



READ: A Journal of Inter-Translation

Issue 9

Edited by Sarah Riggs and Alisha Mascarenhas

All rights revert to authors upon publication

ISBN: 978-1-933959-61-0

Design and typesetting by Mark Addison Smith

Litmus Press is a program of Ether Sea Projects, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit literature and arts organization.

Litmus Press publications are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with support from Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature. This project is also supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support for Litmus Press comes from the Leslie Scalapino-0 Books Fund, individual members and donors. All contributions are fully tax-deductible.

State of the Arts



NYSCA



LITMUS PRESS

925 Bergen Street #405

Brooklyn, New York 11238

litmuspress.org

SMALL PRESS DISTRIBUTION

1341 Seventh Street

Berkeley, California 94710

spdbooks.org



Table of Contents



Table of Contents

Editor's Note

Stine An +
Michael Walsh

Habib Tengour +
Cole Swensen

Mona Kareem +
Ra'ad Abdul Qadir

Isabelle Garron +
E. Tracy Grinnell

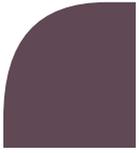
Khalil Hawi +
Rawad Wehbe

Jean-Loup Ker +
Frances Chute

Genji Amino +
Serubiri Moses

Talisman Group:
Ghazal Mosadeq, Safaa Fathy,
Sarah Riggs, Anne Waldman,
Adania Shibli, Elizabeth Willis

Bios



Editor's Note



READ: A Journal of Inter-Translation,
Issue No. 9, 2020

Editors' Note

The 2020 Tamaas Translation Seminar was a year unlike any other. Rather than come together in a poet-to-poet translation exchange in Reid Hall, Paris, we gathered remotely, from our respective satellite locations in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Paris, London and somewhere in California. Each day for a week, we assembled online to greet one another through the screen and discuss our ideas, our difficulties and our insights in the process of poetry translation. We worked in English, French, Arabic and Persian, in groups and in pairs, and often in solitude while the world around us strained to survive the conditions of a global pandemic.

Published here are the results of this 15th year of the annual Tamaas Translation Seminar.

Alisha Mascarenhas & Sarah Riggs
Brooklyn, NY
Summer 2021

READ: A Journal of Inter-Translation **Intro to collaboration with Litmus Press**

Litmus Press & Tamaas: an inter-cultural arts organization have worked as friends in poetry and translation community for many years. This year, Tamaas is transitioning from publishing *READ* with 1913 Press, its home for 15 years, to a newly forming collaboration with Litmus Press.

The first instance of this collaboration, Issue 9, is published here as a PDF. Future projects are in the works, including an anthology of Arab poets and upcoming issues of *READ*.

READ documents the results of the Tamaas Translation Seminars as one point along wide-ranging processes of translation. In their shared commitment to translation as a meeting place, Litmus Press & Tamaas are excited to extend this encounter through publication. It is our hope that publishing *READ* as a freely accessible online resource can serve a wider community of writers, translators, educators and readers in their thinking through experimental translational practice.

Previous print issues of *READ* can be ordered through 1913 Press on <https://www.spdbooks.org/>. The most recent issue of *READ* can be read online at <http://tamaas.org/>.



**Stine An +
Michael Walsh**



Korean Children's Songs

translated by Stine Su Yon An &
Michael Joseph Walsh

Introduction

We didn't know where our project, an exploration of Korean children's songs, or **동요** [dongyo], would take us. Through the Tamaas translation seminars, we sensed particular resonances in the discussions surrounding embodied poetics, collective authorship, circulation, folklore, and spells (both charms and curses). Songs are paradoxical: they are simultaneously trifles, poems, and prayers. Songs are ornamental in that they can function as a form of "portable ecology,"¹ part language, part melody, perhaps even choreography. Songs also lend themselves to virality—children's songs even more so. A children's song can be something you pick up at the playground, from school, your environs. A song shared out of love and delight, or a song drilled into you as a part of an education or cultural inculcation.

We were drawn to being in conversation with these children's songs that have been carried by people, through upheaval, colonization, civil war, rapid modernization, and diaspora. Many of the songs featured in this collaboration were written during the Japanese colonial era, and some of them came to express the hope that the children who sang them would one day do so in a country free from colonial domination.

In another turn, these children's songs become songs of collective labor: the labor of liberation, the labor of hope, and the complicated

¹ Here we draw on Anne Anlin Cheng's discourse on adornment and the ornamental in the chapter "Gleaming Things" from her book *Ornamentalism*. The chapter in turn draws on Spyros Papapetros's scholarship on the nineteenth century architect and art theorist Gottfried Semper.

conscripted labor of nation-building and the introduction of the normative nuclear family after the Korean War.

These songs reflect a time when Korean composers were drawing on Western musical traditions and melodies and composers, and songwriters were imagining a modern conception of childhood. Many of these songs have collective afterlives in that they contain repurposed melodies, or have been revised by the collective, or have spawned alternative lyrics.

To that end, we also wanted to capture the folk histories of these songs. For example, “Dad and the Crayons” is a pop song from the late 80s that was later repurposed as a children’s song despite its sinister undertones. In the archives of the internet, we find personal interpretations and experiences of the song as well as parody lyrics that lay bare the song’s intimations of domestic violence.

In our translations, in the spirit of folk history and personal ethnography, we’ve included notes and reflections of our experiences as well as audio recordings and links to images, videos, and text. We hope our collaboration creates space to consider the songs we carry with us.

—*Michael Joseph Walsh and Stine Su Yon An*

Playlist

Some translations include links to recordings.

To explore the playlist,
scan the QR code below or visit
[https://soundcloud.com/gregorspamsa/sets/
dongyo-tamaas-2020](https://soundcloud.com/gregorspamsa/sets/dongyo-tamaas-2020).



우리의 소원 Our Wish (1947)

Words by 안석주 (安碩柱) [An Seok-ju]

Music by 안병원 (安丙元) [An Byeong-won]

우리의 소원은 [독립] 통일
꿈에도 소원은 [독립] 통일
[이 목숨 바쳐서] 이 정성 다해서
[독립독립이여 오라] 통일 통일을 이루자

이 거래 살리는 [독립] 통일
내 나라 찾는 내 [독립] 통일
[독립이여] 통일이여 어서 오라
[독립이여] 통일이여 오라

 [Listen to "Our Wish \(Independence + Unification\)."](#)

 [Listen to "Our Wish \(Independence\)."](#)

 [Listen to "Our Wish \(Unification\)."](#)

Our Wish

Translated by Michael Joseph Walsh
and Stine Su Yon An

Our wish is for [independence] unification,
Even in our dreams, [independence] unification
[I pledge this life] With all our hearts, let's make it come true,
Unification [Independence] come now

Unification [Independence] which will save our nation
Unification [Independence] through which i recover my country
Unification [Independence] please hurry
Unification [Independence] come now

Translator's Note

In the original version of this song, written during the period of Japanese colonial rule, what the song's collective voice longs for is 독립 ("independence"). The lyrics were amended in 1947 following Japanese surrender and the subsequent partitioning of the Korean peninsula, changing 독립 ("independence") to 통일 ("unification") and modifying a few other lines. This version of the song was then incorporated into national textbooks, and it has since been widely sung on both sides of the 38th parallel. During the 2000 inter-Korean summit, Kim Il-sung and Kim Dae-jung, the respective leaders of the North and South, famously clasped hands and sang this song as a show of unity.

 **꽃밭에서**
In the Flower Garden (1952)

Words by 어효선 (魚孝善) [Eo Hyo-seon]

Music by 권길상 (權吉相) [Gwon Gil-sang]

< 1 >

아빠하고 나하고 만든 꽃밭에
채송화도 봉숭아도 한창입니다.
아빠가 매어놓은 새끼줄 따라
나팔꽃도 어울리게 피었습니다.

< 2 >

애들하고 재밌게 뛰어 놀다가
아빠 생각 나서 꽃을 뽐니다.
아빠는 꽃 보며 살자 그랬죠.
날 보고 꽃 같이 살자 그랬죠.

 [Listen to "In the Flower Garden \(Korean\)."](#)

In the Flower Garden

Translated by Stine Su Yon An

Verse 1

In the flower garden, the one I grew with him
Rose moss blossoms, balsams too, gathered in full bloom
Twirling through the trellis vines and the twine my father tied
Morning glories trumpet their hues, gathered in harmony

Verse 2

I play and romp with neighborhood friends, outside having fun
When I miss my father so, I look at the flowers we grew
Father once said to me, "Let's always live with flowers"
He looked at me and said, "Let's always live like flowers"

 [Listen to "In the Flower Garden \(English\)."](#)

Translator's Note

Eo Hyo-seon first published the lyrics to 꽃밭에서 in the September 1952 issue of the Korean children's magazine <소년 세계>. At the time, he wrote based on his memories of growing a garden with his father and their conversations before they were separated by the war. A year later, the composer Gwon Gil-sang paired Eo's lyrics with a melody to give hope to children suffering as a result of the Korean War. The song also inspired the 1974 film adaptation <<아빠하고 나하고>> (With My Father and Me).

나비야 Butterfly (early-to-mid 1900s)

Words by Unknown

Music by Franz Wiedemann

나비야 나비야 이리날아오너라
노랑나비 흰나비 춤을추며 오너라

봄바람에 꽃잎도 방긋방긋 웃으며
참새도 짹짹 노래하며 춤춘다

Hänschen Klein



1. Häns - chen klein ging al - lein in die wei - te Welt hin - ein
Stock und Hut steht ihm gut
„Wünsch dir Glück,“ sagt ihr Blick,
ist gar wohl - ge - mut.
„Kehr' nur bald zu - rück!“

2. Doch die Mut - ter wei - net sehr hat ja nun kein Häns - chen mehr.

Fine
D.C. al Fine

Butterfly

Translated by Stine Su Yon An

Butterfly, butterfly, flutter flutter over here
Yellow, white butterflies, dance on over here

In the spring breeze petals too flutter flutter brightly
Little birds chirp chirp chirp sing along and dance

 [Listen to "Butterfly \(English\)."](#)

Translator's Note

The Korean version of this song is an adaptation of a Japanese adaptation of the German Biedermeier era song "Hänschen Klein" ("Little Hans") by Dresden composer Franz Wiedemann. The original version of "Little Hans" tells the story of a youth who goes out into the wider world and returns home as an adult. The Japanese adaptation invites a butterfly to rest on a canola leaf and then to play with cherry blossoms if it gets bored with the leaf.

Image: Melody and abridged lyrics for "Hänschen Klein" by Franz Wiedemann.

Source: Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:H%C3%A4nschen_Klein.svg



옹달샘

Forest Spring (1935)

Words by 윤석중 (尹石重) [Yun Seok-jung]

Music by Friedrich Silcher

깊은 산속 옹달샘 누가 와서 먹나요
맑고 맑은 옹달샘 누가 와서 먹나요
새벽에 토끼가 눈 비비고 일어나
세수하러 왔다가 물만 먹고 가지요

깊은 산속 옹달샘 누가 와서 먹나요
맑고 맑은 옹달샘 누가 와서 먹나요
달밤에 노루가 숨바꼭질하다가
목마르면 달려와 얼른 먹고 가지요

Forest Spring

Translated by Stine Su Yon An

Small spring in the forest deep, who comes by to drink from you?
Small spring of the clearest clear, who comes by to drink from you?
Just at the break of dawn, waking sleep from her eyes,
A rabbit stops to wash her face but hops away with just a drink.

Small spring in the forest deep, who comes by to drink from you?
small spring of the clearest clear, who comes by to drink from you?
Under a moonlit sky, playing hide-and-seek all night,
A small deer stops to quench her thirst and leaps away with just a drink.

Translator's Note

The melody of this Korean children's song has a surprising origin. The song borrows the melody from the German folk song "Drunten im Unterland" by Friedrich Silcher (1789-1860). Silcher, a composer of German lieder and collector of regional folk songs, based "Drunten im Unterland" on a Swabian melody passed on through oral tradition. The lyrics of "Drunten im Unterland," written in a Swabian dialect, are from the German missionary and linguist Gottfried Weigle (1814-1855). While "Drunten im Unterland" expresses regional pride and nostalgia, the Korean adaptation paints a serene, playful forest scene.



코끼리 아저씨 Mr. Elephant

Words and music by 변규만 [Byeon Gyu-man]

화창한 봄날에~(룰루랄라~)
코끼리 아저씨가~(룰루랄라~)
가랑잎 타고서
태평양 건너 갈적에~(랄라랄라~~)
고래아가씨(안녕하세요~)
코끼리 아저씨 보고
(아휴~처음 뵈겠습니다~)
첫눈에 반해 돌이살짝 윈크했데요
(윈크~나두 윈크~)
당신은 육지멧쟁이~(아이월요~)
나는 바다예쁜이(어머나~)
천생연분 결혼합시다
(어머어머어머어머~아이몰라~)
예식장은 용궁예식장
주례는 문어아저씨
(신랑신부는 잘 살아라~)
피아노는 오징어
예물은 조개껍데기
(감사합니다~감사합니다~^^)

Mr. Elephant

Translated by Michael Joseph Walsh

On a bright spring day (lulu, lala)
When Mr. Elephant (lulu, lala)
Climbed onto a leaf
And crossed the Pacific (lalalala)
Miss Whale (Hellooo)
Saw Mr. Elephant
(Ooh...Nice to meet you...)
In love at first sight they gave each other a wink
(Wink! Wink!)
You're the stud of the land (Oh, well...)
And I'm the babe of the sea (Oh my!)
C'mon let's get married
And be together eternally.
(Oh wow oh wow oh wow oh wow...Ooh, I don't know)
The wedding's held under the ocean
In the palace of the Dragon King
The minister's Mr. Octopus
(I now you declare you man and wife!)
Mr. Squid plays the piano
And the clam shells are wedding rings
(Thank you! Thank you everyone!)



The Hare and the Dragon King: A Retelling

By Michael Joseph Walsh

The Dragon King lived in a golden palace deep under the East Sea. The Dragon Palace, as it was called, was resplendent; its gardens were full of ocean flowers, and its orchards deep-sea fruits. Every night the court was filled with music, and the palace's residents lived a life of unimaginable delights.

One day the Dragon King fell ill. As his condition worsened, he assembled his court physicians, who informed him that he would die without medicine that could only be found on land. "And what is this great medicine?" he asked. "The liver of a mountain hare," his head physician replied.

The Dragon King despaired; there were certainly no mountain hares on the ocean floor, and none of his ministers, who were fish, was capable of venturing out on land. Just then, a tortoise arrived and asked for an audience with the king. "I, Tortoise," he said, "move about on land as easily as I swim in the sea. I will find this hare, your majesty, and will retrieve his liver for you."

Once on land, the tortoise quickly found the hare and approached him. "Honorable hare," he said. "I have come from the Dragon Palace, deep under the East Sea. Rumors of your greatness have reached us, and his majesty the Dragon King wishes to host you at his court." "That's very kind of you, Mr. Tortoise," the hare replied. "But I quite like it here on land. Why should I follow you to the bottom of the East Sea?"

"You say that you like it here on land," the tortoise replied, "but I can't see why you would. Day and night you are pursued by hunters and tigers and wolves, all of whom wish to eat you. In the winter you freeze in the cold, and in the summer you burn in the heat. Come with me to the Dragon Palace, where the gardens are full of flowers, and the trees are full of fruit, and every night is filled with music and dancing, and the tigers and wolves will never reach you."

The hare was intrigued. He climbed on the tortoise's back, who swam out into the sea and then dived straight down, swimming as fast as he could toward the palace and his ailing king.

As soon as they arrived at the palace, the hare was seized and brought before the king. "Open this hare's belly," he ordered, "and bring his liver to me."

For a moment, the hare was distraught. But then he devised a clever plan.

"Oh, my king!" he said. "What have I done! If only I'd known!"

"What are you going on about, Hare?" the king asked.

"Oh, your majesty! The creatures of the land all covet my liver, and they pursue me night and day. To keep it safe, I cut it out myself and hid it in a secret spot, deep in the mountain woods. If I had known that you were in need of it, your majesty, I would surely have brought it along!"

"Tortoise," the king said, "take this hare back to land and retrieve his liver from its hiding place."

The tortoise obeyed. He swam back to the surface with the hare on his back, then paddled them both onto shore.

As soon as they were back on land, the hare hopped away before the tortoise could seize him. "You fools!" he said. "What creature can cut out its own liver and then go about its day? Best of luck with your sick king; I, for one, am off."

Then the hare, exulting in his freedom, bounded off into the mountain woods.

Translator's Note

This is a retelling, rather than a translation, of a popular Korean folk tale. The Dragon King is a Chinese mythological deity known throughout the greater East Asian cultural sphere. The hare, a ubiquitous figure in Korean folklore, appears here in his traditional guise as a trickster.

산토끼 Mountain Hare (1928)

Original words and music by 이일래 (李一來) [Yi Il-rae]

산토끼 토끼야 어디로 가느냐
깡충깡충 뛰면서 어디로 가느냐

산고개 고개를 나흔자 넘어서
토실토실 알밤을 주워서 올테야

 Listen to “Mountain Hare (Korean).”

산 토끼

天籟스럼게 李一來 作 總作曲



산 토끼 토끼야 너 어디로 가느냐
산 고개 고개를 나 넘어서
깡 충 충 뛰 어 서 너 지 디 로 가 나
토 실 토 실 알 밤 을 주 워 서 올 테 야

Image: The original publication of 산토끼 (“Mountain Hare”) from the bilingual Korean children’s song collection <조선동요작곡집> [joseondongyogokjip] (English title: My Native Place and Other Songs) published in Masan, Korea in 1938 with music and Korean lyrics by Yi Il-rae, English translations by Anne New, and Illustrations by Esmond New.

Source: A blog post describing one person’s visit to the song’s place of origin: <http://blog.daum.net/mylovemay/15533666>.



Mountain Hare

Translated by Stine Su Yon An

Mountain hare, mountain hare, where are you hopping to?
Wild and sleek and running free, where are you hopping to?

I'll hop, hop, hop on my own, pass after mountain pass,
To pick the plumpest chestnuts to bring back and share with you!

 [Listen to "Mountain Hare \(English\)."](#)

Translator's Note

According to my grandmother, I sang 산토끼 and danced around the Seoul Gimpo International Airport while my grandmother and late grandfather shed tears over my and my mother's imminent departure to the United States. I was 22 months old at the time and my grandparents' first grandchild. My mother and I were flying to join my father in Birmingham, Alabama. I do not remember singing the song at the airport. I do not remember who taught me the song.

The composer Yi Il-rae worked as a teacher at a primary school in Korea during the Japanese Occupation. The melody and lyrics came to him when he observed wild rabbits during one of his mountain walks with his infant daughter in tow. He wrote the song with the hope that one day his daughter and the Korean people, liberated from colonial rule, could live without fear and as freely as these mountain hares.

The song's catchy tune spread quickly, from school to school, and so on. Children and adults alike circulated the song, modifying the lyrics for greater singability and even creating alternate lyrics to carry more explicit anti-colonial messages.

To support Yi Il-rae's work as a composer, Australian Presbyterian missionaries sponsored the publication of a bilingual collection of Korean children's songs, including 산토끼, titled <조선동요작곡집> [Joseon Dongyo Jalgokjip] in 1938.

While the composer's identity was forgotten for a long time as the song became common, the song was reattributed to Yi Il-rae in the late seventies. Today, the primary school Yi Il-rae used to teach at commemorates his work and the song through song monuments. Located nearby is also the 산토끼 song theme park that celebrates the composer and the song's history. The theme park features a petting zoo, a rabbit village with different species of leporids from all over the globe, and at least one mountain hare living in captivity.

Additional Media

Images of the song monument:

<http://blog.daum.net/hanero/12622624>

Video tour of the 산토끼 song theme park:

<http://blog.daum.net/hanero/12622624>

🦵👶 새나라 의 어린이
 Children of the New Country/
 Nation/Land (1945)

창간호 1 어린이신문 1945年12月1日(土)

어린 이 신 문

편집인: 박희정 | 발행처: 서울대동문로11번길 | 발행처: 어린이신문사 | 창간호 1

새나라 의 어린이

부드럽게

1. 새 나라 의 어린이 는 밝게 웃어 나 다 잠 무 걱 가 없 는 나 라 무 리 나 라 새 나 라
 2. 새 나라 의 어린이 는 서 로 시 로 놀 습 나 다 작 심 생 이 없 는 나 라 무 리 나 라 새 나 라
 3. 새 나라 의 어린이 는 커 튼 밭 을 일 으 나 다 사 리 만 들 는 나 라 무 리 나 라 새 나 라
 4. 새 나라 의 어린이 는 힘 들 지 않 나 다 정 리 만 들 는 나 라 무 리 나 라 새 나 라
 5. 새 나라 의 어린이 는 힘 들 지 않 나 다 무 렷 무 렷 그 는 나 라 무 리 나 라 새 나 라

작곡: 박희정 | 편곡: 박희정

Image: The children’s song “새나라 의 어린이” as first published on the first page of the first issue of the Korean children’s publication <어린이신문> [örinishinmun] on December 1st, 1945, only a few months after Korea’s liberation on August 15th, 1945.

