



IL PIETRISCO TRANSLATIONS

**Flashpoints:
Contemporary microfiction**

**Edited by
Monica Boria & Ángeles Carreres**



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Notes on Contributors

MAYTE BLASCO (1979) is a Spanish librarian, independent author and lover of literature. She has worked in the Biblioteca Nacional de España since 2004, aside from a two-and-a-half-year sabbatical between early 2013 and late 2015 during which she wrote her first novel, *Las vidas que pudimos vivir* (2015). She has since written a further novel, *La extrañeza de la lluvia* (maLuma, 2021) as well as two collections of short stories: *Jaulas de hormigón* (Niña Loba, 2022), which was nominated for the Premio Setenil, one of the most prestigious literary awards in Spain, in the same year, and *La mejor familia del mundo* (Niña Loba, 2024). She also maintains an online presence through her blog, *El Blog de Mae*, which she uses as an outlet to express herself through her works of microfiction, and to reflect upon other literary topics, questions and debates.

MONICA BORIA is a Senior Language Tutor in Italian in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures at the University of Manchester. Her research interests are in contemporary Italian cultural studies, humour studies and translation. She has published on satirical writer Stefano Benni, comedian Sabina Guzzanti, TV parody and satire, 70s underground comics, and translation. Her latest work in Translation Studies is *Translation and Multimodality: Beyond Words* (Routledge, 2019), co-edited with Ángeles Carreres, María Noriega-Sánchez, and Marcus Tomalin. She has translated academic and literary works for publishers such as Elsevier, ETS, Palgrave, and Peter Lang. Her literary translations include the first Italian edition of selected short stories by Dorothy Edwards (*Ammutinamento e altri racconti*, ETS, 2019) and poems by Anglophone women writers (Pauline E. Johnson, Kathrine Sowerby, Madhur Anand).

ÁNGELES CARRERES (Valencia, 1972) is Professor of Spanish and Translation Studies in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Cambridge, UK. She holds a Diploma in Translation from the UK Institute of Linguists. She has published the books *Cruzando límites: la retórica de la traducción en Jacques Derrida* (Peter Lang, 2005) and, with María Noriega-Sánchez and Carme Calduch, *Mundos en palabras: Learning advanced Spanish through Translation* (Routledge, 2018). She is co-editor of the volume *Translation and Multimodality: Beyond Words* (Routledge, 2019). As a literary translator, she has translated into Spanish the novels *The Long Song* (*Una larga canción*, El Aleph, 2011), by the British Jamaican writer Andrea Levy, and *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted* (*Iola Leroy, o las sombras disipadas*, PUV, 2008) by Frances E. W. Harper, one of the first novels published by an African American woman (1895). With Monica Boria, she is editor-in-chief of *Il Pietrisco Translations*.

MASSIMO GERARDO CARRESE (Thun, 1978) is a fantasiologist and scholar of fantasiology. He is also a pataphysicist, anagrammatist, and musician, and creates games involving numbers, language, and art. Since 2001, he has been studying the scientific, humanistic, recreational, and artistic aspects of imagination, imagery, and creativity. He is the artistic director of the Fantasiologic Festival, an event which brings together scholars, artists, writers, mathematicians and performers to explore themes related to creativity. He runs fantasiologic workshops in schools, universities and other social settings. More information about his recent publications and other activities can be found on his website at www.fantasiologo.com.

NICOLE CENTOFANTI was born and raised in a small town in Tuscany and learnt English and Spanish in high school. She obtained a degree in Linguistic Mediation with a focus on Marketing at Unicollege SSML in Florence. In 2024 she completed her Master's degree in Specialized Translation at the University of Trieste with a thesis on the translation of Dr. Seuss' works.

Since then, she has followed her dream of becoming a literary translator. She attended specialized courses in translation, provided by Fondazione Unicampus Sanpellegrino on the translation of children's literature and literary translation. She translated *L'amore è nelle piccole cose* by Stella J. Jones and illustrated by Jane Massey for Edizioni EL (2025) and *Identitalie/Identitalies* by Laila Wadia published by Vita Activa Nuova (2025). She also participated in the collaborative translation of *Barnaby* by The Fan Brothers published by Gallucci Editore (2024).

FABRÍCIO CORSALETTI (Santo Anastácio, São Paulo state, 1978) has lived in São Paulo city since 1997. He took a degree in literature at the University of São Paulo. In 2007, Companhia das Letras published *Estudos para o seu corpo* (Studies for your body), which brings together the first four of his books of poetry: *Movediço* (Labortexto Editorial, 2001), *O sobrevivente* (Hedra, 2003), and the then unpublished *História das demolições* and *Estudos para o seu corpo*. Companhia das Letras also published his collection of short stories *King Kong e cervejas* (King Kong and beers) in 2008, the novella *Golpe de ar* (Gust of Air) in 2009, three further poetry collections and a collection of *crônicas*, as well as a number of books for children. In 2023, Corsaletti's most recent poetry collection, *Engenheiro fantasma* (Ghost engineer), published by Companhia das Letras in 2022, won the prestigious Jabuti prize in both the poetry and book of the year categories. He has written a regular column for the magazine *sãopaulo*, a supplement to the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*.

MAYA FEILE TOMES (1989) is a translator, interpreter and academic. In January 2025 she took up a new post as lecturer in Hispanic Studies at the University of Glasgow. She was previously Lorna Close Lecturer in Spanish (and Fellow of Murray Edwards College) at the University of Cambridge, where she co-founded the Cambridge Translation Studies Network in 2024. She has been four times longlisted in the John Dryden Translation Competition, and was shortlisted for the Sundial Literary Translation Award for *Ciudades en las que nunca has estado* in 2023. Her first book-length literary translation, Argentinian author Leticia Obeid's *Preparación para el amor* (Córdoba: Caballo Negro, 2015; Buenos Aires: Blatt & Ríos, 2024), will be published by Scratch Books in 2026.

ROSABEL GREEN (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2002) is an emerging translator and honorary scholar of Clare College, University of Cambridge, where she recently graduated with a first-class degree in Modern and Medieval Languages. She studied Italian, Spanish and Portuguese with a particular focus on the Italian language, literary translation, dialectology and Romance linguistics. As part of her year abroad, she studied linguistics at the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares in Spain and phonology and sociolinguistics at the Università degli Studi di Padova in Italy. This year, she will return to Italy to work as an English teacher in the region of South Tyrol. Whilst there, she hopes to pursue more translation projects, as well as exploring the region's alpine landscape and multilingual culture.

SOPHIE LEWIS is a London-born translator and editor. Working from French and Portuguese, she has translated works by Stendhal, Jules Verne, Marcel Aymé, Violette Leduc, Leïla Slimani, Noémi Lefebvre, and Annie Ernaux, as well as Sheyla Smanioto, Victor Heringer and Patrícia Melo, among others. Recent edits include works by Jeferson Tenório, Lucrecia Zappi and Fábio Zuker. With Gitanjali Patel, she co-founded the Shadow Heroes translation workshops enterprise (www.shadowheroes.org). She has also made a career in publishing, her most recent positions being as senior editor at And Other Stories press and latterly managing editor at The Folio Society. Lewis's translations have been shortlisted for the Scott Moncrieff and Republic of Consciousness prizes, and longlisted for the International Booker Prize. She was joint winner of the 2022 French-American Foundation prize for non-fiction, for her translation of anthropologist Nastassja Martin's *In the Eye of the Wild* (New York Review Books, 2021).

M. CARME MARÍ (Barcelona, 1969) is a computer engineer and holds a degree in piano. Since 2014, she has been writing micro-stories, having taken courses at the Writing School of the Ateneu Barcelonès. Her works have won awards or been finalists in various competitions such as those of the Association of Catalan Storytellers, the Microbiblioteca of Barberà del Vallès, *Wonderland* of Ràdio 4, Inspiraciència, and the International Cardenal Mendoza Microfiction Contest. She has been published in various collective books, both in Catalan and Spanish, and is one of the 85 authors included in the book *Bones confitures. Antologia de microrelats catalans* (Good Jams: Anthology of Catalan Microfiction). She publishes her texts on her personal blog *Petites històries* (Little Stories).

ISABEL NEATE is a recent Modern and Medieval Languages (Spanish and French) graduate from the University of Cambridge, who is currently undertaking a master's degree in translation at the University of Bath. While Isabel is keen to translate from both Spanish and French into English, a strong interest of hers lies in translating from Catalan, owing to her study of the language to an advanced level during her time spent at Cambridge. Passionate about uncovering nuances in the languages she translates, Isabel also enjoys the challenge of carrying an author's voice across languages faithfully, while making texts available for new readers to access. Her translation of *Tocats per la fortuna* (Struck by Luck) for *Il Pietrisco* is her first published translation.

CRISTINA PASQUA is a Rome-based freelance editor, proofreader and writer. An avid reader, she has been writing short prose since her teenage years. To date, she has published the collections *Diciassette* (Odradek Edizioni, 2001), *fughe* (pièdimosca, 2023), and *forasacchi* (pièdimosca/glossa, 2024). Her microfiction has appeared in the anthologies *multiperso* (pièdimosca/glossa, 2022) and *L'ordine sostituito* (déclic, 2024). Her novel *Cinque* was awarded the Zeno Prize for unpublished fiction in 2022. Together with Alessandro Pera, she has published *Forbici* (Lorusso, 2024), a crime novel set in Rome. Her work often centres on marginalised characters trapped in grim circumstances, individuals who sometimes express their desperation, but rarely manage to escape their situation. Her microtexts have been praised for their experimental language and bold narrative voice, and some have been translated into German and published in the magazine *Faust*.

MARTA PÉREZ SIERRA (Barcelona, 1957) is a Catalan poet, short story writer and cultural activist. She has published fifteen poetry collections, including *Sexe Mòbil Singular (SMS)* (Viena Ediciones, 2002), *Fil per randa* (Bubok, 2008), *Dones d'heura* (Pagès editors, 2011), *Si goso dir-li un mot d'amant* (Cims, 2013), *M'he empassat la lluna* (Viena, 2015), *Escrit en un tovalló de bar i altres poemes* (Voliana, 2024) and, most recently, *Safrà* (2024). She has also authored four short story collections, including the microfiction volumes *Bavastells* (Walrus, 2014) and *Compte amb el buit* (Témenos, 2018), as well as three children's story books. Her work has featured in over 20 poetry and short story anthologies, and she has received a number of literary accolades, notably the Jordi Pàmias Prize 2010 for *Dones d'heura*, the Ciutat d'Alcoi Prize 2019 for *Escorcoll*, the XLIII Poetry Prize '25 April' Vila de Benissa 2023 for *Safrà*, among others. As a cultural activist, she has initiated various collaborative initiatives aimed at highlighting the connection between literature and other arts, including music and performance.

CÉSAR SÁNCHEZ (Madrid, 1970) is an author, copywriter and lapsed mathematician. He has blessed, and baffled, the reading public with two novels – the pseudonymously published *De vicio* (2016) by 'Arturo G. Pavón' and, more recently, *Maldito pego pulgoso* (2021) – and two short story collections: *Ciudades en las que nunca has estado* (2017) and *Catálogo de sombras* (2024). All the works to appear under his own name have been published by independent

Seville-based press, Editorial Barrett. César's work is characterised by surrealism, errorism, and a riotous sense of the absurd. He has a devoted circle of fans, including the editorial team at Barrett. The words 'cult' and 'following' are not out of place here.

ANA MARÍA SHUA (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1951) is a writer, journalist, screenwriter and Literature professor at the University of Buenos Aires. When she was 16, she published her first book, *El sol y yo* (1967), a collection of poems which suggests her inclination towards short texts. During the military dictatorship she was exiled and lived in Paris for a while, working for the Spanish current affairs magazine *Cambio 16*. In 1980 she published her first novel *Soy paciente*, which won the Losada publishing house prize. She is known for her works of microfiction, for which she has won several prizes and which have been translated into fifteen languages worldwide. Shua has worked as a screenwriter, adapting some of her writing for the screen. In 2014 she won the Konex Platinum Award from the Konex Foundation and the Argentinian National Prize for Literature for *Fenómenos de circo*.

ROWAN STAMP is a recent graduate from the University of Cambridge. He has been passionate about language learning throughout his academic life, and was first exposed to the discipline of literary translation while studying the Modern and Medieval Languages degree, which has given him experience translating a range of literary texts in both directions between his target languages, French and Spanish, and his native English. He is particularly interested in exploring how universal aspects of human behaviour and emotions, especially those relating to familial relationships, can be translated across linguistic and cultural boundaries. At the time of writing, he is preparing to start a MA in Applied Translation Studies at the University of Leeds to further develop his linguistic and translation skills, with the aim of pursuing a career in the translation industry upon graduating.

