla morte in quello altro paese non ne possiamo portare cosa alcuna; io per me voglio osservare quello detto di quello santo uomo, frate Giacomone da Todi, il quale in una sua lauda, la quale è piena di sentenzie e di moralità, che dice in questo modo:

Tanto è mio
Quanto io godo e do per Dio.'

E feciono carità insieme alla malvagia e con proposito in quel punto d'adopere bene e sempre di godere.

Facezia LXV: Il Piovano Arlotto insegna incantare la nebbia a ser Nastagio Vespucci e al Zuta Sarto

Ser Nastagio Vespucci e 'l Zuta sarto si scontrarono una mattina di buona ora insieme.

Dice ser Nastagio: "Io mi sento questa mattina non buono istomaco e se io bevessi uno gotto di buona malvagia io sarei guarito."

Dice il Zuta: "Io ho ancora gran sete e vorrei bere e non vorrei ispendere danaio; se voi volete e' mi dà l'animo di fare pagare uno boccale di malvagia al Piovano Arlotto che debbe venir qui fra una mezza ora a provarsi uno mantello gli fo."

Disse ser Nastagio: "E' non ti riuscirà perché il Piovano è fante isturato."

I tremble, freeze, burn... I don't even know yet who will judge me. I am very uncertain about my fate because I know the kind of life I led, especially in regard to my sin of greed, for which I made every type of wretched deal just to accumulate money and possessions. It cost me dearly but I never stopped wanting more. I leave my sons rich, and only God knows how long they'll have it all. Go with God, Piovano my dear, and be at peace, enjoy yourself, have a good time, and don't do like I did." With that he took his leave.

Piovano was absolutely transfixed, such that he remained there still as a statue for a full quarter hour. When he regained his composure, he mounted and rode to Florence. Reaching his house, he quickly changed clothes and went to find his two good friends, Domenico da Figghine and il Luta, and told them the whole story - all the while weeping and lamenting Lionardo's sad state.

Then he said, "Let's learn our lesson at another's expense; let's get down to the business of enjoying ourselves and doing good. Look, after death in that other world we can't take anything with us. For my part, I want to follow what that holy man, Brother Jacopone da Todi said in one of his lauds, which is steeped in morals and good common sense:

All is mine, I laud
Since I rejoice and give, by God!

And they gave charitably to wickedness together with the intention from that point on to do their utmost to always indulge themselves.

Anecdote LXV: Piovano Arlotto Teaches Nastagio Vespucci and Zuta the Tailor How to Cast a Spell against Morning Fog

Nastagio Vespucci and Zuta the tailor ran into each other early one morning.

Nastagio told him, "I feel sick to my stomach this morning, but if I were to drink a gulp of fine Malvasia wine, I'd be cured."

Zuta replied, "I'm still very thirsty and would like another drink, but I don't want to spend more money. If you agree, you'll give me the courage to trick Piovano Arlotto into buying us a jug of Malvasia. He'll be here within the half hour to try on a coat I'm

Appunto in questi ragionamenti viene lì il Piovano Arlotto e dice: "Iddio vi dia il buon dì."

Disse il Zuta: "Piovano mio, voi siate il benvenuto; a me pareva mille anni voi arrivassi qui, per rivelarvi un grande secreto d'una visione m'è venuta questa notte in sull'ora del mattutino. Apparvemi vostro padre e salutommi e disse: 'Io sono Matteo Mainardi, padre del tuo Piovano Arlotto; vorrei che domattina tue lo trovassi, e digli come io sono in purgatorio e che continue ardo e se egli dà per Dio per l'anima mia soldi. 12. di piccioli io esco di purgatorio e di queste pene del fuoco. Io mi ti raccomando.' Io non dormì poi, Piovano mio, e istamane a buona ora mi levai e andai alla Nunziata udirvi una messa, la quale io feci dire per la anima sua e ispesi soldi dua. Piovano, io vi conforto facciate questo bene e presto, avvisandovi che voi no' gli potresti ispendere meglio che in pagarci una metadella di malvagia a ser Nastagio e a me."

Disse il Piovano: "Come io venni qui, m'accorsi che tu mi volevi lavorare; non conosco io ser Nastagio e te? Vedi se tue farnetichi: cognoscesti tu mio padre?"

Disse il Zuta: "Io lo cognobbi e fu uno uomo dabbene e uno reale mercatante."

Rispose il Piovano: "Tu non lo conoscesti, né mai lo vedesti. Mio padre fu uno ribaldo e morì nelle Istinche e se viveva più otto dì gli era impiccato; io non ispenderei per lui uno picciolo, ma se voi dua mi volete pagare uno boccale di malvagia per noi tre io vi voglio insegnare uno incanto alla nebbia, cioè contro a essa della mattina, che mai non vi offenderà."

Andò il fatto per il contradio e non tenne la pania, ché ser Nastagio e 'l Zuta la pagorono a lui, ed il Piovano insegnò loro lo incanto contro alla nebbia in questo modo, dicendo: "Togliete una tazza grande piena di malvagia e dite dua volte:

'Nebbia nebbia mattutina che vien sempre la mattina,
una tazza di malvagia contro a te è vera medicina.'

E poi tira giù tutta quella tazza e mai non ti nocerà."

making for him.”

Nastagio said, “You’ll never succeed because Piovano is clever and the consummate talker.”

While they hashed out their plans, Piovano Arlotto arrived and said: “May God grant you a good day!”

Zuta addressed him, “Piovano my dear, welcome! A vision came to me just before daybreak, and it feels like a thousand years passed before you arrived... I’ve been so eager to reveal this great secret to you. Your father appeared to me and said, ‘I am Matteo Mainardi, the father of your friend Piovano Arlotto. Tomorrow morning I’d like for you to seek him out and remind him that I am still burning in purgatory, but if he offers God twelve coins for my soul, I will be able to leave its tormenting fire. I’m depending on you.’ I couldn’t sleep at all after that, Piovano, so this morning I rose early and went to the Nunziata church to hear mass, which I had said for his soul for two coins. Piovano, I beg you, do this good act and quickly, and for our part your money is not better spent than in buying Nastagio and me a half carafe of Malvasia.”


Then Piovano responded, “What? I come here only to realize that you want me to work? You don’t think that I know you and Nastagio any better? Let’s see if you’re delirious: did you know my father?” Zuta said, “Yes, I knew him, and he was a good man and a true business dealer.”

Piovano retorted, “You didn’t know him, nor did you ever meet him. My father was a scoundrel who died in the Stinche debtors’ prison. And if he had lived eight more days, he would have been hanged. I would not waste one coin on him. But if you two want to buy a jug of Malvasia for the three of us, I will teach you an enchantment, one that dispels the morning fog, so that it will never disturb you.”

In the end, their plan didn’t work out -- just the opposite -- because Nastagio and Zuta ended up paying Piovano, and he told them the spell against the fog, instructing in this way: “Lift a large glass full of Malvasia and say two times:

‘Fog, oh fog that comes early each day,
a sip of Malvasia will surely take away!’

Then drink the glass dry, and the fog will never afflict you.”



Poems by Renato Filippelli

Translated by Barbara Carle

Barbara Carle is a poet, translator and critic. Her most recent works are: *Sulle orme di Circe*, Ghenomena, 2016, *Tra il cielo e la terra Between Heaven and Earth*, *Poems in the Classical Chinese, English and Italian*, a trilingual Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry (With Curtis Dean Smith), La Vita Felice, 2017, and *November*, a book of poetry by Domenico Cipriano with a critical introduction, September, 2015, Gradiva Publications.

Renato Filippelli, 1936-2010, authored eight books of poetry during his lifetime:

Vent'anni, Gastaldi Editore, Milano 1956; *Il canto della Veronica*, Centro Artistico Internazionale, Varese, 1964; *Ombre del sud*, Istituto Editoriale del Mezzogiorno, Napoli, 1971; *Ritratto da nascondere*, Loffredo, Napoli, 1975; *Requiem per il padre*, Bastogi Editrice Italiana, Foggia, 1981; *Plenilunio nella palude*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli, 1997; *Dai fatti alle parole*, Sigma Libri, Napoli 2006; *Spiritua-lità*, Guida, Napoli, 2012. His complete works were recently published: *Tutte le poesie*, Gangemi Editore, 2015.

Author of six critical books and numerous educational textbooks as well as newspaper and literary journal articles, Filippelli is a deeply religious poet with strong roots in Southern Italy. His major themes are historical and cultural focusing on the plight of Southern Italy, on nature and on the minority of exploited or abused creatures and persons. I have chosen poems from his early works, *Vent'anni*, *Ombre del sud*, and *Ritratto da nascondere*. These are the first English versions of his work. *Ombre del sud* is one of Filippelli's most powerful works combining the themes of being "meridionale" (from Southern Italy), war, and the exploited other most convincingly.



Manno - Bosco, maniera nera su
rame, 170x125 mm, 1997



Renato Filippelli

Da *Vent'anni*, 1956, in *Tutte le poesie*, Gangemi Editore, 2015

Presagio

(all'amico Peppino Messa)

Un giorno,
uccideranno il tuo fragile cuore,
o mia poesia.
Ti strapperanno con oscura forza,
ignara e dolce, dalla solitudine.
Bave striscianti d'odio
ripasseranno su la tua innocenza.
Ti sentirò, sperduto tra le folle,
tremante che t'aggrappi sul mio petto,
stupita dei miei occhi senza lagrime.

Ad un cane

T'uccisero un mattino, ed eri vecchio
e stanco tanto che neppure un grido
levasti dalla gola e poche stille
tinsero lo sterrato. L'assassino
t'accusò che irrompevi nei pollai
dei vicini e straziavi; ti finiva,
invece, perché più non gli stanavi
le lepri ed eri inutile. Io sentii
da lontano il suo schioppo. Accorsi. Vidi.
Nulla gli dissi, lo guardai negli occhi.
Ti si appressava, il vile, e ti puntava
l'arma, spiando se mai t'avventassi;
poi ti palpava senza più tremore.
Ma tu vivevi, e gli levasti al viso
gli occhi velati d'agonia, ma senza
rancore, tristi, e piano gli lambivi
la mano, con la tua bocca fedele.



Renato Filippelli

From *Vent'anni*, 1956, in *Tutte le poesie*, Gangemi Editore, 2015

Foreboding

(to my friend Peppino Messa)

One day
they will kill your fragile heart
my dear poetry.
They will tear you, with dark strength
you, unknowing and tender, from solitude.
Slobber oozing hatred
will drip on your innocence.
I will feel you while I'm lost in the crowd,
as you cling trembling to my chest,
stunned by my eyes without tears.

To a Dog

They killed you one morning, and you were old
and so tired that not even a cry
rose from your throat, few drops
stained the dirt road. The assassin
accused you of breaking into the
neighbor's henhouse to wreak havoc,
instead he finished you off, since
you no longer could drive out the hares
and you were useless. I heard
the gunshot from afar. I ran. I saw.
I said nothing, looked at him in the eyes.
He approached you, the coward, pointed
his arm at you, checking to see if you would
fight back, then he touched you no longer afraid.
But you were still alive, you raised your eyes
to his face, veiled by the agony, but without
rancour, sad, slowly you licked
his hand with your faithful mouth.



Inverno 1944

Allora anche l'inglese,
che sotterrava i suoi rifiuti,
a sfregio, ebbe pietà.
Quelle erano le nostre donne,
negli scialli del pianto:
fierezze che s'arresero alla fame
e scesero dai monti.
Stavano dietro secchi allineati,
i gesti delle cagne timorose
e decise, l'argilla che s'avviva
sul volto, a nuovo soffio di pudore.
Anche il soldato inglese ebbe pietà
di quelle ombre librate sul principio
delle sere: tornavano
col passo lieve d'assorte mendicche,
nei neri scialli,
e l'occhio di silenzio arido immenso.

O ansiosi morti...

Il Sud vi bruciò d'un fermo sole,
o morti, ansiosi morti, alla mia vita
come radici attorte, timorose
parvenze onde s'infolta
un lume declinante.
Dell'ombre che da voi scendono al mare
la sommessa vicenda
io sento su di me passare, come
sente la terra farsi ampio brusio
dell'erbe al giro rapido del vento...



Barbara Carle / Renato Filippelli

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From *Ombre dal Sud*, 1971, *Tutte le poesie*

Winter 1944

Then even the British
who buried their leftovers
to our detriment, showed compassion.
There appeared our women,
wrapped in shawls of mourning
proud figures who surrendered to hunger
and came down from the mountains.
They were behind their lined up pails,
gestures of fretful but determined creatures,
earth rekindling their faces with each breath of shame.
And so too the British soldier showed compassion
for those shadows hovering at dusk: they returned
with the light step of thoughtful beggars,
with their black shawls
in their eyes silence arid immense.

Oh My Beloved Dead...

The South burned you with staunch sun
oh my own dead, my restless dead
shy figures like the twisted roots
of my life where a declining
light deepens.
The subdued event of shadows
that descend from you to the sea
I feel pass over me, as the earth
feels the vast murmur
of the grass in the rapid sweep of wind...



Cadde tutta la vigna*(al padre)*

Venne il tedesco, come fece notte,
ti batteva la vigna, sangue tuo,
e t'alzava sul volto le sue torce.
D'attorno ti girava lo sghigno,
prostrava i tralci teneri, le barbe,
piantava le mitraglie e ti frugava
negli occhi per vederti nello strazio.
E tu fosti una statua di silenzio
coi figli stretti intorno ai tuoi ginocchi,
e mamma ti guardava dalla soglia.
Cadde tutta la vigna giovinetta.
Tu rimanevi come un capitano
fiero davanti alla sua schiera morta.
E il tedesco lurco non ti rise
più, rispettava quel muto dolore.

Da Ritratto da nascondere, 1975, Tutte le poesie

Erba

Un'erba nasce a limiti di strade
e vive d'una gocciola di luce.
Nei secoli l'umana
erba del Sud sentì premere e andare,
ignari e ad arte, i passi aspri dell'uomo,
piegò senza morire, si distese,
raccolta ai nodi delle sue radici,
sulla lenta agonia della sua terra.



Barbara Carle / Renato Filippelli

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The Entire Vineyard Fell

(to my Father)

The Germans came with the night
they trampled your vineyard, your own blood
and raised their torch in your face.
They circled you with their snickers
prostrating the delicate shoots, the roots
planting their machine guns they searched
your eyes to find your agony.
As though you were a statue of silence
with your children clinging to your knees
and Mother watching from the doorway.
All the young vineyard fell.
You remained like a proud
captain in front of your dead ranks.
And the foul Germans didn't mock
you anymore, they respected that silent anguish.

From *Ritratto da nascondere*, 1975, *Tutte le poesie*

Grass

Grass is born on the edge of the roads
it lives on a drop of light.
Over the centuries the human
grass of the South felt the harsh steps
of men, ignorant and on purpose,
press down then leave, it bent over
without dying, laid down
curled up in the knots of its roots,
in the slow agony of its land.



Al mare

Allora
eri una striscia, un tremore eri
fra un monte e un altro monte, esiguo
che non avrei potuto
di quella coltre vestire il mio sonno.
Allora, in quel lontano
chiarore si sbatteva,
con lunghe ali di gioia,
come un gabbiano, la mia infanzia.
Ora
cieca l'anima scava
come una talpa solchi nella terra.



Barbara Carle / Renato Filippelli

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To the Sea

Then
you were a strip, a shiver
between one mountain and another, so thin
that I could not have dressed my sleep
with that cover.
Then, in that faraway
brightness writhed
my childhood like a seagull
with long wings of joy,
Now
my blind soul digs
furrows in the Earth like a mole.





Poems by Alessandro Fo

Translated by Anthony Molino

Anthony Molino is a widely published psychoanalyst and award-winning literary translator from the Italian. Based in Italy, he is Editor of the “Featured Artist” section of *JIT* and collaborates with the noteworthy online Italian art review *Aracne* (www.aracne-rivista.it). His most recent translations are the late Lucio Mariani’s *Traces of Time* (Open Letter Books, 2015) and Paolo Febbraro’s *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser* (Negative Capability Press, 2017). He has recently completed translations of Luigia Sorrentino’s *Olimpia* (with Gray Sutherland) and a volume of selected poems by Mariangela Gualtieri (with Cristina Viti).

Alessandro Fo was born in Legnano in 1955 and is professor of Latin at the University of Siena. He has translated Rutilius Namatianus’ *De Reditu* (Einaudi, 1994); Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass* (Einaudi, 2010) and *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche* (Einaudi, 2014); and Virgil’s *Aeneid* (Einaudi, 2012). His collections of poetry include *Otto febbraio* (Scheiwiller, 1995); *Giorni di scuola* (Edimond, 2000); *Piccole poesie per banconote* (Polistampa, 2002); *Corpuscolo* (Einaudi, 2004); *Vecchi filmati* (Manni, 2006) and *Mancanze* (Einaudi, 2014). He is also the author of the critical work *Il cieco e la luna. Un’idea della poesia* (Edizioni degli Amici, 2003). The four poems presented here are taken from *Mancanze*, which was awarded the 2014 Premio Viareggio Rèpaci.



Manno - Cielo, rotella e puntasecca su zinco,
420x330 mm, 2004



Angelo preoccupato

Nel sonno fece un incubo. Parlava...
Le carezzai piano piano i capelli.
Era tornata la calma (sembrava).

La mattina le carezzai i capelli.
«Dici davvero? Non me n'ero accorta».

Poi, tutta la giornata.

E di nuovo la sera, andando a letto,
la mano andò alla seta
della sua testolina tormentata.

E disse un po' pensosa e addolorata
«Ma quando sarò morta,
tu mi accarezzierai i capelli?»

Angelo delle mani

Mani giunte in preghiera,
in ginocchio, una sera,
e le assai lunghe dita
puntate alla soffitta
del cielo, là, oltre il tetto
(passando sul nasetto
protervo), dotazione
da assorta Annunziata
in attonito chiostro,
melodiose mani verticali
pronte ad aprirsi in ali
al *Padre nostro*.



Worried Angel

She had a nightmare. Spoke in her sleep.
I slowly, slowly stroked her hair.
Things turned calm (it seemed).

In the morning I stroked her hair.
"Really? I didn't notice."

Then, the long day.

And again, at night, upon going to bed
my hand reached for the silk
of her tormented little head.

And she said, a bit pensive and gloomy,
"But when I'm dead
will you still stroke my hair?"

Angel of Hands

Hands folded in prayer
kneeling, one evening,
and her quite long fingers
pointing at the ceiling
of heaven, there, beyond the roof
(bypassing her dogged
little nose), enthralled replica
of the Annunciation
in startled cloister
melodious vertical hands
ready to become wings
at the words of the *Our Father*.



Congedi (Gide in Italia)

Il padre Abate di Montecassino
mi ricevette il giorno del congedo.
Era anziano e malato. Era stato
un buon pianista. E adesso, in poltrona,
leggeva una partitura,
eseguendola in mente.

«È una gioia perfetta
la musica in silenzio,
immaginando il suono»...

Era Chopin: «La musica piú pura».

Anch'io, morendo, non perderò nulla
a cui abbia tenuto maggiormente.

piena di grazia

...come una testa è piena di pensiero.

E non è cosa meno incredibile il pensiero,
a pensarlo davvero,
questo nulla che si fa verbo e moto,
 il corso di parole
 che esercita il diritto
 di pronunciarsi muto
 e sfocia qui trascritto,

l'immateriale
dentro il materiale
- o forse nel suo vuoto

- come la Grazia,
nel suo corpo mortale.



Anthony Molino / Alessandro Fo

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Taking Leave (Gide in Italy)

The Abbott of Montecassino
received me the day I took leave.
He was old and sick. He had been
a fine pianist. And now, in his armchair,
he read a score
and played it in his head.

“The joy of music
in silence is a perfect one,
as one imagines the sound...”

It was Chopin: “The purest music.”

I too, dying, will lose nothing
I’ll have held more dearly.

full of grace


...like a head is full of thought.

And thought is something no less incredible,
if you think about it,
this nothing that becomes word and movement,
the stream of terms
that exercises its right
to be pronounced in silence
and flow here transcribed,

the immaterial
within the material
-or perhaps in its void

-like Grace
in its mortal body.





Two Short Stories by Giorgio Caproni

Translated by Susan Jorstad and Beppe Cavatorta

Susan Jorstad is a lecturer in Molecular and Cellular Biology at the University of Arizona, where she has taught since 1991. Her PhD is in Paleoanthropology, and her studies took her to Middle Paleolithic excavations in France and Germany, where her long-dormant love of languages was rekindled. After a second visit to Italy in 2011, she began studying Italian at the University of Arizona, beginning with Italian 101 and proceeding through all the undergraduate courses. She discovered her passion for translating with the very first poem in a 300-level Italian literature class, and began translating WWII-era short stories in 2016 with Beppe Cavatorta.

Beppe Cavatorta's essays have appeared in journals like *Studi Novecenteschi*, *Anterem*, *Rivista di studi italiani*, *Nuova prosa*, *il verri*, *Carte Italiane*, *NAE*, *Or*, *Italica*, *Italian Culture*, and *Lectura Dantis Virginiana*. He is the editor of several books and anthologies: *Balleriniana* (with Elena Coda, 2010), *A. Spatola: The Position of Things; Collected Poems, 1961–1992* (2008), and *The Promised Land* (with Luigi Ballerini, Elena Coda, and Paul Vangelisti, 2000). He is also the author of *Scrivere contro* (Writing against, 2010), in which he recreated a profile of experimental writing in Italy from the beginning of the twentieth century to the late 1960s. Cavatorta also specializes in the theory and practice of translation and cultural interchange. He has published his translations of several American poets into Italian in the anthologies *Nuova poesia Americana: San Francisco* (New American poetry: San Francisco, 2006) and *Nuova poesia Americana: New York* (New American poetry: New York, 2009). He also published the edition of the experimental novel *The Porthole* by Adriano Spatola (translated with Polly Geller; 2011) and, in the *Journal of Italian Translation*, the translation of Emilio Zucchi's *The Marrow of Evil*, and a selection of poems by Sergio Atzeni (both with Brenna Ward). In 2016 he edited for Mondadori *Poesie 1972–2015* (Poems, 1972–2015), the collected poetry of Luigi Ballerini. Cavatorta is finally the co-editor (with Luigi Ballerini) of *Those who from afar Look Like Flies*, an anthology of Italian poetry from *Officina* to the present. The second volume is in the making.

Giorgio Caproni was born in Livorno in 1912. In 1939, after living in various small towns throughout Italy, he settled in Rome, where he taught elementary school for the rest his life. He made his poetic debut with *Come un'allegoria* (As an allegory) in 1936, a collection defined by naturalistic descriptions of a fragile world, written in a style reminiscent of such poets as Giacomo Leopardi, Giovanni Pascoli, and Umberto Saba. His subsequent books *Ballo a Fontanigorda* (Dancing at Fontanogorda, 1938) and *Finzioni* (Fictions, 1941) were written in the same vein, but with *Cronistoria* (Chronicle, 1943), a collection of poems centered around the tragic death of his fiancée, Olga, Caproni briefly adopted the lexicon and the style of the Hermetic school. His next title, *Il passaggio d'Enea* (Aeneas's passage, 1956,) in which he reflects upon the tragic effects caused by the war, may be considered the highest achievement in Caproni's early poetic career. With *Il seme del piangere* (The seed of tears, 1959) the poet returns to the style of his early collections and more traditional poetic forms. A new phase in Caproni's development is clearly marked by the short collection *Congedo del viaggiatore cerimonioso & alter prosopopee* (The ceremonious traveler's farewell and other prosopopoeias, 1965), in which he employs an epigrammatic, aphoristic, everyday language style, which remains the hallmark of his subsequent works: *Versi nella nebbia & dal monte* (Poems in the fog and from the mountain, 1968), *Versi fuori commercio* (Poems not for sale, 1970), *Il muro della terra* (Earth's wall, 1975) – modeled after Dante's journey through the city of Dis – and *Il franco cacciatore* (The marksman, 1982). The comprehensive collection *Tutte le poesie* (The collected poems; published by Garzanti in 1983) contains numerous previously uncollected poems. In 1986 Caproni published *Il conte di Kevenhüller* (The count of Kevenhüller), a collection of poems that narrate the hunting of a beast, which successively metamorphoses into God. Caproni was an amateur violinist, and music is central to this collection, in which the rhythm of the poems mirrors that of the hunt, a symbol for the attempt to capture meaning through poetry. After the death of Caproni in 1990, Giorgio Agamben edited a new collection of his poems entitled *Res amissa* (Things removed). Caproni also translated a number of authors into Italian, such as Marcel Proust, Charles Baudelaire, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Guy de Maupassant, Jean Genet, Federico García Lorca, Wilhelm Busch, and Guillaume Apollinaire.

Anche la tua casa

Rina era andata, come ogni giorno, sul costone, di lì potendo vedere a suo agio le case di Loco. Le riconosceva una per una, come il pastore riconosce le sue pecore, e nel sole infinito che batteva su di esse fermava a lungo lo sguardo su quelle pietre cariate – sul suo paese tagliato dalla rotabile a fondo valle, con tutte le case vecchie ad eccezione della sua e di poche altre, candide pei muri di calce al sole. Dava la mano ai suoi bambini che invece non guardavano nulla e che ogni volta («Perché non torniamo là, a casa nostra»), e ciò che le faceva ora opachi gli occhi non era né esaltazione né abbattimento: era un pensiero denso e caldo come un vento sabbioso nella sua testa – un sangue caldo che le saliva buio agli occhi con una solennità di cui lei stessa, ora, si sgomentava. Senonché era tornata subito quieta – aveva accettato con quiete quella forza nuova insorgente in lei, quasi si fosse scoperta un'altra volta incinta. E non rispondendo nulla alla domanda dei bambini, li aveva riportati piena di quell'illimitata quiete sopra la stalla a Casanova dove s'era esiliata.

«Una casa nient'affatto nuova», protestava il figlio più piccolo. Certamente una casa, pensava invece lei, non foss'altro libera – una casa dove non c'erano entrati «*gli altri*» e dove lei si sentiva, sulle tavole sopra la stalla, libera nel suo volontario esilio. E guardando le tavole con le fessure larghe un dito da cui passava il tanfo acre delle bestie, ai suoi bambini ch'erano tanto delicati, su quelle tavole avrebbe voluto spiegare ciò che nemmeno lei sapeva spiegarsi – avrebbe voluto almeno immettere in loro un poco di quell'immenso flusso caldo che si sentiva in sé e che a lei da sola pareva di non poter contenere più. Senonché s'era limitata a dire questo ai suoi bambini, i quali forse nemmeno pensavano più alla loro domanda: «Torneremo a Loco quando i partigiani avranno scacciato i fascisti. Ora ci sono loro ed è come se la nostra casa non ci appartenesse più».

I suoi bambini non potevano capire ciò e lei lasciò subito cadere il discorso. Li aveva posati delicatamente sulle tavole, nel fiato acre ma tepido che veniva su dalla stalla, e subito mentr'essi dormivano lei era rientrata nei suoi pensieri – era risalita sul costone col suo pensiero e ancora fissava uno per uno i tetti delle case del suo paese, vedeva loro sotto i tetti, i fascisti, muoversi da padroni nelle stanze ch'erano di lei, e col mitra sul cuscino nel letto di lei vedeva nella

Your House Too

As she did every day, Rina came up over the ridge, to where she could easily look down on the houses of her village, Loco. Her eyes came to rest on each, confirming them one by one, as a shepherd does his sheep. And as the endless sun beat down on them, her gaze came to rest at last upon those crumbling stones – upon her village divided by the road at the bottom of the valley, upon all the old houses with their white-washed walls (except for hers and a few others) glowing in the sun. She held her children by the hand – who by contrast looked at nothing and who asked each time (“Why don’t we go back there, to our house?”) – and what brought tears to her eyes in that moment was neither joy or despair: it was a thought, dense and hot like a gritty wind in her head – a hot pulse rising up into her eyes with a power that alarmed her. But, she regained her composure – she had quietly accepted this new force growing in her; it was almost as if she had discovered that she was pregnant again. And without answering the children, filled with a profound sense of calm, she took them back to the place of her self-imposed exile over the stable in Casanova.

“This is not a new home at all”, protested the youngest son. On the contrary, it certainly is a home, she thought, at least it’s free of the “others”, a place to which they had not yet come, and where she felt, on those rough planks over the stable, free in her voluntary exile. And looking at those planks, with cracks as wide as a finger letting the sour stink of the animals waft up, looking at her children who were so vulnerable, she wanted to explain to them the thing that she could not explain even to herself – she would have liked to instill in them at least a little of the immense hot tide that was in her, that thing that she seemed no longer able to contain. But she could say only this to her children, who had probably forgotten their question anyway: “We will go back to Loco when the partisans have driven out the Fascists. Right now *they* are there, and our house is no longer our own.”

Her children couldn’t understand that, and she quickly dropped the subject. She laid them gently on the planks, in the pungent warm air that came up from the barn, and as soon as they had fallen asleep, she had drifted back into her thoughts. In her mind, she was climbing up the ridge and staring one-by-one

sua più intima stanza dormire il tenente fascista. Un uomo, pensava Rina, simile alla gente nostra – un uomo con le nostre parole liguri sulle labbra ma incomprensibile per il significato diverso che in lui prendevano le stesse parole usate da lei o dette dalla sua gente a lei.

Vedeva il tenente quand'era entrato la prima volta coi suoi uomini in casa sua, e pensava alfine questo: è un uomo che bisogna distruggere. Perché questo lei aveva provato: che appena sopraggiunti gli alpini fascisti tutto le era divenuto odioso come se tutto (anche i fiori nuziali dei meli, anche le pietre rosse e i pini della sua Valtrebbia, perfino il fiume così profondamente celeste fra i sassi rossi e l'aria di vetro della Valtrebbia) fosse stato segnato da un marchio infame. E l'onda tepida e infinita ch'era in lei aumentava rivedendo con la mente l'ufficiale fascista nella cucina semibuia darle ordini con voce che invano cercava d'esser gentile, i suoi uomini impossessandosi intanto delle stanze e degli utensili di casa. Stanze e utensili domestici che «loro» rubavano come rubavano le parole liguri non perché appartenessero a lei (avevano usato quelle stanze e quegli utensili anche i partigiani, senonché allora tutto era naturale e dolcemente vero come se li usasse lei stessa) bensì perché essi, lo sentiva, li usavano contro di lei, per farne strumento di un'azione che trascinava anche lei contro ogni cosa vera. E le pareva proprio di sentirsi ancora una volta incinta ripensando alla sera in cui il tenente con un libro in mano era disceso in cucina dalla camera a lei usurpata. Aveva in mano il libro da lei dimenticato sul comodino, e tenendo l'indice tra le pagine il tenente aveva detto: «Ha lasciato su il libro perché io ammiri suo marito? Io ammirerei suo marito se fosse qui con noi. Comunque qui c'è una poesia veramente bella, sono parole che capisco anch'io». E aperto il libro dove teneva l'indice come segno aveva letto diversi scritti da suo marito per lei: li aveva letti con voce dolce, ma perché in bocca di lui tutto diventava orrore. Ora Rina si ripeteva a memoria quei versi, quasi per ristabilirne la verità. Li ripeteva lenti – erano versi penetrati in lei lentamente, una nostalgia di lui, non ligure, per lei e i monti della Liguria di lei. Li aveva scritti suo marito in guerra e cosa poteva capire del loro lamento il tenente fascista? Senonché proprio questo le dava una meravigliata ira: che invece lui capisse. E per questo lo sentiva ora, con quelle parole intime in bocca, più che mai nemico laggiù nel letto suo, davvero pari a un errore che bisogna ad ogni costo distruggere. Talché subito quella sera stessa,

at the roofs of the houses in the village, seeing those under the roofs, the Fascists, moving like they owned the place through the rooms that were hers. She saw the lieutenant in her most private room sleeping in her bed, with a machine gun on her pillow. He is a man, thought Rina, not unlike our people – a man who speaks our Ligurian dialect, but is somehow incomprehensible; he spoke the same words that she used and that others spoke to her, but their meanings were twisted and distorted coming from his lips.

She saw again in her mind the lieutenant entering her house for the first time with his men, and she finally concluded this: this man must be destroyed. Because this is what she had felt: as soon as the Alpine Fascists had arrived, everything had turned toxic to her (even the apple blossoms, even the red rocks and pines of her Valtrebbia, even the deep blue river running between the red stones and the crystalline sky of the Valtrebbia) as if it all had been ruined by some invisible stain. And now the warm and infinite wave that was in her grew as she replayed in her mind the Fascist officer in the semi-dark kitchen giving her orders with a voice that had tried in vain to be kind, while his men were taking over her rooms and her kitchen utensils. Rooms and utensils that they had stolen, just as they had stolen the Ligurian words – stolen, not in the sense that those things belonged to her (the partisans had also used those rooms and things, except that in that case, it was natural and right, as if she herself had used them), but rather, she recognized, because the Fascists had used those very things against her, by making her an instrument in their scheme, and thus turning her against every true thing. And it felt again as if she were pregnant, thinking of the night when the lieutenant had come down to the kitchen, down from the bedroom he had stolen from her, with a book in his hand. It was the book she had forgotten on the nightstand, and with a finger between the pages, the lieutenant said “You left the book upstairs so that I could admire your husband? I would admire him if he were here with us. In any case, here is a truly beautiful poem, with words that even I understand.” And he had opened the book to the page marked by his finger and read the verses written for her by her husband: he had read them in a sweet voice, but in his mouth everything became ugly. Now Rina repeated the verses to herself from memory, just to make them real again. She recited them slowly – they were verses that entered her slowly: the longing of

appena uditi da lui quei versi, aveva pensato senz'astio e fredda: «Bisogna proprio che quell'uomo non esista più». E la paura le era venuta la notte, dormendo con la madre vecchia e i bambini in cucina. O meglio, non propriamente la paura, e nemmeno un odio, bensì quell'infinita energia calma ch'era ormai in lei e che al mattino le aveva fatto subito dire alla mamma: «Io in questa casa non ci sto più finché ci sono loro. Me ne vado coi bambini a Casanova, al diavolo, ma questa casa ce l'hanno rubata e io non ci sto più finché ci sono i ladri». E pur essendole sembrato che la mamma non l'avesse del tutto capita, al mattino se n'era andata lo stesso coi suoi bambini a Casanova - aveva ritrovato sulla stalla a Casanova quella sua libertà e quella fiducia senza confine di cui le pareva di sentirsi incinta. E mentre i bambini dormivano ormai, non per loro ma soprattutto per sé aveva ripetuto: «Torneremo a Loco quando i partigiani avranno scacciato i fascisti».

I bambini ormai erano dentro il sonno, chiusi, e lei avendo ora bisogno che qualcuno sentisse quelle sue parole, era entrata in cucina accanto alla stufa di ghisa rovente - s'era messa a parlare con la donna che l'ospitava. Ma non c'era soltanto quella donna in cucina: c'erano anche tre uomini armati di *sten* che lei conosceva ma che lei in quel momento non s'aspettava di vedere lì. Li salutò per nome e disse: «Allora è il momento d'andare a scacciare via quelli di giù?». Cui essi risposero una sola cosa: «Sì». E soltanto quando si furono allontanati un poco nel buio sull'erba uno si voltò dicendo: «Andiamo a riprendere anche la tua casa - forse non la faranno a pezzi».

«Io», - disse in cucina Rina, - l'ho detto pochi minuti fa che torneremo a Loco quando i partigiani avranno scacciato i fascisti. Ora dico questo: dico che ci torneremo domani». Ma la donna perché taceva - perché dentro la notte non s'udiva un colpo? La donna s'era chiusa anche lei nel sonno presso la stufa ormai semispenta e a Rina era toccato di vegliare tutta la notte per non udire nemmeno un colpo. Solamente con la prima luce, nell'aria dilatata dal gelo dell'alba, Rina aveva udito d'un tratto i cani abbaiar giù sullo stradale inquietati, con quel tono d'allarme nel latrato che lei conosceva così bene. E allora mentalmente disse: «Ci siamo». Senonché spari non se ne udivano ancora - soltanto dalla parte di Gorreto s'udiva un velato fragor di carriaggi ingrandir con la luce. «Si sposta tutta la divisione», pensò ad altra voce Rina, - il tenente aspetta coi suoi uomini tutta la divisione

her husband, who was not from there, not Ligurian, his longing for her and for her Ligurian mountains. He had written these words in war. What of their lament could this Fascist lieutenant possibly understand? But it was exactly this that infuriated her: that in fact, he did understand. And because of this, she felt him now, with those intimate words coming from his mouth, more than ever her enemy over there in her bed; he was clearly a wrong that must be righted at all cost. So that immediately that same evening, as soon as she had heard those words from him, she had thought, coldly and without rancor, "It is really necessary that this man cease to exist." And the fear had come to her that night, sleeping with her old mother and the children in the kitchen. Or better: not really fear, nor hate, but rather that new strength that was now in her, and in the morning it had forced her to tell her mother "I'm not staying in this house as long as they are here. I'm going down to Casanova with the kids; to hell with them! They stole this house and I'm not going to live here with thieves." And although it seemed that her mother had not really understood, in the morning she had left with her children for Casanova — where she had found in the barn that freedom, strength and confidence that felt like a strange new life growing inside her. And as the children had fallen asleep, not for them, but for herself above all, she had repeated "We will return to Loco when the partisans have driven out the Fascists."

The children were now deep asleep, unreachable, and she needed someone to hear her words, so she went into the kitchen next door, to the hot iron stove — she began talking to the woman who was lodging them. But it wasn't only the woman in the kitchen: there were also men armed with rifles, whom she knew, but was not expecting to see there. She greeted them by name and said "So, is it finally time to go down there and chase those guys out?" To which they answered just one word: "Yes." And it was only after they had set off a way across the grass in the dark, that one turned and said, "We're going to take back your house, too — as long as they don't smash it to pieces."

Turning back to the kitchen, Rina said "Just a few minutes ago I said that we will go back to Loco when the partisans have driven out the Fascists. And now I can say that we will go back tomorrow." But why did the other woman remain silent — and why had they not heard a shot? The woman had fallen sound asleep in front of the

per muoversi». Non aveva il minimo dubbio di ciò come se queste cose gliel'avesse dette un altro, e andò calma dove dormivano i suoi bambini a preparare la sua roba. Poi, quando cominciarono i primi spari, disse ai bambini svegliatisi di soprassalto ch'era cominciata la festa. Ed essendo i bambini abituati ai colpi dei mortai fascisti e degli *sten* partigiani, anch'essi molto calmi andarono con lei sul costone a vedere «la festa».

Ora (cominciava piuttosto fredda la sera d'ottobre) Rina era appena tornata nella casa nuovamente sua. C'era ancora, fresco, lo sterco dei muli e dei cavalli sullo stradale di Loco, e nella casa era un cupo odore forestiero insopportabile. Ma perché quell'onda ch'era caldo in lei non s'era ancora sciolta? Aveva sentito che c'erano quattro partigiani morti e che li aveva finiti alla nuca il tenente prima d'andarsene, e in lei quel pensiero era più acuto della letizia per avere ritrovato la casa. Addirittura (sentiva proprio d'essere sincera pensando ciò) avrebbe preferito non ritrovare la casa piuttosto che saper distrutti quegli uomini. Perché oscuramente sentiva questo: ch'erano morti anche per lei, affinché lei ritrovasse libera la casa per sé e i suoi bambini, e anche per suo marito quando sarebbe tornato.

Lasciò i bambini a sua madre dicendo: «Io voglio vedere i morti – non c'è un uomo qui che possa accompagnarli da loro?». Non c'era davvero nemmeno un uomo (tutti erano ancora nei boschi, ad eccezione dei più vecchi ed inutili), e così s'avviò sola al cimitero dov'era da un anno suo padre morto e dove ora, con la nuca e le spalle sul cemento dell'obitorio, posavano depostevi dal Commissario di Loco le quattro salme di Raffo, di Pantera, di Sardegna, di Pippo. Li aveva finiti con un colpo alla nuca il tenente mentre uno con l'altro essi si medicavano ferite larghe quanto una mano, e per lei era come se le strappassero i capezzoli vedere la garza ancora pulita ma all'infinito inutile dentro le ferite di Pantera, coi capelli finemente biondi (parevano finti come pareva finta la carne morta) e gli occhi celesti così da poco morti e vitrei su cui già si posava una polvere eterna: quella che cadeva anche sui visi illividiti di Raffo e di Sardegna, sulla cui tenera cera erano ancora le impronte dei tacchi del tenente che aveva calcato il tallone sulla loro bocca con tutto il suo peso. Volle lei stessa chiudere gli occhi ai morti e prima che ad ogni altro a Sardegna morto col pugno chiuso. Un pugno, anche così abbandonato sul cemento, veramente duro e ligure malgrado il nome finto di Sardegna. E a ciò che era in lei d'immenso, nelle sue

half-open oven, but Rina stayed awake all night, listening in vain to hear at least one shot. It was not until first light, in the dawn's heavy cold air, that Rina suddenly heard the worrisome barking of dogs down on the road, with a tone of alarm that she knew well. And she said silently to herself "Now it begins." But still she heard no gunfire, just the muffled rumble of trucks coming from Gorretto, growing louder as the day dawned. "The whole division is on the move", Rina realized. "The lieutenant is waiting to move his men out with the division." She was absolutely certain of this, as if someone else had told her this as fact, and so she calmly went back to where her children slept, and got their things together. When the first firing began, she told the children, who had been startled awake, that a show had begun. And because the children were used to the sound of the Fascist mortars and the partisan rifles, they calmly went with her to the ridge to see "the show".

The October nights were becoming quite cold, so Rina hurried quickly to the house that was finally hers again. There were still fresh droppings from mules and horses on the road through Loco, and in the house an unbearable musty smell of strangers. But why had that hot wave inside her not cooled? She had heard that four partisans had been killed, finished off by the lieutenant just before he left, each with a shot to the neck, and that was foremost in her mind - more than the intense joy that her house was her own again. Really, (and she felt quite sincere thinking this) she would have preferred to lose the house than to have these men lose their lives. Because she felt vaguely that they had died for her, so that she could take back her house - for herself, for her children, and also for her husband, whenever he might return.

She left her children with her mother, saying: "I want to see the dead - isn't there a man that can take me to them?" In fact, there was no one (all of the men were still in the woods, except the old and feeble), and so she went alone to the cemetery where her father had lay this past year, and where now, sprawled on the cement of the mortuary, lay the four corpses of Raffo, Sardegna, Pantera, and Pippo, brought there by the police chief of Loco. The Fascist lieutenant had killed each with a shot to the neck, as they were trying to staunch each other's gaping wounds, as big as a hand. She felt as if her heart were being ripped from her chest, seeing the gauze, still clean, but quite useless, in Pantera's wounds,

reni quasi fosse incinta, infine senza una lacrima lei aveva trovato una corrispondenza: era la stessa cosa chiusa in quel pugno che nessuna forza al mondo avrebbe potuto allentare più.

Il Natale diceva Pablo...

Cadeva di quando in quando una zolla di neve dagli alberi (forse un superstite riccio di castagna, appesantito dalla neve), e mentre quel soffice e leggero tonfo rendeva ancor più augusto, sotto una luna fredda come una moneta d'argento, il silenzio della notte, Pablo, in quella lontana notte del '43 (o del '44: è difficile, ahimé, ricordare con esattezza quegli anni), Pablo era l'unico ad aver voglia di parlare.

- Di tutte le feste dell'anno - diceva, il Natale è...

Senonché nessuno stava ad ascoltare le sue parole. Stavano tutti e quattro a sentire quei morbidi tonfi (ogni zolla cadeva, come una molle eco, in corrispondenza d'un lontano ovattato boato di mortaio), e se tutti e quattro avevano piacere che Pablo continuasse a parlare, era soltanto per veder la nuvola di vapore che, nell'albore lunare, usciva dalla sua bocca: era soltanto per vedere (giacché non lo potevano sentire, mentre le loro dita gelavano reggendo lo "sten") un poco d'umano tepore.

- Il Natale, - diceva...

Ma il Natale non era sotto quegli alberi vetrificati di gelo e di luna. Non era nemmeno giù a valle, dove una Trebbia ridotta in enormi lastroni di ghiaccio, color bottiglia sotto la luna, non scorreva più accanto al paese che teneva spenti tutti i suoi lumi, e nemmeno era in città: non era più in nessuna parte della terra, forse, o almeno non era più in nessuna parte della terra dov'erano

his fine blond hair (which now seemed somehow unreal, as their dead flesh seemed unreal) and the blue eyes, only just-now dead and already glassy and dusted with eternity: just like the battered faces of Raffo and Sardegna, that still bore the outline of the heel of the Lieutenant's boots, ground into their tender skin with all his weight. She wanted to close the eyes of the dead herself, and first among them, Sardegna who lay with fist clenched. A fist, even when abandoned on the cement that way, that before was truly hard and Ligurian, despite his assumed name of Sardegna. And at last, without a tear, she knew that she had found a match for that immense, almost living thing in her belly: it was the same thing locked inside that fist, which no power on earth would ever release.

“Christmas” Said Pablo...

Every now and then a clump of snow fell from the trees. Perhaps it was one of the last chestnut husks, weighed down by the snow. And while these soft and gentle thumps made the silence of the night even more solemn, under a moon as cold as a silver coin, that long-ago night of '43 (or '44: it's difficult, alas, to clearly remember the year), Pablo was the only one with any desire to talk.

“Of all the holidays during the year,” he said, “Christmas is...”