Source: From a South Korean community message board post titled “해방 후 처음 나온 우리 동요” (The first Korean children’s song to be published after liberation) published on August 21, 2019. From a Bobaedream message board.

새나라 의 어린이

Words by 윤석중 (尹石重) [Yun Seok-jung] | Music by 박태준 (朴泰俊) [Bak Tae-jun]

부드럽게

1. 새나라의 어린이는 일찍 일어납니다. 잠꾸러기 없는 나라 우리나라 좋은 나라.
2. 새나라의 어린이는 서로서로 돕습니다. 욕심쟁이 없는 나라 우리나라 좋은 나라.
3. 새나라의 어린이는 거짓말을 안합니다. 서로 믿고 사는 나라 우리나라 좋은 나라.
4. 새나라의 어린이는 싸움을 하지 않습니다. 정답게들 사는 나라 우리나라 좋은 나라.
5. 새나라의 어린이는 몸이 튼튼합니다. 무럭무럭 크는 나라 우리나라 좋은나라.

Children of the New Country/Nation/Land

Translated by Stine Su Yon An

Softly

1. Children of the New Country/Nation/Land rise early. A Country/Nation/Land without sleepyheads, our Country/Nation/Land is a good/great Country/Nation/Land.

2. Children of the New Country/Nation/Land help each other. A Country/Nation/Land without greedy little pigs, our Country/Nation/Land is a good/great Country/Nation/Land.

3. Children of the New Country/Nation/Land never tell lies. A Country/Nation/Land where people trust each other, our Country/Nation/Land is a good/great Country/Nation/Land.

4. Children of the New Country/Nation/Land never pick fights. A Country/Nation/Land where people treat each other with affection, our Country/Nation/Land is a good/great Country/Nation/Land.

5. Children of the New Country/Nation/Land have strong bodies. A Country/Nation/Land of ever-growing growth, our Country/Nation/Land is a good/great Country/Nation/Land.

Translator's Note

I learned this song while growing up in both South Korea and America. I was surprised to learn that the song had five total verses. The first, second, and fifth verses are the most widely known and sung. This children's song was written to celebrate Korea's independence from Japanese colonial occupation. Revisiting this song and its lyrics, I find myself thinking about the Protestant and American immigrant work ethics and ableist narratives around productivity I internalized as a child growing up in a new country/nation/land.

태극기 Taegeukgi (1940s)

Words by 강소천 (姜小泉) [Gang So-cheon]

Music by 박태현 (朴泰鉉) [Bak Tae-hyeon]

태극기

태극기가 바람에 펄럭입니다.
하늘높이 아름답게 펄럭입니다.

태극기가 힘차게 펄럭입니다.
마을마다 집집마다 펄럭입니다.

Taegeukgi, Retranslations

Translated by Stine Su Yon An

The national flag flutters in the wind
High up in the air and picturesque, the flag flutters

The national flag flutters with might
In every village, in each and every home, the flag flutters

The national flag pulses in the wind
High up in the air and picturesque, the flag pulses

The national flag pulses with might
In every village, in each and every home, the flag pulses

The national flag beats in the wind
High up in the air and picturesque, the flag beats

The national flag beats with might
In every village, in each and every home, the flag beats

Translator's Note

태극기 [Taegeukgi] refers specifically to the Korean national flag. The song is said to have been written during the Korean War. In these retranslations, I've made the flag less specific. What are the flags that fly over us?

아빠와 크레파스 **Dad and the Crayons**

아빠와 크레파스

Words and music by the band 배따라기 (Baettaragi)

어젯밤에 우리 아빠가
다정하신 모습으로
한 손에는 크레파스를
사 가지고 오셨어요 (음음)

그릴 것은 너무 많은데
하얀 종이가 너무 작아서
아빠 얼굴 그리고 나니
잠이 들고 말았어요 (음음)

밤새, 꿈나라엔
아기코끼리가 춤을 추었고
크레파스 병정들은
나뭇잎을 타고 놀았죠 (음음)

어젯밤엔 달빛도
아빠의 웃음처럼
나의 창에 기대어
포근히 날 재워 줬어요 (음음)

Dad and the Crayons

Translated by Michael Joseph Walsh

Last night dad came home
With a warm smile on his face.
In his hand he held some crayons
That he'd brought home for me. (mmm mmm)

There were so many things I could draw
And the white page was so small.
I decided then to draw dad's face
And as I finished, I fell asleep. (mmm mmm)

That night, in the land of dreams,
A baby elephant danced
And a troupe of crayon soldiers
Rode on the leaves and played. (mmm, mmm)

Last night even the moonlight
Was like dad's smile
And it leaned in through my window
And warmly tucked me in. (mmm, mmm)

Translator's Note

아빠와 크레파스 was released as pop single by the band Baettaragi in 1985, but it is now much more widely known as a children's song. What I translate as "crayons" is more accurately a kind of oil pastel known as 크레파스 (Cray-Pas), with a texture in between that of a crayon and that of a pastel.

This song has had an interesting folk afterlife. Though it was widely disseminated as a children's song, many who heard it at the time report that they found it "creepy" and disturbing, perhaps due to the contrast between the song's lyrical content and its somewhat discomfiting melody. This spawned a number of popular parody versions in which the song's perceived sinister undertones are made overt.

Below I've translated a portion of a very active YouTube comment thread concerning one performance of the song. The original (Korean language) comments appear to have been deleted by the video's owner; they now survive only in my English translation. I've also translated a number of the more common parody versions of the song that have circulated on the internet.



Add a public comment.

I remember thinking this song was really scary...It really creeped me out, though I don't know why I felt that way at the time...But when I listen to it now I find it so sad.

It was never like that for me...just seemed like it was about a dad buying a set of crayons.

Because it's a children's song written in a minor key, probably.

It's because it's in a minor key...songs in a minor key are supposed to be sad and dark...

Me too

Me too!

I was the same way—I was born in 85...

I also hated this song.

When I was a kid there was a story going around about this song. Of course, in those days there were a lot of made-up stories, like “The Ghost of the Hong Kong Granny.”² Anyway the story goes like this: the dad bought a set of crayons, but there was no color red. Back in the day when people were poor, you couldn’t buy crayons with all the colors. So the kid was trying to draw his dad’s face, but he didn’t have any red to color the lips. So he bit his finger until it bled, and colored his dad’s lips with the blood, then fell into a deep sleep. That’s the story that was going around, anyway. Of course it’s just a story that someone back then made up. But maybe that’s why the song was scary.

Crazy scary.

It’s normal for a song in a minor key to sound ominous and sad.

Me tooooo

Me too, something about the mood of the song was so scary

² **The Ghost of the Hong Kong Granny:** An old Korean woman died in a plane crash on her way to Hong Kong. As her spirit was leaving her body, it merged with the cat that had been sitting on her lap. Her ghost, half-human, half-cat, then returned to Korea, where she began to murder children, snatching them up and killing them as they walked to and from school.

So I wasn't the only one who felt that way...every time I heard this song it scared me so bad I wondered if it really was a children's song.

When I was a kid I heard a version that goes "Last night dad came home / Drunk, with a bat in his hand" lol

Lol a bat

It's in a minor key

Me too...

There's a story behind this song. The song, which [originally] began "Last night dad came home / with a drunk look on his face," incorporates the songwriter's childhood memories. Much like my late father, the songwriter's father was a heavy drinker. One day his father came home drunk with a box of crayons, and while the songwriter was drawing with them, he fell asleep, and then he had a dream just like the one in the lyrics. Of course this is just a story I heard. But the story overlaps with my memories of my father, who was a drunk, and who I'll never see again. And so it feels true to me, and I identify with it.

Dad and the Crayons

Last night dad came home

With an angry look on his face.

In his hand he held a club

That he'd brought home with him. (mmm mmm)

He hit me once, and I cried.

He hit me twice, and it hurt.

He hit me again, and it knocked me out.

He hit me a fourth time, and I died. (mmm mmm)

*That night, in the land of dreams
A baby elephant destroyed the 63 Building
And crayon soldiers with hatchets
Hacked people up till they died. (mmm mmm)*

*

*Last night dad came home
With a drunk look on his face.
In his hand he held a baseball bat
That he'd brought home with him. (mmm mmm)*

*The first time he hit me, I took it.
The second time he hit me, I cried.
The third time he hit me, I started to bleed.
The fourth time he hit me, I went down to hell. (mmm mmm).*

*

*Last night dad came home
With a warm look on his face
In his hand he held an iron club
That he'd brought home with him. (mmm mmm)*

*The first time he hit me, I cried.
The second time he hit me, it knocked me out.
He hit me again, and it killed me.
Then he hit me once more, and I came back to life. (mmm mmm).*

   반달
Half Moon (1924)

푸른 하늘 은하수 하얀 쪽배엔
계수나무 한 나무 토끼 한 마리
돛대도 아니 달고 샷대도 없이
가기도 잘도 간다 서쪽 나라로

은하수를 건너서 구름 나라로
구름 나라 지나선 어디로 가나
멀리서 반짝반짝 비치이는 건
셋별이 등대란다 길을 찾아라

Half Moon

Translated by Michael Joseph Walsh

Blue sky, the milky way, and in a small white boat
A rabbit and a gyesu tree.
With no mast up, and no push pole
The going is good to the western land.

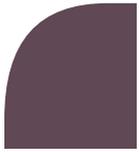
Through the milky way, toward the land of clouds.
Past the land of clouds, where is it one goes?
Shining in the distance, the morning star
Is a beacon. Use it to find your way.

Translator's Note

Published by Yun Geuk-yeong in 1924 as the first entry in a song collection of the same name, 반달 (“Half Moon”) is generally considered to be Korea’s first children’s song.

The rabbit and gyesu tree refer to the Korean folk interpretation of the image one sees on the surface of the moon: a rabbit pounding rice (to make tteok, Korean rice cakes) under the boughs of a gyesu tree. Here “gyesu” is a transliteration of the Korean term for the tree more commonly known in English as the katsura (*C. japonicum*).

Yun dedicated the song collection to his older sister, who had recently passed away. “Half Moon” is therefore commonly interpreted as alluding to Yun’s grief at his sister’s death, with the moon’s passage into the “western land” corresponding to his sister’s passage from 이승 (“this world”) to 저승 (“the world beyond”).



**Habib Tengour +
Cole Swensen**



Phare dans une mer de temps

par Cole Swensen

traduit par Habib Tengour

Première partie : Installation vidéo, 16mn 53s.

La pièce s'ouvre la nuit sur un oiseau ambre vif bizarre volant sur fond de collines sombres.

Cette première tranche du travail comprend quatre écrans des images animées de courte durée sont projetées par intermittence.

L'oiseau apparaît sur l'écran en bas à droite.

Les quatre écrans montrent souvent des échos, des détails agrandis d'autres écrans légèrement décalés dans le temps et dans l'échelle. Un autre oiseau passe, puis est agrandi sur l'écran à gauche, où nous voyons qu'en fait, il s'agit d'une tache de lumière ondulant à travers la colline en face, à intervalles réguliers.

Les images circulent et se juxtaposent sur les écrans ; parfois tous occupées en même temps, parfois seulement un ou deux voire trois.

Et puis c'est l'aube, très calme avec des nuages qui s'accumulent jusqu'à la mer. Une clôture grillagée descend au rivage, un oiseau perché sur presque tous les poteaux.

Phare de Cap Caxine, construit en 1868 le long de la côte, juste à la sortie d'Alger un long chemin pavé bordé d'arbres d'un vert profond mène au phare et au long bâtiment blanc en dessous.

Deux hommes s'engouffrent dans le brouillard, se fondent dedans, devenant de moins en moins distinct et de plus en plus frimas.

Vagues rugueuses s'écrasant sur rivage rocheux avec ligne de minuscules fenêtres éclairées s'étirant au loin le long des falaises basses.

Loupe cubique, un faisceau incisif et aveuglant, coupant et dans la lentille elle-même, constituée de cercles de verre concentriques à leur tour encerclant le pays environnant.

Plans montrant quelque chose de la structure de l'objectif incroyablement complexe suggérant l'œil à facettes d'un insecte actif par réfraction.

Puis les images se déplacent vers le phare de Cap Sigli, construit en 1906, le long d'un littoral relativement inhabité d'environ 200 km à l'est d'Alger. Sa lumière brille à 40 km au large.

De cette hauteur, on peut voir la côte au loin et les vagues sans fin rythme des jours.

Une autre aube. Quelqu'un ouvre un rideau sur une fenêtre luisante, tout en poignet.

Une autre fenêtre, celle-là tachetée par la pluie, fait écho à l'écran suivant par la pluie qui s'écoule maintenant en ruisseaux, alors que sur la suivante, la caméra recule pour nous donner un plan plus large de la tempête soufflant dans les arbres.

Et un reflet de l'énorme lentille s'allumant sur une autre fenêtre donc aussi sur le ciel réfléchi.

Puis l'ombre blême de barres parallèles se déplaçant régulièrement à travers un mur blanc parce qu'une fenêtre que nous ne pouvons pas voir s'ouvre.

Puis une image de porte vitrée cintrée versant à chaud de la lumière beurrée sur un porche en pierre.

Puis le soir vu à travers les vitres tournantes de la lampe et son ombre portée à la recherche d'un endroit où se poser.

Puis l'échelle se rétrécit, on voit une paire de jumelles avec des portes fenêtres se refléter sur l'une des lentilles.

Une main tenant un stylo bleu remplit une feuille de papier avec précision, une écriture serrée, gardant trace de tout ce qui se passe à la lumière.

Livres sur une étagère, sur la couverture du premier : *Registre de Phare* (prononcé *far*).

Les livres contiennent des pages et des pages, qui remontent à des décennies, notant la rotation des gardiens et les moments où la lumière est allumée et éteinte — souvent en hiver, pas avant 8 heures du matin.

Le phare vu de terre, à travers une dentelle de branches stériles.

Un bateau blanc passe loin au large ; en fait, c'est la seule fois que nous voyons un navire en mer, ce qui semble soudain ironique car, bien sûr, les bateaux et les navires sont les seules raisons pour lesquelles les phares existent.

Il y a 27 phares le long des 1622 km de côtes algériennes tous avec leurs gardiens, travaillant par relais et en collaboration pour mener à bien un large éventail de fonctions toutes ciblées sur la nuit, car c'est à ce moment-là, bien sûr, qu'un phare prend vie.

Partie 2 : La vie d'un gardien de phare **projection vidéo, 11mn 11s**

C'est un travail qui, dans une grande partie du monde, est maintenant géré à distance et automatiquement dans ce projet Zineb Sedira documente également un mode de vie en voie de disparition.

Beaucoup de séquences fragmentaires de la partie 1 sont des extraits ou des prises de vue de ce film d'entretiens avec Karim Ourtemach, dit Krime, débuts de la cinquantaine, gardien de phare au Cap Sigli depuis 2005.

Son histoire est étonnante : après avoir traversé des temps difficiles, il a été amené à camper dans une petite cabane en pierre au-dessous du phare du Cap Sigli, a commencé à s'interroger sur la vie des gardiens de phare, et, après de nombreuses observations, a décidé que c'était un rêve, et donc est devenu son rêve, et bien que les détails de l'histoire ne soient pas donnés dans le film, il est de fait devenu l'un des gardiens du phare de Cap Sigli. Nous sommes en présence d'un homme qui est heureux, mais c'est un terme trop frivole ; c'est un homme qui est arrivé à ce qu'il appelle le paradis. C'est un peintre, et passe souvent toute la matinée à dessiner, puis à peindre la nuit. Et un pêcheur quand la mer est calme. Son bateau est bleu, le même bleu que le ciel, que les volets et les portes du bâtiment où ils vivent. *Je ne quitterai jamais le phare de Cap Sigli.* Il parle de la paix et du paysage sauvage qu'il sent faire partie de lui. *Je ne partirai jamais d'ici parce que je suis ici dans le sens qu'il s'agit de ce que je suis plutôt que de l'endroit où je suis.*

Krime lavant les immenses fenêtres de la salle des lanternes, ses gestes de nettoyage du verre, une sorte de chorégraphie sémaphore,

qui est en effet un signal, mais cette fois-ci vers l'intérieur, dans la grande lampe. Plus les vitres sont propres, plus la lumière va loin.

Krimo traversant alors la cour au bas du phare, qui est en fait leur propre maison, où ils retournent dans la cuisine préparer quelque chose pour le dîner — au cours du dîner, ils parlent — de ce qui ne va pas avec l'optique, la mécanique, ce qui ne va pas avec la lumière — il est souvent question du temps, quelles tempêtes ont fait tomber quelles lignes et quelle myriade d'autres systèmes seraient, à leur tour, détruits par ça.

Il dit qu'ils dorment avec un œil ouvert en fait, tous les gardiens

dorment face à une fenêtre qui donne directement sur la lumière parce qu'une pause dans son balayage rythmique les réveillerait.

C'est souvent en hiver, quand il y a des coupures et des pénuries d'électricité — un manque d'électricité peut provoquer l'arrêt de la lampe, et ils doivent ensuite monter au sommet et le tourner à la main le reste de la nuit.

Ils reçoivent des visiteurs de temps en temps — lui leur demande souvent de rester pour le déjeuner ou le dîner. Ils signent un registre avec leur nom, la date, et les commentaires qu'ils souhaitent faire — Très heureux d'avoir visité ce phare — Merci beaucoup pour votre hospitalité et pour la chance que vous nous avez donnée de voir votre beau littoral — et du poète Tahar Djaout : Je ne savais pas qu'entre Azeffoun et Béjaïa, il y avait un tel endroit miraculeux, il nous apprend qu'un coin perdu peut aussi être le centre du monde.

Un phare, quel que soit l'ancrage de ses fondations, oscille toujours

entre littéral et figuratif — phare comme saveur : combien de navires ne se sont pas brisés sur ces rochers ?

Phare comme témoin : l'histoire dans toute son amertume, transpercée par une lance exigeante.

Phare qui veille sur nous et la ligne de démarcation entre mer et terre. Phare comme berger, gardant les choses séparées.

Passer toute sa vie à s'occuper d'une lumière.

Partie 3 : La Montée
projection vidéo, 12mn 32s

Un escalier en colimaçon — la vidéo commence par de longues vues d'ensemble, l'ascension, photographiée de façon à ce qu'elle soit juste légèrement décalée. Le hic dans cet achèvement maintient l'ensemble en mouvement de sorte que les escaliers ne finissent jamais.

Il s'ouvre avec Zineb Sedira qui monte au phare du Cap Sigli ; on la voit venir dans le reflet d'une armoire à glace qui fait face à la porte. Elle commence à grimper, en comptant chaque pas, s'arrêtant de temps en temps pour respirer. La caméra la suit en plongée. Ailleurs, on trouve encore des images fixes du même escalier prises en contre-plongée, regardant le plafond de la tour et la lumière qui descend de son centre.

Lighthouse in a Sea of Time **(after Zineb Sedira)** by Cole Swensen

Part 1: *Lighthouses*

Video Installation, 16m 53s.

The piece opens at night with an oddly bright amber bird flying by against a background of dark hills.

This first part of the work consists of four screens on which moving images of short duration are intermittently projected. The bird appears on the screen in the lower right.

The four screens often show echoes, often enlarged details, of other screens, just slightly off-set in time and scale. Another bird passes, and then is enlarged on the screen to the left, at which point we see that, in fact, it's actually a patch of light rippling across the facing cliff at regular intervals.

Images flow and juxtapose across the screens; sometimes all are occupied at once, sometimes only one or two or three.

And then it's dawn, very calm, with clouds building up out to sea. A chain-link fence runs down to the shore, with a bird perched on almost every pole.

Cap Caxine Lighthouse, built in 1868 along the coast just outside Algiers, a long cobblestone path lined with deep green trees leads up to the lighthouse and the long white building below it.

Two men walk out into fog and head off, blending in, becoming less and less distinct and more and more the weather itself.

Rough waves crashing on a rocky shore with a line of tiny lighted windows stretched out along the low cliffs in the distance.

Cubic magnifying lens, an incisively sliced and blinding beam, cutting in, and into the lens itself, built of concentric glass circles, which in turn, circle the surrounding country.

Shots showing something of the structure of the lens, incredibly complex, suggesting the eye of an insect, so faceted and refractively active.

Then the images shift to the Cap Sigli Lighthouse, built in 1906, along a relatively uninhabited stretch of coastline some 100 or so miles away. Its light shines 25 miles out to sea.

From that high up, you can see far down the coast and the endless waves, the rhythm of days.