MARCUS TOMALIN is a Fellow at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. His research focuses upon different aspects of the complex relationship between languages and literature. He has written at length about Haida, an endangered North American language, and has examined how writers such as Elizabeth Griffith, William Cowper, and William Cobbett were influenced by the French language during the long eighteenth century. From 2015-2019, he was one of the organisers of the 'Cambridge Conversations in Translation' research group which focused on the theory and practice of translation. His many publications include the monographs *Linguistics and the Formal Sciences* (CUP, 2006), *Romanticism and Linguistic Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), *"And he knew our language": Missionary Linguistics on the Pacific Northwest Coast* (John Benjamins, 2011), *The French Language and British Literature, 1756-1830* (Routledge, 2016), and *Telling the Time in British Literature, 1675-1830* (Routledge, 2020).

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‘Peleas familiares’, in *Los pescadores de perlas: los microrrelatos de Quimera*, by Ana María Shua ©2019 Montesinos, Barcelona, and ‘Las dos mitades’, in *Fenómenos de circo*, by Ana María Shua ©2000 Emecé, Buenos Aires.

While we have done our best to identify and correct any typos, we apologise for any slips and blunders we may have missed.

Monica Boria and Ángeles Carreres

Introductory note

We are delighted to publish the third issue of *Il Pietrisco Translations*, devoted to contemporary microfiction in a Romance language.

The idea for this issue arises from the desire to provide a taste of the richness of this genre in contemporary writing. While in the West the origins of this form of fiction are often traced back to Greco-Roman times (aphorisms, fables, funerary epitaphs, etc.) and the oral tradition of medieval storytelling (parable, anecdote, folk tale, proverb, etc.), its contemporary shape is firmly rooted in the 20th century: first in the experiments of the avant-gardes and, from the 1960s onwards, in literary postmodernism (Botha 2016: 202). The emergence of e-literature, and the increasing pervasiveness of digital environments have given 21st-century microfiction a new and distinctive flavour, one in which “brevity is not only a quantitative parameter but also a qualitative frame that captures ‘the world of the now’”, and where “the anonymous and typified characters of miniature writing” are deeply entwined with forms of digital subjectivity that are typical of our contemporary ‘onlife’ (Tonetto 2024: 289).

But what exactly do we mean when we talk about ‘microfiction’? Categorizations based on length typically indicate fewer than a hundred words for microfiction, fewer than 750 for flash fiction, and several pages for short-short fiction. Yet what all these forms foreground is “the relational and seemingly paradoxical experiences of reading as an embodied process in time and space. [...] Short fiction may invoke larger scales of time and space quickly through citation, by making intertextual links to wider bodies of work and [...] be a major contributor to ongoing debates [...]. Short fiction encapsulates global patterns and stages the interrelationality of time scales through its own narrative acts of scaling” (Naimou 2021: 21-22). As a result, these short forms tend to be characterised by a fragmentary and elliptical structure, with minimal description and a reliance on the unsaid, a playful or ironic tone, an often fantastical or surreal outlook, and, almost invariably, an open or surprising ending.

If Edgar Allan Poe, Franz Kafka, Anton Chechov are among the modern precursors of microfiction, major writers from the Hispano-American countries such as Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, and Augusto Monterroso are regarded as the influential authors who marked a turning point in the development of the genre. In many of their works, the defining features of brevity, the interplay between reality and fiction, and the creation of possible worlds have been brought to the fore as a challenge to the epic ambitions of the novel to represent and understand reality (Inglese 2024, Piccirilli 2021). Despite the homogenising effects of globalisation, microfiction today is very diverse, shaped as it is by different language traditions, cultural contexts, and aesthetic concerns. Each region has moulded the form to its own narrative sensibilities, and in some parts of the world (e.g. the American continent), the genre appears to be more established – or more visible – than in others (e.g. Europe).

With reference to the traditions featured in this journal issue, the ‘microrrelato’ or ‘minificción’ is a well-established genre in the Spanish-speaking world, widely anthologised and available both in print and online. Enjoyed by many readers, it has also attracted well-known writers of other genres, such as Juan Pedro Aparicio, José M^a Merino and Luciano G. Egido (Mateos Blanco 2016). Microfiction’s cultural and literary value is also fully recognised at academic level. In Latin America, critical engagement with the ‘microrrelato’ dates from the second decade of the 20th century, and in Spain, from the avant-garde movements; today the genre enjoys a true boom (Encinar 2010). While in Spain microfiction tends to be more heavily influenced by the European literary tradition and places greater emphasis on formal experimentation and critical and intellectual reflection, in Latin America, the genre is more closely associated with cultural and linguistic hybridity, urban life, social critique and communicative immediacy. A selection of contemporary writers from continental Spain includes Carmen Camacho, Alberto Escudero, Cristina Grandes, Lara Moreno, Julia Otxoa, Javier Tomeo, and Pedro Ugarte. Among microfiction writers from Latin America are the Argentinians Ana María Shua (featured in this volume) and Luisa Valenzuela, the Chilean Fernando Iwasaki, the Mexicans Juan José Arreola, Alberto Chimal, and René Avilés Fabila.

In Catalonia, as elsewhere, microfiction has found in the blogosphere fertile ground in which to thrive. Benefiting from initiatives aimed at promoting literary production in Catalan, web platforms such as Relats en català or La bona confitura have been showcasing the genre since the early 2000s. A number of prizes devoted to microfiction have been set up, further contributing to raising the profile of this vibrant literary form. Some names to note are Mercè Bagaria, Violant Barquet, Jordi Masó Rahola, Sònia Moll, Marta Pérez Sierra (also featured here), Joan Pinyol, and Jesús M. Tibau, to quote just a few.

In Italy, from the 1960s onwards, the influence of structuralist studies shook the foundations of storytelling, and the traditional structure of Italian prose was influenced by experimental authors from abroad, notably the Oulipo group from France and Borges and Cortázar. The evolution towards new narrative models was also facilitated by the growth of a more diverse readership increasingly shaped by the fast-paced rhythms of television, cinema, pop music, and comic books (Casadei 2024). Early experiments by writers such as Italo Calvino, Goffredo Parise, Giorgio Manganelli, Giuseppe Pontiggia, were taken further by the ironic and irreverent tones of literary postmodernism, which also accelerated the move towards brevity and the disruption of dominant literary canons with authors such as Stefano Benni, Ermanno Cavazzoni, Gianni Celati, Luigi Malerba, Maria Sebregondi, Grazia Verasani and others. As a result, the ‘microracconto’ is today a widely practised and heterogeneous genre, especially in online literary magazines and blogs. The range of explorations that emerges from contemporary Italian microfiction is remarkably broad: from highly polished microstories, to experiments in automatic writing, to the playfulness of texts with linguistic constraints in the style of Oulipo (Inglese 2021). The nuances in tone are equally wide-ranging, from the fantastic to the absurd, from the elegiac to the ironic, from the humorous to the tragic. In addition to the authors included in this issue, others anthologised by niche publishers such as

Campimagnetici (*Brevi che ti passa*, 2019) and piédimosca (*Multiperso*, 2022) offer a taste of the coming of age of Italian microfiction.

‘Micronarrativas’ or ‘microcontos’ in Portuguese date back to Modernism, when brevity and concision begin to gain momentum as a challenge to traditional forms, and renowned authors such as Fernando Pessoa and José de Almada Negreiros published several ‘micronarrativas’ (Silva Rodrigues 2017: 283). In Portugal, writers of the avant-garde such as Mário Henrique Leiria, Jorge de Sena, Alberto Pimenta, and especially Ana Hatherly experimented with microfiction, but the genre has truly taken off in the new millennium. In Brazil, Almada Negreiros, in the early twentieth century, is widely regarded as the precursor of the genre, while the first contemporary example – termed ‘ministória’ by its author – is a 30-word untitled piece published in 1994 by Dalton Trevisan, who is regarded as instrumental in the canonisation of the genre (Spalding 2008). Other 21st-century key figures include Fernando Bonassi, Márcia Denser, Marcelino Freire, Cíntia Moscovich, João Gilberto Noll, Luiz Ruffato. The genre, and its theorisation, has been recently enriched by the vibrant voices of a new generation of Afro-Brazilian writers and scholars (Silva 2024).

The following paragraphs aim to offer a snapshot of the pieces featured in this volume. We have tried to avoid spoilers, however do feel free to skip this section if you wish to come fresh to these stories. Short fiction often relies on sudden shifts and a thwarting of the reader’s expectations to work its magic, so it makes sense to approach them with an open mind. We follow here the order in which the contributions appear in this volume, in alphabetical order by the author’s name.

Rowan Stamp translates into English ‘Vida nueva’ (2021, ‘A new life’), by Spanish author Mayte Blasco. A family gets together to celebrate the New Year. As they raise their glasses, the various characters secretly make their wishes for the year to come, each hoping for the ‘vida nueva’ promised in the title. However, life has other plans. Stamp’s translation, which he describes as ‘faithful but not literal’, offers a sensitive rendering of Blasco’s text, attending to its many nuances on various levels – lexis, idiom, register, and grammar.

Massimo Gerardo Carrese’s ‘Il cervo è io’ (2024, ‘The stag is I’), translated from Italian into English by Rosabel Green, takes us into a mind-bending journey through the twists and turns of the author’s imagined geometries. The stylised, abstract nature of the narrative contrasts with its playful tone. Green offers an illuminating account of her three-step translation process. This ultimately relies on the spoken word in order to capture the natural flow of the original, showing that – for this particular text – less is more.

Sophie Lewis translates into English three pieces by the Brazilian poet Fabrício Corsaletti, taken from his 2018 collection *Perambule* (On the Move). Bittersweet childhood memories, a wry gaze on Parisian high society and literati, a desolate urban landscape, are all featured in the stories of this modern day *flâneur*, as Lewis describes Corsaletti. In her note, Lewis highlights the mix of high and low register as crucial to the comic effect in ‘Marquesa’ (‘Marquise’). Her rendering also pays close attention to phonic elements as conveyors of meaning.

Isabel Neate translates into English ‘Tocats per la fortuna’ (2024, ‘Struck by Luck’), by the Catalan author M. Carme Marí. A woman recounts to her coworker the tale of her somewhat bumpy journey to work, making it evident to anyone but herself that what she calls her ‘lucky charm’ is the bringer of misfortune. Neate reflects on the translator’s call to work with the ambiguities embedded in the original so as to preserve its intended effect.

Two pieces (2023) by Italian author Cristina Pasqua are translated into English by Monica Boria, with the collaboration of Marcus Tomalin. In ‘finestre’ (‘windows’), the body of a female survivor of domestic violence – but can this be called survival? – experiences a constant dismembering and ‘re-membering’, in a nightmarish loop. The same sense of inescapable doom permeates ‘s’arrossa l’aria’ (‘the air reddens’), which tells of a tragic accident whose scars cannot be erased. Boria departs from AI-produced versions, carefully reworked to produce her own, showing the potential as well as the limitations of the tool.

Ángeles Carreres translates into Spanish seven pieces by the Catalan author Marta Pérez Sierra, from her collection *Compte amb el buit* (2018, *Mind the Gap*). Centred around the metaphor of the train journey, these stories foreground the themes of gender-based abuse, body shaming, the experience of imprisonment, childhood ravaged by war, among others. In her commentary, Carreres illustrates the pitfall of cognates when translating between Romance languages, as well as the need for compromise in the pursuit of fidelity.

Four of Spanish author César Sánchez’s pieces are translated into English by Maya Feile Tomes. The stories, taken from his 2017 collection *Ciudades en las que nunca has estado* (Cities You’ve Never Been To), feature the cities of Burgos, Lima, Las Vegas and Buchapest [*sic!*]. But these are city portraits with a twist – Sánchez reinvents and, sometimes literally, inverts these spaces. Feile Tomes’s version has sought to highlight the visual element, opting for a crisp, pared-down style that echoes the character and pace of Sánchez’s writing.

Nicole Centofanti translates into Italian two pieces by Argentinian writer Ana María Shua, ‘Peleas familiares’ (2013, *Family Quarrels*) and ‘Las dos mitades’ (2000, *Two Halves*). Both stories feature circus characters, prompting reflection on just how similar our seemingly humdrum lives are to the extremes of absurdity we feel shielded against by ‘normality’. Centofanti’s note illustrates the need for the translation to depart from literal renderings to preserve meaning and tone.

We hope you will enjoy this issue.