But no one was paying any attention to his words. All four of them were focusing on those soft thuds (each clump fell, echoing the distant muffled rumble of mortar fire). If they were pleased that Pablo continued talking, it was only to see the cloud of vapor coming out of his mouth in the glimmer of the moonlit: it was merely to see, (since they couldn't feel it, with their frozen fingers gripping their machine guns), a little human warmth.

“Christmas,” he said...

But Christmas was not there, under those trees glazed with frost and moonlight. It was not even down in the valley where the Trebbia River, choked with enormous ice floes, bottle-green under the moon, no longer flowed along the village that kept all its lights extinguished; and it was not even in the city: it was no longer in any part of the Earth, maybe, or at least no longer in any part of the world where “they” had come, those that were then called the

entrati «loro», quelli che allora si chiamavano i tedeschi, anche se non era giusto chiamarli così, non essendo vero che tutti i tedeschi fossero «loro».

I mortai battevano remoti e velati (erano «loro» che stavano ritirandosi, e seminando a caso la morte), e quasi ad ogni colpo, forse mentre qualcuno (un bambino, una ragazza, una madre) moriva per via di quel colpo sotto le macerie di un muro, di nuovo una zolla di neve si staccava dagli alberi, e cadeva soffice proprio mentre Pablo continuava a parlare, e qualcuno moriva.

- Il Natale, - diceva Pablo...

Sotto, a fondo valle, brillava di ghiaccio e di luna il paese, con tutti i suoi lumi spenti, e se ne vedeva, velato anch'esso di ghiaccio e di luna, il campanile. Ma mentre le campane tacevano, e nemmeno un lume era acceso, Pablo perché continuava a parlare (in quella notte fra il 24 e il 25 dicembre) del Natale che ormai non esisteva più nemmeno lì, a pochi chilometri, nel paese?

- Il Natale, - diceva Pablo...

Ma ora Athos non lo ascoltava più: non guardava più, nemmeno, la nuvola di vapore tepido che usciva dalla sua bocca, e s'era messo a pensare al viso di Lumarzo, al viso di Pantera, di Sardegna, che la sera prima, con quei nomi finti (nemmeno i nomi potevano più essere veri), avevano visto morti proprio lì giù, in paese, con sotto gli occhi lividi dei calcagni di «loro» (di quelli che allora si chiamavano «i tedeschi»), i quali dopo averli uccisi avevano spaccato le ossa di quei visi montandoci sopra coi loro calcagni ferrati.

- Il Natale, - diceva Pablo...

Ma il Natale, pensava ora Athos, che altro mai era il Natale, se non il nome vero di quei compagni morti, e morti proprio anche perché il loro nome, appunto come il Natale, ridiventasse vero sulla terra?

Continuavano a cadere soffici, le zolle di neve agli echi remoti dei mortai, e chi può più ricordare, ora, se quella era una notte del '43, o del '44? Era una notte, questo è certo: una notte dell'anno e dell'uomo.

Germans, even though it wasn't really right to call them that, since not all Germans were "they".

The mortars pounded far off and muffled (it was "they" who were retreating, and sowing random death). With almost every blast - maybe while someone (a child, a little girl, a mother) died because of that strike, under the rubble of a wall -- another clump of snow slid from the trees, and fell softly as Pablo continued talking, and someone died.

- Christmas" said Pablo...

Below, at the bottom of the valley, the village sparkled with ice and moonlight, with all its lights out, and if one could see, veiled also in ice and moonlight, the bell tower. But while the bells were silent, and not one single light was on, why did Pablo, continue to speak (on that night between the 24th and 25th of December) of Christmas that was no longer there, either, a few kilometers away from the village?

"Christmas," said Pablo...

But now Athos wasn't listening to him anymore, nor any longer looking at the stream of vapor coming from his mouth; he was thinking of Lumarzo's face, Pantera's, Sardegna's, from the night before, with those fake names (even names could no longer be real). They had seen them dead, right down there in the village, with deep blue bruises under their eyes from "their" boot heels (those that were then called "the Germans"), those that after having killed them, smashed the bones of those faces with their iron-clad boot heels.

"Christmas," said Pablo...

But Christmas, thought Athos, what else was Christmas then, if not the true name of those dead comrades, who had died so that their names, just like Christmas, could become true again on earth?

The clumps of snow continued to fall softly, echoing the distant mortars. Who can still remember, now, if that was a night in '43 or '44? It was a night, this is certain: one night of the year and of man.



Poems by Glen Sorestad

Translated by Angela D'Ambr

Angela D'Ambr. Nel 2008 si è laureata in Lingue e letterature straniere presso la facoltà di Lettere e filosofia di Firenze. Nel 2009 ha conseguito il diploma di Master II in traduzione di testi post-coloniali in lingua inglese presso l'Università di Pisa. Nel 2015, la laurea in Lettere Moderne presso la Scuola di Studi Umanistici e della Formazione (Firenze). Ha tradotto (EN > IT) poesie di autori contemporanei (canadesi, americani, australiani, ecc.). Le traduzioni sono comparse sulla rivista *El Ghibli* (2010 - 2016) e su altre riviste online e cartacee.

Glen Sorestad è nato a Vancouver, ma si è trasferito nelle praterie a dieci anni ed è cresciuto in una fattoria nel Saskatchewan centro-orientale. Ha frequentato una scuola di campagna d'una sola stanza. È stato insegnante di scuola per oltre 20 anni, gli ultimi dodici in una scuola superiore a Saskatoon. Le poesie e i racconti di Sorestad sono stati pubblicati in tutto il Canada, negli Stati Uniti, in Inghilterra, Scozia, Nuova Zelanda, Danimarca, Finlandia, Norvegia, Slovenia, Cuba e Sud Africa. È autore o co-autore di oltre venti volumi di poesia; la sua poesia è stata spesso trasmessa da radio CBC, dalle radio degli Stati Uniti, e dalla radio statale in Norvegia e Slovenia. Le sue raccolte poetiche sono state tradotte in varie lingue, tra cui francese, spagnolo, norvegese, finlandese, sloveno e afrikaans. È redattore e co-redattore di molte antologie poetiche e narrative, tra cui, un'antologia internazionale, *Something to Declare*, per la Oxford University Press e un'antologia di poesia, *In The Clear*, Thistledown Press. Le sue poesie sono state pubblicate in oltre 50 antologie e libri di testo. Uno dei suoi volumi poetici ha fornito l'idea principale per la *pièce*, *A Place in the Shade* di Rodney McLean. I suoi racconti sono stati antologizzati, e uno è stato ridotto per la televisione in Canada da Bravo TV.

Nel 1999 Sorestad è stato insignito del titolo *Life Member* dalla *League of Canadian Poets*. Nel novembre del 2000 è stato nominato primo Poeta Laureato di Saskatchewan, diventando così il primo Poeta provinciale o federale nominato in Canada, e attivo fino al

2004. Ha ricevuto il *Saskatoon Book Award* nel novembre 2001 per *Leaving Holds Me Here*. Nel febbraio 2003 Sorestad ha ricevuto la *Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal*. Ha ricevuto l'iscrizione vitalizia al *Writers Guild Saskatchewan* nel 2009. È stato nominato Member of the Order of Canada il 30 giugno 2010. Ha ricevuto la *Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal* nel 2012.

Al presente, Sorestad è impegnato nella stesura di vari articoli, apparsi o di prossima uscita su riviste online, sui procedimenti della scrittura poetica. A marzo 2017, uscirà un nuovo volume di poesie, *Water and Rock*, scritto da Sorestad in collaborazione con Jim Harris.

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A Thief of Impeccable Taste

Glen Sorestad

1.

Looking Back

Sometimes I am shaken
by a desire to return
to that child I was-
endless days under a vast sky,
sun omnipresent as the mongrel
that dogged my footsteps.

A half-century and more
removed, I remember each day
bloomed wonder. Never bored,
I did not realize how poor
we were, having so much.

On second thought, it's possible
my retrospective vision is
blurred, selectively smudged.
Perhaps it is our nature to hold
hard to what causes least pain?

To indulge moments of nostalgia
is no act of foolishness. Though
time past will not return,
we still can marvel
at the road we've travelled,
at the one that lies ahead.



Un ladro di gusto impeccabile¹

Glen Sorestad

1.

Sguardo sul passato

A volte sono scosso
da un desiderio di ritornare
il bambino che ero -
giorni infiniti sotto un cielo immenso
sole onnipresente come il cane
bastardo che mi tallonava.

Rimosso più di mezzo
secolo, ricordo che ogni giorno
sbocciava in meraviglia. Mai tediato,
non capivo quanto fossimo
poveri, avendo così tanto.

Ripensandoci, è possibile che
la mia visione retrospettiva sia
confusa, selettivamente falsata.
Forse è nella nostra natura aggrapparci
forte a ciò che dà meno dolore?

Concedersi momenti di nostalgia
non è un atto di follia. Anche se
il passato non ritornerà,
possiamo sempre meravigliarci
per la strada percorsa nel viaggio,
per quella che avanti ci si stende.

1 Glen Sorestad, *A Thief of Impeccable Taste*, SandCrab Books, 2011. La raccolta si articola in cinque parti: *Looking Back*; *Ruminations*; *Beauty is Where You Find It*; *Disclaimers*; *Epilogue*.



2.

Suspension of Belief

Cables, ropes and wooden slats
create a seemingly fragile
sagging arc high above
the crash and dash
of Capilano Canyon.
I am five.

In my eyes this is not
a bridge – but rather,
some adult deceit
designated to instill
fear in a small boy.

Father takes my hand,
envelops it in warmth,
strength and security
a child comes to accept
as truth. “Come on,”
he says.

I step forward.
Beneath my feet
faith and trust
teeter and sway
side to side,
nothing beneath me
but a void
my fear has filled.

“No,” I say.



2.

Sospensione della credulità².

Cavi, funi e assicelle di legno
creano un arco avvallato
all'apparenza fragile sospeso
sullo scroscio e schianto
di Capilano Canyon
Ho cinque anni.

Ai miei occhi questo non è
un ponte - ma piuttosto,
un inganno da adulti
pensato per instillare
paura a un ragazzino.

Mio padre mi prende la mano,
la avvolge col calore,
la forza e la sicurezza
che un bambino riconosce
come veri. "Coraggio,"
mi dice.

Avanzo d'un passo.
Sotto i miei piedi
fede e fiducia
traballano e oscillano
fianco a fianco,
niente sotto di me
se non un vuoto
colmato dalla mia paura.

"No," rispondo.

2 Modellato, con rovesciamento, sull'espressione tecnica *suspension of disbelief* (Coleridge, 1817) = sospensione dell'incredulità, *i.d.* accettazione della finzione.



3.

The Thief Reflects

Tell me, what have
I stolen from you
that you have missed?

Surely you know
I have taken only
inessential fragments

you would have shed
without my help.
I can in no way be

dismissed as common
thief, nor as cheap
trickster. You must

agree I am a thief
of impeccable taste:
I did choose you.

4.

Nocturne

1.
Night is never dark enough for some.
There will always be things to hide.

Cold speaks its own language. Listen.
The deafest ear will hear something.

Fear not the night, the dark, the cold.
It is ourselves that we need to fear.

2.
An open heart will always be hurt.
Close it if you must. All hearts die.



3.

Il ladro riflette

Dimmi, cosa
t'ho rubato
che ti è mancato?

Di sicuro sai
che ho preso solo
frammenti inessenziali

li avresti sperperati
senza il mio aiuto.
Non posso proprio essere

liquidato come ladro
comune, o dozzinale
truffatore. Devi

convenire che sono un ladro
di gusto ineccepibile:
infatti ho scelto te.

4.

Notturmo

1.
La notte non è mai buia abbastanza per qualcuno.
Sempre ci saranno cose da celare.

Il freddo parla la sua propria lingua. Ascolta.
L'orecchio più sordo udrà qualcosa.

Paura non avere di notte, freddo, buio.
Di noi stessi che dobbiamo aver paura.

2.
Un cuore aperto sentirà sempre il male.
Chiudilo, se devi. Tutti i cuori muoiono.



Open hearts know the joy of yes.
Closed hearts only the pain of no.

Only a fool tries to stop the wind.
The same fool tries to stop hurt.

The open hand feels good about itself.
The closed hand always wonders why.

5.

Hourglass

The evidence lies everywhere. Grains of sand.
Our days are lost in the trivia of meetings,
appointments, To-Do lists, post-it notes stuck

to cupboard doors where we can't miss them,
magneted to the refrigerator like commandments,
or posted like tearful pleas for lost kittens,

terse reminders how our lives have become
a musical score of comings and leavings,
the sound and voice of calendars and daybooks.

We ignore the image - the bottom half,
its increasing sand. It is funerals we attend
with growing frequency that give us pause,

make us feel the measure, the urgency,
the anticipatory snare drum roll.
Beat by beat, grain by grain.



I cuori aperti sanno la gioia del sì.
I cuori chiusi solo la pena del no.

Solo un folle tenta di fermare il vento.
Lo stesso folle tenta di fermare il male.

La mano aperta è soddisfatta di sé.
La mano chiusa sempre si chiede perché.

5.

Clessidra

Le prove sono ovunque. Granelli di sabbia.
I nostri giorni vanno persi in banalità: riunioni,
appuntamento, liste di commissioni, appunti su *post-it*

incollati ad ante di credenze dove non ci sfuggano,
fissati da magneti al frigo come comandamenti,
o affissi come strazianti appelli per gattini smarriti,

tersi promemoria delle nostre vite divenute
una colonna sonora di arrivi e di partenze,
il suono e la voce di calendari e di diari.

Ignoriamo l'immagine - la sua metà inferiore,
con la sabbia in aumento. È il ritmo crescente
dei funerali cui assistiamo che ci dà la pausa,

che ci fa sentire la misura, l'urgenza,
il rullo premonitore del tamburo
Battito dopo battito, grano dopo grano.



6.

Make it Last

A flash of orange and black
 through sun-splattered aspen leaves,
 the faintest glimpse of baltimore oriole;
 or the brilliant scarlet shoulder sheen
 as a red-winged blackbird warbles
 from its wind-bent cat-tail perch;
 or a high-above dissonant clamour
 of a passing startle of snow geese
 etched white on unmarred blue:
 rare moments the willfully blind
 view as commonplace, or do not see.
 Beauty surrounds us - no charge,
 no previous experience needed.
 Stand awhile. Look and listen.
 Make it last.

7.

Beauty is Where You Find It

Why deny Beauty
 can illuminate a January day
 when wind has taken a break
 and the air is a hush,
 a blanket of expectation?

Even that miserly sun,
 that furtive fox
 creeping ever southward,
 bounces brilliant diamond facets
 off sculpted snow,
 mauve with shadow.

This winter postcard
 pleases me, even though
 I do not stand long
 admiring the chill wonder
 of glistening snow, caught



6.

Fa' che duri

Un lampo d'arancione e nero
tra foglie di pioppo spruzzate di sole,
il guizzo fievolissimo dell'ittero galbula;
o il lucente lustrore scarlatto d'una spalla
allorché un tordo sassello trilla
dal suo trespole-tifa piegato dal vento;
o in alto, lassù, lo strepito discorde
d'un transitorio trasalire d'ocche delle nevi
bianco inciso su incorrotto azzurro:
momenti rari che i caparbiamente ciechi
ritengono ordinari, o non li vedono.
La bellezza ci assedia - gratuita,
nessuna esperienza pregressa è necessaria.
Fermati per un po'. Guarda e ascolta.
Fa' che duri.

7.

La bellezza è dove la trovi

Perché negare che la Bellezza
può illuminare un giorno di gennaio
quando il vento fa una sosta
e l'aria è un silenzio,
una coltre d'attesa?

Persino quel misero sole,
quella volpe furtiva
che striscia sempre verso sud,
sbalza brillanti sfaccettature di diamante
sulla neve scolpita,
color malva nell'ombra.

Questa cartolina invernale
m'appaga, sebbene
non mi soffermi a lungo
ad ammirare l'algido prodigio
della neve scintillante, preso



between contradictions –
beauty or warmth.

8.

Autumn Thoughts

This colour cornucopia
of crimsons and golds –
autumn's passion.

Nature dies
with such flamboyance,
such acrylic outbursts.

I gaze at this flaunting
of fiery hues
and unbidden names
flash into my mind.

I have seen too many
friends too soon
to the grave.

Their eulogies remind
how each green maple's
leaves must flame and fall.

With winter's first snow
I yearn for Spring
to breathe life back
into the maple's veins



tra contraddizioni -
bellezza o calore.

8.

Pensieri d'autunno

Questa cromo-cornucopia
di cremisi e di ori -
passione d'autunno.

La natura muore
con tale fastoso sfolgorio,
tali deflagrazioni acriliche.

Io fisso questo sfoggio
di sfumature fiammeggianti
e spontanei i nomi
nella mente mi saettano.

Ho accompagnato troppi
amici, troppo presto
alla tomba.

I loro elogi funebri rammentano
come ogni foglia del verde
acero deve flambare e cadere.

Alle prime nevi d'inverno
della Primavera il soffio
anelo che re-infonda vita
nelle vene dell' acero.



9.

March Musing

Alone with my thoughts
I reflect on so many themes,
but so often these musings
return to you, the centre
of my world and the wonder
of it all, the serendipity,
if indeed such matters ever are,
that we managed somehow,
with all the infinite permutations
and random rolls of the dice,
to found each other.

For we have saved each other
and we have both been saved.
In the finding, lay the saving;
in the saving, lay the finding.

10.

Six Reasons I Write Poems*... remembering John V. Hicks*

A poem empowers the child in me altrimenti
to emerge and show me the way;

I've discovered through poems
what I otherwise wouldn't know;

Each of my poems is a small tile
in the ongoing mosaic of my life;

I like the state I'm in when a poem
takes hold and won't let go;

I love the subtle way words can map
their own path through the forest;

Poems allow me to share with strangers
moments of intimate intensity.



9.

Meditazione di marzo

Solo con i miei pensieri
rifletto su così tanti temi,
ma molto spesso queste meditazioni
ritornano a te, il centro
del mio mondo e la meraviglia
di tutto, la serendipità,
se davvero esistono cose così,
per cui c'è riuscito, chissà come,
con tutte le infinite permutazioni
e i fortuiti lanci dei dadi,
di trovarci.

Poiché a vicenda ci siamo salvati
ed entrambi siamo stati salvati.
Nel trovarsi, sta il salvarsi;
nel salvarsi, sta il trovarsi.

10.

Sei motivi per cui scrivo poesie
... in memoria di John V. Hicks

Una poesia consente al bambino in me
d' emergere a mostrarmi la via;

Grazie alle poesie ho appreso cose
che altrimenti ignorerei;

Ogni mia poesia è una micro-tessera
nel mosaico in corso della mia vita;

Amo lo stato in cui sono quando una poesia
s'impadronisce di me e non molla;

Amo la sagacia con cui le parole mappano
il proprio percorso attraverso la foresta;

Le poesie mi consentono di condividere con estranei
momenti di intensa intimità.





Poems by Biagio Marin

Translated by Peter Hainsworth

Peter Hainsworth taught Italian Literature and Language at the Universities of Hull, Kent and Oxford, from where he retired in 2003. He is now an Emeritus Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. He has published widely on medieval and modern Italian literature, most recently co-authoring with David Robey *A Very Short Introduction to Dante* for Oxford UP (2015). His translations include a selection of Petrarch's poems and other works (*The Essential Petrarch*, Hackett, 2010) and a selection of Boccaccio's stories (*Tales from the Decameron*, Penguin, 2015).

Biagio Marin was born in 1891 in Grado, a fishing village on the coast between Venice and Trieste, in a region under Austrian rule until 1918. He studied in Florence and Vienna before the First World War, and then, after service in the Italian army during the war, also in Rome. He spent his working life in Northern Italy as a schoolteacher, schools inspector and finally as a librarian in Trieste. He published his first collection of poetry in 1912. More than thirty further volumes followed, almost all in the dialect of Grado, where he lived in retirement from 1956 until his death in 1985. From the 1960s onwards he was recognised as an important and distinctive voice, a poet writing with apparent simplicity in traditional rhyming forms in a quite unprovincial way, whose dialectal colouring was in fact not a serious barrier for readers from other parts of Italy. His rate of publication increased rather than diminished in old age, which saw him produce some of his best work.





Manno - Cielo, rotella su zinco,
420x330 mm, 2004



La morte xe per duti un'avventura

La morte xe per duti un'avventura
che scuminsia tra i fiuri a primavera;
nissun la veghe; solo cò fa sera,
la mostra la so grinta bruta e dura.

La morte mia da tanto la madura,
la false lampa prima de taglià;
me la vardo co' l'anema sigura,
ma dopo tremo in meso de la strâ.

El corpo mio el gera una biondura
de gran al vento ne la grande istae
e ne le vene el veva la frescura

de le rogie che score trasognae.
Adesso 'l corpo mio me fa paura,
co' la so morte che no l'ha pietae.

(Dopo la longa 'stae, 1965)

Me son in paradiso!

Me son in paradiso!
Canta 'l mar su la spiassa,
maistral fresco me basa
sul viso.

Trémola i piopi incora,
i felissi, nel vento
e del vespero l'ora
el mondo fa contento.

No sè dí la biavura
dei munti a l'orizzonte,
de l'aria la frescura
'desso che'l sol va a monte.

Vardo in giro comosso
el biavo fâsse d'oro



Death's an adventure faced by everyone

Death's an adventure faced by everyone
that starts off in the springtime among flowers.
No one sees it. It's just when night draws on,
that it reveals its ugly face and glowers.

My death has been maturing for so long,
the sickle only flashing at the wheat.
I look at it and think that I feel strong
and then I shiver walking down the street.

My body was a blinding field of grain
on which the wind of a great summer played,
and it had coolness in its every vein

from little streams that flowed by half-asleep.
And now my body's making me afraid;
death's pitilessly bending down to reap.

I am in paradise!

I am in paradise!
The sea is singing on the sand
and there's a cool west wind
kissing my eyes.

Poplars still tremble in the light
enraptured with the breeze,
and the world is at ease
in this hour before night.

I can't put into words the blues
of the mountains far away,
or the coolness of the air at play
in the sun's late hues.

Stirred I turn round and mark
how the blue turns to gold,



e l'oro fâsse rosso
púo 'l rosso fâsse moro.

E vien la note granda
co' le stele in colana
e Galassia fa girlanda
su l'isola graesana.

(El mar de l'eterno, 1967)

Un pesse son del To vièr

Un pesse son del To vièr,
no hè vogiúo 'ndâ fora
lasso l'aque che scora
tra i vimini a piasser.

Ma dopo la stagion
voravo la corente del mar grandò,
de quando in quando
cognôsse in Tu la perdission.

E navegâ nel fondo scuro
del To mistero
là che l'aqua fa muro
e no' riva 'l pensiero.

Pêrdeme nel caligo
de la To eternitàe
senza mèa, senza stràe,
senza luse d'intrigo.

(Tra sera e note, 1968)

Carne, carne tu geri



Peter Hainsworth / Biagio Marin

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and the gold turns to red,
and the red becomes dark.

Then the vast night appears
in its necklace of stars,
and the Galaxy garlands
Grado's small island.

I'm a fish who's in Your pond

I'm a fish who's in Your pond,
the outside not among my needs;
happy to let the waters flow
as they want among the reeds.

But now the season's changed, I'd like
to try the current of the open sea,
to know at least from time to time
abolishment in You of me,

to sail through the dark depths beneath
into the mystery You are,
where water turns into a wall
and thought can't travel far,

to lose myself in the dense mist
of Your eternal being,
without an aim, without a road,
without the light to stop me seeing.



Carne, carne tu geri,
e senza fantasia
pei versi mie lisieri,
la gno manincunia.

La carne vol figiâ,
e sol e luna piena;
la crosta e la molena,
in carne vol ganbiâ.

Tu geri negra tera
vogiosa de fâ gran
tu geri bona piera,
la casa de doman.

Me gero nato solo
per stâ in parte a vardâ
la vita duta un nuòlo
che 'l vento pol disfâ.

L'ha disfào la to dressa,
el to sen l'ha sfinío,
anche la to belessa
la xe andagia con Dio.

(Quanto più moro, 1969)

Duto finío

Duto finío e ninte mai xe stào:
un sogno apena visto in volo,
apena un supio molo
d'un istàe za passào.

Gera quela la vita mia:
su l'orisonte, un monte
sfinío dal velo che tigniva sconte
le prime stele d'una note in via.

Profumi persi e prumitinti
de cu sa quale ignote fioridure:



Flesh you were

Flesh you were, you were flesh,
with no fancy to release
my feather-light verse
my unhappiness.

Flesh wants children to come
the full moon and the sun,
wants every crust and crumb
to take on fleshly form.

You were rich black earth
wanting to make corn,
you were solid stone
from which a house is born.

I was born to stand
watching on one side
life which is just a cloud
for the wind to unwind.

It has unwound your hair,
your breast it has undone,
and your beauty is now where
such things with God have gone.

All faded

All faded and nothing was there:
a dream glimpsed in its flight,
a weak breath of air
from a summer already gone.

That was the life I led:
and on the horizon a mountain faded
beneath the veil that hid
the first stars of a night travelling on.

Lost fragrances that came



solo un zuogo dei vinti
in solitudini azure.

La luse stessa, granda pecaòra,
che m' iludeva tanto co' i so zuoghi,
in alto, in basso, in duti i loghi,
l'ha durà solo un' ora.

(Quanto più moro, 1969)

Meravegiusi ingani

Maravegiusi ingani
dei fiuri che no' dura
dei nuòli senza afani
che navega per l' aria asura.

Me mai ve disdirè
de voltri hè senpre sé,
e co' la mente inferma
piú v' amo de la tera ferma.

Feste dei mili
che l' alto siel 'nbriga
e púo un' ariosa maga
disperde i petali sutili;

primavera matana
istàe che 'l cuor tu brusi,
sol che tu lusi
nel sangue che bacana:

senpre ve benedisso
co' boca tonda me ve lodo:
in ogni modo,
me voggio el vostro abisso.

(El vento de l'eterno se fa teso, 1973)

Navega qua



promising blossoms no one knew,
only the winds playing games
in solitudes of blue.

The light, the light, the wicked light
seducing with its playfulness,
above, below, and anywhere it liked,
and lasting just an hour, or less.

Wondrous the tricks

Wondrous the tricks put on by flowers
that are not made to last,
by clouds in the blue air above
sailing untroubled past.

Never shall I turn you down,
for you I always thirst,
loving you with infirm mind
much more than solid earth.

Those parties of the apple trees
drunk on the open sky,
till the fine petals founder
when a windy witch storms by!

You, spring, are just crazy,
summer, you burn the heart,
and sun, you shine into the blood
that revels in your heat.

Always I'm blessing all of you,
giving you full-mouthed praise.
I want to stay in your abyss
in any of its ways.



Navega qua
navega là
el porto vero
l'eternità.

Lassa la vita a largo
e che la vaga a pico;
el to barco xe cargo
del to nemico.

El porto no' xe 'l mondo
né sul mar, né là in sielo;
no' tu devi 'ndâ a velo
ma calâ nel profondo.

(El vento de l'eterno se fa teso, 1973)

Ninte no' xe passào

Ninte no' xe passào
e duto vive e xe presente;
un sielo solo levante e ponente
un solo sol m'ha iluminào.

I primi vogi che m'ha inamorào
xe quii che 'adesso ríe,
e infinite restíe
basa dí e note el lío de Grao.

Ogni geri xe incúo
ansi xe adesso,
ogni vento xe el messo
de Dio, nel sielo de velo.

E ninte mai more
nel mondo:
un solo, ma fondo
xe 'l corso de l'ore.

La mutassion origina el canto;



Sail away here

Sail away here,
sail away there,
eternity's the port
to which you must fare.

Let life sail the seas,
let it go and capsize,
you have in your hold
your foe and your prize.

The port's not the world,
not at sea, nor on high.
You must leave the sails furled;
it's the deeps you must try.

Nothing has passed

Nothing has passed and died,
and all is present and alive:
morning and evening sky are one,
light filled me from a single sun.

The first eyes for which I fell
are those now laughing still,
and day and night the kisses pour
from endless waves on Grado's shore.

Every yesterday's today,
no, it's the here and now,
and every wind's God's messenger
though the heavens stay in cloud.

Nothing can die ever
in this world of ours;
it's a single but deep river,
the course of the hours.



no' 'vê paura de sparî;
dura un atimo el dí
ma xe eterno l'incanto.

(El vento de l'eterno se fa teso, 1973)

Me son contento d'êsse nato

Me son contento d'êsse nato
da longo tenpo d'êsse su la tera,
dopo tanto dolor e tanta guera
son incora beato.

Tanto hê godúo la luse, el sol;
le musiche dei vinti in duti i sieli,
el cantussâ su l'alba dei noveli
e perfin el tramonto che me duol.

Ato d'amor xe stagia la gno vita,
la luse l'ha nudría
la luse adesso se la porta via,
per una strâ piú sita.

In un'alba del sol me son vignúo
felisse al mondo a fin de zugno,
e 'aveva el sol in cuor e in pugno
el fantulin ridente e núo.

(El vento de l'eterno se fa teso, 1973)

El silenzio me ciama

El silenzio me ciama
e me rispondo;
xe sconta in cuor l'antica brama;
elo la ciama nel profondo.

Cussí la se dissolve ne l'unbría;
la se fa ritmo e púo parola
che sona a lungo e svola
lassando drío 'na luminosa ssia.



Song comes from changefulness.
Don't be fearful to be gone.
A moment and the day's undone,
but the eternal spell stays on.

I'm one content to have been born

I'm one content to have been born,
to be on earth so long,
and after so much war and pain
my happiness still goes on.

I've revelled in the light and sun,
wind singing under any sky,
new creatures chuntering at dawn,
even this painful end of day.

My life has been an act of love,
which light fed with its food,
and now light carries it away
down a more silent road.

It was a sunny dawn when one late June
into the world I came in joy.
He held the sun in his heart and fist,
that naked laughing little boy.

Silence calls to me

Silence calls to me,
and I obey.
The ancient yearning of the heart
is summoned from its deep hideaway.

Thus it melts into the shadows,
becoming rhythm, then words that make
lasting music and then fly,



Doloroso el segreto:
elo lo svela;
resto ridotto a vela
che návega su un mar asuro e queto.

(*A sol calào*, 1974)

La sera ha tanto vento

La sera ha tanto vento,
e la xe scura e svoda,
e l'anema se snoda
con ela nel lamento.

La sera ha man gelàe
sul cuor la me le mete:
le lontane comete
no' le cata piú stràe.

E tu no' tu me porti
de fémena i conforti;
de la carne el tepor
del to sangue l'odor.

Son tera arsía,
piòveme basi adosso:
sul tovo sen me cato posso:
la sera negra la me porta via.

(*A sol calào*, 1974)



leaving a luminous wake.
It is painful, the secret
that the silence sets free.
What's left of me is a sail
voyaging across a calm blue sea.

There's such a wind tonight,

There's such a wind tonight,
blowing dark vacant air
in a long lament
that my soul has to share.

The night has icy hands;
it lays them on my heart;
there are no more faraway comets
on which to depart.

And you don't bring the comfort
that a woman could,
the warmth of the flesh,
the scent of your blood.

I am scorched earth.
Rain kisses on me now:
on your bosom I find rest,
black night carries me away



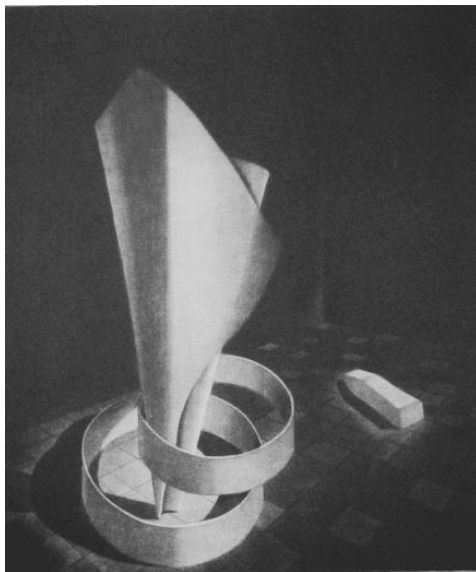


Poems by William Carlos Williams

Translated by Anna Cellinese

Anna Cellinese is Senior Lecturer and Director of the Italian Language Program at Princeton University. She has published articles on Fenoglio and Pavese as well as on popular culture and language pedagogy. Her latest translation of Dacia Maraini's "Diario Americano 2015" appeared in *Dacia Maraini. Taccuino Americano (1964-2016)* edited by Michelangelo LaLuna.

William Carlos Williams was born September 17, 1883 in Rutherford, New Jersey. A pediatrician, an artist, and a poet, he has not received the large-scale attention given to Pound, Yeats, and Eliot since he had neither love for the American academy, nor for the academic critic. Some of his most famous anthologies include *Spring and All* (1923), *Collected Poems 1921-1923* (1934), and *Adam & Eve & the City* (1936), as well as prose collections *Kora in Hell: Improvisations* (1957), *The Great American Novel* (1923), and *The Voyage to Pagan* (1928). Williams received the Pulitzer Prize and the National Institute of Arts and Letters' Gold Medal for Poetry posthumously in 1963. Williams' first priority in life was contact with people since it meant contact with language. His most consistent principle in sixty years of writing was the use of natural speech rhythms: the line divided and spaced so as to suggest rhythmic breaks in the language as it is spoken. A poem, he said, is not made of thoughts, but of words like pigments, and the poet is a word-user who depicts the artistry of language. Words in a poem cease to represent symbols for ideas, and become the real matter of *actuality* – exorcising the word in its relation with things. Words are, for Williams, a semantic revelation born *hic et nunc*, free voices of his American contemporary reality.



Manno - Composizione, maniera nera
su zinco, 450x450 mm, 1999



Man in a Room (from *Poems 1918-1921*)

Here, no woman, nor man besides,
 Nor child, nor dog, nor bird, nor wasp,
 Nor ditch-pool, nor green thing. Color of flower,
 Blood-bright berry none, nor flame-rust
 On leaf, nor pink gall-sting on stem, nor
 Staring stone, *Ay de mi!*
 No hawthorn's white thorn-tree here, nor lawn
 Of buttercups, nor any counterpart:

Bed, book-backs, walls, floor,
 Flat pictures, desk, clothes-box, litter
 Of paper scrawls. So sit I here,
 So stand, so walk about. Beside
 The flower-white tree not so lonely I:
 Torn petals, dew-wet, yellowed my bared ankles.

Love Song (from *Al que quiere!* 1917)

I lie here thinking of you: -

the stain of love
 is upon the world!
 Yellow, yellow, yellow
 it eats into the leaves,
 smears with saffron
 the horned branches that lean
 heavily
 against a smooth purple sky!
 There is no light
 only a honey-thick stain
 that drips from leaf to leaf
 and limb to limb
 spoiling the colors
 of the whole world -
 you far off there under
 the wine-red selvage of the west!



Uomo in una stanza

Qui nè donna nè uomo oltre me,
Nè bimbo nè cane nè uccello nè vespa,
Nè bacino acquoso nè fronda. Color di fiori,
Bacca rosso sangue nessuna, nè ruggine
Incendiaria su foglia, nè galla rosata su stelo, nè
Impassibile pietra, *Ay de mi!*
Qui non bianco rovo di biancospino, nè prato
Di ranuncoli, nessun equivalente:

Letto, dorsi di libri, pareti, suolo,
Immagini stese, scrittoio, cassoni, groviglio
Di scarabocchi. Così qui io seggo,
Così m'alzo, così vago. Accanto
All'albero bianco di fiori non così solo Io:
Petalì lacerati, umidi, ingiallivano le mie nude caviglie.

Canzone d'amore

Qui disteso pensandoti:-

la macchia dell'amore
è sul mondo!
Giallo, giallo, giallo
corrode nelle foglie,
chiazza con zafferano
i bicorni rami che pendono
pesanti
contro un liscio cielo porporino!
Non c'è luce
solo una densa macchia di miele
che goccia di foglia in foglia
di ramo in ramo
contaminando i colori
di tutto il mondo-
tu lontana lì sotto
l'orlo scarlatto dell'Ovest!



Sappho (from *Poems 1955-1962*)

That man is peer of the gods, who
face to face sits listening
to your sweet speech and lovely
laughter.

It is this that rouses a tumult
in my breast. At mere sight of you
my voice falters, my tongue
is broken.

Straightway, a delicate fire runs in
my limbs; my eyes
are blinded and my ears
thunder.

Sweat pours out: a trembling hunts
me down. I grow
paler than grass and lack little
of dying.

The Hard Listener (from *The Wedge 1944*)

The powerless emperor
makes himself dull
writing poems in a garden
while his armies
kill and burn. But we,
in poverty lacking love,
keep some relation
to the truth of man's
infelicity: say
the late flowers, unspoiled
by insects and waiting
only for the cold.



Saffo

Quell'uomo è pari agli dei,
fronte a fronte siede ascoltando
la tua dolce parola e leggiadra
risata.

Questo è ciò che provoca un tumulto
nel mio petto. Al solo mirarti
la mia voce vacilla, la mia lingua
si disfa.

Immediatamente, un fuoco delicato corre
per le mie membra; i miei occhi
si oscurano e le mie orecchie
tuonano.

Il sudore evapora: un tremito
m'incalza. Impallidisco più
dell'erba ed è un po' come
morire.

L'ascoltatore assente

L'imperatore impotente
si logora a scrivere
poesie in un giardino
mentre i suoi eserciti
uccidono e bruciano. Ma noi,
in povertà privi d'amore,
manteniamo un legame
con la verità dell'umana
tristezza: diciamo -
i tardi fiori, illesi
dagli insetti e in attesa
solo del gelo.



The Bird's Companion (from *Poems 1929-1935*)

As love
that is
each day upon the twig
which may die

So springs your love
fresh up
lusty for the sun
the bird's companion -

Song (from *Pictures from Brueghel 1962*)

beauty is a shell
from the sea
where she rules triumphant
till love has had its way with her

scallops and
lion's paws
sculptured to the
tune of retreating waves

undying accents
repeated till
the ear and the eye lie
down together in the same bed



Il compagno degli uccelli

Come l'amore
che si posa
ogni giorno sopra il ramoscello
che può morire

Così balza il tuo amore
esuberante
bramoso di sole
il compagno degli uccelli -

Canzone

la bellezza è una conchiglia
del mare
dove lei regna trionfante
finché l'amore non l'ha posseduta

molluschi e
zampe di leone
scolpiti
all'unisono delle onde in ritirata

immortali accenti
ripetuti finché
l'orecchio e l'occhio
giacciono insieme nello stesso letto



The Locust Tree in Flower
(from *An Early Martyr and Other Poems 1935*)

Among
of
green

stiff
old
bright

broken
branch
come

white
sweet
May

again

The Poem (from *The Wedge 1944*)

It's all in
the sound. A song.
Seldom a song. It should

be a song - made of
particulars, wasps,
a gentian - something
immediate, open

scissor, a lady's
eyes - waking
centrifugal, centripetal



Il carrubo in fiore

Tra
il
verde

rigido
vecchio
radioso

rotto
ramo
viene

bianco
dolce
Maggio

ancora

La poesia

È tutto
nel suono. Una canzone.
Di rado una canzone. Dovrebbe

essere una canzone - fatta di
dettagli, vespe,
una genziana - qualcosa di
immediato, cesoie

aperte, occhi
di donna - risveglio
centrifugo, centripeto



To a Poor Old Woman(from *An early martyr and other poems 1935*)

munching a plum on
 the street a paper bag
 of them in her hand

They taste good to her
 They taste good
 to her. They taste
 good to her

You can see it by
 the way she gives herself
 to the one half
 sucked out in her hand

Comforted
 a solace of ripe plums
 seeming to fill the air
 They taste good to her

The Wind Increases (from *Poems 1929-1935*)

The harried
 earth is swept
 The trees
 the tulip's bright
 tips
 sidle and
 toss -

Loose your love
 to flow

Blow!

Good Christ what is
 a poet - if any
 exists?

a man
whose words will
 bite
 their way
home - being actual
having the form
 of motion

At each twigtip

new

upon the tortured
body of thought

 gripping

the ground

a way
 to the last leaftip



un uomo
le cui parole
 mordendo
 giungeranno
a casa - reali
in forma
 di movimento

In ogni cima di un ramo

nuovo

sopra il torturato
corpo del pensiero

 che stringe

la terra

una strada
 fino all'ultima cima di foglia





Friulian Poems by Pierluigi Cappello

*Translated by Sandro-Angelo de Thomasis, Damiano Gurisatti,
and Giovanni Miglianti*

Sandro-Angelo de Thomasis is a PhD candidate at Yale University's Department of Italian Language and Literature. He received an honors BA in Western Society and Culture at Concordia University's Liberal Arts College in Montreal. His current fields of interest revolve around Dante and medieval modalities of texts and images, the vernacularization of Boethius' *Consolatio* in Trecento Italy, and contemporary Italian poetry. He is on the editorial board for the second tome of *Those Who From Afar Look Like Flies* (University of Toronto Press, forthcoming), a bilingual anthology of contemporary Italian poetry, and his most recent translations have been published in the *Journal of Italian Translation*.

Damiano Gurisatti is a high school teacher in Italy. He holds an MPhil in Classics from the University of Bologna and a BA in Classics from the University of Udine. His primary research interests concern ancient Greek literature and philosophy, with a particular focus on ancient Christian literature. He also has a strong interest in the language, literature, and culture of his native Friuli.

Giovanni Miglianti is a PhD student in Italian Literature at Yale University. He holds an MPhil in European Literature and Culture from the University of Cambridge and a BA in Humanities from the University of Udine. His main research interests lie in twentieth-century Italian literature and cultural history, with a particular focus on representations of the Holocaust, antifascist exiles in the United States, and Italian dialect poetry.

Pierluigi Cappello was born in Gemona del Friuli in 1967. In 1976, the Friuli earthquake forced his family to relocate from Chiusaforte, a little village in the Fella valley at the foot of the Carnic Alps, to another small town, Tricesimo, closer to the larger city of Udine. It is in this area that he lived for most of his life, first in a prefabricated building donated by the Austrian government, and then – for only a few years before his premature death in 2017 – in

the neighboring town of Cassacco. In 1983, a motor accident put him in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Like several Friulian poets who began to write verses in Italian and then shifted to their native language after the traumatic event of the earthquake (Ida Vallerugo, Giacomo Vit, and even Amedeo Giacomini), Pierluigi Cappello's poetic production began in Italian, with *Le nebbie* ('Fogs', 1994) and *La misura dell'erba* ('The Measure of the Grass', 1998). His Friulian verses, from the first booklets published in 1999 (*Il me Donzel*, 'My Donzel', and *Amôrs*, 'Loves') to a few poems in *Assetto di volo* ('Attitude of Flight', 2006) and *Mandate a dire all'imperatore* ('Let the Emperor Know', 2010), appear to be an enclosed experience, but one particularly worth examining. Over the years, Cappello's fame grew also outside Friuli as his poems were awarded several prizes: Montale Europa (2004), Pisa (2006), Bagutta-Opera Prima (2007), San Pellegrino (2007), Viareggio-Rèpaci (2010), Vittorio De Sica (2012), Accademia dei Lincei (2013). 2013 marked a turning point, from periphery to the center of attention, with the anthology *Azzurro elementare* ('Primary Blue') published by Rizzoli and Francesca Archibugi's documentary on his life and work (*Parole povere*, from the title of one of Cappello's Italian poems). In the same year, Cappello published his autobiographical novel *Questa libertà* ('This Freedom'), in Italian, stressing the strong interconnection between his poetry and prose writing. Since then, all of Cappello's work has been published by Rizzoli and his name gained national recognition in Italy, with a growing following of popular figures who admire his work and tweet his verses (such as the singer Jovanotti, who prefaced Cappello's last poetry collection, *Stato di quiete*, 'State of Rest', 2016). Such success also coincided with Cappello's dismissal of Friulian as an "exhausted form of writing" (as he himself put in an interview to Gian Mario Villalta) and with his decision to write only in Italian.

Writing from the Edge: Pierluigi Cappello's Friulian Verses Giovanni Miglianti

Pierluigi Cappello's poetry stands as an act of resistance on three different levels. On a personal level, as a resistance to the severe disability caused by a motor accident in his youth; secondly,

level, in his use of Friulian as a poetic language as well as in his reappropriation of closed forms like the sonnet.

At the end of the twentieth century, the literary model of Friulian is Pier Paolo Pasolini, whose poetry collections, from his debut with *Poesie a Casarsa* (1942) to his final *La nuova gioventù* (1975), paved the way for a revival of Friulian poetry. Cappello's first poetry collection in Friulian, *Il me Donzel*, emphasizes its genealogy, significantly alluding to Pasolini's lyric *O me Donzel*. The "donzel" or young boy, which for Pasolini was a symbol of the peasant boys he saw in Casarsa, becomes for Cappello a dramatized version of the lyric I as well as the main addressee of his poetry. Such splitting of the self, embodying both the lyric I and the only possible audience of the poet, hints at one of the major motifs of Cappello's work: the figure of the double – something already evident in his diglossia between Italian (the language in which he began and ended his poetic career) and Friulian.