Another dawn. Someone flicks a curtain open across a brilliant window, all wrist.

Another window, this one spotted with rain, is echoed on the next screen by rain now running down in streams, while on the next, the camera backs up to give us a longer shot of the storm blowing through trees.

And the huge lens turning, reflected on yet another window and thus also in the reflected sky.

Followed by the pale shadow of parallel bars gliding calmly across a pale wall because another window that we can't see is opening.

And then an image of an arched glass door pouring warm buttered light out across a stone porch.

Then evening seen through the rotating panes of the lamp, its shadow cast and seeking a place to land.

And then the scale shrinks, and we're looking at a pair of binoculars with french windows reflected in one of the lenses.

A hand holding a blue pen fills a sheet of paper with precise, tight writing, keeping a record of everything that goes on at the light.

Books on a bookshelf, on the cover of the first one: *Registre de Phare* (pronounced *far*).

The books contain pages and pages, going back decades, making a note of the rotation of keepers and the times when the light is turned on and off—often in winter, it's not before 8 am.

The lighthouse seen from land, through a lacework of barren branches.

A white boat passes far offshore; in fact, it's the only time we see a vessel out at sea, which seems ironic as, of course, boats and ships are the only reasons that a lighthouse exists.

There are 27 lighthouses along Algeria's 750-mile coastline, all with their keepers, working in a rhythm of relay and collaboration to

carry out a wide range of functions all focused on the night, for that, of course, is when a lighthouse comes alive.

Part 2: *The Life of a Lighthouse Keeper*
video projection, 11m 11s

It's a job that, in much of the world, is now handled remotely and automatically, so in this project, Zineb Sedira is also documenting a disappearing way of life.

In which we see that many of the fragmentary sequences that make up part 1 are either extracts or outtakes from this filmed interview with Karim Ourtemach, known as Krimo, now in his early 50s, who has been a lighthouse keeper at Cap Sigli since 2005.

His story is striking—having, when times were tough, taken to camping in a small stone hut below the Cap Sigli lighthouse, he began wondering about the life of the lighthouse keepers, and, after much observation, decided that it was a dream, and so it became his dream, and though the details of the story are not given in the film, he did, in fact, become one of the keepers of the Cap Sigli Lighthouse. We are in the presence of a man who is—I want to say *happy*, but that's too frivolous a term—this is a man who has arrived. At what he calls paradise. He's a painter, and often spends the entire morning drawing, then paints at night. And a fisherman when the sea is calm. His boat is blue, the same blue as the sky, and as the shutters and doors of the building where they live. *I will never move out of the Cap Sigli Lighthouse*. He speaks of the peace and of the wild landscape that he feels is a part of him. I will never leave here because I am here in the sense that it is what rather than where I am.

Krimo washing the huge windows of the lantern room, his sweeping gestures over the glass, a kind of choreographed semaphore, which

is indeed a signaling, but this time inward, in toward the great lamp. The cleaner the windows, the farther the light.

Krimo then walking through the courtyard at the bottom of the lighthouse, which is, in fact, their own house, where they go back into the kitchen and cook something for dinner—and over dinner, they talk—about what's gone wrong—with the optics, the mechanics, what's gone wrong with the light—often a matter of weather, and what storms have brought down what lines and what myriad other systems would, in turn, be brought down by that.

He says that they *sleep with one eye open*; in fact, all the keepers sleep facing a window that looks directly out on the light because a break in its rhythmic sweep will wake them up.

It's often in winter, when there are power cuts and shortages—insufficient electricity can cause the lamp to stop turning, and then they have to climb to the top and turn it by hand for the rest of the night.

They have visitors from time to time—he often asks them to stay for lunch or dinner. They sign a register with their name, the date, and any comments they wish to make—*Très heureux d'avoir visité ce phare—Many thanks for your hospitality and the chance to see your beautiful coastline*—and from the poet Tahar Djaout, *I didn't know that between Azeffoun and Béjaïa there was such a miraculous place, which teaches us that a faraway spot can also be the center of the world.*

A lighthouse, no matter how anchored its foundation, is always teetering between the literal and the figurative—lighthouse as savior:

how many ships have not broken up on these rocks?

Lighthouse as witness: history in all its bitterness, pierced by an
exigent spear.

Lighthouse watching over us and the fine line between sea and land.
Lighthouse as shepherd, keeping separate things separate.

To spend your whole life tending a light.

Part 3: *La Montée*
video projection, 12m 32s

A spiral staircase—the video begins with long views of the entire extent, the ascent, photographed so that it's just slightly off-set. The mar in that perfection keeps the whole thing in motion so that the stairs never end.

It opens with Zineb Sedira walking up to the Cap Sigli Lighthouse; we see her arriving through her reflection in a glass cabinet that faces the door. She starts climbing, counting each step, stopping from time to time for breath. The camera follows her from the top. Elsewhere there are stills of the same staircase taken from the bottom looking up at the ceiling of the tower and at the light shining down from its center.

Circe's Smile

by Habib Tengour

translated by Cole Swensen

Circe sees him.

Ooo! Who's that?

Hmm, looks like he just might make things difficult ...

Could end up bruising my self-esteem.

Appearances are rarely deceiving.

First note: he won't eat.

Seems indifferent.

Or even withdrawn. And not in an ascetic way.

Proud

The nose shows it.

Sets him apart from his comrades.

No doubt about it. No comparison.

The others wallow—pigs not worth a pin.

While you, little sweetie, your reserve draws me in.

You have simply got to be hungry!

But he suspects something.

Crafty man!

This'll lead to no end of trouble.

My art is faltering.

First time.

Like a debutante

Stumped in front of her make-up!

But all seems utterly normal.

No illusion to give me a leg up ...

Defeated by the usual routine

Give it up.

This trying to think it out—it's driving me nuts.

Off to your sty, you swine, and wallow with your friends!

But she's careful not to say it out loud.

Pulled as she is toward the abyss.

Nothing makes her as sad as when he looks away.

You old witch—

That's what they call you

All of them, all the time

Those assholes!

They say it, and it needles you.

Ouf! ...

Just get over it ...

But I let it get to me—*me*—all their talk behind my back

Age—I won't have it—whereas magic—that I've got, no spells needed

But it all falls apart once you start to care.

And yet you have to dive into the whole hell of it

to even begin to understand the pig-headedness

They're always saying my arithmetic's wrong

A kick in the butt, the dunce's cap

Arbitrary rule gives the psyche a workout.

A rap on the knuckles, a rod across the palm, across the very ends of the fingers

What on earth can I do, me, in the face of the debauchery of men

In fact, they find their lives as swine rather better

And you, you boast of a dignity that I've yet to see

*

Eat! I've got a touchy cook.

You didn't

land on my island

to go

on a diet.

Fasting was fine for the ancients.

But your comrades aren't holding back.

Those pigs

No need for a touch of my wand to make them

Eat

Honor my cuisine

Taste

And besides ...

I don't poison my guests, if that's what you're worried about.

My serving dishes—gorgeous pieces!—

are heaped

with everything delicious

Maybe it's just that your head is already too stuffed with sailors' suspicions.

Ah, yes!

it's hunger and deprivation when the west-wind arrives.

Worry not.

Night is no darker than the depths of a wave.

You've landed

Safe and sane

What on earth is he doing? What's that root that he's grabbing— Eeegads!

Is he trying to make me lose

my cool? He's staring at me

fixedly.

He landed here with a fixed idea.

His mind was already made up.

And he doesn't make even slightest gesture

as if he's wholly unaware

of the language of visibility.

Shows no interest in my snail recipe.

Lighten up, my love!

Would that my pheromones could disturb his composure ...

Off to your sty! No? You wrecker of hexes ...

You,

you Nobody!

*

On the bed /raised/

She massages him ...

Ah! That's great!

Keeps on talking to keep from falling asleep ...

Achilles' weapons.

Everyone wanted them.

I fought

to retain my rights.

And I won.

And what a lot of trouble

ever since!

I didn't want to destroy them. So I hid them. The gods plotted my ruin. A nasty god, jealous of my cunning. My comrades haven't always been such gluttons. What has bonded us in brotherhood is far beyond the petty exploits in which everyone is out for himself.

And if it had been up to me, we'd never have been dragged into this war in the first place. For once, all my ruses were useless

cast doubt on my virility

and then some.

but I soon took care of that
Tested by the sword!

The argument is irrefutable

play on fear? The sense of revulsion as blood coagulates in the sun. As sand burns the skin and in the dark of night, fingers freeze.

though hardly subtle. Why not

The war

goes on even beyond its end
doesn't look so good.

what rings in the head

Crossing over the border simply isn't worth it. Grief crystalizes as bitterness. We must destroy it all if we're to have peace!

Circe smiles.
We'll talk about it over breakfast.

*

He won't be leaving all that soon ...
legend.

time having been extended into

source text for the two direct quotations:

<https://www.boyle.kyschools.us/UserFiles/88/The%20dyssey.pdf>

Robert Fagles translation, 1996

Le sourire de Circé

by Habib Tengour

*Quand elle eut prononcé et scellé le serment,
je montai sur le lit très beau de la déesse.*

Homère, L'Odyssee, X.

*Stephen : Toutefois, qui a besoin de deux gestes pour illustrer une miche
et une cruche ? Ce geste-ci symbolise la miche et la cruche de pain et de
vin dans Omar. Tiens ma canne.*

James Joyce, Ulysse

Circé l'observe.
Voilà quelqu'un !
Qui lui donnera du fil à retordre.
Peut-être blessera-t-il son amour propre.
L'allure trompe rarement.
Elle voit il ne mange pas.
Indifférent.
Ou peut-être replié. Pas l'aspect ascète
Fier
Du nez
Celui-là se distingue de ses compagnons.
Ça saute aux yeux. Pas comparable.
Ceux-là se vautrent des porcs valent pas un clou.
Toi mon chéri tu ne perds rien pour attendre.
Elle murmure.

Lui déplace les plats ne touche à rien.
La patte de canard l'intrigue.
Et le rutabaga.
Que sait-il des sortilèges que j'administre aux naufragés ?
Il ignore.
Il connaît les manières de table.
Parfait.
L'amener à goûter au ragoût de mouton ?
Une bouchée pour bibi petite lippée
Mimi minus minuscule
Ou une gorgée de ce vin résiné.
Hume le bouquet.
Ça fait tourner la cervelle non
Mmmmm Mmmmm Mmmmm non
Croquer une pomme.
Tu dois avoir faim

Il se doute de quelque chose.
L'habile homme !

Je vais être dans la difficulté.
Mon art pris en défaut.
Première fois. Une débutante
Perplexe devant son maquillage !
Il ne se passe rien d'extraordinaire.
Nulle illusion en guise de marche pieds...
Abattement à poursuivre une routine

Se raccrocher.
Ce raisonnement me désespère.

Allons au tect ! Va rejoindre tes compagnons !

Elle se garde bien de prononcer la formule.
Attraction du gouffre.
Rien ne la désole autant que l'oscillation du regard.

Vieille sorcière
Comme ça qu'on dit
On le dit à tout bout de champ

Des bouseux !

Ils disent et ça ragote.
Ah...

Sortir de l'ornière...

Que j'me préoccupe, moi, de tous ces racontars
L'âge je n'en ai pas divine sans le sortilège
L'engrenage c'est quand on met le pouce

Faut quand même plonger dans le purin pour se rendre
compte de la cochonnerie
C'est toujours moi qu'on accuse à cause des bûchettes
La fessée le bonnet d'âne

La règle sur le pupitre travaille le psychisme.
La paume le dos ou le bout des ongles

Qu'est-ce que j'y peux, moi, contre l'égarement des hommes
Ils croient en pourceaux leur vie meilleure
Toi tu te prévaux d'une dignité que je demande à voir

*

Mange ! Ma cuisinière est susceptible.
dans mon île

Tes compagnons ne se privent pas.
Pas besoin de coups de baguette pour être ce qu'ils sont
Mange
Honore ma cuisine
Goûte

Je n'empoisonne pas mes hôtes si tel est ton souci.

Mes raviers — ils sont beaux !
des choses bonnes

Peut-être as-tu la tête farcie des récits de marins.

c'est la faim et les privations quand se déchaîne le noroît.
Tranquillise-toi.

Tu n'as pas débarqué
pour faire abstinence.
Le jeûne convient aux vétérans.
Des porcs

Et d'ailleurs...

contiennent

Justement,

La nuit n'est pas plus obscure que le fond de la vague.
Tu as accosté
Sain et sauf

Que fait-il ? Cette racine qu'il serre...
Cherche-t-il à me faire perdre
Contenance ? Il me fixe
avec insistance.
Il est prévenu.
Et dans l'expectative.
Pas un geste non plus comme s'il ignore
la langue du visible.
Il boude ma recette d'escargots.
Le plaisir coco !
Ma phéromone troublera-t-elle son flegme...

Malheur !

Au tect ! Non ! Tu déjoues les formules...

Toi,
comme personne !

*

Sur le lit surélevé/ Elle le masse...
Lui raconte pour ne pas somnoler...

C'est bon...

Les armes d'Achille.
Et j'ai gagné.

Tous les voulaient. Je me suis battu faire valoir mes droits.
Que de discorde depuis lors !

J'ai hésité à les détruire. Je les ai cachées. Les dieux ont comploté ma perte. Un dieu bourru, jaloux de mon astuce. Mes compagnons n'ont pas toujours été gloutons. Les aventures qui nous unissent ne relèvent pas de simples équipées où chacun tire la couverture.

S'il n'avait tenu qu'à moi, cette guerre nous ne l'aurions jamais menée. Pour une fois mes tours n'ont servi à rien

mettre en doute ma virilité

Je n'ai pas laissé dire

et même surenchéri

La preuve par le bronze ! L'argument est irréfutable.

Mais peu subtil. Pourquoi ne pas évoquer la peur ? L'écœurement quand le sang coagule au soleil. Le sable brûle la peau et dans le noir de la nuit les doigts gèlent.

La guerre dure encore au moment où elle s'achève

ce qui résonne dans le crâne n'est pas très beau.

Traverser la frontière ne donne aucun à valoir. La douleur se cristallise en amertume.
Il faut tout raser pour avoir la paix !

...

Circé sourit.

On verra ça au petit dèje !

*

Il ne partira pas de si tôt...

le temps du récit.



**Mona Kareem +
Ra'ad Abdul Qadir**



Coastal Cities

by Ra'ad Abdul Qadir
translated by Mona Kareem

Beautiful coastal cities
where men go naked
dipping their bodies in the sea
crowded with butterflies
butterflies of all sorts.
On apartment windows, flowers are blooming
A sun is carrying suitcases
from the port to the bank
Lockers open and close
There is sand to deposit
Shipments to be sent
Boxes to dispose
Today
we have a lot of work to do

On Saturday Evening

by Ra'ad Abdul Qadir
translated by Mona Kareem

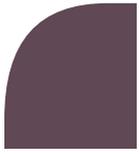
When the sea throws you on the shore
in the morning
They will not be distracted
by the birds' noise
or the rising sun
Remember
that they will listen to you
with attention, depth
with passion
faith
with excitement
their rifles rested on their knees
with hope
and certainty.
On every street corner
in every square
as they close their shops
in the evening
packing their pipes
a little relaxed
surrendered to sleep
their rifles on their knees
with total certainty
complete conviction
and a little resignation
at night.

مدن ساحلية رعد عبد القادر

المدن الساحلية الجميلة، حيث يتعري الرجال
،وتغطس أجسادهم في البحر، تزدهم بالفراشات
فراشات من كل نوع. هناك زهور تتفتح
على نوافذ الشقق، وشمس تحمل الحقائق
من أرصفة الميناء إلى البنوك وخزانات
تفتح وتغلق
ورمل يودع
وعمليات شحن وتفريغ
لدينا اليوم عمل كثير

في مساء السبت رغد عبد القادر

عندما يلقي بك الموج إلى الساحل، في الصباح
لن تلهيهم ضجة الطيور ولا الشمس المشرقة
تذكر أنهم سيصغون إليك
بانتهاء، بعمق
بحرارة
بايمان
بحماسة. بنادقهم على ركبهم. بأمل
بكل تأكيد، وفي كل زاوية شارع
وفي كل ساحة عامة، وهم يغلقون دكاكينهم
في المساء، وهم يعمرّون غلايينهم
متراخين بعض الشيء، مستسلمين إلى النوم
بنادقهم على ركبهم - وبيقين كامل -
وقناعة تامة
وبشياء من التخلي
في الليل



**Isabelle Garron +
E. Tracy Grinnell**



de *Figures de l'Enfer*
Humoresque
par E. Tracy Grinnell
traduit par Isabelle Garron

Cassandra: I know that I am mad,
but Mother, dearest, now, for this one time
I do not rave.

The Trojan Women, Euripides (trans. Edith Hamilton)

Seulement l'écoute de la mer, faite
confiée, avalée toute entière dans le reflet, des feuilles rêvées
s'agenouillant, les amant retournent celui qui
nourrit l'horizon

Moi, ma ville seule sa violence errante
Moi, ma seule boussole est dans la nuit
l'océan transfiguré intensément en un
opéra, *je*

Les vagues semblent d'un seul tenant, eau de mémoire
se rapproche du néant l'allitération ne sert la nuit, les
sosies leur goût le ravissement des muses
luttant contre les sirènes

De la mer à la mer rappelle succombant par la mer
son chant d'horizon défait, lyre à nue loin
dans les tréfonds, le canyon de Lydonia dans les détroits sombres
comme si là, comme si —

d'autant plus que la chute silencieuse, lacunes en torsades
appelant, où mon corps s'amarrant, coque illusoire
ni même mon équipage, ni même mon vaisseau capricieux
ni même écouter les goélands

Peau étrangère, moi, incrustée dans du bois de cire, forme de racine
déchirures, poissonnettes, croa-croa
noyade à mes tympans, incapable, j'enregistre
tout ce que je regarde

Oiseau rebelle des eaux rares
Je suis qui est vaincu, la bête et tout, par
les violons, la lyre, ou tut autre amour maudit
scellé au triomphe

Par delà le registre charnel, touche aveugle
océan noir, les chiffres ne résolvent rien, chaque maison tombe
finalement – mouvement perpétuel, lumière sauvage
naviguant faux glas

Terreur des corps, gonflant le regard vide de l'océan
nuit douce, enchères des catastrophes pour chaque
colportage des échecs de fantaisie, fantômes agités
par les langues d'abattage gémissent

Terrain vide énonçant l'expiration
les échos entravés des reflets du promontoire
acres des sirènes, des déviants confondant
les seigneurs dans chaque rêve

Ravisseuse captive, temps murmurés déchaînés
chansons sans visage d'instruments mêlés enclins
à la tempête à la violence des marées, comptant les octaves
d'une précision à couper le souffle

Bourdonnant, silencieux, regardant partout, quels yeux?
rien ne trahissait mon sourire archaïque et mourrant,
quiconque préfère le coma d'un guerrier, grouillant
vide, implacable

Chants de crise, gelés, toujours armés
reflets impurs surgissant afin de rendre des fragments
entiers, un promontoire de regards rendu
prosopopée

De plus en plus froide ou effrayante, qu'offre l'obscurité
de la terre ? la logique du palindrome, l'illusoire ricochet
du verre, le renversement rappelle
la marche lente des cages

Coussins doux, eau d'ailes déployées
uniquement sans verre et sans usage, le miroir
mars son miroir, sans visage jusqu'à ce que soient regardés
les esprits partis errer

Ce soir je pense je meurs dans d'insaisissables avances
l'océan clair recommence, désolantes
figures tels des oiseaux insincères — qui sait ce qu'il en est
de périr dans le non-sens

from *Hell Figures*
by E. Tracy Grinnell

Humoresque

Cassandra: I know that I am mad,
but Mother, dearest, now, for this one time
I do not rave.