Monica Boria and Ángeles Carreres, September 2025

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MAYTE BLASCO

Translated from the Spanish into English by Rowan Stamp

Vida nueva

La familia, reunida en torno a la mesa, roza sus copas de champán y piensa en sus deseos de año nuevo. La abuela, que rivaliza con sus amigas por ver quién tiene más nietos, desea que su nuera y su hijo tengan un bebé. Está complicado, pues su nuera está a punto de cumplir cuarenta y cinco años, pero ella no pierde la esperanza de tener otro nieto que haga algo de compañía a Pedrito. Este, que ya es un adolescente de trece años, no quiere saber nada de hermanos. Su único deseo de año nuevo es poder dar su primer beso a una chica. Su padre, escritor aficionado, sueña con encontrar una editorial que publique su novela, mientras que la madre lo único que desea es conservar su matrimonio y que la familia no se rompa. Mientras sonríen y se abrazan, ignoran que el año nuevo no traerá ningún nieto a la familia. Pedrito vivirá su primera decepción amorosa al ser rechazado por la chica que le gusta. El padre no encontrará ninguna editorial que quiera publicar su mierda de novela y, por si fuera poco, recibirá por correo electrónico una foto de su mujer acostándose con otro hombre que supondrá el fin de su relación. Sin embargo, nada de eso importa ahora: bajo el efecto del alcohol y el pitido de los matasuegras, todos piensan que es fin de año, la noche en la que dicen que todo comienza.

A new life

Gathered around the table, the family clinks their champagne glasses together and thinks about their New Year's wishes. The grandmother, who competes with her friends to see who will have the most grandchildren, wishes for her son and daughter-in-law to have a baby. Although this is unlikely, as her daughter-in-law is about to turn forty-five, she has still not lost hope of having another grandchild to give little Pedro some company. But little Pedro, now a thirteen-year-old teenager, does not want a new baby brother or sister. His only New Year's wish is to have his first kiss with a girl. The father, an aspiring writer, dreams of finding a publisher for his novel, while the only things the mother wishes to do are to save her marriage and to stop her family from falling apart. As they smile and hug each other, they fail to realise that the new year will not bring another grandchild to the family. Little Pedro will have his first heartbreak when he gets rejected by the girl he likes. The father will not find a single publisher willing to publish his shitty novel and, to add insult to injury, he will receive an email with a photo of his wife in bed with another man, putting an end to their relationship. But none of that matters now: feeling the buzz of alcohol and party horns, they all think that New Year's Eve is the night of new beginnings, so they say.

Context

'Vida nueva' is a work of microfiction, as of yet unpublished in print, uploaded by Mayte Blasco onto her blog, *El Blog de Mae*, in December 2021.

Like much of her literary output – Blasco herself has stated that 'almost everything [she has] written over the course of [her] life has dealt either directly or indirectly with the theme of familial relationships' (2024, my translation) –, 'Vida nueva' depicts a family in crisis, which is used as a springboard from which to explore complex emotions and realities. In the first half of the microfiction, the fictional yet verisimilar family in question is celebrating New Year's Eve, making their wishes and convincing themselves that the New Year will mark the beginning of a 'new life' and bring them some better luck.

However, no such reversal of fortune occurs; through her use of irony and her tragicomic tone, Blasco encourages her readers to acknowledge the futility of this practice and derides the perception of the New Year as a time of renewal and positive change, as all the family members' nightmare scenarios, such as the parents' marriage breaking down as a result of the mother's infidelity, and the father's failure in his attempts to get his poor-quality novel published, inevitably play out. Furthermore, perhaps owing in part to Blasco's decision to refer to the majority of the characters in general terms, such as 'la abuela' (the grandmother) rather than giving them specific identities, and in part to the fact that the New Year is celebrated by virtually every culture in the world and associated with new beginnings, 'Vida nueva' is relatable and universally generalisable.

'Vida nueva' has been positively received by Blasco's readers, with many of them praising its humour and realism in the comments section of her blog.

Translator's note

My overall approach to translating 'Vida nueva' sought to render it in fluid and idiomatic English prose while maintaining its irony and tragicomic tone, considered by Blasco as defining characteristics of this work; as such, I opted for a faithful but not literal translation, keeping close to the source text. This can be gleaned throughout the translated text, such as in my translation of 'decepción amorosa' as 'heartbreak' and replication of Blasco's use of semantic syllepsis in 'bajo el efecto del alcohol y el pitido de las matasuegras' by translating it as 'feeling the buzz of alcohol and party horns' despite having to paraphrase and alter its syntax slightly.

I initially considered deviating from the source text slightly when translating the phrase 'mierda de novela', as I was aware that I was translating 'Vida nueva' for a more formal context than the one in which it was originally published, requiring a higher register. I identified 'god-awful' as a potential translation for 'mierda', as it also conveys the humorous and deprecating tone which Blasco uses to make fun of the father's false hope. However, upon further reflection, I decided that it was better to translate 'mierda' as 'shitty'; despite being the less pejorative of my two options, the literal translation better captures Blasco's light-hearted ridiculing, as it can be read as a throwaway insult rather than a heavily charged, malicious one.

Finally, due to the lack of temporal markers other than references of New Year's Eve, 'Vida nueva' could arguably be read as both a dramatised narration of a past event or as a commentary of a general phenomenon, as the present indicative tense is used for both purposes in Spanish; however, in formal English prose, it is only used for the latter (Butt and Benjamin, 2013: 203-4), thus mandating the loss of temporal ambiguity in my translation. Ultimately, I found it necessary to maintain Blasco's original choice of tenses – present indicative and future – and thus allow for the irony to be communicated more effectively.

I would like to thank Mayte Blasco herself for taking the time to answer my questions about 'Vida nueva' and her work more broadly, which has helped contextualise it and inform some of the translation choices that I made. I am also grateful to my friend and classmate Isabel Neate for introducing me to her work, and to the Pietrisco reviewers for their comments.

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MASSIMO GERARDO CARRESE

Translated from the Italian into English by Rosabel Green

Il cervo è io

Che ero in montagna e non c'era nessuno. C'eravamo solo io e un cervo e il silenzio. Non è che io fossi andato lì con il cervo è che il cervo è saltato fuori dal bosco e si è trovato a duecento metri da me e io da lui. Eravamo equidistanti. Se io mi spostavo erano duecentodieci metri per me e duecentodieci metri per lui se lui restava fermo. Se anche lui si spostava allora dovevamo ricalcolare le nostre distanze ma eravamo comunque sempre equidistanti a prescindere se a spostarmi ero io o il cervo. Ero già in sintonia con il cervo. Allora mi sono fermato e ho fatto finta di non vedere il cervo e che pure il cervo ha fatto finta di non vedermi e che lui faceva piano per andarsene da dietro ai cespugli e che già non eravamo più equidistanti perché dai duecentodiecimetri ora lui era distante da me più di me ma era sempre la stessa distanza da me solo che equidistanti mi fa pensare all'equino e non al cervo ma volevo dire che lui si muoveva e io no, comunque sempre equidistanti eravamo è chiaro questo, non è che se io mi sposto e tu no io sono più lontano da te. Cioè sì sono più lontano da te ma siamo sempre alla stessa distanza. Ecco perché si chiamano le relazioni a distanza perché comunque non cambiano anche se lei vive a Pistoia e tu a Molfetta non è che poi lei è più lontana da te che però la gente ti dice sempre uh ma lei è così lontana da te come fai a sopportare una relazione a distanza e io poi devo spiegare che non è una relazione a distanza ma è una relazione equidistante e che seppure io andassi a Pistoia a fare l'amore con lei comunque avremmo una relazione più ravvicinata ma sempre equidistante ma dicevo del cervo e io facevo che guardavo da un altro lato così lui pensava che io non lo vedevo e che non fosse visto e che io penso che lui non mi vedeva e che non sono visto neanche da lui. Hai visto il cervo? Dove?

The stag is I

That I was in the mountains, on my own. It was just me, and a stag, and silence. It's not like I went there with the stag – the stag jumped out from behind the bushes and ended up like two hundred metres away from me. And me from him. Equidistant. Like, if I moved, it would have been two hundred and ten metres for me and two hundred and ten metres for him if he stayed still. And if he moved as well, well then we would have to recalculate our distances. But we would still be equally far from each other – no matter which one of us moved. I was in sync with the stag already. So, I stopped and I pretended not to see the stag and that the stag was pretending not to see me and that he was gonna leave behind the bushes and that we weren't equidistant anymore because, now, he was more than two-hundred-and-ten metres away from me. But it was actually still the same distance, it's just that "equidistant" makes me think about equids, not about deer. Anyway – as I was saying – he was moving and I wasn't, but we were still clearly equidistant. It's not like if I move but you don't then I'm further away

from you. I mean yes, I am further away from you, but we're always equally distant from each other. Like, that's why we call them long-distance relationships – because even if she lives in Pistoia and you live in Molfetta, it's not like she's any more distant from you than you are from her. But then people always say to you ughh, she's so far away, y'know, how can you handle being in a long-distance relationship? and then I keep having to explain that a long-distance relationship is still an equidistant relationship, like, even if I went to Pistoia to make love to her, sure we'd be closer together, but it would still be equidistant. But, anyway, back to the stag. I looked the other way so he thought that I couldn't see him and that he hadn't been seen, and so that he thought that I thought that he hadn't seen me and that I hadn't been seen by him. Have you seen the stag? Where?

Context

'Il cervo è io' is a work of micronarration found in Massimo Gerardo Carrese's *SpuntiSunti* (déclic edizioni, 2024), a collection of pieces born from the author's fascination with number games, anagrams and the mental mechanics of imagination, and developed over the past 15 years.

The text primarily explores the layers of imagination and speculation we move through when we reach for a fleeting idea, which Carrese depicts as a stag. The piece's focus on the distance between narrator and stag alludes to the conceptual space between an unstable idea and its concrete realisation. The dangers and possibilities inherent in this space are revealed as the narrator ponders it, his digression on the semantics of 'equidistant' causing him to lose sight of his original idea but bringing new insight into the 'equally distant' nature of human relationships.

The nature of silence and its role in stimulating the imagination also emerges as a key theme. We are told early in the text that the narrator finds himself in silence, and yet the narrative is anything but that; noisy, dynamic and multifaceted. The quiet of the forest intensifies the narrator's internal monologue, drawing out his imaginative process. This resonates with Carrese's working practice; as he shared with me in an email (2025), he spends much of his time walking and thinking, and as his inner voice fills the silence around him, he finds that imagination and observation become entwined.

The notion of imagination also informs the piece's narrative form. Carrese's work is deliberately agrammatical, refusing to be restricted to the confines of acceptable grammar. The prescriptive standards of written language do not apply to the language of imagination, the narrator's vehicle for exploring the text's central ideas. The narrative, although not a stream of consciousness in the strict sense, captures the dynamism of 'thought language' with its own distinct value. The resulting text is confusing but not incomprehensible; highly conceptual and yet deliberately underdeveloped, with sentences whose syntax is as dynamic as the imagination driving them. As such, it benefits from being read aloud, synthesised by the reader's own dynamic thought processes.

Translator's note

My approach to this translation developed over three drafts. The first was literal; an exercise in understanding the original text. With the second, I sought to refine, but I found myself imposing an inappropriate 'correctness' upon the piece. It read as terse and overwrought, lacking the qualities of authentic 'thought language'.

My third draft took a new approach. I was partly inspired by Carrese's creative process, which I learned – thanks to email exchanges – involved paying attention to his stream of consciousness and preserving it in writing. It was also influenced by sharing my second draft with another translator; as we spoke, I found myself explaining sections of the piece by verbally rephrasing them in a more natural way. And so arose my final approach: I spoke the story of the stag as it came to my mind and recorded it, comparing it to my written translation, then re-recording and reworking the piece.

Resulting filler words (such as 'like') and non-standard choices (such as 'And me from him') reflect what is acceptable to our 'thought grammar' – or at least mine, the only thought grammar I can authentically represent. In the original Italian, some non-standard structures are also included to create ambiguity, such as when the narrator 'h[a] fatto finta [...] che pure il cervo ha fatto finta'. The lack of subjunctive creates confusion around a supposedly 'pretend' action that the stag takes, a confusion that cannot be rendered fully in English.

Punctuation in the original Italian is minimal, but I found its addition necessary in some cases. I replaced some conjunctions with punctuation – for example the hyphen replacing 'è che' – and in the opening sentences I inserted commas for the sake of rhythm, which felt in keeping with their clarity and simplicity in the original Italian. However, to maintain the oscillation between moments of clarity and long, unchecked digressions, which gives the piece much of its dynamism, I have left longer and denser sentences largely unpunctuated. That said, I have added some sentence breaks where they aid comprehension, given the relative lack of syntactic freedom in English.