In Italian and especially in Friulian, Cappello prefers fairly common and yet evocative words, that are decontextualized from their original pragmatic use and given a new, poetic meaning. As a result, his language is refined but not pedantic. Like Andrea Zanzotto, another poet struck by the trauma of civilization's onslaught on nature, Cappello often employs traditional fixed forms, from the sonnet (the meter of the whole *Il me Donzel*) to the rondeau, a circular structure typical of Medieval poetry. In his reappropriation of such stylistic features, Cappello manifests his resistance through singing the lost world of his youth in Friuli, with frequent references to the physical and intellectual struggle (*fadie*) of this operation: "I struggle/ doing everything", *Il me Donzel* XIV (see also: "the evil of the steps borne/ and to bear every day", *Il me Donzel* XIII).

Another figure of the double, derived from thirteenth-century romantic poetry, is the *Domine*, the partner/self to whom the verses of Cappello's second Friulian collection, *Amôrs*, are addressed. Other than these aliases (the *Donzel* and the *Domine*), both *Il me Donzel* and *Amôrs* are devoid of people and dominated by the poet's loneliness. Cappello's world appears almost entirely made by nature, with its seasons and colors. The poet himself is depicted as a Leopardian sparrow, who sings even in wintertime (*Il me Donzel* XIII). Who he sings to – other than to his own doubles – remains an open question, but certainly his verses are not directed

just to himself. While the loneliness of the lyric I is connoted by a diffuse silence (“there is I who cries I/ in the gold of silence”, *Il me Donzel* X) and by nothingness (“with nothing ahead/ with nothing behind”, *Il me Donzel* XIV), there is a constant attempt to bear a resemblance to others, reflected in his repetition of the verb *sameâ* (‘to resemble’) and especially in the love poems (“inside yours is my fear / of forgetting myself”, *Amôrs* II).

More than a loner, Cappello presents himself as an exile, living at the periphery of Italy as well as at the outer limits of language, particularly when writing in Friulian. Despite the physical hindrance that forced him to remain sedentary, he was in exile from his native Chiusaforte, the village abandoned after the earthquake. Indeed, he experienced exile within his own land, Friuli, a land historically prone to emigration: abroad, overseas, and from mountain villages to lower towns, like he did. But he also experienced a peculiar form of linguistic exile, as many Italian poets in the twentieth century who chose dialect to speak – as noted by Franco Brevini – of the living in the language of the dead; participating in what Giulio Ferroni defines as “posthumous literature,” that is a literature aware of its own critical state.

The content of Cappello’s poetry also expresses a concern for liminality. Among his favorite words is *ôr* (*Il me Donzel*, II and V), “edge”, just as his own Friuli is a border region, between Italy on one side and the Germanic and Slavic cultures of central Europe on the other. Estrangement is a characteristic technique of Cappello, who in his later poems (see *Parole povere*, written in Italian) describes Chiusaforte and its former inhabitants from a detached, peripheral perspective as well as from a position of profound sympathy. “I wouldn’t know anything else of myself/ if I didn’t know of myself/ that I am foreign” (*Il me Donzel* XVII).

The translations presented in the following pages are a ‘lavoro a sei mani’. They are the result of a year-long process of discussion and exchange between Sandro-Angelo de Thomasis and myself. Our work on the Friulian verses (which constitute the major part of the lyrics anthologized here) would not have been possible without the invaluable linguistic expertise and cultural advice of Damiano Gurisatti. I wish to thank both Damiano and Sandro for their friendship and for this adventure between three languages, Friulian, Italian, and English.

Pierluigi Cappello**Il me Donzel****II**

Sium, sium dentri inte sium
lûs di ce che nol è
e vôs di chel ch'al jere
neri butul de gnot

ch'al impromet sflandôr
tiere fate di niule
niule fate ladrîs
man çampe inte man drete

sium cjapimi me sium
cjampanule di scûr
flamule benedete

declinazion di poete
ch'al impromet amôr
e ôr dal ôr e gnot.

V

«E jo cjanti, cjanti, cjanti
e no sai bielsôl parcè
E jo cjanti solamentri
che par consolâmi me.»



Pierluigi Cappello

My Donzel ¹

II

Dream, dream within sleep
light of what isn't
and voice of what was
black bud of night

that promises splendor
land made of cloud
cloud made root
left hand in right hand

dream catch me dream
bluebell of darkness
a blessed flame

declension of a poet
that promises love
and edge of the edge and night.

V

"And I sing, sing, sing
and I don't know why.
And I sing simply
to console myself." ²

1. *Donzel* literally means "young boy" and points back to Pier Paolo Pasolini's Friulian poem *O me donzel* (in *Poesie a Casarsa*), whose first stanza is chosen by Cappello as epigraph of his collection *Il me Donzel*.
2. Stanza from a traditional Friulian song, documented since 1867 (Giovanni Gortani, *Saggio di canti popolari friulani*) and popularized throughout the last century by the widespread practice of choruses and, more recently, by folk music revival. According to musicologist Roberto Frisano, the original context of these lines is probably to be sought in the realm of (concealed) love, but to date they are commonly deemed to embody a sort of motto of Friulian philosophy and lifestyle.



Un rai - il prin - di soreli
mancul che une çjarece
sofli d'aur o çjaveli
te miezegnot dal cûr;

un rai cerçât sul ôr
di veri da la tace
cul tenar dai miei lavris
tal neri dal cafè;

un rai ch'al sedi screi
se no ancjemò lusôr
o buinore dai vîfs

tal screi di vierte d'aur;
un rai - chest prin - ch'al è
par colorâmi me.

X

Vuê ch'al è unvier di frêt
spieli di frêt sul fuei
e il cûr mi trimulee
come un ramaç discolç;

vuê che di al è parti
e amôr di me s'innee
fra la peraule dite
e chê ancjemò di di;

scoltimi ben che ben
jo o sai murîmi a mi
Donzel, numar d'amôr:

fra me e me anime mê
soi jo che o sighi jo
ta l'aur dal cidinôr.



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A ray – the first one – of sunshine
less than a caress
breath of gold or hair
in the heart's midnight;

a ray tasted on the rim
of the glass cup
with the tender part of my lips
in the coffee's black;

a ray that may be the onset
if not already the light
or early morning of the living

at the onset of gold of spring;
a ray – this first one – that exists
to color myself.

X

Today that is cold winter
cold mirror on the leaf
and my heart quakes
like a bare branch;

today that to speak is to leave
and love of myself drowns itself
between the word spoken
and that one yet to speak;

listen to me well, for well
I know how to die for myself,
Donzel, figure of love:

between me and me soul of mine
there is I who cries I
in the gold of silence.



XII

Chel che tu viôts cumò
 un passar nome passar
 un pugn dutun cun sè
 intal so sei di niule

coltade tai miei vôi
 cressude spetenade
 là ch'o comenci jo
 om víf intal gno sei

di cjar dentri intal frèt
 di frèt dentri i cjavêi
 di passar nome passar

ch'a mi à viodût cumò
 doman, Donzel, tal frèt
 cjantaràial inmò?

XIII

Intal rivâl di jerbis
 lizeris di Zenâr
 e lungjis tant che il rai
 che si distude in lôr

podê polsâ, polsâ...
 tra di e pensâ, sentât
 sul nuie tirâ il flât
 gjavâ scae sore scae

il mâl dai pas puartâts
 e di puartâ ogni dì.
 E po tornâ a partî

cu l'anime par troi
 ch'al è vivâr di viers
 amâr amâr amâr.



XII

What you see now
a sparrow just a sparrow
a fist absorbed into itself
in its being of cloud

nurtured in my eyes
grown uncombed
there where I begin
living man in my being

of flesh within the cold
of cold within the hair
of a sparrow just a sparrow

which saw me now
tomorrow, Donzel, in the cold
will it still sing?

XIII

On the hill with light
grass of January
as long as the ray
that fizzles out in it

to be able to rest, to rest...
between saying and thinking, sitting
upon nothing, drawing air
removing splinter after splinter

the evil of the steps borne
and to bear every day.
And then setting forth once again

with the soul as a path
that is bitter bitter bitter
vivarium for verses.



XIV

Jo o fâs fadie par fâ
 dut, fadie par vistîmi,
 Donzel, fadie a mangjâ
 fadie a durmî e par fâ

l'amôr, fadie a cjalâ
 la zilugne a Fevrâr
 come ch'e fos la prime
 floride arbe d'Avrîl

fadie a smenteâ
 che di nô al restarà
 un jevâsi intal scûr

cence fadie un poiâsi
 tal scûr, cul nuie devant,
 cence nuie daûr.

XVII

No savarès Donzel
 fadie, no savarès
 l'imbast e chel daspâ
 e chel tasêmi dentri

intal sec criçulâ
 des cuestis, e il zimul
 sfuarçâ da lis zimis
 lis primis, a Fevrâr;

no savarès tal sanc
 nì il cjalt dal cjaminâ
 nì il fresc gotâ de polse

no savarès nuealtri
 di me se no savès
 di me che o soi forest.



XIV

I struggle doing
everything, struggle getting dressed,
Donzel, struggle to eat,
struggle to sleep and making

love, struggle to watch
the frost in February
as though it were the first
flowering grass of April

struggle to forget
that of us will remain
a rise into the dark

without struggle a rest
in the dark, with nothing ahead,
with nothing behind.

XVII

I wouldn't know, Donzel,
struggle, I wouldn't know
the grief and that groping
and that keeping silent inside myself

within the curt crackling
of the ribcage, and the twin
forcing of the buds,
the first ones, in February;

I wouldn't know in the blood
neither the heat of walking
nor the cool dripping of the pause

I wouldn't know anything else
of myself if I didn't know
of myself that I am foreign.



XIX

Lassaitmi cussì come
 ch'ò stoi cence rasons
 cence vuadagn nì dam
 doi vôi davierts ai fonts

rasonaments dal cîl
 ch'al sta parcè che o stedi
 fer cussì come ch'ò stoi.
 Lassaitmi achì ch'ò sedi

la sissule plui scarte
 ta l'airfuart di Avrîl,
 il svoledon di cjarte

poiât tal vert dal prât,
 la maravee dal frut
 ch'al dis ch'al à svolât.

Amôrs

II

Tô la mê bocje amôr sul to savôr
 la mê vergogne di vivi cumò
 ch'ò ti tocji ch'ò ti sflori e o ti cor
 come inte gnot un gjat adôr dai mûrs;
 jo o ti cor come un gjat adôr dai mûrs
 siben ch'ò sai che intai conts di amôr
 doi mancul un mancul di zeri al fâs
 e un plui un un al varès di fâ,
 siben che e reste cumò che tu vâs
 la mê cerce di te su la tô piel
 su la mê il risinâ dai tiei cjavei

e je dentri te tô la mê pôre
 di smenteâmi di me.



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XIX

Leave me thus as
I am without reason
without profit or loss
two eyes open to the deep

reasonings of the sky
which is so that I am
still thus as I am.
Leave me here, let me be

the cheapest swarf
in the strongwind of April
the paper airplane

sitting in the field's green
the marvel of the child
who says that it did fly.

Loves

II

Yours is my mouth, love, upon your taste
my shame for being alive now
that I touch you that I caress you and I stride you
like a cat at night along the walls
I stride you like a cat along the walls
albeit I know that in the calculus of love
two minus one gives less than zero
and one plus one should give one,
albeit it remains now that you go
my tasting you on your skin
on mine the dripping of your hair

inside yours is my fear
of forgetting myself.



V

Front a front, amôr, doi cjâfs, il to e il gno:
 il gno distirât par cjalâti miôr
 il to, plui alt, che a cjalâmi jo viôt
 l'arc dal to cei distirâsi in pâs;
 difûr dal cuadri dal balcon
 il vert des jerbis strafondis d'Avrîl:
 dute une primevere tasude
 ch'ô tas par fâti plui bieles.
 Denti il cercli di vert dai tiei vôi
 di strac ch'al jere plui font
 plui penç al nassarà il mont.

X

O cerci l'air che tu spetenis cu li' mans
 chest dâti e cjolti lusinte tal scûr
 di ca la fan, di là il pan da la mê fan
 tu floride tal mieç
 e flôr la pierre ch'e sfloris in me;
 o cerci chest air e al bastarès
 se par vivi la pôre di vivi no fos
 mancul lontane di te.

Inniò

Scrivi Lune

Se manco amâr
 al sveâsi al fos l'incjant
 achì al sarès il to vivi,
 do' ch'al lusi un pôc plui in là.
 Denti il lusî de lune
 ch'ô viôt lusî come perfete sul fuei
 cumò ch'ô le ài scrite. Scrivi lune:
 e tal zîr da la man ch'a la segne
 jessi nì ca nì là,
 consegnâ al sium dut il sunsûr dal mont
 e cjaminâ sigûrs al lum da la gnotade.
 Che cence tiere e cence cil



V

Face to face, love, two heads, yours and mine:
mine resting to look at you better
yours, above, looking at me I see
the arch of your eyebrow peacefully resting;
outside the frame of the window
the green of the soaked grass of April:
an entire spring kept quiet
that I keep quiet to make you more beautiful.
Within the circle of green of your eyes
from tired that it was, deeper
denser the world will be born.

X

I taste the air that you ruffle with your hands
this giving and withdrawing of yourself shining in the dark
here the hunger, there the bread of my hunger
you flowery in the midst
and a flower the rock that ceases to flourish in me;
I taste this air and it would be enough
if for living the fear of living were not
less far than yourself.

Nowhere

To Write Moon

If less bitter
at the awakening were the enchantment
here would be your living,
where it shines a little farther away.
Within the shining of the moon
that I see shining as if perfect on the leaf
now that I have written it. To write moon:
and at the turn of the hand that marks it
being neither here nor there,
entrusting to the dream all the world's sound
and walking steady in the night light.
Without earth and without sky



a si è achi, trimant al vivi,
 come l'air ator ator di un sbâr.

Rondeau

Cun cheste lenghe nude e in nissun puest
 nì mai viodût in lûs di nissun voli
 se no dai miei cjalant i tiei celescj
 jo mâr o clamarès chel to celest
 tiscjel il lum dal to tasê forest
 e primevere il solc lunc dal to pet;
 cjalanti, inte buere di me ch'è cres
 falchet sarès se no tasès cjalanti
 in cheste lenghe nude e in nissun puest.

In nissun puest amôr ma nome in chest
 l'amôr ti disarès ch'al è taront
 l'insom e il sot ladrîs e zime in rime
 e intal clarôr sul fil da la tô schene
 crît il clâr de lune clare compagne
 bielece son li' mans strentis in trece
 li' mès li' tôs e intor il braç de gnot
 ch'a si davierç in lûs, nulinti, e in blanc
 in nissun puest amôr ma nome in chest.

In nissun puest ma achì ti volarès
 niçant adôr sul niçul des peraulis
 peraulis come fraulis ti darès
 che vite ator ator e je tampieste
 jo e te mâr fer tal mieç da la tampieste
 e messedant i tiei cui miei cjavei
 amôr plui tô la muse tô e sarès
 e non il to plui non, cun dut il rest forest
 in cheste lenghe nude e in nissun puest.



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being here, quivering at living,
like the air all around a shot.

Rondeau

With this bare tongue and in no place
never seen in full light by any eye
if not by my eyes looking at yours sky blue
I would call sea your sky blue
castle the light of your being silently foreign
and spring the deep cleavage of your chest;
looking at you, wind gusts growing within me
I'd be a young hawk were I not silently looking at you
in this bare tongue and in no place.

In no place, love, but just in this
I would tell you that love is round
the up and the down, root and shoot in rhyme
and in the dim light on the spine of your back
a shout is the moonlight equally dimmed
beauty are the hands woven in a braid
mine yours and around them the night's arm
that discloses itself in light, smelling you, and in white
in no place, love, but just in this.

In no place but here I would want you
cradling you tight in the cradle of words
words like strawberries I'd give you
for life all around is a tempest
you and I still sea in the tempest
and blending your hair with mine
more yours, love, your face would be
more name your name, with all the rest foreign

in this bare tongue and in no place.



I vostri nomi**Parole povere**

Uno, in piedi, conta gli spiccioli sul palmo
l'altro mette il portafoglio nero
nella tasca di dietro dei pantaloni da lavoro.

Una sarchia la terra magra di un orto in salita
la vestaglia a fiori tenui
la sottoveste che si vede quando si piega.

Uno impugna la motosega
e sa di segatura e stelle.

Uno rompe l'aria con il suo grido
perché un tronco gli ha schiacciato il braccio
ha fatto crack come un grosso ramo quando si è spezzato
e io c'ero, ero piccolino.

Uno cade dalla bicicletta legata
e quando si alza ha la manica della giacca strappata
e prova a rincorrerci.

Uno manda via i bambini e le cornacchie
con il fucile caricato a sale.

Uno pieno di muscoli e macchie sulla canottiera
Isolina portami un caffè, dice.

Uno bussa la mattina di Natale
con una scatola di scarpe sottobraccio
aprite, aprite. È arrivato lo zio, è arrivato
zitto zitto dalla Francia, dice, schiamazzando.

Una esce di casa coprendosi un occhio con il palmo
mentre con l'occhio scoperto piange.

Una ride e ha una grande finestra sui denti davanti
anche l'altra ride, ma non ha né finestre né denti davanti.



Your Names

Layman's Terms

One, standing, counts small change in his palm
another puts his black wallet
in the back pocket of his work trousers.

One hoes the poor soil of a slanting garden
the nightgown with faint flowers
the underskirt visible when she leans over.

One holds the chainsaw
and he smells of sawdust and stars.

One breaks the air with his yell
because timber crushed his arm
it went crack like a great branch breaking
and I was there, I was little.

One falls from the tied bicycle
and when he gets up his sleeve is ripped
and he tries to run after us.

One sends away kids and crows
with his gun loaded with salt.

One all muscles and stains on his undershirt
Isolina bring me some coffee, he says.

One knocks on Christmas morning
with a shoebox under his arm
open, open. Uncle has arrived, he has arrived
hush-hush from France, he says, loudly.

One leaves home covering an eye with her palm
while from the uncovered eye she cries.

One laughs and has a big gap in her front teeth
another also laughs, but she has neither gaps nor front
[teeth.



Una scrive su un involto da salumiere
sono stufa di stare nel mondo di qua, vado in quello di là.

Uno prepara un cartello
da mettere sulla sua catasta nel bosco
non toccarli fatica a farli, c'è scritto in vernice rossa.

Uno prepara una saponetta al tritolo
da mettere sotto la catasta e il cartello di prima
ma io non l'ho visto.

Una dà un calcio a un gatto
e perde la pantofola nel farlo.

Una perde la testa quando viene la sera
dopo una bottiglia di Vov.

Una ha la gobba grande
e trova sempre le monete per strada.

Uno è stato trovato
una notte freddissima d'inverno
le scarpe nella neve
i disegni della neve sul suo petto.

Uno dice qui la notte viene con le montagne all'improvviso
ma d'inverno è bello quando si confondono
l'alto con il basso, il bianco con il blu.

Uno con parole proprie
mette su lì per lì uno sciopero destinato alla disfatta
voi dicete sempre di livorare
ma non dicete mai venite a tirar paga
ingegnere, ha detto. Ed è già
il ricordo di un ricordare.

Uno legge Topolino
gli piacciono i film di Tarzan e Stanlio e Ollio
e si è fatto in casa una canoa troppo grande
che non passa per la porta.



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One writes on her grocery bundle
I'm fed up with being in this world, I'm going to the other.

One prepares a sign
to put on his log pile in the forest
don't touch hard to cut, written in red paint.

One prepares a cake of soap with TNT
to put under the log pile and the sign mentioned above
but I didn't see him.

One kicks a cat
and loses her slipper while doing it.

One loses her mind when the night comes
after a bottle of Vov.

One has a huge hump on her back
and always finds money on the street.

One was found
in a very cold winter night
with the shoes in the snow
and the snow's drawings on his chest.

One, here night comes suddenly with the mountains, he
[says,
but in winter it's beautiful when you can't tell
the top from the bottom, the white from the blue.

One with his own words
there and then sets up a strike destined to fail
you always say you gotta work
but you never say come and get paid
mister, he said. And it is already
the remembrance of a remembering.

One reads Mickey Mouse
he likes Tarzan movies and Laurel and Hardy
and he made himself a canoe at home which is too big
to go through the door.



Uno l'ho ricordato adesso adesso
in questo fioco di luce premuta dal buio
ma non ricordo che faccia abbia.

Uno mi dice a questo punto bisogna mettere
la parola amen
perché questa sarebbe una preghiera, come l'hai fatta tu.

E io dico che mi piace la parola amen
perché sa di preghiera e di pioggia dentro la terra
e di pietà dentro il silenzio
ma io non la metterei la parola amen
perché non ho nessuna pietà di voi
perché ho soltanto i miei occhi nei vostri
e l'allegria dei vinti e una tristezza grande.



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One I remember him just now
in this feeble light pushed by the dark
but I don't remember his face.

One says to me, at this point you should put
the word amen
because this would be a prayer, as you made it.

And I say that I like the word amen
because it smells of prayer and of rain inside the earth
and of pity inside the silence
but I would not put the word amen
because I have no pity for you all
because I only have my eyes in yours
and the joy of the vanquished and a great sadness.





Neorealism, Melodrama or Agitprop? Pier Paolo Pasolini and Luchino Visconti discuss Visconti's *Rocco and his Brothers*

Translated by Steve Eaton and Vanessa Fanelli

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Vanessa Fanelli received her BA in Cultural Heritage Studies from the Università Statale di Milano *magna cum laude*. She has worked at Bucknell University (Pennsylvania) as a teaching assistant and assistant instructor and has taught Italian at IESS Abroad Milano where she still works. She has a master's degree in Italian Studies from the University of Texas at Austin where she is now pursuing her Ph.D. She is currently vice president of the French and Italian Graduate Student Organization for which she has organized the 2016/2017 Italian Lecturer Series, featuring author Ellen Nerenberg as the keynote speaker.

In the early 1960's, the Italian Marxist film director, poet, novelist and activist Pier Paolo Pasolini answered questions from readers in the leftist weekly *Vie Nuove* (New Roads). In this column from October, 1960, Pasolini addresses the problem of the mass migration of impoverished southern Italians to the north, and in particular the issue of the absence of decent housing in and around the city of Rome. In doing so he criticizes a newly released film by the director Luchino Visconti, *Rocco and His Brothers*, about a family of farmers that leaves its native Lucania in search of a better life in the northern industrialized city of Milan. Later that month, Luchino Visconti replied in *Vie Nuove* with his own essay, also translated here, although Pasolini's comments are not explicitly mentioned.





Acknowledgments

The translators would like to thank Dr. Paola Bonifazi, of the University of Texas at Austin, who encouraged this project, and whose course on postwar Italian films inspired it.



Manno - Immagine sognata n.
3, acquatinta e puntasecca su
zinco, 200x150 mm, 2016



Da "Vie Nuove" no. 39, Ottobre 1 1960; poi in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, a cura di Siti and De Laude, (Milano: Mondadori, 1999), 901-905.

Da Pasolini a Visconti

Caro Pasolini, solo in questi giorni ho scoperto che i cittadini romani sono "ufficialmente" divisi in due categorie: cittadini a pieno diritto e cittadini a mezzo servizio. Mi riferisco ai cosiddetti "non-residenti", a coloro cioè che non possono ottenere la residenza nel comune di Roma perché non hanno un lavoro stabile e che non possono avere un lavoro stabile perché non hanno la residenza. Le conseguenze di questo stato di cose sono spaventose: questa gente non può ottenere alcun aiuto, alcuna assistenza, non può nemmeno votare se non ha i mezzi per tornare ad esprimere il suo voto nel comune in cui "ufficialmente" risiede. Insomma, per l'amministrazione comunale di Roma questa gente non esiste affatto. Dinanzi agli abitanti delle borgate e alle loro miserabili condizioni di vita, l'amministrazione comunale capitolina chiude gli occhi e non muove dito. Bel modo di risolvere i problemi, non le sembra? Mi piacerebbe sapere che cosa pensa lei di questo problema (conseguenza delle nefaste leggi fasciste, mai abrogate, sull'urbanesimo) tanto più che si riferiscono a personaggi di cui ha fatto i protagonisti dei suoi romanzi. Forse, quando li scriveva, lei non se ne rendeva conto, ma stava scrivendo di un mondo che per Ciocetti [sic] "non esiste" neppure. Cordialmente

Guido Cristini

Beh no: me ne rendevo conto perfettamente: non tanto che non esistesse per la persona di Ciocetti – che sarebbe pressoché nulla –, ma per il governo italiano, la nostra classe dirigente, la nostra borghesia, e anche parte degli uomini di sinistra. I quali ultimi, intendo dire, conoscono bene l'esistenza del mondo sottoproletario della periferia di Roma, formato in molta parte, appunto, di non residenti: ma la conoscono un po' dal di fuori, come problema da affrontare in un quadro generale di problemi: qualche volta burocraticamente, qualche volta un po' demagogicamente. In realtà noi marxisti fatichiamo un po' a credere nell'esistenza reale di un sottoproletario: che non è più, ormai, il sottoproletario classico, pura massa inerte: ma è in fase di trasformazione e di evoluzione.

Il problema dei non-residenti è proprio un elemento che mette

From "Vie Nuove" no. 39, October 1 1960; reprinted in Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Saggi sulla politica e sulla società*, Siti and De Laude, eds. (Milan: Mondadori, 1999), 901-905.

From Pasolini to Visconti

Dear Pasolini, only in recent days have I discovered that the citizens of Rome are "officially" divided into two categories: citizens with full rights and day-labor citizens. I refer to the so-called "non-residents," that is to those who cannot obtain residency in the city of Rome because they don't have permanent employment and who cannot have a permanent employment because they don't have residency. The consequences of this state of things are frightful: these people cannot get any help, any assistance, cannot even vote unless they have the means to go back and cast their vote in the town where they "officially" reside. In short, according to the city administration of Rome, these people don't even exist. Faced with the inhabitants of the peripheral neighborhoods [suburbs¹] and their miserable living conditions, the city administration of the capital closes its eyes and doesn't lift a finger. Doesn't that seem like a nice way to solve problems? I would like to know what you think of this problem (a consequence of the ill-fated fascist laws, never revoked, regarding urbanization) all the more since it refers to characters whom you have made protagonists in your novels. Perhaps, when you wrote them, you didn't realize it, but you were writing about a world that for Ciocetti [sic]² "doesn't even exist." Cordially,

Guido Cristini

Well no: I realize it full well, not so much that it doesn't exist for someone such as Ciocetti – who is a nobody –, but for the Italian government, our ruling class, our bourgeoisie, and even some of the men on the left. The latter, I mean, are well aware of the existence of the sub-proletarian world on the periphery of Rome, formed in large part of these very same non-residents: but they are aware of them from somewhat of a distance, as a problem to deal with within a general set of problems: sometimes bureaucratically, sometimes a bit demagogically. In reality we Marxists struggle a little to believe in the actual existence of a sub-proletariat: which is no longer the classic sub-proletariat, purely an inert mass: but is in a phase of transformation and evolution.

in evidenza questa nuova fase del sottoproletario della capitale (quasi tutto emigrato dal Sud): infatti - a contatto di una nuova realtà sociale, di nuove e immediate difficoltà - i più passivi, inerti, rassegnati dei sottoproletari si vivificano: lo spirito disperato di avventura che, dai tristi e affamati paesi del Sud, li ha portati a Roma, trova qui nuova materia dove esercitare la sua vivacità, la sua speranza.

Spessissimo, è vero, succede che gli emigrati del Sud, specie giovani, si lascino trascinare e coinvolgere dalle tentazioni più immediate degli ambienti, dove, necessariamente, devono andare a vivere: i quartieri miserabili, le borgate, addirittura le baracche.

Ma anche questo, tutto sommato li trasforma: nel peggiore dei casi il loro ingenuo fatalismo si trasforma in un tipo anarchico di rivolta. Almeno, non considerano più sacro ciò che effettivamente non è. È un misero primo passo.

Nel migliore dei casi - quando conservino intatta la loro fondamentale onestà di paesani meridionali - di fronte alle evidenti ingiustizie che quassù li opprimono, acquistano un sia pur confuso sentimento dei propri diritti. E infatti, in questi ultimi mesi, si è assistito a un movimento organizzato e collettivo dei non residenti, che hanno così reso pubblico il loro stato, ne hanno fatto prendere atto a chi possiede un minimo di coscienza umana e politica: e qualche risultato l'hanno pur ottenuto, o sono sulla strada di ottenerlo.

Che un cittadino italiano possa essere non-residente, è mostruoso. Egli infatti ha diritto di vivere come vuole e dove vuole. Il non concedere la residenza significa fare un processo alle intenzioni: il che è tipico dei governi paternalistici e fascisti. Ma a parte questa mostruosità particolare del fenomeno, esso si inserisce in un problema più generale e urgente: quello della disoccupazione. Se la disoccupazione non esistesse non esisterebbe il problema se concedere o no la residenza a un cittadino, in una nuova città ch'egli con tutto il diritto ha liberamente scelto.

Non concedendo la residenza, le "autorità" romane ammettono semplicemente e impudentemente questo: a Roma non c'è modo di lavorare. Come del resto non c'è modo di lavorare nei miserandi paesi del Sud da cui la maggior parte di non-residenti provengono. E allora? Certo, un campo di concentramento è sempre la soluzione migliore... E infatti le borgate, volute dai fascisti, e consacrate dai democristiani, sono veri e propri campi di concentramento.

The problem of the non-residents is really something which testifies to this new phase of the sub-proletariat of the capital (almost entirely emigrated from the South). In fact – coming in contact with a new social reality, with new and immediate difficulties – the most passive, inert, resigned sub-proletarians are coming back to life: a desperate spirit of enterprise has taken them from the sad and starving villages of the south to Rome, finding here new material with which to exercise their vivacity, their hope.

Quite often, it's true, it happens that the emigres from the South, especially the youth, let themselves get dragged into and involved with the more immediate temptations of the environment, where, by necessity, they have to go to live: the miserable areas, the sub-urbs, even in shanty towns.

But even this ultimately transforms them: in the worst cases their naïve fatalism is transformed into an anarchic kind of revolt. At least, they no longer consider sacred that which really is not. It is a pitiful first step.

In the best cases, when they keep their fundamental southern-townspeople's honesty intact in the face of all the evident injustice that oppresses them up here, they acquire a sense (however confused) of their own rights. And in fact, in these last months, we have seen a collective, organized movement by the non-residents, who have thus made their status public, have made anyone who possesses a minimum of human and political conscience take notice: and have even gotten some results, or are on the road to getting them.

That an Italian citizen can be a non-resident is monstrous. In fact he has the right to live how he wants and where he wants. Not granting residency amounts to punishing someone for their intentions³: which is typical of paternalistic and fascist governments. But aside from the particular monstrosity of this phenomenon, it forms part of a more general and urgent problem: that of unemployment. If unemployment didn't exist, then the question would not exist as to whether or not to grant residency to a citizen in a new city that he has freely chosen, with every right to do so.

By not granting residency, the Roman "authorities" admit this plainly and shamelessly: in Rome one can't find work. For that matter there is no work in the miserable southern towns from which the greater part of the non-residents originate. And so? Of course, a concentration camp is always the best solution... And in fact the

Ho visto ieri sera, in una proiezione privata, il film di Visconti *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*: la regia, come del resto sempre è splendida, il racconto, specie nella seconda parte, commuove profondamente: tuttavia, a essere completamente e magari brutalmente sincero, questa ultima opera di Visconti mi lascia incerto.

Il film affronta il problema degli emigrati meridionali a Milano: non conosco a fondo il rapporto tra i meridionali e Milano: e su questo lascio sospeso il giudizio: ma, per diretta conoscenza, posso dire che Rocco e i suoi fratelli sono dei meridionali di maniera di cui l'unico veramente indovinato è forse Ciro – se si toglie quel tanto di troppo dolce che c'è nel suo rapporto con la ragazza che dovrà sposare. Gli altri rispondono a schemi: il conformista facilmente influenzabile dall'ideologia borghese (Vincenzo), il sensuale squilibrato (Simone) e il mistico (Rocco). Non escono da questi schemi, che, alle volte, premono tanto sul personaggio da rendere la vicenda un po' melodrammatica, e spesso confusa. Io avrei richiesto a Visconti un maggiore coraggio di approfondimento psicologico: quello che rende complicate le cose, contraddittori i fatti, difficili gli avvenimenti: che non è mai spettacolo. L'approfondimento psicologico – che, naturalmente, è poi da rendere tutto concreto, semplice, ottico, plastico, attraverso gli immediati strumenti dell'espressione artistica – che Visconti ha pur usato nella *Terra trema*.

Questo excursus viscontiano, l'ho fatto per dire che sul problema dei non-residenti romani, ossia sui Rocco e fratelli che vivono a decine, a centinaia di migliaia nelle borgate non bisogna sul piano politico essere ottimisti nel senso facile e sentimentale della parola: bisogna purtroppo affrontare spesso contraddizioni e complicazioni dolorose, spesso insolubili, spesso atroci. Porre il problema, renderlo oggetto d'indignazione, non basta: è un modo un po' tautologico per salvare la propria coscienza. Bisogna, o lottare senza sosta, senza respiro, con la massima dedizione, come fanno molti sindacalisti – che sono dei veri e propri santi – o analizzare il problema con la più coraggiosa e spietata intenzione di approfondirlo e esprimerlo.

Tutti gli altri sistemi lasciano assolutamente indifferenti uomini come Ciocchetti e soci.

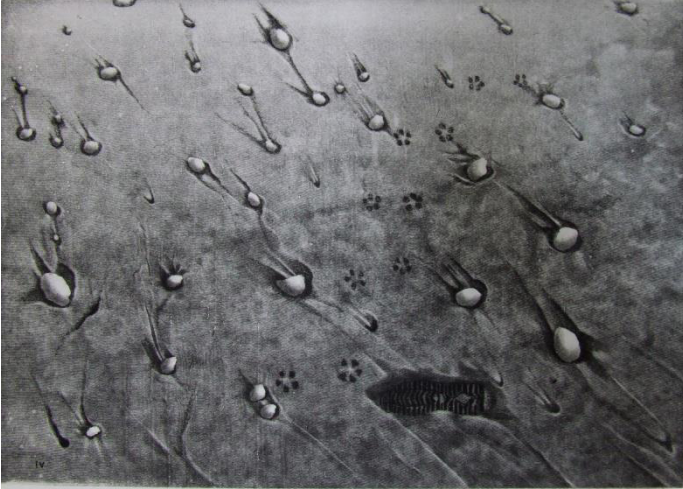
suburbs, desired by the fascists, and consecrated by the Christian Democrats, are true and proper concentration camps.

Last evening I saw, in a private screening, Visconti's film *Rocco and His Brothers*⁴: the direction, as always, is splendid, the story, especially in the second part, profoundly moving: but yet, to be completely and perhaps brutally sincere, this latest work by Visconti leaves me doubtful.

The film deals with the problem of southern emigrants in Milan: I am not deeply familiar with the relationship between the southerners and Milan: and I'll suspend judgement on this: but, from firsthand knowledge, I can say that Rocco and his brothers are southerners of whom the only one authentically imagined is perhaps Ciro – if you take away the overly sweet relationship he has with the girl he's supposed to marry⁵. The others answer to type: the conformist easily influenced by bourgeois ideology (Vincenzo)⁶, the unstable sensuous one (Simone) and the mystic (Rocco). They do not depart from these types, that, at times weigh so much on the character as to make the plot a bit melodramatic, and often confused. I would have asked Visconti for greater courage in having psychological depth: the kind that renders things with complexity, facts with contradictions, events with difficulty: that is never mere entertainment. Psychological depth – which, naturally, is then rendered entirely concrete, simple, visual, plastic, through the direct use of artistic expression – which indeed Visconti used in *Terra Trema*.

I have made this Viscontian digression in order to say that regarding the problem of Roman non-residents, or rather regarding Rocco and brothers who live by the dozens, by the hundreds of thousands in the suburbs, that what is needed on the political level is not optimism in the facile and sentimental sense of the word: what is needed is rather to deal with often contradictory and painful complications, often unsolvable, often appalling. To pose the problem, to render it an object of indignation, is not enough: it is a rather tautological saving of one's own conscience. We need either to fight without rest, without taking a breath, with the utmost dedication, as many unionists – who are true and proper saints – are doing, or to analyze the problem with the most courageous and merciless intention of getting to the bottom of it and voicing it.

All the other approaches leave men like Ciocetti and his associates indifferent.



Manno - Impronte, ceramolle e puntasecca su rame,
220x290 mm, 2007,





Notes

1 The term “*borgate*” does not refer to American-style suburbs but to planned and unplanned neighborhoods on the outskirts of large Italian cities, beginning under Fascism and accelerating in the post-war period. It covers everything from shanty towns arising spontaneously from abandoned construction sites to massive, cheaply built apartment blocks.

2 Urbano Ciocchetti, a member of the dominant Christian Democratic party, was mayor of Rome from 1958 to 1961.

3 In other words, migrants from the South are denied residency out of fear that they intend to take from Romans.

4 *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) is Luchino Visconti’s epic melodrama about a family of five brothers and their mother from the southern province of Lucania who come to Milan in search of a higher standard of living.

5 Pasolini seems to be confusing *Ciro* – a minor character and “good egg” who works in a factory and has no love interest in the story, with *Vincenzo*, another minor (and stable) character who is engaged and becomes a married father by the end of the picture.

6 In fact *Ciro* is the most explicit mouthpiece of what Pasolini considers “bourgeois ideology” in the film.



Da "Vie Nuove" no. 42(?), Ottobre 22 1960, poi in: Luchino Visconti, *Il cinema, a cura di Adelio Ferrero*, (Modena: Modena Comune, 1997), pp 60-64

Da Verga a Gramsci, di Luchino Visconti

Interessato come sono ai motivi profondi che turbano e rendono inquieta, ansiosa del nuovo, la esistenza degli italiani, ho sempre visto nella questione meridionale una delle fonti principali della mia ispirazione. Devo precisare che in un primo tempo mi sono accostato a questa questione, posso dire anzi di averla scoperta, per una via puramente letteraria: i romanzi di Verga. Ciò accadeva nel 1940 - 41 mentre preparavo *Ossessione*. La sola letteratura narrativa alla quale, nel quadro del romanzo italiano, sentivo di potermi riaccostare, dopo le letture giovanili, nel momento in cui col mio primo film affrontavo, sia pure i limiti imposti dal fascismo, un tema contemporaneo della vita italiana, era quella di Mastro Don Gesualdo e dei Malavoglia. Devo dire che, fin da allora, maturai il progetto di fare un film da questo romanzo. Poi venne la guerra, con la guerra la Resistenza e con la Resistenza la scoperta, per un intellettuale della mia formazione, di tutti i problemi italiani, come problemi di struttura sociale oltre che di orientamento culturale, spirituale e morale.

Le differenze, le contraddizioni, i conflitti tra nord e sud cominciarono ad appassionarmi al di là del fascino esercitato su di me, come settentrionale, dal mistero del Mezzogiorno e delle isole, ancora ai miei occhi assai simili alle terre sconosciute che scoprirono i Mille di Garibaldi. Vittorini aveva suonato un buon allarme con le sue "conversazioni". La chiave mitica in cui fino a quel momento avevo gustato Verga, non mi fu più sufficiente. Sentii impellente il bisogno di scoprire quali fossero le basi storiche, economiche e sociali, sulle quali era cresciuto il dramma meridionale e fu soprattutto con la lettura illuminante di Gramsci che mi fu consentito il possesso d'una verità che attende ancora d'essere decisamente affrontata e risolta. Gramsci non soltanto mi persuase per la acutezza delle sua analisi storico - politiche che mi spiegavano fino in fondo le ragioni, il carattere del Mezzogiorno come grande disgregazione sociale e come mercato di sfruttamento (di tipo coloniale) da parte della classe dirigente del nord, ma per-

From "Vie Nuove" no. 42(?), October 22 1960, reprinted in: Luchino Visconti, *Il cinema*, Adelio Ferrero, ed. (Modena: Modena Comune, 1997), pp 60-64

Luchino Visconti: From Verga to Gramsci

Interested as I am in the deeper causes that agitate and trouble the existence of Italians, the changes that create anxiety, I have always seen in the southern question⁷ one of the main sources of my inspiration. I must point out that I came across this question in an earlier period. In fact I can say that I discovered it by a purely literary route: the novels of Verga⁸. That happened in 1940 - 41 while I was working on *Ossessione*⁹, my first film, in which I was confronting, albeit within the limits imposed by fascism, a contemporary theme of Italian life. At that moment, the only narrative literature, in the realm of the Italian novel, which I felt I could be close to, after my juvenile readings, was that of *Mastro-don Gesualdo* and of *I Malavoglia*¹⁰. I have to say that, since then, I had mulled over a project to make a film from the latter novel. Then the war came, with the war the Resistance, and with the Resistance the discovery, for an intellectual of my background, of all the problems of Italy, such as being problems of social structure, as well as cultural, spiritual and moral tendencies.

The differences, the contradictions, the conflicts between North and South became a passion for me beyond the fascination exercised on me, as a northerner, by the mystery of the Mezzogiorno¹¹ and of the islands, still to my eyes very similar to the *terra incognita* discovered by the *Mille* of Garibaldi¹². Vittorini had sounded a good alarm with his *Conversations*¹³. The mythic mode in which up to that moment I had enjoyed Verga was no longer sufficient for me. I felt impelled by the need to discover the historical, economic and social bases upon which the southern tragedy had developed, and it was above all through the brilliant writing of Gramsci¹⁴ that I was granted the possession of a truth which still waits to be decisively addressed and resolved. Gramsci not only persuaded me by the acuteness of his historical-political analysis which explained to me down to their roots the reasons, the nature of the Mezzogiorno as a great social disintegration and as the product of exploitation (of the colonial kind) on the part of the ruling class of the North, but

ché, a differenza di altri importanti autori meridionalisti, mi dava l'indicazione pratica, realistica, di azione per il superamento della questione meridionale come questione centrale della unità del nostro paese: l'alleanza degli operai del nord con i contadini del sud, per spezzare la cappa di piombo del blocco agrario industriale: mi illuminò inoltre, Gramsci, sulla funzione particolare, insostituibile degli intellettuali meridionali per la causa del progresso, una volta che fossero stati capaci di sottrarsi al servilismo del feudo e al mito della burocrazia statale.

La bontà dello schema gramsciano ha trovato conferma nelle lotte del dopoguerra. E, malgrado le grandi trasformazioni avvenute nel Mezzogiorno e in Sicilia sulla base dei movimenti contadini per la riforma agraria, per l'autonomia e per la industrializzazione, sembra a me che la indicazione del grande combattente antifascista sia rimasta insuperata. Ma si potrà chiedere perché nei miei film di ispirazione meridionale io mi sia addentrato in drammi essenzialmente psicologici, sulla linea costante della rappresentazione del tema verghiano del fallimento, dei "vinti" insomma. Cercherò di rispondere a questa osservazione.

Un film nasce da una condizione generale di cultura. Non potevo partire, volendomi accostare alla tematica meridionale, che dal più alto livello artistico raggiunto sulla base di tale contenuto: da Verga. A ben guardare, però, anche nella Terra trema io ho cercato di mettere a fuoco, come fonte e ragione di tutto lo svolgimento drammatico, un conflitto economico. La chiave di volta degli stati d'animo, delle psicologie e dei conflitti, è dunque per me prevalentemente sociale, anche se le conclusioni a cui giungo sono soltanto umane e riguardano concretamente gli individui singoli. Il lievito. Però, il sangue che scorre nella storia è intriso di passione civile, di problematica sociale.

E così, Rocco. La questione dei rapporti tra fratelli e tra figli e la madre non mi ha certo interessato meno di quella che una simile famiglia provenisse dal Sud, fosse una famiglia meridionale. Operando questa scelta non mi sono limitato, però, alla ricerca d'un materiale umano particolarmente suggestivo, ma ho consapevolmente deliberato di tornare sul problema del rapporto tra Nord e Sud, così come può tornarvi un artista il quale voglia, per così dire, non soltanto commuovere ma invitare al ragionamento.

Si rifletta a questo: in un momento in cui l'opinione ufficiale che

because, unlike other important southern authors, he gave me a practical, realistic course of action for transforming the southern question into the central question of the unity of our country: the alliance of the northern workers with the peasants of the South, to break the iron grip of the agrarian-industrial complex. Furthermore, Gramsci enlightened me on the special, irreplaceable role of the southern intellectual in the cause of progress, once they were able to remove themselves from feudal servility and from the myth of the state bureaucracy¹⁵.

The value of Gramsci's scheme found confirmation in the post-war struggle. And, in spite of the great transformations that have occurred in the Mezzogiorno and in Sicily on the basis of the peasants' movements for agrarian reform, for autonomy and industrialization, it seems to me that the guidance of the great antifascist fighter has remained unsurpassed. But I will be asked why in my films inspired by the South I have explored essentially psychological dramas, along lines consistent with the representation of Verga's theme of failure, in other words of the "conquered." I will try to respond to this observation.

A film is born out of a general cultural condition. Wanting to deal with the southern question, I could begin only from the highest artistic level reached on the basis of such material: with Verga. Looking closely, however, even in *Terra Trema*¹⁶ I tried to bring economic conflict into focus as the source and reason for all of the dramatic development. The keystone of the states of mind, the catalyst, of the psychology and of the conflicts, is thus for me primarily social, even if the conclusions which I reach are only human and relate concretely to single individuals. However, the blood which flows through history is filled with civil passion, with social issues.

And so, *Rocco*. The question of the relations between brothers and between sons and mother certainly interested me just as much as the fact that such a family came from the South, a "southern Italian family." Working through this choice, however, I did not limit myself to the search for particularly suggestive human material, but consciously decided to return to the problem of the relationship between North and South as an artist may return to it, wishing, so to speak, not only to move, but to invite reasoning.