The Trojan Women, Euripides (trans. Edith Hamilton)

Only an ear to the sea, confided
error, swallowed whole in reflection, dream leaves
genuflecting, lovers return the one who
feeds the horizon

I, my only city erratic violence
I, my only compass is into the night-
like transfigured ocean, so seriously
operatic, *I*

Waves seem seamless, water of memory
comes nearer naught alliteration serves night, dead
ringers delight favoring muses' rapture
battling sirens

Sea to sea remembers succumbing to sea
light's horizon-song undone, lyre unmasked far
depths, Lydonia's canyon in darkened straits while
as if there, as if—

Moreso silent falling, lacunae like laps
calling, where my body unmooring, false hull
nor my carriage go, nor my wayward vessel
nor listen to gulls

Foreign skin, I, bedded in waxwood, root-like
tearing hold-fasts, finger-long fishlets caw-caw
at my eardrums drowning, unable, I list
all that I look on

Rebellious bird of uncommon waters
I am what is bested, the beast and all, by
violins, the lyre, or whatever cursed love
fixes in triumph

Overhead the listing embodied, blind touch
black ocean, figures solve nothing, every house falls
eventually — perpetual motion, wild light
seaworthy false knell

Terror of bodies, swelling the ocean's blank stare
comely night, catastrophe's bidding for each
hawking failures of fantasy, ghosts of restless
slaughtering tongues wail

Empty terrain proffering expiration
bated promontory's reflection echoes
acres of sirens, deviants confounding war-
lords in every dream

Captive captor, whispering times unleashed
faceless songs of tangled instruments tempest
prone to tidal violence, counting octaves'
breathless precision

Droning, soundless, everywhere watching, what eyes?
nothing betrayed my dying archaic smile, that
one loves best a warrior's coma, thronging
empty, relenting

Crisis lyrics frozen, forever in arms
false reflections leaping to render fragments
whole, a promontory of gazes gone to
prosopopoeia

Growing cold or fearsome, the darkness of earth
offers what? a palindrome's logic, false glass
ricochet, reversal is reminiscent
pacing in cages

Gentle cushions, water of wings unfurling
only glassless while unemployed, the mirror
mars its mirror, faceless until it's gazed on
wits gone to wander

Tonight I think I die in filmy advances
lucid ocean begins again, untoward
figures' bird-like cants who know what it is to
perish in nonsense



**Khalil Hawi +
Rawad Wehbe**



Three Poems:
From the Hellfire of the Comedy (1979)
by Khalil Hawi
translated by Rawad Wehbe

In the Station of a Train

For over a year now
in its station arrives a train.
On two rails it minces
young limbs and old
the same.

In the throngs
where the dead were clamoring
for a shroud, a casket and a well
I saw one rail bleed
into time and its absence.
I saw another bleed
into delusion and transparency.
For the living in this world,
I prepared funerals that were boundless.

I plunged into a tunnel
from crippling fear to momentary reprieve:
a voice seeking refuge just beyond reach.
Sparks from the echoes erupting
across the silent plane sprawling.

The old woman, my mother,
doubt at her keeps gnawing
one thought clinging to another
and from anguish she is dying.

I spent all night eluding
a ghoul of machinations
and assassination
who laps up torture's curious flavors:
lawful and delightful.
I praised a wolf
who slavers over supple limbs and tenderness.
I tried the whip's sting on the body of the blameless
only to live in his wailing limbs.

Had celibacy protected the virtue of women
then no path would have tunneled between two thighs
open and spread wide
invaded by the relentless fever of protection.

Rodent tongues dangle
and through garbage heaps they rummage;
people born of shame
from which they are shameless.

The elected sire
learns from the thoughts he is wrestling
epileptic states of convulsion.
With the love of God, he is seething,
with humanity: values that breed civilization.
I see a brood of owls sprouting

in hearts that sold their fire.
Flesh strewn about the streets,
they went on selling,
Lebanon's flesh:
mangled and callous.

My mother fears sleep will pry open
her heavy eyelids to an angry sky.
Yes, indeed—unthinkable anger.
You, who routinely console the weary
never asking why.

So what the old woman is crying?
Another sacrifice for the slaughter
that redeems a bounty of treasure
cleansed of deceit
that sat in our hearts calcifying.
In the beginning
no brother killed his own
and none escaped the eye:
invisible and all-seeing
In the beginning
there was no crime.
Lebanon will squeeze one hand with the other,
return, and be held by a generous mother.

Why don't I say,
a hidden fear slips
into the marrow of knights and mountain goats
that shakes the foundation of stones,
that makes passing boredom smile;

the crust around a loaf
shuts mouths moaning and crying;
a friend turns in orbit
casting a contemptuous shadow
carrying a knife
that recoils at my silence;
a heavy and silent heart
swallows mud and mire.

Why don't I say,
eyes harden and stiffen
in silence petrified by stupor;
catastrophe is unending.
Grief
the color of rubies, pearls, crimson
and the white hue of a child's dream
fast asleep, peacefully nursing,
is a dream
born in a dark heart
from languid vines blossoming.
Catastrophe is unending
grief is unending.
I discovered your secret,
O great sphinx, that cannot be found
in the expanse of time,
an original secret renewed and restated.

Beirut, 1975

A Country of Double Estrangement

In an Arab airport during the ongoing events in Lebanon

My forehead, color, tongue, and hands
have cast around me
a pure Arab air
from my country.

At the curve of the guard's lips
files topple
before my eyes,
files that attest to hired deceit and lies.
My ears cave in
around a silver tongue that chokes
on words Arabic and foreign competing
for formulation.

On this earth
I have no road nor path, no roof nor bed
I am dealt a captive's hand trapped in a cell.
Help, O stabbing knife
that shows mercy to a hanging limb,
a hand that covers a brow
spewing "no" and "no" again and again,
and eyes that swallow the light
amid a vantage of the siege
from airports and planes.

Help him as he chokes, sullen and broken.
Make him a stranger in the depth of darkness
as he goes, no idea to where,

as long he departs from this country,
this hell of double estrangement.

The Miracle

He communes with arid soil and sleet
along roads and in shuttered faces.

Blossoms descend on him in spring
blossoms inflorescent.

He weeps over the fragrance of children with brown skin
until his tears burn incandescent.

The madman pulls his limbs together
to return. His old age will not stagger
in his hollow estrangement that is even stranger.

ثلاثة قصائد لخليل حاوي من دوانه «من جحيم الكوميديا» (١٩٧٩)

قطار المحطة

ما زال من عام
يُراوِحُ في محطَّته قطارُ
يُفري على الخطين
أشلاء الصغار مع الكبارُ

في زحمة القتلى
على كفن وتابوت وبئرٍ ضيقه
عاينتُ خطأً يمحي
بين الزمان ولا زمانُ
عاينتُ خطأً يمحي
بين التوهم والعيانُ
أعددتُ للأعمار في الدنيا
جنائزَ مطلقه

أوغلتُ في نفق
من الهول الثقيل إلى المبيت
صوتٌ جريحٌ يستجيرُ ولا يجارُ
تتفتقُ الأصداًءُ
عن شررٍ يشيعُ مدى السكوتِ
أمي العجوزُ يعضُّها ظنُّ، يرسُّه انتظارُ
وتكادُ من جزعٍ تموتُ

رأوغتُ طولَ الليلِ،
غولَ مؤامراتٍ واغتيالِ
يشتفُ طعمَ غرائبِ التعذيبِ

ممتعةً، حلالٌ
وحمدتُ ذنباً يشتهي
لحمَ الفريسة
غضةَ الأعضاء غيرَ مشوّهة
وبلوتُ لسعِ السوطِ
في جسدِ البريء
عشتُ في أعضائه المتأوّهة

لو كان يعصم عفة الأنثى امتناعُ
ما غوّرتُ دربُ، مدى الساقينِ
واسعةً مُشاعُ
تجتأحها حمى الحماة بلا انقطاع

بشرٌ يمدُّ لسانهُ فأراً
ويمخرُ مُزيلةً
ألعارُ أصلِ طباعه
لن يخجله

السيدُ المختارُ
يُتقنُ من صراعِ الفكرِ
حالاتِ التشنجِ في الصريعِ
يُرغي بحبِّ الله والإنسانِ
والقيمِ التي تلدُّ الحضارةَ
وأرى فروخَ اليومِ
تنبتُ في ضميرِ باعِ نارهُ
ومضى يبيعُ
لحماً تبعثرَ في الشوارعِ
«لحمَ لبنانَ» «المنخلِ» و«المنيغِ»

أمِّي تخافُ النومَ يفتَحُ
ثقلَ جفنيها على غضبِ السماءِ

«بلى، بلى ... غَضَبٌ...مُحَالٌ
يا مَنْ تَعُودُ أَنْ يُرِيحَ الْمُتَعَبِينَ
بلا سؤال

ما هَمَّ لَوْ بَكَتِ الْعَجُوزُ
ذَبِيحَةَ بَيْنِ الذَّبَائِحِ
تَفْتَدِي جِبَلَ الطُّيُوبِ
تَجْلُوهُ مِنْ كَيْدِ
تَصَلِّبِ فِي الْقُلُوبِ
فِي الْبَدءِ لَمْ يَفْتِكْ أَحٌ بِأَخِيهِ
لَمْ يَهْرَبْ مِنَ الْعَيْنِ الْخَفِيَّةِ الْعَلِيمَةِ
!!فِي الْبَدءِ لَمْ تَكُنِ الْجَرِيمَةُ
لِبَنَانٍ سَوْفَ يَشْدُ يَمْنَاهُ عَلَى الْيُسْرَى
يَعُودُ، تَضَمُّهُ الْأُمُّ الْكَرِيمَةُ

لَمْ لَا أَقُولُ:
خَوْفٌ خَفِي يَنْطُوي، يَنْسَلُ
فِي صُلْبِ الْفُؤَارِسِ وَالْوُعُولِ
يَدُوي فَيَرْتَجِفُ الْحَجَرُ
يَمْضِي فَيَبْتَسِمُ الصَّجَرُ
حَرْفُ الرِّغِيفِ
يَشْدُ أَفْوَهاً تَنْ، تَنْ
تَلَهْتُ فِي مَدَارُ
أَلْقَى صَحَابِي فِي الْمَدَارِ عَلَى احْتِقَارُ
يَرْتَدُّ خَنْجَرُهُ إِلَى صَمْتِي
وَيَبْتَلَعُ الْوَحُولُ
قَلْبَ يَهُمُّ وَلَا يَقُولُ
لَمْ لَا أَقُولُ:
تَتَخَجَّرُ الْعَيْنَانِ

في صمت يحجره الدهول
إنَّ الفجائعَ مُزمنةً
إنَّ الغمائمَ
لونَ ياقوت، جمان، أرجوان
وبياض حلم الطفل
،يهجع وهو يرضع في أمان
حلم
يولده سواد القلب
يزهر في عروق موهنة
إنَّ الفجائعَ مزمنةً
إنَّ الغمائمَ مزمنةً
أدركت سرك
يا أبا الهول الذي لا يلتقي
عبر الزمان
.سراً أصيلاً يستجد فيعلنه

بيروت ١٩٧٥

بلاد الغربتين

في مطار عربي خلال الأحداث الجارية في لبنان

جَبْهَتِي، لوني، لساني، وَيَدِي
خَلَعْتُ حَوْلِي
مُنَاخاً عَرَبِيّاً، صافياً
مِنْ بَلَدِي

وَتَهَاوَتْ عَبْرَ أَشْدَاقِ الْخَفِيرِ
بَيْنَ عَيْنِي
مَلْفَاتٌ مِنَ الْمَكْرِ الْأَجِيرِ
وَكَتَوْتُ أذْنِي
بِغُصَّاتِ الْبَلَاغَةِ
وَصِرَاعِ بَيْنَ لَفْظِ أَعْجَمِيٍّ عَرَبِيٍّ
فِي الصِّيَاغَةِ.

ليس لي في الأرض
دَرْبٌ، موطئٌ، سَقْفٌ، سَرِيرٌ
فَأَتَنِي حِظُّ الْأَسِيرِ
أَسْعَفِي يَا طَغْنَةَ
تَرْحَمُ شَلَوْاً يَنْدَلِي
ويداً تُخْفِي جَبِيناً
«يَتَّقِي: «كَلَا وَكَلَا ثُمَّ كَلَا
وَعُيُوناً تَتَمَلَّى
مِنْ مَطَلَاتِ الْحِصَارِ
طَائِرَاتٍ وَمَطَارِ

أَسْعَفِيهِ فَاحْمَأُ جُهْمًا كَسِيرُ
عَرَبِيهِ فِي مَطَاوِي غَيْهَبِ
يَمُضِي وَلَا يَدْرِي
إِلَى أَيِّنَ وَأَيِّنَ
حَسْبَهُ أَنْ تَطْلُقِيهِ
مَنْ جَحِيمٍ فِي بِلَادِ الْغَرَبَتَيْنِ

العجيبَة

أَلَفَ الْيَبَاسَ مَعَ الصَّقِيعِ
عَبَّرَ الدَّرُوبَ، وَفِي الْوَجْهِ الْمُعْلَقِ
هَلَّتْ عَلَيْهِ مَعَ الرِّبِيعِ
بَعْضُ الْبَرَّاعِمِ مُورِقَةٌ
وَبَكَى لِرَائِحَةِ الصَّغَارِ السُّمْرِ
وَاشْتَعَلَتْ دُمُوعُ

شَدَّ الْمَخْلُوعُ جِسْمَهُ
لِيَعُودَ، لَنْ يَطْوِي مَشِيْبَهُ
فِي جَوْفِ غُرْبَتِهِ الْغَرِيبِ



Jean-Loup Ker + Frances Chute



Coverage
a co-translation of protest in the news

Summer 2020
Brooklyn, NY

by Jean-Loup Ker + Frances Chute

Uprisings

May 30–June 26, 2020: A Set of News Variations

Demonstrations broke out in several large American cities on Friday night demonstrations that shake the United-States since

the social fabric has (trans)formed into a web // a fabric of lies.

July 2014. June 2020.

May 26th.

The Middle-Ages.

Monday.

For 200 years.

A year later, [] court rulings to not charge the implicated officers for murder have set a portion of the country and of the city ablaze.

have ignited a portion of the country and of the city.

American cities experienced another night of “disturbances, lootings and confrontations” with

“America

have set fire to a portion of the country and the town.

the historic wave of anger against

once more”

.

If even in the country of the so-called “American dream”, Black lives can turn into a nightmare, how is it elsewhere?

From New York to Paris, the modus operandi is similar.

violent arrest by white police officers

asphyxiated by a white police officer

such a way, and managed to start a global protest phenomenon

and this in spite of the fact that the officer arrested a few days after the riots was charged with manslaughter.

Why has the video showing the murder of George Floyd been broadcasted around the world

even in the so-called dream-country that America is,

we have arrived at the expiration date // the expiration date has come.

.

It's make or break!

the implicated police officers have set fire to a portion of the country and the town,
the United-States are set ablaze
on the ruins of a destroyed building in the province of Idleb.

a cover // a cover on fire // a curfeu // a curfew

a curfew is declared // a curfew is in effect // a curfew is in force

the social fabric has transformed into

The city of Minneapolis, epicenter of this new eruption of anger
a curfew declared from 8pm local time on Friday, to 6am the next day, while a police station
was set on fire the previous night.

Some demonstrators then braved the overnight curfew established in the federal capital as well as in many
other cities

vehicles were burnt,

we witness jolts of peasant resistance

On the evening of Monday June 1st, the police forces had however dispersed with blasts of tear gas, the
(Black Lives Matter in the United-States and the comité Adama Traoré in France).

The local police said it arrested a few people on site and 65 others for *failure to comply* with

the curfew

proceeded to more than 300 arrests, the vast majority of which for
curfew violation.

Police everywhere
in the cultural landscape
about 200 people started to throw stones and fireworks
on Twitter,
an internet user invites “the United-States to spend time on the problem of racism in their own
country rather than to come to the Middle-East to look for oil.”

.
The political and economic classes have chosen the French language and the Catholic religion until 1986.
a type of power that retains its own autonomy and influence
The Haitian author Gérard Barthélémy didn't hesitate to compare the constraining Code Boyer to Colbert's
Code noir.

“Everyone did a great job”, said the republican billionaire in a self-congratulatory manner,
before praising “crushing force” and “domination”

The police, he admitted, retaliated with « ammunition »
“Lootings will immediately be met by bullets » he added in a tweet
to consolidate their monopoly and their stranglehold on the state apparatus,
comparing images of wars in the region with those of demonstrations in the United-States.

.
July 2014. June 2020.
May 26th.
The Middle-Ages.
Monday.
200 years.
Eight days later

The social fabric has transformed into
A document entitled "From Beirut with Love » gives advice to demonstrators in Minneapolis to stay
safe during the riots

: a mental reaction of progressive disjunction: "I know this scene, I know what is going to happen next
but...IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN THIS WAY! IT CAN'T HAPPEN THIS WAY ANYMORE",

a cognitive situation both culturally familiar and politically dissonant

ignite[s]

"a sort of convergence of struggles is created between Black Americans, Palestinians, Arab peoples fighting
against dictatorships..."
and protestors demand criminal sanctions that match the violence endured by the victim.

American protests seen from the Middle-East

Between feelings of solidarity towards the insurgents and jubilation to see the United States in a state of crisis, the reactions are very mixed.

[redacted] a photo of
a torn American flag
[redacted] is not surprising
[redacted] But
this editorial choice shows only
[redacted] the hope,
that this will weaken [redacted] the
origin of numerous ills in the region.

[redacted] "Black Lives Matter"
[redacted] provoked a
wave of [redacted] indignation.
[redacted] social networks
are booming [redacted] where the United States fascinates as
much as repels the local populations.

Numerous voices

invited

“the States to spend more time taking care of the problems in their own country before coming to look for oil in the Middle East,”

parallels

“A convergence among Black Americans, Palestinians and Arab populations struggling against their dictators ... A common struggle for justice on the planetary level,”

among

citizens of a second zone

New night of resistance in Amerikkka, despite war tone of 45

American cities rise up in a new night of resistance, reclamation of capital and confrontations with police, despite the president's violent attempts to assert control, including threats to bring in the army.

Eight days following the murder of George Floyd, a Black man asphyxiated by a white police officer, the storm of intergenerationally accumulated anger in response to racialized violence, ongoing police brutality and social inequalities shakes the nation and will not be calmed.

Incidents of aggression toward protestors uniting in the Movement for Black Lives were reported in Washington, where police attacked with sound bombs and deployed their helicopters to make more than 300 arrests, most of which for disobeying curfew.

On Monday night, the 1st of June the president announced in a warlike tone the deployment of “thousands of heavily armed soldiers” and police in the capital to put an end to “riots” and “looting.”

He called upon the governors to “dominate the streets” while threatening to send in the army if they didn’t act in accordance with his orders.

Following a peaceful protest on the afternoon of June 1st, about 200 people started throwing rocks and fireworks at police before looting boutiques.

The president’s white silence upheld that of the nation. His failure to

respond to these uprisings was no accident, as he praised the illusion of a maintained order in a muscular speech performed on June 2nd, assuring his followers that Washington had seen “no problems the night prior.”

Meanwhile, the forces that seek to assert an order of dominance employed tear gas, intimidating and dispersing many mourning protestors surrounding the White House so that the president could have his chance to stand before a church. This emblem of supremacy was kindly defaced the day prior. The protestors then defied the imposed curfew instated in the federal capital as in numerous other cities. The police, admitted the chief, responded with ammunitions.

In St-Louis, Missouri, it was announced that four police officers were successfully injured by bullets, thus offering some relief to those suffering the effects of racially motivated police violence.

Floyd was murdered on May 26th. Thrown to the ground and handcuffed, he died under the knee of a cop, whose colleagues stood by and watched. He repeated the phrase, “I can’t breathe.”

Autopsies have confirmed that his death was due to the lethal pressure imposed on his neck. His murderer was dismissed, arrested and charged.

The spirits will not be calmed.

A power in blue on both sides of the Atlantic—regarding police reform projects

*United-Statian and French police
manage to thwart or neutralize any attempt of reform*

a power with its own relative autonomy and influence
complex and ambivalent relations with
the social *body*.

November 2013, New York, United States. Bill DeBlasio, a Democrat elected mayor.

A year later, and the court ruling to not charge the officers for murder
of Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Ferguson (Missouri)
have set part of the country and of the city ablaze

the main NYPD union (the Police *Benevolent* Association)

press conference

the main NYPD union (the Police Benevolent Association)

anxious to get reelected, the mayor finally announces in June 2015
an increase of the budget allocated to the NYPD.

June 2020, Paris, France. After two weeks of protests against the violence and racism
exhibited by police officers, Minister of the Interior Christophe Castaner

press conference

the ban of an arrest technique called “of strangulation”

to somehow improve the
(Police Force’s Code of *Ethics*)

unions express the *anger* of police

symbolic throws of handcuffs on the ground, several gatherings
in spite of the sanitary rules in place at the time

"*they feel* hurt
in their *pride*" summarizes a union representative

which other profession
is capable of obtaining such instant attention from its minister
has access to political, media, and cultural support,
in such a way

longevity

Police unions became widespread all over the country at the end of the 1960’s
when police brutality was being challenged

Patrick Lynch has been doing this work at the head of his union in New York (PBA)
for twenty years.

unequivocally support policemen accused of misdemeanor and murder:

help finance electoral campaigns

longevity

From New York to Paris, the modus operandi is similar
can materialize as a strike, always threatens
to leave power unprotected

Paris, May 23, 2020. On a TV show singer and actress Camelia Jordana speaks
of the feeling of dread that the police provoke
she mentions, in direct terms, precise instances of police brutality

the singer's words are condemned almost unanimously by TV anchors,
police union leaders, and right wing and far-right politicians

the normalized political repertoire
treated as assaults on the police's *honor*

who is included in and excluded from

the social *body*

the political reading of this sequence is familiar

the structural relationship between police and press,
already about two centuries old
this structural alliance

is familiar.