FABRÍCIO CORSALETTI

Translated from the Portuguese into English by Sophie Lewis

Fumaça

Eu e minha irmã gostávamos de cheirar fumaça de caminhão. Não sei de onde tiramos essa ideia. Não era moda entre a molecada do bairro. O fato é que se um dos dois ouvia o barulho de um caminhão subindo a rua, gritava “caminhão, caminhão!”, e imediatamente corríamos pra varanda e, de mãos dadas, esperávamos. Quando o caminhão passava em frente de casa, íamos pro meio da rua, atrás do caminhão, diante do escapamento, e cheirávamos com vontade – até a esquina pulando e rindo feito loucos – a nuvem de fumaça preta. Nunca contamos isso pra ninguém. Tínhamos vergonha desse prazer meio nojento. Hoje acho que fomos corajosos. Que foi graças àquela fumaça no sangue que suportamos o que viria depois.

Smoke

My sister and I used to like sniffing lorry exhaust fumes. I don't know where we got the idea. It wasn't a cool thing that all the local kids were doing. Just if one of us heard a lorry come grinding up the road, we'd shout: 'Lorry, lorry!' and both race straight to the veranda, where we'd wait for it, hand-in-hand. When the lorry was about to drive past the house, we'd run into the middle of the street, up by the exhaust, and we'd be sucking in the cloud of black smoke behind it like gourmets, a skipping, grinning pair of maniacs, all the way to the corner. We never told anyone. We were embarrassed by our rather disgusting predilection. These days I think we were audacious. That it was thanks to the black smoke in our blood that we were able to handle what happened after.

Marquesa

A marquesa saiu às cinco horas. O sr. Valéry saiu às 17h01. Às 17h12 estavam os dois no mesmo café. A marquesa sentou à mesa em que se encontravam a duquesa e a baronesa e, juntas, falaram mal da condessa, que estava feliz da vida com o novo amante, um jovem oficial da Marinha de bigode loiro. O sr. Valéry sentou sozinho, mas logo se fez acompanhar pelo fantasma de Mallarmé, a quem confessou alguns de seus problemas, como por exemplo o incômodo que os suspensórios lhe causavam — tinha sempre a impressão que uma alça era mais curta que a outra. Tentou falar também de filosofia, mas Mallarmé não embarcou na conversa; depois de morto tinha perdido o interesse por assuntos abstratos. Quando a marquesa foi ao banheiro, passou muito perto do sr. Valéry, que só conhecia de nome. “Pas mal”, pensou, “melhor do que eu imaginava.” O sr. Valéry não reparou na marquesa. (Ao contrário de Mallarmé, que babou feito um fauno à visão de seus braços rechonchudos.) Às 19h45 o sr. Valéry pediu a conta e foi embora, pois tinha o hábito de dormir cedo. Já a marquesa só chegou em

casa às 8h21 da manhã seguinte, com uma baguete quentinha acomodada entre as alças da bolsa e um meio sorriso nos lábios desbotados.

Marquise

The Marquise went out at five o'clock. Valéry went out a minute later. By 17:12 they were both in the same café. The Marquise joined the table where the Duchess and Baroness were sitting and, together, they all slagged off the Countess, who was pleased as punch with her new lover, a young officer in the Marines with a blond moustache. Valéry sat by himself, but he soon called up the spectre of Mallarmé, to whom he confided a few of his problems, for example, how uncomfortable he felt wearing trouser braces – he always suspected that one brace was shorter than the other. He also tried discussing philosophy, but Mallarmé wasn't buying this chat; since dying he'd lost interest in abstract ideas. When the Marquise went to the toilet, she passed very close to Valéry, whom she only knew by name. '*Pas mal*,' she judged; 'Better than I pictured him.' Valéry did not notice the Marquise. (Unlike Mallarmé, who drooled like a satyr at the sight of her plump arms.) At 19:45, being in the habit of going to bed early, Valéry got the bill and went home. Whereas the Marquise only arrived home at 08:21 the next morning, with a nice warm baguette tucked between the straps of her handbag and a hint of a smile on her faded lips.

Pasaigem

Um rio sujo. Sacos de lixo e copos de plástico na correnteza. Na margem direita, o mercado de peixes. Na margem esquerda, um posto de gasolina abandonado e uma casa de madeira, pintada de vermelho há muito tempo, prestes a desmoronar. Lá embaixo um barco de pesca sem ninguém dentro. O ar é úmido e pegajoso. O cheiro não é dos melhores. Um desses lugares desolados do Brasil, que fazem você se sentir podre por dentro. Quando uma garça pousa no corrimão da ponte – seu branco é vibrante, quase fosforescente –, a paisagem inteira parece querer se transformar. Mas essa ilusão dura menos que um susto. Penso na força que perdemos, que perdi.

Landscape

A filthy river. Bags of rubbish and plastic cups in the current. On the right bank, the fish market. On the left, an abandoned petrol station and a wooden house, once painted red, long ago, now on the verge of collapse. Below the house, a fishing boat with no one in it. The air is humid and sticky. The smell is not the most savoury. One of those desolate parts of Brazil that make you feel rotten inside. When a heron lands on the handrail of the bridge – the white of it is dazzling, almost phosphorescent – the entire landscape feels ready for transformation. But that illusion is briefer than the beat of a shock. I think about the strength we are losing, that I have lost.

Context

Perambule (Editora 34, 2018), the collection of *crônicas* from which my three translated pieces are taken, has just been republished this year in its entirety by Editora 34, the new edition including another collection of *crônicas* and some unpublished prose pieces, and the whole new collection being titled *Um milhão de ruas*. The two collections' titles, meaning respectively 'on the move' and 'a million streets', point towards Fabrício Corsaletti's principal concerns. He is a poet of modernity, in the Baudelairean sense – a poet of the city. What's more, everything urban is worth his sustained attention. As he says in one piece, '*Eu amava todas as cidades, mesmo as horríveis*' (I loved all cities, even the awful ones). He is in fact mainly a poet, having stated: '*Meu negócio é poesia. Escrevo prosa só de vez em quando*' (My thing is poetry. I only write prose now and then). But his nonetheless substantial prose corpus is alive with the humour and lyricism, as well as the penchant for divagation and the unexpected, that are trademarks of his poetry. His prose works could make an extension of the poetry, in the Baudelairean mould: something of a *Spleen de Paris* to his *Fleurs du mal*. He is a flaneur of São Paulo – a patently unwalkable city for most – hence the thirst for movement that impels the characters in *Perambule* (On the Move), which contains sixty of his most recent short texts, as well as some short and flash-fiction pieces. A confirmed drifter, Corsaletti invents the most varied journeys, among the streets of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Paris and Amsterdam, flying over his native town with a drone or exploring the world via Google Earth, treading the tarmac of these great metropolises but also the beaten earth paths of his childhood.

Translator's note

Translating Corsaletti meant getting under the skin of his discursive, lyrically-minded protagonists. For 'Marquesa' (Marquise), I had Corsaletti in mind as a Baudelaire for our times and his places. The piece is a dig at Parisian literary conventions. Specifically, it was Paul Valéry who mocked realist conventions by saying all novels might begin with a line as banal as 'The marquise went out at 5 o'clock.' Here, Valéry and the Marquise meet in a café, with the nobs at one table and key fin-de-siècle poets at another. The key to translating this was to keep it light. I paid attention to period accoutrements but also followed Corsaletti's style, mixing in 21st-century diction to point up the absurdity. The mixture of high- and low-register diction was crucial.

A strong sense of place is essential to Corsaletti's method. In Brazil, the old lorries produce the most noxious black smoke, far worse than what we get in Europe. For this piece I recreated some of the alliteration of the Portuguese via sounds of disgust – with the 'k's through 'sucking in the cloud of black smoke' – and of fantasy and play – supplementing further 'k' sounds with 'g's and 'n's in 'like gourmets, a skipping, grinning pair of maniacs.' In the final lines, the hilarity and childish yuckiness of this piece turn much darker, and here I followed the Portuguese closely. My 'what happened after' matches Corsaletti's 'o que viria depois' not only word-for-word but also in the sense that conventional grammar makes the sentence feel unfinished.

I know São Paulo fairly well too. It is a mega-city with an originating river hidden at its heart. This is where I imagined 'Paisagem' (Landscape) to be set. For this piece I turned to Mallarmé (also summoned in 'Marquesa'). Mallarmé's motifs of swans and whiteness,

both white birds and the blank page, were pertinent. I highlighted the heron's evanescence, and also that the vision was so brief it might never have been there at all. Is it a stretch too far to hear 'un coup de dés' in 'the beat of a shock'?

M. CARME MARÍ

Translated from the Catalan into English by Isabel Neate

Tocats per la fortuna

Agafant un cafè a la feina, només arribar, li explica a la seva companya:

–Aquest matí gairebé surto de casa sense el meu amulet de la sort. Era al replà quan me n’he adonat i he tornat enrere a buscar-lo. He baixat corrents cap a la parada del bus i se m’ha escapat pels pèls. He esperat el següent i, mentre venia, ha caigut un xàfec d’aquells ben intensos. En pujar-hi ràpid per deixar de mullar-me, se m’ha enganxat el vestit a la porta i tinc una vora penjant, tot i que no s’ha acabat de trencar. Segur que la meva preciosa pedra m’hi ha ajudat. A més, amb l’aiguat la targeta de transport ha quedat inservible. El xofer em deia que se li feia impossible llegir els viatges gastats i he hagut de comprar el bitllet. Hem parlat una mica, era molt simpàtic. Li he comentat la sort que em porta aquest amulet tan especial. Després, en moure’m endavant ja no hi havia seients lliures, però m’ha anat bé estar dempeus que aquí em passo el dia asseguda... Què et sembla, a tu t’agrada, Roser? –i en posar la mà a la bossa per ensenyar-li, no el troba i veu que la cadeneta on el tenia s’havia obert. –Oh, qui sap on serà? Potser mostrant-lo quan he pagat ha caigut? Què faré ara sense ell?

La Roser s’ha quedat immòbil al costat de la finestra, des d’on està veient, horroritzada, l’accident que ha tingut l’autobús fa uns moments. Un camió de gran tonatge ha xocat contra la zona del volant, deixant-la com un acordió. Si el conductor no ha pogut sortir-ne a temps...

Struck by Luck

Upon arriving, she grabs a coffee at work, and she recounts to her colleague:

“This morning, I almost left the house without my lucky charm. I was on the landing when I realised and ran back in to look for it. I dashed down to the bus stop and just missed it, by a split second. I waited for the next one and, as it was approaching, the heavens opened. As I hurried on board the bus to stop getting drenched, my dress got trapped in the door and now a flap of the fabric is hanging loose, though it hasn’t ripped off completely. I was positive my precious stone had helped me out. On top of that, the rain had ruined my bus pass. The driver said he was having trouble making out how many journeys I had left on it, so I’d have to buy a new ticket. We chatted a little and he was really nice. I was telling him about the luck this rather special charm brings me. Then, as I moved further along the bus, there were no more free seats left, but standing up worked out in my favour because I spend the whole day here sitting down anyway... What do you think, Roser? Do you like it?”

As she reaches into her bag to show her, she cannot find it and notices the chain it was attached to had unfastened. “Oh, who knows where it could be now? Maybe it fell when I showed it off while paying! What am I going to do without it?”

Roser remains stationary beside the window, and horrified, she gazes out to observe the accident the bus had been involved in moments before. A large truck crashed into the driver’s side, leaving it crumpled up into pleats like an accordion. If the driver could not manage to get out in time...

Context

M. Carme Marí writes microfiction in both Catalan and Spanish on her online blog. Published on her blog in 2024, *Tocats per la fortuna* was her submission to the eighth edition of the *Concurs ARC de Microrelats* (The Association of Catalan Storytellers’ Microfiction Competition). The publication has one overarching theme – which was ‘luck’ from November 2022 to May 2023 – and authors may present a piece of microfiction pertaining to different subthemes on a monthly basis. Marí entered *Tocats per la fortuna* under the subtheme of *L’amulet* (Talisman) in January 2023.

Tocats per la fortuna centres on the exchange between a woman and her coworker, portraying a seemingly mundane interaction in the workplace. The narrative recounts a woman’s increasingly unfortunate journey to work. Her coworker, Roser, appears distracted throughout, as she watches the scenes of a road traffic accident – a collision between a truck and a bus – unfold outside. The story is laced with irony, as it recounts a woman’s retrieval of her lucky charm – only to have misfortune pursue her all the way to work. Marí crafts a narrative that is evasive, ironic and subtly unsettling; ultimately, she fosters a sense of intrigue in *Tocats per la fortuna*. While this could be testament to the constraints of the microfiction form, this appears to be a deliberate choice from the author, because the reader must resort to drawing their own conclusions and, to a certain extent, assume the role of detective, to ascertain the specifics which Marí decides against sharing.

