The problem, then, is a choice between rhyme and reason...

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calque

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editor's note

This journal was hatched from a single piece of data: in the U.S., translations make up something like two percent of the market; in Europe the number is ten times that, or more. Of this two percent, a well-armed researcher might find a meager handful of publications printing the original material alongside the translations; an equally malnourished handful publish prefaces written by the translators themselves. And, in the razzle-dazzle world of Big Publishing, few translated books even stoop to print the name of the translator on their covers, unless the name carries enough marketing clout to warrant the privilege. Recent among these are the Matthew Ward translation of The Stranger, the Lydia Davis translation of Swann's Way, and Edith Grossman's translation of Don Quixote. The reasons for this pattern are too varied to go into here, though the most ponderous of them being the Cyclopean nature of the publishing world—this epithet being meant in its broadest and most disdainful sense. This all whirlpools around a phenomenon called "the invisible translator", one particular aspect of which concerns this journal: to make a translator invisible is to refuse to consider a translation for what it is in its most basic sense, a work of literary critique. A translation is an interpretive act, and because of this, it is unique to the translator; it is her response, from the receiving culture, to a text in a foreign language; and finally, it is an original work of art. This journal aims to foster this view of translation, which is actually not only an approach to writing them, but to reading them as well.

Readers will notice that no translator's note prefaces Joshua Beckman's translations. These poems came to us by a stroke of incredible luck, and because a hefty body of critical work on this poet and his translators already exists in English, we decided to publish the poems on their own, grateful for the opportunity to share them.

—Steve Dolph

calque is a real word that we have made up

Everywhere that I go among writers and thinkers I am told that literature is dying. Usually this information is conveyed to me with little passion, as if it were the father of a friend of a neighbor's cousin who had been stricken, rather than one of the finest things of which humans are capable. I hear this from undergraduates and from tenured professors, from poets and from geeks who excrete science fiction. It is widely believed, but I do not believe it. Every society that has ever done anything from huddle around a campfire to send a man into space has told itself stories. Nothing is going to change that. Rumors of literature's demise have been greatly exaggerated. Literature is not dying, because it is incapable of dying. It is, however, obviously in very bad shape in the United States. I see that very clearly, and am prepared to outline the reasons why this is so for any interested party. It is my opinion that if writing in the English language is going to be restored to anything like vigor it will take what it has always taken: an influx of new ideas from abroad.

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, arguably the first work of what came to be known as English literature, is in large part an anthology of French, German, and Italian stories taken from books that Chaucer purchased while doing diplomatic work on the Continent. The esteemed Chaucer simply translated the lot of them, arranged them, and considered them to be his own work. Shakespeare has been repeatedly found to use Ovid's Metamorphosis and other identifiable foreign texts as sources for his plays. The earliest English long poems were translations of Homer and Virgil. Ernest Hemingway was strongly influenced by Constance Garnett's translations of the Russian classics. Philip Roth edited a series of his favorite books from Eastern Europe. The Language Poets have been candid about their affinity with the Russian Constructivists. Again and again, when the language has become dull and the literature has gone into decline, the English language has been renewed through contact with foreign literatures.
Ideas, techniques, subjects and ways of approaching them, metaphors, these things are always passing between languages. Not just between English and other languages, but between all languages. This is something that is always happening that has always happened. The early European vernacular poets were influenced by the Latin language. The Romans were influenced by the Greeks and the Hebrews, the Hebrews by the Babylonians. At every point where two languages, two literary traditions, interact, translation is what makes it possible.

The problem in the field of translation at present is that, on one hand you have a great mass of people who neither know nor care to know much about it. On the other hand you have the swelling ranks of an increasingly legitimate academic discipline, producing an obfuscating cacophony of inane debate about minor issues. Translation theory is quickly coming to resemble poetic theory. Both are voluminous and of questionable relevance to the practitioner of the craft they purport to theorize. Between these two camps lies open space. Calque hopes to situate itself in that open space.

We publish new works of and in translation, so that they may be read. Making a text available to a wider readership seems to be the function of translation, in a practical sense. We are neither foolish nor brash enough to believe ourselves capable of re-invigorating English letters, which is the work of a generation or more. We do aspire to contributing to that larger goal on a small scale, but we have other embarrassing aspirations as well. We provide space for the individual translator to speak about the difficulties of his or her task because the task is difficult, and must sometimes be explained. If a translator has a theoretical angle to belabor, then fine, but they may also spend four pages outlining the nuances of a single word. Or they may say nothing at all. The important thing is that the reader sees the hand of the translator working. Translation is a critical practice, which occasions the writing of criticism. There is, however, nothing more than an ancestral custom which dictates that such criticism must be a deadly bore even to its author. We do not find that this convention suits us, so it has been discarded. We prefer the idea that criticism can be informative while being neither condescending nor jargon-heavy.

The early planning of this journal was marked with trepidation on our parts. Did we have time for this and would anyone contribute and who would read it? We queried a prominent academic in the field who, in response, assured us that the kind of journal we were planning “doesn’t, and can’t, exist in English.” This was precisely the motivation we required. Many talented people were eager to submit work of very high quality and were very gracious in toleration of their freshman editors. As for readers, we shall see, but I for one am prepared to read this issue aloud to strangers if all else fails us.

—Brandon Holmquest
poems by Sándor Kányádi
translated from the Hungarian by Paul Sohar
Kányádi is a Romanian citizen, born in 1929 in a small village and educated as a teacher within the Hungarian community of Transylvania, a region that is home to roughly two million ethnic Hungarians who were torn away from their mother country and given to Romania by the Versailles Treaty subsequent to WW I.

Since then, Romania’s ethnic Hungarians have been subjected to all of the forms of humiliation and persecution usually accorded to conquered peoples. Communist internationalism, which was supposed to erase all ethnic boundaries, brought only Romanian exclusivity, and with it the suppressions of all efforts at ethnic survival. The only way out was to leave the native soil and seek peace elsewhere. Unfortunately, it was the educated classes that were more able to pick up stakes and start over in Hungary or the US. This brain drain further weakened the isolated minority. A symbolic leadership role was thrust upon writers and poets, largely because their work was closely watched by the censors.

Kányádi refused to join the Communist Party. Consequently, he was only allowed to eke out a meager living as an editor. He worked first at a women’s magazine and then at a children’s weekly, where he spent most of his active life. His income was supplemented by various prizes he received as a poet. Although isolated from the outside world, he was not unaware of his contemporaries. One of his favorites was Zbigniew Herbert, the great Polish poet he met at the Rotterdam Poetry Festival in 1989.

In the 1980’s, Kányádi was offered a Hungarian passport, an apartment and a job in Hungary by the Hungarian Minister of Culture, a controversial figure prone to playing the benevolent dictator, alternating promises of favors with threats of censorship. Kányádi refused to leave his native Transylvania, saying that poets and writers have a special obligation to their people; they must remain with them as beacons in the dark; they must serve as spokesmen for their people; and most of all, they must keep alive the language, the spirit of the culture that produced them. Kányádi succinctly summarizes this idea in the following little ditty-like aphorism: “get the truth / let it shine / throw your people / a sure lifeline.”

Yet Kányádi is not a nationalist. He wants to ensure the survival of his people by fighting for the rights of all oppressed minorities, by concentrating on common bonds that unite rather than divide diverse ethnic groups, by solving common problems rather than dwelling on past injuries and historical injustices. He may be called a cosmopolitan nationalist – or a nationalist cosmopolitan – aware of global developments but working locally.

Kányádi made the personal sacrifice of staying in Transylvania. He continued his work as the editor of a small Hungarian-language children’s magazine even while turning out a whole series of sophisticated poetry books, garnering every prize available in Romania and Hungary. He later won the prestigious Herder Prize, given by the University of Vienna. He asserts that children’s poetry requires the same care and attention as grown-up poetry. He likes to compare himself to a carpenter who makes chairs for adults and children, the only difference being the size but not the quality.