Police everywhere in the cultural landscape
contemporary societies reek of

which other profession
has been more represented in modern fiction

has been more filmed in their working environment

central actors in contemporary imaginaries
characters, in spite of their inadequacies
appear like "*good cops*",

cultural penetration
of the police-officer-as-
expert
witness
carrier of truth

The video
forms of activism
Black Lives Matter in the United-States and the Comité Adama Traoré in France

certain social groups identify with the victim

the recordings echo
a cognitive situation
both culturally familiar and politically dissonant

gradual disjunction
widely broadcasted
patterns

as police reform demands police power
or such a thing as *Benevolent*
pride or
"good hurt"
For the time being

in France
talks of abolition are still muffled
and described as fantastical in mainstream news outlets.

Indignation after police fire shots at a Black man in Wisconsin

Three months after the murder of George Floyd, which provoked a historic movement of protest against racism and police violence in the United States, another apparent blunder occurred in Wisconsin once again stoking the embers of anger in the country.

As with [REDACTED] George Floyd, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
the attempted arrest of Jacob Blake [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] was filmed by a witness.

The images, [REDACTED]
show the African-American father followed by two police officers who draw their weapons as he walks around a car.

An officer grabs hold of his t-shirt [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] then fires [REDACTED] seven
shots are heard [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
The two officers were suspended [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] while incidents of opposing protestors and the forces of
order broke out [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Jacob Blake
was shot “in front of his children”.

[REDACTED] This is ordinary [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] violence [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] caught on camera,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] With each
of the seven shots fired, police made their intent clear — they
believed they had the right to kill an unarmed Black man for the
crime of walking away from them. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

it's offensive to act as if not letting him bleed out afterward was an act of grace rather than a mandatory response to their own violence.

The fact that incidents of police violence like this

the only way to end the scourge of police violence is to immediately divest from a policing institution that, from its inception, has been used to oppress Black people, Policing is a crisis in and of itself

Translators' Note

by Jean-Loup Ker + Frances Chute

In May 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had reached a global scale, contaminating hundreds of thousands worldwide^[1]. Confined to our homes in Brooklyn, New York, we, your translators, were fortunate to be exempt from the workforce of nurses, cleaners, food-delivery workers and others made to continue their work in dangerous proximity to the virus to allow for the survival and comfort of others. The death toll in New York state since the beginning of the pandemic was 23,391^[2]: a number difficult to comprehend.

It seemed as though these thousands of lives were randomly taken, yet these deaths reflect our society's deeply-rooted systemic ills. Reports show that Black and Latinx New Yorkers died at twice the rate of white residents^[3], and the neighborhoods with the lowest death rates had double the income of those with the highest rates of COVID-19 mortality. Differentially distributed access to both adequate healthcare and living conditions that allow for necessary confinement had lethal consequences all over the country.

It was amid these conditions on May 25 that George Floyd, a Black man, was murdered by a white police officer in Minneapolis. To situate this murder in recent history, between 2013 and 2019 alone, 1,944 Black people were killed by police, and only in 3% of these cases were charges brought against the murderers—with 1% of these charges resulting in a conviction^[4]. For many, the murder of George Floyd brought on and amplified lifetimes of grief and rage. Amidst the viral pandemic, protests against police brutality, racist policies and practices, and toward police abolition and Black

liberation broke out all over the country, and soon after, other parts of the world.

As these uprisings were occurring during the annual Tamaas translation seminar, we found it impossible as participants to attend to the task of translation without including our own attention to these uprisings. Reading the news was painful yet necessary, and the collapse of rhetoric in the heat of the burning centre of New York City was restrictive and overwhelming.

As translators, we entered this project as a way of processing the information and mis-information of news media for ourselves. As French-speakers living in the US, we made a decision to focus on how this blooming movement was being portrayed in international French language news media, looking to articles from France and countries that linguistically carrying the legacy of its colonial rule. A critical question quickly arose concerning how to address this systemic and particular violence without exploiting the suffering of others. Our respective choices reflect these concerns.

In this translation experiment that emerged, we sought to disarticulate the assumed authority and neutrality of this reporting of facts, so that the underlying assumptions could be gently taken apart and dismantled. We hope that our readers will welcome this intervention into language as an opportunity to question and critically reflect on the stability of rhetoric and narrative presented in the news. For us, this process granted a degree of agency, rendering possible the ability to engage with news media: to participate in how we respond to our consumption, rather than fully succumb to the overwhelming onslaught of information spilling through our feeds. We invite you to stay with emergent questions of whether or not a word or a turn of

phrase has maintained the meaning of the source text, and to observe your own perceptions regarding how truth and power are constructed.

This year will be considered an important marker in U.S. history, not only because of the number of people who died of coronavirus-related illnesses, but also because of the upheavals and the vital conversations around abolition they brought into mainstream discourse. The media's polarizing tendencies in the portrayal of these events, in the months preceding a presidential election, were difficult to miss. Zooming out of news sources written from within the United States provided perspective and connections with recent and older historical events in other places and within different contexts where power relations were sometimes similar and other times radically different than in the U.S., providing us with a wider view of the events we were witnessing.

As we complete our translations in September 2020, we know of at least five other Black individuals who have been murdered by police in the U.S.: David McAtee, Daniel T. Prude (who was killed on March 30th, but whose case was only made public in August), Carlos Carson, Rayshard Brooks, and Dijon Duran Kizzee. The officers who murdered Breonna Taylor on March 13th while she was sleeping in her Louisville apartment have still not been charged. In September, Jacob Blake, who was shot by a police officer seven times in the back, survived the assault, and is presently paralyzed from the waist down.

[1] World Health Organization Situation Report on May 31, 2020:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200531-covid-19-sitrep-132.pdf?sfvrsn=d9c2eaef_2

[2] Pix11.com: <https://www.pix11.com/news/coronavirus/latest-coronavirus-updates-in-new-york-monday-may-25-2020>

[3] The New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/18/nyregion/coronavirus-deaths-nyc.html>

[4] Vox.com: <https://www.vox.com/2020/6/30/21306843/black-police-killings>

Source texts

« Indignation après des tirs de la police sur un homme noir au Wisconsin » Sébastien Duval—Agence France-Press et Bob Charito Agence France-Press à Kenhoshia et à Washington. *Le Devoir*. 25 août 2020.

<https://www.ledevoir.com/monde/etats-unis/584699/enquete-ouverte-dans-le-wisconsin-apres-des-tirs-de-la-police-sur-un-homme-noir>

“Lily Meyer and Mona Kareem on their New Series, Close-Up: An Experiment in Reviewing Translation”. *Words Without Borders*. 14 May 2020.

<https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/dispatches/article/lily-meyer-mona-kareem-close-up-an-experiment-in-reviewing-translation-s?src=minordetail>

“On the Difficulties of Writing the Truth”. Hari Kunzru. *Triple Canopy*. 17 June 2020.

<https://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/issues/26/contents/i26-on-the-difficulties-in-writing-the-truth?slug=lecture>

« Un pouvoir en bleu de part et d'autre de l'Atlantique—à propos des projets de réforme de la police ». Yann Philippe. *Analyse Opinion Critique*. 24 juin 2020.

<https://aoc.media/analyse/2020/06/23/un-pouvoir-en-bleu-de-part-et-dautre-de-latlantique-a-propos-des-projets-de-reforme-de-la-police/?loggedin=true>

“Writing in Crisis: A Conversation Between Beirut and New York. Lina Mounzer and Mirene Arsanios on What it is to Bear Witness”. *LitHub*.

1 September 2020

<https://lithub.com/writing-in-crisis-a-conversation-between-beirut-and-new-york/>

« Nouvelle nuit de troubles aux États-Unis malgré le ton martial de Trump ». *Le Courrier du Vietnam*. 3 juin 2020.

<https://www.lecourrier.vn/nouvelle-nuit-de-troubles-aux-etats-unis-malgre-le-ton-martial-de-trump/779534.html>

« Les manifestations américaines vues de Moyen-Orient ». *L'Orient le Jour*. 2 juin 2020.

<https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1220191/les-manifestations-americaines-vues-du-moyen-orient.html>

Lina Mounzer and Madhu Kaza: *Translating the Uncertain Present: Madhu Kaza in conversation with Lina Mounzer*, May 19, 2020, as part of "Translating the Future", a series of conversations organized by The Graduate Center's Center for the Humanities, and Howlround.

Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion, Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945–1960*, Oxford University, 1996



Genji Amino + Serubiri Moses



Letters 15 Jun - 1 Jul

by Genji Amino + Serubiri Moses

15 Jun, 2020, at 17:49

Dear Moses,

Where contemporaneity is all recumbent. Lifting what we might say into some other forbearance, was that what we were looking for when something was to be written, put together, displayed.

The usual things are going on what we got mixed up in. Can talk about death as a modality of speech, containment as the mood of personhood. Of which nothing is common but something distributed in the way that we walk, meet, somewhere looking a great deal outside the protest where it fell out. All over actually, it's hard to say. What was passed along got picked up wherever it was we moved to be going on like this, now, in some address I get into never being able to figure out, that seems to persist in the vacuum of relation.

And that's I guess the subject of our exchange, ongoing by accident since its muffled inception, some motive conviction about what gets carried out under and around the signs of life while somehow bearing forth the other world, wherever it already is. The kind of thing one wants to talk about, live in, knowing that its everywhere and nowhere opens onto description as a means of touch, audition as a mean of site, improvisation as a mote of vision.

For me this happens with abstraction. Not that address inheres in it as the guarantee of an imperial conception of human condition, or that abstraction would be in itself some leveling affront against the irreducible difference of human or natural body. Still less that the idea of the human or of the abstract are safeguards against rather than the principal tools of the modern projects of slavery. Very beside all this,

feeling more as if, like an old saw, the question of abstraction might bare the mark of a few ongoing impossibilities we are differently intimate to.

Abstraction is the sight of a melancholic return to an originary force attributed, exploited and then disavowed by the human. Blackness, Asianness, and Indigeneity have been differentially located in the purview of this originary force as the figure of the abstract, the source of a foundational distinction by which the figure can see himself upright against the ground of a putatively primitive or alien or natural prehistory. I think that in the perverse dynamics of this uplift are contained an open secret about the composition of ground, about the spectral dynamics of power in the wake of dispossession.

In *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman questions the capacity of prevailing accounts of power to describe ongoing redress “undertaken with the acknowledgment that things will likely remain the same.” I think that from this reckoning of the contemporary afterlives of a global necropolitical and carceral regime follows something we feel of poetry and submerged voice. Voice submerged within the constraints of what we call language, another way of talking about the rapacious history of a figure, submerged within the very confines of this sentence, so that the word hardly seems to locate it, so much is it subterranean to uplift by representation as thought, position, person.

It is this reserve of voice that I think has compelled our meetings, each of us looking the other way under the surface of what passes for art, for poetry, toward what we know of some intimacy between that melancholy by which culture conserves the constitutive violence of what is called human being and that melancholy which reserves an extra political violence that continues to trouble that being from below.

Somewhere in that bind I think we are with the question of artists and writers invested by race but operating under abstraction where it is imagined an unmarked surface. I think what draws us to these artists is a feeling that they bring the ground to the surface, manifest some occluded volume without necessarily raising it up. A movement without an object of visibility, a subject of being heard.

If this knowledge and feeling of abstraction is a kind of verbal trace of the violent disaggregation of subjecthood and objecthood from the reverance of the ground, perhaps we can do some listening here. Perhaps where we get turned around here together to find some voice, we can get it together to hear the dead speak.

Genji

16 Jun, 2020, at 18:24

Dear Genji

The first thing that comes to mind after reading your letter is perhaps that mourning is something that seems to shape your engagement with your grandfather. Perhaps this is no coincidence; as you suggest, 'can we talk about death as a modality of speech?' --- A different question: who are we speaking to when addressing the dead? Since they are no longer living, where does our address go.

*'We suffer
from the condition
of being addressable'* (Butler)

Jacques Derrida said; 'If the dead, indeed cannot and do not receive our address, then why write?' --- Sylvia Plath: 'I

write because I have the urge to excel in one medium of translation and expression of life.'

George Orwell: 'I write it

because there is some lie that I want to expose,'

Nicole Krauss: 'Why does one begin to write?

Because she feels misunderstood, I guess.' The

translation, the exposure, and the misunderstanding

lead us toward addressing the dead. I

re-read a eulogy that I had written after the

passing of a friend last summer. I did feel a

strange tension about whether by writing, and

publishing it, I was speaking without the

recipient.

(The dead do not suffer from the condition of

being addressable)

After all, he was dead. This makes

me think about whether we speak to the dead
because we feel misunderstood. Are we
writing to the dead or to the living? And
is our primary concern writing as a means
1) to close the gap, 2) to fill a hole, 3) to
find a muse, 4) to find some rest, 5) to
come apart, 6) to come away, 7) to re-ignite
8) to translate, 9) to contradict, 10) to brag,
11) to amuse, 12) to lust, 13) to disclose,
14) to enclose, 15) to fill a hole that is
both present and absent. As Hegel said,
'(...) the immediate vanishing of the one into the other.'
Derrida said about Roland Barthes post-mortem,
'And yet Barthes himself is no longer there.'
'We must hold fast to this evidence, to its
excessive clarity, and continually return to

it as if to the simplest thing,' he added,
'to that alone which, while withdrawing into the
impossible, still leaves us to think and gives
us occasion for thought.' I think that
'Bronx Gothic' a performance by Okwui Okpokwasili
does this. In the performance :

Okpokwasili speaks about a letter that she
wrote at a young age to an older girl,
the letter, which is read in the voice of
a young girl, is interspersed with movement.

'a sense of mourning throughout'—

'were we together in the dark?' wrote Nomaduma Masilela,

The work insists: 1) on revealing, 2) on unveiling

3) on returning, 4) on mourning, 5) on nothing

6) on reversing the ontological gaze, 7) on suspending

the rules, 8) on making a place out of no-place.

Were we together in the dark?

This reminded me of a ritual that I used to perform.

I call it a ritual, but it may have been rather

spontaneous;

I would stay up all night,

at day break, I would sit on my desk chair facing the

window, light rays breaking through window to wall.

I would write poems very late at night on a type-writer,

'When thou settest in the western horizon

The land is in darkness, in the manner of death,' wrote Akhenaten.

I was mourning.

Perhaps we should distinguish between

scientific abstraction and aesthetic abstraction.

If not, we run the risk of thinking that art, and poetry,

are algorithms which function consistently

through a set of variables, and conditionals.

I look forward to reading your next letter.

Regards,

Moses

18 Jun, 2020, 20:27

dear Moses I love what Butler says what does that mean
saying that I love a contour of thought without necessarily
loving what it touches upon or to say one loves a terrible insight
or an artist or performance who brings it forth and also
I love the different letters we are making addressable huh
I think a lot of this like a word being a kind of interim and the dead
being a name for the duration and displacement of that that
there is an opened ness of saying that the dead help us describe
by whatever detour of address that you're addressing here
are we addressable do you think Moses or how do we locate
that whatever difference between our impossibilities and those
of those that we say are no longer with us something Serious
there huh because this "condition" that is supposed to bind us
in a kind of soup of language is real iffy viscous but with its own
rules and regulations of bondage so what's really going on there
where they say we can be found or laid hold of by language
and what kind of holdings go on there I think something of talking
is always a relief in the present a kind of release into simultaneity
with things that have been said and will be of course not particular
to saying more about ways to know or not know various being together
ness people like to call world people Butler too wants this world so bad
they even want to recoup the kind of loss we touch upon here for
a kind of solidarity or sociality but what about its part in worldless
ness

Dear Moses several
thinking of your lists and the reasons to write by
deleting lines
trying to stay with that excessive clarity in the question
of redress
level of contact
or lack of what would describe
removal or its wake
in the mode of enclosure or embrace

To me a kind of closet. Kind of knowledge of an exterior interior where some speech stays in, others too. Kind of interminable self-analysis reveals our speech by another, only along a declivity that routes identification. Again on the wager that there are conditions under which power is striated by forms of domination that regulate trajectories of appropriation, relegating some movement so that we must think again what it can mean to disidentify. Disavowal can only begin to describe this remainder.

What is happening there? Do we close a gap, fill a hole, find a muse, find some rest, come apart, come away, re-ignite, translate, contradict, brag, amuse, lust, disclose, fill a hole that is both present and absent. Not shame in relation to the critical or reparative potential of a failure to perform but shame as a resource of that which does not or cannot perform. Not the rehearsal of a dramatization of shame as the tightrope upon which a perennially fallen performance of human dignity would balance, but shame as a material of refusal. Shame which will not take up the political or the social as measure of human endeavor. Shame which, like trauma, constitutes an opening out, a give in, a depression of the language of representation.

It is not that I feel abstraction lends itself to this because it is the language of the non-representational or of the unrepresentable. Rather the question of abstraction seems to hang around the question of, as you say of Okpokwasili's performance, an insistence on something like nothing. Something that is not holding forth, as in a statement, an opinion, a commitment, a commuting of position. Which is at the same time a revealing, an unveiling, a returning, a mourning, a nothing, a reversal of the gaze, a suspension of the rules, a place out of no place. Something which does not lend itself to be shown in the usual sense, which is already exchanged. A problem for the grammar of inscription as a problematic of possession, something which will not lend itself to prevailing modalities of conservation, occupation.

Something about mourning and melancholy, in which voice can be reserved, in which voice has been interred, abstracted, redresses an ongoing primitive accumulation as its remainder, its reminder.

Looking forward to hearing.

Genji

Fri, 19 Jun, 2020 at 04:35

Dear Genji,

What makes letter writing so enjoyable is that it precisely consists of this adventure of not knowing. I don't know how, or where exactly you are when you receive my letter. And while we're both in New York City, there's something about this letter writing that creates excitement and hope, and surprise. Excitement at receiving the other's letter. Hope for the reader to read, and to respond; Surprise when the response comes. I am still trying to unpack or just hear what you said and it is truly intense, but exciting.

When you suggest that excessive clarity is the question, this speaks to me aesthetically; in writing, we speak about the clarity of sentences; James Baldwin spoke of writing a sentence as clean as a bone. Is this what you also mean by clarity? Susan Sontag wrote about clarity in the photograph: 'For a brief time— say, from Stieglitz through the reign of Weston — it appeared that a solid point of view had been created with which to evaluate photographs: impeccable lighting, skill of composition, clarity of subject, precision of focus, perfection of print quality.' Might this be a similar model to that excessive clarity? And then of course, there's the question of excess, which implies an overflowing; which implies emotion.

worldliness ≠ worldlessness
world-possession ≠ world-without

These seem radical, even at a glance. World can be easily graspable, or entirely not graspable. World can be known, or completely unknown. Then there's the usual question of which world? As in the best of both

worlds. There's the question, I think, of my world? And who's world is it? Do we or can we even say without guilt that 'it is mine'? Then the other side, which is about the not-world. But quickly a question: if not-world, then what? That question would make sense if we add another if;

if not-world,
then ... If

Simply, if world is a true value, then clouds, then life, then trees, then music, then rivers, then streams, then cities, then mountains, then ... etc. But if world is a false value, then not-clouds, then not-life, then not-trees, then not-music, then not-rivers, then not-streams, then not-cities, then not-mountains, then not ... etc. But if world is a negative value, meaning that there is no world, and then, we assume that no cities, no mountains, etc. Then, in this suspension of world, what about the if? Do we know the world? Or do we know 'a' world? Do we think we know the world, and assume it to be the ultimate definition of all worlds?

Therefore, I agree with your take on Judith Butler's comment. I also appreciate you asking the question, 'what kind of holdings go on there?' Judith Butler wants this world so bad, and yet:

*this world is a mean world
to live in till the end*

*this world is a mean world
to live in till the end*

no mother, and no father

no sister and no brother

*this world is a mean world
to live in till the end*

—trad. spiritual

I look forward to your response,

Regards,

Moses

Sun, 21 Jun, at 18:45

I.

a brief proposal:

Shall we write letters to the actual dead?

Then, could we incorporate a non-English textuality in them, to make this address more particular?

Mon, 22 Jun, at 21:20

Dear Moses,

Yes. I think we should write in our languages to our people. I am surprised. I think the letters are letting us know that exchange is not what is imagined. Lot of incline, bunch of implication. Remembering what talking is and how much contact it is in.

That's one thing. Interior all over. Again I mean my kind of hang up. What's the big idea kind of feeling about how the violence a mythos of interiority has done leaves something to be desired. Like, not everything apart from the people running things and the people thinking they're them is "outside." There's an attraction of what we run out of and what what we run into. I got tired just now.