Translator’s note

I decided to translate this piece of microfiction because I liked how the narrative was embedded into speech, and then how the third-person narration adds an ironic layer. Since the story centres on a woman’s monologue, I opted for a more conversational tone, relying on more informal figures of speech like ‘by a split second’ for *se m’ha escapat pels pèls*, and ‘on top of that’ for *a més*, to retain the natural, cohesive flow of the woman’s account of her journey to work. At the same time, I aimed to give the third-person narration a more literary tone to firmly differentiate this from the main body of speech.

Perhaps owing to the brevity of microfiction, Marí seems to withhold from the readers concrete details about the characters’ identities, the story’s setting and about the bus crash itself. The reader is denied access to specifics – from character relationships, to

location, and even with the bus crash at the end of the story – and therefore the translator must navigate this ambiguity while preserving the thematic tension of the story. This purposeful ambiguity lends itself well to generating suspense, especially emphasised by beginning the story *in medias res* – a strategy that immediately situates the reader within closer proximity to the place and characters; this is also something I have endeavoured to retain in my translation. As a translator, this has presented me with the challenge of conveying a meaningful characterisation – with no information readily available apart from the name of Roser for one of the women – and atmosphere, all while respecting the author’s evident predilection for the other character’s anonymity.

When translating the title, I wanted to reflect the theme of chance (luck) and foreshadow the story’s ending (the bus being struck). I settled on ‘Struck by luck’ as it epitomises the stylistic impact of the original text, through rhyme and wordplay.

References

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CRISTINA PASQUA

Translated from the Italian into English by Monica Boria with the collaboration of Marcus Tomalin

finestre

In balcone Lidia soffiava fuori il fumo, seduta in bilico su uno sgabello, le gambe irrefrenabili, un movimento continuo, ritmato.

I capelli si erano fatti radi, lo sguardo spento. Quando parlava, sembrava cercasse di far emergere le parole da un buco profondo, una cantina umida e inospitale. A fatica riusciva a tirarle fuori, odoravano di muffa, di stantio, di infelicità. Fingeva il quotidiano, la regolarità, i sorrisi, le cicche spente con dovizia, i saluti. Il susseguirsi di giorno e notte la stava mangiando un pezzo alla volta. Se ne era accorta, la dirimpettaia, allungando lo sguardo. Una mattina le mancava un sopracciglio, il giorno dopo aveva perso una mano. Svanire era la sua rovina.

Malessere si era impossessato della casa, si rifletteva nelle luci innaturali che allagavano la cucina, si affacciava sui balconi spogli, si posava sui mobili scuri. Non aveva nessuno con cui scambiarsi il dolore. Covava dentro, affondava radici. Un grumo di tristezza le piegava le spalle, le teneva sempre chiuse come le ante di un armadio. Se si provava a sbirciarci dentro, si leggeva paura.

Suo marito aveva voce di catrame, nera e appiccicosa. Quando urlava, tutti gli angoli, le fughe, gli interstizi erano travolti da una colata di rancore. Ai tempi Lidia aveva già perso il braccio sinistro, la bocca conservava solo il labbro superiore, l'arcata dentale aveva fatto una fine buia. Nell'oblio di bocca e denti, stava zitta, fumava in silenzio e guardava con l'unico occhio rimasto, il destro, appannato ma ancora vigile.

Il giorno che erano volate parole sbieche, la bocca di lui si era mossa senza quasi emettere suono, fino a quando la rabbia era tracimata veloce nei canali di scolo a ridosso del marciapiede. Un colpo di taglio ben assestato l'aveva fatta barcollare, perché nel frattempo aveva anche perso l'appoggio dell'anca e del piede sinistro.

Lidia era rientrata in casa a testa bassa, lui l'aveva seguita. Avevano chiuso le finestre, le serrande elettriche erano scese come una ghigliottina.

Poi era stato silenzio. Giorni e giorni di ovatta. Non si sentiva un fiato, né un pianto, né un gemito, solo un'assenza di colla nella casa sigillata.

Dopo pochi giorni, lui era uscito dal cancello con una valigia in mano. Lidia in quel breve lasso di tempo aveva smarrito seni e scapole e nei giorni a venire aveva ripreso a ritagliarsi tempo per fumare in balcone, le gambe, in parte riapparso, di nuovo incontrollabili.

Nonostante tutto, aveva continuato a svanire. A intervalli regolari, riacquistava un braccio, ma perdeva l'ombelico, ritrovava la caviglia sinistra, ma il polso destro non c'era più. E così i capelli, ancora più radi, le orbite vuote per non incontrare sguardi altrui, i gomiti sempre più stretti, nel tentativo di conservare il ventre.

windows

On the balcony, Lidia breathed out smoke into the air, teetering on a stool, her legs irrepressible, in a ceaseless, rhythmic twitching.

Her hair had grown thin, her gaze dim. When she spoke, it was as though she were dredging words up from a deep hole, a dank and inhospitable basement. The words emerged with effort, heavy with the smell of mould, of staleness, of sorrow. She faked normality, the rituals of daily routine, the smiles, the cigarettes stubbed out with precision, the greetings. The endless cycle of day and night was eating her away, bit by bit. She had begun to notice, the neighbour, watching from a distance across the street. One morning an eyebrow was gone, the day after a hand. She was fading away, and that was her downfall.

Unease had taken hold of her home; it gleamed in the unnatural lights that flooded the kitchen, peered out from bare balconies, settled like dust on the dark furniture. She had no one to share her pain with. It festered inside her, rooted deep. A hump of misery hunched her shoulders, shutting them tight like wardrobe doors. And if you dared to peek inside, fear was evident.

Her husband's voice was thick with tar, black and sticky. When he shouted, every corner, every crack, every crevice was overwhelmed by a flow of resentment. By then, Lidia had already lost her left arm; her mouth retained only the upper lip, her dental arch had ended badly. In the abeyance of mouth and teeth, she kept quiet, smoked in silence, and watched through the only eye she had left – her right – hazy, but still alert.

On the day twisted words began to fly, his mouth moved, barely making a sound, until rage spilled out swiftly into the gutter's edge skirting the pavement. A sharp, well-placed blow knocked her off balance, because by that stage she had already lost the anchor of her hip and left foot.

Lidia had slipped back inside, head lowered, and he had followed. They had shut the windows, the electric blinds had dropped like a guillotine.

Then came silence. Days and days of muffled hush. Not a whisper, not a wail, not a whimper, only the absence of glue in a tight-sealed house.

A few days later, he walked out through the gate, suitcase in hand. In that brief span, Lidia had lost her breasts and shoulder blades. In the days that followed, she began to make time again to smoke on the balcony, her legs, partly returned, once more uncontrollable.

And yet, she kept on fading. At regular intervals, a limb would reappear, perhaps an arm, while the navel would slip away. She would recover her left ankle only to lose her right wrist. And so it went on – her hair ever thinner, eye sockets emptied, to avoid meeting the gaze of others, her elbows pulled in tighter and tighter, in an attempt to retain her womb.

s'arrossa l'aria

C'è un momento della sera in cui l'aria si macchia di rosso, ogni gesto appassisce, si ritira, muore.

“E allora che fai?”

Serio stringe tra le mani il collo di una bottiglia. Rigido, male avanza con la destra e la sinistra segue a fatica.

“Vattene a casa, Serio. Sei pisto come l'uva.”

“Semprini fatti li cazzi tua.”

Era d'estate e mietitura, quando il Colletti al tramonto era sceso al campo ubriaco fradicio e, durante una manovra, lo aveva tirato sotto con il trattore. Come stai, come stai, come stai, ripeteva, il volante stretto tra le dita, gli occhi infuocati di paura nel retrovisore, in corsa verso l'ospedale.

Quando la scritta rossa aveva preso corpo, il Colletti aveva inchiodato, era sceso sgambato, mulinando le braccia, ed era corso ad aprire la portiera. Suo figlio era solo un ragazzino sdraiato sul sedile posteriore, sembrava addormentato, la stessa posizione di quando con la 128 si imbarcavano per il mare, l'Elide ancora viva, la frittata di pasta tra due piatti stretti da un canovaccio a fiori. Serio era svenuto dopo la seconda curva, mentre il sangue fluiva dalla gamba squarciata, solo un lembo di pelle a tenerla insieme al resto. Era arrivato mezzo dissanguato, erano stati costretti ad amputargli la sinistra ad altezza coscia. La protesi di legno, sgraziata, il piede stretto e appuntito, era arrivata solo anni dopo, quando il vuoto di gamba era ormai pieno di ricordi: Serio che correva a perdifiato, i pedali impazziti sulla scesa di breccetta, e giù, in fondo, fino al mulino, le gambe a mollo nel fiume, la brina del mattino a strusciargli le caviglie di brividi, i pantaloni corti, la cartella a segare le spalle, la tracina che lo aveva pizzicato al mare, l'Elide pronta con l'ammoniaca e il Colletti che rideva a bocca larga e gli dava dei nomi, cacasotto, scimunito, stringi i denti, tutto passa.

Non l'ho visto, giuro non l'ho visto, aveva ripetuto il Colletti, la saliva raggrumata agli angoli della bocca, lo sguardo sgualcito di paura, le mani sporche di grasso agitate come a scacciare mosche invisibili, l'aveva ripetuto fino a notte fonda, quando un portantino era uscito a fumare e l'odore acre di Nazionali si era appropriato della sala d'attesa al suo rientro, aveva continuato davanti all'infermiera che era sfilata silenziosa dietro il vetro di protezione scuotendo la testa. Alla fine, con gli occhi di sabbia a forza di piangere, si era appisolato su una panca di formica e si era fatto mattino.

“Te la spacco quella faccia, Sempri’. Levati di mezzo.” Si era dovuto appoggiare al bancone per non finire a terra, aveva sbattuto il pugno. “Versami un Fernet, Ovi” aveva detto trascinando lingua e gamba marcia e quello non aveva perso tempo.

Ogni sera la stessa storia. Serio che entra, Serio che si scola una boccia di grappa, Serio che si siede e gioca a tresette con Perazzi, Maioli e Coricelli, Maioli che come sempre bara, Serio che si alza e inizia a tirar giù cristi, fino a che non gli mette le mani addosso, e Semprini, il socio di Ovidio si mette in mezzo e cerca di farlo ragionare. Serio che come ogni sera si mette a piangere, si lascia andare su una sedia e smonta la protesi e fa vedere a tutti quello che resta della gamba sua e maledice il Colletti, il secondo marito di sua madre, quel buono a nulla che ha fatto marcire la gamba, la campagna tutta e morire l’Elide di crepacuore. Ogni sera la stessa storia, quando il cielo s’arrossa e Serio esce di casa, percorre la scesa lungo muro, le mani a scivolare sulle pietre, una cena veloce a casa della zia e ancora due passi fino al bar, dove ogni sera un po’ muore.

the air reddens

There’s a moment in the evening when the air is stained red, every gesture wilts, pulls back, dies.

“So what are you gonna do then?”

Serio grips the neck of a bottle in his hands. Rigid, his right hand moves forward awkwardly, the left struggles to follow.

“Go home, Serio. You’re hammered.”

“Mind your own fucking business, Semprini.”

It was summer, during the harvest, when Colletti came down to the field at sunset, totally wasted, and while manoeuvring, he ran him over with the tractor.

How are you, how are you, how are you?, he kept repeating, hands clutching the steering wheel tight, eyes burning with fear in the rear-view mirror, speeding towards the hospital.

When the red writing took shape, Colletti slammed on the brakes, leapt out, arms flailing, and rushed to open the car door. His son was just a lad, lying on the back seat. He looked asleep—the same pose he’d take when they loaded into the FIAT 128 for the seaside, when Elide was still alive, with the pasta omelette wrapped between two plates held tight by a floral tea towel. Serio had passed out after the second bend, while blood poured from his gashed leg. Only a flap of skin holding it to the rest. He arrived half-drained, and they had no choice but to amputate above the thigh.

The wooden prosthesis came years later – clumsy, with a narrow, pointed foot – by then the missing leg was filled with memories: Serio running flat out, pedals spinning madly down the gravel slope, down to the mill, legs dangling in the river, morning frost brushing his ankles into shivers, short trousers, school satchel biting his shoulders, the

weever fish that stung him at the beach, Elide ready with the ammonia, and Colletti laughing wide-mouthed, calling him names: wimp, idiot, grit your teeth, it'll pass.