Think about this: at a moment in which the official position

si tende ad accreditare è quella di un Mezzogiorno e di una Sicilia e di una Sardegna trasformati dalla presenza d'un maggior numero di strade asfaltate, di fabbriche, di terre distribuite, di autonomie amministrative assicurate, io ho voluto ascoltare la voce più profonda che viene dalla realtà meridionale: vale a dire quella d'una umanità e d'una civiltà che, mentre non hanno avuto che briciole del grande festino del cosiddetto miracolo economico italiano, attendono ancora di uscire dal chiuso di un isolamento morale e spirituale che è tuttora fondato sul pregiudizio tipicamente italiano che tiene il Mezzogiorno in condizioni di inferiorità rispetto al resto della nazione. Forse ho forzato questo tema in modo energico e persino violento, ma nessuno potrà rimproverarmi di averlo forzato in modo arbitrario e propagandistico. Mi potrei avvalere del conforto della cronaca che registra ogni giorno l'odissea dei lavoratori meridionali che vanno al Nord in cerca di lavoro e di fortuna.

Ma per quanto mi sia facile affermare che la storia di Roco e i suoi fratelli potrebbe benissimo figurare in una di quelle notizie di cronaca, io desidero rivendicare il carattere di tipicità. Nella particolarità del tutto fantastica dei miei personaggi e della vicenda, io credo di aver posto un problema morale e ideale che è tipico del momento storico in cui viviamo e che è tipico dello stato d'animo aperto, da un lato, alla speranza e alla volontà di rinascita dei meridionali, dall'altro lato, continuamente respinto, per la insufficienza dei rimedi, verso la disperazione o verso soluzioni del tutto parziali come quella dell'inserimento individuale, di ogni singolo meridionale in un modo di vita impostogli dall'esterno.

In questo quadro ho collocato la mia vicenda che, come è noto, arriva fino al delitto, centrando un aspetto del carattere meridionale che mi pare di grande importanza: il sentimento, la legge, e il tabù dell'onore.

Rispondo alla seconda questione. Il tema della sconfitta, della irrisione, da parte della società, dei più generosi impulsi individuali, è un tema moderno quant'altri mai. Vi sono tuttavia almeno due modi di trattarlo. Vi è un modo estetico e compiaciuto che io non esito a definire asociale, anzi antisociale. V'è un modo, invece, che esamina le condizioni della sconfitta nel quadro delle difficoltà imposte dall'ordine costituito e che tanto più si arricchisce di speranza e di energia quanto più fa emergere dalla rappresentazione artistica il volto reale dell'ostacolo e il rovescio luminoso di una

that is gaining acceptance is that of a Mezzogiorno and of a Sicily and of a Sardinia transformed by the presence of a higher number of asphalt roads, of factories, of land redistribution, of the guarantee of local autonomy, I wanted to listen to the deeper voice that comes from the southern reality: that is, of a humanity and a civilization that, while it has received only crumbs from the much celebrated so-called economic miracle, is still waiting to escape from its confinement in a moral and spiritual isolation that is still based upon the typically Italian prejudice that keeps the South in a state of inferiority with respect to the rest of the nation. Perhaps I have pushed this theme in an energetic and even violent way, but no one can reprove me for having forced it in an arbitrary and propagandistic way. I could avail myself of the comfort of the tabloids that record daily the odyssey of the southern workers who go north in search of work and better fortune.

But as easy as it might be for me to affirm that the story of *Rocco and His Brothers* could very well appear in one of those crime-sheet stories¹⁷, I would assert that they are quite typical. In the entirely imagined details of my characters and events, I believe I have posed a moral and ideological problem which is typical of the historical moment in which we live and that is typical of a spirit open, on the one hand, to hope and a desire for a southern rebirth, but on the other hand is continually driven by inadequate remedies towards desperation, or towards utterly partial solutions, such as the individual insertion of every single southerner into a way of life imposed from the outside.

In this context I have set my story that, as has been noted, leads to crime, highlighting an aspect of the southern character that seems to me of great importance: the sentiment, the law, and the taboo of honor¹⁸.

I respond to the second question¹⁹. The theme of defeat, of mockery by society of the most generous individual impulses, is a theme as modern as ever. In any case there are at least two ways to deal with it. There is an aesthetic and complacent way which I do not hesitate to define as asocial, even anti-social. On the other hand, there is a way that examines the conditions of defeat in the context of the difficulties imposed by the established order and that, the more it is enriched by hope and energy, the more it reveals through artistic representation the real face of the obstacles – the

diversa prospettiva.

Verga arrestava il suo processo inventivo e analitico alla prima fase di questo metodo. Il mio tentativo è stato quello di estrarre dalle radici stesse del metodo verghiano le ragioni prime del dramma e di presentare al culmine dello sfacelo (nella Terra trema: il dissesto economico della famiglia Valastro; in Rocco: la frana morale nel momento di maggiore assestamento economico) un personaggio che chiaramente, quasi didascalicamente (non ho paura della parola) le mettesse in chiaro. Qui, in Rocco, non a caso questo personaggio è Ciro, il fratello divenuto operaio, che non soltanto ha dimostrato una capacità non romantica, non effimera di inserirsi nella vita, ma che ha acquistato coscienza di diversi doveri discendenti da diversi diritti.

Tutto sommato, e devo dire senza accorgermene, il finale di Rocco è riuscito un finale simbolico, direi emblematico delle mie convinzioni meridionaliste: il fratello operaio parla col più piccolo della famiglia d'una visione futura del suo paese che raffigura quella idealmente unitaria del Pensiero di Antonio Gramsci.

Come si vede sono arrivato a conclusioni sociali, e persino politiche, avendo percorso durante tutto il mio film soltanto la strada dell'indagine psicologica e della ricostruzione fedele d'un dramma umano.

Pessimismo il mio? Esasperazione e forzatura polemica di tutti i conflitti?

Pessimismo, no. Perché il mio pessimismo è soltanto quello della intelligenza, mai quello della volontà. Quanto più l'intelligenza si serve del pessimismo per scavare fino in fondo le verità della vita, tanto più la volontà si arma, a mio avviso, di carica ottimistica, rivoluzionaria.

Esasperazione dei conflitti? Ma questo è il compito dell'arte. L'essenziale è che i conflitti siano reali. Io credo perciò di aver dato con Rocco non un quadro di parte, ma un quadro sul quale tutti, purché animati di buona volontà, possono convenire: nel condannare ciò che merita condanna e nell'assumere quelle speranze, quelle aspirazioni cui nessun uomo libero può davvero rifiutarsi.

© «Visconti: il cinema» 1977.

enlightening flip side of the coin.

Verga halted his inventive and analytical process at the first phase of this method. My attempt has been that of extracting from the very roots of Verga's method the primary causes of the tragedy and to present at the disastrous climax (in *Terra Trema*: the financial ruin of the Valastro family; in *Rocco*: the moral collapse of the family at the moment of greater economic stability) a character who clearly, almost didactically (I am not afraid to use the word) brings them to light. Here, in *Rocco*, it is not by chance that this character is *Ciro*, the brother turned laborer, who not only has demonstrated an ability, not romanticized or fleeting, to make for himself a place in life, but who has acquired consciousness of the new obligations that come with new rights.

As it turned out, and I have to say without my realizing it, the ending of *Rocco* managed to be a symbolic ending, I would say emblematic of my convictions about the South: the laborer brother speaks to the youngest in the family of a vision of the future of his town which represents the ideally unified one of Antonio Gramsci's thinking.

As you can see I have arrived at social and even political conclusions, having followed through all of my films only the road of psychological investigation and the faithful reconstruction of a human drama.

Would you call it pessimism?

Stirring up trouble over the issues? Pessimism, no. Because my pessimism is only that of intellect, not of will. As much as the intellect makes use of pessimism to get to the bottom of the truth of life, so too does the will arm itself, in my opinion, with an arsenal of revolutionary optimism. Stirring up trouble over the issues? But this is the task of art. What is essential is that the issues are real. I believe therefore that I have given with *Rocco* not a partial portrait, but a portrait on which everyone, if motivated by goodwill, can come together: in condemning that which deserves condemnation and in taking up those hopes, those aspirations which no free man can really refuse.

7 The "southern question" refers to the longstanding problems of poverty and illiteracy in southern Italy compared to the relatively prosperous, better-educated and more industrialized north.

8 *Giovanni Verga* (1840-1922) was a Sicilian novelist and short-story writer who



Manno - Impronte, 2007, ceramolle e puntasecca su rame,
mm 220x330



wrote, among other works, the short story “Cavalleria Rusticana” and later the libretto for the opera of the same name. Because of his terse, unsentimental portrayal of Sicilian peasants and laborers he is thought of as the father of Italian realism. His fiction did not prescribe solutions to southern poverty or overtly question the injustice of class disparity.

9 *Ossessione* (1943), a crime thriller based on the American author James M. Cain’s novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, was Visconti’s first feature film.

10 *Mastro-don Gesualdo* and *I Malavoglia* are two novels by Verga. *I Malavoglia*, about a family of fisherman in the Sicilian village of Aci Trezza, became the basis for Visconti’s film *La Terra Trema*.

11 *Mezzogiorno* is a term for southern Italy.

12 *I Mille* [“the thousand”] of Garibaldi refers to the landing of the Italian patriot Giuseppe Garibaldi with his force of about a thousand partisans on the island of Sicily in 1860, in a campaign to liberate the island from the Bourbon tyranny of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and claim it for a united Italy. Of course Sicily was not literally a “terra incognita,” but like the Milanese Visconti, Garibaldi (born in Nice) was an outsider with respect to southern Italy.

13 *Conversations in Sicily* (1941) was a novel by the Sicilian writer Elio Vittorini. It describes the return of a young man from the north of Italy to his native village in Sicily to see his mother, and deals with themes of poverty and exploitation.

14 Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an influential Italian Marxist philosopher and antifascist. Among other ideas, he stressed that intellectuals must not merely give direction to working classes, but must educate and be educated by them.

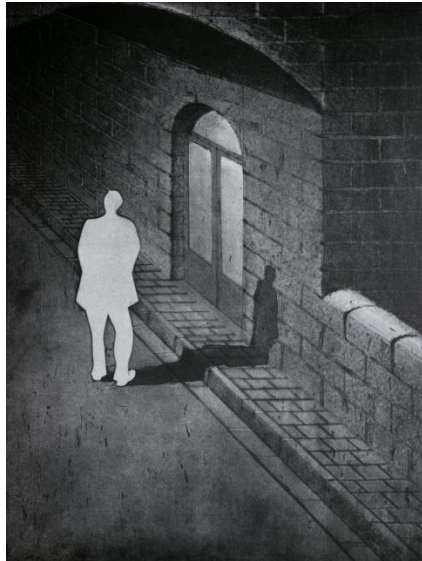
15 *the myth of the state bureaucracy* - i.e., the idea that state institutions and their rules would ensure progress and fair play for the peasants and laborers of the south.

16 *La Terra Trema* (1948) is Visconti’s neorealist film epic about a family of fishermen in the actual village of Aci Trezza, Sicily, loosely based on Gramsci’s *I Malavoglia*. Through the story of the family, especially of the son who tries to break the monopoly of the fish buyers who keep the village’s fishermen in poverty, Visconti indirectly analyzes the causes of oppression and the reasons for its endurance. It was funded by the Italian Communist Party and was to have been the first of three films dealing with Sicilian fishermen, peasants, and miners, respectively. The other two films were never realized.

17 The main plot of *Rocco and His Brothers* is a melodrama involving a love triangle with deadly consequences.

18 The plot involves a rape and a murder motivated by injured honor.

19 Visconti has not explicitly listed two questions in this essay, but he is apparently referring to, firstly, the accusation that his films are portrayals of individual characters and their fates, rather than treatments of fundamental class issues, and, secondly, that his stories seem to end in defeat rather than pointing the way to a triumphal class victory.



Manno - L'ombra che accmpagna,
acquaforte e acquantina su ferro,
400x300 mm, 2014





Re-Creations:
American Poets in Translation

Edited by Michael Palma





Poems by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Translated by Barbara Carle

Poems by Peter Covino

Translated by Luigi Bonaffini

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was born in Boston. His father, a Unitarian Minister, died of stomach cancer in 1811. Emerson graduated from Harvard Divinity School and followed his father into the ministry in 1829. He married eighteen-year-old Ellen Tucker in September of that year. Her death, from tuberculosis, less than two years later affected him profoundly, and contributed to the growing skepticism that led to his withdrawal from the ministry several years afterward. In 1834 he moved to Concord, Massachusetts, which would be his home for the rest of his life, and met Lydia Jackson, whom he married the following year. As a writer and public speaker, Emerson is best known for his essays, including such seminal pieces as "The American Scholar" (1836), "Nature" (1837), and "Self-Reliance" (1841). In the 1840s and '50s he became increasingly active in the Abolitionist movement. His articulation of his Transcendentalist philosophy and emphasis on individual moral responsibility influenced a number of younger men, most notably Henry David Thoreau. In addition to his highly influential prose works, he published several substantial collections of verse: *Poems* (1847), *May-Day and Other Pieces* (1867), and *Selected Poems* (1876). After several years of deterioration of his mental faculties, he died on April 27, 1882, four weeks before his seventy-ninth birthday.

Peter Covino was born in Sturno, Italy, and moved with his family to the United States when he was a child. For ten years he was a social worker in New York City in the fields of foster care and AIDS services, after which he earned a doctorate from the University of Utah, and he is now an associate professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Rhode Island. His poems have been published in the *American Poetry Review*, *Colorado Review*, *The Paris Review*, *The Yale Review*, and *The Penguin Anthology of*





Italian-American Writing, among others. His poetry collections are *Cut Off the Ears of Winter* (2005) and *The Right Place to Jump* (2012), and he is the co-editor, with Dennis Barone, of *Essays on Italian American Literature and Culture* (2012). He has received the Frank O'Hara Poetry Prize for his chapbook *Straight Boyfriend* (2001), the 2007 PEN American/Joyce Osterweil Award for *Cut Off the Ears of Winter*, and the Paterson Poetry Prize for Literary Excellence (2013). He has also recently completed a translation of the poetry of Dario Bellezza. He is one of the founding editors of the poetry journal *Barrow Street* and the Barrow Street Press, and since 2009 has been the poetry editor of *VIA: Voices in Italian Americana*.



Ralph Waldo Emerson**The Snow-Storm**

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farmhouse at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.



Ralph Waldo Emerson

Translated by Barbara Carle

La bufera di neve

Annunciata da ogni tromba del cielo
arriva la neve spronando i campi
senza posarsi mai, l'aria imbiancata
cela collina e bosco, fiume e etere
vela la cascina in fondo al giardino.
Il passeggero in slitta fermo, il passo
del corriere rallentato, gli amici
chiusi fuori, i compagni di casa
seduti intorno al chiaro focolare,
avvolti nella intimità impetuosa
della bufera.

Osservate l'arte
della tramontana. Da una cava
invisibile per sempre fornita
di tegole, il feroce artefice
incurva i suoi candidi baluardi
col tetto proiettato intorno ad ogni
piolo sopravento, o albero o porta.
Di corsa, con mille mani il suo fare
feroce, così estroso selvaggio
non cura i numeri, le misure.
Beffardo sulle stie o sui canili
pende ghirlande di marmo, in guisa
di cigno adorna il rovo ascoso
riempie il viale del contadino
da muro a muro malgrado
i sospiri, all'ingresso una torretta
fine incorona il lavoro. Con le ore
contate quando il mondo gli appartiene,
si congela come se non ci fosse
dopo torna il sole lascia un'arte
di stupore imitare con lente
strutture, pietra dopo pietra, fatta
in un'epoca, l'opera notturna
del demente vento, la spiritosa
architettura della neve.



Days

Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
 Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
 And marching single in an endless file,
 Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
 To each they offer gifts after his will,
 Bread, kingdoms, stars, or sky that holds them all.
 I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
 Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
 Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
 Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
 Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

Hymn

*Sung at the Completion of the Concord Monument, April 19,
 1836*

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
 Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
 Here once the embattled farmers stood,
 And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept;
 Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
 And Time the ruined bridge has swept
 Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,
 We set today a votive stone;
 That memory may their deed redeem,
 When, like our sires, our sons are gone.



Le giornate

Figlie del tempo, le giornate ipocrite,
calme mute quali dervisci scalzi
marciano in una fila infinita
e nelle mani fascine e diademi.
A ognuno porgono ciò che vuole
in dono, pane, regni, stelle o il cielo
che tutto contiene. Io nel mio giardino
intrecciato vidi il fasto, scordai
le speranze del mattino, corsi
a cogliere spezie e mele, si volse
la giornata e se ne andò silenziosa.
Troppo tardi scorsi sotto la benda
solenne il suo disprezzo.

Inno

*Cantato per inaugurare il monumento di Concord, il 19 aprile
1836*

Ornò il diluvio il ponte severo
dove issarono la bandiera al vento
di aprile. Qui fermarono il tempo
i contadini assediati e spararono
il colpo udito dal mondo intero.

Da allora il nemico si assopì
come il vincitore in silenzio dorme
e il tempo spazzò via le rotte forme
del ponte sul torrente che proseguì
a strisciare sicuro verso il mare.

Sulla verde riva del dolce ruscello
innalziamo la lapide votiva
perché il ricordo possa riscattare
quella impresa quando i nostri figli
come i siri verranno a mancare.



Spirit, that made those heroes dare
 To die, and leave their children free,
 Bid Time and Nature gently spare
 The shaft we raise to them and thee.

Brahma

If the red slayer think he slays,
 Or if the slain think he is slain,
 They know not well the subtle ways
 I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
 Shadow and sunlight are the same;
 The vanished gods to me appear;
 And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
 When me they fly, I am the wings;
 I am the doubter and the doubt,
 And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
 And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
 But thou, meek lover of the good!
 Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Letters

Every day brings a ship,
 Every ship brings a word;
 Well for those who have no fear,
 Looking seaward well assured
 That the word the vessel brings
 Is the word they wish to hear.



Spirito, facesti gli eroi sfidare
la morte per liberare i figli cari
supplica il tempo e la natura
di risparmiare per loro e per te
l'asta commemorativa che sale.

Brahma

Se il rosso omicida crede di uccidere,
se l'ucciso morto si vuol credere,
non conosce le finezze che colgo
sembro passare ma poi mi rivolgo.

Lontano o scordato per me è accanto,
l'ombra e la luce sono altrettanto,
gli dei svaniti mi appaiono chiari,
l'onta e la gloria mi sono uguali.

Chi mi esclude ragiona male,
chi vola adopera le mie ali,
sono il dubitatore e il dubbio,
l'inno che il bramino canta sono io.

Gli dei forti bramano la mia dimora,
i sette sacri la bramano ancora,
ma tu, schivo, che ami il bene e il bello!
Trova me e volgi le spalle al cielo.

Le lettere

Ogni giorno porta un bastimento
Ogni bastimento porta una parola
È bene, per chi non ha paura
Rivolto al mare ben sicuro,
Che la parola in arrivo col veliero
Sia quella che spera di sentire.



Good-Bye

Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home:
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
But now, proud world! I'm going home.

Good-bye to Flattery's fawning face;
To Grandeur with his wise grimace;
To upstart Wealth's averted eye;
To supple Office, low and high;
To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go, and those who come;
Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home.

I am going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone, —
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the livelong day,
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?



Addio

Addio, vano mondo! vado a casa:
non mi sei amico, nemmeno io ti sono.
Da tempo vago tra le tue folle spente
un'arca da fiume sui flutti dell'oceano
da tempo mosso dai colpi che creano
ma ora, vano mondo, torno a casa.

Addio alle moine dell'adulazione,
alla grandezza delle savie smorfie,
allo sguardo arricchito distolto,
all'agile incarico, basso e alto,
ai varchi pieni, alla corte alla strada,
ai cuori freddi a chi ha fretta e non bada
a quelli che vanno e a chi viene,
addio vano mondo! vado a casa!

Vado alla mia lapide focolare,
cocolata dalle verdi colline,
un cantuccio segreto solitario
in un ameno boschetto inventato
da fate giocose sotto archi verdi
che fanno eco al canto dei merli,
dove piede volgare non si ferma,
un luogo sacro al pensiero e a Dio.

Ah, quando starò nel nido silvano,
calpesterò il vanto greco e romano.
Quando sarò disteso sotto i pini,
dove brillano gli astri divini,
irridere il vano folclore umano,
le scuole sofiste, i ceti dotti.
A che servono i nobili concetti,
quando uomo e Dio in natura sono uniti?



Peter Covino**Closer**

In the end there was
a certain grace

splayed on the table
unrecognizable

our beloved (pup)
barely

five sedated on
a manual respirator

unresponsive
Phenobarbital

overdose in wait
human hair

not fur its smell
and luster

in spite of a final
breathless episode

just minutes before
we arrived for our

nightly visit the ex and I
he from across country

in case of the worst
sweet pup

earlier in the day
recognizing his hide

and seek whistle
paw shake of recognition



Luigi Bonaffini / Peter Covino

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Peter Covino

Translated by Luigi Bonaffini

Più vicino

Alla fine c'era
una certa grazia

divaricata sul tavolo
irriconoscibile

il nostro amato cucciolo
appena

cinquenne sedato su
un respiratore manuale

inerte
Fenobarbital

overdose in attesa
capelli umani

non pelo il suo odore
e lustro

nonostante l'ultimo
episodio senza fiato

pochi minuti prima
che arrivassimo per la nostra

visita di ogni sera l'ex ed io
lui dall'altra parte del paese

casomai fosse il peggio
dolce cucciolo

non molto prima
riconoscendo

il suo fischio di nascondino
la stretta di zampa in riconoscimento



cone headed oxygen
tubes stapled to her nose

our last link too
expiring

yes, a certain grace
to release this spirit

from the metal
vet emergency room cage

to sniff her hair
feel the last shallow

horror of breath
a stopped baby-like

heart all muscle
and miles of hiking

reduced to a toneless
aspiration pneumonia —

released spirit etherized
in the lingering smell

of the keepsake collar
and blanket on the bed

at my feet where
nightly she tried

to creep up
pawing me still



tubi d'ossigeno a testa di cono
spillati al naso

anche il nostro ultimo nesso
quasi scaduto

sì, una certa grazia
per liberare il suo spirito

dalla gabbia di metallo
nella sala d'emergenza del veterinario

per fiutarle il pelo
sentire l'ultimo leggero

orrore del respiro
un cuore fermo

quasi infantile un forte muscolo
e chilometri di camminate

ridotti a una polmonite da aspirazione
priva di tono -

spirito liberato eterizzato
nell'odore persistente

del collare e coperta
ricordo sul letto

ai miei piedi dove
ogni notte cercava

di strisciarmi addosso
battendo ancora le zampe.



Red Desert

It must have been the early seventies
When we first saw that film, my older sister
And I, in a trip that seemed to the moon
Or at least the City and not the art house

Cinema in Roslyn, Long Island, just
The next town over from ours where a whole
Village had immigrated from Italy –
Glen Cove, Long Island, twin city to Sturno,

Avellino and some other imagined
Calabria. She was apoplectic
To see Antonioni, a strange name
Similar to Tony... Tonino.... Yet,

Nothing readied me for the jolt of her
Neon orange mini-dress, or thigh-high
Go-go boots, and the crimped auburn bob,
With chic matching white and gold face-hugging

Glasses. It's tempting to invent a bruised
Or swollen eye, though they were likely
Puffy from yearning and sleeplessness. Our
Parents had just read her diary and

Caught her in some tryst with a married man;
And she had run away briefly but been
Dragged back, here – to Monica Vitti and
Richard Harris' vows to redeem us;

Or remind us, we were part of the same
Alienated, industrial complex,
At least, in DeKooning-esque flashes of
Pea-green, noxious yellows, and of course red.

Red. Lots of it, as we melded into
The screen, my sister holding my hand I
Want to recall, and her hair too starting
To tussle and come loose as Monica



Deserto rosso

Deve essere stato agli inizi degli anni settanta
Quando abbiamo visto quel film per la prima volta, io
E la mia sorella più grande, in un viaggio
che sembrava finire sulla luna, o almeno alla City

E non il cinema d'essai a Roslyn, Long Island,
Il primo paese dopo il nostro, dove un intero
Villaggio era emigrato dall'Italia, -
Glen Cove, Long Island, città gemella di Sturno,

Avellino e un'altra Calabria immaginaria..
Lei stava dando di matta
per vedere Antonioni, nome strano
simile a Tony... Tonino... Eppure

Niente mi aveva preparato allo schock della sua minigonna
Neon arancione, o gli stivali Go-go fino alla coscia,
Il caschetto mosso castano ramato, con occhiali
Coordinati bianco-oro che le coprivano il volto.

Si è tentati a inventare occhi
Pesti e gonfi, anche se erano probabilmente
Tumefatti per la smania e l'insonnia. I nostri
Genitori avevano appena letto il suo diario e

L'avevano beccata in una tresca con un uomo sposato;
E lei era scappata via per un po' di tempo ma era stata
Riportata a forza qui - alle promesse di Monica Vitti
E di Richard Harris di redimerci;

O di ricordarci che eravamo parte dello stesso
Complesso industriale alienato,
Almeno, in sprazzi à la DeKooning di
Verde pisello, giallo tossico, e naturalmente rosso.

Rosso. Tanto, mentre noi ci mescolavamo allo
Schermo, voglio ricordare mia sorella
Che mi teneva la mano, e anche i suoi capelli
Che cominciavano ad arruffarsi e a sciogliersi



Hurtled toward *her* affair, just a few weeks
After being released from the psych ward
And failing to open some unspecified
Boutique. Our star escapes into the fog,

Symbolically, after nearly driving
Off a pier and leaving behind her purse.
Meanwhile, her child feigns paralysis
And refuses to budge, until Vitti

Tells a fable about a far-flung beach
(That I learned later was in Sardinia).
Between 7-Up refills and Milk Duds,
All I wanted was never to be bored,

And I wasn't, as I think about it now
Pampered at this desk in a fancy Roman
Hotel. No wonder a student recently
Called me a diva, (divo, I'd accept),

On these days after a second Malaysian
Plane disaster; and Italy's ex-premier
Pardoned, as expected, from his alleged
Peccadillos with "Mubarak's niece."

This latest visit to the first country
Was more mourning and preparatory
Paving the way into the family tomb
Avoiding our other sister in ruin;

Pricing the transport of body vs. bones
Convincing this once-hip sister to bury
The hatchet, and heed her own mounting wounds—
No holiday cards or calls; from a size

8 to 18 in ten years. "Blown-up
Like a bicycle pump," mother would scold,
Present only to the rancor of age,
Underemployment, and hip replacement.



Mentre Monica volava verso la *sua* tresca, poche settimane
Dopo essere stata dimessa dal reparto psichiatrico
E non essere riuscita ad aprire una imprecisata
Boutique. La nostra star fugge nella nebbia,

Simbolicamente, dopo aver quasi fatto un salto
Dal molo con la macchina lasciandosi dietro la borsa.
Intanto suo figlio finge una paralisi
E si rifiuta di muoversi, finché la Vittì

Non racconta la fiaba di un spiaggia lontana
(Che più tardi ho saputo era in Sardegna).
Tra bis di 7-Up e Milk Dud,
Volevo solo non annoiarmi

E fu così, mentre ci penso
Coccolato in questa scrivania in un lussuoso
Albergo romano. Nessuna meraviglia se uno studente
Mi ha recentemente chiamato diva (divo lo accetterei),

Di questi giorni dopo il secondo disastro
Di un aereo malese e il perdono dell'ex
Premier italiano, come previsto, per le sue presunte
Scappatelle con la "nipote di Murabak".

Ques'ultima visita al primo paese
Era più un lutto e un tentativo
Di spianare la strada per la tomba di famiglia
Evitando l'altra nostra sorella in rovina;

Stabilire il prezzo del trasporto di salma vs. ossa,
Convincere questa sorella una volta alla moda
A seppellire l'ascia di guerra, e pensare alle sue ferite
Sempre peggiori - niente cartoline alle feste o telefonate,

Da taglia 8 a 18 in dieci anni: "Gonfia come
Una pompa di bicicletta", rimproverava mia madre,
Presente solo al rancore dell'età,
Sottoccupazione e protesi dell'anca.



Even Roman friends inexplicably
 Don't return calls. Colleagues warn by email
 That I should go back into therapy.
 Soon enough, I suppose I will. Amidst

This intangible wreckage and the rapid
 Fragmentation of consumerism,
 We can even Face Time, or chat on Skype.

Your Call

Your call from the other room
 like a call from another world:
 the way the world seemed

to gather at the end of your bed.
 Who could say what epiphany
 awaited? You'd keep your back

to me, ceremoniously dressing,
 talking in the most mellifluous
 contralto. I had to force myself

not to check if the radio were on.
 How unlike that clipped, housework
 voice — you used to complain about

washing dishes, scrubbing clothes.
 That voice you cursed him with
 for not buying a dryer, then

prayed penitently to put the good
 in his head (as if agitated words
 had reached some influential saint

on a direct line). Your call
 from your room was the call
 from the Kingdom, and I never

answered, for fear my own
 voice might ruin the mood.
 I would touch you nowhere



Persino gli amici romani inspiegabilmente
Non richiamano. I colleghi mi avvertono
Via email che dovrei riprendere la terapia.
Suppongo che fra non molto lo farò. Tra

Questa intangibile devastazione e la rapida
Frammentazione del consumerismo,
Possiamo anche Affrontare il Tempo, o chattare su Skype.

La tua chiamata

La tua chiamata dall'altra stanza
come la chiamata da un altro mondo:
il modo in cui il mondo sembrava

raccogliersi ai piedi del tuo letto.
Chi potrebbe dire quale epifania
fosse in attesa? Mi voltavi la schiena,

vestendoti ceremoniosamente,
parlando nel più soave
contralto. Mi sono dovuto sforzare

a controllare che non fosse accesa la radio.
Così diverso da quella voce secca
da faccende domestiche - di cui ti lamentavi

lavando i piatti, strofinando gli indumenti.
Quella voce con cui imprecavi contro di lui
perché non comprava l'asciugatrice, poi

pregavi contrita di mettergli la testa
a posto (come se delle parole agitate
avessero raggiunto qualche santo influente

su una linea diretta). La tua chiamata
dalla tua stanza era la chiamata
dal Regno, ed io non ho mai

risposto, per paura che la mia stessa
voce potesse rovinare lo stato d'animo.
Ti toccavo da nessuna parte



and everywhere. Who could say
what epiphany awaited, what family
secret, what sighting of the Virgin.

His Touch

Today I learned the cost of living has not gone up.
I am not worth a three percent raise.

Today I learned I can't live a day without
coming back to you, back to that point.

Not ten years of therapy, not an ocean
between us, a generation gap.

Today I learned the money I earn
will never be enough:

furniture polish, wax,
a spit-shine for all spit-shines.

How I have re-created those nights,
my first communion, my marriage;

and how I enjoy these reenactments,
lover-father, father-lover,

as much seducer as seduced,
as much only child as fatherless son.

And if I could carve myself
out of myself,

if I could bleed
a thousand baths —

because even then I'd repair myself
the way water does after it is entered.

Oh, the slippery friction of it,
the slippery fiction ...



e dappertutto. Chi potrebbe dire
quale epifania fosse in attesa, quale segreto
di famiglia, quale visione della Vergine.

Il suo contatto

Oggi ho scoperto che il costo della vita non è aumentato.
Io non valgo un aumento del tre per cento.

Oggi ho scoperto che non posso vivere senza
ritornare a te, a quel punto.

Nemmeno dieci anni di terapia, nemmeno un oceano
tra di noi, un gap generazionale.

Oggi ho scoperto che i soldi che guadagno
non basteranno mai;

lucido per i mobili, cera,
una lucidatura a sputo per tutte le lucidature a sputo.

Come ho ricreato quelle notti,
la mia prima comunione, il mio matrimonio,

e come mi piacciono queste rievocazioni,
amante-padre, padre-amante,

tanto seduttore quanto sedotto,
tanto figlio unico quanto figlio senza padre.

E se potessi ritagliarmi
da me stesso,

se potessi sanguinare
mille bagni -

perchè anche allora mi ricucirei
come l'acqua quando c'entra qualcosa.

Oh, la sua viscida frizione,
la viscida finzione...



Lizard-Tree

Here in our garden you are
a gnarled, spindly intruder,
the transplanted heart
of an old conjure woman.

Nourishing you is no easy task:
the fastidious pruning
and insecticides, the plastic covers
for the cold. You ward me off

with claws three inches long
and shriveled fruit: poisonous
lemons whose fragrance
still haunts the yard.

How will I know you are dead —
when you no longer dart around me,
when the hiss of the wind subsides.



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L'albero di Hiba

Qui nel nostro giardino sei
un nodoso, allampanato intruso,
il cuore trapiantato
di una vecchia maga.

Nutrirti non è facile:
la meticolosa potatura
e gli insetticidi, i teloni di plastica
per il freddo. Tu mi tieni a bada

con artigli lunghi sette centimetri
e frutti appassiti: limoni
velenosi la cui fragranza
ancora infesta il cortile.

Come farò a sapere che sei morto -
quando non mi guizzi più intorno,
quando si calma il sibilo del vento.







Voices in English from Europe to New Zealand

Edited by Marco Sonzogni



James Ackhurst and **Elena Borelli** are a British-Italian team of translators. They are currently working on the first complete English translation of Pascoli's *Poemi Conviviali*.

Fabrizio Ferreri was born in Catania in 1979. He holds a PhD in the History of Science from the State University of Milan and a PhD in Sociology of Development from the Kore University of Enna. He teaches philosophy at secondary schools and is leading the establishment of an Observatory for Sicily's small towns.

Marco Sonzogni and **Ross Woods** are widely-published literary translators based in Wellington, New Zealand and Dublin, Ireland. They have co-translated the poetry of three Swiss-Italian poets: Fabiano Alborghetti (in print), Yari Bernasconi (forthcoming) and Giorgio Orelli (in print).

Ilaria Caffio was born in Taranto and graduated in Philosophical Sciences with a thesis on Simone Weil. She designs, project-manages and curates literary and cultural events. Her first collection of poems, *Congiungimento*, was published in 2017 by Mauro Marino for Fondo Verri Editions (Spagice Poesia) with a preface by Flaminia Cruciani.

Tim Smith (1992) is a postgraduate student at Victoria University of Wellington and holds degrees in Italian, Classics and Literary Translation Studies. A published literary translator, he specializes in the reception of Dante. *To Hell and Back. Dante's Inferno in English Translation (1782-2017)*, co-edited with Marco Sonzogni, was published this year by John Benjamins.

Paola de Benedictis is a journalist, writer, poet, and performer. After graduating with degrees in Communication, Philosophy,

and a Master's degree in Cinematographical Writing, she started working with the *Sindacato dei giornalisti cinematografici* in Rome, the *Rivista del Cinematografo* and the *Filmmaker magazine*. In 2005, she started working for *RAI a Report*, falling in love with the Middle East. She studies Arabic, participating in a journalism course for war reporters by the *fondazione Cutuli*, seeing Lebanon and Israel with her own eyes. She has written for numerous publishing houses, including LietoColle, Perrone, Vitale, and Pesa Nervi, receiving prizes and widespread recognition. She recently received a special mention at the *Ilmioesordio - Poesia 2015* competition, and was a finalist for the Quasimodo poetry prize in 2015. In 2017, she took part in the first iteration of a poetry course at the Molly Bloom writing school in Rome run by Gilda Policastro.

At present, she is working on her 'posthumous' novel, neither in prose nor poetry, rather in 'written voice'.

Valentina Gambioli was born in Sassari in 1995 and she lives in Cagliari. She is a third year student in the faculty of Languages and Cultures for Linguistic Mediation at the University of Cagliari, where she has developed a particular interest for the English language and translation studies. She has also studied at University College Dublin, for one academic year and currently she is working on her final dissertation at Victoria University of Wellington, under the supervision of Dr Marco Sonzogni, Reader in Translation Studies, experienced translator and interpreter.

A special thank you to Alan Bates, Rory McKenzie and Marco Sonzogni for reviewing the English translations.

Giovanna Iorio lives in London. She is a widely published and award-winning author. Her most recent publications, including *La neve è altrove* (Fara Editore, 2017), *Haiku dell'inquietudine* (Fusibilia, 2016), *Dormiveglia* (racconti, ReginaZabo, 2016); *Frammenti di un profilo* (Pellicano, 2015). Her poems are featured in many anthologies, including *Cuore di preda* (CFR) and *SignorNo* (SEAM). She writes for *Roma&Roma*, *DiarioRomano*, *Erodoto108* and *L'Estro Verso*. She is the recipient of many awards, most recently the 2016 Civetta Minerva

Award and the 2016 Fara Editore Award. Her work has received special commendation at the 2015 Camaiore Prize 2015 and at the 2015 Sassari International Literary Prize.

Suze Randal completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at Victoria University in 1970. She retired from teaching languages in 2014, having spent most of her teaching career as Deputy Principal of Rongotai College in Wellington. In 2017 she returned to Victoria to study Italian.

Maddalena Lotter was born in 1990 in Venice, where she lives and works. She has an Arts degree from Ca' Foscari University and a diploma in flute from the Venice Conservatory of Music. She is a musician and teacher. Her first book of poetry, entitled *Verticale*, was published in the yellow series of Lietocolle&Pordenonelegge in 2015; among its various accolades, *Verticale* was launched at Turin's Book Fair (*Salone del Libro*) and was a finalist in the Carducci Prize in 2016. Some texts are also included in various printed anthologies and appear on numerous online literary sites, including *Nuovi Argomenti*, *Nazione Indiana*, the *RAI Poetry Blog* and others.

Elena Carletti is a PhD Candidate in Italian Studies at the University of Sydney where she works on poetry and photography. Her translation studies background allowed her to work as an intern at Giramondo Publishing, for which she carried out literary translations of some short stories by Tom Cho. In 2013 she specialized in Italian Studies with a thesis on the concept of space-time in the poetry of Amelia Rosselli. She has published the essays *Il chiarore che deforma – processi deformanti nella poetica di Amelia Rosselli* on «altrelettere», and, *Space-time and tetradimensionality in the post-war poetics of Lucio Fontana, Toti Scialoja and Amelia Rosselli* on «Arabeschi». Her research interests include: Italian poetry of the twentieth century, English literature, translation, visual studies and photography.

Sylvia Plath was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1932. She was the daughter of Aurelia Schober and Otto Plath, an entomolo-



gist and professor at Boston University who died in 1940, when Plath was only eight years old. After her graduation, Plath, a talented student and writer from an early age, obtained a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Cambridge, England. While in England, she met the English poet Ted Hughes and they got married in 1956. Plath's poetry is associated with the genre of confessional poetry and it is often compared to the work of Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton. She published her first poetry collection - *The Colossus and Other Poems* - in 1960. In 1963, she committed suicide due to her clinical depression. Her following poetry collections were edited by Ted Hughes and published posthumously. In 1982, Plath was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her *The Collected Poems*.

Alice Amico (1993) is a translator, Italian teacher and crossword enthusiast based in Auckland, New Zealand. She holds a MA in Specialised Translation (English and Russian) from the University of Bologna (School of Interpreting and Translation in Forlì). She graduated with a thesis on Frank Sargeson, for which she translated some of his short stories, with a focus on the aspect of hidden homosexuality. Her main interest is literary translation; she has a column on New Zealand prose writers on the website www.leavingitalyivingnewzealand.com

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the Frank Sargeson Trust, who allowed me to publish this short story, and to my supervisor professor Adele D'Arcangelo, who provided me with valuable feedback and encouragement.

Frank Sargeson (1903-1982) is considered the father of New Zealand literature, as he wrote in New Zealand English, for New Zealanders and on New Zealand reality. Born in Hamilton, he spent most of his life in Takapuna, Auckland, where he wrote his very much loved and praised short stories and acted as a friend and generous mentor for a circle of young writers, among whom we also find Janet Frame, who once wrote to him: "The Great Irrigation Scheme of New Zealand literature is having marvellous



results. [Remember] the narrow channel you made, all alone, into that part of the land where everyone said nothing would grow? And remember the struggle you had to get people to accept it was necessary? You can look at all those creeks and channels that followed and see the orchard. What an orchard." Sargeson's stories mainly deal with the divide between a bourgeois and puritan society and its outcasts, and many of the stories present a subtext where the *mates'* relationship is often described with ambiguous tones that hint more at a homosexual relationship between men, rather than at a plain friendship. The latest edition of his short stories was published by Cape Catley in 2010. See: <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4s5/sargeson-frank>

Francesca Benocci is a PhD candidate in Literary Translation Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. Her project consists of the compilation of an anthology of contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand women poets in her Italian translation, along with the related theoretical background in literature and poetry translation. Other than translating and editing, she writes a blog, poetry, and short stories both in English and Italian. She holds an MA in Literary Translation and Text Editing, and a BA in Languages, Literature and Cultures both from the University of Siena.

Tusiata Avia is a poet, performer and children's book writer. Known for her dynamic performance style, she has written and performed a one-woman poetry show, *Wild Dogs Under My Skirt*, which toured between 2002-2008 in Moscow, Jerusalem and Vienna, as well as destinations closer to home. Tusiata has held a number of residencies including the Fulbright Pacific Writer's Fellowship at University of Hawaii, and the Ursula Bethel Writer in Residence at University of Canterbury. She was the 2013 recipient of the Janet Frame Literary Trust Award. Her latest collection, *Fale Aitu* (Victoria University Press, 2016) was shortlisted for the 2017 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.

Alessandra Giorgioni (1996) is a postgraduate student (Hon-



Marco Sonzogni

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ours) at Victoria University of Wellington, studying Italian Studies and Literary Translation Studies. An avid reader, the encounter with works in translation started her love for the theory and practice of literary translation as creative writing.

Eleonora Rimolo was born in Salerno in 1991 and she lives in Nocera Inferiore. She graduated in Classical Letters and Modern Philology, she is a Ph.D. student in “Literary Studies” at the University of Salerno. She has published two collections of poems: *Dell’assenza e della presenza* (Matisklo, 2013) and *La resa dei giorni* (AlterEgo, 2015, Prize of “Young Europe Poetry in verses 2016” organized by the House of Poetry of Como). She works as an editor for the online section of ‘Atelier’. A short sequence from *Temeraria gioia* was published in the December 2016 issue of the literary journal *Atelier*.



FABRIZIO FERRERI

*

*Or che m'ascolti è come
se da me svolgessi
il vischio della materia
e intorno il sapore acre
e forte spandesse
di vittoria – su cosa
contro chi se al più
è una larva tinta di rosa
per darne cupida illusione
che di fronte a me si posa?*

*

Filigrana intravista
in contro-luce appena,
falsariga cecità
e vista, silenzioso solista
in un coro di sbandate voci, dimmi
sei demiurgo dalle mani invisibili
o semplice cronista?

*

(stanato dal profondo dei tuoi anni
intatta ancora la tua cera
la mia impastata di miseria...)

la voce
fina
di sordina – spremuto carbone
che appena fuma
quasi spento
quasi un boccheggio



James Ackhurst and Elena Borelli / Fabrizio Ferreri

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FABRIZIO FERRERI

Translated by James Ackhurst and Elena Borelli

*

*Now that you're listening to me
it's like you were peeling off of me
the milkskin of things
and all around the acrid scent
of triumph were spreading through the air -
on what, against whom
if it's nothing more than
a pink-white pupa
unfolding an illusion of lust
before my eyes?*

*

Filigree barely gleaned
in the chiaroscuro sheen,
palimpsest, blindness
and vision, a silent violin
in a disbanded orchestra:
tell me, are you the puppet-master
pulling invisible threads
or just a chronicler
of what's been?

*

(dripping down through the depth of your life
your waxen mask untarnished still
and mine muddied with wretchedness...)

the thin
voice
of a muffle
crumbled charcoal
barely smoking
 just about extinguished
 just about a gasp



*

Colpevole sonnolenza
o silenzio, tuo malgrado,
che ti sotterra?

In questa conca di respiro
mozzato
 infondi
sieri d'eternità
nei nostri grumi di malattia.

*

In questo lembo di terra
duro pure al peccato
il cielo si è fermato
con il suo pallore

– nel silenzio complice
dell'albero, della pietra
non in questa così tesa
ragione ma lesa nei suoi slanci
inane alle sue rampe

avrei voluto incontrarti...

ILARIA CAFFIO

Il falco scende a picco sul cranio scorticato.
Morsica laterale col becco ingiallito
le statue di Sant'Anna, le nivee speranze-
una beatitudine che aspetto è questa.
Tirare fuori gli anellidi dalla gola
essere il poeta del foro la colomba sulla spalla
appiccare il Fuoco sedermi nel Fuoco
librarmi nei barocchi vicoli luridi di piscio
pulire l'andatura dalle botte portare i capelli
in alto squartare per bene il Kyrie eleison
invitare solo i topi al banchetto nuziale.

*

Ecco Gesù ai piedi del porto
trascina un carretto di buoi mandorle e tè.
Mi condurrà alla croce
ai luoghi del ricordo
mi parlerà d'amore mi parlerà d'amore
con voce elementare
cingerà agrumeti monti vallate mari
con un gesto conosciuto
e porterà dalla fronte bagnata il raccolto
fra le pieghe del lenzuolo.

*

Mi abita
mi disfa in parti brevi
l'urna del tempo
mi giudica-
sull'uscio della porta
la luce si piega a malapena.
Tu conosci la rovina dei giorni
Io la celebriamo.