Sometimes I think I do not have a lot of imagination, in the way of for example a question about what could be put in a world or what is in it. I am not sure I always notice and infrequently can I think of it. I think I act like there is whatever ongoing, it is no good and then there is the rest—not excess, just left overs it's not particular and it's not general it's movement and it's material and there keep being things to say. Versus other worlds. Why I keep saying the other world like there is only one. Everything is everything kind of thing.

Love if because confused by it. All of that about the conditional is a big surprise to me. Maybe too much feeling myself that it's a matrix of conditions very bumped together. Being of unsound sight I'm used to that and the question what can you see. Figure I have a lot invested in the idea that squinting around has that potential energy. Versus needing an if. Or wow that's like a question of technique—always so

into and not into that one, doing requires the rest that's not outside it so what's technique anyway. More like a question of how to walk or talk with someone because what's going on in a space. Therefore enjoy, am astonished. By if.

Mean, world, what's that end.

Genji

I forgot I wanted to talk about a vigil

Tue, 23 Jun, at 03:12

Dear Genji,

I wanted to share that my fascination with the book *The Work of Mourning*, comes from a few years ago. Maybe it is a work someone cited. I have always been going around Derrida, in unexpected ways. I never encountered him through these more formal texts such as Spivak's translation of *De la Grammatologie*, and the other often quoted, *Spectres of Marx*. His interview with saxophonist Ornette Coleman was my introduction. Anyway, the text speaks to me more as a tautology. He writes about Roland Barthes who wrote Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes. He writes about the death of the author, who wrote 'Death of the author'. Having read Barthes's memoir written after losing his mother, *Mourning Diary*, it is obvious to me that when Derrida said,

And yet Barthes himself is no longer there.

'We must hold fast to this evidence, to its

excessive clarity, and continually return to

it as if to the simplest thing,' (...)

'to that alone which, while withdrawing into the

impossible, still leaves us to think and gives

us occasion for thought.'

I saw it as a refraction of Barthes' own words about losing his mother. The 'evidence' part. Barthes sort of kept asking days later after the fact, is she dead? Maybe this is not true that she has died. He searched for 'evidence'. Keguro Macharia I know in Kenya lost his mother, and mirroring Barthes' search for evidence wrote this on his blog:

'My rhythms feel off. I haven't slept in five days. I've lost my appetite for the first time in my life. I'm not worried about the appetite—it will return. I do not think I'm scared of my dreams, but I might be afraid to wake up from sleeping. If I can defer sleeping and waking up, perhaps I can remain in waiting time, familiar time. I know she's dead.'

He's basically paraphrasing Barthes. It is this notion of 'evidence', and whether we can really 'know' about death and dying. But what is evidence? *The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true.* It sounds like bullshit.

Tell me about a vigil.

Moses

Sun, 28 Jun, at 22:28

Dear Moses, made me think of true things
how
putting one foot over the other like
by trying to share something
we say we are knowing a great deal or get these books
now here is a quandry
I am still trying to figure out an occasion
I think to myself is it a position
get to thinking being in one place or one approach isn't so much
faithful
how we get back to something or know where we come from
are going by missing
but is an occasion any different I don't think even the true things keep happening
even when we say they are repeating
with a difference I don't know if I like repetition so much
in that sense getting a handle on things even if it seems there is some consistency
I always liked better like the beat of a heart just insistence
I remember Stein talking about but it's not that
I prefer difference to repetition no I just think there is a surface depth problem
kind of many textures many sounds and we want to give
the lie to depth to surface so that we move through something
nothing really I guess if you think about a moment not so
that time resolves space somehow more like
just a moment is a part of a thing or is it
that part of an experience which is bound to a thing
then in that sense occasion can be a way of avowing
getting caught up and once we're there the idea of cause
well that's not so bad with so much dimension and radial
charm so much so that it makes me think all of these ideas

about freedom or release can't be unbound from something
very close I mean the good kind not just getting rid of an outside
or cutting out the middle man I mean the real thing
I just think it has something to do with this yielding to
where we keep finding ourselves how it's not some truism we are in
the know about but a rehearsal we like to stay alive to like
getting better in the sense of how we are hurt I think wow
reading your letter about maybe it is not true she has died
I think what kind of occasion was that then for me I mean
and what we are looking for each of us sometimes I think
I have a question sometimes not so much I'm not sure
what I mean about a vigil staying up all night kind of waiting
your friend is talking about watching over I'm feeling like
death is relatively unspecific to what I'm talking about
though everywhere diffused something to do with this
unspecific time introduced by the recognition not of absence
as much as an opening in time what an occasion is that
death forces us to talk about or is an occasion for talking
in
what is it about the idea of waiting I appreciate it
because it is showing us another topographic approach
it's not an encounter and it doesn't need to be oriented
it intimates other interiors I love that and as much as I don't get a good feeling
about deferral as if something is coming next I can see
how if we stay with the idea of putting off we are opening up
some other space I ask myself now what will my speech
put off for a time there that's something if we can think
how speech is not just efficacious or failed or studied
performance but a true putting off what happens
in the meanwhile let's see

Genji

Tue, 30 Jun, at 22:21

Dear Genji

I like what you write at the end of your letter about performance. When you talk about 'my' speech, and 'putting off'. I also like where you especially write about a 'failed or studied performance', as the counter to 'my speech' and 'putting off'. I guess this makes me think about deferral and performance. Whether or not we know what we say when we say it. Or what it means to perform speech. It makes me think of Obama, and how when he was president, they said that he was speaking in the tradition of the Black Baptist church. I don't know enough of either of the two subjects to say anything meaningful here. But it occurs to me that deferral is connected entirely to performance, and that you are absolutely right, when you draw these relationships between speech and deferral.

Derrida wrote that, 'Classical theatre, the theatre of diversions, was the representation of all these representations.' Again, he drew from a tautology. He also said that, 'the other, the infinitely other as death, and thus practicing writing as *deferral* and as an *economy of death*.' And he noted elsewhere, 'To think the closure of representation is thus to think the cruel powers of death and play which permit presence to be born to itself and pleasurably to consume itself through the representation in which it eludes itself in its deferral' (See: Writing and Difference).

I'm wondering whether to return here to the 'if not, then ... if' statement, because of the deferral. That you end your letter with the perspective of 'true putting off what happens', I am thinking here

again about the possibility, and the impossibility implied in the quote shared from Derrida in earlier letters. The If followed by the not, implies that momentarily this possibility is deferred. However, the 'if not ... if' statement, suspends entirely the notion of a 'possible' that is deferrable.

Moses

Tue, 30 Jun, 23:35

Dear Moses I thought about a non-English textuality
how a big part of something I hear for me is
around
it's not exactly negative but I know
that it is removed
something of how my mother learned from her father
to say certain things how they are said not
how he says them
meanwhile everything is going on besides
and it is a kind of recitation of removal
people like to talk about assimilation I am not sure
on the Jewish sides and even the Japanese
there's of course mostly introjection
the white kind
and you can say assimilation but I am also thinking
of a swallowing of what is lost
too
a having that with you and how that is a non
English grammar
my white Jewish grandmother says that
Leo says that when he stopped dreaming in Japanese
he never spoke it again particularly and I don't know
what kind of dreaming was going on there
what's left in any case
but I do feel dreamy about what is English and non
personally that's some kind of rectitude without center
or seeing it happen plus a softness
kind of dip in the ground and desire

kind of taste it in the way of a rock
in the mouth it's a particular kind anyway
of something like performance you are saying. I love the question of knowing what we say. I love possession of the present or future by the dead as a whole other way of thinking. both possession and performance. I love what is unwitting about it and I love what it can teach us about wit and how to do it what it cannot teach us. I feel complicated about deferral because it just feels like what is going on in the kind of knowing and not knowing you describe in speech is just too...I don't know...full of surprise for an idea that knows itself so well. what about all of the give in location experienced by every utterant? and what about how they get into each other? it just feels too discrete. eet.

I want to know what is the difference between an other and an addressee. I want to know what is supposed to be so infinite about the other and I want to know what other vocabularies for getting bound up we can use other than reflection and investiture. why I do not know I also love this near miss with respect to what he says about the Representation of Representation...I love the problem of the remove he is talking about, not where it is about decentering or debodying but where it is about a kind of oversaturated signal. I am into consumption but want to think about what it might have to do with something held back, too.

still don't know how I feel about if. I have a problem about the impossible as if it's a thing, I don't know if it's mine but I seem to keep on liking it.

I tried to send and it did not go. famous words. but this fact made me think, I missed this idea too of an economy of death. okay now I am even more back, into somewhat, an idea of the way this can hop around, get distributed. will give it another go round.

Genji

Wed, 1 Jul, at 15:47

Dear Genji,

I love what you say about your Jewish grandmother and what she said about Leo's dreaming in Japanese. I guess this is true, because at some point, we begin to forget the language, if we do not keep practicing it. I don't know if this has been my experience, but I try to now use online dictionaries to almost refine the Luganda. I also like what this means for speech, or how this imparted a set of pictures onto speech. I'm interested in how for example the absence of Japanese in Leo's dreams triggered a different set of pictures in his everyday life. Given W. J. T. Mitchell's picture theory, pictures are signs, and there is a kind of image science. But here, I guess, I am referring more to this sense of the internalized psychological picture, as opposed to the concrete object out in the world. Still, the soft picture against the hard picture can also reorient our vision, and I suppose that is where both language, and speech come from. I want to try an experiment with the if-not, then, if statement:

If Luganda is a language, then Luganda consists of a vocabulary, syntax, and grammar;

If Luganda is a language, then it is spoken;

If Luganda is a language, then it is a language of instruction;

If Luganda is a language, then it is written;

And if Luganda is not a language, then Luganda does not consist of a

vocabulary, syntax, and grammar;

And if Luganda is not a language, then Luganda is not spoken;

And if Luganda is not a language, then Luganda is not a language of instruction;

And if Luganda is not a language, then Luganda is not written.

And if Luganda is not a language, then Luganda does not consist of vocabulary, syntax and grammar;

But If vocabulary, syntax and grammar are not conditions of language, then Luganda might be a language;

And if Luganda is not a language, then Luganda is not spoken;

But if speech is not a condition of language, then Luganda might be a language;

And if Luganda is not a language, then Luganda is not a language of instruction;

But if instruction is not a condition of language, then Luganda might be a language;

And if Luganda is not a language, then it is not written;

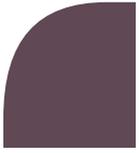
But if writing is not a condition of language, then Luganda might be a language;

I guess, what emerges here is the equation between the language and

its conditions. But what also emerges here for me is the deeper thing which is that in the case that language is deferred or negated, let's say, the second if provides another logic that may override the condition of language. The result is that language would be language on different terms. And I think this relates to what you say when you describe the concrete notion of the other in Derrida, or even when he talks about being infinitely other as death. I suppose, I would like to work through some of these problems because the condition of being, and the condition of dying are the determinants of Derrida's formulation. I suppose, if we could employ the if-not-then-if statement, then death might not be the condition for otherness. What would otherness mean under a different set of conditions? And in a sense, what would death mean on different terms? Let me know if we could incorporate some non-English textuality in our letters.

Best regards,

Moses



**Talisman
Group**



Talismanic Translations

Ghazal Mosadeq

The “talismanic” translations presented here are creative translations of selected excerpts from Persian magic and sorcery books, spells, talismans, charms, etc., that I have been collecting since 2013 and have published and performed parts of this collection at different venues since then. During the Tamaas Translation seminar 2020 I shared part of this project of mine with Safaa Fathy, Adania Shibli, Sarah Riggs, Anne Waldman and Elizabeth Willis.

The following translations that are the result of our collaboration focus on working with texts that are mystifying and veiled, that offer the chance to translate more than what is linguistically on the page.

The source texts are mostly handwritten and printed at low quality and are from different periods. The lack of punctuation in some of the older texts (or texts forged to look older) makes them even harder to access for readers/translators. The scripts, sigils, ciphers, numbers and magic symbols have been interpreted differently by each of us and combined with our own accounts from our group gatherings into our individual pieces.

We met online and each of us in different parts of the world: Germany, France, United Kingdom and different states in the United States. The seminar happened during the lockdown, when the number of Covid deaths everywhere around the world was on the rise, at the politically intense pre US elections time and when jungles in various places on earth were on fire, and the refugees’ situation was just as catastrophic as before if not even worse, when we barely heard about them in

the news. Add to this the history of each of participants' politically engaged writing and there is no surprise that our conversations circled around political and environmental issues. These topics are reflected in our translations.

Adania, for this project, chose to write about the process of translation talismans as a healing process. She finds solace in words and calls them, "[t]he refuge of the weak, the last resort..."

Anne Waldman reads/translates and projects the questions that the group discussed during the seminar into her translation of a geomancy text. Her source text was, Collection of various essays on ilm al-raml (Geomancy) and the illustrated version of Asrar-i Qasimi. In her vibrational words, she translates the visual repetition of the magic manuscript into an incantation while including the political instance into her writing.

Elizabeth Willis worked on a forged document: a very low quality xeroxed page that is most probably a practitioner's notes (1989), that contained an astral grid, words, numbers, symbols, and some obscure geometrical signs. The page is not titled but on the first page of it is written: A guide for prayers. She engaged in translating the symbols, the signs and the environment.

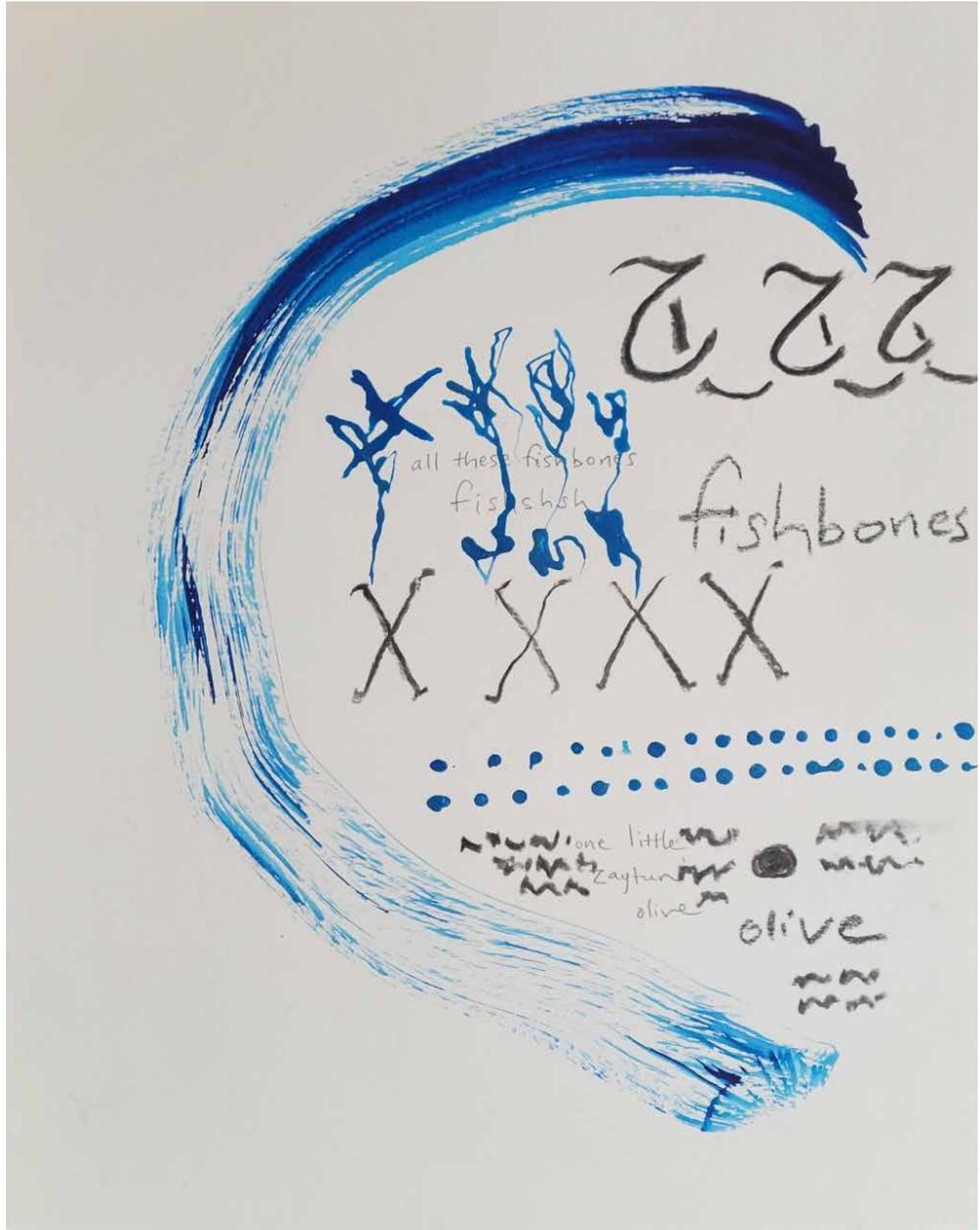
In Safaa Fathy's work, the philosophy of magical power is at stake. Our occult heritage, grimoire, magic origins of grammar, all become her material. In her multilingual translation, she uses French, English, Arabic and Persian.

Sarah Riggs produced visual poetry inspired by a combination of different magic writings, symbols, schemes and ideographs from the

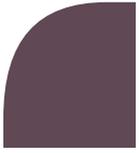
texts we read. Her visual pieces reflect some of the talismanic images that were in the main pdf that I prepared for this seminar and the six of us shared.

For my own translation, *The Third Connection*, I used as a source text couple of chemistry pages from the *Asrar-i Qasimi* manuscript, an esoteric magic text by Sufi scholar and exegete, *usayn V i K shif* (1436-1505 CE). Through distortion of words from the source text that I could or could not understand, I tried to recreate the text for it to echo some of my environmental concerns but also to mirror the language and syntax of the original magic text.

The liberating idea of magic, translation as a method of creation. Visual precisions, visual rhymes, poetical compositions, and political conversations overlaid the magical manuscripts we worked on and transformed into poetry.



Sarah Riggs

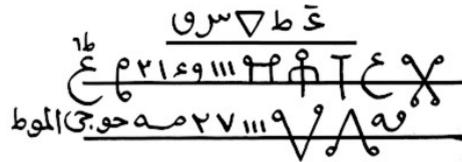


Safaa Fathy



در in

In the science of talismans and deployments of the spirituals and determinations of the jinn. From the talismans of the *Timtim* of India and *Dwalis* of *Eskander*, the texts of Hermes and the laws of Plato and Apollonius. In the name of God the supreme, came the one who partitions the gifts, the owner of the knowledge of hidden worlds, to whom has been accorded the right to numerical equations. With the help of limitless diligence, came the master of masters, producer of all happiness. I mean the friend of friends, may God's prayers and blessings go to him and his family and those close to him. Someone puts the robes of the status of sciences and gives glory to its aesthetics and teachings of its wisdom. And because he acquires the signs of truth in the lexicon and in tongues, the science of invocations and pleadings to the end of seeing things as they are, sometimes he pours assertions and answers through these supreme words dictated to him: "And say, oh God increase my knowledge". Starting from here, you understand that within this power there may be a Noble essence. No power more Nobel than science and more precious than knowledge.



The image of the image or an image of the image is taken.

And the daughter of the appearance of wonders and the appearance of oddity is gone.

The legacy of selenic talismans lies in the house of incense and lines of prophets. In *Hindustan*, in *Yunan* and in the Maghreb, where difficulties are in numbers, hearts were brought and hearts were transported, hearts were conveyed and revealed out of thick oblivion. Saturn and Venus would group and gather, Mercury and Mars cuddle and snuggle. In the hands of the Sun, the sons hither and thither last and abscond, salute the heavy snake and the supreme spider of such uneven south. We know the best of knowledge and the worst of deeds, crab versus Taurus, the obsessive, maleficent and soldiers of Iblis. In the name of the heads of djinn, curl and inflate the plate

نظرة ونظرات فقرة وفقرات في قلع على الربوع

Lust et désir obsession et obéir par amour de l'œil et les cils et le corps brûle la nuit, les individus ne mangent, ne dorment, ne se lèvent, ne se reposent, the dissension of the silly snake is kicked out par des paroles adorables.

هرهرة القط وسلامات العجل بحق الأبيض والأسود مع تلميحات الأصفر والأحمر
بطرفة العين وجمع البقر بحق آه آه 15 نداءه بحق سليمان ابن داوود وذو بعد
الطيّار

Et le bâtard du routard et *Diwan el Salam*, c'est l'heure, c'est l'heure, c'est leur Hour fire, and fire, and fire, brings محبات

The death magic lies in the black calf's cinders while the mother cow of Moses brings life forth to the dead of the day, dead of the hour, dead of the sanctuary oasis, its bone resurrects the murdered to use the tongue. Moses speaks to God, not the oasis nor the hour. Moses voices resuscitate, resuscitate and the cow burns to the life of the cow and ferments the past. Heifer holds, heifers take, heifer

reveals, heifers bounce, heifer grips, heifers grasp, heifer herein, heifer herewith, heifer hereto, heifer hither, here lies the words in the Al Moshtara and so, so the name grave. Jupiter puppets detain the threads of the wave. Fruits are scared.