I didn't see him, I swear I didn't, Colletti kept saying, saliva caked in the corners of his mouth, his face crumpled with fear, grease-stained hands waving as if to swat invisible flies. He kept repeating it until the small hours, when a hospital porter went out for a smoke and the acrid stench of *Nazionali* permeated the waiting room when he came back in. He kept going, even in front of the nurse who glided silently behind the protective glass, shaking her head. In the end, with eyes dry from so much crying, he dozed off on a Formica bench, and then it was morning.

"I'll smash your face in, Sempri'. Get out of my way." He had to lean on the counter to stop himself collapsing, and he slammed his fist down. "Pour me a *Fernet, Ovi*," he slurred, dragging both his tongue and his bad leg, and Ovidio didn't hesitate.

Every night, the same story. Serio walks in, knocks back a bottle of *grappa*, sits down to play *tresette* with Perazzi, Maioli, and Coricelli. Maioli, as always, cheats. Serio gets up, starts cursing to high heaven, and then duffs him up. Semprini, Ovidio's business partner, steps in, tries to calm him down. As he does every evening, Serio breaks down crying, slumps into a chair, removes his prosthesis and shows everyone what's left of his leg, damning Colletti – his mother's second husband – that useless sod who let his leg rot, ruined the land, and broke Elide's heart until it killed her.

Every evening, it's the same story: when the sky reddens and Serio leaves the house, makes his way down the slope along the wall, hands brushing the stone, he has a quick supper at his aunt's, and then walks to the bar, where every evening, a little more of him dies.

Context

The microtexts presented here were published online in 2023: *s'arrossa l'aria* was included in the literary blog multiperso, run by Carlo Sperduti, while *finestre* appeared in the literary magazine *micorrize*, and subsequently in the collection *fughe* (pièdimosca, Perugia, 2023).

Pasqua's work centres on ordinary characters trapped in unhappy lives. Whether victims, perpetrators, or both, their tragic, marginal existences are captured in narrative snapshots that illuminate their predicament, frustration, misfortune or crime. As Marina Chiarioni (2023: 167) suggests, Pasqua's stories leave one with the feeling of having furtively peered through a door left ajar, one that ought to have remained closed. Various themes are explored through a successful mix of tones – mythical, ironic, nostalgic, (darkly) humorous, fantastic – and an array of literary and linguistic devices are deftly deployed.

The theme of gender violence in 'finestre' is played out against the backdrop of the gothic genre. The 'zombification' of the protagonist, whose body degenerates (and

regenerates) keeping her alive – albeit with thinning hair and empty eye sockets – acts as a metaphor for the survivor of violence. Is a pregnancy, hinted at by the term ‘ventre’ (belly/womb), what the protagonist is trying to hold on to in order to return to life?

In ‘s’arrossa l’aria’, the accident that crippled the protagonist is vividly evoked through a flashback to 1970s rural Italy, which crystallises the present in an endless loop, where all the characters in the village have a part to play. The occasional use of vernacular and regional idioms adds colour to the scene and lightens the tone – only to enhance the poignant, elegiac conclusion.

Translator’s note

As an experiment in human-machine collaboration, two translations – one literal (V1) and one poetic (V2) – were generated by the freely available version of ChatGPT (4.0). I adapted them to create my own translation, which was then revised by a native speaker (Marcus Tomalin).

While V1 was overall accurate, some lexical nuances were not captured. In ‘finestre’, the term ‘cantina’ was translated literally as ‘cellar’, while the term ‘basement’ would be more appropriate in the context of an Italian block of flats. Similarly, the word ‘ventre’ was translated as ‘belly’, missing the allusion to a possible pregnancy, which the term ‘womb’ would convey.

V2 was a much freer translation. The passage about the ‘cantina’ dispenses with the term altogether: ‘it was as though she were dredging words from a well – deep, dank, and long-forgotten.’ And the term ‘ventre’ was rendered as ‘her very centre’.

Syntactically, the inversion ‘Se ne era accorta, la dirimpettaia,...’ creates an ambiguity regarding the subject (Lidia was the subject of the previous sentence), which is difficult to render. V1 provides ‘The woman across the way had noticed’, while V2 gives ‘Across the courtyard, the neighbour had begun to notice’. Neither version retains the ambiguity, and V2 also omits the gender. We rely on commas to convey this ambiguity: ‘She had begun to notice, the neighbour, watching from a distance across the street.’

The main challenges in ‘s’arrossa l’aria’ are posed by the regional idiom ‘sei pisto come l’uva’ and the vernacular expression ‘fatti li cazzi tua’. With ‘you’re pissed as a fart’, V1 provides a more vulgar version for the idiom, whereas V2 furnishes the American English ‘you’re drunk as a skunk’. We opted for the British English ‘you’re hammered’, which is closer to the imagery of the original idiom (literally, ‘you’re crushed like grapes’). Both versions translate the vernacular expression as ‘Mind your own bloody business’, which we intensified by replacing ‘bloody’ with ‘fucking’. Providing a regional English equivalent of these expressions would be inappropriate given the clearly Italian setting of the story – made explicit through the characters’ names, brands (*Nazionali*, *Fernet*, *FIAT 128*), the card game *tresette*, and the alcoholic spirit *grappa*. However, we did replicate the informal register of the dialogues: we translated ‘E allora che fai?’ as ‘So what are you gonna do then?’, a decision that AI systems cannot (yet) replicate, typically mistranslating the question in both versions as ‘What do you do?’

References

Chiarioni, Marina. 2023. 'Postfazione', in Cristina Pasqua, *fughe* (pièdimosca, 2023), pp. 166-67

MARTA PÉREZ SIERRA

Translated from the Catalan into Spanish by Ángeles Carreres

Via morta

M'ha semblat veure't a l'andana del tren. T'ajupies a posar bé la bossa de mà arrencada amb les dues maletes. He distingit els teus cabells rossos, que ja blanquegen, sempre ben tallats. El teu gest delicat i displicent en tot allò que toques.

T'has girat i m'has mirat. No eres tu.

Jo sí que l'era. He engreixat el meu equipatge amb més enyorança de tu. El record dels nostres dies i un tren sense passatge, aturats, en una via morta que mai em conduirà a tu.

Via muerta

Me ha parecido verte en el andén de la estación. Te agachabas a colocar la bolsa de mano alineada con las dos maletas. He reconocido tu pelo rubio, ya entrecano, siempre bien cortado. Tu gesto delicado y displicente en todo lo que tocas.

Te has dado la vuelta y me has mirado. No eras tú.

Yo sí lo era. He cebado mi equipaje con más añoranza de ti. El recuerdo de nuestros días y un tren sin pasaje, detenidos, en una vía muerta que nunca me conducirá a ti.

Abocador

Les nenes fetes de tu, de les costures de la guerra amarada amb essència d'espines de sardina, de barrusca dels bojos anys 20. Les nenes fetes de tu, de l'estalvi de molles de pa dur, d'una bondat exagerada, d'una fe incomprensible, d'una fe encatificada d'algues com núvols increïbles. Cada dia, dijous de Corpus. Les nenes, sí mama, que el papa és un dèspota i cal passar-hi de puntetes, no amoïnar-lo, no fer soroll, jugar a nines fluixet, que el papa treballa molt. Les nenes fetes de tu callen i tu ets tota pell de silenci quan ell t'estavella contra el terra. I les nenes encara són un xic més tu, si això és possible.

Vertedero

Las niñas hechas de ti, de las costuras de la guerra impregnada de esencia de espigas de sardina, de la rapa de los locos años 20. Las niñas hechas de ti, del ahorro de migas de pan duro, de una mansedumbre exagerada, de una fe incomprensible, de una fe alfombrada de algas como nubes increíbles. Cada día, un jueves de Corpus. Las niñas, sí, mamá, que papá es un déspota y hay que ir de puntillas, no molestarlo, no hacer ruido, jugar a las muñecas bajito, que papá trabaja mucho. Las niñas hechas de ti callan

y tú eres toda piel de silencio cuando él te estampa contra el suelo. Y las niñas son aún un poco más tú, si eso es posible.

Urinaris

No tindrè mai més set anys ni la possibilitat d'amagar-me uns minuts al bany. Segura que ningú em destorbarà. Refugiada en una intimitat consentida pels pares.

En tindrè setanta-set, algun dia, i el record dels urinaris d'una benzinera d'autopista, camí de la presó de Can Brians, se'm farà present. Com sempre. Com totes les vegades que viatjo. Aquells urinaris d'autopista eren el preàmbul d'unes reixes que s'obririen en un vis a vis per als familiars i a dins no hi hauria cap espai per a la intimitat. Inevitable, el perfil de la presó a la memòria.

En tindrè cent set, potser. I em vindrà tot sovint a la memòria la porta malmesa de l'urinari de la sala d'espera de Can Brians, impossible de tancar, amb la bombeta fosa penjada del sostre, com un mal auguri. El llum també se suïcida. Tota la poesia carcerària escrita amb majúscules, amb femta, amb sang, pudenta, escatològicament bella.

Merche, chochete, te quiero.

Lo más grande de este mundo, mi mare. Te quiero, libre.

Llámame 60753441, me borro cuando ella sarga.

Urinarios

Nunca volveré a tener siete años ni la posibilidad de esconderme unos minutos en el baño. Segura de que nadie me molestará. Refugiada en una intimidad consentida por mis padres.

Tendré setenta y siete, algún día, y me vendrá a la mente el recuerdo de los urinarios de una gasolinera de autopista, camino de la cárcel de Can Brians. Como siempre. Como todas las veces que viajo. Aquellos urinarios de autopista eran el preámbulo de unas rejas que se abrirían en un vis a vis para los familiares y dentro no habría espacio para la intimidad. Inevitable, la silueta de la cárcel en la memoria.

Tendré ciento siete, tal vez. Y una y otra vez me vendrá a la memoria la puerta desvencijada del urinario de la sala de espera de Can Brians, imposible de cerrar, con la bombilla fundida colgando del techo, como un mal augurio. La luz también se suicida. Toda la poesía carcelaria escrita con mayúsculas, con excremento, con sangre, hedionda, escatológicamente bella.

Merche, chochete, te quiero.

Lo más grande de este mundo, mi mare. Te quiero, libre.

Llámame 60753441, me borro cuando ella sarga.

Perfil de línia

Magdalenes aixafades sota la butaca plegable, de fusta, del cinema d'estiu, del poble d'estiu, d'una tarda d'estiu, on van nens i nenes d'estiu. Sense nens del poble que feinegen a tota hora amb uns pares, que viuen justament d'això, dels estiuejants.

S'ha comprat les magdalenes del forn que fan aquella olor tan diferent de les de ciutat, perquè volia portar berenar com tots els altres, però quan els llums s'han apagat i la pel·li de l'oest ha començat, ha esmicolat les magdalenes i les ha amagades sota la butaca per evitar la temptació. Té deu anys molsuts i li fa vergonya. Si pogués, arrabassaria els quilos també sota la butaca del cinema, que ja no hi és, que l'han enderrocat, com l'estiu d'ella. Ara, sempre és hivern en la seva talla trenta dos, que només escalfen els tes diürètics.

Perfil de línea

Madalenas aplastadas bajo la butaca plegable, de madera, del cine de verano, del pueblo de verano, de una tarde de verano, adonde van niños y niñas de verano. Sin niños del pueblo que trabajan a todas horas con unos padres que viven precisamente de eso, de los veraneantes.

Se ha comprado las madalenas del horno que tienen ese olor tan distinto de las de la ciudad, porque quería traerse la merienda como todos los demás, pero cuando se han apagado las luces y ha empezado la peli del oeste, ha desmenuzado las madalenas y las ha escondido debajo de la butaca para evitar la tentación. Tiene diez años regordetes y se avergüenza. Si pudiera, embutiría también los kilos bajo la butaca del cine, que ya no está, lo han demolido, como su verano. Ahora siempre es invierno en su talla treinta y dos, que solo caldean los tés diuréticos.

UM

Un vespre assistiré a un recital de poesia i el poeta, mestre en Gai Saber, recitarà un poema on els nens grassos, símbol d'una societat benestant i sense principis, seran perseguits. Acabarà amb un reble molt aplaudit. Després, en recitarà un altre on els homes, insaciabls consumistes, encara en voldran més. Amb ànsia, xuclaran mamelles de dones grasses, dirà el poeta.

Un vespre assistiré a un recital i sortiré amb poemes a les butxaques amb totes les lletres rebregades, una metàfora escapolint-se per les vores dels texans i algun o altre analogisme, o potser una hipèrbole, mossegant-me el mugró.

Un vespre seuré en una butaca orellera blanca, creuaré les cames lentament, molt lentament. Amb un somriuré, deslliuraré els nens i les dones de tot el greix masclista. Els donaré versos com a sargantanes a l'ombra.