Here we encounter a duality in Kányádi’s character. It is based, not on his divided ethnic identity, but on his eagerness to reach and teach his audience. This may be the reason why another contradiction has persisted throughout his poetic
career. He has never abandoned traditional forms. Instead, Kányádi alternates between them and free verse as the subject matter or the mood of the piece require. The two styles, like parallel roads, have been channeling his voice all along.

In my translations, I try to reproduce both the form and the content of the original. The modern tendency of ignoring form ends up flattening poetry and killing off the spirit of the original. Translation of that kind is a crime against poetry. Kányádi himself is a very respectful translator, and he earned the friendship of quite a few Romanian poets by translating their works into Hungarian. He did the same for Transylvanian German and Yiddish folk songs, two other ethnic minorities, once essential strands in the fabric of Transylvanian society, now almost completely eliminated.

Since his retirement Kányádi has spent more time in Budapest and at international poetry festivals. In 1996, he shared the invited poets’ podium with Robert Creeley in Helsinki. He still keeps up a rigorous schedule of readings in schools all over the Carpathian Basin, where Hungarian is spoken. He not only performs his own poems, but all the Hungarian classics as well, mostly from memory. This is his way of defending ethnic literature against the rising tide of globalization.

—Paul Sohar
Zápor
Villámok tört szánya verdesi ablakom.
Kopog a zápor.
Hallgatom.
Szénaillat és léveríték,
Párálló újjasok szaga;
mint egy hajó, elindul vélem
ez a modernnek mondható szoba.

Ringat a zápor.

Ködbe süllyed aztán az emlék
föl-fölvetődj partja.
Nyerí egy csikó, majd ráomlik lassan
a föláztott falú pajta.

Deluge
The broken wings of lightning bolts are
lashing my window.
The deluge is knocking.
I'm listening.
Hay bouquet and sweat of horses,
the smell of newborns;
like a ship, my no-nonsense room is
sailing off with me.

The deluge is rocking me.

Then the flickering shore of memory
sinks into misty brown.
A colt sneezes and the soggy walls
of the barn come tumbling down.
Hipotézis

Az óceánok s a tengerek valószínűleg azért keletkeztek, hogy szemléltető-eszközökül szolgálván, a képletbe-foglalhatón túl – vagy innen? – valami fölemelőt is sejtessenek az időről, ami, bizony, a rájtunk s a természetben alkalmazott rutinos fogásaival hovatovább mindjobban lejáratja magát előttünk.

Hypothesis

oceans and seas probably came into being as demonstrative tools designed to suggest something uplifting about time beyond – or on this side of – what can be expressed in an equation something though that devalues itself in our eyes by the timeworn tricks it routinely pulls on nature and us.
A parton

Túlbőgi a nagydob a tengert,
a neon az eget túrlagyogja;
árván omlik a parttól elvert
holdfény a benti hullámokra.

Feleútján meghal a harmat.
Jó lenne most egy csöndes séta. –
Zokog a tenger, a hold hallgat.
Csak a magánynak van árnyéka.

On the shore

The band’s drum out-thumps the sea,
neon outshines all the stars;
moonlight, chased away from shore,
floats alone on outer waves.

Dewdrops wither halfway down.
A quiet walk would do some good.
The sea is sobbing, the moon is still.
Shadows grow in solitude.
Kétszer kelt föl

Kétszer kelt föl a telehold
egyetlenegy éjszakánkon;
kétszer kelt föl a telehold,
csak azért, hogy minket lásson.

Háromszor jött el a hajnal,
gyémántkulcsa hármat fordult;
háromszor jött el a hajnal,
s harmadszor is visszafordult.

Két telehold, három fényes,
harmatszemű hajnalsillag,
álnak az ég delelőjén,
es csak nekünk világítnak.

Twice the full moon

Twice the full moon rose that night,
on our one and only night of nights,
the full moon rose so as to shine
and see us two, of all the sights.

Dawn arrived on three occasions,
three times turned its jeweled key;
dawn arrived on three occasions
and turned back quickly on all three.

Two full moons and three pure shiny
dew-dipped eyes of Sirius
are standing at the very zenith
and gushing all their light on us.
Félvén se félve

Hány megvert sereggel
futottam én már, s hányszor
múlt életem egy-egy
paraszthajszálon.

Ha győztem is, a győzelmem
pirruszi volt csak,
mit megünnepelem
nem engedtek a holtak,

dik nem mellettem, de bennem
dőltek halomra.
Boldog, aki magában csak önnön
halálát hordja,

és annak él jámbor
gondjai között, naponta
güről rá; fél borral, máskor
zenével, könyvvel udvarolja;

aki céljal, tervvel
tartja magát távol,
aki illendőséggel termel,
amikor gyászol.

De meghalni minden-egy halállal,
trénírozni a véget,
s nem tudni, mikor találhat
önnönnmagadban – téged;

In fearless fear

How many times I've got caught
with an army in a rout,
how many times my mere survival
has been in the gravest doubt.

Even on the winning side
it was but a Pyrrhic victory,
and every time the dead souls caused
its celebration denied to me,

the fallen ones who piled up
not beside me but inside.
Blessed is the man who has
only his own death to abide,

and lives his simple, modest life
in its pious daily care,
offering for it watered wine,

keeping a respectful distance
with goals and plans without relief
and doing his best to do his share
even while still in grief.

But to die with every single death
in constant training to defend
yourself without knowing when and where
you may have to face the end;
órökkön szembenézve,
s nem hajlani mégsem
a kétségbeesésre,
kiállni verten az éle,
maradni hadvezérnek,
és tudni, félvén se féleve,
a végső vereséget.

K anya di So h a r
to be in constant readiness,
to be constantly aware
of the bitter end without though
falling into dim despair;
to step out in front and to lead
a beaten army, a sunken fleet,
that is to know in fearless fear
the ultimate defeat.
fiction by Kenji Miyazawa

translated from the Japanese by Nobumasa Hiroi
The year 1996 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of Kenji Miyazawa's birth. Although moderately known before, Miyazawa had become one of the more famous and respected writers among the Japanese almost overnight. In that and the following year, his *Night on the Milky Way Train* and two other works were adapted to film. Miyazawa's universal world encompassing stars and galaxies amused millions of Japanese people. Though there was a hidden intention of Japanese Railroad companies behind the sudden emergence of Miyazawa's name, the enduring admiration of him until today among Japanese people confirms that the buoyant force was his.

Despite this explosion of Miyazawa's popularity, his name was hardly heard outside of Japan. In an interview, Roger Pulvers, an American author, playwright, and theater director, who translated Miyazawa's works, including *Night on the Milky Way Train*, explained the unpopularity of Miyazawa's works in the U.S. According to Pulvers, American scholars had been preoccupied with the socio-historical themes in Japanese literature, and children's books like Miyazawa's were not taken seriously in that regard. Besides, Pulvers argued, there were certain names of Japanese writers, like certain brands, that were widely accepted as the Japanese writers. Simply put, Miyazawa was not one of those names and for that reason alone his translation of *Night on the Milky Way Train* was turned down by American publishers. His translation was later published by Chikuma Press.

Now the English translations of Miyazawa's major works can be found through major online bookstores. Including those translations such as Pulvers's version of *Night on the Milky Way Train*, which is available only in Japan due to its bilingual format, Miyazawa's works are almost all available in English. "Ginkgo Nuts," however, is one of the few exceptions; despite it having completeness and quality similar to his other works, the story has not been translated into English. "Ginkgo Nuts" is worthy of worldwide audience; it exemplifies Miyazawa's life stance, his compassionate gaze upon nature, and his wild, childlike imagination.