A star has reached the land, alights there to share and share. None shall eat thereof, of that tree, a mammal black not to be laden with your guilt, nor can that tree bear its fruit to gift. The backs of those are forbidden to be crossed and the furs of those are forbidden to quiver.

کن فیکون

Be, and there was the scorpion tale 117 113 99 walk to the land of the 9-9 CASTOR OIL.

You who realise yearnings, who make desires come true. Mercury counsels your Wednesday, write there and leave it to eternity. Hour, hour, hour, fire, fire, fire. Mad with desire, bent *Iblis*, and al *Shaitan* bring forth love and let be known the knowledge of no. Spread black pepper on Suzanne. In the name of the agent's excessive desire. Excave adoration, agents of the demon, do, do, do, demanding the secret of the plane.

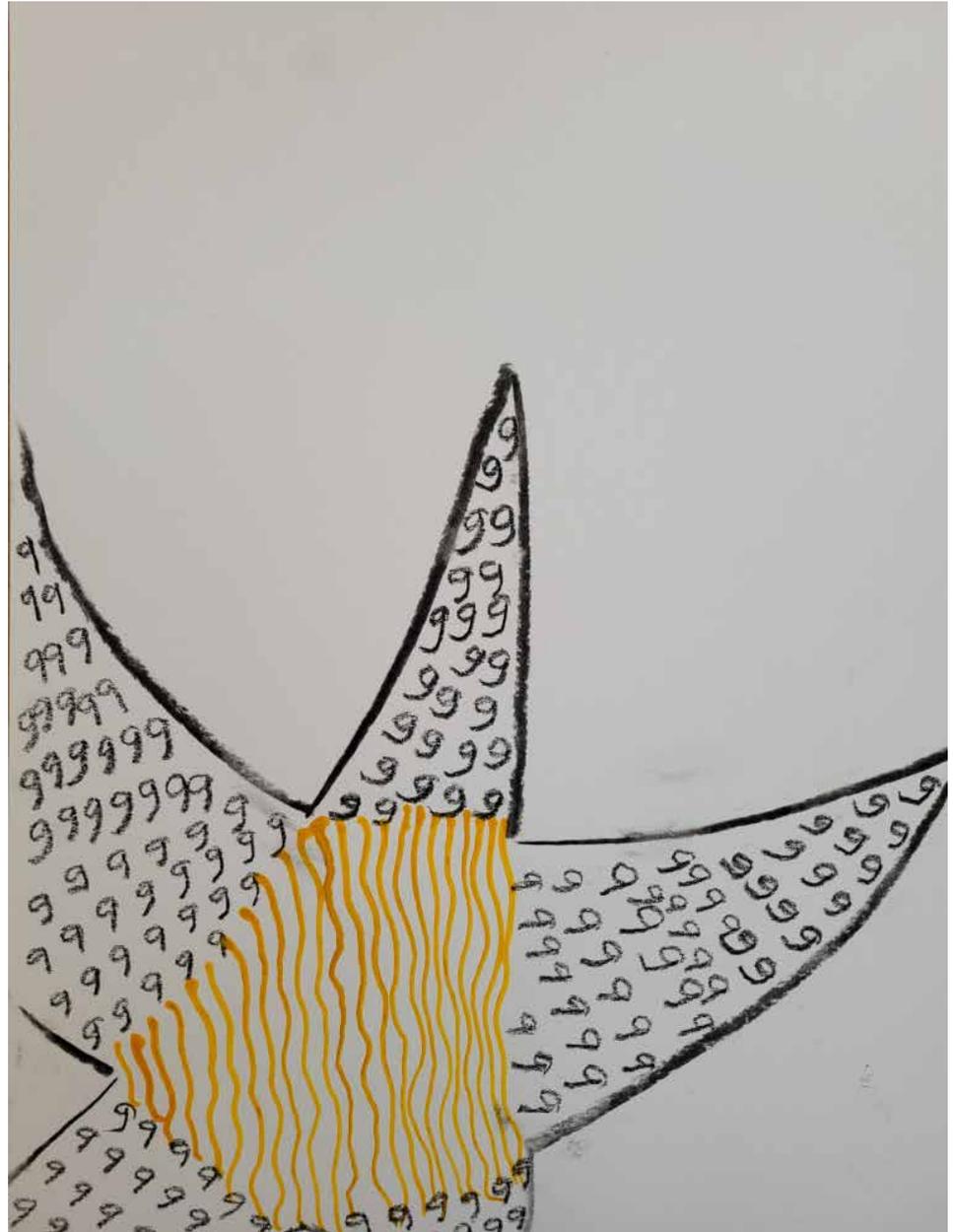
کوهوس لئاسوس و ماؤوس

Here for us, us, us loss, *dahlias* and *somos*. Os, Os, Os. Beneficent ghost.

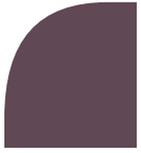
I swear on the heads of the dear near angels, *Michael* and *Gizael*.

Heflael respond, oh *Taflael* and the obedient *Motael*, respond, intend

and intend, swear and utter in the name of Venus, stir the lust of lustful eyes and the tongue of hallucination and passion, obsession in session. Let tears fill the eye and the night seal the heart. In the name of Solomon's ring, in the name of the cow and calf, hasten, speed and accelerate. In the name of black and white, in the name of yellow and red, in the name of moos, moos, moos of the brother calf and heifer. Hasten, hasten the Hour, hour, oasis of *Osiris*. Talisman of *Shaba* reaches before and after in the insides of many to be free.



Sarah Riggs



Ghazal Mosadeq



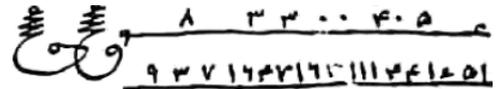
Three Connections

First Connection

first,
you better know
that bone—
deposited in the fish tank
is of dust



from the same antidote
that goes around
called Shmoon
and her doings
are on minerals
plants
and what belongs to mountains
and deserts



Given that, we take Shmoon's mountains and deserts feminine. And She is Zal.Kh.a.tani, who is called Ta'a. She is on your side in this doing.

و او در این عمل به جانب عزیمت است
و او به فکر عزیمت است
و حال آن که عزیمت

.departure

d. i. v. e. r.
g. e. n. c. e.
y. o. u. s. h.
a. m. o. o. n.

and the science of conquering jinn

She talks with that name

Every time she talks

Eyes

You need to speak that -

O learn her name

U

Speak that when you act

And

You vow. the kind of speech you can see with your eyes



are you listening? the subjugation weakness in her eyes, but why?

Speak with a tongue. her name. like speaking with a tongue but with

her name. her nametongue.

Speak in her name.

with your tongue.

(at)

A promise

That woman should be c.a.lill. en by Azam

(and that's the way it is)

because of the time it takes

to write on an Azam and here is her name عليها لطفكثي

trivial use

وَصَل

and whoever wants to touch that bone and the mirror her doings
will be on earth only because whoever wants to act on the bone and
the mirror, her doings will be on the lands and she will take what
she wants from the mines on the customs of her,
someone told me.

measure it exactly when porringer asks you to
and summon your breath with the numbers
on the round bottom of the zarf.
imagine being quiet. see how nearly being there
is being there.

the avatar of the hour—in which the action takes place is there. get
help. take her out of the room with you.
speaks. to speak.
as of fifty-one-time saying. she has to be present to be absent from
the onlookers. she has to be there.

On the illusion that onlookers can't see her. Until the bone is removed and the talc is silenced. This is an example for an example. And this is an example. And this bone is all the terrestrial components and the liver and the mines and the unripe plants, the plants with no stem - they can be spread in any way she wants.

وَكَيْفَ يُبَيِّنُ

The Second Connection

وَصَلَّىٰ

that buoyant Azam on waters. Is the name of the weather.

the olive is the form of that.

it gives us olives.

a ring inlaid with an olive

a seal with a name

S.O.H.T.N.L.Y.ث.I

whatever this ring does that possesses your air

it is in the air

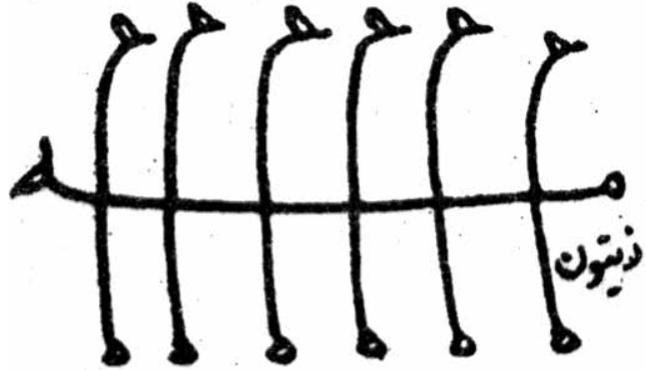
and it exists in birds

in clouds

in thunder and rain and

in lightning

and the likes of it are infinite in this practice. and I give you an example because if someone wants to show the beyond to show the raising to the sky, she will take the bone and write with that olive. read the name of that oath forty-nine times from her hands towards a Rasan or a wood of the like to the air and tell the name of the day and the name of the night and the hour of both of them.



(on)

زيتون

O olive your eyes—I go. I'm out of here
Now look at me

the onlookers will see her arising while she is sitting among her peers.
and the back of her neck is not going to believe her. nor does those
who are sitting behind her. behind her shoulders.

disbelief. flabbergast.
to capture her is beyond you

The Third Connection

a bone
afloat on mirage
call it nature

ك س ا ل ه ص ش

his name is Saliymoun and here you need his name:

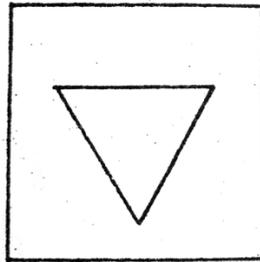
K.S.A.L.H.V.S.ش.A.

and its potency is in Nar or Tes in any way.

now another example. a huge fire has broken out and she is sitting in the middle playing with fire. Azam, I told you. the name and the ring. Forty-two times. The oath. I go into the fire. don't call me. and the time expands. people see it. but that is an example. can you see it?

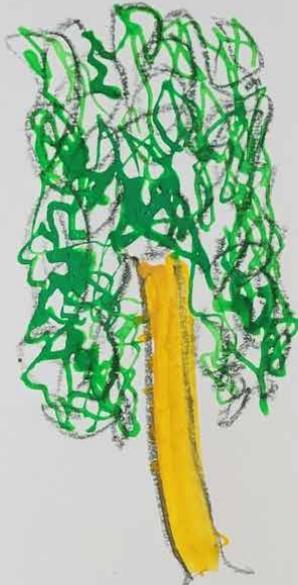
80 É t 1 600 0 I

922. 956. 924.
962. 961. 959.
985. 965. 960.





Handwritten text in a cursive, scribbled style, consisting of approximately ten lines of illegible characters.

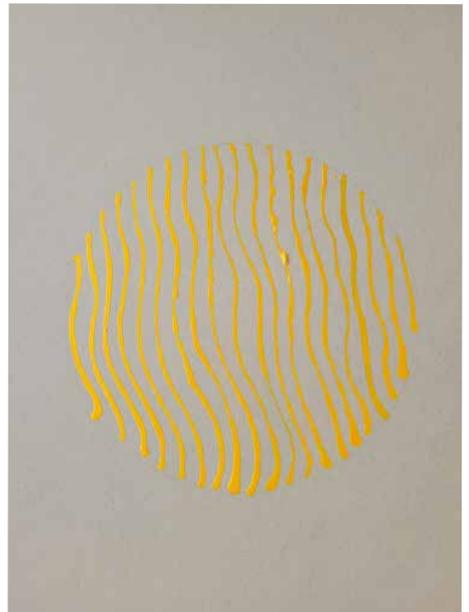
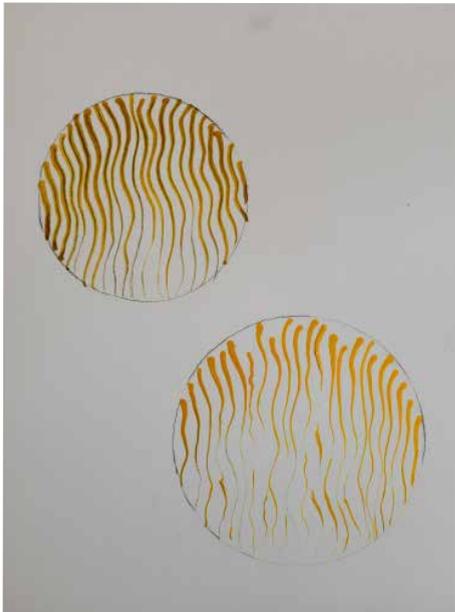
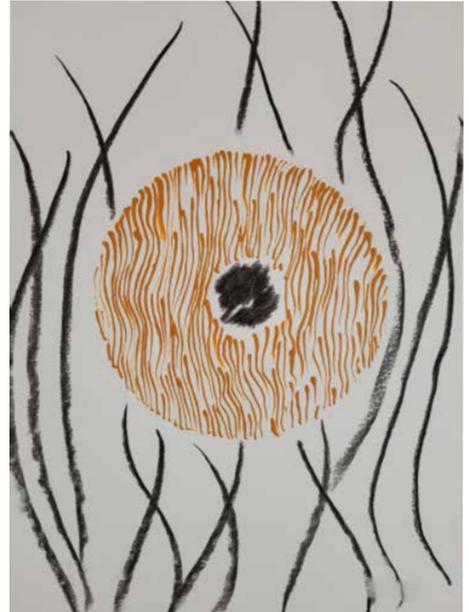


locust carved in the bird's belly

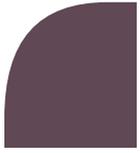


Sarah Riggs





Sarah Riggs



Adania Shibli



A Workshop in Translating Talismans by Poets

1.

Being embedded in the power of language, the unimaginable power of language, more powerful than the real and the most powerful in the real. It is the refuge of the weak, the last resort for the weakest amongst the weak. A poem. A talisman.

The healing power of a talisman; to heal. The destructive power of a talisman; to destroy. The weapon of the weak, is a wish, a desire, which may remain unfulfilled within the realm of the rational.

Only the irrational can turn it true. Until then it remains a poem, and should remain hidden. The right to obscurity, and against the temptation to be seen, noticed, acknowledged; a solace to insecurity. A talisman. A poem. By the mystery in repetition, is how they work together.

What significance is there for poems to come encounter talismans?
What is common between them both? What is totally different?

Which talisman do you seek? Which talisman do you want to be written? Which talisman can you write?

Where does a talisman derive its power from? Where does its power lie?

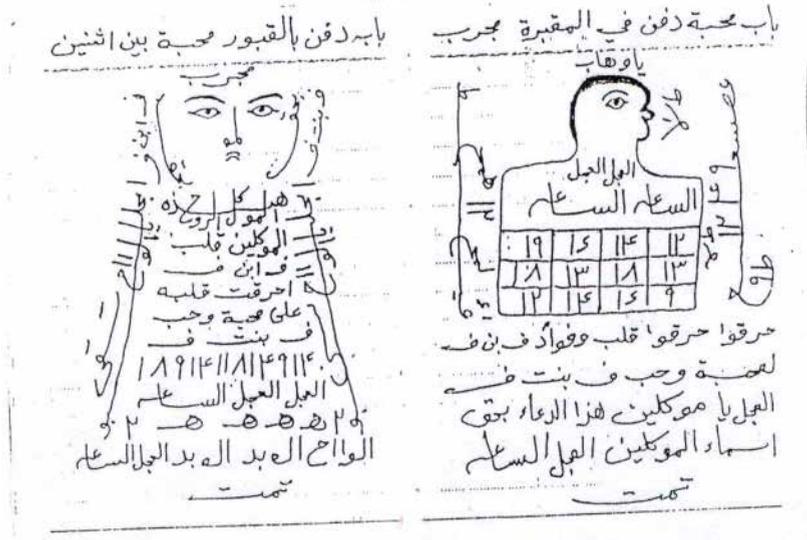
Who decides the rationale behind writing a talisman?

W.W.W.W.W.W.W.W.

Starting questions. Only questions.

2.

How to translate magic? By logic, or by creating and living magic?



from the text: Matab-I Sheikh al-rouhanin fi al-vatan al-Arabī, Al-Sheikh Attiah Abd Al-Hamīd, Lil- Kashf va al-matābiah

Translating talismans into poetry. Translating from a genre to another; a medium to another, from the fleeting to the anchored. Translating the momentary into eternity. To translate moments that are fleeing, while trying to ground poetry in history. Then we will no longer be tempted to read news more than we are tempted to read poetry. We read the news about war with poems and from a poetic position. From politics to poetics. But poetry can make us enter politics, enter pain. Translating something into something completely different.

Mad.

The life of a talisman in poetry, the echo of a talisman in a poem. Talismans tell us about class. The vulnerability of a body in politics. Talismans are protests. Wanting to stop harm, wanting to divert harm. The experience of pain is to translate pain.

Imagine what happens if translation is practiced like that: to do it as a lived experience, with all that happens to us as we translate.

This is how a revolutionary act of translation appears. This is an important moment for shifting the politics of translation. The radicalisation of the concept of translation as a lived experience and anchored in living experience. To translate radically. Generating new texts that are translations but, in some sense, are carrying the power of a translated talisman.

What talismans are surrounding us in the history we are in at the moment?

What can we do with poems when asking questions that are considered political?

What can a standard language tell us about race and racism?

W.W.W.

Less questions. Only questions.

3.

Can talismans speak in an absent language? A language that was, and is no longer here, connecting talisman to different times and places.

The writers of talismans are not concerned with the literary, but are compassionate to illiteracy. To abandon a language that is standard, which has no power beyond the communicative, the functional, the rational. A dead language.

Reading talismans from right to left and their translations from left to write, like a truthful reflection in a mirror.

A drawing of a talisman almost makes a talisman without language. It can be looked at from every side, from right to left and left to right, when the left is right and right is left, like a truthful reflection in a mirror. But not numbers.

Numbers, the hijacked language of talismans, are more and more defining what we are, which paths are being forced on us through these numbers. 99. 3 5s. HK899000.

Teaching the code system; knowing the numbers as the first entry for that which will never be understood; learning the numbers which are the easiest to translate, but are they? They are incomprehensible anyway. The easiest way to decipher the most mysterious, is only possible through moving back into the mysterious, the most mysterious.

For a writer of a talisman, the writer is a shaman, someone who is subject to a linguistic spell and the source of it. Powerlessness in the face of language, and bodilessness.

Then translation emerges as a body. The body which is standing between the writer and the reader, one language and another, one who can be another.

The body is in the midst of the talisman. It is about a love, a separation, a joining of a body.

There's no going forward without speaking back to the absent.

How does a translation of a talisman keep the same power of an absent language?

Ha.

Another question.

4.

You should heal the soul through the body; the translation through a talisman.

Read a talisman.

Fragility, vulnerability, abuse, harassment, rape, privacy, negligence, political, social, economic. Associations as a liberating effect of talismans. A Journey through a poem.