* UM segons el Termcat en el lèxic de transport turístic: UM sigla. Persona menor de 12 anys que viatja sola en un mitjà de transport públic.

UM

Una tarde asistiré a un recital de poesía y el poeta, maestro del Gay Saber, recitará un poema en el que los niños gordos –símbolo de una sociedad acomodada y sin principios– serán perseguidos. Rematará con un verso final muy aplaudido. Después, recitará otro en el que los hombres –consumistas insaciables– aún querrán más. Chupetearán con avidez tetas de mujeres gordas, dirá el poeta.

Una tarde asistiré a un recital y saldré con los bolsillos llenos de poemas, con todas las letras estrujadas, una metáfora escapándoseme por las orillas de los vaqueros, y alguna que otra analogía –o tal vez una hipérbole– mordisqueándome el pezón.

Una tarde me sentaré en un sillón orejero, cruzaré las piernas lenta, muy lentamente. Con una sonrisa, libraré a los niños y a las mujeres de toda la grasa machista. Les daré versos como lagartijas a la sombra.

* UM: persona menor de 12 años que viaja sola en transporte público (*unaccompanied minor*).

Sala d'espera

La rosa de nit enmig de la runa

Ricard Mirabete

Han enrunat l'edifici, quatre parets s'alcen, desafien la memòria. La façana, protegida, apuntalada.

Allà, abans, hi havia un edifici de pisos. Descarnada la pedra, a la vista els ossos emmagrits. Com retalls de maons cosits de colors i formes diferents. Un patchwork fet per manobres. Un pany de paret enrajolat que segurament era d'una cuina. Un bocí de bany, encara blanc, amb mosaic fins a la meitat amb la marca de la banyera. Imagino els pisos de passadissos llargs, com es feien abans. A una banda les habitacions. Un altre retall de mur, empaperat, ves a saber de quin color, on els anys i la pols han fet feina. S'intueix la mostra, paper pintat amb dissenys florals, d'aquells adomassats. Somnis d'interior. Decorat per un matrimoni jove, segurament, amb la mare d'ell a casa, vídua, potser. Rutinàries baralles de jove i sogra. Ja se sap... I més endavant tindran fills, un nen i una nena, que podria ser que haguessin penjat aquell pòster amb el símbol de la pau, tronat, que es desprèn d'una de les parets.

Miro el buit d'aquells (no) pisos i se m'estreny el cor.

Sala de espera

La rosa de noche entre los escombros

Ricard Mirabete

Han derrumbado el edificio, cuatro paredes se alzan, desafían a la memoria. La fachada, protegida, apuntalada.

Allí, antes, había un edificio de pisos. Descarnada la piedra, a la vista los huesos resecos. Como retales cosidos de ladrillo, de distintas formas y colores. Un *patchwork* hecho por obreros. Un trozo de pared alicatada, seguramente de una cocina. Un pedazo de un baño, aún blanco, de mosaico hasta media altura, con la marca de la bañera. Imagino los pisos de pasillos largos, como se hacían antes. A un lado las habitaciones. Otro retal de muro, empapelado vete a saber de qué color, donde han hecho su trabajo los años y el polvo. Se intuye la muestra, papel pintado con motivos de flores, de esos adamascados. Sueños de interior. Decorado por un matrimonio joven, seguramente, con la madre de él en casa, viuda, quizá. Discusiones cotidianas de nuera y suegra. Ya se sabe... y más adelante tendrán hijos, un niño y una niña, que seguramente habrán colgado ese póster con el símbolo de la paz, amarillento, que se desprende de una de las paredes.

Miro el hueco de esos (no) pisos y se me encoge el corazón.

Reserva denegada

Era una nena de Gaza. Tenia tots els colors entrellaçats a la seva cintura, el morat desesperat, el blau míssil, el groc sorra roent, el verd soldat, el violeta assetjat, el vermell sang. El seu món acolorit es nega a ballar amb ella.

Abatuda a terra, mossegada per la guerra, lliurada al pà·lid, transparent, gris perla de la mort.

Reserva denegada

Era una niña de Gaza. Llevaba todos los colores trenzados a la cintura, el morado desesperado, el azul misil, el amarillo arena abrasador, el verde soldado, el violeta asediado, el rojo sangre. Su mundo en colores se niega a bailar con ella.

Abatida por tierra, mordida por la guerra, entregada al gris perla pálido, transparente, de la muerte.

Context

The pieces presented here are taken from Marta Pérez Sierra's microfiction volume *Compte amb el buit* (Barcelona: Témenos, 2018). The inspiration for this title, and for the book, came to the author from the pervasive warning in the London underground, constantly played through loudspeakers with every train that arrives or departs: 'Mind the gap between the train and the platform'. This is a longer, more user-friendly version of the terser phrase used a decade or two ago – 'Mind the gap' –, of which 'Compte amb el buit' is a direct translation. Pérez Sierra takes the seemingly banal, everyday adage and turns it on its head: the gap no longer as something to be avoided or skimmed over but as the (uncomfortable) place from which to try and make sense of the world – an ex-centric vantage point of sorts from which complex realities can be probed and acted upon.

For Pérez Sierra writing is indeed a way of acting in the world. Her work combines the gift for introspection with a keen awareness of the challenging experiences of others. In the course of her career as a writer, editor, and cultural activist, she has engaged with a range of social concerns. The pieces contained in *Compte amb el buit* revolve around the metaphor of the train journey. In these stories we encounter a number of themes that run through the author's entire oeuvre, and which I've tried to include in my selection: the memory of love lost ('Via morta'), the silent ordeal of domestic violence ('Abocador'), the grim, improbable poetry of imprisonment ('Urinaris'), the body shaming imposed by perverse notions of beauty ('Perfil de línia' and 'UM'), the imagined lives haunting a derelict building ('Sala d'espera'), the intolerable suffering of children in war zones ('Reserva denegada'). While deeply affecting, the pieces in this volume never patronise their characters or resort to sentimental excess. Empathy for their predicament is tempered with a deep respect for their unique humanity.

Translator's note

The fact that the title *Compte amb el buit* should be a direct translation of the English 'mind the gap' led me to reflect, again, on how translation – both from a historical and individual perspective – helps shape our thinking and experience. I was born and raised in the city of Valencia. Spanish was the language we spoke at home but, as the language of my grandparents, Valencian – one of the 'occidental' varieties of Catalan – was always also part of my (somewhat conflicted) linguistic identity.

As is often the case when translating languages belonging to the same family, the challenge is often to spot where a direct translation, albeit not inaccurate, fails to fully capture the intended sense. In 'Abocador', una 'bondat exagerada' is attributed to the main female character, a domestic abuse survivor. The cognate Spanish word 'bondad' would convey the idea of moral goodness. However, I feel the Catalan foregrounds the misplaced docility and self-effacement of the character. I have therefore opted for 'mansedumbre' (meekness, submissiveness).

In other cases, the semantic ambivalence of the source text may leave us wondering whether it is our call as translators to pin down the meaning. In 'Via morta' the author writes: 'No eres tu. Jo sí que l'era' (It wasn't you. I was). It is not entirely clear whether 'I was you' or 'I was, myself' is meant. The ambiguity is crucial here – heartbreak causes the character's identity to become entangled with that of her former lover. I decided to retain the suggestion of a double meaning by opting for a literal translation ('yo sí lo era').

As is so often said, translation is the art of compromise. Rarely, if ever, can we be faithful to every layer of meaning. In 'Urinaris', the author describes prison poetry as 'pudenta, escatològicament bella' (stinky, escatologically beautiful). The word 'pudenta' belongs in a colloquial register, hence 'maloliente' would have been a fitting rendering. However, this created an unwelcome sound repetition (maloliente, escatològicamente), which led me to settle for the higher register 'hedionda'.

CÉSAR SÁNCHEZ

Translated from the Spanish into English by Maya Feile Tomes

Burgos

Estoy de pie junto a la entrada principal de la catedral de Burgos, pero la ciudad no se ve por ninguna parte.

Me acerco a un cartel sujeto por dos postes metálicos y leo:

«Debido al proceso de remodelación emprendido en la ciudad, el ayuntamiento ha decidido cambiarla de sitio. Si desean visitarla, no tienen más que mirar dentro de la sacristía del altar mayor de la catedral, lugar que hemos elegido para su ubicación provisional.

Rogamos disculpen las molestias».

Burgos

I'm standing by the main entrance to Burgos cathedral but the rest of the city is nowhere to be seen.

I peer over at a sign tacked to a pair of metal posts and read the following:

“Owing to the renovation work currently being carried out in the city, the council has taken the decision to relocate it temporarily. Those wishing to visit are kindly requested to make their way to the sacristy behind the main altar, where the city has been set up until further notice.

We apologise for any inconvenience.”

Lima

El prestidigitador sujeta el mantel por los dos picos de uno de sus extremos más cortos. En la mesa, los elementos (parque y edificios, incluido el teatro donde la función tiene lugar), meticulosamente colocados sobre el estampado de paramécios de colores.

El redoble comienza. El prestidigitador finge concentración. Fuera, en la avenida marchita que discurre o sesea frente al teatro, un coche se estrella contra el escaparate de una tienda de charangos. Alguien pincha globos con una espina de lenguado en el gallinero. En el foso, un chamán parte nueces con los dientes. Lejos, una ciudad enmascarada se derrama lentamente sobre el océano, allí donde los puntos intermedios de la marea se solapan.

La percusión cesa.

El hombre tira del mantel con un movimiento mil veces ensayado.

Ahí está. Ha vuelto a hacerlo. Todos los edificios siguen en su sitio, permanecen en pie. Todos menos el teatro/salero que se tambalea al borde mismo del acantilado. El público, mecido por el vaivén, aplaude ajeno al océano que aguarda impaciente la zambullida que esta noche tampoco se producirá.

Lima

The illusionist takes hold of the tablecloth by its corners at the short end. Upon it are the different bits (parks and buildings, even the very theatre where the show is taking place), all impeccably arranged across the cloth with its pattern of multicoloured amoeba.

The drumroll begins. The illusionist pretends to be deep in concentration. Outside, on the withered boulevard which snakes or snoozes its way past the theatre, a car crashes into the window of a shop selling little Andean guitars. Someone is popping balloons with a fishbone up in the gods. Down in the pit, a shaman is cracking nuts with his teeth. In the distance, a masked city is pouring itself slowly over the ocean, right where the seams of the waterline overlap.

The drumroll stops.

The man whips out the tablecloth with a well rehearsed flick of the wrists.

There it is. He's done it again. The buildings remain rooted to the spot, all still standing. All except for the theatre-cum-saltshaker which is teetering right at the edge of the precipice. The public, rocked by the swaying motion, bursts into applause without sparing a thought for the ocean eagerly braced against the impact it won't be receiving tonight either.

Las Vegas

Apagón en Las Vegas.

Las Vegas

There was a power cut.

Bucarest

And though we feel with doubt, the vicious circle turns and burns.

Patti Smith

A las dos de la madrugada, estoy en la cama de una habitación de un hotel de Bucarest y sueño que me acabo de alojar en un hotel de Budapest.

Cuando despierto, no ha amanecido ni dentro ni fuera de mí. Aún.

Lo primero que me viene a la cabeza es que siempre he querido viajar a Budapest, pero que, por algún motivo que se me escapa, no hago más que naufragar en Bucarest. Calado hasta los huesos de Bucarest.

Amanece dentro y fuera de mí, por ese orden. Entonces, me levanto, me ducho, me afeito, me visto, me peino, me pongo los calcetines y los zapatos, me persigno, salgo de la habitación, pienso en mi gato y cojo el ascensor.

Vestíbulo. Restaurante.

Después de desayunar, pregunto en recepción cómo puedo llegar a la ciudad de Buca y por cuál de los muchos puentes que atraviesan el río debo cruzar luego para llegar al centro de Rest sin dar demasiada vuelta. El recepcionista, una ceja de la que cuelgan ojos, boca, cuello y todo lo demás, pone cara de no entender los exquisitos matices de mi inglés. No obstante, sin pedir más explicaciones, me dibuja un croquis en el espacio en blanco de un folleto turístico.

Durante todo el día me dedico a trasladar los gruesos trazos del plano al laberinto de calles que me rodea, pero ni rastro de Buca o de Rest. Ya de noche, harto de caminar y de echar pestes a quienes a lo largo de las horas me han dirigido por caminos equivocados, decido hacer un último intento con un anciano que parece de fiar. Tiene pinta de profesor jubilado. Viste traje de pana negro de tres piezas, boina también de pana, encasquetada hasta la mandíbula, y zapatos de charol con cordones. De cerca, su mirada posee una intensidad de roedor.