Miyazawa's life was short; he died at the age of thirty-seven. In such a short time, Miyazawa wrote many notes, poems, and fairy tales. Miyazawa never tried to sell his work or to seek public accolade: one of the contributing factors to the unpopularity of his works until 1996. In fact, the only payment he received while he was alive was five yen for a fairy tale he submitted to a magazine.

There was a reason for his indifference in profit. Miyazawa taught agriculture at a high school in Iwate prefecture where he was born and continued instructing agriculture to farmers after he resigned from the high school. Writing was done during the spare time between teaching and interacting with his students or farmers. Having the teaching job, Miyazawa never considered his writing as the source for his living. Besides, born in a well-to-do family, Miyazawa never struggled financially as other writers did. If he struggled, it was voluntary, by witnessing many farmers living in deep poverty.

Miyazawa's father was a wealthy pawn broker. As Miyazawa grew up, he saw farmers come to and leave his house, giving up their only furniture, clothes, or tools in exchange for some money, or begging for postponement of their payment. These childhood memories deeply carved his sympathy toward the poor, and this shaped his rest of life and literary work. Miyazawa had an interest in the land, especially in promoting his birth state, Iwate. Teaching agriculture at a local high school and to farmers were his ways of contribution to Iwate, and in his later life, he also took some official roles in Iwate for its development.
He was an untraditional teacher; he loved to take his students out to the mountains and woods. He had also developed a custom to take notes of whatever emotion that the interaction with nature aroused in him. In “Ginkgo Nuts,” Miyazawa describes nature in surprising and unique ways, such as the color of the sky (as the color of a balloon flower) and the sound of crystal-frost flowing up in the air (as the rustling sound). His unorthodox sensitivity comes from the firsthand interaction with nature. Miyazawa’s figure in nature resembles that of Thoreau, and there is another commonality between them.

Both Thoreau and Miyazawa had a strong interest in the Buddhist scripture *The Lotus Sutra*. Though it’s not well known, Thoreau wrote a brief translation of *The Lotus Sutra*. Miyazawa encountered *The Lotus Sutra* when he was eighteen years-old and since then, became a devotee of its teaching. His father, however, was a staunch practitioner of The Pure Land Buddhism even before Miyazawa was born, and his decision to break away from his father’s religion aggravated their already bad relationship, caused from their different ideas concerning the poor. *The Lotus Sutra*’s message that every man and woman regardless of his/her birth condition may enter the way of Buddha, the life of Buddhisatva and the state of enlightenment, strongly resonated Miyazawa’s concern for the poor. His poem, “Not even defeated by rain” best exemplifies the influence of *The Lotus Sutra* on Miyazawa’s life stance.

Most of the poems recorded in his only poetry book, *Haru to Shura* (An Asura and Spring), were those notes, which Miyazawa took while walking in nature and which he called “Mental Sketches Modified.” He called them “modified” because he believed that the emotion that was aroused in him by nature was somehow modified in the process of writing it down. Miyazawa always attempted to preserve whatever he saw and felt in as raw a state as he could. Many of his fairy tales were manifested from these “Mental Sketches Modified.” And that is the reason why “Ginkgo Nuts” reads almost like poetry.

Just as Miyazawa tried to sketch his mental activity as faithfully as possible, I attempted to translate “Ginkgo Nuts” as literally as possible. There were, however, some parts that needed some modification such as the very beginning of the story. Miyazawa’s unique use of Japanese in which he chooses words according to their sound in order to convey the very temperature of the sentence was especially difficult to reconstruct. The first line has many hard sounds such as k and t—*sora no teppen nanka tsutemakute tsutemakute marude kachikachi no yaki wo kake te sugata desu*—that emphasize the coldness of the sky. Miyazawa repeatedly used this technique. In translating, I repeated using s-sound in the first sentence to produce a sense of coldness and also added an image of ice to emphasize hardness of it—the top of the sky was cold like icy-solid steel. Though there were some minor modifications it is absolutely unavoidable to have some of them when a written work gets transferred to a translator’s mind and again gets transferred from his mind to the page. Just as Miyazawa called his poetry “Mental Sketch Modified,” my translation of “Ginkgo Nuts” could be called “Ginkgo Nuts Modified.”

-Nobumasa Hiroi
Ginkgo Nuts

The top of the sky was cold like icy-solid steel. And it was full of stars. Shortly, an extraordinary luster the color of a balloon flower began emerging in the east.

At that break of dawn, in the sky, so far above that even a skylark would not reach, some crystalline frost flew southerly, blown by the wind, making a little rustling sound.

The morning was so clear that such an inconspicuous sound reached the ginkgo tree upon the hill.

Every single ginkgo nut on the tree woke up all at once, and was frightened. It was indeed the day of their departure. They all had known about this and the two crows also had come by yesterday to tell them the time was coming.

"I'm afraid that my eyes will roll in the air as I fall," one of the nuts said.

"You just have to close your eyes very tight," another nut said.

"Oh yeah, I should have filled my canteen. I completely forgot it."

"I prepared some menthol-water! besides water. Do you want some? Mom told me to drink it when I feel sick during the journey."

"Why didn't Mom give me the menthol-water too?"

"Don't worry. I will share it with you. You shouldn't think badly of Mom."

Their mother was the ginkgo tree. In this year, a thousand golden children were born.

And this very day was the time for all her beloved children to set out on a long journey.

The mother ginkgo tree was so sad to say good-

---

1 A mixture of water and some dried peppermint. It can be used to soothe throat ache and stomachache and mixed with some tonic water as well based on one's preference.
「あたしどんなんであってもいい、からお母さんの所に居たいわ。」
「だっていけないんですって、風が毎日とう云ったわ。」
「いやだわね。」
「そしてあたしたちもみんなばらばらにわかれてしまふんでせう。」
「ええ、さよう。もうあたしなんにもいらねいわ。」
「あたしもよ。今までいろいろわが儘ばっかし云って許して下さいね。」
「あら、あたしこそ。あたしこそだわ。許して頂戴。」
東の空の桔梗の花びらはもういつかしばらくよう
に力なくなり、朝の白光りがあらははじめました。星
が一つつつ消えて行きます。
木の一番一番高い処に居た二人のいてふの男の
子が云びました。「そら、もう明るくなかったぞ。嬉しいな
あ。僕はきっと黄金（きん）色のお星さまになるんだよ。」
「僕もなるよ。きっとこれから落ちればすぐに北風が空
へ連れてって呪われるだろうね。」 僕は北風じゃないと思
ふんだよ。北風は親切じゃないんだよ。僕はきっと鳥
（からす）さんだろうと思うね。」
「そうだ。きっと鳥さんだ。鳥さんは偉いんだよ。こゝ
から遠くてまるで見えなくなるまで一息に飛んで行く
んだからね。頼んだら僕ら二人位きっと一遍に青だら
迄連れて行って呪われるぜ。」
「頼んで見ようか。早く来るといいな。」
その少し下でもう二人が云びました。
「僕は一番はじめに杏の様様のお城をつづねるよ。そ
してお姫様をさかけて行ったばけ物を退治するんだ。
そんなばけ物がきっとどこかにあるね。」
「うん、あるだろう。けれどもあぶないじゃないか。ば
け物は大きいんだよ。僕たちなんか鼻でふっと吹き飛
ばされちまふよ。」
「僕ね、いい、もの持ってるんだよ。だから大丈夫さ。見
せようか。そら、ね。」
「これお母さんの髪でこさへた網じゃないの。」
“I will visit the castle of the Apricot King before anything. And I’ll slay the monster who has taken away the princess. I’m sure there is a monster like that somewhere in the world.”

“Yeah, I bet there is a monster like that somewhere in the world. But isn’t it dangerous? I heard a monster is huge. It’ll blow us away just with its nose breath.”

“Well, I have something special and with this I’ll be alright. Do you wanna see it? Look.”

“Isn’t this the net made of our mother’s hair?”