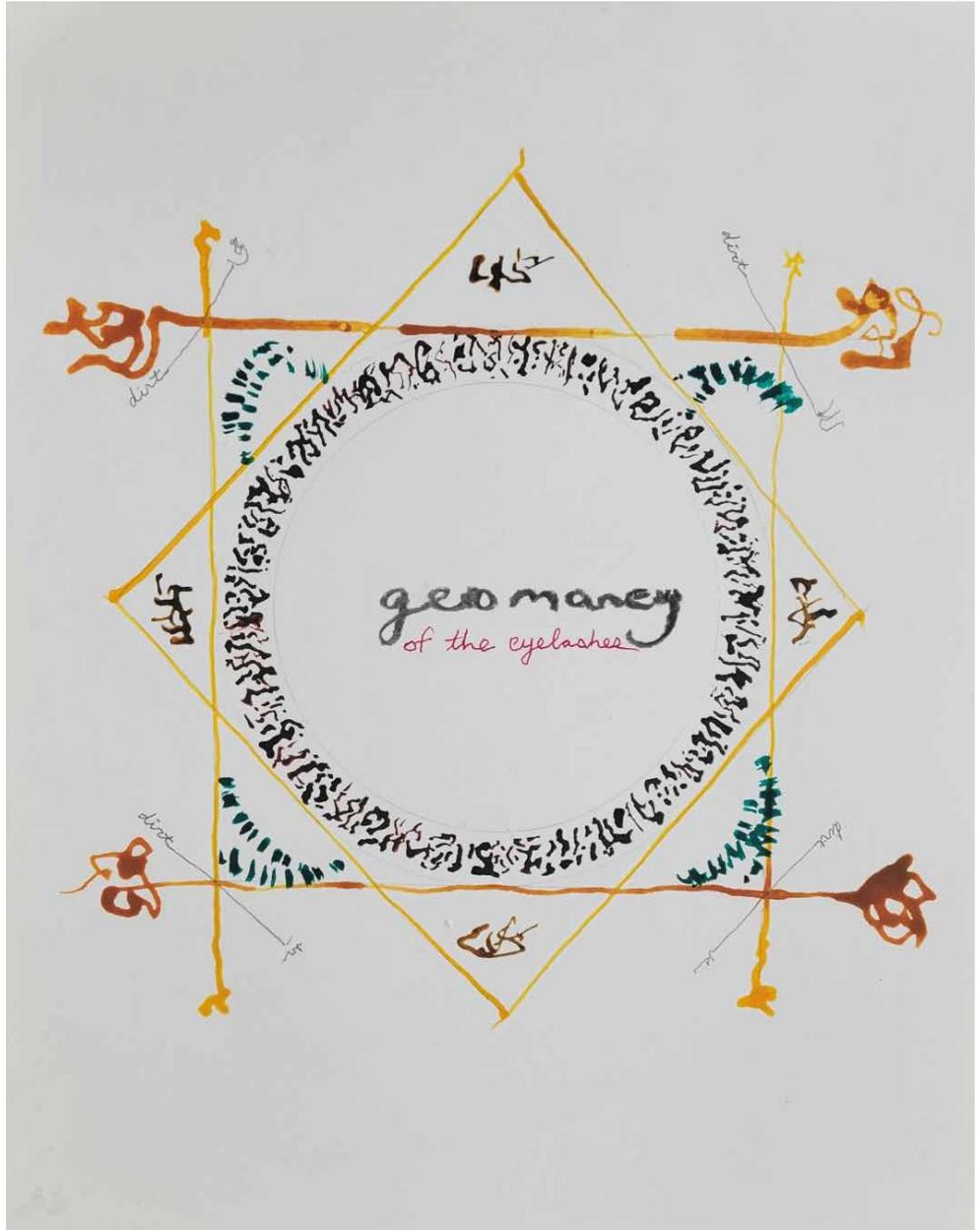
A poem is not bare. It has a form. Poetry as a shield, a great shield against these times. A political mode of resistance. Write a poem.

What talisman can we write in conditions of fragility, vulnerability, that can be totems and physical protection?

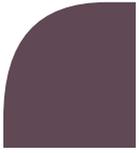
W.

No more questions.

Read a talisman.



Sarah Riggs



Anne Waldman



blood moon

geomancer, she was investigating, inventing out of her time a lash, a leash to pull,

to call you back...get to work

Is this the longest or shortest century? Look into your human detonation. Astrological signs were a prominent motif in Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts. As the end of the current millennium approaches, they might say, they have said, they will be saying there will be signs, **miracles, and wonders (nišān, abdīh, škoftīh; Dēnkard,).** **Each century ends with an eclipse.** The year, month, and day will become one-third shorter, the night brighter. The sun will show a mist, the moon will change color; earthquakes and violent winds will occur. Mercury and Jupiter will arrange **“rulership for the wicked”**. They say they have said they will be saying it over and over scrying the fallen city. He will not heed the votes. **Never say his name** or he will materialize at greater speed.

Later (reading the sand) “kingship will never come to the Problematized One, when the planet Jupiter attains its exaltation and casts down Venus it will be **a soldered sounder, over, sing,** over.

When Jupiter & Saturn meet, it will be conjunct to your trine, your eclipse, don't wander.

What rules? What problem to call him out. (fretting the skies) He is blurred in the text, the Polarizing One. Can you make the count come

right down on him. The Moon turns **blood in the fire** of our time. On him. **Blood on his hands.** Inturbation in the cenotaphs.

In kinship? Or out of broken nation. Venus up in arms. Cupping the night. **Not say the name.**

There is division, word too dangerous to be spoken to. In the strobing cinematic camera, all dangerous. Firearms on display, poised, aim, a trigger in your belly. Oily sand on the floors of state. Relations between humans and artifact. Is he human? Not say the presumptuous name.

In the dream a battle scene: Persepolis heaving. I am called to this, called to this. **Close race.**

When a primary trigger has been dislodged, will you be ready? I see the way rooms divide, sliced. And the commander is saying "a small mechanism": just push will you ready it?

Militia with a bullhorn on the lawn. Threat of lynching. Hide before activated, Detroit. Hissing interception. Come out. A flock of birds because they register **freedom on the border of cruelty.** Detroit, the test of vision, long tentacles of liberation hold ground, hold blessed ground, stay, hold. Never reduced to **bare life.** Astral omens **fighting conditio inhumana.**

(with gratitude to Peripheries)

Interpreter

Letters carved under the belly

Carved
On the bird
Belly

Belly of the bird

You have a locust face
Those numbers
& symbols

Red letter: bird & locust

Locust looking up?

Divested of song and how
Could a small bird divested of song
Devastate a scourge eating the land?

Pestilence, all land
Such a small bird, large locust
Stones a threshold
To hold power down
Stay this ground out of synthesis of escape
Throw pebbles as you count them
To the wind

Interpreting the charts
What is the querent's side of the query?
Can't see them, the hits,
& numbers fully
Punctuation rare
[Inside texts, obscure
A subject changes]
Dots are blue in the scribe's hand

Branches wisps of call to geomancy
More dust
Lost in the charnel ground
But they become hieroglyphic coming after
Coming after in the charnel ground

Survive in talisman,
These afternoons, evenings in Egypt,
London, Paris, shuttered Palestine
Coming after

Remind you of conquest
Of sand, water
And fluid life, bodies strewn

Heh teh unfinished Say it again
Heh teh heh teh

And the impermanence of all edges
planetary
resists every weapon

They will remind you of a game on paper
:Remind you of lovely things you wished upon
pebble, feather, umbilicus
And maybe you will get it now
Good luck the fish and its bone, memory
A dragon might have heart failure
And see him lying there with dangerous numbers
A kind of contagion all over his body
Troubled dragon in his body parts
Hovering, circling round his body
Painted numbers all in red

Red, red again, blood moon tonight

And it is bad grammar
For a golden poem
To amass these numbers of pain
To always be warning, distress distress

Signal: heh teh tally our lockdown on the page

And if that all your shield you run with

?A halo over your head

?How much ransom for the dragon's blood

In the marginalia I'll scribe apologies

The idea is to have dominion
over the tragically mixed up

Conglomeration of tendencies that are
Animal parts

One with a pig's ear
Human visage
Out of sorts
Warning Don't Move
Claw, tongue, wing

Don't

2

I feel at home
Working with what I don't know

I need a catalogue
I need a timeline
I want syncretic paradise to open and let the virgins fall
the wise poets enter and resist a religious intonation &

I am not scared
I will provide proof against fire
A magic garment I would wear

Against plague
If I get this magic merriment garment will never let go

Skin of Akan Daw
Skin of leopard
That resists every weapon Is proof against fire
would not sink in water &

I have lost my handle

Such a skin
A black leopard has

And can't calculate the worth
Of many a word about such an animal

This refers to a book, a golden book
All of gold, books are like animals
That means a book of light
A prophecy
A hadith



from Collection of various essay on Raml
(Geomancy) and the illustrated version
of Asrār-I Qassemi, no name of the
author of (1908),The Iranian National
Parliamentary Library collection

Azal- eternity
Something with life inside
?What could be inside
Gleaming eye of leopard
?How much worth
How heavy its solar wealth

Don't measure the foundation, the house
Or the boxes that contain all things
?It is a lamb or a goat or leopard will stir you

You saw the book with the skin of a gazelle in Fez
Protect with a horn, you trembled
A gazelle will lead the way

When you say “prophetic” you mean covered in words
Paint my body
I am as the animal lost in a diagram of chance
Of tyranny of surveillance of droning power

Locusts across the land

And a gold box

Holds little secrets
And each page of a golden book that chest of gold

Illusion! now, open

Could this be literal plunder
Could this be a truncated story
Of ravage

Everything turns to gold with a touch of plunder
Alexander the Great known as Ambidextrous Alexander

Invades the text here

How do you get the warring news

Or the history of what one decided was inclement

Tyrants and Deciders

In Memoriam: Suffragists Talisman

40 safe guards apotropaic. 40 guards with clubs went on. 40 guards with clubs rampage. 40 brutalized thirty-three jailed suffragists. this was 40 guards with clubs at Occoquan Workhouse. orders of W.H. Whittaker. Lucy Burns was beaten by 40 guards with clubs. and then 40 guards with clubs. they chained her hands to cell bars above her head. she was left there 40 guards with clubs. a night. Dora Lewis was hurled by 40 guards with clubs. a dark cell. her head smashed against the iron bed, she was out cold. 40 guards with clubs. Dora! Alice Cosu her roommate thought she was dead. and suffered a heart attack from the actions. 40 guards with clubs. affidavits reported women were grabbed. choked. slammed. pinched. beaten. kicked. and twisted. 40 guards with clubs.

Please summon words of your own as you intone the numbers. The rage of witness=protection for the harmed and the efficacy (vocal) against that harm. Cry out.

40 guard with clubs, no

39 struck a blow, no

38 and more, no

37 and more, no

36 beaten, no, twisted, no

35.....

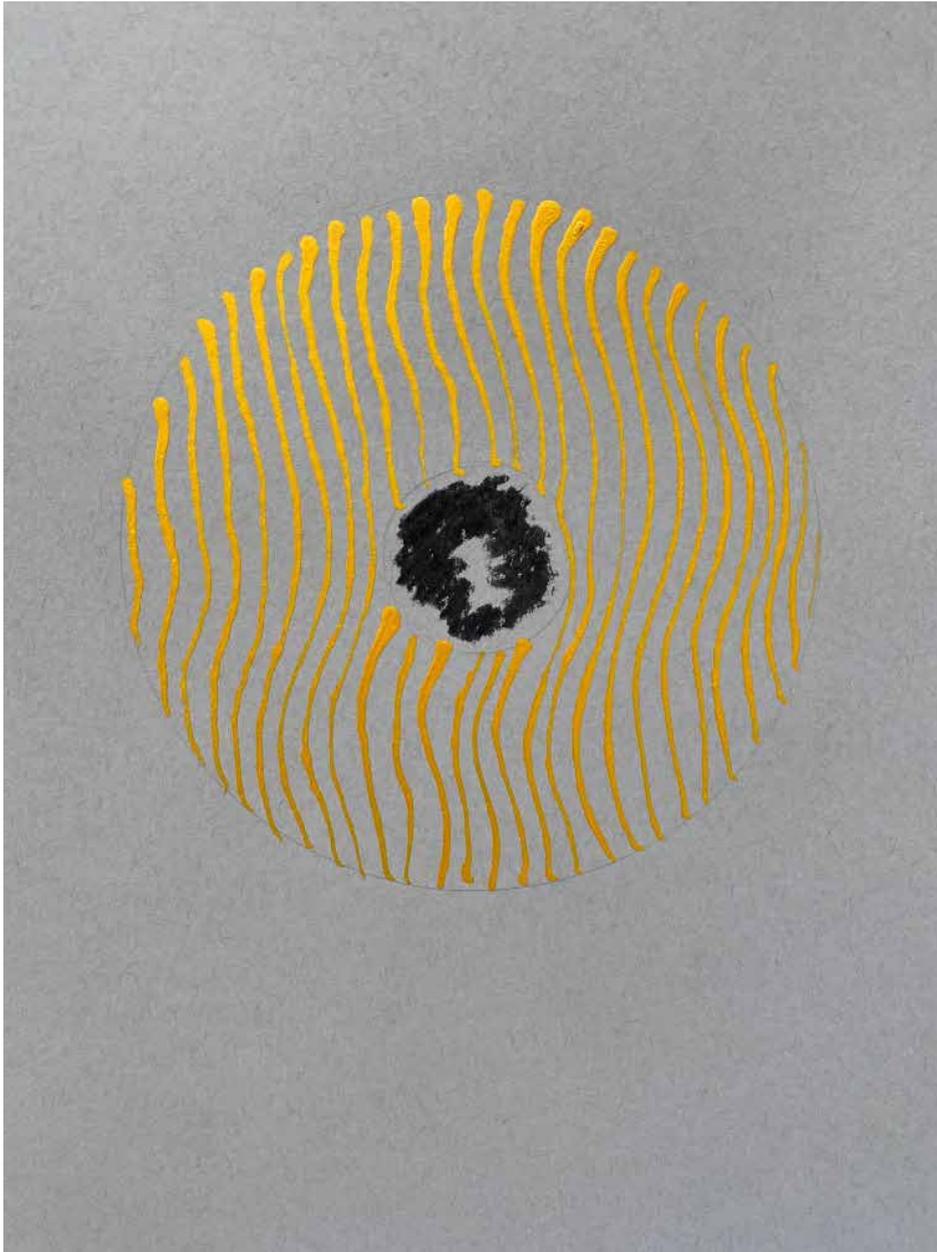
34 go on against

33

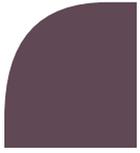
32

31

30 and more
29 on against the 40
28 a sunspot for Venus
27 "you sleep with your ears open"
26
25
24
23
22 deliverance?
21
20
19.....suffers
18 now twisted
17
16 beaten, now
15
14
13 & still beaten, now
12 please no on more
11
10 suffragist
9 armeggedon
8
7
6
5 and more, no
4 on more
3
2 cry out
1 more



Sarah Riggs



Elizabeth Willis



A PART IN PARTING

In a woman's hip her passport
and every address she's ever lived
I leave her my chickens,
my hay, my foxes
she carries the number like a child
like a bruise
We leave her the key to the bus
My nerves are in the east, my reason
in the west
when she comes to you
an insect laces up the leaves
Six may form a star
seven a constellation
heaven is plural
as when I come to her
like the head of Holofernes in her dream
My heavens
we are just getting started
Peel the fruit clockwise
in a single strip
make a tea of it
Write this down
Can you distinguish
between creation and invention
the head and the hat
Can you draw the border as you remember it
host and guest as in a virus

[19 3 15 22 94 19]

ghost and rest

sink or swim

What you are from

is not what you do

what you do

what you are made of

I see a long and joyful life for the afflicted

Suzanne, you goose, where on earth

did you come from

as she is in heaven

To pray to a mother

is as natural as corn

=

Step into

then out of

this shoe

Saint Lorine, protect us

clear the deck

Take all references to money

out of this room

Write this down

Clear the desk

of everything but friendship

Alliance is mineral

the ferocity of all suffrage

The sound of scissors in London

is a severing of trauma

I am going now, it says

translated by fire

but I hold your hand

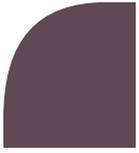
This town has finally reached the map
be careful what you find
unknown script
be careful who you tell
Safaa you are telling me
This is the way
Anne I brought this to you
with all my trust
Sarah you came before
Adania, you were waiting at the border
Ghazal, thank god, how you flew
A poem assembles this house
a singular they
a plural I
on the shore
at sea
a cone like a hat
appears in the morning outside my door
There is no god but this
and international orange
Put all else away from you
We are on this side of the border
because we are with you, Adania
when you say "we are Palestinian"
unarmored word
from one mouth to another
Write this down
=
May his bowels be immovable
until he dies of his own poison
May the sharpness of his words

cut his throat in the night
May he find no surrogate
may his teeth crumble
May the grin of the dollar sign
burn his sulfurous lawn
May a garden grow above it
May an olive grove transform
sulfur into sweetness
its noise into a whisper
May your feet say to the silence
I am here
In my dream the girls escape
in my dream the bullet swerves
in this dream my mother is alive
in every cell of my body
The salt is our radio
the salt of the body
I see you in the black box of the future
in which we are together
face to face
unbroken

-



Sarah Riggs



Bios



Stine Su Yon An (안수연) is a poet, translator, and performer based in NYC. Her work has appeared in *Electric Literature*, *Black Warrior Review*, *BAX*, *Pleiades*, *ANMLY*, and elsewhere. Stine received an MFA in Literary Arts at Brown University and was selected as the Korean poetry mentee for the 2020 ALTA Emerging Translator Mentorship Program. A participant in the 2020 Tamaas translation seminar, Stine worked with poet Michael Joseph Walsh to translate a selection of Korean children's songs.

Michael Joseph Walsh is a Korean American poet and translator. He is co-editor of *APARTMENT Poetry*, and his work has appeared in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *DIAGRAM*, *Guernica*, *FOLDER*, *Fence*, *Sink Review*, *jubilat*, and elsewhere. A participant in the 2020 Tamaas translation seminar, he worked with poet Stine Su Yon An to translate a selection of Korean children's songs. He lives in Denver.

Mona Kareem is the author of three poetry collections, and most recently, the trilingual chapbook *FEMME GHOSTS*. She is currently a Translator-in-Residence and visiting lecturer at Princeton University. Mona spoke as a panelist with poet and filmmaker Safaa Fathy for the film series *Saved From the Waters* co-hosted by Tamaas, and was a participant in the Tamaas Translation Seminar in 2020.

Habib Tengour, a poet and anthropologist, was born in 1947, in Mostaganem. He has written about twenty books (poetry, prose, plays and essays). His poetry has been translated into English, German, Italian, Arabic and other languages. He himself is a translator of Arabic language poets (Saadi Toucef, Chawki Abdelamir) and of the English language poets (Pierre Joris, Charles Bernstein). In 2016, he ran the collection "Poèmes du monde" (World Poems) for Apic publishing house, in Algiers. His latest work, *Odysséennes Odissaïche* (bilingual

edition in French and Italian), was published by Puntoacapo, in Turin, in October 2019.

Cole Swensen is the author of seventeen books of poetry, most recently *On Walking On* (Nightboat, 2017), and a collection of critical essays, *Noise That Stays Noise* (University of Michigan, 2011). Her work has been awarded the Iowa Poetry Prize, the S.F. State Poetry Center Book Award, and the National Poetry Series, and has been a finalist twice for the L.A. Times Book Award and once for the National Book Award. A former Guggenheim Fellow, she co-edited *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry*, and is the founding editor of La Presse. She has translated over twenty books of French poetry, prose and art criticism, including Jean Frémon's *Island of the Dead*, which won the PEN USA Award in Translation. She divides her time between Paris and Providence, RI, where she teaches at Brown University.

Alisha Mascarenhas is a poet, translator and educator, an the author of *Contagion Fields* published with Belladonna*. Alisha co-edits *READ: A Journal of Inter-Translation*, and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

E. Tracy Grinnell is the author of four books of poetry: *Hell Figures*, *portrait of a lesser subject*, *Some Clear Souvenir*, and *music or forgetting*. She is the founding editor and director of Litmus Press.

Isabelle Garron lives and works in Paris. Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals. She has taught in various environments, from schools and universities to hospitals. She was on the editorial board of the *Action poétique* review from 2004 to 2012. From 2005 to 2009, she was an art critic for "Peinture fraîche," a French radio show produced by Jean Daive. Her four main books, *Face devant contre* (2002), *Qu'il faille* (2007), *Corps fut* (2011) and *Bras vif*

(2018) have been published by Flammarion. *Face Before Against* was translated by Sarah Riggs, and published by Litmus Press, NY, in 2008. She and Yves de Manno co-edited *Un nouveau monde. Poésies en France (1960-2012)*, published by Flammarion in 2016 (second printing, 2017). She is the translator into French, with E. Tracy Grinnell, of *way* by Leslie Scalapino, published in 2020 by José Corti.

Ghazal Mosadeq is a writer and poet. She was the winner of the Bayhaqi Short Fiction Prize, and shortlisted for the Khorshid Poetry Prize. She has written three poetry collections, *Dar Jame Ma* (2010), *Biographies* (2015), and *Supernatural Remedies for Fatal Seasickness* (2018). Her poems and short stories have been published in anthologies and magazines in Iran, Canada, the UK, Portugal and Greece.

Safaa Fathy was born in Egypt. She is a poet, essay writer and filmmaker. Her plays, *Terror* and *Ordeal* were introduced by Jacques Derrida, with whom she signed a book, *Tourner les mots. Au Bord d'un film*. Her latest book of poetry, *Revolution Goes Through Walls* (SplitLevel), was translated and published in Egypt, France and in Brazil.

Sarah Riggs has published 7 books of poetry, including most recently *Eavesdrop* (Chax, 2020) and *The Nerve Epistle* (Roof, 2021), as well as the French-English *Murmurations* (Apic, 2021). She has translated and co-translated six books of contemporary French poetry into English, including most recently Oscarine Bosquet's *Present Participle* and Etel Adnan's *Time*, winner of the 2020 Griffin International Poetry Prize for Translation. Sarah Riggs lives in Brooklyn, NY.

ISSUE

NEWS

2020