ILARIA CAFFIO

Translated by Marco Sonzogni and Ross Woods

The hawk dives down on the skinned cranium.
It bites sideways with its yellowed beak
The statues of Santa Anna, her snow-white hopes —
A blessedness am waiting for is this.
Plucking worms from her throat
being the court poet the dove on her shoulder
lighting the Fire sitting in the Fire
soaring in baroque alleys filthy with piss
cleaning my stride from blows wearing my hair
up butchering the Kyrie eleison
inviting only the rats to my wedding feast.

*

There's Jesus at the foot of harbour
Pulling an oxen cart almonds and tea.
He'll lead me to the cross
to sites of memory
he'll tell me of love he'll tell me of love
in an elementary voice
he'll encircle citrus groves mountains valleys seas
with a familiar gesture
and he'll bring from his dripping forehead the harvest
between the folds of bedsheets.

*

It lives in me
it undoes me in small pieces
the urn of time
judges me —
at the doorstep
the light barely bends.
You know the ruin of days
I celebrate it.



*

*Se in questo Centro esiste un luogo buono
congiungerò le mani a forma di felce di spada lucente
minima ladrona in grotta
ricolma del dio infante
congiungerò i granai e le acque terrestri
aliti di vento palmi sospesi
in attesa di pace
congiungerò i corpi distanti negli esili fiati e
l'umanità diminuita prenderò in utero.*



*

If in this Centre a good place exists
I will join my hands a fern-like shining sword
smallest thief in the grotto
brimful with the infant god
I will join granaries and terrestrial waters
gusts of wind hanging palms
waiting for peace
I will join distant bodies in faint breaths and
I will carry a diminished humanity in utero.



PAOLA DE BENEDETTIS**La diagnosi condanna assolvendo**

Avrei voluto ingoiare il tuo cancro
convertendo la sua fame nel mio pasto
dove ho chiuso le mascelle del tuo sguardo.

La cervice del mondo

Giunse l'ora delle trasparenze.
Ingoiasti il fogliame duro del distacco
e risucchiasti d'un fiato interi stagni di dolore
Ciò che mi protesse fu l'assenza di riparo.
I gomiti della fiducia, i polsi della speranza
nulla di consolatorio venne a sostenere.
Caddi nella notte meridionale
dove la paura non è niente di intero
e ciò che si fa chiaro pietoso non diventa.

Nostalgie convalescenze e ricadute

Ci saranno sempre appunti poco chiari
giorni scarni rosicchiati dall'insonnia.
Scorreranno in processioni dubbi e colpe
le grafie di tutti i basta, dei miei forse.
Violenti quanto occorre, crudeli a sufficienza
torneranno
i cani amari dei ricordi.

Il margine del mondo si oscuro'

Bisogna declinare il pianto
come un verso senza transito
e reggere l'assalto dei tuoi silenzi armati.

Gabbia di Faraday

Chiusi nella mia austera densità la fine.
Feci ciao alla fine e annottò,
con impotenza estrema.



Tim Smith / Paola De Benedictis

PAOLA DE BENEDICTIS

Translated By Tim Smith

Diagnosis, Absolving While Condemning

I would've swallowed your cancer
Turning its hunger into my meal
Right where I shut my jaws from your gaze.

The Cervix Of The World

The time of transparency has arrived.
I ingested the rough foliage of our parting
swallowed again on that breath, whole ponds of sorrow;
it was the absence of a shore that used to protect me.
The elbows of trust, the pulses of hope,
no consolation came to help me.
I fell into the southern night
where fear is never complete
and what is made clear allows for no compassion.

Nostalgia, Convalescence, Relapse

Unclear notes will always be here,
meagre days nibbled away by insomnia.
Doubts and sins –
every 'stop!' and every 'maybe', handwritten –
will slip past in processions.
As violent as necessary, sufficiently cruel,
the bitter dogs of memories
will be returning.

The World's Edge Is Hidden

The weeping must be declined
like a verse without transit
and rule over the violence of your armed silences.

Faraday Cage

I shut the end into my austere density.
I said goodbye to the end and night fell,
with utter impotence.



GIOVANNA IORIO

*

Mi sveglia il tuo respiro di rami,
l'alba sulla corteccia
splende di vita.

*

Mi piacerebbe passare la vita
abbracciata a te
perché sento terribilmente la solitudine
di essere al mondo.

*

È un vero peccato
che la mia vita non ti commuova,
a me di te commuove tutto,
il fiore, il tronco, il frutto.

*

Mi siedo accanto a te
con gli occhi chiusi.
Si sente perfino il mare,
nelle tue radici.

*

Vorrei sapere cosa si prova
ad avere il muschio sul cuore,
ti ascolto in silenzio,
somiglia al tuo verde
il mio bisogno di parole.

*

Ho solo due gambe e dieci dita
come posso seguire le tue
cieche radici,
il tuo viaggio immobile dentro la vita?



GIOVANNA IORIO

Translated By Valentina Gambioli

*

Awakened by the breath of your branches,
the dawn on your bark
shines of life.

*

I would spend my life
In your hug
because I feel terribly the loneliness
of being in this world.

*

What a pity
that my life does not move you,
everything about you moves me,
the flowers, the trunk, the fruit.

*

I sit next to you
with my eyes closed.
You can even hear the sea,
in your roots.

*

I'd like to know what it feels like
to have moss on your heart,
I listen to you in silence,
resembles your green
my thirst for words.

*

All I have is two legs and ten fingers
how can I follow your
blind roots,
your still journey inside life?



*

Vorrei saper nuotare
nel tuo silenzio.
Tra i rami il vento infrange
un lago di cielo.

*

E dimmi le tue paure:
il lampo, la scure?
E quando abbracci l'aria
è un grido o una preghiera
l'intreccio commovente dei tuoi rami?
Sai, anch'io ho paura,
ogni giorno muore chi amo,
m'inchino a mani giunte
ma il cielo è lontano.

*

Forse ci stiamo pensando,
tu agiti un ramo,
a me all'improvviso
trema la mano.

*

Quando ci abbracceremo ci sarà la neve,
si abbasseranno fino a coprimi il cuore
le tue fronde.
Ci spezzeremo nello stesso istante.



*

Oh I wish I could swim
into your silence.
The wind among your branch breaks
a lake of sky.

*

And tell me your fears:
the lightning, the axe?
And when you hug the air
is it a cry or a prayer,
the heartwarming interweaving of your branches?
I am scared too, you know,
everyday someone I love dies,
I kneel down with my hands folded
but the sky is too far away.

*

Maybe we are thinking about each other,
you wave a branch,
suddenly my hand trembles -
an avalanche.

*

There will be snow when we hug,
your fronds
will roof in my heart.
We will break at the same instant.



MADDALENA LOTTER

'Nostra madre ci faceva ragionare'

Nostra madre ci faceva ragionare
ci ha insegnato tutto
dai miti all'impianto base della vita,
a volte in modo così dettagliato
che siamo diventati sottili come la luce
per infilarci piano nel mondo
senza disturbare le forze paurose
gigantesche che lo muovono.

Un ricordo d'infanzia

Abbiamo costruito una casa nella sabbia
e poi l'abbiamo calpestata.
Sulle macerie il capo supremo
decise che era ora di andare
a caccia di meduse, per essiccarle al sole.
Il più piccolo fu costretto
a toccare un tentacolo. Ci piaceva fare
e disfare; non vorrei eccedere
ma eravamo spietati.
Ad ogni buon conto, negli anni
nessuno è rimasto impunito.

'Addormentarsi in gioventù'

Addormentarsi in gioventù
con un pensiero dominante: tutta la vita
che è salva se c'è veramente un centro
della Terra a cui tutto si abbraccia,
se ci sono i venti sulfurei
e le grandi iguane del passato
abitanti del fondo di ogni conoscenza
nella camera magmatica
dove tutto, un tempo, è stato pensato.
Non viene dai cieli
la creazione, è una cosa interiore.



Suze Randal / Maddalena Lotter

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MADDALENA LOTTER

Translated by Suze Randal

'Our mother made us think'

Our mother made us think
she taught us everything
from the myths to the basic structure of life,
sometimes in so much detail
that we became insubstantial like light
to slip softly into the world
without disturbing the huge
and fearful forces that propel it.

A Childhood Memory

We built a house in the sand
and then we trod on it.
On its ruins the supreme leader
decided it was time to go
in search of jellyfish, to dry them in the sun.
The littlest one was forced
to touch a tentacle. We liked to do
and to undo. I don't want to exaggerate
but we were ruthless.
In any case, in those years
no one went unpunished.

'Falling asleep as a child'

Falling asleep as a child
with one upmost thought: that the whole of life
is safe if there really is a centre
of the Earth where everything is encompassed,
if there are the sulphurous winds
and the great iguanas of the past,
dwellers at the font of all knowledge in the magma chamber
where everything, at one time, was devised.
Creation does not come
from the heavens, it's an inner thing.



SYLVIA PLATH**Fever 103°**

Pure? What does it mean?
The tongues of hell
Are dull, dull as the triple

Tongues of dull, fat Cerberus
Who wheezes at the gate. Incapable
Of licking clean

The aguey tendon, the sin, the sin.
The tinder cries.
The indelible smell

Of a snuffed candle!
Love, love, the low smokes roll
From me like Isadora's scarves, I'm in a fright

One scarf will catch and anchor in the wheel,
Such yellow sullen smokes
Make their own element. They will not rise,

But trundle round the globe
Choking the aged and the meek,
The weak

Hothouse baby in its crib,
The ghastly orchid
Hanging its hanging garden in the air,

Devilish leopard!
Radiation turned it white
And killed it in an hour.

Greasing the bodies of adulterers
Like Hiroshima ash and eating in.
The sin. The sin.

Darling, all night
I have been flickering, off, on, off, on.



Elena Carletti / Silvia Plath

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SYLVIA PLATH

Translated By Elena Carletti

Febbre a 41

Puro? Che cosa vuol dire?
Le lingue dell'inferno
Sono smorte, smorte come la triplice

Lingua dello smorto, grasso Cerbero
Che sibila al cancello. Incapace
Di ripulire leccando

Il tendine infiammato, il peccato, il peccato.
Lo stoppaccino sfrigola.
L'odore indelebile

Di una candela spenta!
Amore, amore, i bassi fumi rotolano
Da me come le sciarpe d'Isadora, ho il terrore

Che una sciarpa si impigli e mi àncori alla ruota.
Quei foschi fumi gialli
Fanno il loro elemento. Non si alzeranno,

Ma ruzzoleranno intorno al mondo
Soffocando l'anziano e l'umile,
Il debole

Bimbo di serra nella sua culla,
L'orchidea spettrale
Che appende il suo giardino pensile nell'aria,

Leopardo infernale!
Le radiazioni l'hanno reso bianco
E ucciso in solo un'ora.

Ungendo i corpi degli adulteri
Come le ceneri di Hiroshima e il pasto consumato.
Il peccato. Il peccato.

Amore, tutta la notte



The sheets grow heavy as a lecher's kiss.

Three days. Three nights.
Lemon water, chicken
Water, water make me retch.

I am too pure for you or anyone.
Your body
Hurts me as the world hurts God. I am a lantern —

My head a moon
Of Japanese paper, my gold beaten skin
Infinitely delicate and infinitely expensive.

Does not my heat astound you! And my light!
All by myself I am a huge camellia
Glowing and coming and going, flush on flush.

I think I am going up,
I think I may rise —
The beads of hot metal fly, and I love, I

Am a pure acetylene
Virgin
Attended by roses,

By kisses, by cherubim,
By whatever these pink things mean!
Not you, nor him

Nor him, nor him
(My selves dissolving, old whore petticoats) —
To Paradise.

Insomniac

The night is only a sort of carbon paper,
Blueblack, with the much-poked periods of stars
Letting in the light, peephole after peephole ---
A bonewhite light, like death, behind all things.

Ho lampeggiato, accesa-spenta-accesa-spenta.
Le lenzuola si fanno pesanti come il bacio del libertino.

Tre giorni, tre notti.
Acqua al limone, acqua
Al pollo, acqua fammi vomitare.

Sono troppo pura per te o per chiunque altro.
Il tuo corpo
Mi fa male come il mondo fa male a Dio. Sono una lanterna

La mia testa una luna
Di carta giapponese, la mia pelle d'oro battuto
Infinitamente delicata e infinitamente costosa.

Non ti riempi di stupore il mio calore? E la mia luce?
Tutta da sola sono una enorme camelia
Che brilla e che viene e che va, vampa dopo vampa.

Mi sa che sto andando su,
Mi sa che mi elevo -
Le scaglie di caldo metallo volano e io, amore, io

Sono una pura vergine
Di acetilene
Scortata da rose,

Da baci, da cherubini,
Da qualsiasi cosa queste rosee cose significhino.
Non tu, né lui

Non lui, né lui
(Le mie me stessa in dissolvenza, vecchie sottane da
[puttana) -
Al Paradiso.

Insonne

Il cielo notturno è solo una sorta di carta carbone,
Blu-nero, con i punteggi di stelle traforati a fondo
Che lasciano entrare la luce, buco dopo buco -
Una luce bianco osso, come la morte, dietro ogni cosa.

Under the eyes of the stars and the moon's rictus
He suffers his desert pillow, sleeplessness
Stretching its fine, irritating sand in all directions.

Over and over the old, granular movie
Exposes embarrassments--the mizzling days
Of childhood and adolescence, sticky with dreams,
Parental faces on tall stalks, alternately stern and tearful,
A garden of buggy rose that made him cry.
His forehead is bumpy as a sack of rocks.
Memories jostle each other for face-room like obsolete film
[stars.

He is immune to pills: red, purple, blue ---
How they lit the tedium of the protracted evening!
Those sugary planets whose influence won for him
A life baptized in no-life for a while,
And the sweet, drugged waking of a forgetful baby.
Now the pills are worn-out and silly, like classical gods.
Their poppy-sleepy colors do him no good.

His head is a little interior of grey mirrors.
Each gesture flees immediately down an alley
Of diminishing perspectives, and its significance
Drains like water out the hole at the far end.
He lives without privacy in a lidless room,
The bald slots of his eyes stiffened wide-open
On the incessant heat-lightning flicker of situations.

Nightlong, in the granite yard, invisible cats
Have been howling like women, or damaged instruments.
Already he can feel daylight, his white disease,
Creeping up with her hatful of trivial repetitions.
The city is a map of cheerful twitters now,
And everywhere people, eyes mica-silver and blank,
Are riding to work in rows, as if recently brainwashed.



Sotto gli occhi delle stelle e il ghigno della luna
Lui subisce il suo desertico cuscino, l'insonnia
Stende la sua sabbia fine e irritante in ogni direzione.

Ancora e ancora il vecchio film granuloso
Mette in mostra i disagi- i giorni uggiosi
Dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza, appiccicosi di sogni,
Le facce dei genitori su alti steli, severe oppure in lacrime,
Un giardino di rose infestato d'insetti che l'aveva fatto
[piangere.

La sua fronte è bitorzoluta come un sacco di sassi.
I ricordi si spintonano per l'inquadratura come stelle del
[cinema invecchiate.

È immune alle pillole: rosse, viola, blu -
Come avevano illuminato il tedio della lunga sera!
Quei pianeti zuccherosi il cui influsso gli aveva donato
Una vita battezzata in non-vita per un po',
E il risveglio dolce e stordito di un neonato smemorato.
Adesso le pillole sono consumate e scioche, come divinità
[classiche.

I loro colori papavero-sopore non gli servono a nulla.

La sua testa è un piccolo spazio di specchi grigi.
Ogni gesto si getta subito giù per un vicolo
Di prospettive in diminuzione e il suo significato
Cola via come acqua dal buco alla fine di tutto.
Vive senza riservatezza in una stanza scoperchiata,
Gli spacchi calvi dei suoi occhi si irrigidiscono spalancati
Sull'incessante lampeggiare di fulmine delle circostanze.

Tutta la notte, nel cortile cementato, gatti invisibili
Hanno gemuto come donne, o strumenti danneggiati.
Lui può già sentire la luce del giorno, il suo morbo
[biancastro,
Strisciargli vicino con il cappello pieno di futili ripetizioni.
La città è una cartina di cinguettii allegri ora, e ovunque
Le persone, gli occhi vacui e d'alluminio, vanno in schiere
[al lavoro,
Come appena reduci di un lavaggio del cervello.



FRANK SARGEON*A Short Story***A great day**

It was beginning to get light when Ken knocked on the door of Fred's bach.

Are you up? he said.

Fred called out that he was, and in a moment he opened the door.

Just finished my breakfast, he said. We'd better get moving.

It didn't take long. The bach was right on the edge of the beach, and they got the dinghy on to Ken's back and he carried it down the beach, and Fred followed with the gear. Ken was big enough to make light work of the dinghy but it was all Fred could do to manage the gear. There wasn't much of him and he goddamned the gear every few yards he went.

The tide was well over half-way out, and the sea was absolutely flat without even a ripple breaking on the sand. Except for some seagulls that walked on the sand and made broad-arrow marks where they walked there wasn't a single thing moving. It was so still it wasn't natural. Except for the seagulls you'd have thought the world had died in the night.

Ken eased the dinghy off his shoulders and turned it the right way up, and Fred dropped the anchor and the oars on the sand, and heaved the sugar bag of fishing gear into the dinghy.

I wouldn't mind if I was a big hefty bloke like you, he said.

Well, Ken didn't say anything to that. He sat on the stern of the dinghy and rolled himself a cigarette, and Fred got busy and fixed the oars and rowlocks and tied on the anchor.

Come on, he said, we'll shove off. And with his trousers rolled up he went and tugged at the bow, and with Ken shoving at the stern the dinghy began to float, so Fred hopped in and took the oars, and then Ken hopped in and they were off.

It's going to be a great day, Fred said.

It certainly looked like it. The sun was coming up behind the island they were heading for, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky.



FRANK SARGEON

Translated by Alice Amico: A Short Story

Una bella giornata

Il sole stava sorgendo quando Ken bussò alla porta del *bach* di Fred. Era una casa spartana, simile a un capanno.

Sei sveglio? Chiese.

Fred gridò di sì e subito dopo aprì la porta.

Ho appena finito di fare colazione, disse. È meglio se ci diamo una mossa.

Non ci volle molto. Il *bach* era proprio a ridosso della spiaggia, quindi Ken si mise la barca a remi in spalla e la portò sulla battigia, mentre Fred lo seguiva con i remi e l'occorrente per pescare. Ken era abbastanza grosso da sollevare la barca senza sforzo, mentre Fred poteva solo occuparsi del resto della roba. Era mingherlino e maledisse tutta quella roba a ogni passo.

C'era bassa marea e il mare era piatto come una tavola, sulla sabbia non si infrangeva neanche un'onda. A parte alcuni gabbiani che muovendosi lasciavano impronte simili a frecce tutto il resto era immobile, tanto da sembrare innaturale. Sembrava che, tranne i gabbiani, il mondo intero fosse morto nella notte.

Ken poggiò la barca a terra e la rigirò. Fred buttò l'ancora e i remi sulla sabbia e lanciò nella barca il sacco con l'attrezzatura per pescare.

Non mi dispiacerebbe essere un tipo grande e grosso come te, disse.

Ken non rispose. Si sedette a poppa e si rollò una sigaretta. Fred si mise a fissare i remi e gli scalmi e legò l'ancora.

Dai, disse, muoviamoci. E con i pantaloni arrotolati iniziò a trascinare la barca dalla prua mentre Ken spingeva a poppa. La barca entrò in acqua, Fred saltò dentro e prese i remi, poi fu la volta di Ken e partirono.

Sarà una bella giornata, disse Fred.

Di certo prometteva bene. Il sole stava sorgendo da dietro l'isola dove erano diretti e non c'era una nuvola in cielo.

Andiamo nello stesso posto dell'altra volta, disse Fred.

Dimmi se non vado dritto. E per un po' remò forte, ma senza



We'll make for the same place as last time, Fred said. You tell me if I don't keep straight. And for a time he rowed hard without sending the dinghy along very fast. The trouble was his short legs, he couldn't get them properly braced against the stern seat. And Ken, busy rolling a supply of cigarettes, didn't watch out where he was going, so when Fred took a look ahead he was heading for the wrong end of the island.

Hey, he said, you take a turn and I'll tell you where to head for.

So they changed places and Ken pulled wonderfully well. For a time it was more a mental shock you got with each jerk of the dinghy. You realised how strong he was. He had only a shirt and a pair of shorts on, and his big body, hard with muscle, must have been over six feet long.

Gee, I wish I had your body, Fred said. It's no wonder the girls chase you. But look at the sort of joker I am.

Well, he wasn't much to look at. There was so little of him. And the old clothes he wore had belonged to someone considerably bigger than he was. And he had on an old hat that came down too far, and would have come down further if it hadn't bent his ears over and sat on them as if they were brackets.

How about a smoke? Fred said.

Sure. Sorry.

And to save him from leaving off rowing Fred reached over and took the tin out of his shirt pocket.

That's the curse of this sustenance, Fred said. A man's liable to be out of smokes before pay-day.

Yes, I suppose he is, Ken said.

It's rotten being out of work, Fred said. Thank the Lord I've got this dinghy. D'you know last year I made over thirty pounds out of fishing?

And how've you done this year?

Not so good. You're the first bloke I've had go out with me this year that hasn't wanted me to go shares. Gee, you're lucky to be able to go fishing for fun.

It's about time I landed a position, Ken said. I've had over a month's holiday.

Yes I know. But you've got money saved up, and it doesn't cost you anything to live when you can live with your auntie. How'd you like to live in that damn bach of mine and pay five bob a week



andare troppo veloce. Il problema erano le sue gambe corte, non riusciva a incastrarle sotto il sedile di poppa. Ken era impegnato a rollarsi una scorta di sigarette e non guardava dove stessero andando, perciò quando Fred controllò si accorse che stavano andando dal lato sbagliato dell'isola.

Ehi, disse, rema un po' tu e io ti dico dove andare.

Si scambiarono di posto e Ken remò meravigliosamente. A ogni colpo della barca ti stupivi di quanto andasse veloce. Si capiva quanto fosse forte. Indossava solo una camicia e un paio di pantaloncini. Era grande, muscoloso e alto più di un metro e ottanta.

Cavolo, vorrei avere il tuo fisico, disse Fred. Certo che le ragazze ti vengono dietro. Io invece sono una mezzasega.

Effettivamente non era un granché. Era così minuto. I vecchi vestiti che indossava erano appartenuti a qualcuno molto più grosso di lui. Portava anche un vecchio cappello troppo largo, che sarebbe calato ancora più giù se non fosse stato per le orecchie che lo trattenevano.

Ti va una sigaretta? Chiese Fred.

Certo. Scusa.

Per non farlo smettere di remare Fred si allungò e prese la scatola dalla tasca della camicia.

È il problema di vivere con la pesca, disse Fred. Uno rischia di fumarsi tutto prima del giorno di paga.

Eh sì, così pare, disse Ken.

Fa schifo non avere un lavoro, disse Fred. Grazie a Dio ho questa barchetta. Sai che l'anno scorso ho fatto più di trenta sterline pescando?

E quest'anno com'è andata?

Non tanto bene. Quest'anno sei il primo che è venuto con me e non vuole dividere i soldi. Cazzo, sei fortunato a poter andare a pescare solo per divertimento.

È anche ora che mi trovi un lavoro, disse Ken. È più di un mese che sono a spasso.

Certo. Ma hai dei soldi da parte e non spendi nulla perché puoi vivere con tua zia. Ti piacerebbe vivere in quel *bach* di merda e pagare cinque sacchi a settimana d'affitto? E poi hai anche studiato.

Non serve a molto di questi tempi. Uno si deve accontentare di quello che si trova.

Sì, ma se sei andato in una di quelle scuole superiori è tutta



rent? And another thing, you've got education.

It doesn't count for much these days. A man has to lake any position he can get.

Yes, but if a man's been to one of those High Schools it makes him different. Not any better, mind you. I'm all for the working class because I'm a worker myself, but an educated bloke has the advantage over a bloke like me. The girls chase him just to mention one thing, specially if he happens to be a big he-man as well.

Ken didn't say anything to that. He just went on pulling, and he got Fred to stick a cigarette in his mouth and light it at the same time as he lit his own. And then Fred lolled back in his seat and watched him, and you could tell that about the only thing they had in common was that they both had cigarettes dangling out of their mouths.

Pull her round a bit with your left, Fred said. And there's no need to bust your boiler.

It's O.K. Ken said.

You've got the strength, Fred said.

I'm certainly no infant.

What good's a man's strength anyway? Say he goes and works in an office?

I hadn't thought of that.

Another thing, he gets old. Fancy you getting old and losing your strength. Wouldn't it be a shame?

Sure, Ken said. Why talk about it?

It sort of fascinates me. You'll die someday, and where'll that big frame of yours be then?

That's an easy one. Pushing up the daisies.

It might as well be now as anytime, mightn't it?

Good Lord, I don't see that.

A man'd forget for good. It'd be just the same as it is out here on a day like this. Only better.

Ken stopped rowing to throw away his cigarette.

My God, he said, you're a queer customer. Am I heading right?

Pull with your left, Fred said. But I'll give you a spell.

It's O.K. Ken said.

And he went on rowing and after a bit Fred emptied the lines out of the sugar bag and began cutting up the bait. And after a bit longer when they were about half-way over to the island he said



un'altra storia. Non che sia meglio, attenzione. Io sono per la classe operaia perché sono un lavoratore, ma un tipo istruito è avvantaggiato rispetto a uno come me. Le ragazze gli vanno dietro, per dirne una, soprattutto se è anche un tipo grande e grosso.

Ken non rispose. Continuò a remare, mentre Fred gli metteva una sigaretta in bocca e si avvicinava per accenderla insieme alla sua. Poi Fred si stravaccò sul sedile e lo guardò: l'unica cosa che avevano in comune era la sigaretta in bocca.

Rema con la sinistra, disse Fred. Non c'è bisogno di ammazzarti.

Va bene così, disse Ken.

Sei forte, disse Fred.

Di sicuro non sono un bambino.

Ma a che serve essere forti alla fine? Metti che vai a lavorare in un ufficio.

Non ci avevo pensato.

E poi, s'invecchia. Immagina di invecchiare e perdere la tua forza. Non è un peccato?

Già, disse Ken. Ma perché ne stiamo parlando?

Non so, è una cosa che mi affascina. Un giorno morirai, dove finirà quel fisico?

Facile. A concimare le margherite.

Tanto vale morire ora, no?

Oddio, non saprei.

Le persone si dimenticano. Sarà proprio come adesso, con una giornata così. Solo un po' meglio.

Ken smise di remare per buttare via la sigaretta.

Mamma mia, disse, sei proprio un tipo strano. Sto andando bene?

Rema con la sinistra, disse Fred. Facciamo cambio.

Non preoccuparti, disse Ken.

Continuò a remare e dopo un po' Fred prese le lenze dai sacchi e iniziò a preparare l'esca. Dopo un altro po', a metà strada dall'isola, Fred disse che erano abbastanza lontani, quindi Ken ritirò i remi e gettò l'ancora. Prepararono le lenze e iniziarono a pescare.

A quel punto si capiva che sarebbe stata di sicuro una bella



they'd gone far enough so Ken shipped his oars and threw the anchor overboard, and they got their lines ready and began to fish.

And by that time it was certainly turning out a great day. The sun was getting hot but there still wasn't any wind, and as the tide had just about stopped running out down the Gulf the dinghy hardly knew which way to pull on the anchor rope. They'd pulled out less than two miles from the shore, but with the sea as it was it might have been anything from none at all up to an infinite number. You couldn't hear a sound or see anything moving. It was another world. The houses on the shore didn't belong. Nor the people either.

Wouldn't you like to stay out here for good? Fred said.

Ring off, Ken said. I got a bite.

So did I, but it was only a nibble. Anyhow it's not a good day for fish. It wants to be cloudy.

So I've heard.

I've been thinking, Fred said, it's funny you never learnt to swim.

Oh I don't know. Up to now I've always lived in country towns. Doesn't it make you feel a bit windy?

On a day like this! Anyhow, you couldn't swim that distance yourself.

Oh couldn't I! You'd be surprised... get a bite?

Yes I did.

Same here... you'll be settling down here, won't you, Ken?

It depends if I can get a position.

I suppose you'll go on living with your auntie.

That depends too. If I got a good position I might be thinking of getting married.

Gee, that'd be great, wouldn't it?

I got another bite, Ken said.

Same here. I reckon our lines are crossed.

So they pulled in their lines and they were crossed sure enough, but Ken had hooked the smallest snapper you ever saw.

He's no good, Fred said. And he worked the fish off the hook and held it in his hand. They're pretty little chaps, aren't they? he said. Look at his colours.

Let him go, Ken said.

Poor little beggar, Fred said. I bet he wonders what's struck him. He's trying to get his breath. Funny isn't it, when there's plenty of



giornata. Il sole stava diventando caldo ma non c'era vento. La marea si era fermata e la barca galleggiava immobile. Erano arrivati a poco meno di tre chilometri dalla costa, ma con quel mare piatto sarebbero potuti essere vicinissimi come infinitamente lontani. Il silenzio era totale, tutto era fermo. Era un altro mondo. Le case sulla costa non ne facevano parte, e neanche le persone.

Non rimarresti qui per sempre? Chiese Fred.

Zitto, disse Ken. Qualcosa ha abboccato.

Anche da me, ma ha solo assaggiato. Comunque non è una buona giornata per pescare. È meglio quando è nuvoloso.

Così dicono.

Pensavo, disse Fred, è strano che tu non abbia mai imparato a nuotare.

Non so. Finora ho sempre vissuto in città.

Non hai paura?

Con una giornata così! Comunque neanche tu riusciresti a nuotare così tanto.

Ah, no? Potrei stupirti... Ha abboccato?

Sì.

Anche da me... Ti stabilirai qui?

Dipende, se trovo lavoro.

Quindi rimarrai da tua zia.

Dipende anche quello. Se trovo lavoro magari posso pensare di sposarmi.

Cavolo, sarebbe bello, no?

Ne ha abboccato un altro, disse Ken.

Anche qua. Mi sa che si sono incrociate le lenze.

Le tirarono su e in effetti erano incrociate, ma Ken aveva preso il pagro più piccolo che avesse mai visto.

Non è buono, disse Fred. Tolsse l'amo e tenne il pesce in mano. Sono carini, no? Disse. Guarda che colori.

Liberalo, disse Ken.

Poverino, disse Fred. Scommetto che si sta chiedendo cos'è successo. Cerca di respirare. Buffo, no, con tutta l'aria che c'è. È come se cercasse di fare soldi dall'aria come Major Douglas.

Per l'amor del cielo, disse Ken.



air about? It's like Douglas Credit.

Oh for God's sake, Ken said.

I bet in less than five minutes he forgets about how he was nearly suffocated, Fred said, and he threw the fish back. And it lay bewildered for a second on the surface, then it flipped its tail and was gone. It was comical in its way and they both laughed.

They always do that, Fred said. But don't you wish you could swim like him?

Ken didn't say anything to that and they put fresh bait on their hooks and tried again, but there were only nibbles. They could bring nothing to the surface.

I'll tell you what, Fred said, those nibbles might be old men snapper only they won't take a decent bite at bait like this.

And he explained that off the end of the island there was a reef where they could get plenty of big mussels. It would be just nice with the tide out as it was. The reef wouldn't be uncovered, it never was, but you could stand on it in water up to your knees and pull up the mussels. And if you cut the inside out of a big mussel you only had to hang it on your hook for an old man snapper to go for it with one big bite.

It's a fair way, Ken said.

It doesn't matter, Fred said. We've got oceans of time. And he climbed past Ken to pull up the anchor, and Ken pulled in the lines, and then Fred insisted on rowing and they started for the end of the island.

And by that time the tide had begun to run in up the Gulf and there was a light wind blowing up against the tide, so that the sea, almost without you noticing it, was showing signs of coming up a bit rough. And the queer thing was that with the movement the effect of another world was destroyed. You seemed a part of the real world of houses and people once more. Yet with the sea beginning to get choppy the land looked a long way off.

Going back, Ken said, we'll be pulling against the wind.

Yes, Fred said, but the tide'll be a help. Anyhow, what's it matter when a man's out there with a big hefty bloke like you?

Nor did he seem to be in too much of a hurry to get to his reef. He kept resting on his oars to roll cigarettes, and when Ken said something about it he said they had oceans of time.

You're in no hurry to get back, he said, Mary'll keep.



Sono sicuro che tra cinque minuti si sarà dimenticato che stava quasi per soffocare, disse Fred ributtandolo in acqua. Rimase per un attimo in superficie, confuso, poi con un colpo di coda scomparve. Aveva un non so che di comico ed entrambi risero.

Lo fanno sempre, disse Fred. Non ti piacerebbe saper nuotare come lui?

Ken non rispose e misero un'esca nuova sugli ami per riprovare, ma i pesci non abboccavano. Non tiravano su nulla.

Sai cosa, disse Fred, questi che assaggiano sono dei vecchi pagri, solo che non gli piace l'esca.

Disse che poco lontano dall'isola c'era una secca piena di cozze. Sarebbe stato perfetto in quel momento, con la bassa marea. Il fondale non sarebbe stato scoperto, non lo era mai, ma l'acqua arrivava solo fino al ginocchio e si potevano pescare le cozze. Poi bastava tagliarla e appenderla all'amo, così un pagro bello grosso se la sarebbe mangiata in un boccone.

È un bel po' lontano, disse Ken.

Non importa, disse Fred. Abbiamo un mare di tempo.

Si spostò dietro Ken per tirare su l'ancora; Ken ritirò le lenze e Fred insistette per remare, così si diressero verso l'isola.

A quel punto nel Golfo la marea si stava alzando e si era sollevata una brezza leggera che spingeva l'acqua in direzione opposta. Il mare iniziava ad agitarsi un po', anche se in modo impercettibile. La cosa strana era che con quel movimento svanì l'effetto di sembrare in un altro mondo. Eri di nuovo parte del mondo di case e persone. Anche se col mare che diventava mosso la costa sembrava molto più lontana.

Tornando remeremo controvento, disse Ken.

Sì, ma la marea aiuterà, rispose Fred. Comunque, che importa, ci sei tu che sei grande e grosso.

Non sembrava neanche avere troppa fretta di arrivare alla secca. Continuava a posare i remi per girarsi una sigaretta, e quando Ken provò a dire qualcosa al riguardo lui rispose che avevano un mare di tempo.

Non avere fretta di tornare, Mary ti aspetterà, disse.



Well, Ken didn't say anything to that.

Mary's a great kid, Fred said.

Sure, Ken said. Mary's one of the bes.

I've known Mary for years, Fred said.

Yes, Ken said. So I've gathered.

I suppose you have. Up to a while ago Mary and I used to be great cobbers.

I'll give you a spell, Ken said.

But Fred said it was O.K.

Mary's got a bit of education too, he said. Only when her old man died the family was hard up so she had to go into service. It was lucky she got a good place at your auntie's. Gee, I've been round there and had tea sometimes when your auntie's been out, and oh boy is the tucker any good!

Look here, Ken said, at this rate we'll never get to that reef.

Oh yes we will, Fred said, and he pulled a bit harder. If only a man hadn't lost his job, he said.

I admit it must be tough, Ken said.

And then Fred stood up and took a look back at the shore.

I thought there might be somebody else coming out, he said, but there isn't. So thank God for that. And he said that he couldn't stand anybody hanging around when he was fishing. By the way, he said, I forgot to do this before. And he stuffed pieces of cotton-wool into his ears. If the spray gets in my ears it gives me the earache, he said.

Then he really did settle down to his rowing, and with the sea more or less following them it wasn't long before they were off the end of the island.

Nobody lived on the island. there were a few holiday baches but they were empty now that it was well on into the autumn. Nor from this end could you see any landing places, and with the wind blowing up more and more it wasn't too pleasant to watch the sea running up the rocks. And Fred had to spend a bit of time manoeuvring around before he found his reef.

It was several hundred yards out with deep water all round, and it seemed to be quite flat. If the sea had been calm it might have been covered to a depth of about a foot with the tide as it was. But with the sea chopping across it wasn't exactly an easy matter to stand there. At one moment the water was down past your knees,



Ken non rispose.

Mary è una brava ragazza, disse Fred.

Già, la migliore che ci sia, disse Ken.

La conosco da anni, disse Fred.

Già, a quanto ho capito.

Hai capito bene. Fino a un po' di tempo fa io e Mary eravamo amici per la pelle.

Facciamo cambio, disse Ken.

Ma Fred disse di non preoccuparsi.

Anche Mary ha studiato un po', disse. Solo che quando suo padre è morto la sua famiglia era al verde, quindi ha dovuto iniziare a lavorare. È stata fortunata a trovare un posto da tua zia. Sono passato a prendere il tè qualche volta, quando tua zia non c'era, e porca miseria se era buona la roba da mangiare.

Guarda che se continuiamo così non ci arriviamo alla secca, disse Ken.

Si che ci arriviamo, disse Fred, e remò un po' più forte. Se solo non avessi perso il lavoro.

Ammetto che dev'essere dura, disse Ken.

Fred si alzò e guardò verso la costa.

Pensavo che sarebbe uscito qualcun altro, e invece no, disse. Grazie a Dio. Disse che non sopportava avere gente intorno quando pescava. A proposito, disse, ho dimenticato di farlo prima. Si infilò del cotone nelle orecchie. Se mi entra l'acqua nelle orecchie poi mi fanno male, spiegò.

Poi si mise a remare come si deve e con il mare che più o meno li spingeva non ci misero tanto ad arrivare all'isola.

Era disabitata. C'erano alcuni *bach*, ma essendo autunno inoltrato erano vuoti. Da quella parte non si vedevano punti in cui sbarcare, e con il vento che diventava sempre più forte guardare il mare che si infrangeva sulle rocce non era il massimo. Fred girò un po' prima di trovare la secca.

Era a qualche centinaio di metri dalla costa, circondata dall'acqua profonda, sembrava abbastanza piatta. Se il mare fosse stato calmo, con la bassa marea l'acqua sarebbe stata profonda solo trenta centimetri. Ma col mare mosso non era proprio facile stare lì in piedi. Un momento l'acqua ti arrivava sotto il ginocchio, quello dopo dovevi riprendere l'equilibrio perché ti arrivava alla coscia. Faceva una strana impressione, perché con l'acqua alta tutto intorno



and the next moment you had to steady yourself while it came up round your thighs. And it was uncanny to stand there, because with the deep water all round you seemed to have discovered a way of standing up out in the sea.

Anyhow, Fred took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves and his trousers as far as they'd go, and then he hopped out and got Ken to do the same and keep hold of the dinghy. Then he steadied himself and began dipping his hands down and pulling up mussels and throwing them back into the dinghy, and he worked at a mad pace as though he hadn't a moment to lose. It seemed only a minute or so before he was quite out of breath.

It's tough work, he said. You can see what a weak joker I am.

I'll give you a spell, Ken said, only keep hold of the boat.

Well, Fred held the dinghy, and by the way he was breathing and the look of his face you'd have thought he was going to die. But Ken had other matters to think about, he was steadying himself and dipping his hands down more than a yard away, and Fred managed to pull himself together and shove off the dinghy and hop in. And if you'd been sitting in the stern as he pulled away you'd have seen that he had his eyes shut. Nor did he open them except when he took a look ahead to see where he was going, and with the cotton-wool in his ears it was difficult for him to hear.

So for a long time he rowed like that against seas that were getting bigger and bigger, but about half-way back to the shore he took a spell. He changed over to the other side of the seat, so he didn't have to sit facing the island, and he just sat there keeping the dinghy straight on. Then when he felt that he had collected all his strength he stood up and capsized the dinghy. It took a bit of doing but he did it.

And after that, taking it easy, he started on his long swim for the shore.



sembrava che riuscissero a stare in piedi in mare aperto.

Comunque, Fred si tolse il cappotto e si arrotolò le maniche e i pantaloni fin dove poteva, poi saltò fuori dalla barca e mentre la teneva scese anche Ken. Poi, trovato l'equilibrio immerse le mani, tirò su delle cozze e le lanciò nella barca, e lavorava così veloce che sembrava non avesse un attimo da perdere. Dopo quasi un minuto era già senza fiato.

Che lavoraccio, disse. Vedi che rammollito che sono.

Facciamo cambio, disse Ken. Tieni la barca.

Fred tenne la barca, da come respirava e dalla faccia che aveva sembrava stesse per morire. Ma Ken stava pensando ad altro, stava cercando di mettersi in equilibrio e immergeva le mani qualche metro più in là. Fred si riprese, spinse via la barca e ci saltò dentro. Guardandolo dalla prua mentre remava via si poteva notare che aveva gli occhi chiusi. E non li aprì se non per guardare dove stava andando, e col cotone nelle orecchie non sentiva niente.

Per un bel po' remò in quel modo contro le onde, che diventavano sempre più grosse, ma più o meno a metà strada fece una pausa. Si spostò dall'altro lato, per non guardare in direzione dell'isola, e rimase lì seduto a remare dritto. Poi quando sentì di aver recuperato le forze si alzò e ribaltò la barca. Ci volle un po' ma ci riuscì.

Poi, con tutta la calma del mondo, iniziò la lunga nuotata verso la costa.



*Part 1**#MeToo: Because Poetry Is Always Political***Francesca Benocci**

Eventually the spotlight is yet again - albeit, as always, way too briefly - on sexual violence aimed at women. And aimed at men, for that matter, as the confrontation that led to Kevin Spacey's coming out has allegedly revealed. Hollywood is now very alert and committed to voicing its 'darkest secrets'. Actors, actresses, producers, and sexual violence and harassment have opened up Pandora's box, and also - rest assured - make for good and juicy tabloid material.

As per Wilde, it is important that one talks about it, and violence is indeed violence. But the best aspect of this happening - if one can consider anything related to sexual violence 'best' at all - is the wave of self-awareness and sharing that swept social media like a tsunami. The moment the #metoo hashtag appeared on Facebook, I felt something lifting inside me, and I had to share my experience not much for my sake but for that of others. No one should be left alone to bear the not-so-remote likelihood of being shamed. I had to stand with my fellow humans and own what had happened to me. I was not alone and neither were they. Some people went into the specifics, and gave detailed accounts of various episodes, some others listed the occurrences. Some, like me, simply wrote "#me-too". There was no need to say much more than that, at the time. Owning the experience and sharing it with others was enough.

One reflection on my part was that most male voices were deafeningly silent when the wave was rolling and crashing, and I started thinking that shame and silence do indeed work in funny ways across gender and society, and take advantage of the divergence in the social perception of the binary male/female. The majority of men I know have certainly been abused one way or another - and so have many women who are still unprepared to look at things that way - but they have been mostly brought up in a world in which is 'the man' who takes advantage of 'the woman': it is a system that, by default, places almost all social responsibility on (canonically) male shoulders and removes agency from the feminine party.

I am a feminist - meaning 'a strenuous supporter of gender



equality' - and I refuse to believe most men haven't been abused by women in horrible ways, and have been persuaded by an antiquated social heritage they should feel flattered by all the failed or successful attempts to their virtue. In this era of objectification of the (male and female) body, there is no space for gender boundaries. There are excuses we each give to ourselves and others, but any kind of attention, from anywhere, in any way, that is not wanted - or not wanted any longer - should just cease to be. There is no 'playing', 'joking', 'oh - come on! - be a sport', 'I meant it as a compliment!', 'you are too serious, relax', 'it's not a big deal', 'I won't tell if you don't', 'don't cry it will be over soon', 'we are together, anyway'.

In sexual violence there is no difference, nor can there be: not in gender, not in alleged intentions, not in outcomes, not in attitude, not in strength, nothing. It makes no difference.

And in sexual violence there is no 'light' or 'heavy' offense - as is true for racism, sexism, and all the -isms. There is no minor or major sexual violence, only sexual violence. It is not much the action itself but the mind-set that cannot be excused.

There is no difference between someone grabbing your ass on the bus, someone catcalling you, your partner forcing themselves on you, someone getting upset at you because they were expecting sex, someone locking you in a room with them, someone telling you to get something from a top shelf to check out your body, someone resting their hand somewhere you don't want it for too long, someone not stopping when you tell them to, someone kissing you on the cheek when you don't want it, someone paying you unwanted compliments, someone grabbing you by your ponytail, someone raping you.

And, if there is no 'minor thing', there is no-thing you might think you 'just have to endure' because - after all - it's not that bad, and some have had it worse. Violence is violence. There is no space for shame or blame here.

You are beautiful, and it wasn't your fault.

You are beautiful.

It wasn't your fault.

YOU. ARE. BEAUTIFUL.

IT. WAS. NOT. YOUR. FAULT.



Part 2***Demonstration by Tusiata Avia***

What follows is a poem by New Zealand author Tusiata Avia, in which shame, blame, human rights and the promise of a better future for her daughter intertwine. During a demonstration against sexual violence the past visits Tusiata, and she meets again with her younger self. And she realises that part of her is still fighting with her own guilt, with the burden of responsibility that always weighs heavy on the victim's shoulders: "what if I led him/her on", "what if I wanted it and then stopped wanting it and just gave the wrong impression", "what if I was wearing sensual clothing", "what if I was flirting", "what if I was drunk"...

What if:

"and it was in your home town
and you helped him find a place to stay
you picked him up from the airport

it made you feel helpful
and kind and involved
and you did kind of like him."