“That’s right. She gave it to me. She told me to hide in it when something bad happens. So I’ll go to the monster with this net in my pocket and say hello monster, can you swallow me? I bet you can’t, I’ll say. Then I bet the monster gets really mad and swallows me right away. So I’ll take out this net in the monster’s stomach and wear it and tear everything inside the monster. Then no way could the monster avoid getting typhus and dying.”

Then I’ll come out from the monster and bring the Apricot princess back to the castle and marry her.”

“How wonderful! Then can I visit you as a formal guest?”

“Of course you can. I’ll share half the country with you. And I’ll send our mother a lot of candies and goodies everyday.”

The stars were now completely gone. The eastern sky was burning white. Suddenly the tree became noisy. The time of the departure was close.

“My shoes are a little small on me. What a pain. I’ll go barefoot.”

“Then why don’t you exchange them with mine. Mine are a little big on me.”

“That’s a good idea. Well, it’s a perfect fit.

---

2 This seemingly harsh comment for a child to make probably comes from Miyazawa’s personal experience. In 1914, when he was eighteen-years-old, he got infected by typhus and stayed in hospital for a few months.
Thanks.”

“Oh no, I can't find my cloak, the new cloak my mother gave me!”

“You have to find it quickly. On which branch did you leave it?”

“I don't remember.”

“That’s a problem. I heard that it’ll be very cold soon. You have to find the cloak.”

“See? Isn't this good bread? Look how some raisins are peeking out. Take it. Put it in your bag now for the sun is about to rise.”

“Alright I’ll take it. Thank you. Why don’t we go together?”

“I'm in big trouble...I really can't find it. I don't know what to do...”

“Let's go together then. You can use my cloak sometimes. If we freeze, why not die together?”

The burning white eastern sky began to wave. The mother ginkgo tree was standing as if she were frozen.

All of a sudden, a bundle of light beams showered the tree, like golden arrows and illuminated the ginkgo children.

From the north the transparent frosty wind blew. “Goodbye my mother.” “Goodbye my mother.” All of the children jumped off the mother ginkgo tree and fell, like a squall.

North Wind said, smiling: “so it goes again this year.” And he left flapping his frosty coat made of glass.

Upon the despondent mother ginkgo tree and her children who had just set out for a long journey, the majestic sun in the eastern sky, like a burning jewel, shined with all its might.
poems by Philippe Soupault
translated from the French by Nick Moudry
From 1919 to 1923, Philippe Soupault was the co-editor, with André Breton and Louis Aragon, of the avant-garde literary journal *Littérature*, which published the work of the Dadaists and the formative work of the Surrealists. In 1919, he co-wrote, with Breton, *Les Champs Magnétiques*, the first self-proclaimed work of automatic writing. In the English-speaking world, Soupault is best known for this work, and for his novel *Les Dernières Nuits de Paris* (1928), which was translated by William Carlos Williams in 1929, the only book-length English translations of his work currently in print.

Although Soupault published at least seventeen books of poetry during his lifetime, to this date only one significant collection of his poetry has been translated into English, the deeply out-of-print *I'm Lying: Selected Translations of Philippe Soupault* (1985), which presents less than forty pages culled from his nearly sixty-year career. None of his individual volumes of poetry have been translated into English in their entirety.

For reasons relating to the scarce availability of Soupault's poetry in English outlined above, I am currently translating the entirety of his book *Georgia*, which was originally published in 1926, the same year Soupault split from the Surrealists over political and aesthetic differences. Because its publication coincides with this split, *Georgia* serves as an important document in the history and development of the Surrealist movement.

Soupault's work was always much less politically and theoretically oriented than the work of his Surrealist colleagues, owing a much stronger debt to lyric and romantic traditions. Breton reportedly excommunicated Soupault—along with Antonin Artaud—for "their isolated pursuit of the stupid literary adventure." The poems in *Georgia* provide what is perhaps the supreme example of what Breton meant by that statement. The first four poems included here are from the first third of that book, while the fifth—and longest—poem, "Cruz Alta," is the final poem in the book. Presented as such, I hope that they give the reader a general idea of the book's range of topical and aesthetic concerns.

In the U.S., when discussing the literary origins of Surrealism, it has become a sort of shorthand to refer primarily to the work of Breton—particularly his manifestoes and theoretical writings—with perhaps a passing reference Robert Desnos' trance writing or Louis Aragon's devotion to the Communist party. With the exception of Franklin Rosemont and the Chicago Surrealist Group, however, Surrealist-influenced writing in the U.S. has taken a decidedly less orthodox and theoretical bend. Likewise, Soupault's work presents an alternate model of Surrealist writing, a way to complicate and interrogate the lyric voice while simultaneously adhering to the general conventions of lyric tradition. As such, Soupault's work can be said to be more aligned than Breton's with the various paths of Surrealist-influenced writing in the U.S.—from the Deep Image poets to various New York School poets or the suburban soft-Surrealism of poets like James Tate and Charles Simic.

One of the most typical gestures in Surrealist poetry is the juxtaposition of nouns with modifiers that have no explicit or logical connection. Breton derives this idea, in part, from an essay by Pierre Reverdy that was published in *Nord-Sud* in 1918: "The image is a pure creation of the mind. It cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities. The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image will be—the greater its emotional power and poetic reality..." For Breton, this "poetic reality" held immense emancipatory power that he felt was linked to his attempt to synthesize Marxism and psychoanalytic theory. This gesture is taken
to the extreme in his poem “L’Union libre,” which contains such lines as: “Ma femme aux yeux d’eau pour boire en prison / Ma femme aux yeux de bois toujours sous la hache.” Lines such as these present a difficulty for the translator in what to do with the preposition “de.” In such situations, there is a tendency among translators to adhere closely and literally to the syntactical patterns of the original French, such as Kenneth White’s translation of the above lines (1969): “My wife with eyes of water to drink in prison / My wife with eyes of wood always under the axe.” White’s translation is lexicographically correct, but it also makes the lines sound more archaic in English than they do in French, losing some of the startling force of the Breton’s juxtaposition.

Although Soupault utilizes juxtaposition much less aggressively than Breton, translators of his work still often defer to the authority of the original text when dealing with the preposition “de.” See, for example, Mary Ann Caws’ version of “One Two or Three” from Surrealist Painters and Poets: An Anthology (2001): “Let’s look for the kids / the parents of the kids / the kids of the kids / the bells of spring / the springs of the summer / the regrets of fall / the silence of winter.” My own version of this poem can be found in this issue. I have opted away from the stilted, formal tone of Caws’ translation, cultivating instead a more stripped-down style that I align with the directness and clarity of expression being championed by Soupault’s American contemporaries Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, not as way to make Soupault’s work conform to American poetic norms but rather as a way to begin sketching a comparison between Soupault and American poetic traditions.