—¿La ciudad de Buca, la ciudad de Rest? —Tras unos momentos en los que da la impresión de estar bastante confuso—. Lo siento, señor, pero esas ciudades no se encuentran por aquí. Lo único que puedo decirle es que, en este momento, nos hallamos en Budarest y que, al otro lado del río, está Bucapest. Ni siquiera va a encontrar Budapest en muchos kilómetros a la redonda. Por cierto, tampoco Buda o Pest. Perdone, pero creo que se ha perdido.

Al terminar, el viejo sonrío abiertamente, puede que a causa de la cara que se me ha puesto al escucharle parlotear con soltura en la lengua de John Lennon.

El caso es que regreso al hotel hundido en un mar de dudas.

A las dos de la madrugada, estoy en la cama de una habitación de un hotel de Budapest y sueño que me acabo de alojar en un hotel de Bucarest.

Cuando despierto, no ha amanecido ni fuera ni dentro de mí. Aún.

Lo primero que me viene a la cabeza es que siempre he querido viajar a Bucarest, pero que, por algún motivo que se me escapa, no hago más que arder en Budapest. Abrasado hasta la médula con ascuas de Budapest.

Amanece fuera y dentro de mí, por ese orden. Entonces, me ducho, me levanto, me visto, me afeito, me pongo los calcetines y los zapatos, me peino, salgo de la habitación, me persigno, cojo el ascensor y pienso en mi gato.

Azotea.

Columbario.

Buchapest

With doubt the vicious circle turns and burns.

Patti Smith

It's two in the morning and I'm in bed in a hotel room in Bucharest, dreaming that I've just checked into a hotel in Budapest.

When I awake, it's dawned neither inside nor outside me. Yet.

I'm immediately seized by the thought that I've always wanted to visit Budapest, but for reasons that escape me I keep on washing up in Bucharest. Soaked to the skin in Bucharest.

Dawn breaks inside and outside me, in that order. I get up, take a shower, have a shave, get dressed, comb my hair, don my socks and shoes, make the sign of the cross, leave the room, think of my cat and call the lift.

Lobby. Buffet.

After breakfast, I go up to the reception desk to ask how to get to the city of Bucha and which of the countless bridges crisscrossing the river I should take to get to the center of Rest by the least circuitous route. The receptionist, a monobrow from which eyes, mouth, neck, etc. cascade down, grimaces as if my exquisite efforts to express myself in English were unintelligible to him. Nonetheless, without further ado, he proceeds to sketch me out a map on the blank corner of a tourist leaflet.

I spend the rest of the day attempting to reconcile the coarse contours of the diagram with the labyrinth of streets spooling out all around me, but there's no sign of Bucha and Rest. At nightfall, tired of walking and inwardly cursing everyone who's pointed me in the wrong direction over the past few hours, I decide to try my luck one last time with an old man with a trustworthy air about him. He looks like a retired university professor and is sporting a natty three-piece corduroy suit, matching corduroy beret pulled down over his ears, and dapper patent leather lace-up shoes. From up close his gaze has an almost rodent-like intensity.

"The cities of Bucha and Rest?" He finally breaks his silence after a bewildered pause. "I'm sorry, sir, but there are no cities by those names around here. All I can tell you is that right now we are standing in Budarest and that there, over on the far side of the river, is Buchapest. We're not even anywhere remotely near Budapest. Nor, for that matter, Buda or Pest. I'm sorry, sir, but I think you must have lost your way."

At the end of his little speech, the old man grins broadly, gratified no doubt by my incredulous expression at hearing him babbling away effortlessly in the language of John Lennon.

The upshot is that I make my way back to the hotel adrift on a sea of doubts.

At two in the morning, I'm in bed in a hotel room in Budapest, dreaming that I've just checked into a hotel in Bucharest.

When I awake, it's dawned neither outside nor inside me. Yet.

I'm immediately seized by the thought that I've always wanted to visit Bucharest, but for reasons that escape me I keep on smouldering away in Budapest. Scorched to the core in the embers of Budapest.

Dawn breaks outside and inside me, in that order. So, I take a shower, get up, get dressed, have a shave, don my socks and shoes, comb my hair, leave the room, make the sign of the cross, call the lift and think of my cat.

Roof terrace.

Morgue.

Context

Peninsular Spanish author César Sánchez's short story collection, *Ciudades en las que nunca has estado* (Cities You've Never Been To, 2017), is a mind-bending tour around the cities of Spain, Europe and beyond. Operating simultaneously across multiple planes and dimensions as only the work of an ex-mathematician could, Sánchez's surrealist exploration of the globe's metropolises always manages to take a step in an unexpected direction, from the city that gets stolen ('Jaén') to the urban jungle of the author's own inner world ('Mi propia vida'). The stories vary in length from more substantial pieces to tales so short they can be classed as flash fiction. Four from the latter category are presented here: 'Burgos', 'Lima', 'Las Vegas' and 'Buchapest' [*sic!*]. Together they give a flavour of Sánchez's shape-shifting technique and ability to work up different subjectivities into dense narrative worlds in the space of a single page, even a single phrase. The collection was published in 2017 by Editorial Barrett in Seville, which has since also published Sánchez's novel *Maldito pego pulgoso* (2021) and most recently also his second batch of short stories, *Catálogo de sombras* (2024). Together, these works confirm Sánchez as an unapologetically bamboozling narrator who is still just about comprehensible in *Ciudades en las que nunca has estado* but has only been getting more zany ever since. None of Sánchez's work has appeared in English before and, in general, short story collections remain under-represented within the international translation market. The choice of these texts for translation here celebrates the short story as a form in general and Sánchez's work in particular, offering English-speaking readers the opportunity to meander through his idiosyncratic literary localities. The world itself lies between the pages and interstices of this curiously compelling collection.

Translator's note

In an email exchange a few years ago, it was put to me by Manuel Burraco Gaitán at Editorial Barrett that, if I had enjoyed Martín Rejtman's *Madrid es una mierda* (Madrid Sucks), then I was likely to enjoy César Sánchez's *Ciudades en las que nunca has estado* as well. I purchased a copy right away and it arrived just in time for me to take it with me on a long weekend to York. I distinctly recall cracking it open outside a café on a sunny-but-windy day in the heart of the old town and tumbling straight out of York's medieval streets and into the no less labyrinthine world of Sánchez's cities, passing through the magic portal of its opening tale set in the glorious *noir* of downtown 'No York'. These are stories which certainly have the power to make you forget your surroundings and in

retrospect I realise that 'No York' also stands as a sign of the way I was made to forget mine. Now my weekend in the north-eastern English city is forever associated with César's delectable overwriting, and undoing, of it. Keen to offer something of this experience to Anglophone readers, I have set out to translate the stories in a manner that is as clean, crisp and carefully confusing as the effect in Spanish. I have pared back wherever possible, opting for phrasal verbs where needed to titrate the pacing, and, above all, seeking to prioritise the visual impact of César's cinematic ideas. In 2023, my versions of 'No York' and 'Buchapest' were shortlisted in the Sundial House Literary Translation Award, which is run out of none other than the Big Apple. And all this before I finally got to meet the full Barrett team in person in 2024 in the inimitable city of Seville.

ANA MARÍA SHUA

Translated from the Spanish into Italian by Nicole Centofanti

Peleas familiares

Las peleas familiares son raras en nuestro circo, incluso en las fiestas de fin de año. Las ofensas suelen ser involuntarias y se olvidan rápidamente. Imagínese usted: nadie quiere pelearse con su cuñado, el lanzador de cuchillos. O incomodar a su suegro, el hombre forzudo. Hasta la equilibrista o la ecuyere tienen los músculos bien desarrollados. Ni siquiera nos conviene irritarnos con los enanos, que son muchos y actúan mancomunadamente. Por eso, apenas hay un atisbo de pelea, se convoca al mago para que la haga desaparecer. Puede que su magia no sea más que ilusionismo, pero en cambio es un hombre muy conciliador.

Liti familiari

Le liti familiari sono rare nel nostro circo, anche alle feste di fine anno. Di solito non offendiamo di proposito e ci passiamo sopra velocemente. Immaginate: nessuno vorrebbe litigare con suo cognato, il lanciatore di coltelli. O infastidire il suocero, l'uomo forzuto. Persino l'equilibrista o la cavallerizza hanno dei bei muscoli. Non conviene nemmeno prendersela con i nani, che sono molti e operano tutti insieme. Per questo, appena si accende una scintilla di lite, si convoca il mago per spegnerla. Forse la sua magia è semplice illusionismo, ma lui è comunque un uomo molto conciliante.

Las dos mitades

Charles Tripp, el hombre sin brazos, se ganaba la vida como carpintero antes de entrar en circo. Eli Bowen, el acróbata sin piernas, tenía dos pequeños pies de diferente tamaño que nacían de sus caderas y era considerado el más buen mozo de los artistas de circo. En una de sus actuaciones conjuntas Bowen conducía una bicicleta mientras Tripp pedaleaba. Los espectadores aplaudían como tontos, sin darse cuenta de todo lo que podríamos hacer si tuviéramos esa otra mitad de la que nada sabemos, la mitad que nos falta, la otra parte de estos cuerpos inacabados que sólo por ignorancia imaginamos completos.

Le due metà

Charles Tripp, l'uomo senza braccia, si guadagnava da vivere facendo il falegname prima di entrare a far parte del circo. Eli Bowen, l'acrobata senza gambe, aveva due piedini di grandezza diversa che gli spuntavano dai fianchi ed era considerato il più avvenente tra gli artisti del circo. In una delle loro performance insieme, Bowen guidava una bicicletta mentre Tripp pedalava. Gli spettatori applaudivano come pazzi, senza rendersi conto di

ciò che potremmo fare se tutti trovassimo quest'altra metà di cui non sappiamo niente, la metà che ci manca, l'altra parte dei nostri corpi incompiuti che per semplice ignoranza crediamo completi.

Context

'Peleas familiares' was first published in 2013 in *Quimera*, a Spanish monthly magazine on literature analysis, and is now part of *Los Pescadores de perlas: los microrrelatos de Quimera*. 'Las dos mitades' is featured in *Fenómenos de circo*, published by Emecé (Grupo Planeta, Buenos Aires, 2000).

These short stories are perfect examples of Ana María Shua's writing: they are written in a simple yet elegant style, with short sentences that allow the reader to focus on every detail of the story without ever getting lost or distracted. The lexicon, though, includes some technical terms when it comes to the elements and characters of the circus, especially in 'Peleas familiares'. In this short story we find elements that contribute to a sense of mystery that captivates the reader, such as the fact that it starts almost in *medias res*, that the narrator is anonymous, yet we know something important about them (they are part of the circus), and the fact that the author doesn't give many details on the characters nor the setting.

The theme of the circus often appears in Shua's stories. It probably is a metaphor for life and also gives her the possibility to create realistic and at the same time disturbing scenes. But there's more: Ana María Shua's short stories show a fine irony that can be understood by the more attentive readers who see themselves and their lives in those creepy and absurd realities that she creates. Despite the conciseness of the stories, the author conveys strong messages, and at the end of every short story the reader is left with much to think about.

Translator's note

Ana María Shua's works are some of the best examples of contemporary microfiction in Spanish. They present a very simple and linear style so they don't pose particular difficulties of comprehension, but a simple use of language doesn't necessarily mean a simple text to translate. The greatest challenge is conveying the same message in the same linear and clear way in the target language. Another issue is rendering the element of idiomaticity that is strongly present in Shua's works, in order to make the text sound as natural as possible in the target language.

The first difficulty the translator encounters is the sentence 'las ofensas suelen ser involuntarias y se olvidan rápidamente', which cannot be translated literally without awkwardness. I have opted to translate as 'di solito non offendiamo di proposito e ci si passiamo sopra velocemente', which sounds (much) more natural, especially the phrase 'passarci sopra' which implies not only forgetting but also forgiving.

We find a similar challenge in the sentence 'hasta la equilibrista o la ecuyere tienen los músculos bien desarrollados': a literal rendering would not be idiomatic in Italian, so a more informal and idiomatic wording has been chosen ('dei bei muscoli').

The last example I would like to discuss in 'Peleas familiares' refers to the addition of the metaphor of the sparkle at the end of the target text. In the original, the author uses the word 'atisbo' – 'a glimmer' or 'a hint' – and I chose the word 'scintilla' (sparkle). I also decided to adapt the verbs to the metaphor of the sparkle using 'accendere' and 'spegnere' in order to make the whole sentence sound natural to the Italian reader and to recall a sense of magic.

One final example can be found in 'Las dos mitades', where in the phrase 'entrar en circo' I added 'a far parte'. The reason here is that 'entrare al circo' refers to physically entering the show, while the original meaning is 'joining the profession'.

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