The refrain in Tusiata's poem is "you wonder". Victims are left wondering for years. Some forever, never truly able to move on, to relinquish responsibility for an act part of them will always think they have taken part in, but that has been forced upon them instead. Letting go of guilt and shame is sometimes impossible. Yet, in her poem, while marching along the streets with other people, other victims, holding her daughter's hand, Tusiata finds the strength inside herself to come to terms with what was done to her, and millions of others. She lets go. She stops wondering.

ITWASNOTYOURFAULTITWASRAPERAPEREREAPERAP-
ERAPERAPERAPE.

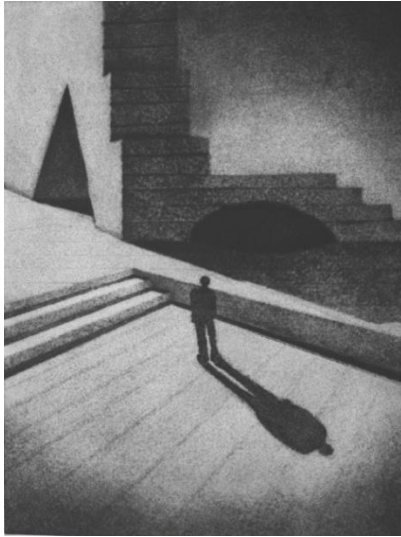
IT. WAS. NOT. YOUR. FAULT.

IT. WAS. RAPE.

RAPE.

RAPE.

RAPE.



Manno - L'ultimo cavamonti,
rotella su zinco, 400x300 mm,
2015



Demonstration

by Tusiata Avia

The thing is

even after all these years
even after all you know
after all the times you have spoken

to classrooms full, divided them into four
pointed to one quarter and said:
All you people have been sexually abused

to get the message across.
And then listened to them unbutton their stories
shame and anger lighting them up like brilliant torches

firing the night inside them
the blackness all around
a thousand bright bombs falling from the sky.

The thing is
after speaking through the mouths of every kind
of good girl
girl child

bad girl
slut.
After reading

and talking and posting
the drain out of it
and then have it tunnel

back up through you like a worm
as big as an earthquake



Francesca Benocci / Tusiata Avia

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Manifestazione

di Tusiata Avia

Translated by Francesca Benocci

Il fatto è che

anche dopo tutti questi anni
anche dopo tutto quello che sai
dopo tutte le volte che hai parlato

a classi piene, le hai divise in quattro
indicato un quarto e hai detto:
Tutti voi avete subito abusi sessuali

per far passare il messaggio.
E poi li hai ascoltati sbottonare le proprie storie
vergogna e rabbia accenderli come torce incandescenti

infuocare la notte dentro di loro
l'oscurità tutt'intorno
mille bombe brillanti che cadono dal cielo.

Il fatto è che dopo aver parlato da bocche di ogni sorta
di brava ragazza
ragazza bambina

ragazzaccia
troia.
Dopo averne letto

e parlato e postato
fino agli sgoccioli
per vederlo riemergere

da te scavando come un verme
grande come un terremoto



and disappear again.
Even after marching
at the anti-rape demonstration today
with your six year old daughter's hand in yours

and a sign pinned to her small chest:
'Believe Survivors'
even now, as you stand here in the Square you wonder

because it was 25 years ago
and you did kind of like him
even though he was a bit of a Fob.

You wonder

because it was the Samoan Students' Association so'otaga
and you were the president the year before
the first woman, the first New Zealand-born, the first afa
[kasi

and it was in your home town
and you helped him find a place to stay
you picked him up from the airport

it made you feel helpful
and kind and involved
and you did kind of like him.

You wonder

because after one of the association parties
you were a bit drunk and ended up sleeping
in the lounge of the house he was staying in



e sparire di nuovo.
Anche dopo aver marciato
alla manifestazione contro lo stupro oggi
tenendo la mano di tua figlia di sei anni nella tua

e un cartello sul suo petto di bimba:
'Credete ai sopravvissuti'
anche adesso, in piedi qui in Piazza Non sei sicura

perché è stato 25 anni fa
e lui un po' ti piaceva
anche se era un po' un Fob¹.

Non sei sicura

perché era il so'otaga della Associazione Studentesca
[Samoana
e tu eri stata presidente l'anno prima
la prima donna, la prima nata in Nuova Zelanda, la prima
[afa kasi

ed era nella tua città natale
e tu l'hai aiutato a trovare un posto dove stare
tu sei andata a prenderlo all'aeroporto

ti ha fatta sentire utile
e buona e coinvolta
e lui un po' ti piaceva

Non sei sicura

perché dopo una delle feste dell'associazione
eri un po' alticcia e alla fine ti sei addormentata
nel soggiorno della casa dove stava

1 Fresh Off the Boat, letteralmente "appena sceso dalla barca", usato in gergo con il significato del migrante appena arrivato in Nuova Zelanda da un'isola del Pacifico; termine spregiativo.



and kind of hoping something would happen
in the same way you would hold a tiny, fragile creature
in your loosely caged hands

maybe a butterfly or a newborn mouse
and offer that delicate thing up
to him and hope he might

ease it gently from you
so as not to hurt it
and maybe he'd even offer something back.

Because of that

you let him kiss you
on the floor
before it turned

from a hopeful kiss with a guy
you kind of liked
to him on top of you

and you saying:
No, stop it!
Because he'd stopped kissing you now

and even though he was shorter than you
he was a hell of a lot stronger than you could've imagined
and was prying you apart.

You wonder

because when you realised what was happening
you knew you didn't want that
and you told him: I don't want this. Stop!



e un po' ci speravi che qualcosa succedesse
nello stesso modo in cui terrestri una creaturina fragile
tra le mani a gabbia, delicate

forse una farfalla o un topolino appena nato
e gli offri quella cosa fragile
e spero che possa

prenderla delicatamente
così da non farle male
e forse che ti offra perfino qualcosa in cambio.

Per questo

lasci che ti baci
sul pavimento
prima che diventi

da un bacio di speranza a un ragazzo
che un po' ti piace
a lui sopra di te

e tu che dici:
No, smettila!
Perché ora ha smesso di baciarti

e anche se è più basso di te
è molto più forte di quanto tu potessi immaginare
e ti sta aprendo le gambe.

Non sei sicura

perché quando ti sei resa conto di cosa stava succedendo
sapevi di non volerlo
e gli hai detto: Non voglio. Fermati!



But the thing is

he didn't stop
he just kept going
he didn't say anything

and you swore at him:
Fucking get off me!
I don't want this

I don't want this
you said:
I don't want this.
But he just kept going
and didn't say anything at all
until he was finished

when he rolled off you and said:
It's no big deal.
That's all he said.

And you wonder

now, in the Square
if you could've fought harder
or not slept in the lounge

or not let him kiss you
or not kind of liked him
or not hoped he might like you too.

And you remember

that the next morning
when you got to your mother's place
you looked at yourself in the hall mirror and thought:



Ma il fatto è che

non si è fermato
è andato avanti
non ha detto niente

e tu hai imprecato:
Cazzo, levati di dosso!
Non voglio

Non voglio
hai detto:
Non voglio.
Ma lui è andato avanti
e non ha detto assolutamente niente
finché non ha finito

ti si è tolto di dosso:
che sarà mai.
Ha detto solo questo.

E tu non sei sicura

ora, in Piazza
che non avresti potuto lottare di più
o non dormire in soggiorno

o non lasciare che ti baciasse
o non fartelo piacere un po'
o non sperare che a lui piacessi tu.

e ti ricordi

che la mattina dopo
arrivata a casa di tua madre
ti sei guardata nello specchio all'ingresso e hai pensato:



I've just been raped.
And then you had a shower
and changed into your church clothes

and went to the church service with everyone else
and he was there.
And when you returned to teachers' college in Auckland
you couldn't function
you kept seeing him in the cafeteria
and everywhere

and you kept cracking up
and missing classes
and when you finally went to the counsellor

and talked about it
she said: Have you heard yourself?
You keep saying:

It's no big deal.

So, today
twenty-five years later
as you watch this young woman

in the Square
the age you were then
take her clothes off in protest

you wonder again
whether it was rape
and whether it might have been your fault.



Mi hanno appena stuprata.
E poi ti sei fatta la doccia
e cambiata per andare in chiesa

e sei andata a messa con tutti quanti gli altri
e lui era lì.
E quando sei tornata a scuola ad Auckland
non connettevi
lo vedevi sempre alla mensa
e dappertutto

e continuavi ad andare in crisi
e a saltare le lezioni
e quando alla fine sei andata dallo psicologo

e ne hai parlato
lei ha detto: Senti quello che dici?
Continui a dire:

Che sarà mai.

Così oggi,
venticinque anni dopo
mentre guardi questa giovane donna

in Piazza
all'età che tu avevi allora
spogliarsi nuda in protesta

non sei ancora sicura
se sia stato uno stupro
o se sia stata in effetti colpa tua.





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ELEONORA RIMOLO**Li vediamo dal basso**

Li vediamo dal basso,
scendono gradino dopo
gradino esperti itinerari
della trascorsa stagione:
minano la quiete della stanza,
parlano con un fiore in bocca
e dicono — ci confessano,
mormorando alle nostre
inquietudini solenni —
da lì, se sali, si vede anche,
si vede anche il mare,
una striscia di cielo
rubata ad un dio morente:
e attraverso la cella,
se ti concentri, si sente pure,
si sente pure il sale,
briciole sulla lingua a misura
di bacio, uno scambio di
oceani tormentosi,
quella scia di pietà
che colora di petrolio
un altro dramma negato.

Il mattino dopo

Il mattino dopo
brandelli di ossa e scarti
di epidermide si confusero
col ferro:
il sole sciolse il senso
del dolore trascorse
un egoismo attraversò
il binario, planando,
l'angelo nero alzò un
piede scavalcò
quell'altura vischiosa,
nessuna traccia, diranno,



ELEONORA RIMOLO

Translated by Alessandra Giorgioni

We See Them from Below

We see them from below,
They descend step
by step, expert travellers
of the changing season:
they threaten the silence of the room,
they speak with flower in mouth
and they say — they confess to us,
murmuring to our solemn fears —
from there, rising up, you can even see,
you can even see the sea,
a strip of sky
stolen from a dying god:
and across the cell,
if you focus, you can even taste
you can even taste the salt,
crumbs on your tongue about
a kiss' worth, an exchange with
tortuous seas,
a slipstream of mercy
that paints another
hopeless ordeal
the colour of petrol.

The Morning After

The morning after
shards of bone and shreds
of epidermis were mingled
with iron:
the sun melted feeling
of pain passed
selfishness crossed
the platform, gliding,
the black angel lifted his
foot, climbed over
the slimy heights,
no trace, they will say,



sulle suole delle scarpe,
di plasma, nessuna:
incolpevole solamente
il sollievo della gente
mendicante meschina
della sola propria salvezza.

Nessun commento compare, adesso

Nessun commento compare, adesso,
soltanto la porta serrata torva, cigola
l'attesa mendicante di un'attenzione
che può solo sfiorire e che
ti risparmiò, perché ieri ho perso
il diritto di sottrarti
ai tremori del tuo maestrale.

Per la parola noi siamo andati oltre

Per la parola noi siamo andati oltre,
siamo stati macigni che planano
sopra i campi di girasole: oggi la gioia
scorre dai tornanti della gola
sfocia tra gli interstizi occlusi
del diaframma per metà
ci orienta al sole,
fissa per sempre il tuo verso
sopra la tavola, per questo gli eroi,
per questo la casa, la biblioteca,
il tuo mantice sopra il mio.

La morsa che stringe ogni giorno

La morsa che stringe ogni giorno
tra le costole io attendo
mi lasci svanito in frammento
appena davanti la tua casa:
vedrai che tormento, vedrai
dalle fogne risalire la cernia,
il gufo sporgersi dall'osso



on the soles of his shoes,
of plasma, none at all:
merely blameless
the relief of the
wretched beggars
of their own salvation.

No Comment Appears, Now

No comment appears, now,
the creak of the grim locked door, only
the wait begging for attention
that can only but wither away and which
I spare you, because yesterday I lost
the right, to save you from
the tremors of the northwest wind.

For a Word We Went Over and Above

For a word we went over and above,
We were boulders that skim
over the fields of sunflowers: today joy
runs through the curves of our throat
it flows amongst the obstructed gaps
of the diaphragm
it orients us towards the sun,
for ever etches your verse,
on stone, for this reason we have heroes,
for this we have a home, a library,
and your bellows over mine.

The Vice That Tightens Every Day

The vice that tightens every day
between my ribs, I await
you abandon me reduced to nothing
right in front of your house:
you'll see what torment, you'll see
the fish surface out of the sewers,
the owl peer out from behind the bone





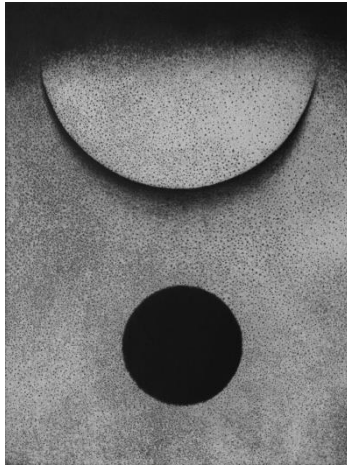
pregustare quel manto
cavo di carne, la rovina
conquistare le stanze,
calare in anticipo
la notte barbara.





anticipating that hollow cloak
of meat, destruction
take over the rooms,
the barbaric night
fall early.





Rizzelli- Segni della memoria
n.2, acquaforte, acquatinta e
rotella su zinco, 400x300 mm,
2011





Scritture sperimentali / Experimental Writings

Edited by Gianluca Rizzo



Poems by Peter Cole*Translated by Gianluca Rizzo*

Nato a Paterson, New Jersey, nel 1957, **Peter Cole** è l'autore di cinque libri di poesia, il più recente dei quali si intitola *Hymns & Qualms: New and Selected Poems and Translations* (FSG, 2017), e di numerosi volumi di traduzione dall'ebraico e l'arabo, sia medievale sia contemporaneo. Di lui, Harold Bloom ha scritto che "è un traduttore senza pari e uno dei pochi poeti autentici della sua generazione in America". Fra i premi e riconoscimenti di cui è stato insignito nel corso della sua carriera ricordiamo l'American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature, una Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, un Jewish National Book Award, il PEN Prize in Translation, e, nel 2007, una MacArthur Fellowship. Vive e lavora fra Gerusalemme e New Haven, in Connecticut.

Author's Note

For almost as long as I've written poems, I've translated them. Over time, the two modes in me came to feel like one, or at least like aspects of a single impulse. Maybe because they always were. In 1981, when I first went to Jerusalem, I was, a little strangely, looking for a Hebrew that would give me English. Small surprise that I found it "slant," in the Jewish poems of medieval Spain (which emerged through Arabic) and with the living, language-shifting poets of the old-new city where I still pay rent; that this brought me to Galilean kabbalah and the mysteries of reception, which is part of what kabbalah can mean; and that the Palestinian poetry of those hills would eventually follow. In between came just about everything – life.

This book enfoldes a movement between these various modes and worlds into the vital transfer that translation is – from sensation to expression, from one person's language and age to another's. In primary ways, as on these pages, "original" poems and "translations" intertwine: hence the double helix of this whole. The earliest pieces here took shape mostly but not only in Jerusalem; the more recent found their curious and often circuitous paths to paper on



desks and park benches on New Haven, along the coasts of the Cycladic islands, and again in Jerusalem, albeit a very different city from the one where the writing began. Throughout, there were friends and goads, trials, wonders, misgivings, weather, trees, catastrophes, and pleasures. I've tried to honor them all.



Peter Cole

From *Hymns & Qualms: New and Selected Poems
and Translations*

Every Single Person

Every single person you meet,
Philo wrote, it's said — Everyone —
is fighting a very great battle.
Except that no one is able to find
where he said it, or what he thought
the burden might be that brings it on.
Still, it's almost certainly true —
and so he added, perhaps, be kind.

Through the Slaughter

and Bialik

Sky — have mercy.
When flechettes fly
 forth from a shell,
 shot by a tank
 taking Ezekiel's
 chariot's name —

When their thin fins
invisibly whiz,
 whiffling the air
 like angels' wings —
 their metal feathers
 guiding them in —

When their hooks rip
through random flesh
 in a promise of land
 with its boring sun —
 Is it like the priests'
 release in Leviticus?



Peter Cole

Da Inni e scrupoli: Poesie e traduzioni, nuove e scelte

Ogni singola persona

Ogni singola persona che incontri,
si dice abbia scritto Filone – Tutti –
combattono una battaglia immane.
Purtroppo nessuno sa per certo
dove l'abbia scritto, o quale, secondo
lui, fosse il fardello che l'abbia scatenata.
Eppure, è quasi sicuramente vero –
quindi ha aggiunto, magari, siate gentili.

Attraverso il massacro

e Bialik

Cielo – abbi pietà.

Quando fletchette schizzano
fuori da una bomba,
esplosa da un carro armato
che porta il nome del
carro di Ezechiele –

Quando le penne sottili
fischiano invisibili,
sibilando nell'aria
come ali di angeli –
le piume di ferro
a fargli da guida –

Quando gli uncini lacerano
la carne, a caso
con una promessa di terra
col suo sole noioso –
È come la franchigia dei preti
di cui si dice in Levitico?



The male without blemish
 and dashed blood?
 The limbs in pieces?
 The tents of meeting?
 The burnt offering?
 Does it hasten deliverance?

Or summon Presence?
 Is its savor pleasant?
 As the rage unfurls
 in a storm of flame
 and the darts deploy
 in a shawl of pain,

does it soar like *justice*?
 Contain a God?
 Expose a Source?
 What will is known?
 Does it touch a *throne*?
 Can we see a crown?

As the swarm scorches
 the air with anger,
 and the torches of righteousness
 extend their reach—
 What power is power?
 Whose heart gives out?

When skin is *pierced*
 to receive that flight,
 what light gets in?
 What's left of sin?
 What cause is served?
 What cry is heard?

When the blood of infants
and elders spurts
 across T-shirts
 does it figure *forever*?
 As it wreaks its change
 and seeks *revenge*



Il maschio senza difetto
e il sangue sparso?

Le membra a pezzi?

Le tende dei convegni?

Le offerte bruciate?

Affretta il giudizio?

O evoca la Presenza?
Ha un buon sapore?

Quando la furia si spande

in una tempesta di fiamme

e le frecce esplodono

in uno scialle di dolore,

forse che s'innalza come *giustizia*?

Contiene un Dio?

Indica una Fonte?

Quale volontà si manifesta?

Tocca un *trono*?

Si vede una corona?

Quando lo sciame brucia
l'aria con rabbia,

e le torce della rettitudine

illuminano con più forza —

Che potere è il potere?

Quale cuore cede?

Quando la pelle si *squarcia*
per accogliere quel volo,

che luce penetra?

Che rimane del peccato?

Che urla si sentono?

Al servizio di quale causa?

Quando il sangue di vecchi
e bambini sgorga

sulle *t-shirt*

le imbratta *per sempre*?

Mentre porta il cambiamento

e insegue la *vendetta*



above the *abyss*?
 Could Satan devise
 vengeance like this —
 war which is just...
 an art of darkness?
 Have mercy, skies.

Jerusalem, The Gaza War, 2014

What the Beard Said

Smallness of mind, the xenophobic
 mystic muttered, his beard a cloud,
 a little too proud, I thought, hearing:
 Smallness of mind — it's what makes us
 miss the greatness
 of straits opening
 onto a faintness (call it largesse)
 of first things' traces linking long
 trails of being,
 tales of longing,
 marrow in the narrow bone
 of and through our rendered listening:
 low — today, for instance — skies
 the winter tint of tarnished vintage
 silver in a kitchen drawer.
 Drawing's goyish,
 said the cloud —
 though you love it, over paths
 you're always walking, wherever you are
 (when you're able) spokes poking
 out from the crown of cones or corners
 you've never seen but seem to turn
 within, within you.
 Time and again.
 Misanthropy's end, the cloud sputtered.
 Smallness of mind. Magnitude's friend.



al di sopra dell'abisso?
Neanche Satana potrebbe inventarsi
un castigo come questo –
guerra che è giusta...
un'arte dell'oscurità?
Abbate pietà, cieli.

Gerusalemme, Guerra di Gaza, 2014

Cosa ha detto la barba

Piccolezza mentale, ha mormorato
il mistico xenofobo, barba come nuvola,
un po' troppo orgoglio, ho pensato, sentendo:
Piccolezza mentale – è quello che c'impedisce
di vedere la grandezza
degli stretti che si aprono
su una debolezza (chiamiamola generosità)
di tracce dei principi primi che collegano lunghi
sentieri dell'essere,
storie di desiderio,
midollo dell'osso del collo,
di e per gli ascolti che abbiamo reso:
cieli – oggi, per esempio – bassi
la tinta invernale d'argento antico
annerito nel cassetto della cucina.
Disegnare è da gentili,
disse la nuvola –
anche se ti piace, sui sentieri
che percorri da sempre, dovunque tu sia
(quando puoi) raggi che sbucano
dalla corona di coni o cantoni
che non hai mai visto ma fra i quali
t'aggiri, dentro di te.
Più e più volte.
Il fine della misantropia, borbottò la nuvola.
Piccolezza mentale. Amica della magnitudine.



On Being Partial

I'm partial to what's possible,
 he thought – not the ineffable,
 distant, devoid of insistence
 and temperament that tampers,
 or tramples

Not the impersonal,
 but that which hovers here –
 between the "I" of the opening
 and the "us" of your possible listening
 now, or in the imperfect
 tense and tension of what
 in fact articulates the eternal
 That abstract revelation
 and slippery duration
 to which, it seems, I'm given
 and because of which I'm never
 finished with anything, as though living
 itself were an endless translation

Improvisation on Lines by Isaac the Blind

Only by sucking, not by knowing,
 can the subtle essence be conveyed –
 sap of the word and the world's flowing

that raises the scent of the almond blossoming,
 and yellows the bulbul in the olive's jade.
 Only by sucking, not by knowing.

The grass and the oxalis by the pines growing
 are luminous in us – petal and blade –
 as sap of the word and the world's flowing;

a flicker rising from embers glowing;
 light trapped in the tree's sweet braid
 of what it was sucking. Not knowing

is the amber honey of persimmon drawn in.
 An anemone piercing the clover persuades me –
 sap of the word and the world is flowing



Dell' avere una debolezza

Ho una debolezza per il possibile,
pensò — non per l'ineffabile,
distante, privo d'insistenza
e temperamento che manomette,
o calpesta

Non l'impersonale,
ma quello che galleggia qui —
fra l' "io" dell'apertura
e il "noi" del tuo ascolto possibile
ora, o nel tempo
imperfetto e teso di quel
che articola l'eterno
Quella rivelazione astratta
quella durata scivolosa
alla quale, sembrerebbe, vado soggetto
e a causa della quale non mi riesce mai
di finire niente, come se la vita stessa
fosse una traduzione senza fine

Improvvisazioni su versi di Isacco il Cieco

È solo col suggerire, e non col sapere,
che si può trasmettere la sottile essenza —
linfa della parola e del fluire del mondo

che emana l'odore del mandorlo in fiore,
e ingiallisce l'usignolo nella giada dell'olivo.
Solo col suggerire, non col sapere.

L'erba e l'acetosella che cresce presso i pini
sono per noi luminose — petalo e foglia —
come linfa della parola e del fluire del mondo;

una scintilla che s'alza dalle braci incandescenti;
luce intrappolata nella dolce treccia dell'albero
di quello che suggeriva. Non è il sapere

il miele ambrato raccolto nel diospiro.
Mi persuade un anemone che buca il trifoglio —
linfa della parola e il mondo fluisce





attraverso la separazione, i doni della saggezza,
e in quella convinzione si compiono scelte:
Ma solo col suggerire, non col sapere
quella linfa della parola fluisce attraverso il mondo.

Il ghazal di quello che vede

*"A chi chiede, qual è la Profondità dell'Essere Primordiale, si
risponda: 'Nulla.'"*

Yosef Gikatilla (Spagna, 13° secolo)

Quello che vede quando vede — il mandorlo invernato che
[dispiega
le bianche fiamme dei pistilli nutritivi attraverso il richiamo
[del blu —

non è nulla se la mente non lo tiene fermo lì il giorno della
[fucina dei

conti;
e quando si ferma a pensarci, anche quel pensiero lì è nulla

senza il fuoco alimentato dall'incendio del mondo
dentro a un tutto nero se sapere è nulla.

È tutta una questione d'atteggiamento nel dolore, o nel
[piacere: un equilibrio.
È così che si dicono parole e si formano frasi, che sono nulla

se non patti ai quali si scende, un vivere —
una specie di ponte sospeso attraverso i detriti alla deriva
[su un fiume

infinitamente largo, solenne,

cavi tesi e travi erette,
come se la massa incalcolabile, e il carico, fossero nulla.



From *The Invention of Influence: An Agon*
 Part One

The following considerations are based upon a single example of the "influencing machine" complained of by a certain type of schizophrenic patient.

Victor Tausk, Vienna, 1919

It's a machine, said the doctor,
 of a mystical nature —
 reported on at times by patients.
 Their knowledge notwithstanding,
 witnesses are able to offer
 only the vaguest of hints
 as to how the air loom functions.
 It makes them see pictures. It produces
 thoughts and feelings, and also removes them,
 by means of mysterious forces.
 It brings about changes within the body —
 sensation and even emission,
 a palpable kind of impregnation,
 as one becomes a host.
 For some it's driven by faint effluvia
 derived from human breath;
 for others electric charges are sent
 directly into the brain.
 It's born of a need to explain the cause
 of things inherent in man.
 Certain factors are always involved:
 Enemies. Displaced erotic
 tension. Boundaries are called into question
 as though one's thoughts were "given"
 and knowledge implanted from beyond —
 so what's within is known.
 One does nothing on one's own.
 Strings are pulled and buttons
 pressed, all to evade an anxiety
 that rears its head at the heart
 of the void in avoidance. The echoes begin:
 The cure as illness, the illness
 as cure. Thus the revolving door
 that becomes a lament for the makers —



Da *L'invenzione dell'influenza: Un agone*
Parte Prima

Le seguenti considerazioni sono basate su un unico esempio della "macchina influenzante" della quale si lamenta un certo tipo di pazienti schizofrenici.

Victor Tausk, Vienna, 1919

È una macchina, disse il dottore,
di natura mistica —
di cui parlano a volte i pazienti.
A prescindere dalla loro conoscenza,
i testimoni possono offrire
solo i più vaghi suggerimenti
riguardo il funzionamento del telaio ad aria.
Gli fa vedere delle immagini. Produce
pensieri ed emozioni, ma li rimuove anche,
adoperando una forza misteriosa.
Causa una serie di cambiamenti nel corpo —
sensazioni e perfino emissioni,
una sorta di tangibile inseminazione,
che trasforma in organismi ospiti.
Secondo alcuni si diffonde attraverso deboli
effluvi derivati dal fiato degli esseri umani;
per altri si tratta di cariche elettriche inviate
direttamente all'interno del cervello.
Nasce dal bisogno di spiegare la causa
di fenomeni connaturati all'uomo.
Alcuni fattori sono sempre coinvolti:
Nemici. Tensione erotica
dislocata. I confini sono spesso chiamati in causa
come se i pensieri dell'individuo fossero "dati"
e la conoscenza impiantata da un altrove —
e così quel che è dentro diventa noto.
Non si fa niente di propria iniziativa.
I fili vengono tirati e i bottoni
premuti, tutto per sottrarsi all'ansia
che si manifesta nel cuore
del vuoto nel tentativo di evadere. Comincia l'eco:
La cura come malattia, la malattia
come cura. E quindi la porta girevole
che diventa una lamentela per chi crea —





and for those who fall prey to the powers –
of this most intricate machine.

Israel Is

Israel is he, or she, who wrestles
with God – call him what you will,

not some goon (with a rabbi and gun)
in a pre-fab home on a biblical hill.





Gianluca Rizzo / Peter Cole

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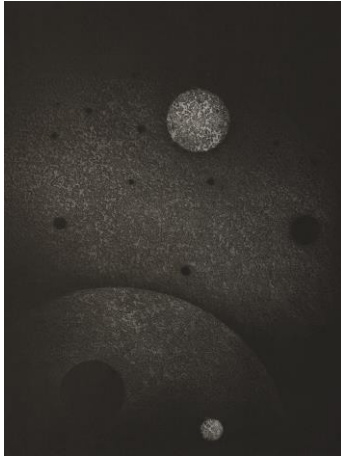
e per quelli che cadono preda dei poteri —
di questa macchina fra le più intricate.

Israele è

Israele è colui, o colei, che lotta
con Dio — chiamatelo come vi pare,

non un energumeno (con un rabbino e una pistola)
dentro a una casa prefabbricata su una collina biblica.





Rizzelli-Seconda luna,
acquaforte e acquatinta su
ferro, 400x300 mm, 2016





Emerging Translators

Edited by Anne Greott



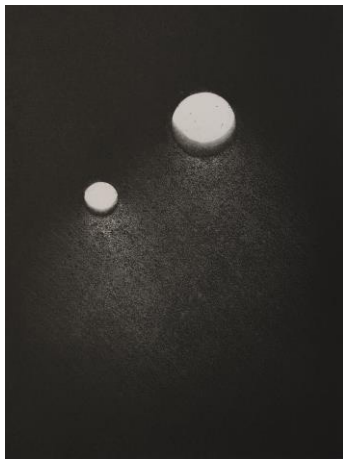
Poems by William Waring Cuney

Translated by Elena Moncini

Elena Moncini was born in Lucca, Tuscany, where she lives. She graduated in Foreign Languages and Literature at Pisa University, where she attended a post-degree course in Literary Translation of Postcolonial Texts in English. She translated short stories and poems by various authors for the online literary magazines *El Ghibli* and *Sagarana* and she contributed to the volume *Canto un mondo libero. Poesia-canzone per la libertà e la pace*, edited by Marco Fazzini, Pisa, ETS, 2012. Her critical essay *Stephen Vincent Benét e la lezione di Whitman* was published in February 2014 in *Semicerchio*, together with translations of Benét and Whitman's poems. She also contributed to *Testo a Fronte* with the translation of *Hard Times Blues/Blues dei tempi duri* by William Waring Cuney. Her translation of *The Watery Gowns/Le vesti acquee* by Baret Magarian was published in the *Journal of Italian Translation* in 2014. Her co-translation of the short stories collection *Melting Point* by Baret Magarian was published by Quarup, Pescara, in July 2017. She currently teaches English language and culture at a secondary school in Lucca and works as a translator.

William Waring Cuney is considered a minor poet of the Harlem Renaissance. Although he was highly appreciated by his contemporaries and his poems were widely read by the audience of his age, his works were only published at the end of his career.

He was born in Washington, DC, in 1906. He attended Howard University and graduated from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. Wanting to pursue a career in singing, he attended the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and moved to Rome. However, Cuney never became a professional singer and switched to writing, winning a prize at the age of eighteen with his poem *No Images*. Cuney's poems of the middle and late 1930s were recorded by Josh White as *Southern Exposure*, and others were set to music by Al Haig and Nina Simone. During World War II, Cuney served in the South Pacific and after the war he settled in the Bronx. *Puzzles*, a limited edition book of poems with woodcuts by Ru Van Rossen, was published in 1960. Two years later he withdrew from public life. In 1973 his second collection of poems, *Storefront Church*, was published in London. He died in 1976.



Ruzzelli - Segni di luce,
acquaforte e acquatinta su
ferro, 400x300 mm, 2016





Il blues delle catapecchie

Mi sveglio stamani, pioveva nel letto.
Mi sveglio stamani, pioveva nel letto.
Dio, in testa mi pioveva, sai, pioveva dal tetto.

Di fare 'sta vita non c'è proprio motivo.
Di fare 'sta vita non c'è proprio motivo.
Ho perso il lavoro. Non ho neanche il sussidio.

Dio, mi chiedo quando avrò buone notizie.
Dio, mi chiedo quando avrò buone notizie.
Sto per dirti come ha fatto a venirmi il blues delle catapecchie.

Ora vado alla Casa Bianca, vado sul prato del Campidoglio.
Ora vado alla Casa Bianca, vado sul prato del Campidoglio.
È così da che son nato. Sgomberate, su, che è meglio.

Blues dell'armaiolo

Sono stato alla fabbrica d'armi
a cercarmi un lavoro,
hanno avuto il coraggio di dirmi,
"Per te nulla, ragazzo, sei nero".

Mio padre è morto,
morto a far la guerra in mare.
Mamma ha detto che la sua morte
mica ci ha potuto aiutare.

Io fratello te lo dico
non c'è neanche una ragione
per non far lavorare un Negro
in difesa della nazione.



I'll tell you one thing
That boss man ain't my friend.
If he was, he'd give me
Some Democracy to defend.

In the land of the free
Called the home, home of the brave,
All I want is liberty,
That's what I crave.

Down-Home Boy

I'm a down-home boy
Trying to get ahead.
It seems like I go
Backwards instead.

Been in Chicago
Over a year.
Had nothing down home,
Not much here.

A measly job,
A greedy boss -
That's how come
I left Waycross.

Those Great Lake winds
Blow all around.
I'm a light-coat man
In a heavy-coat town.

My Lord, What a Morning

O my Lord
What a morning,
O my Lord,
What a feeling,
When Jack Johnson



Elena Mancini / William Waring Cuney

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Una cosa te la dico
quel capo non è mio amico.
Se lo fosse, mi darebbe
un po' di Democrazia da difendere.

Nella terra dei liberi
detta casa, casa dei temerari,
voglio solo libertà,
non c'è altro che desideri.

Ragazzo di provincia

Sono un ragazzo di provincia
che cerca di avanzare.
Ma faccio retromarcia
a quanto pare.

Sto a Chicago
da un anno e più.
Niente avevo a casa,
non ho molto quassù.

Un capo pidocchioso,
un lavoro malpagato -
e così da Waycross
me ne sono andato.

Ai Grandi Laghi il vento
soffia da ogni lato.
Ho una giacca un po' leggera
per un posto infagottato.

O mio Dio, che mattinata

O mio Dio,
che mattinata,
o mio Dio,
che figata,
quando Jack Johnson



Turned Jim Jeffries'
Snow-white face
To the ceiling.

Nineteen-twenty-nine

Some folks hollered hard times
in nineteen-twenty-nine.
In nineteen-twenty-eight
say I was way behind.

Some folks hollered hard times
because hard times were new.
Hard times is all I ever had,
why should I lie to you?

Some folks hollered hard times.
What is it all about?
Things were bad for me when
those hard times started out.



ha rovesciato a Jim Jeffries
quella faccia
bianca slavata.

Millenovecentoventinove

C'era gente che gridava ai tempi duri
nel millenovecentoventinove.
Nel millenovecentoventotto
per me era già miseria in ogni dove.

C'era gente che gridava ai tempi duri
ché i tempi duri non c'erano mai stati.
Sempre e solo tempi duri ho visto io,
secondo te me li sono inventati?

C'era gente che gridava ai tempi duri.
Ma di che stiamo parlando?
Quei tempi duri erano nuovi ma
io ero messo male sai da quando.



Uncle Sam Says

Airplanes flying 'cross the land and sea,
Everybody flying but a Negro like me.
Uncle Sam says, "Your place is on the ground,
When I fly my airplanes, don't want no Negro round."

The same thing for the Navy, when ships go to sea,
All they got is a mess boy's job for me.
Uncle Sam says, "Keep on your apron, son,
You know I ain't gonna let you shoot my big Navy gun."

Got my long government letter, my time to go,
When I got to the Army found the same old Jim Crow.
Uncle Sam says, "Two camps for black and white,"
But when trouble starts, we'll all be in the same big fight.

If you ask me, I think democracy is fine,
I mean democracy without the color line.
Uncle Sam says, "We'll live the American way,"
Let's get together and kill Jim Crow today.



Dice lo zio Sam

Sorvolano la terra e il mare gli aeroplani,
tranne i negri come me volano tutti gli esseri umani.
Dice lo zio Sam: "Tu resti a terra e ti siedì,
io guido i miei aeroplani senza Negri tra i piedi".

Stessa cosa nella Marina, le navi prendono il mare,
ma il mio posto è in cucina a strofinare.
Dice lo zio Sam: "Figliolo, tieni pure il grembiule,
lo sai che non ti lascerò usare il mio fucile".

Mi arrivò la lunga lettera del militare, era ora di andare,
ma anche nell'esercito discriminazione razziale.
Dice lo zio Sam: "Bianchi e neri in due accampamenti",
ma iniziano i guai e si fanno insieme i combattimenti.

La democrazia va bene, per quello che ne so
intendo una democrazia senza Jim Crow¹.
Dice lo zio Sam: "Vivremo da americani",
uniamoci e uccidiamo Jim Crow stamani.

1 Personaggio di una nota *coon song* recitata durante gli spettacoli dei menestrelli tra fine Ottocento e inizio Novecento. Questa figura è poi divenuta emblema della discriminazione razziale.



Love Poems by John Donne

Translated by Simone Pagliai

Simone Pagliai ha studiato legge all'Università La Sapienza di Roma e ha lavorato diversi anni come avvocato. Si è formato come traduttore all'Università di Firenze e, oltre che di documenti giuridici, si è occupato di narrativa e poesia.

Ha tradotto, fra gli altri, testi poetici di John Donne, Marianne Moore, Oscar Wilde, Dylan Thomas, Galway Kinnell, Elizabeth Bishop e Séamus Heaney.

John Donne nacque a Londra nel 1572 da una famiglia cattolica. La sua fede – in un periodo in cui l'appartenenza religiosa era al centro di violenti scontri politici in Inghilterra e in tutta l'Europa – gli impedì di coronare con la laurea gli studi universitari e di intraprendere una carriera a corte. Donne fece però vita di società (*“Not dissolute but very neat”, dice di lui un contemporaneo, “a great visitor of ladies, a great frequenter of plays, a great writer of conceited verses”*), partecipò a importanti spedizioni marittime e diventò segretario del Lord Guardasigilli, Thomas Egerton. Questo incarico, tuttavia, gli venne tolto nel 1601, quando si scoprì che aveva sposato in segreto la nipote di Egerton, Anne More. A seguito del matrimonio, Donne venne brevemente imprigionato e, negli anni successivi, visse fra gravi difficoltà economiche con una famiglia sempre più numerosa (Anne More gli diede dodici figli e morì nel 1617, mentre partoriva l'ultimo). Nel 1615, prese gli ordini della chiesa anglicana e la conversione gli aprì nuove prospettive di carriera: fu ordinato diacono, fatto ministro nella cattedrale di San Paolo e infine cappellano di corte del re Giacomo I. Nel 1621, diventò decano della Cattedrale, dove fu sepolto dopo la morte, avvenuta nel 1631.

John Donne è considerato il maggiore dei poeti metafisici e uno dei massimi esempi di *wit* (qualità difficilmente definibile) nella letteratura inglese. Scrisse poesie d'amore in cui s'intrecciano slancio passionale e raffinatezza intellettuale e – a partire all'incirca dal 1617 – poesie religiose (*Holy Sonnets*), oltre che elegie, satire e



due poemetti conosciuti come *Anniversaries*. In prosa compose il *Biathanatos*, che è una meditazione sul suicidio, e opere di polemica anticattolica (*Pseudo-martyr*, *Conclave Ignatii*). Nell'ultima parte della sua vita fu un importante predicatore, celebre per i suoi numerosi sermoni.

Nota sulla traduzione

Per quel che si sa della sua vita, John Donne era un tipo capace di cavarsela in una rissa da taverna come in una disputa filosofica, in un bordello come in un salotto, su una nave da guerra come sul pulpito di una cattedrale.

Ai molti talenti doveva corrispondere un carattere dalle molte complessità.

Nato in una famiglia cattolica in tempi di lotte politico-religiose e repressioni cruente, Donne cresce fra "uomini di una fede oppressa e afflitta" e presto perde uno zio (condannato per aver detto messa) e un fratello (morto in prigione perché la messa l'aveva ascoltata): ciononostante, più in là nella vita, passa alla Chiesa d'Inghilterra per diventare diacono, ministro della cattedrale di San Paolo e infine cappellano alla corte del re Giacomo. Fin da giovane sente forte il richiamo dell'ambizione, eppure si gioca la carriera, si chiude ogni prospettiva e affronta la povertà sposando segretamente - e contro la volontà del futuro suocero - Anne More, nipote del Lord Guardasigilli, presso il quale era impiegato come segretario privato. I suoi esordi nel mondo sono quelli di un avventuriero che s'imbarca nelle spedizioni del Conte di Essex e di Lord Raleigh, ma al momento della morte è diventato un predicatore celeberrimo con fama di grande mistico.

Questa varietà spinta fino alla contraddizione si riflette nelle sue poesie d'amore, che parlando d'amore evocano un intero universo - l'alchimia e la teologia, la filosofia e la geografia, il gergo dei tribunali e il linguaggio della strada, i concetti dell'astronomia e i discorsi del mercato, le scene di vita quotidiana e le fantasie astruse, le immagini ossessive di morte e le celebrazioni della vita, le raffinatezze dello spirito e il richiamo della carne, le maniere del cortigiano e le esaltazioni del mistico, le descrizioni dal vero e i riferimenti per iniziati.

Versi dal contenuto tanto ricco pongono ovviamente dei



problemi alla traduzione: restituire i diversi registri, conservare le allusioni, cercare un rigore filologico (e si potrebbe continuare).

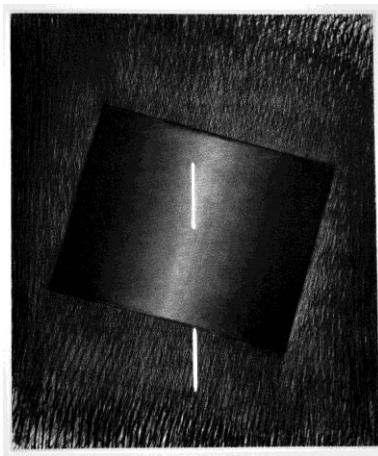
Tuttavia – come ha rimarcato Virginia Woolf – quel che più colpisce, in Donne, non è tanto il significato della poesia, pure così importante, quanto il vigore elegante dei versi, “*l’esplosione con cui egli irrompe nel discorso*”. La raffinatezza, la magnificenza, la sofisticazione del significato ci impressionano perché sono espresse – sono formate – da un’energia grazie alla quale “*ogni prefazione, ogni parlamento è consumato*”¹. Scrive Cristina Campo che in Donne “*i giuochi verbali, i contrasti di associazioni, le allusioni molteplici non spezzano l’arco altero della strofa, l’imperturbabile naturalezza della dizione*”².

Su questo, soprattutto, si concentrano le traduzioni che seguono: rendere, sì, il significato, ma provando in primo luogo a conservare la forza e il ritmo del verso. Per ogni poesia si cerca una traduzione che restituisca in italiano (anche graficamente) i metri e le proporzioni di Donne, usando o combinando, a seconda dei casi, endecasillabi, novenari, settenari e quinari. Ogni volta che il testo lo consente, si inseriscono rime e assonanze, a fine verso o interne ai versi.

Sono versioni destinate anche al lettore che sa poco dei significati più riposti e dei riferimenti eruditi, e che tuttavia può apprezzare la bellezza e l’ingegnosità dei versi, le suggestioni di queste poesie.

1 VIRGINIA WOOLF, *Donne After Three Centuries*, in *The Common Reader, Second Series*, London 1932.

2 CRISTINA CAMPO, Introduzione a *John Donne, Poesie amorose – poesie teologiche*, Einaudi, Torino 1971.



Rizzelli- Segni di luce n. 1,
maniera nera su zinco, 330x250
mm, 1998



Twicknam Garden

Blasted with sighs, and sorrouded with teares,
 Hither I come to seeke the spring,
 And at mine eyes, and at mine eares,
 Receive such balmes, as else cure every thing;
 But O, selfe traytor, I do bring
 The spider love, which transubstantiates all,
 And can convert Manna to gall,
 And that this place may thoroughly be thought
 True Paradise, I have the serpent brought.

'Twere wholsomer for mee, that winter did
 Benight the glory of this place,
 And that a grave frost did forbid
 These trees to laugh, and mocke mee to my face;
 But that I may not this disgrace
 Indure, not yet leave loving, Love let mee
 Some senslesse peece of this place bee;
 Make me a mandrake, so I may groane here,
 Or a stone fountaine weeping out my yeare.

Hither with christal vials, lovers come,
 And take my teares, which are loves wine,
 And try your mistresse Teares at home,
 For all are false, that tast not just like mine;
 Alas, hearts do not in eyes shine,
 Nor can you more judge womans thoughts by teares,
 Then by her shadow, what she weares.
 O perverse sexe, where none is true but shee,
 Who's therefore true, because her truth kills mee.

Witchcraft By A Picture

I fixe mine eye on thine, and there
 Pitty my picture burning in thine eye,
 My picture drown'd in a transparent teare,
 When I looke lower I espie;
 Hadst thou the wicked skill
 By pictures made and mard, to kill,
 How many wayes mightst thou performe thy will?



Il parco di Twickenham

Riarso dai sospiri, immerso in lacrime,
vengo a cercare qui la primavera,
e negli orecchi, negli occhi ricevo
quel balsamo ch'ogni altra cosa cura;
ma, traditore di me stesso, ho addosso
il ragno amore, che trasmuta tutto
e convertire può la manna in fiele.
E affinché sembri, questo, veramente
il Paradiso, porto qui il serpente.

Per me sarebbe sano che l'inverno
la gloria in questo luogo ottenebrasse,
e un gelo, duro, agli alberi vietasse
di ridere beffardi sul mio viso.
Perch'io questa disgrazia infine sfugga,
ma non rifugga amare, Amore faccia
di me una cosa inerte del giardino:
mandragora – ch'io possa lamentarmi –
o fonte in pietra che il mio anno pianga.