—Nick Moudry
Un deux ou trois

Recherchons les enfants
les parents des enfants
les enfants des enfants
les cloches du printemps
les sources de l'été
les regrets de l'automne
le silence de l'hiver

One two or three

Let's look for the kids
the kids' parents
the kids' kids
spring bells
summer springs
autumn remorse
winter silence
Impair

Un fil se tend
une ombre descend
un papillon éclate
l'orage
un ballon
lune de miel ou d'argent
quatre à quatre

Odd

A thread tightens
a shadow descends
a butterfly distends
the storm
balloons
honey moon
silver moon
four by four
Say it with music

Les bracelets d’or et les drapeaux
les locomotives les bateaux
et le vent salubre et les nuages
je les abandonne simplement
mon cœur est trop petit
ou trop grand
et ma vie est courte
je ne sais quand viendra ma mort exactement
mais je vieillis
je descend les marches quotidiennes
en laissant une prière s’échapper de mes lèvres
A chaque étage est-ce un ami qui m’attend
est-ce un voleur
est-ce moi
je ne sais plus voir dans le ciel
qu’une seule étoile ou qu’un seul nuage
selon ma tristesse ou ma joie
je ne sais plus baisser le tête
est-elle trop lourde
Dans mes mains je ne sais pas non plus
si je tiens bulles de savon ou des boulets de canon
je marche
je vieillis
mais mon sang rouge mon cher sang rouge
parcourt mes veines
en chassant devant lui les souvenirs du présent
mais ma soif est trop grande
je m’arrête encore et j’attends
la lumière
Paradis paradis paradis

“Say it with music”

Gold bracelets and flags
locomotives boats
healthy wind and clouds
I simply let them go
my heart is too tiny
or too big
and my life is short
I don’t know when exactly my death will come
but I grow old
as I descend these simple steps
a prayer slips from my lips
Does a friend await me
is it a thief
is it me
I can no longer see
that lone star in the sky or that lone cloud
because of my sadness or my joy
I can no longer lower my head
it is too heavy
I don’t know if I am holding
soap bubbles or cannonballs
I walk
I grow old
but my blood my dear red blood
flows through my veins
hunting far beyond memories of the present
my thirst is too great
but I stop and await
the light
Paradise paradise paradise
Calendrier

La fumée des cigares
la chaleur des maisons
la lumière des océans et des rivières
sont nos chers compagnons
Et pourtant notre ingratitude est sans bornes
comme nos regards comme notre voix
Nous passons avec notre rire
pour mieux voir les bonheurs des dames
et les paradis des enfants
Nous ne savons pas qu'il existe quelque part
une île
un désert
pour les petits
Aujourd'hui et demain
comme deux mains croisées
supportent malgré tout la chaleur des années
Nous pouvons courir
et nous pouvons mourir
la pluie sera pour nous la chère bienvenue
Son visage sanglant et ses mains croisées
supportent elles aussi la chaleur des années

Calendar

Cigar smoke
warm houses
ocean and river light
are our dear companions
Yet our ingratitude knows no boundaries
like our gaze
like our voice
We go by with our laughter
the better to see the happy women
and the children's paradise
We do not know that there is some slice
an island
a desert
for the little ones
Today and tomorrow
like two folded hands
endure the heat of the ages
despite everything
We can fly
and we can die
the rain will be for us the beloved welcome
His bloody face and folded hands
endure the heat of the ages
Cruz Alta

Comme un fil de soie
comme un nuage de laine
le soir descend à perdre haleine
et nous soupirons de plaisir
Un grand cri un oiseau gris
et toutes les cloches de la terre
appellent les brebis
dans les champs et sur l’océan
tous les nuages sont partis
pour le silence et pour la nuit
loin du ciel loin des yeux
près du cœur
Un homme
une croix
je ne vois pas les souris
les fourmis et les amis
Tout est gris
pour fermer les yeux
tandis que le soleil
très affectueusement
allume des incendies un peu partout
Un homme
une croix
et l’on entend les chiens poursuivre les ombres
les femmes fermer les portes des granges
au son d’un accordéon
et le vent tombe
comme si les routes coulaient
les maisons dormaient
les montagnes brûlaient
Toutes les cloches de la terre
répondent
aux ondes universelles
C’est Madrid et sa voix de miel
Nous dormons
Nous dormons
C'est Rio de Janeiro bienveillant
Il fait un temps merveilleux
et nous attendons le paquebot
C'est Londres
Pétrolifères fermes
cupriferes indécis
Il pleut simplement
un assassinat deux vols
une conversation
C'est New York chaleureux
Tout est prêt pour le départ
Accident dans la 18e avenue
Un incendie dans l'Oklahoma
Tout est prêt
C'est Paris c'est Paris
Nous n'oublions pas les ingrats
travaillons ou attendons
La République est en danger
Filibert de Savoie gagne le grand prix
C'est la Nuit qui répond en fin
Messages
Un crapaud lourd comme un pierre joue du piano
près d'un hortensia
Les étoiles descendent en volant
lucioles et vers luisants
Les étoiles sont des étincelles
qui s'échappent du brasier
immense
que je suppose
derrière les montagnes
le silence fuit sous le vent
C'est la Nuit qui secoue les branches
messages du ciel
les oiseaux immobiles crient
les serpents s'enterrent
et les hommes ferment les volets
et les paupières

Here's Madrid with its honey voice
We sleep
Here's benevolent Rio
The weather is marvelous
We wait for the ship
Here's London
Petroliferous closed
Cupriferous unsettled
It just rains
A murder two robberies
A conversation
This is warm New York
Everything is ready for departure
An accident on 18th Street
A fire in Oklahoma
Everything is ready
C'est Paris c'est Paris
We do not forget the ungrateful
We work or wait
La République is in danger
Filibert de Savoie wins the grand prize
It is Night that finally answers
Messages
A toad, heavy as stone, plays the piano
Next to a hydrangea
The stars fall while flying
Fireflies and bright lines
The stars are sparks escaping
The immense
Inferno
That I imagine
Behind the mountains
Silence flees beneath the wind
It is Night that shakes the branches
Messages from the sky
The paralyzed birds cry
Snakes bury themselves
messages de la terre

c'est la Nuit qui indique la route

les sources parlent à leur tour

une lumière cligne

un train s'éloigne

messages de la mer

Tout est prêt

un homme

une croix

c'est la Nuit qui répond

Terre terre

encore une heure

on entend respirer

encore une heure

c'est le jour

c'est le soleil

Terre terre

Nous abordons

---

And men close the shutters

Their eyelids

Messages from the earth

It is Night that lights the way

The springs speak in turn

A light blinks

A train withdraws

Messages from the sea

Everything is ready

A man

A cross

It is Night that answers

Earth earth

One more hour

One awaits breath

One more hour

It is day

The sun

Earth earth

We arrive
In 1933, Juan Bosch published *Camino Real*, his first collection of short stories. The collection received acclaim throughout the Caribbean, and was argued by critics to be the book that seeded the development of the modern Dominican short story. A few months later, Bosch was arrested and jailed by the secret police of then-dictator Rafael Trujillo on suspicion of anarchist activity. He was kept at the Ozama fortress for several weeks, then transferred to Nigua, known to be one of the worst jails in the country. There he contracted malaria and nearly died, but was released at the behest of the writer César Herrera.

After his release Bosch returned to his work as a minister of culture in Trujillo's government. As per the fashion of other military states, the government had "recruited" the nation's intellectuals into high-ranking government positions, from which their influence could be controlled. But Bosch took advantage of the office. He became literary editor for the newspaper *Listín Diario*, publishing and mentoring young Dominican poets and writers, among them Pedro Mir, who would become the country's Poet Laureate. Bosch was soon chosen as head of the Ministry of Information and informed that Trujillo planned to install him into the legislature.

This charge prompted his decision to leave the country. The public was becoming aware of the details surrounding the infamous Parsley Massacre, in which Trujillo ordered the execution of twenty-thousand itinerant Haitian sugarcane workers. Bosch found himself incapable of continuing his work. In January, 1938, Bosch fled the Dominican Republic under the pretext of taking his wife to Puerto Rico to seek medical treatment for complications regarding her pregnancy. This departure marked the beginning of what would be a twenty-four year exile from his native country. After a short stay in Puerto Rico, Bosch settled in La Habana, finding there an active audience for his work. He began publishing stories and writing for the magazine *Bohemia* while editing the complete works of Eugenio María de Hostos, one of his strongest political influences.

In a letter written to Trujillo in February explaining his self-imposed exile, Bosch wrote, "My destiny is to be a writer, and in that field the country has nothing left to give me. And that alone would not be enough reason to make me leave the place where my affections lie if not for the fact that on top of not being able to continue to write, I would be forced into being a politician, and I am not disposed to allowing politics to divert my intentions or drown my convictions and principles. Unless one wants to face a violent situation for one's self and one's own, in the Dominican Republic, one has to be a politician." Soon afterward, Bosch's works and even his name were banned from the Dominican Republic, by order of Trujillo.

