

IL PIETRISCO TRANSLATIONS

**Mirrors, Landscapes, Battles
21st-Century Poetry by Women**

**Edited by
Monica Boria & Ángeles Carreres**



Issue 2 (2024)

© Il Pietrisco Translations 2024
Edinburgh, U.K.

ISSN: 2635-165X



www.pietrisco.net

Front cover image: *Sandy beach* (photo by Monica Boria)

Mirrors, Landscapes, Battles

21st-century Poetry by Women

edited by

Monica Boria and Ángeles Carreres

Contents

Notes on Contributors	p. 3
Acknowledgements	p. 10
Introductory Note	p. 11
MARIA AZENHA translated by Lesley Saunders	p. 16
MARÍA EUGENIA BRAVO-CALDERARA translated by Isabel del Río	p. 20
CHANDRA LIVIA CANDIANI translated by Arianna Autieri	p. 26
LAURA CORRADUCCI translated by Alain Bourdy	p. 32
LIRIA EVANGELISTA translated by Teresiana Matarrese	p. 35
EMALÚA GCANCHOLA translated by Rima Mourabbi	p. 39
MARIANGELA GUALTIERI translated by Marcus Tomalin	p. 42
EMILIA IVANCU translated by Elena Chiattelli	p. 49
PATRÍCIA LAVELLE translated by Alice B. Osti Magalhães and Jenny Marshall Rodger	p. 52
CRIS LIRA translated by Kyler Johnson	p. 59
FERNANDA MARTÍNEZ VARELA translated by Giancarlo Tursi	p. 66
OFELIA PRODAN translated by Iulia Cosma, Loredana Fortuna, Maria Haiduc, Simona Huțanu, Ramona Daniela Muraru, Andreea M. Toma	p. 71

Notes on Contributors

ARIANNA AUTIERI, born in 1991 near Milan, Italy, is a Lecturer in Translation Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. She holds a PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Warwick. Her research interests are literary and intersemiotic translation (theory and practice), avant-garde and experimental translation, music, Modernism and James Joyce. She has published several articles on translation, Joyce and music, including ‘Translating Joyce’s Musical Language: “The Dead”’ in *Language and Languages in Joyce’s Fiction. Joyce Studies in Italy*, vol. 21, 2019. Her monograph, entitled *James Joyce Music Performed: the “Sirens” Fugue in Experimental Re-translation*, will be published with Legenda in 2025. Arianna translates literary texts both from English into Italian and from Italian into English. Arianna’s experimental translation of James Joyce’s ‘Sirens’, *Ulysses*, into Italian is forthcoming with her monograph. She is currently translating, in collaboration with Charlotte Spear, some short stories from Pirandello’s *Novelle per un anno*, for the collaborative digital edition *Stories for a Year*, edited by Lisa Sarti and Michael Subialka.

MARIA AZENHA was born in Coimbra, Portugal, in 1945. She held teaching positions in Mathematical Sciences at the Universities of Coimbra, Évora, and Lisbon, and at the António Arroio School of Artistic Education. She is a member of the Portuguese Writers Association and an Honorary Member of the Academic Centre of Letters and Arts of Lisbon. She has more than twenty individual works published since 1987, some of which have been translated into bilingual Portuguese-Spanish editions. She is represented in several poetry anthologies since 1982, with poems translated into Italian, Spanish, French, and English. She has participated in conferences and colloquia since 1987. Her translators include Daniela Di Pasquale, Carlos Ciro, José Ángel Cilleruelo, Sandra Santos, Gustavo Petter, Eduardo Veras and Lesley Saunders. She has received several awards and distinctions: USU National Jubilee Year Poetry Competition – Universidade Santa Úrsula, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Silver Medal (1986); Eça de Queiroz Prize, Honorable Mention (1990); Literature and Visual Arts Competition with the Support of the National Commission for Portuguese Discoveries, Honorable Mention (1991); Semi-finalist for the PT Literature Prize (2012); Glória de Sant’Anna literary award, Honorable Mention (2017); Finalist of the IV Jovellanos International Poetry Prize – El Mejor Poema del Mundo, Ediciones Nobel, Spain (2017).

ALAIN BOURDY was born in Poitiers in 1950 and he graduated from the University of Poitiers in 1975. After moving to Avignon, he worked as a secretary in the European Centre of Poetry in Avignon where he started to become more passionate about translations of contemporary Italian poets. The famous French poet Philippe Jacottet deeply appreciated and encouraged his work as a translator of Italian contemporary authors. Boudry has translated many important voices of contemporary Italian poetry, among them Rosita Copioli, Donatella Bisutti, Antonella Anedda, and others, which have been published on the famous French literary review *Autre Sud* receiving much praise. His translations have also appeared in many magazines and well-established literary blogs. Boudry published his first collection of poems *Subtiles résonances* (Subtle resonances) in 2019 for Mala Editions. He is currently working on his first book of translations.