Versate, amanti, in fiale di cristallo
il pianto mio, ch'è vino dell'amore:
provate, a casa – se la vostra amata
l'ha differente al gusto, allora è falso.
Ahimé, negli occhi il cuore non si vede,
né pensiero di donna dal suo pianto,
più di quanto dall'ombra il suo vestito.
Oh, sesso perverso! Tutte infedeli,
eccetto lei, fedele per uccidermi.

Sortilegio con un ritratto

Se tengo l'occhio mio fisso nel tuo,
compiango il mio ritratto, che nel tuo occhio brucia;
e quando guardo ancor più in basso lo intravedo
dentro la trasparenza d'una lacrima.
Da strega avessi l'arte
d'uccidere con quei ritratti fatti e sfatti,
in quanti modi lo potresti fare?



But now I have drunke thy sweet salt teares,
 And though thou poure more I'll depart;
 My picture vanish'd, vanish feares,
 That I can be endameg'd by that art;
 Though thou retaine of mee
 One picture more, yet that will bee,
 Being in thine owne heart, from all malice free.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
 And whisper to their soules, to goe,
 Whilst some of their sad friends doe say,
 The breath goes now, and some say, no:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
 No teare-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
 T'were prophanation of our joyes
 To tell the layetie our love.

Moving of th'earth brings harmes and feares,
 Men reckon what it did and meant,
 But trepidation of the spheares,
 Though greater farre, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers love
 (Whose soule is sense) cannot admit
 Absence, because it doth remove
 Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love, so much refin'd,
 That our selves know not what it is,
 Inter-assured of the mind,
 Care less, eyes, lips and hands to misse.

Our two soules therefore, which are one,
 Though I must goe, endure not yet
 A breach, but an expansion,
 Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.

If they be two, they are two so
 As stiffe twin compasses are two,



Ma ormai, salate e dolci, ho già bevuto
le lacrime tue e vado, benché tu pianga ancora:
svanito il mio ritratto, svanisce la paura
che possa danneggiarmi l'arte oscura:
se un altro mio ritratto
conservi, ebbene quello, giacché sta nel tuo cuore,
rimarrà libero da ogni livore.

Un congedo: a vietare il pianto

Come i virtuosi trapassano lievi
sussurrando all'anima di andare
mentre fra i mesti amici alcuni dicono:
"Va via il respiro" e altri: "Ancora no",

così sciogliamoci anche noi: senza rumore,
senza tempeste di sospiri o pianti -
sarebbe oltraggio per le nostre gioie
svelare a dei profani il nostro amore.

La terra trema e dà timori e mali -
del moto scruta l'uomo effetto e senso -
ma la trepidazione delle sfere,
malgrado sia tanto più grande è innocua.

L'amore degli amanti sublunari,
che ha l'anima nei sensi, ottuso, nega
l'assenza, ché quest'ultima rimuove
la cosa che formava la sua essenza.

Ma a noi - l'un l'altro, in mente, fatti certi
di quell'amore tanto più squisito
da rimanerci affatto sconosciuto -
mani occhi e labbra mancano di meno.

Perciò le anime nostre, fuse in una,
se pure me ne vado non s'infrangono,
ma come l'oro quando vien battuto
s'espandono e si fanno lama eterea.

Se le anime son due, lo sono al modo
dei piedi nel compasso: il piede fisso -



Thy soule the fixt foot, makes no show
 To move, but doth, if th'other doe.

And though it in the center sit,
 Yet when the other far doth rome,
 It leanes, and hearkens after it,
 And growes erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to mee, who must
 Like th'other foot obliquely runne;
 Thy firmnes make my circle just,
 And makes me end, where I begunne.

The Dreame

Deare love, for nothing lesse than thee
 Would I have broke this happy dreame,
 It was a theame
 For reason, much too strong for phantasie,
 Therefore thou wakd'st me wisely; yet
 My Dreame thou brok'st not, but continued'st it,
 Thou art so truth, that thoughts of thee suffice,
 To make dreames truths; and fables histories;
 Enter these armes, for since thou thoughts it best,
 Not to dreame all my dreame, let's act the rest.

As lightning, or a Tapers light,
 Thine eyes, and not thy noise wak'd mee;
 Yet I thought thee
 (For thou lovest truth) an Angell, at first sight,
 But when I saw thou sawest my heart,
 And knew'st my thoughts, beyond an Angels art,
 When thou knew'st what I dreamt, when thou knew'st
 when
 Excesse of joy would wake me, and cam'st then,
 I must confesse, it could not chuse but bee
 Prophane, to thinke thee any thing but thee.

Coming and staying show'd thee, thee,
 But rising makes me doubt, that now,
 Thou art not thou.
 That love is weake, where feare's as strong as hee;



cioè l'anima tua - che appare fermo,
si muove sempre al muovere dell'altro:

per quanto sia nel centro che dimora,
se appena l'altro piede s'allontana
si piega, quello, per seguirlo intento
e torna dritto quando l'altro torna.

Così tu sei per me che, obliquamente,
correre devo, come l'altro piede:
la tua fermezza fa giusto il mio cerchio
e dove inizio, lì mi fa finire.

Il sogno

Per nulla, amore, che ti sia da meno,
avrei interrotto questo dolce sogno:
era argomento adatto alla ragione
e troppo forte per la fantasia.
Saggiamente, pertanto, m'hai svegliato,
eppure il sogno mio non hai interrotto: hai prolungato.
Sei tanto vera che, da sé, pensarti è sufficiente
a fare verità dei sogni e delle fiabe storia.
Entra fra queste braccia: giacché t'è parso giusto
che il sogno non finissi, mettiamo in atto il resto.

Come un lampo o una luce di candela,
gli occhi, m'hanno svegliato, e non il suono:
e se ho pensato, a prima vista, fossi
un angelo (siccome tu ami il vero),
quand'ho visto che mi leggevi il cuore,
e molto più d'un angelo vedevi il mio pensiero,
quando il mio sogno hai indovinato e poi
l'istante
del mio risveglio per la gioia, e sei venuta,
sarebbe stato - in fede mia - profanazione
pensare fossi cosa diversa da te stessa.

Venire e stare t'hanno rivelata,
che tu sia tu davvero il tuo levarti
fa dubitare e debole è l'amore
quando per forze è pari alla paura;



'Tis not all spirit, pure, and brave,
 If mixture it of Feare, Shame, Honor, have.
 Perchance as torches which must ready bee,
 Men light and put out, so thou deal'st with mee,
 Thou cam'st to kindle, goest to come; Then I
 Will dreame that hope again, but else would die.

The Anniversarie

All Kings, and all their favorites,
 All glory of honors, beauties, wits,
 The Sun it selfe, which makes times, as they passe,
 Is elder by a yeare, now, than it was
 When thou and I first one another saw:
 All other things, to their destruction draw,
 Only our love hath no decay;
 This, no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday,
 Running it never runs from us away,
 But truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day.

Two graves must hide thine and my coarse,
 If one might, death were no divorce.
 Alas, as well as other Princes, wee,
 (Who Prince enough in one another bee,)
 Must leave at last in death, these eyes, and eares,
 Oft fed with true oaths, and with sweet salt teares;
 But soules where nothing dwells but love
 (All other thoughts being inmates) then shall prove
 This, or a love increased there above,
 When bodies to their graves, soules from their graves
 [remove.]

And then wee shall be thoroughly blest,
 But wee no more, than all the rest;
 Here upon earth, we're Kings, and none but wee
 Can be such Kings, nor of such subjects bee;
 Who is so safe as wee? were none can doe
 Treason to us, except one of us two.
 True and false feares let us refraine,
 Let us love nobly, and live, and adde againe
 Yeares and yeares unto yeares, till we attaine
 To write threescore: this is the second of our raigne.



non è spirito valoroso e puro
se con *Pudore, Paura, Onore* è mescolato.
Forse come le torce, che devono esser pronte,
si spegne l'uomo e splende, così tu mi governi:
venuta per accendere, vai per venire e io,
per non morire, ancora sognerò quella speranza.

L'anniversario

I re con tutti i loro favoriti,
tutte le glorie degli onori e le bellezze e i begli spiriti,
perfino il sole, che i tempi mentre vanno va formando,
hanno oramai un anno di più, rispetto a quando
io e te ci siamo visti per la prima volta.
Ogni altra cosa al mondo andrà dissolta,
soltanto il nostro amore non sconterà declino:
siccome non ha ieri, giacché non ha domani,
sebbene stia correndo, non corre via e rimane
fedele al nostro primo, ultimo giorno eterno.

Due tombe inghiottiranno i nostri corpi:
se fossero una sola, non soffriremmo in morte alcun
[divorzio.]

Ma ahimè, come i sovrani, morendo pure noi
(sovrani di noi stessi) per sempre lasceremo
le orecchie e gli occhi nostri, che sono sazi spesso
di salse dolci lacrime e promesse.

Avrà però quell'anima dove non c'è che amore
(altri pensieri, lì, saranno meri ospiti)
l'amore - questo o un altro, più rifinito - quando
il corpo, nella tomba, svincolerà gli spiriti.

Saremo allora in tutto benedetti
ma, pur se benedetti, mai benedetti più di tutti gli
[altri:]

qui sulla terra, invece, siamo già re e noi soli
in questo modo re, di tali re soggetti.
Chi più sicuro, infatti, di noi, quando fra tutti
nessuno, a parte noi, ci può tradire?

Teniamo allora a freno timori veri o finti:
amiamo nobilmente, col vivere aggiungendo
anni sugli anni ancora, fino a tre volte venti:
del nostro regno, questo, è già l'anno secondo.



A Lecture Upon The Shadow

Stand still, and I will read to thee
 A Lecture, Love, in loves philosophy.
 These three houres that we have spent,
 Walking here, Two shadowes went
 Along with us, that we ourselves produc'd;
 But, now the Sunne is just above our head,
 We doe those shadowes tread;
 And to brave clearnesse all things are reduc'd.
 So whilst our infant loves did grow,
 Disguises did, and shadowes, flow,
 From us, and our cares; but now 'tis not so.

That love hath not attain'd the high'st degree,
 Which is still diligent lest others see.

Except our loves at this noone stay,
 We shall new shadowes make the other way.
 As the first were made to blinde
 Others; these which come behinde
 Will worke upon our selves, and blind our eyes.
 If our loves faint, and westwardly decline;
 To me thou, falsly, thine,
 And I to thee mine actions shall disguise.
 The morning shadowes weare away,
 But these grow longer all the day,
 But oh, loves day is short, if love decay.

Love is a growing, or full constant light;
 And his first minute, after noone, is night.



Una lezione sull'ombra

Amore, fermati, ché ti farò
lezione di filosofia d'amore.

 Qui, per tre ore, spese passeggiando,
 camminavano, con noi, due ombre:
noi stessi le andavamo producendo;
ma il sole ci sta adesso sulla testa,
 pestiamo le ombre e tutto
 al fulgido chiarore è ricondotto.
Così nel crescere, fanciullo,
il nostro amore proiettava inganni;
da noi, dai nostri affanni, fluiva l'ombra: ora non più.

Non è un amore fermo al più alto grado
quello che teme di mostrarsi agli altri.

A meno che non resti al suo meriggio,
darà l'amore nostro nuove ombre,
 e se le prime agivano sugli altri,
 quest'ultime, che dietro a noi si fanno,
noi stessi e gli occhi nostri abbaglieranno.
Se cala ad occidente il nostro amore,
 io a te le azioni mie,
 tu, falsa, a me le tue, nasconderemo.
Le ombre del mattino sfumano,
ma crescono le nuove lungo il giorno,
ma amore è giorno breve, se è amore che declina.

L'amore o cresce o è piena luce, e ferma:
dopo il meriggio il primo istante è notte.





Amore che cresce

Credo a stento il mio amore tanto puro
quanto pure m'immaginavo fosse,
ché come l'erba soffre le percosse
d'ogni vicissitudine e stagione:
mi sa che ho spergiurato, tutto l'inverno, quando
dicevo che era immenso, se in primavera cresce.

Se questa medicina, l'amore, che il dolore
con il dolore cura, non è una quintessenza,
ma impasto d'ogni umore che affligge anima e sensi
al quale il sole presta il suo vigore,
l'amore non è astratto, né puro, quanto s'usa
dire s'altre non s'ama che la Musa,
ma, fatto d'elementi, al pari d'ogni cosa,
a volte esso contempla, a volte fa.

Ma non più grande, e invece più evidente,
è reso, amore, dalla primavera,
nel modo stesso in cui nel cielo il sole
le stelle non espande ma rivela.
I dolci atti d'amore, come boccioli spuntano
dalle radici nuove di quest'amore e gemmano.

Se cerchi più larghi prodotti in acqua smossa
da un solo cerchio, sono, le crescite d'amore,
sembrano tante sfere che fanno un solo cielo,
perché concentriche rispetto a te.
Se accresce, primavera, il calore dell'amore,
l'inverno come un principe che in guerra
impone tasse nuove e in pace non le annulla
terrà di primavera l'incremento.





Poems by Ann Lauinger

Translated by Filippo Naitana

Filippo Naitana is Associate Professor of Italian Studies at Quinnipiac University. His scholarly interests include Dante and the classical tradition, the Renaissance in a Mediterranean context, and Cesare Pavese as translator. His research has been published in journals such as *Archivio storico italiano*, *Dante Studies*, *Quaderni medievali*, and *Italian Poetry Review*. His poetry and literary translations recently appeared or are forthcoming in *The Massachusetts Review*, *Levania*, *Breviario Poetico*, and *Nuovi Argomenti*.

Ann Lauinger's two books of poetry are *Persuasions of Fall* (University of Utah Press, 2004), winner of the Agha Shahid Ali Prize in Poetry, and *Against Butterflies* (Little Red Tree Publishing, 2013). Her poems have appeared in publications from *Alimentum* to *Zone 3*, including *Angle*, *The Cumberland River Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Measure*, *Parnassus*, *The Same*, *Smartish Pace*, and *The Southern Poetry Review*; and have been featured on Poetry Daily, Verse Daily, and Martha Stewart Living Radio. She has translated poetry of Vergil and Ronsard, as well as Filippo Naitana. Her work is anthologized in *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, *Poetry Daily Essentials 2007*, *Decomposition*, *In a Fine Frenzy: Poets Respond to Shakespeare*, *A Slant of Light*, and *Short Flights*. A member of the literature faculty at Sarah Lawrence College and of the Slapering Hol Press Advisory Committee, she lives in Ossining, NY.



Rizzelli- Segni di Matera
n. 1, acquaforte, rotella e
puntasecca su zinco, 400x300
mm, 2000



Persuasions of Fall*For Kelsey Bergstrom*

It makes its own silence, an avalanche of
 light that jags past the boles, pours over ochre-
 tented branches, and becomes the air: fed straight
 into lungs, brain, and the begging senses, till
 vagrancy finds itself suddenly at home,

and poverty slinks off, inaudible now
 whatever its mutterings, under all that
Gold, gold! A sliding quiet answers desire;
 the heart beats to no end. But, for the fire's sake,
 call it purgatory of apples, peace, home.

And not alone. A flock of migrant finches
 stitches counterpoint through the trees in dark blue
 chevrons, each brief flight a rising or dropping
 cadence from yellow to bare brown to yellow.
 A toppled tree thrusts what's left of its roots home

to the light where improbably pink mushrooms
 crown the inversion. Does darkness win? No doubt
 there's a strong persuasion in favor of just
 that, an undersong caught in the throat of full
 brilliance, something about ripeness, cold stars, home.

Knives

We lay dangerous things out between us.
 The knives are washed and dried and shining

dark on the white counter; no ambush
 lurks in the drawers. Their carbon steel

looks to me mottled with violence



Persuasioni dell'autunno

Per Kelsey Bergstrom

Crea il suo proprio silenzio, una valanga di
luce che oltrepassa –frastagliandoli — i tronchi degli alberi,
si riversa sui rami color ocra, e diventa aria: dritta a

[riempire

i polmoni, il cervello e i sensi imploranti, finché
il vagabondare non diviene improvvisamente casa,

e la povertà sgattaiola via, inudibile ora
a dispetto dei borbottii, sommersa da tutto quell'
Oro, oro! Una quiete fluida risponde al desiderio;
il cuore batte senza scopo. Ma, per amor del fuoco,
chiamalo purgatorio di mele, pace, casa.

E non da solo. Uno stormo di fringuelli migratori
ricama a uncinetto fra gli alberi dei motivi chevron
blu scuro: ogni breve volo una cadenza ascendente
o discendente, dal giallo al marrone spento al giallo.
Un albero abbattuto spinge in piena luce la terra

arroccata fra radici divelte, dove improbabili funghi rosa
coronano l'inversione. Vince forse l'oscurità? Senza dubbio
son persuasi in molti che sia proprio quello il caso;
un controcanto strozzato in gola della vera brillantezza:
qualcosa riguardo la maturazione, le stelle fredde, la casa.

(Da Ann Lauinger, *Persuasions of Fall*, Salt Lake City:
University of Utah Press, 2004)

Coltelli

Apparecchiamo tra noi oggetti pericolosi.
I coltelli sono lavati, asciugati e splendidamente

bui sul bancone bianco. Nessun agguato
si annida nei cassetti. Il loro acciaio al carbonio

mi pare offuscato dalla violenza che potrebbero



they might do: the slip-grip sliced thumb

or barefoot amputation. I've never mastered
the Julia Child technique, can't let the broad

blade fall of its own weight. When you
chop, the edge strikes the board at just

the right angle, making short soundless
work of onions doomed to the pot.

Each blade you sweep down
the whetstone sings a high thin tune.

I instinctively choose the wrong knife
for the job: serrated for peeling,

a paring knife to dice with. When I
sharpen, I take the edge right off.

It's a kitchen tango, darling,
cooks' paso doble of risky glitter,

a knife's edge perfected
by daily diminution.

Wild Mushrooms

Never mind getting to know our names:
Slippery Jill, Green Stain, Stinky Squid,
Inky Cap, Angel's Wings, Devil's Urn.
What you need to know is anonymous.
We are earth's organs, her oracles.
Ask what you will, there's only one answer:
self is a fraud — flim-flam phoenix,
articulate toy, a tease to distract
for a time — no ticket to eternity.
All marvels, mechanisms, mastery —



infiggere: un pollice affettato per la presa maldestra

o un piede scalzo amputato. Non ho mai padroneggiato
la tecnica di Julia Child e non so lasciare che il coltello

da chef cali sospinto dal suo stesso peso. Quando triti tu,
invece, la lama colpisce il tagliere ad angolo

perfettamente retto, producendo lesti
e muti cubetti di cipolla condannati alla pentola.

Ogni lama che fai scivolare sulla pietra ad acqua
canta per te una nota alta e sottile.

Per istinto, qualunque sia il compito in questione,
io scelgo il coltello sbagliato: seghettato

per sbucciare, gobbino per tritare. Se mi azzardo io
ad arrotare, addio filo della lama!

È un tango da cucina, tesoro mio,
un paso doble da cuochi che scintilla pericolo:

un filo di lama che si perfeziona
per quotidiana diminuzione.

(Da Ann Lauinger, *Persuasions of Fall*, Salt Lake City:
University of Utah Press, 2004)

Funghi selvatici

Non ti preoccupare di sapere i nostri nomi:
boletto salmonato, macchiolino, calamaro aulente
gotto d'inchiostro, ali d'angelo, urna del diavolo.
Ciò che devi sapere è anonimo.
Siamo organi della terra, i suoi oracoli.
Chiedi ciò che ti pare, la risposta è sempre la stessa:
l'lo è una frode — una fenice imbrogliona,
un giocattolo intellegibile, un allettamento che per un po'
distræ — non certo un biglietto per l'eternità.
Tutto meraviglie, marchingegni e maestria —



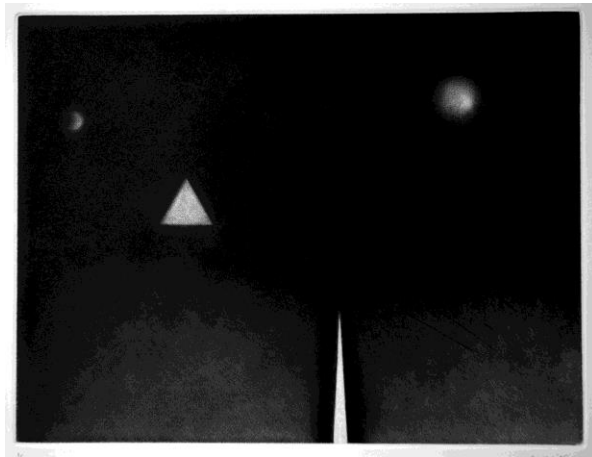
mere matter. All suffer their metamorphoses.
What do you want with wildflowers?
Let the sun, senile and oversexed,
lavish his light on their lying designs.
Turn aside, step to the sunless
margins of the path. With moss and mold
we hold dank dominion here. On dung
and leaf-litter, living and lifeless wood,
our flesh unfolds. Here is your fellowship:
sacs and caps and cups and cortex
fringed coral fingers and fat thumbs
sponge of bone-marrow, birthmarks, blotches
bright cinnabar beads of blood.



pura materia. Tutti subiscono delle metamorfosi.
Che hai a che spartire tu con i fiori di campo?
Lascia che il sole senile e concupiscente
prodighi luce sulle loro forme mendaci.
Scansati, esplora i margini ombrosi
del sentiero. A furia di muschio e muffa
qui esercitiamo un lauto dominio. Su sterco
e humus, legno vivo e morto,
la nostra carne si distende. È qui la tua compagnia:
sacche e cappelli, volve e corteccia,
bordate dita di corallo e grassi pollici,
spugnoso midollo, nei, chiazze,
gocce di sangue cinabro vivo.

(Da Ann Lauinger, *Persuasions of Fall*, Salt Lake City:
University of Utah Press, 2004)





Rizzelli- Segni di luce, maniera nera su zinco,
250x330 mm, 1995





Giambattista Marino (1569-1625)

One of the most colorful Italian poets, Giambattista Marino was born in Naples where, as a child, he often visited the tombs of Vergil and Sannazzaro. Rome, Venice, Turin, Paris, and of course Naples acclaimed him as the greatest poet of his era. Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Carlo Emanuele I of Savoy, Maria de' Medici, and Louis XIII favored and idolized him. No poet was ever so imitated and envied in his lifetime. The incident of an attempt on his life by Gaspare Murtola, a poetaster inevitably eclipsed by him, was one of the many episodes, pathetic and pompous, around the brilliance of his fame.

The love of Venus for Adonis is the subject of *Adone*, his masterpiece, a poem in twenty Cantos dedicated to Louis XIII. Here Marino displays his inexhaustible virtuosity - an ever-increasing ability to paint and decorate, to overdescribe and overemphasize, and to force the simplest word into its most complete and unexpected connotations, no matter how far-fetched and fanciful. Never at a loss for pun or conceit, he illustrated with every line he wrote the motto of his whole poetic career:

*È del poeta il fin la maraviglia . . .
chi non sa far stupir vada alla striglia.*

The poet's aim is to amaze ... ; unable to do so, he had better mind a stable.

Of his other many works, mention should be made of *La Lira*, a collection of lyrics, *La Sampogna*, a series of mythological idyls, and *Strage degli Innocenti*, a poem in four Cantos celebrating the Slaughter of the Innocents by the hand of Herod.

Giambattista Marino died in Naples, where a monument in his honor had already been decreed.



Amore incostante

Chi vuol veder, Marcello,
Proteo d'amor novello,
novel camaleonte,
a me giri la fronte,
ch'ognor pensier volgendo,
forme diverse e color vari apprendo.

Giá defender non oso
il mio fallo amoroso;
anzi l'error confesso,
la colpa accuso io stesso:
ma chi fia che raccoglie
sul corso fren de la sfrenata voglia?

chi d'un cupido amante
il desir vaneggiante
o circoscrive o lega,
che si move e si piega
lieve piú ch'alga o fronda
che tremi in ramo a l'aura, in lido a l'onda?

Non ha sol un oggetto
il mio bramoso affetto:
cento principí e cento
trov'io del mio tormento;
sempre che vada o miri,
sempre ho nõve cagioni ond'io sospiri.

Ogni beltá, ch'io veggia,
il cor mi tiranneggia;
d'ogni cortese sguardo
subito avampo ed ardo.
Lasso! ch'a poco a poco
son fatto éscia continua ad ogni foco.

Quante forme repente
offre l'occhio a la mente,
tante son lacci ed ami
perch'io vie piú sempr'ami:
or per una languisco,
or per altra mi struggo e 'ncenerisco.



Inconstant Love

Let all, Marcello, see new Proteus in me,
a love's chameleon
in all my longings shown,
for, though my thoughts I turn,
different colors, various forms I learn.

No, I do not intend
my failings to defend;
rather I now confess
and blame my love's excess:
but who can ever stop
an untamed will onrushing to the top?

Who can restrain in part,
or check and bind, the heart
of an unsated lover,
moving and bending over more
than a seaweed, more
than leaf on branch or wave upon the shore?

My love, I say to you, has
several goals in view:
a hundred causes bind
and torture this my mind,
for, where I gaze or go,
new reasons I discover for my woe.

Each beauty that I see
enslaves my heart and me,
and every kindly glance
enslaves my soul at once.
Ah, slowly this desire
has made me constant fuel for each fire.

The sudden forms my mind
through these my eyes can find
are traps and hooks in store
to make me love much more:
now for a girl I smart,
and now another takes and burns my heart.



Me la fresca beltate,
me la piú tarda etate
infiamma e punge e prende:
quella però m'incende
con le grazie e co' lumi,
questa con gli atti gravi e co' costumi.

L'una per la sua pura
semplicità natura,
l'altra per l'altra parte
de l'ingegno e de l'arte,
egualmente mi piace
e la rozza bellezza e la sagace.

Usi fregiarsi: i fregi
chi fia che non appregi?
Vada inculta e sprezzata,
sol di se stessa adorna:
quella schiettezza adoro,
quella sua povertate è mio tesoro.

O vezzosa e lasciva,
o ritrosetta e schiva,
quella mi fa sperare
che sia tal qual appare,
questa il pensier lusinga
ch'ami d'essere amata e che s'infinga.

Colei, perché si vede
che di statura eccede;
costei, perché mi sembra
piú sciolta ne le membra:
preso di doppio nodo,
ambedue fra me stesso ammiro e lodo.

Gota bianca e vermiglia
m'alletta a meraviglia;
pallido e smorto volto
sovente il cor m'ha tolto:
ma s'ama anco talora
bruno ciglio, occhio oscuro e guancia mora.



Me a fresh face endears,
me someone on in years
kindles and holds and pricks:
one burns me with her looks
and with her ways; one more
for all her solemn actions I adore.

I cherish in one creature
her lovely, simple nature,
and in one more I find
wonders of art and mind:
equally dear to me
sagacity and artlessness can be.

Let her wear make-up: who
will not admire such view?
let her be negligent-
herself, her ornament:
that calculated measure
I love, and this directness is my treasure.

Let her be gay and sly,
or timorous and shy,
one makes me hope she'll be
as she appears to me,
the other :flatters all
my thoughts , which to her love she seems to call.

One with her stately height
entrances soon my sight;
and this to me does seem
supple and lithe of limb:
so in a double knot,
I praise them both with every eager thought.

A white and crimson cheek
I wonder at, and seek;
a pale and bloodless face
can oftentimes amaze:
but one can ever prize
the duskiness of brow and cheek and eyes.



O crin d'òr biondo e terso
tra vivi fior cosperso,
che si confonda e spieghi,
leggiadra man dislegghi,
scorger parmi in quell'atto
de l'Aurora purpurea il bel ritratto;

o chiome altra mi mostri
del color degl'inchiostri,
raccolte o pur cadenti
sopra due stelle ardenti,
l'assomiglio non meno
della Notte tranquilla al bel sereno.

Se ride un'angeletta,
quel suo viso è saetta;
se piagne, a la mia vita
quel suo pianto è ferita;
se non piagne né ride,
senza stral, senza piaga ancor m'uccide.

Ninfa ch'or alta or grave
snoda voce soave
soavemente, e cria
angelica armonia,
chi fia che non invoglie
a baciàr quella bocca onde la scioglie?

Ove fra lieta schiera
fanciulla lusinghiera
batta con dite argute
dolci fila minute,
qual alma non fia vaga
d'aver da man sí dotta e laccio e piaga?

Veder per piagge o valli
giovinetta che balli,
in vago abito adorno
portar con arte intorno
il piede e la persona;
e qual rustico cor non imprigiona?



Whether a hand unfold
a hair of gleaming gold,
falling in easy showers
amid some lively flowers,
I soon see in that action
the purple Dawn's impeccable refraction;

or if another show
a hair of ink-black glow,
full-gathered up or seen
over two stars' new sheen,
that I compare no less
to quiet Night's unclouded tranquillness.

When a fair angel smiles,
a dart my soul beguiles;
and when she weeps,
her weeping in tears my life is keeping;
with neither smile nor cry,
though with no dart or wound, she makes me die.

A nymph that sweetly sings
and forth her sadness brings,
capturing, soft and even,
a harmony from heaven,
who would not want to kiss
that mouth that issues such melodious bliss?

If many a maiden lingers
and one with subtle fingers
is seen there to resume
the labor of the loom,
what man would be so grim
as not to let that hand imprison him?

You see a girl advancing
on bank or dell, and dancing,
all of her loveliness
made lovelier by her dress,
and agile on her foot:
does not your heart at once become her loot?



Se m'incontro in bellezza
 a star tra 'l coro avezza
 de le nove sirene
 di Pindo e d'Ippocrene,
 con gli sguardi e co' carmi
 può ferirmi in un punto e può sanarmi.

Havvi donna gentile
 ch'al ciel alza il mio stile:
 costei, ch'ama il mio canto,
 amo e bramo altrettanto,
 e stato cangerei
 sol per esserle in sen co' versi miei.

Altra, qualor mi legge,
 mi riprende e corregge.
 Allor convien ch'io dica:
 — O pur l'avessi amica,
 o soggiacer felice
 a sì bella maestra e corretrice. —

Insomma, e queste e quelle
 per me tutte son belle,
 di tutte arde il desio.
 Marcello, or, s'avess'io
 mill'alme e mille cori,
 sarei nido capace a tanti amori?

Donna che si lava le gambe

Sovra basi d'argento in conca d'oro
 io vidi due colonne alabastrine
 dentro linfe odorate e cristalline
 franger di perle un candido tesoro.
 O (dissi) del mio mal posa e ristoro,
 di Natura e d'Amor mète divine,
 stabilite per ultimo confine
 ne l'Oceano de le dolcezze loro.

Fossi Alcide novel, chè i miei trofei
 dove mai non giungesse uman desio
 trapiantandovi in braccio erger vorrei.



If I a siren meet
that, competently sweet,
can with the Nine be seen
of Pindus and Hippocrene,
both with her song and glance
she wounds me and then heals me all at once.

A gentle lady's mine,
who makes my style divine.
This, whom my song can touch,
I praise and love as much,
and I would change my state
to dwell in her deep heart with what I write.

Another reads my verse,
and finds me quite perverse.
Then I must say of her,
"If she my mistress were,
I would be happy to
submit to such a sweet, harsh teacher's view!"

In short, they're all to me
beautiful equally,
and for them all I'm glad.
Marcello, if I had
a thousand souls and hearts,
would they contain so many loves and smarts?

Woman Washing Her Legs

Within a shell of gold on silver base
two alabaster pillars once I saw,
breaking a treasure of white pearls
ablaze on scented waves - a crystal with no flaw.
O solace of my woes, O resting-place
(I said) where Love and Nature, by God's law,
set the last limits of their ended race
in the deep sea of their own bliss and awe!

Would that I were a new Alcides! You
in these my arms as trophy I would take,
and know what no man's longing could achieve.



O stringer, qual Sanson, vi potess'io,
 chè col vostro cader dolce darei
 tomba a la morte e morte al dolor mio.

Bella schiava

Nera sì, ma se' bella, o di Natura
 fra le belle d'Amor leggiadro mostro.
 Fosca è l'alba appo te, perde e s'oscura
 presso l'ebeno tuo l'avorio e l'ostro.
 Or quando, or dove il mondo antico o il nostro
 vide sì viva mai, senti sì pura,
 o luce uscir di tenebroso inchiostro,
 o di spento carbon nascere arsura?

Servo di chi m'è serva, ecco ch'avolto
 porto di bruno laccio il core intorno,
 che per candida man non fia mai sciolto.
 Là 've più ardi, o sol, sol per tuo scorno
 un sole è nato, un sol che nel bel volto
 porta la notte, ed ha negli occhi il giorno.

Fede rotta

Sovra l'umida arena
 de le latine sponde
 di propria man Tirrena
 queste parole un dì scriver vid'io:
 Mirzio è sol l'amor mio.
 Ahi fu ben degna di sì fral parola,
 crudel, l'arena sola; onde poi l'onde
 e del Tebro in un punto e de l'oblio
 Mirzio, ch'era il tu'amore,
 radessero dal lido e dal tuo core.



Or would that I were Samson! Grabbing you,
with your delightful fall I thus would give
a tomb to death and death to all my ache.

Beautiful Slave

Yes, you are black, and yet your looks can
be among Love's beauties miracle of grace.
Dawn's dark compared to you, whose ebony
makes pearl and ivory lose their light and price.
When did this world, or that of our old sires,
behold and feel so pme and live a ray
out of the darkest ink, or such hue fires
rising from coals that long in colddeath lay?

Slave to my slave, around my heart I show
an everlasting chain, a swarthy noose
that no white hand can ever sunder loose.
Right in the middle of your brightest glow,
O Sun, another sun is born: its face
wears night, but only day shines in its gaze.

Broken Faith

One day, on the wet sand
of the Latian shore
I saw Tirrena bend
and write with her own hand,
"Mirtius is my love forevermore."
The sand, O cruel one,
was the ideal place
for such a fragile phrase:
one with the tide of your oblivion,
the Tiber with its current did erase,
the following moment and forevermore,
Mirtius from your heart as from the shore.



Al sonno

O del Silenzio figlio e de la Notte,
padre di vaghe imagnate forme,
Sonno gentil, per le cui tacit'orme
son l'alme al ciel d'Amor spesso condotte,
or che 'n grembo a le lievi ombre interrotte
ogni cor, fuor che 'l mio, riposa e dorme,
l'Erebo oscuro, al mio pensier conforme,
lascia, ti prego, e le cimerie grotte.

E vien' col dolce tuo tranquillo oblio
e col bel volto, in ch'io mirar m'appago,
a consolare il vedovo desio.

Che, se 'n te la sembianza, onde son vago,
non m'è dato goder, godrò pur io
de la morte, che bramo, almen l'imgo.

Invito all'ombra

Or che l'aria e la terra arde e fiammeggia,
né s'ode euro che soffi, aura che spiri,
ed emulo del ciel, dovunque io miri,
saettato dal sole, il mar lampeggia;
qui dove alta in sul lido elce verdeggia,
le braccia aprendo in spaziosi giri,
e del suo crin ne' liquidi zaffiri
gli smeraldi vaghissimi vagheggia;

qui, qui, Lilla, ricovra, ove l'arena
fresca in ogni stagion copre e circonda
folta di verdi rami ombrosa scena.

Godrai qui meco in un l'acque e la sponda;
vedrai scherzar su per la riva amena
il pesce con l'augel, l'ombra con l'onda.



To Sleep

O son of Silence and as well of Night,
father of gentle forms of fantasy,
O kindly Sleep, behind whose guiding might
men's souls soar of ten to the Heaven of Love;
now that all hearts, save mine, find ease and rest
on the dear lap of shades, now herenow not,
oh, leave, I beg you, your infernal nest,
and the dark Hades, so much like my thought.

And with your sweet nepenthe come to me,
bringing that lovely face wherein I soothe
all my desire and all mysolitude.
For, if I am not granted still to see
the features that I love, I will at least
look on the face of Death, and dream of rest.

Invitation

Now that both air and earth are burning flames,
and neither eastwind blows nor breeze is felt;
now that the sea, vying with heaven, seems
one lightning, so the sunrays brightly dart;
here where the holm oak on the bank looms green,
her arms in circles spreading everywhere,
proud of the sparkling emeralds of her hair
which o'er the liquid sapphire can be seen;

come here, my Lilla, here, where, cool, the sand
in every season covers and surrounds
a shady scene of thick and verdant boughs.
Water and bank you will enjoy with me,
and at its lovely limit fish with birds
at play, and waves with amber, you will see.



Altri canti di Marte

Altri canti di Marte, e di sua schiera
 Gli arditi assalti, e l'honorate imprese,
 Le sanguigne vittorie, e le contese,
 I trionfi di morte horrida, e fera.

Io canto, Amor, da questa tua guerriera
 Quant'hebbi a sostener mortali offese,
 Com'un guardo mi vinse, un crin mi prese:
 Historia miserabile, ma vera.

Due begli occhi fur l'armi, onde traffitta
 Giacque, e di sangue invece amaro pianto
 Sparse lunga stagion l'anima afflitta.

Tu, per lo cui valor la palma, e'l vanto
 Hebbe di me la mia nemica invitta,
 Se desti morte al cor, dà vita al canto.

Dafne in Lauro

Deh, perchè fuggi, o Dafne,
 da chi ti segue ed ama,
 e fuor che i tuoi begli occhi altro non brama?
 Se' molle ninfa? o duro tronco forse
 di questo alpestro monte,
 rigida e sorda a chi ti prega e chiama?
 Ma se tu tronco sei,
 come al fuggir le piante hai cosi pronte?
 Come non sai fermarti ai preghi miei?
 Così dicea, ma scorse
 in vero tronco allor cangiata Apollo
 la bella fuggitiva
 fermarsi immobilmente in su la riva.



Invocation

Let others sing of Mars and of his throng
the bold assaults and the most honored feats,
the battles and the bloody victories,
and harsh and horrid Death's triumphal song.

Love, I will sing how many a mortal wound
your lady warrior thrust on hapless me,
caught by her glance and by her hair held bound
a true and yet most wretched history!

Yes, two fair eyes have thrust the deadly blow –
weapons that pierced my soul, and made it shed sad tears
for a long time, instead of blood.

But You, whose valor gave my dauntless foe
victory over me, as to my heart
you gave death, life now to my song impart.

Daphne into Laurel

“Why, Daphne, do you flee
from your pursuing lover,
who nothing but your eyes longs to discover?
Are you a tender nymph, or are you deaf
to me who call your name –
the hardest tree upon some mountain frame?
But if a tree you are,
why can your feet still flee so nimbly far?
And why can my entreaties halt you not?”
These words Apollo said,
but soon he saw the lovely fugitive,
transformed into a trunk,
stop and no longer move along the bank.



Torquato Tasso

Nacqui in Sebeto, in riva al Po piantai
di mia verde corona i primi allori.
Di Fortuna e di Principe provai
prigioner l'ire, e peregrin gli errori.
Su la sampogna giovenil cantai
del vago Aminta i boscherecci amori.
Indi la lira tenera accordai
del mio bel foco a celebrar gli ardori.

Alfin la tromba in più sonori carmi
dietro a l'Autor del Furioso alzando,
trattai Duci e Guerrier', battaglie ed armi.
Forte destin. Per imitar cantando
l'ingegnoso Ariosto, io venni a farmi
imitator del forsennato Orlando.



Torquato Tasso

Born in Sebeto, near the Po I grew
the early laurel of my verdant wreath.
A pilgrim and a prisoner, I knew
both Fortune's fickleness and Princes' wrath.
Upon my youthful pipe I sang the song
of sweet Aminta lovelorn in his wood;
and then I tuned my tender lyre to tell
the lovely flame that burned my solitude.

Raising at last my trumpet for one more
melodious sound, as Ariosto had done,
I sang of arms and battles, knights and war.
O cruel destiny! To imitate
the *Furioso's* genius in his song,
I shared the madness of Orlando's fate.







Commentaries and Reflections on
Paolo Febbraro's

The Diary of Kaspar Hauser

in the translation of Anthony Molino

Edited by Roya Jabarouti



Behind the Truth: *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser* in original and in translation. A conversation with the author, Paolo Febbraro, and his translator, Anthony Molino, along with three reviews (by Robert Zaller, Kevin Z. Moore and Roya Jabarouti).

In the total darkness, poetry is still there, and it is there for you. – Abbas Kiarostami (1940–2016)

The literary event that took place in Dublin on May 5, 2017, co-hosted by the local *Istituto Italiano di Cultura* and *Goethe-Institut*, celebrated the launch of a ‘fated’ book transported from its Italian soil of origin into worlds of English readers. Paolo Febbraro’s *Il Diario di Kaspar Hauser* had taken its final shape after a period of about eight years of the author’s intellectual and emotional journey, only to be published in April 2003 by the Italian small press *L’Obliquo*. The Spanish translation had already appeared in 2015; after almost fifteen years from the original publication, Negative Capability Press released Anthony Molino’s English translation, *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser*, thus presenting the Italian author and his English readers with new and strange emotions. The book launch was duly dedicated to the enigmatic life of the young German man (1812?-1833), whose brief existence has given rise to numerous works of art and criticism. From Jakob Wassermann’s 1908 popular novel *Caspar Hauser oder Die Trägheit des Herzens* (*Caspar Hauser or the Inertia of the Heart*), to various operas, ballets and songs; from the psychosocial dwarfism syndrome known as “Kaspar Hauser” to the in-depth probings of anthropologists like Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (1996), the wild Kaspar of Tolstoy (1896) has ironically elicited, throughout the course of over a century, a deepened sense of our human condition. The ‘profound imbecile’ – as Febbraro refers to him, citing Karl Kraus – was also featured in Werner Herzog’s 1974 masterful movie, *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* (literally, “Every Man for Himself and God Against All”), released in English as *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*. He then reappears, almost three decades later, as the fictional ‘author’ of the forty or so diary entries in Febbraro’s book.

Now, after more than a decade from the original 2003 publication of his book, Febbraro remains grateful to ‘this little book’ for allowing him to be a writer in proper: a writer, I’d say, of strikingly

transparent poems; of his first—and perhaps only—novel; of a touch of theatre and a pinch of haunting history; of a playful yet fierce philosophy which measures itself with the ideas of origin and the original. The book has since won prizes and received positive reviews, from commentators who've appreciated both the bizarre accuracy of its literary architecture as well as its polyphony of voices, through which the author turns our inner world inside-out, right in front of our eyes, as he takes us aboard the fanciful flights of a real poet embodied in the pre-linguistic bareness of 'a holy idiot'.

Similarly, since its publication in April of last year, Molino's version has also received outstanding reviews for both its 'faithfulness' and, at the same time, for the unforgettable novelty of the translation. The accomplished translator has been repeatedly cited for the carefully judged choices that have enabled him to capture the otherness of the author's original and transpose it to a radically different linguistic realm. Out of a sense of 'deep resonance' with the author's intellectual enthusiasm, or merely for the pleasure of possessing and being possessed by the archetypal power of the child-man known as Kaspar Hauser, Molino has struck readers and reviewers with the individuality and elegance of his 'literary culture'.

The contributions that follow include a "letter to the translator" by Prof. Robert Zaller of Drexel University in Philadelphia, who touches on matters inherent in Molino's choices. The letter was penned as a follow-up to Zaller's own review of *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser*, which recently appeared in the journal *Rain Taxi*. The letter is followed by Kevin Z. Moore's review of the book, which spotlights the figure of Kaspar Hauser as Europe's feral child. Finally, I provide interviews of my own with both Febbraro and Molino, along with concluding remarks that will hopefully serve as a worthy complementary perspective for the ready and willing reader.

Dear Anthony Molino,

Quite a book, Febbraro's *Diary of Kaspar Hauser*, and quite an extraordinary accomplishment your translation. Your choices are always so carefully judged; for example, in rendering "'Ca-val-lo, Kaspar'" as "'Horse, Kaspar. Horse.'" Two iterations of 'cavallo,' and two sentences instead of one. But the drawn-out sound value of 'cavallo' and the drastically clipped one of 'horse' makes the repetition necessary to convey the Italian faithfully rather than

literally, and the sentence division follows from that. Then, in the poem about the stars on page 17, you've used "real close" to describe Kaspar's hug of Franz, taking advantage of the colloquialism in English to make the act more clinching in the double sense of the word; by abolishing distance, Kaspar has made Franz as tall as the stars. Well, obviously I could go on . . . the sparer and 'simpler' the original text, the tougher to do it justice. I think of Beckett, and he of course is the translator of himself, the suggestion being that no single language gets all of a poem right: which makes translation not a service, but a necessity. Anyway, you choose only the best, and *Kaspar*, I think, is a seminal text, in the sense of one that makes us think as hard as possible about what language is and how poetry shapes it (and with it the world).

But back to the book. Part of my sense of what Febraro was trying to create was a fictional literary palimpsest in which one layer of pseudo-testimony and speculation builds on another to project a factitious edifice about the supposed discovery of Kaspar's diary, arranged by a supposed editor into a poetic sequence, introduced by an unsigned prologue in at least two voices set off by the italicized passages. Neither of these voices, it seemed to me, would be attributable to Febraro himself, although of course he is the author of "their" joint text as of every other word in the book. Then there's the perspective of the personage who signs himself Krantz in the letter addressed to "Dear Febraro," and who questions whether Kaspar's text can or should be regarded as literature, except in the sense that Febraro himself has tried to make it into the work of art that only a "cozy literary culture"--i.e, a precious and decadent one--could take as such, but which would obviously have been far beyond the intention or capacity of Kaspar himself.