Over the coming decades, Bosch became a prominent figure in the Latin American literary scene and the international anti-Trujillo movement, giving lectures on literature and politics in Costa Rica, Mexico, Chile, Cuba, and Venezuela, where a course he taught on writing at the Universidad Central de Venezuela was attended by future Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez. Among the adopted material for this course was an essay on writing stories that Bosch published in Venezuela titled *Apuntes sobre el arte de escribir cuentos*. This essay came to be regarded as one of the most influential essays of Latin American Social-Realism. A year after its publication Bosch wrote his last story, "La Mancha Indeleble," and the following year, 1961, Trujillo was assassinated and Bosch returned to the Dominican Republic. Just after his return a collection of his stories, *Cuentos escritos en el exilio* was published, months before he became the first democratically-elected Dominican president in almost forty years.
The themes of Bosch's stories reflect his philosophical and social interests in Dominican life. At the same time as he was writing political essays such as *Pentagonism, a substitute for imperialism*, he was also publishing stories that reflected his political stance: pro-agrarian worker, pro-labor, pro-women's rights. His stories, like his essays, were a call for attention to the social and political problems in the Dominican Republic. The story in this translation was chosen in an attempt to foreground this sense of socialist, progressive political consciousness onto the English.

Bosch's essay on writing, *Apuntes sobre el arte de escribir cuentos*, also informs the translation strategy used here. Toward the end of this essay, translated here as "Notes on the Art of Writing Stories," Bosch states, “The storyteller should only use the words necessary to express the action[...]. A thousand frases cannot say as much as a single action.” My translation attempts to evoke Bosch's interest in pared down prose, what he calls “pure” and “direct” and “unadorned” writing, while using, whenever possible, active sentence structures, and word choices that reflect the political themes of the stories.

Though Bosch is widely considered, in Latin America, to be a master storyteller, almost none of his fiction has been translated into English. The story translated here, “Los Amos,” originally published in Cuba, comes first in his story collection *Cuentos Escritos en el Exilio,* the collection through which the people he fought to liberate first re-encountered, after a more than twenty year absence, the man understood to be the greatest writer in Dominican history.

—Steve Dolph
Los Amos

Cuando ya Cristino no servía ni para ordeñar una vaca, don Pío lo llamó y le dijo que iba a hacerle un regalo.

—Le voy a dar medio peso para el camino. Usted está muy mal y no puede seguir trabajando. Si se mejora, vuelva.

—Cristino extendió una mano amarilla, que le temblaba.

—Mucha gracia, don. Quisiera coger el camino ya, pero tengo calentura.

—Puede quedarse aquí esta noche, si quiere, y hasta hacerse una tisana de cabrita. Eso es bueno.

Cristino se había quitado el sombrero, y el pelo abundante, largo y negro le caía sobre el pescuezo. La barba escasa parecía ensuciarle el rostro, de pómulos salientes.

—Tás bien, don Pío —dijo; que Dió se lo pague.

Bajó lentamente los escalones, mientras se cubría de nuevo la cabeza con el viejo sombrero de fieltro negro. Al llegar al último escalón se detuvo un rato y puso a mirar las vacas y los cíos.

—Qué animao ta el becerrito —comentó en voz baja.

Se trataba de uno que él había curado días antes. Había tenido gusanos en el ombligo y ahora correteaba y saltaba alegremente.

Don Pío salió a la galería y también se detuvo a ver las reses. Don Pío era bajo, rechoncho, de ojos pequeños y rápidos. Cristino tenía tres años trabajando con él. Le pagaba un peso semanal por el ordeno, que se hacía de madrugada, las atenciones de la casa y el cuidado de los terneros. Le había salido trabajador y tranquilo aquel hombre, pero había enfermado y don Pío no quería mantener gente enferma en su casa.

Don Pío tendió la vista. A la distancia estaban

The Masters

When Cristino couldn't be used even to milk a cow, Don Pío called for him and said he'd give him a gift.

—I'm going to give you half a peso for the road. You're real sick and can't keep working. If you get better, come back.

Cristino extended a yellow, trembling hand.

—Thank you, sir. I'd like to get goin now, but I got a tempature.

—You can stay tonight, if you want, even make yourself a goatgrass tea. That's fine.

Cristino had removed his old sombrero, and his long, black hair fell thick over his neck. His meager beard seemed to dirty the prominent cheekbones on his face.

—Thas fine, Don Pío, he said. God's grace to you.

He descended the steps slowly while covering his head again with the black felt sombrero. Arriving at the last step he stopped a while and began looking at the cows and calves.

—That bull calf's real lively, he said in a low voice.

It was one he'd cured a couple days before. It'd had worms in its belly and now it was running and jumping happily.

Don Pío came out to the porch and also stopped to look at the cattle. Don Pío was short and chubby, with small, darting eyes. Cristino had been working for him three years. Don Pío paid him a peso a week for the milking, which he did in the morning, his duties around the house, and the care of the calves. The man had turned out a good worker, and quiet, but he'd gotten sick and Don Pío didn't want to keep sick people in his house.

Don Pío took in the view, in the distance the thickets covering the stream crossing, and above the
los matorrales que cubrían el paso del arroyo, y sobre los matorrales, las nubes de mosquitos. Don Pío había mandado poner telas metálicas en todas las puertas y ventanas de la casa, pero el rancho de los peones no tenía puertas ni ventanas; no tenía ni siquiera setos. Cristino se movió allá abajo, en el primer escalón, y don Pío quiso hacerle una última recomendación.

—Cuando llegue a su casa póngase en cura, Cristino.

—Ah, sí, cómo no, don. Mucha gracia —oyó responder.

El sol hervía en cada diminuta hoja de la sabana. Desde las lomas de Terrero hasta las de San Francisco, perdidas hacia el norte, todo fulgía bajo el sol. Al borde de los potreros, bien lejos, había dos vacas. Apenas se las distinguía, pero Cristino conocía una por una todas las reses.

—Vea, don —dijo—, aquella pinta que se aguaita allá debe haber parío anoche o por la mañana, porque no le veo barriga.

Don Pío caminó arriba.

—¿Usté cree, Cristino? Yo no la veo bien.

—Arrímesse pa aquel lao y la verá. Cristino tenía frío y la cabeza empezaba a dolerle, pero siguió con la vista al animal.

—Dése una caminadita y me la arrea, Cristino—oyó decir a don Pío.

—Yo fuera a buscarla, pero me toy sintiendo mal.

—¿La calentura?

—Unju, Me ta subiendo.

—Eso no hace. Ya usté está acostumbrado, Cristino. Vaya y tráigamela.

Cristino se sujetaba el pecho con los dos brazos descarnados. Sentía que el frío iba dominándolo. Levantaba la frente. Todo aquel sol, el becerrito...

—¿Va a traérmela? —insistió la voz

Con todo ese sol y las piernas temblándole, y los pies descalzos llenos de polvo.

thickets, the mosquito clouds. Don Pío had ordered screens put in all the doors and windows of the house, but the laborer’s hut didn’t have doors or windows; it didn’t even have fences. Cristino shifted down there, on the first step, and Don Pío wanted to give him some final advice.

—When you get home, take care of yourself, Cristino.

—Ah sí, for sure, sir, he heard himself respond.

Thank you.

The sun boiled on every tiny leaf on the savannah. Everything shimmered under the sun, from the hills in Terrero to the ones in San Francisco, lost to the north. At the edge of the pasture, far off, were two cows. They were barely distinguishable, but Cristino could tell all the cattle apart.

—Look, sir, he said. That spotted one you can see there must a birthed last night, or this mornin, cause I don’t see its belly.

Don Pío stepped forward.

—You think, Cristino? I can’t see it good.

—Come over ta this side and you’ll see her.

Cristino felt chills and his head was beginning to ache, but he kept his sights on the animal.