This raises the question of whether art, whatever its unconscious sources, can be meaningfully separated from conscious intention, and consequently whether Febraro himself is not the true voicer of Kaspar's text. Krantz puts this question in a way that's grammatically off-kilter: "who [not 'whose'] is the original and who the copy?" The underlying suggestion here seems to be not simply that Febraro is the author of Kaspar's manuscript and indeed of Kaspar himself, but that the real author may be hiding behind (or indistinguishable from) both of them in the infinite regress of Bakhtinian voices, and that we cannot identify *any* author/

redactor/translator in the text. In my reading, Febraro does not appear anywhere *in propria persona*, but only as the addressee of a letter whose supposed author writes to question whether he in fact exists. Thus Febraro is simultaneously offering and effacing himself in every word of the text. Does this leave him the master of a puppet dance, or simply a stand-in for the illusion of an author as such? We start with the common-sense idea that every text must have an author, but in fact we do not know whether the foundational figure of Western literature, Homer, was one person or many. For some, that issue applies to Shakespeare as well, supposedly (like "Kaspar") too much a primitive to be the author of his plays. What, then, truly licenses us to say that "Febraro" is Febraro except for the name across the title page of the book? And, if we grant the proposition, it still leaves us with the question of who the author of the text is besides a name: the Homer problem itself.

Either, then, we are collectively the author of everything, or (another way of saying the same thing), every work of literature is anonymous. The bottom line is that *no* voice in the book can be regarded as univocal and therefore specifically identifiable, so that Febraro cannot speak for himself 'authoritatively' in it. Of course, Paolo Febraro knows whether he is "Febraro" or not; or, more precisely whether he wants to own up to being him. But that's a matter you can take up directly - assuming, of course, that there's any such thing as a straight answer to the question. I don't know Paolo, of course; but my best guess is that you'll get a smile. My admiring regards to him in any case.

Respectfully,
Robert Zaller
Distinguished University Professor of History
Drexel University, Philadelphia

Paolo Febbraro. *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser*. Negative Capability Press, 2017, Translated from the Italian by Anthony Molino.
Reviewed by Kevin Moore

Paolo Febbraro's *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser* is a challenging, even a daunting, poetic fiction in its complex interweaving of poetry, fiction, and fact. The *Diary* is alleged to be a collection of compositions configured as poems written by an "idiot" of the Dostoyevskian sort, that are thus the "fruits of an authentic childhood" written by a mature man whose untutored or brute empirical views of the quotidian range from the beautifully simplistic to the impossibly enigmatic. Febbraro's fictional account of the fictional Kaspar Hauser is framed by two fictions more, one appearing in the "Requisite Prologue" (offering an account of the discovery of the diary in a Bavarian farmhouse); the other in the "Epilogue," allegedly written by a friend of Febbraro's who suspects that the entire document is the poet's fiction. Thus the fiction of origins posited in the *Diary's* introduction is denied at its conclusion, as the ruse of reality is returned to a fantasy of fiction. The alert reader is placed within a maze of speculation and imagination worthy, it should be noted, of the historical Hauser, an inveterate liar whose aristocratic heritage derives from Baron Munchausen, the fabled German fabulist, rather than an anonymous baron whose bastard son he was sometimes presumed to be.

The *Diary* under review then gives us a real poet in an imaginary garden recounting the views of an imaginary poet (Kaspar, the poetic soul) in a real garden, of the commonplace and everyday. It is Hauser's myth of himself, the fiction of a grown man who has retained the innocence of a child, that has attracted poets and writers and filmmakers for centuries: this, because that persona or mask affords those who wear it the opportunity to imagine just what such a marvelous sensibility might see and say about the world-at-large. It is sometimes the case, as it is here, that a lie can initiate the most beguiling of truths.

The historical Kaspar Hauser - whose statue can be viewed in Ansbach's Court Square - appears in history 1828 in Nuremberg, where he arrives one day out of the blue, a nobody from nowhere, claspng an anonymously written letter of introduction: the first of many fictions self-authored and authored about him, that con-

cludes with the injunction that the reader either “take him in or hang him.” He was taken in many times, after which he proceeded to “take in” (dupe) his patrons who, to a man, regretted having taken him in and been taken in by him. Hauser apparently was a pathological liar who created fabulous fictions of himself; and it is the fictional Kaspar, not the historical one, who inspires poets, authors, and filmmakers.

Kaspar Hauser was the first and most original author of the fabulous character by that name who appears in literary history throughout the centuries. He is, for instance, mentioned in Tolstoy’s *What Is Art* (1897). He shows up in Herman Melville’s novella *Billy Budd*, and is referred to in Hans Christian Andersen’s “Beauty of Form and Beauty of Mind.” It is, however, Jakob Wassermann’s 1908 novel *Caspar Hauser or the Inertia of the Heart* that likely proves the most influential treatment of the Hauser myth, for the book is largely responsible for Kaspar’s renown in Germany. Later, in the mid-20th century, the Austrian playwright Peter Handke publishes *Kaspar*, an absurdist play, while the English poet David Constantine explores the Hauser persona in *Caspar Hauser: A Poem in Nine Cantos*. In 1974, Werner Herzog films Hauser’s fable of himself in *Every Man for Himself and God Against All*, which presents a Kaspar similar to Febbraro’s, as the film’s English title *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* best suggests. Herzog’s film portrays Hauser’s life as fabricated by Hauser – evidencing the dark cave of his childhood, the cloaked stranger who daily brings him nourishment, the aura of a bastard son of a local aristocrat, the wooden toys – though he does not break precedent by portraying the biography of an inveterate liar and his troublesome and troubling life. That person is lost in time while the other, mythical Hauser is found time and again in literature because he encourages us, culturally saturated readers, to drain our sophistication, cleanse our perceptual pallet as it were, and savor the difference of an imagined otherness and an imagination of otherness. The enigmatic Kaspar’s songs of innocence are sung, as a result, by experienced songwriters such as Paolo Febbraro in his *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser*.

Febbraro’s *Diary* is an innovative assemblage of short aperçus or poems, each one offering a curious and surprising enlightenment given the simplicity of Hauser’s statements. Febbraro’s Hauser does not look through the proverbial glass darkly, as we all do, but

directly at experience with the crystalline clarity of a mind unclouded by convention. In this sense he is "Adamic", for he describes things and events as though seeing them for the first time. His are short tales told by an idiot signifying the very act of signification. Hauser is an engaging singularity - and his announcements are peculiar and particular, and not articulations of groupspeak, or the prose of the world. Ordinary, even trivial events, such as slipping on a sweater or watching a stream flow, become extraordinary (and extraordinarily interesting) when witnessed through Kaspar's eyes, as the apparent banality of everyday experience becomes a source of reflection and even meditation. Each poem looms, in a way, as a koan which offers readers the opportunity to taste of Hauser's freedom and to re-see (re-view) how things appear unconventionally.

By way of introduction to this mode of perception, a short scene from Herzog's *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* offers an appropriate foretaste. In Herzog's film, Kaspar - played by an actor who is cognitively challenged and not an actor acting idiotically - strolls in an orchard when an apple suddenly falls in front of him and bounces around as if escaping the dangers of a well-trodden path. Kaspar congratulates the apple saying, "Oh! Smart little apple, run away!" Likewise in *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser* we read: "After the rain I walk/and the mud of footprints/follows me in silence"; following which Kaspar reflects, "On rock I return alone" (p.29). Perfect!

Or consider this. Kaspar's interlocutor asserts that, "The earth bends, Kaspar/And the stream, see, slopes to the valley./Because of the bend the water/runs on and on"; to which Kaspar replies "Yet, the sound stands still." Experience followed by innocence. Here's another gem of description. "To listen with one's eyes:/Such is the miracle of reading." Indeed, who could naysay it? But who would think it except Kaspar? A warning is appropriate here. The poems are not all as easy as those I have mentioned; some are downright intractable, like this one: "The names (*sic*) is like/rain in the stream." Or profound: "It was a dream, Kaspar,/not reality," which leads Kaspar to muse: "Was I pretending?" Indeed, exactly what sort of experience is a dream?

Anthony Molino's translation from the Italian is clean, lean, and precise, a mirror of the studied simplicity of the Italian *Diary*. Both the spirit and the word in the Italian have received their twin expressions in English. Here, Molino offers English readers a

translation and not merely a *transcription* (which would have been relatively easy), and his effort doubles the pleasures of Febbraro's *Diary* for those who are bilingual. Both a transcription and a translation might be accurate of the text, but the former might miss the meaning of what has been written when the latter captures it. Indeed, Molino's translation is an elegant work of comprehension and appreciation created *significantly* by a bilingual intelligence, and not by an English intelligence adept in Italian, as is often the case. The telling difference is decided by a translation's capacity to reflect an awareness of native nuances and subtleties of expression, or not. Molino's brings that telling difference to bear on his translation, which has resulted in a just (*les mots justes*) and lyrical representation of Hauser's annunciations of innocence.

Kaspar Hauser died in Ansbach Germany on December 14, 1833, his death caused by either (and here we go again): (1) a self-inflicted wound that went too far (in) in his attempt to orchestrate a fiction of assassination; (2) an actual suicide; or, (3) an attack by unknown strangers for equally unknown motives. Once a tall tale-teller always a teller of tall tales in gesture, act, and declaration, even in the last moments of the tale. The final report of him by contemporaries on the scene perhaps sums up best the Kaspar that writers and poets have found to be an irresistible invitation to their imagination and a suitable challenge to the creative spirit in any genre. "Here lies Kaspar Hauser, a riddle of his time. His birth was unknown, his death mysterious. 1833," an ideal blank slate upon which to rewrite the world. Or as the monument in Ansbach's Court Garden puts it: "Here is a mysterious one killed in a mysterious way." But the end of the principal fabricator was the beginning of fabrications about him: the beginning, ultimately, of a history of those very fabrications, about the child-man, the naive poetic soul, and the proclaimer of profound idiocies of which the Kaspar of Paolo Febbraro's *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser* is the latest and one of the most satisfying to appear.

Kevin J. Moore
Brooklyn, NY
July 23, 2017

Interview with the Translator

Born in 1957 to an Italian father and Italian-American mother, Anthony Molino turned to translation early in his life 'to bridge' a painful split in his bicultural and multilingual sensibility. Today, he still views and practices translation as a 'vital way' of making sense in and for his life. Among his first translations we count Antonio Porta's *Kisses from Another Dream* (City Lights Books, 1987) and *Melusine: A Ballad and a Diary* (Guernica Editions, 1992), as well as Valerio Magrelli's selected poems, *Nearsights* (Graywolf, 1991). These were followed by Magrelli's *The Contagion of Matter* (Holmes & Meier, 2000), a publication that earned him the support of the first Raiziss de Palchi Translation Fellowship, awarded by the Academy of American Poets. Molino later turned his attention to the work of Lucio Mariani, whose poems he published in *Echoes of Memory* (Wesleyan University Press, 2003) and *Traces of Time* (Open Letter Books, 2015). He has also translated two major Neapolitan plays, both landmarks of Southern Italian literature: Eduardo De Filippo's *Natale in casa Cupiello*, rendered in English as *The Nativity Scene* (Columbia University Press, 1995; Guernica Editions, 1997); and Manlio Santanelli's *Emergency Exit* (1999). In the interview that follows the widely published psychoanalyst, anthropologist and award-winning translator recounts how he came to translate and ultimately 'domesticate' in English the pages of Febbraro's *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser*.

1. How did you choose this particular text? Or was it the text that chose you?

Life happens. Books, if you will, "happen". A book – and its author – can enter a translator's life in the same way that a new love, or a catastrophe can enter the life of anyone. They can "happen," that is, serendipitously, with no forewarning. They can chance upon us.

With regards to *Kaspar*, its translation has a concise history, born of fortuitous circumstance. I'd been asked some years ago to help organize a translation conference for a smalltown cultural center in Italy; for some time I'd been reading Paolo Febbraro's weekly columns on poetry translation in the Sunday edition of Italy's daily newspaper, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, and suggested to the conference organ-

izers that Febraro's was a name to consider. They brought him to Vasto for the conference, where Paolo and I first met. I then ended up translating a few of Paolo's poems from another book of his, *Fuori per l'inverno*, for an anthology, at the behest of the anthology's editor, upon Paolo's recommendation of me. A relationship had begun to be forged, a relationship which got cemented when Paolo accepted to stand in and read for Lucio Mariani at a Roman launch of Mariani's and my *Traces of Time*. Lucio was quite ill, in hospital, and Paolo graciously subbed for that immense poet and read his work in tandem with me. It was on that occasion, in Rome at John Cabot University a few years ago, that Paolo timidly handed me a copy of his *Il diario di Kaspar Hauser*. So you tell me: did I choose the book, or did it choose me?!?

2. As a translator yourself, what is your perspective towards Krantz's concept of 'the cozy literary culture' lying underneath a work of translation? Does it deny 'authenticity' or is it the prerequisite of 'originality'?

Let's take the phrase in context, and not extrapolate it only to over-generalize and make a theoretical construct of it. As Febraro has suggested, the book is also an autobiography of sorts. In a commentary to the genesis of the book, which appears on the website of the book's publisher, Negative Capability Press, he writes: "Maybe *Kaspar* is my childhood, so withdrawn, remote, reserved; when I'd absorb and take everything in. The wild meekness of Kaspar, his stand against common sense, his wayward categories of judgement, his immense loneliness all strike me." In that commentary Paolo talks about the architecture of the book as well, where he confirms what the astute reader will have, presumably, gauged for him- or herself: namely, that the architecture allows for a polyphony of voices, or masks, that are in some way all ascribable to "Febraro", the figure who Krantz tries to unmask in the Appendix. All this to say, without wanting to indulge in any facile autobiographism or two-bit psychoanalysis: is it far-fetched to think that the *cozy literary culture* that Krantz cites has really little to do with translation, but is more the trace of competing voices in the life and mind of a *serious* writer situated in the pages of a *very* serious and demanding book? I realize I may appear defensive, insofar as my reply may evoke a sense of "hey, don't shoot at the messenger" – or translator. But let

me go a step further, so as not to elude your question altogether.

I can only speak from experience, from my experience. And that experience, when it comes to translation, is one of an outsider. There is no "literary culture," cozy or otherwise, at the basis of my work. I belong to no literary circles, do not frequent writers, and I live galaxies removed from literature departments, cafés and journals (save for my collaboration with JIT, where my focus, however, is on art and artists). My professional life, for some thirty-five years now and for thirty-five hours a week, is spent in the confines of a consulting room, doing psychoanalysis. My work as a translator is inscribed in my own history and my own "biography"; for the purposes of this interview, let's just say that translation gives me the chance to exercise a talent of mine, which I owe to myself not to neglect. It's an exercise that gives meaning, however partial, to my life. It just so happens that the fruits of that exercise sometimes enter the circuit of a so-called "literary culture," whether cozy or authentic. One thing's for sure: I have only translated works out of a sense of deep resonance or affinity with the original text. (I rarely, if ever, work "for hire".) I'd written as much thirty years ago, in my translator's note to my first book, Antonio Porta's *Kisses from Another Dream*. And I reiterated, or better, extended, the idea, in my translator's note to *Traces of Time*, where I wrote: "I like to think of myself as a 'gentleman thief', someone a la Cary Grant transposed to the world of letters. Better yet, someone who has slipped into the home of a single poet, often through the window of a single book of a very special artist I've studied and long spied on. When a translation of mine 'works', when it satisfies me to the point that I want to see it published, 'domesticated' in the pages of another book, something strange happens: I can tend to forget there was an original poem, that the appropriated object first 'belonged' to someone else. Indeed, I can forget there were any objects stolen. Like for thieves who steal for the pleasure of possession, a delusion sets in whereby the original poetic object becomes mine, and the process of appropriation (translation) ends up erasing any memory of the theft. It's as if the poem were always mine, penned by me in English from the get-go." Gesulado Bufalino, I later learned, held a similar position with regards to the act and art of translation.

3. Had you watched *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* by Werner Herzog, or known about Febraro's passion – and style – beforehand? Or did the translation trigger anything in you after you'd been 'through' it?

I'd seen Herzog's film decades ago, but had little recollection of it. As stated, I had translated a handful of Febraro's poems before tackling *Kaspar*, but the book's style is far removed from anything else he'd done, or has done since. Let's not forget that in the commentary I've mentioned Paolo mulls over the possibility that he may have actually written a novel, when he says: "Maybe *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser* is a novel, the only novel I've ever written, and maybe it tells the history of poetry itself. Maybe, with the bizarre accuracy of its literary architecture, this book has permitted to me to be a writer, during these difficult times..." I find this to be a wonderful confession of sorts: notice that Paolo does not say that the book permitted him to be a poet, but a writer! Indeed the wonder of the *Diary*, if I think more about its polyphony, is the intricacy of the genres that make it up: it is, obviously, a diary of sorts; it is, undeniably, poetry; its author suggests the book may well be a novel; its theatrical elements, in the exchanges between Kaspar and Franz, are delightful; those very exchanges abound with philosophical concerns; and the prominence of the essay is evident insofar as Krantz's "letter" – or essay – is what Febraro relies on to bring the work to a remarkable close. And let us not ignore that the preamble to the book is also an exercise of sorts in writing history, albeit in fictional form.

What did the translation trigger in me? I must say that the translation of the "diary" proper was truly akin to translating a work of theatre. I'd translated De Filippo and Santanelli, and I could not help but be sensitive to the nuances of character and language, of "class", if you will, and background, in giving life to Franz and Kaspar in English. Unconsciously, I'd add, there were surely evocations of Herzog's film, which must have structured in part my elaboration and conception of Kaspar. I must say that I got happily lost in, or absorbed by, the diary, which serves as the core of the book. The experiences of translating the preamble and appendix were, necessarily, of a different order.

4. *As a psychoanalyst, what is your reaction to Febbraro's description of poetry as 'a psychiatric case study'? And what do you think of Kaspar's poetic diary?*

This questi

on alerts me to the fact that you are already familiar with the commentary of Paolo's to which I've referred at least twice already! It's there where Paolo somehow equates poetry with a psychiatric case study, but again, let's keep to the source. Here's what Febbraro writes: "Kaspar's very life suggests that poetry is, at one and the same time, a natural language and a psychiatric case study; it suggests that in our world poetry succumbs and dies, yet still, somehow, manages to endure." I'd say that Paolo's contention is extreme, and risks confusing the natural language that Kaspar, or Febbraro, engenders (as does any poet worth his or her salt, in forever renewing the potentials of language), with the fact that Kaspar's (via Febbraro, but also via the historical documents in our possession) is indeed expressive, if you will, of a psychiatric case study. Kaspar is not, in my imagination, an archetype of the poet, and I'd like to think that not every poet is a headcase! But Kaspar does signify, in his innocent, or innovative, wording of the world, a capacity of which every poet must partake. He incarnates what the Gospel verse invites, when Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (*Matthew 18:3*). Poetry, in a broad sense, potentially allows for one such entry and experience.

5. *Was there anything you wished the English language had enabled you to carry across in a 'different' way, particularly regarding the linguistic features of the Italian original?*

No, not really. I'm not one for false modesty, and I like to think that my "theft" of Paolo's book has been a successful one. This has been aided, however, I will say, by the universality of Kaspar, by his mythic status, by the archetypal power of his story and trauma – all of which make a book like Paolo's eager for entry into most any other language.

6. *The term 'translation' can be applied to a wide range of translational*

processes – from Jakobson’s popular classification of what he refers to as the ‘interpretation’ of a ‘verbal sign’, to all the unconventional metaphorical interpretations of the term, by both daring theoreticians and laymen. As one who is engaged in the practice professionally, I would like to know what the term ‘translation’ means to you, and what you today -intellectually or spiritually- owe to being engaged in the process.

Your question touches deeply on the personal dimension to which I referred earlier. I grew up in what, for simplicity’s sake, I’ll call a bilingual family. Actually, if I consider the Abruzzese dialect of my grandparents, which both my parents spoke, it was trilingual. You see, my parents shared the dialect but were otherwise distinguished by their respective languages: my father, born in Italy, was a late immigrant to the United States, where my mother instead had been born. Their story, our story, is a complex one, like every family’s story. Suffice it to say that their radically different temperaments, and the expression of each, for me became encoded in their respective languages, both of which I mastered early on. But it was as if I lived in two worlds, and ended up identifying within me emotional traits and ways of being that were different according to the language I spoke or in which I thought. I know this sounds pretty crazy, but again, simply put, my reality was painfully split for many years growing up. Instinctively, when I was in my late teens, I began translating as a way to try to bridge the split. I think the very first poem I ever translated was Quasimodo’s “Lamento per il sud” (it doesn’t take a psychoanalyst to fathom the significance of that choice...), which got published in 1978 in what I later learned was a highly respectable journal, *Poet Lore*. Even before then, however, I remember as an adolescent living in Italy watching Eduardo De Filippo’s *Natale in casa Cupiello* on television, and swearing to myself that someday I’d “translate” it into English. I had no experience of translation in any formal sense – I was only fifteen or sixteen at the time – but the power of the play, the emotional chords it played on, its chaotic representation of a world and ways of being that my English-speaking “self” needed to make room for and integrate (so removed was the world of the Cupiellos from anything American), already at that early age pointed my life in a direction that was later to unfold. And, of course, almost twenty years, I kept that promise to myself and

did indeed translate Eduardo's masterpiece, published in English as *The Nativity Scene*.

Anyway... In my early twenties I began a psychoanalysis which was to change my life and, later on, orient me professionally. In that choice, as in my graduate studies in anthropology, you'll understand that processes of translation remained – and to this day remain – paramount in my life, as a way of making sense of the world and making meaning in and for my life. (Looking back, I recall that my master's thesis in anthropology was actually titled "Ethnography and Translation as Parallel Processes.") Today I continue, as I did back in the early '80s when I began translating Porta's *Kisses from Another Dream*, reworking and appropriating (Steiner) books that speak to me deeply. Back then I wrote of the poet's words as those "I myself would have written, had I been blessed or cursed with the artist's sensitivity." Today I talk about translation as a form of artistic theft, and thus reword that early sense of appropriation. You'll have gathered, aside from any metaphor, that the process remains for me a vital one, even forty years after I chanced upon and made use of – in the psychoanalytic sense of "object use" – that fated poem by Quasimodo.

Anthony Molino

Interview with the Author

Paolo Febbraro was born in Rome in 1965 and is today regarded as one of Italy's most acclaimed and innovative writers and literary critics. Febbraro is a regular contributor to the influential cultural pages of Italy's *Il Sole 24 Ore*, through which his connection with translator Molino was originally fostered. He is the author of several books of poetry: *Il secondo fine* (1999); *Il bene materiale. Poesie 1992-2007* (2008); *Deposizione* (2010); and *Fuori per l'inverno* (2014). Among his works of criticism we cite: *I poeti italiani de «La Voce»* (1998); *La critica militante* (2001); and *L'idiota. Una storia letteraria* (2011). Febbraro has also written extensively on literary figures such as Aldo Palazzeschi (*La tradizione di Palazzeschi*, 2007); Umberto Saba (*Saba, Umberto* - 2008); Primo Levi (*Primo Levi e i Totem della Poesia* - 2013; and Seamus Heaney (*Leggere Seamus Heaney* - 2015).

Febbraro's most recent book is the collection of short stories titled *I grandi fatti* (Pendragon, 2016). The poetic core of *Il Diario di Kaspar Hauser* (2003) was initially conceived in June 1995, two years after the author had been deeply moved – via Herzog's film *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* – by the legendary figure of the presumed idiot who revealed to him the 'urgency' and the 'responsibility' to reclaim an authentic sense of being. The interview that follows takes us into and through the loop that connects the spirit of the author with his literary feral child.

1. *Let us ditch Krantz's doubts in the critical Appendix about 'the original': Why would the solitary and reckless Kaspar write a diary? And then, in verse?*

I imagined the character of Kaspar Hauser as a radical idiot, as an introvert relegated inside an Ego not yet shaped by the friction with other human beings. During his educational process, Kaspar enters into awareness, realizing however that he has little in common with the surrounding human society. When he begins writing a diary and to put down his thoughts, he does so in verse because poetry is more ancient than prose: it is, in a way, a primary mode of expression. Clearly, Kaspar needs to translate his road to knowledge into something that can represent his doubts, his holes and, at the same time, his sharp certainties.

2. *Were you drawn towards the literary tradition of the "Idiot" or the "Fool" before coming across Kaspar's actual figure or after that? Who do you think the fictional Kaspar is closest to, if, at all? And, where is his place amongst your other publications, say *L'idiota. Una storia letteraria* (2011)?*

I remember that I read Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* for the first time in 1993, when I was 28 years old. I was won over by the beauty of that novel and remembered two books which I'd read during my university years. The first one was an essay by Michail Bachtin about the literary figure of the fool. The second was Aldo Palazzeschi's *Il codice di Perelà* (translated into English with the title *Man of Smoke*), a fable that tells of a man made of smoke who comes down from the chimney in which he was born and starts to walk

the streets of the city. Initially he is glorified like a messiah, only to end up blamed for the worst crimes, and condemned. With Bachtin in the background, Dostoevsky's and Palazzeschi's works appeared to me as two different moments of the same book: a book written for the ages by authors of very different magnitude. I remember also that around that time I wrote a couple of pages in my own journal, commenting on the book by Dostoyevsky and tracing the road it had dug in my memory and imagination. Unfortunately, I made a computer mistake and instead of saving that file I erased it. However the desire to express – sooner or later – what I had understood and discovered persisted. Shortly after, I watched Werner Herzog's movie *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, which inspired me directly; perhaps in an unconscious way, I had found in Kaspar a character who represented emotionally those elements that had provoked my intellectual enthusiasm. Some time later, in 2001, "Hernán Krantz" wrote to "Paolo Febbraro" the imaginary letter which closes out *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser*, with which I began to approach the idea of an essay on the figure of the idiot, of the fool. As a matter of fact, a few years later I began writing my book *L'idiota. Una storia letteraria*, where I used a sentence of Krantz's letter as an epigraph. I still don't know if the readers of the book ever wondered who on earth was Hernán Krantz!

3. *It seemed to me that all the sections of the book converge upon the idea of 'decentering', as you decenter the key concepts of 'writer', 'reader', 'translator' and 'critic'. Throughout you maneuver on the borders of certainties, whereby at times you own up to occupying such positions, and at others you downplay or dismiss them, always cautious about taking pride in any of them. In The Diary of Kaspar Hauser, what connects these four roles and where do the borders between them lie?*

Kaspar is me, of course, but obviously I am not just Kaspar. Taken its entirety, *The Diary of Kaspar Hauser* - via the narrator of the preamble, the theatrical exchange between Kaspar and Franz in the form of poetry, the narrated epilogue again with its psychological insights, and the final Krantz letter - represents the different parts of myself. To write the book I had to be a poet, a translator, a novelist, an essayist and a playwright. Better: the game I re-invented (which is, of course, a very traditional game) compelled

me to express myself in all these ways. Speaking of the translator function or persona, it is obvious that I didn't translate anything, since I conceived *The Diary* in Italian. Nevertheless, when you make a character speak and write you have to "translate" your mind into that which belongs to him. Kaspar's poems are very different from those Paolo Febbraro writes. In this light, we can rethink Krantz's admonishment, according to which «while we are surely responsible for whatever we find, only in small part are we deserving of it,» to mean something like this: we can write, invent or "find" something only if it has been situated inside of us by a very intricate series of concatenations, often activated during our childhood. Thus, while we are responsible towards other people for what we say or produce, it is nevertheless difficult to feel deserving of it. In the same way, I can feel very good about a poem I've written, but find it difficult to give credit for it to a conscious "Me". I can be proud for having read countless beautiful books, or for delivering a good lecture on literature, but I still can't feel completely proud for ten perfect lines I may have written. We can be absolutely determined to look for a vein of gold, but if the gold wasn't there in the first place there'd be no finding it.

4. *I deeply appreciate your view of poetry as 'a natural language'. With these lines of Kaspar's in mind - «La scrittura è la stessa \ ma i pensieri tornano sotto» (p. 44) - what constitutes «il miracolo della lettura» (p. 36), or what Seamus Heaney called the 'subconscious' and the 'semantic energies of the words'?*

As a boy I read very little; I started to read seriously only when I was seventeen or eighteen years old. Maybe this fact also inspired Kaspar's diffidence towards writing and reading. Evidently, and for a long time, writing and reading have seemed to me to be two of the most beautiful things in life. Nevertheless Kaspar prefers the pronounced word, which is immediately emotional, shaped and affected by the tangible feeling of the meeting with someone or something. Kaspar doesn't understand grammar, so he detests it; he loves words that «displace». It's not by chance, when he learns to write, that he writes in verse; verses, as a matter of fact, are paused sentences, chiseled by feeling. To this end, we can assert that poetry is indeed *a natural language*: its figures of speech are

meant to articulate, expand or focus our mind. I think that this is how Kaspar feels. When he lets Franz read his compositions, Franz analyzes or explains them, but then Kaspar doesn't recognise them any more, even though they've remained the same: «The writing is the same / but the thoughts go back under».

5. Might I also ask, as a final note, whom do you write to, besides your inner 'self'? Do you think of the 'reader' when you write? In other words, why do you write?

I don't know why I write. Maybe because, somewhere along the line, I realized that I know how to do it, and I want to try to create something I like. But I do know why I publish my writings: because I need debate, so that the others can clarify for me who I am. I publish to improve others' mind, to be surprised, to become acquainted with people I would never have known otherwise. When I write, I think of the reader who is in me: a very demanding one, by the way. Instead, when I prepare a book of mine for publication, I definitely think of other readers: of my wife, for instance; of my friends who are poets and critics, of the people I love or spend time with, of the strangers who will somehow cross paths with my pages. I try to respect all these people, entrusting them with the best I have to offer.

Paolo Febbraro

Concluding comments

Let us go back to the beginning and bear in mind the ancient Greek root of the word 'poetry': ποιέω (*poieo*), meaning 'I make'. In this sense, poetry predates prose -and even literacy - serving as a natural exercise for remembering, thus reinforcing a thought with compressed, emotionally charged and syntax-free renderings. Today, while poetry is more conscious about its aesthetic vigour, the poetic language of Febbraro's Kaspar emerges from the simplicity and sparseness of its nature. Though Kaspar may not be 'the archetype of a poet', he is still the 'creator' of a poetic diary; and though his poetry may not fall in the category of 'great' literature, it still secures greatness for the acute immediacy with which it captures



the reader. Kaspar's poetry gives him the right *to be* the other of his others, and gives us the chance, even if for but a moment, to be freed from what we have become and to encounter, once again, our own pre-linguistic phase of existence. That is the miracle of his poetry. Kaspar is the orator of a 'pure' mathematics, and his poetry, as a result, is the innocent by-product of 'his' Negative Capability.

Yet, as I have already suggested, let us not forget that Febraro is the original creator of the poems in the diary. Assuming the guise of a translator, the poet grants himself the liberty of being Kaspar, while at the same time reminding us that "I am not just Kaspar" and that Kaspar's poems are, indeed, very different from his own poems. (But these, too, are his own!) From the outset, he is aware of his faithfulness and liability for translating a part of his inner self into verbal signs that 'displace'. In the final essay, he is the cloaked 'Krantz', who now, through the seriousness and logic of 'prose', takes the liberty of reminding his writerly ego that "while we are surely responsible for whatever we find, only in small part are we deserving of it" (p. 95). Personally, this phrase led me down memory lane, to the reminiscence of a lecture on the philosophy of art I 'happened' to hear during my adolescence. A quote from Kahlil Gibran's *On Children* came to mind, which remains pinned to my library until this day:

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you, [my emphasis]
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

Still, they do belong to you, since they come through you inasmuch as there is a longing for meaning and the desire to express it. It is from that space, that longing, that we have Kaspar's imaginative diary and Febraro's poetry; and with them Molino's translation, that appears out of a deep sense of resonance with the original text, whose capture of linguistic signals evokes an inner world, an inner culture, and invites us into new dimensions of experience. Sooner or later, somewhere along the line, when a translation works, what we have discovered demands to be heard. And so it is with Kaspar's *writing*, which reminds us of the need to know, and the need to be heard; which in a way urges its reader, "Live forever!"



He appears one morning, standing all alone, in a square of Nuremburg, a folded piece of paper in his hand, containing a small quantity of gold leaf, of sparkle, and a letter. "To the Cavalry Captains of Craftsmanship of the Terra Firma," it read. And then, a rosary: to count the days of his short life or the pages of his timeless diary? "Finders, keepers", goes the rhyme. Indeed, Febbraro found him and decided to keep him and 'take' him in, as compassionately as Herzog had, and later Molino, together with the great number of authors and directors and translators before and after them. For every man is the riddle of his existence: his arrival unknown, his departure a mystery. And Kaspar asks: "Is not being born a way to die? In the middle is space and no more" (p. 81).

I am grateful to this exquisite gem of a book for allowing me to be the reader, in this 'space', of a poetry that in each and every one of its pauses resonates across the silence of every man.

Roya Jabarouti

Roya Jabarouti is a PhD Candidate in Literary Translation Studies in the School of Languages and Cultures at Victoria University of Wellington, where she is writing a doctoral dissertation on sounds in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. Her research interests bridge comparative and world literature, the theory and practice of literary translation, and the conceptualization and translatability of metaphor across languages, cultures, genres.



**Traduttori a duello /
Dueling Translators**

Edited by

Gaetano Cipolla





Traduttori a duello / Dueling Translators

A text of poetry or prose, translated by ten equally skilled translators, will result in ten different texts. In theory, the different versions should convey the kernel meaning, that is, the basic message contained in the original text. This section of *Journal of Italian Translation* will test this theory by asking our readers to translate a text chosen by the editor, using whatever style or approach they consider best. The submissions will then be printed with the original text. We will publish as many entries as possible.

For the present issue we had chosen a poem by Stanley H. Bar-kan from *No Cats on the Yangtze*, translated into Chinese by Zhao Si, published by The New Feral Press, Oyster Bay, New York, 2017.

Bathing in Dew (On the Yangtze River)

*"...those who bathed in the dew
were believed to become immortals."*

Robert Payne, *The White Pony*

They say that those who bathe
in the morning dew become immortals.
Thus, I leave my plate outside
waiting for the rise out of the grateful earth.
Each dawn, the dew returns the rain to the sky
so that the clouds can form again and fly to all
dry spots of earth, and spill their load.
Thirsty, the earth drinks in the offering of sky
and new shoots spring out of the saturated dark.
Then, each time the last star appears beside
the golden moon, and the shafts of sunlight
begin to strike the earth, the dew comes up and up,
flying like a string of kites, up and up into the sky.
Catch the morning rise, bathe in it, drink it –
become immortal as a kite slipped from its tether
becomes part of the clouds which come from the earth
and inevitably returns again and again to its mother, the sky.

(9 November 2001)





We have received two translations from Onat Claypole into Sicilian and from Florence Russo into Italian.

**Un bagnu d'acquazzina
(Nta lu ciumi Yangtze)
traduzioni in sicilianu di Onat Claypole**

Si dici ca cu fa un bagnu d'acquazzina
la matina diventa immortali.
Picchissu lassu lu me piattu fora,
spittannu ch'idda sorgi di la terra grata.
Ogni arba, l'acquazzina ritorna l'acqua ô celu
in modu ca li nevuli pozzanu furmarisi di novu
e bbulari supra a tutti li posti sicchi
di la terra e svacantarisi dû pisu.
La terra, assitata, si bivi ddi ufferti
di lu celu e novi jittuni spuntanu
di la scura terra unchia. Ogni vota, doppu,
l'urtima stiddi appari a latu di la luna d'oru,
e fasci di sulì sbattunu supra la terra,
l'acquazzina nchiana e nchiana sempri chiù autu,
bbulannu comu na pennula di cumeti ntô celu.
Agguanta l'acchianata d'a matina,
fatti nu bagnu in idda, bivila! –
Diventa immortali comu la cumeta libbirata
di lu filu ca diventa parti di li nevuli
ca nesciunu dâ terra e ritorna di novu e sempri
inevitabilmente a lu celu ch'è so matri.

(9 novembri 2001)



**Un bagno di rugiada
(Nel fiume Yangtze)
Traduzione di Florence Russo**

Dicono che facendo un bagno di rugiada
si diventi immortali.
Così io lascio fuori il mio piatto
aspettando che esali dalla terra riconoscente.
Ogni mattina la rugiada restituisce l'acqua al cielo
affinché le nuvole si possano formare di nuovo
e volare sopra tutti i luoghi aridi del mondo
e svuotarsi del peso. La terra assetata
si beve quelle offerte del cielo
e nuovi germogli spuntano dalla colma terra scura.
Poi, ogni volta l'ultima stella compare a lato
della luna dorata e i raggi di sole cominciano a battere
la terra e la rugiada sale sempre più in alto
volando come un grappolo di aquiloni.
Afferrate l'ascesa mattutina, bagnatevi di essa, bevetela.
Diventate immortali come l'aquilone liberato dal filo
che diventa parte della nuvola che nasce dalla terra
per ritornare inevitabilmente al cielo ch'è sua madre

(9 novembre 2001)



As I was browsing through my collection of poets, my eyes caught sight of a slim volume entitled *Sonnets For Joseph, poesie 1994-1995* by Giose Rimanelli, published by Caramanica Editore, Marina di Minturno in 1998. The little book was dedicated to Joseph Tusiani in honor of their life-long friendship. I chose one of Rimanelli's poems not because it will pose a great challenge to our translators, but as a way of paying homage to Giose who, sadly, passed away in January 2018.

Thus, for the next issue of *Journal of Italian Translation* I have chosen one the poems entitled "Senza trucchi" from that little book.

Senza trucchi

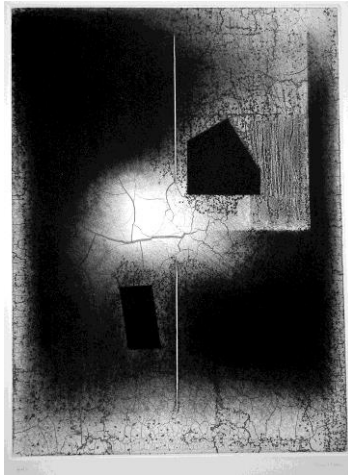
Tessere di memoria
incornicia il presente
artigiano paziente
sempre all'ultima moda

la capriola va fatta a tempo giusto
/ così poco c'è da ridere... barare
senz'alcun trucco con la vita / non più
saltimbanco per farsi capire

meschino nel calcolo dei punti
che lasci parlare in tuo nome
è un grimaldello il convincimento
che ogni mano ogni carta sia vincente

rosicchiando rischi rapide ricchezze
/ scivolano sotto i sensi sottilmente /
se nel mazzo peschi l'asso che ti manca
è quando non ti serve più a bleffare





Rizzelli- Segni di Matera, n. 2,
acquaforte, rotella e bulino
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Recensioni / Reviews



The Living Theatre. Selected Poems of Bianca Taronzi, translated with an introduction by Jeanne Foster and Alan Williamson, Rochester, NY: BOA Editions, 2017.

With this important translation of Bianca Taronzi's selected poetry, Jeanne Foster and Alan Williamson give their North American readers a chance to appreciate one of Italy's greatest contemporary poets, in English and Italian, and this is a work of the finest quality. A bilingual edition is such a great opportunity to understand world poetry, connecting with the best authors, in their original language and in translation.

As Alan Williamson points out in the first pages of the *Introduction*, Taronzi's hero among Italian Modernists is Umberto Saba, even if Saba is a complex reference, much more than «a plain-spoken writer, known for his loyalty to meter and rhyme [...]. A man of gentle temperament, devoted to his native place, willing to risk sentimentality in his tenderness towards animals, children, the poor» (8). Taronzi's poetry is in fact, through and beyond Saba, deeply embedded in Italian tradition. It is rather difficult to appreciate its texture and rhythm, the sound of it, but most of all the many little quotes, internal and external rhymes, without the possibility offered by this bilingual edition, to go back and forth reading, in English and Italian. Sometimes it is necessary indeed, like in the poem *Mia madre*, where the lines translated as «[...] That pastel color/ remained in her heart, / along with another image from that time/ - hers, not mine - of an advertisement for Nestlé/ The year was about 1903» (63) do not return the crepuscular eco elaborated in such a witty, musical, and beautiful text:

«Quel colore/pastello era rimasto nel suo cuore
insieme a un'altra immagine di allora
- la sua - nella réclame della Nestlé.
L'anno era forse il Novecento e tre».

Or in a deeply psychoanalytic, and liberating text such as *Scacco alla regina*, where these English lines - «Landed, now, erect, feet on the ground/ - an evolution - the mental/cripple puts on her makeup:/first the right eye, then the left/colored with shadow/ and the mascara put on. / Art supreme, the art/of getting even»

(71) - cannot be fully appreciated without reading also the original Italian, its sounds and rhymes, with the comic mask, and Humouristic theme of the old lady «imbellettata», a reminder of empathy and humour from Pirandello's 1908 essay *L'umorismo*:

«Ora approdata – causa l'evoluzione –
in posizione eretta, la sciancata
mentale fa toeletta:
l'occhio destro, il sinistro
ben segnati col bistro
e la maschera è fatta.
Arte suprema, l'arte
del pari e patta». (70)

Tarozzi's poetry is such a blessing, especially for those who can appreciate her stern resistance to fashions, time, and its Avant-gardes, as shown in a metaliterary text such as *Confini*. Here the irenic and cheerful opening is a premise to a hilarious list of bombastic imperatives, a friendly fire scolding this wonderful *enfant terrible* on the road of her generation:

I poeti della mia generazione
viaggiavano felici in California
su camion propriamente angelicati; [...]
Mi dicevano sempre: "Non così,
taglia i legami, liberati!
Togli le rime, affrancati dal metro!
Taglia, riduci, incolla!" (104)

The conclusive stanza finds in English some wonderful solutions, such as the literary «adventurous fools» for «sciocchi avventurosi», and is somehow even more powerful in translation, since the presence of Leopardi and his "illusions" is diluted here: «But it wasn't that way, it wasn't mine,/ the neat track was for others/ [...] Without traveling I found myself also/ on dark roads, alone, on a venture,/ and nature, menacing or friendly, / distinguished itself in the thousands deceptions/ which it prepares for adventurous fools:/ the beloved illusions, the happy fall». (115)

Bologna is an important presence in this book, it is the author's birthplace and all her other cities – Venice included – cannot compete with the arcades of memories brought back in *Rossana*:

«Uscivo con Cristiano e i suoi amici
pittori a chiacchierare
all'Osteria del Sole,
a quella delle Dame o dei Poeti». (38)

Or again in the eponymous poem of this book, *The Living Theatre*, where the chronotope of time and place – the occasion is generated by attending a 1960s Julian Beck's *Living Theatre* performance in Bologna – produces a flashback into the poet's childhood, where theatre itself is represented, with its connections to the map of the city, Puppet Theatre and Commedia dell'Arte:

«Ma fuori dalle prove
Adamo ed Eva quieti all'osteria
accanto all'armeria filosofavano.
Il luogo era quel Largo
Respighi in cui
in passato all'aperto si trovava
certe sere il teatro
dei burattini [...]». (94)

Here it is when translating Tarozzi's texts as «a Henry James story» (10) (*Rossana*), or «the Italian equivalent of the phenomena we called "the Sixties"» (*The Living Theatre*), can become problematic. If it is true that Tarozzi's poetry often mirrors the «cross-fertilizations between Italian and American literature» (7) – for her career as both Professor of English and American Literature and translator from English into Italian – it is also true that her poems and narratives belong to a circumscribed time and place, a specificity from where, to quote one of Bologna's most iconic *cantautori*, Lucio Dalla, «l'America è lontana, dall'altra parte della luna». That is to say, Tarozzi's feminism is a very Italian one, as well as her eccentricity, or peculiar choices of embracing a relative marginality. As noted by Jeanne Foster in the second part of the Introduction, she lives in the between, provided her active participation in the

social rituals of the present, and the past, «in Peggy's day», and «in Peggy's time», where the American heiress, Peggy Guggenheim, is quoted as Tarozzi's host in Venice: «"I sat at that table," Bianca told us» (13).

Tarozzi, Foster writes, is «an utterly committed mother and grandmother. At the same time, she is an utterly independent woman, never having married, clearly an exceptional stance for a woman of her generation in a Roman Catholic state». Her independence, originality, and sense of humor is well represented by the conclusive text among those selected from *La Signora di Porcellana* (2012), and the last in this book, *Garibaldi*:

«Da piccola giocavo a Garibaldi:
Garibaldi ero io, le altre ubbidivano.
[...]
non sempre mi seguivano.
Invece di ubbidire
tradivano gridando:
"Non gioco più
comandi sempre tu!" »

Here the genderless indefinite «others», including both the masculine and feminine in English, («I was Garibaldi, the others obeyed») does not fully translate the hilarious fuss, sense of naughty entitlement, the pioneer libertarian spirit, which is the signature of Tarozzi's best narratives:

«E per questo, sgomenta,
in ritirata, perdevo la partita:
Aspromonte, Magenta -
Le tue sconfitte o le vittorie altrui
sono state le mie: io le capivo».

The Living Theatre. Selected Poems of Bianca Tarozzi is a wonderful book to read and enjoy, thinking how productive is the dialogue between different languages and traditions, once time and space, the mindscapes of poetry, become the object of a fertile meditation.

Francesca Cadel

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