—Take a little walk and herd her in for me, Cristino, he heard Don Pío say.

—I’d go get her, but I’m feelin bad.

—The fever?

—Uh-huh, it’s gettin worse.

—that’s no good. You’re used to it by now, Cristino. Go get her for me.

Cristino was holding his chest with his thin arms. He felt like the cold was taking over. He raised his eyes. All that sun, the calf...

—You gonna get her? insisted the voice.

With all that sun and his legs trembling, barefoot, his feet covered in dirt.

—You gonna bring her, Cristino?
— ¿Va a buscármela, Cristino?

Tenía que responder, pero la lengua le pesaba. Se apretaba más los brazos sobre el pecho. Vestía una camisa de listado sucia de tela tan delgada que no le abrigaba.

Resonaron pisadas arriba y Cristino pensó que don Pio iba a bajar. Eso asustó a Cristino.

—Ello sí, don —dijo; voy a dir. Deje que se me pase el frío.

—Con el sol se le quita. Hágame el favor, Cristino. Mire que esa vaca se me va y puedo perder el becerro.

Cristino seguía temblando, pero comenzó a ponerse de pie.

—Sí; ya voy, don —dijo.

—Cogío ahora por la vuelta del arroyo —explicó desde la galería don Pío.

Paso a paso, con los brazos sobre el pecho, encorvado para no perder calor, el peón empezó a cruzar la sabana. Don Pío le veía de espaldas. Una mujer se deslizó por la galería y se puso junto a don Pío.

—¡Qué día tan bonito, Pío! —comentó con voz cantarina.

—El hombre no contestó. Señaló hacia Cristino, que se alejaba con paso torpe como si fuera tropezando.

—No quería ir a buscarme la vaca pinta, que parió anoche. Y ahorita mismo le di medio peso para el camino.

Calló medio minuto y miró a la mujer, que parecía demandar una explicación.

—Malagradecidos que son, Herminia —dijo— De nada vale tratarlos bien.

Ella asintió con la mirada.

—Te lo he dicho mil veces, Pío —comentó.

Y ambos se quedaron mirando a Cristino, que ya era apenas una mancha sobre el verde de la sabana.

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He had to respond, but his tongue was heavy. He pressed his arms tighter around his chest, covered by a dirty, striped shirt of cloth so thin it didn’t warm him.

Footsteps rumbled above and Cristino thought Don Pío was going to come down. That scared Cristino.

—I am, sir, he said. I’m goin. Lemme wait for the chill to pass.

—The sun’ll get rid of it. Come on now, Cristino.

Look that cow’s going off and I could lose the calf.

Cristino continued to tremble, but he started getting up.

—Yes, he said. Right away, sir.

—It’s gone over to the bend in the stream, Don Pío explained from the porch.

Step by step, his arms around his chest, stooped so not to lose heat, the laborer began crossing the savannah. Don Pío watched him from behind. A woman drifted onto the porch and came up next to Don Pío.

—What a beautiful day, Pío! she said in a sing-song voice.

The man didn’t respond. He signalled toward Cristino, who was moving away awkwardly, as if he were stumbling.

—He didn’t want to bring me that spotted cow, it birthed last night. And just now I gave him half a peso for the road.

He fell silent for half a minute and looked at the woman, who seemed to demand an explanation.

They’re so ungrateful, Herminia, he said. It’s not worth treating them good.

She agreed with a look.

—I’ve told you a thousand times, Pío, she said.

And the two remained watching Cristino, who was now barely a stain on the green of the savannah.
The Kiss Across the Ocean

O little bird, how tired I am,
Do you want to accompany me?
Now I have an entire factory
And little men dressed in black

Strange, with what kind of a mystery
Do they want to be good.

In the end, I don't want to be a good person.

They don't have any ground beneath their feet.
And they tug at me constantly.

With the end of summer,

I take care of everything,

for the best.

And I carve the too long path
Between the better and the better.

The better of better.

I know, now at least five o'clock.

I am sitting in the air, or they fall in

and already your body melts

like little crumbs in butter

and you fall asleep nicely.

poems by Tomaž Šalamun
translated from the Slovenian by Joshua Beckman
Poljub čez ocean

O moj ptiček, kako sem truden!
Češ videt kaj sem vse napisal danes?
Zdaj imam že celo tovarno
in možičke oblečene v žakeljce.
Obesil sem jih na svoj cvirn
in jih prilepil na stene brezna.
Nimajo tal pod nogami,
naprej me cukajo.
Fuj, s kakšnimi zarjavelimi
lopatami hočejo biti pridni.
Pa jim ne dam. Mm. Ne.
Najprej očistiti lopate.
Za vse skrbim. Tudi za mucko.
In preklinjam ta predolg lok med
pismom in pismom.
Vem, zdaj jih frči vsaj pet po
zraku, ali pa se valjajo na
Correo Central.
Zakaj ne znaš pihniti tako kot jaz,
glej, aspirirani K
in že se ti topi telo
kot drobtinice na maslu
in boš lepo zaspala.

The Kiss Across the Ocean

O little bird, how tired I am!
Do you want to see everything that I have written today?
Now I have an entire factory
and little men dressed in little sackcloths.
I hung them by my thread
and glued them to the wall of the abys.
They don’t have any ground beneath them,
and they tug at me constantly.
Strange, with what kind of rusty shovels
do they want to be good.
But I don’t let them. Njet.
First to clean the shovels.
I take care of everything. For the kitten also.
And I curse the too long arc
between the letter and the letter.
I know, now at least five of them
fly in the air, or they loll in
the Correo Central.
Why can’t you kiss as I can do,
look, the aspired K
and already your body melts
like little crumbs in butter
and you fall asleep nicely.
Svet
Dotik
Benetke

Oddih se je šibati z lepo ženo po
Grand hotelih in
v mehke roke Latincev tlačiti šope
denarjev.
Stebri civilizacije se spočijejo,
robní dotiki so legitimni.
Jedli med, pili med,
gosta vina, zlato kri.
Uživali smo, ko smo gledali kako
ljubimo v ogledalih, ob misli,
kdo vse se nas bo veličastno
dotaknil.
Te pilote v pesek so zabijali za
naše slavje, žena,
v naju.

The World
The Touch
Venice

It is a relief rushing around Grand Hotels
with a beautiful wife and
squeezing bundles of notes into soft
Latin hands.
Pillars of civilization rest,
marginal touches are legitimate.
Ate honey, drank honey,
thick wine, gold blood.
We enjoyed watching how
we made love in mirrors and to think
of everyone who will majestically
touch us.
These beams were driven into silt
in my and your honor, wife,
to us.
Mehur

mehur je imel čudno srajco prvič je
on odleter drugič sem jaz odleter s čudno
srajco sem te videl mehur kupi si
drugo oziral sem se okrog kam je šel
franci pa ne da zdaj spet najvišji duhovi
amerike pijeto pivo v kavarni
evropa enkrat je bilo tako potem nekaj časa
ni bilo tako zdaj je pa spet tako
enkrat smo vince pil zdaj pa vodo kdo pa dela pri
socialistični zvezi a so tam sploh kaki moji
prijatelji če bi bili tam kaki moji
prijatelji se ne bi včasih zvečer zasanjal z divjo
nostalgijo mi ne bi po glavi hodili
holandci vsi holandci ki zrasejo dobijo nekak
denar 1200 guldnov dobijo jaz pa
ne dobim 1200 guldnov če še tako hitim
holandci so mi rekli tomai to je oslarija
evropa te ne bo gledala kako ti tam hiraš
s takimi gnilimi dohodki da se čez
kovter pokrijem ko pride inkasant ampak to me
jezi zakaj so si ti fantje z najmanjšimi
lulčki na svetu življenje ljubeznivo uredili
mi si ga pa nismo uredili andro mi je rekel
imel sem najmanjši lulček v celi armadi seveda
sem rekel zato ker se gledaš od zgoraj tudi
jaz sem imel občutek da sem imel najmanjši lulček
v armadi ker sem se gledal od zgoraj potem je
andro naenkrat vstal iz postelje in stekel po
sliko in mi jo kazal ni mi zares kazal
slike kazal mi je
lulčka

Bubble

Bubble had a strange shirt on at first it was he
who floated off then it was me who floated off with a strange
shirt I saw you bubble get yourself
another one I was looking around to see where he went
franci don't tell me that america's highest spirits are
again drinking beer in the café
europa it used to be like this then it wasn't for a while
and now it is like this again
we used to drink wine and now we drink water and anyway who works at
the socialist union are there any of my
friends there if there were some of my
friends I would not lose myself in the occasional evening of dreams with wild
nostalgia the dutch wouldn't be on my mind
all the dutch when they grow up get some sort of
money they get 1200 gulden per month and I
do not get any 1200 gulden per month no matter how hard I try
the dutch said to me tomaz this is crazy
europe won't just stand there while you waste away
on such shitty wages I cover myself
with a duvet when the collector comes but it really
gets to me how come these guys with the smallest
willies in the world could sort out their lives agreeably
while we have not sorted it out andro said to me
I had the smallest willy in all the army of course
I said because you are looking at yourself from above
I had the same feeling that I had the smallest willy
in the army because I was looking at myself from above then
andro got out of the bed suddenly and ran to get a
picture and was showing it to me he was not really showing me
the picture he was showing me
his willy
Poznate tega plemenitega gospoda

Poznate tega plemenitega gospoda, Edmund?
Vedno je bilo videti kako želva spi.
Vojvodom ne obljubljamo puščav.
Odkod vihar, odkod zalimane krastače?

Kralj prihaja. Niso to posledice rodu, prijatelj?
Oči, izkopane oči očeta vedrih planjav.

Morda soj, morda vretje, morda vnuki.
Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia in spremstvo,
ne vidim nič morja okrog nas samih.
Vidim okrog nas samih smrt.

Kdo ve? Od koga so postave?
Od kod libelule odločajo o strelcih svobodnih rok?
Kdor je bil prvi rojen, bo pognal sum.
Sir, moja ljubezen je veličastnejša kot ljubezen narave.

Narejena sem iz belega blaga,
belo blago je narejeno, da se svetlika v soncu.
Svetlikanje sonca slepi pogled,
ljubezen se potika okrog kot siva plesen.

Hočem odgovor za zalivanje moči.
Za zalivanje ladij in govorit za zalivanje bark.
Zalivanje veličanstvo.
Krop?

Led.
Led?
Led.

Do you know this noble Sir

Do you know this noble, Edmund?
It always looked like the turtle was sleeping.
We don’t promise the deserts to the Dukes.
Thence the tempest, thence the glued toads.

The King is coming. Aren’t these the consequences of lineage, friend?
The eyes, dug out eyes of the serene father’s plains,
the sky over frogs. The sky over a wild mother.
Our boats are counted. The King is coming.

Maybe lustre, maybe boiling, maybe grandchildren.
Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia and the escorts,
I don’t see any sea around us ourselves.
I see around us the death.

Who knows? Who gives us law?
How can the dragonfly decide about Freehand Shooters?
The first born will propel suspicion.
Sir, my love is more majestic than the love of nature.

I’m made of white cloth,
white cloth is made to shine in the sun.
The shining of the sun blinds the sight,
love roams around like grey mould.

I want the answer to water the power,
to water the boats, you say to water the ships.
Water, Your Majesty.
Scalding water?

Ice.
Ice?
Ice.
Ice. Ice tempers ice. Embark.
Kri in prepad in krvi prepada,
prepadi in krvi in prepada kri,
prepada krvi in na prepadi kri duše,
trgam enakonočje, ko izrekam sad. Jeleni, Gloucester!

Jeleni, Kent! Gore so narejene. Veter je narejen.
Ogenj je narejen. Vata je narejena. Otroci so narejeni.
Usta so narejena. Okna so narejena. Gorski zrak je narejen.
Bucika, mala bucika je narejena.
Kdo praši

I

Čutim travo pod rokami, reče,
slišim, nosim.
Jedli smo obroke, morje ne
sprašuje. Vsak, ki
prag prestopi, ve, kako se upognejo
jeleni. Seme trosim v
zarjo, ta, ki
skače, prosi.

II

Na začetku, v temnih
rokah so doma čebele. Vidiš
muco, ki ji paše? Nismo
mi izbirali: voda skozi sito
teče. Mraz je za ta
čas. Ko vojak odpre nebesa,
kam da čauro, proč?
Da sneži, sneži telesa
v raju.

III

Fontane vodnjaki fontane vodnjaki.
Tako konj. Tako
vlak:
renta ob morju črne dlesni
pirhi zeleni.

Who is Raising the Dust?

I

I feel grass beneath my hands, he says,
I hear, I carry.
We ate rations, the sea is not
asking. Everyone who
crosses the threshold knows how deer
bend. I scatter the seed
in twilight, the one who
jumps is begging.

II

At the outset, in dark hands
bees are at home. Do you see
the kitten enjoying? We did not
select: water flows through
a sieve. It is cold for this
time of year. When a soldier
opens up the sky, what does he
do with the cartridge, give it away?
That it snows, it snows bodies in heaven.

III

Fountains wells fountains wells.
So the horse. So
the train:
annuity at the seaside black gums
green Easter eggs.
IV

Utrinek je v sami zvezdi,
pesem ne boli.
Gore ne zažrejo uma.
Ta, ki prah krtaci
s skorje, pade vedno
nemo.
Mi smo zrasli v soku, vse se
ve,
na skorji.

V

Požrešen sem in trepetam.
V vratu imam zrcala kot
mravlje. Z rokami in
nogami slikam in s tekočino, ki kaplja iz
roke bogu, ko stiska hruško –
sadje.

VI

Rop je delo dobrih ljudi.
Spet kličem pastirja iz druge doline.
Ženske držijo veje vrba.
Trepanica dži Micky Mouse.
VII


VIII

translators

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Paul Sohar was born in Hungary and educated in the U.S. His poems and short stories have appeared in *Aurorean, Chelsea, Hunger, Kenyon Review, Partisan Review, Phantasmagoria, Seneca Review, Rattle, Whiskey Island,* among others. He has also published seven books of translations from the Hungarian, including *Dancing Embers* (2002), a book of Kányádi translations from Twisted Spoon Press. A volume of his own poetry, *Homing Poems,* is now available from Iniquity Press.

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calque

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Al despertar Gregorio Samsa una mañana, tras un sueño intransquilo, encontróse en su cama convertido en un monstruoso insecto.

La Metamorfosis, por Franz Kafka
traducido por Jorge Luis Borges
calque
(kælk) [Fr., lit. 'copy', f. calquer 'to trace' (a design, etc.), ad. It. calcare, ad. L. calcar 'to tread'.]

1. n. a loan translation; a literal translation of a compound, derivative, or phrase from one language to another, e.g. ‘thought experiment’ calqued from the German *gedankenexperiment*, ‘free verse’ calqued from the French *vers libre*, ‘blue-blood’ calqued from the Spanish *sangre azul*.

   vt. to adopt a word or phrase from one language to another by semantic translation of its parts.

2. n; vt. in translation practice, to consciously translate a word into the target language in a way that releases meaning not contained in the source language, e.g. to translate the contemporary Italian *soggiorno* into the archaic ‘sojourn.’

3. n. an original work of fiction written using the conceptual or aesthetic system of a source text; literary work that translates not the content of a source text, but the mode in which that text was written, e.g. *Ulysses*, where Joyce's hero traces a journey analogous to that of Odysseus while the novel itself stylistically and thematically genealogizes the English literary canon, beginning with Homer's *Odyssey*.
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