MARÍA EUGENIA BRAVO-CALDERARA is a Chilean poet and fiction writer based in the UK. Her writing has been published in many European languages, including Finnish, as well as in Arabic and Tamil. She is the author of several poetry collections, including *Oración en el Estadio Nacional* (*Prayer in the National Stadium*) published by Katabasis in 1992 (for which she received an award from the Greater London Council in 1990) and *Poems from exile* (Exiled Writers Ink, 2009). Her memoir *La casa del techo rojo* is soon to be published in Chile. She belongs to the collectives Taller de literatura de la memoria de las mujeres hispanoamericanas de Londres and Las Juanas. Her poems have appeared in anthologies and periodicals published in the UK and other European countries.

Poems from her time as a political prisoner are permanently on display in the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, located in the capital's national stadium, which was a detention and torture centre during the Pinochet dictatorship. In 2013 she was awarded the Salvador Allende prize for her short story 'Agente secreto', and her poetry is included in anthologies of Latin American poets such as *Maravilladoras (Wonder-Makers)* published by Victorina Press in 2021 and *Voces equidistantes (Equidistant Voices)* published by Equidistancias in 2023. The poem 'Germinación de las guerreras' was first published in 2023, in a fanzine by Las Juanas.

CHANDRA LIVIA CANDIANI, born in 1952 in Milan, Italy, is an established Italian poet and prose writer, winner of the Montale Prize (2001), Camaiore Prize (2014) and International Regina Coppola Prize (2019). She published several collections of poetry, including *Io con vestito leggero* (Campanotto, 2005), *La nave di nebbia* (La biblioteca di Vivarium, 2005), *Bevendo il tè con i morti* (Interlinea, 2015), *Fatti vivo* (Einaudi, 2017), *Vista dalla luna* (Salani, 2019), *La domanda della sete* (Einaudi, 2020), and *Pane del bosco* (Einaudi, 2023). *La bambina pugile ovvero la precisione dell'amore* (Einaudi, 2014), from which the translated poems are extracted, was the winner of the Premio Letterario Camaiore in 2014. Her prose works include *Il silenzio è cosa viva* (Einaudi, 2018), *Questo immenso non sapere* (Einaudi, 2021), and *Sogni del fiume* (Einaudi, 2022). In 2015 she edited with Andrea Cirolla *Ma dove sono le parole?* (Effigie, 2015), which includes poems written by children from the multicultural outskirts of Milan during workshops led by Candiani herself, and recounts her experience in this context.

ELENA CHIATTELLI was born in Rome where she lives and works as a ghostwriter, editor, proofreader, and freelance translator. She also works as teacher of Italian as a foreign language and collaborates with an editorial agency. She writes short stories – her first book *Affocolento. Dissertazioni agrodolci di una cuoca ribelle* was published by Ultra Edizioni in 2015; other texts have been published in literary magazines and in 2020 in an anthology for the publishing house 66thand2nd. She also writes poems: in 2022 she was a finalist for the Gozzano Prize, with an unpublished collection of poems. She is one of the editors of *biroconlaccento*, a literary magazine for first-person texts, where she also curates a poetry column. She is also currently working on collective writing projects and creating stories for children and young adults. Elena Chiattelli decided to study Romanian language and literature and to become a translator from Romanian to Italian many years ago, upon entering university, listening to the concrete and deep sound of a language so close to her mother tongue, and falling in love at first sight with contemporary Romanian female poetry.

LAURA CORRADUCCI was born in Italy, in Pesaro, where she lives. In 2007 she published her first collection of poems *Lux Renova* (Edizioni Del Leone), and in 2015 her second collection *Il Canto di Cecilia e altre poesie* (Cecilia's song and other poems) (Raffaelli editore). Her latest collection is *Il passo dell'obbedienza* (The step of obedience) (Moretti e Vitali, 2020). Her poems have been translated into Spanish, English, Romanian, Dutch, Portuguese and French. She has organized several poetry readings and is the founder of the Pesaro summer festival Vaghe stelle dell'Orsa dedicated to contemporary Italian and foreign poetry. She has also engaged in translation and has rendered into Italian *Saying yes in Russian* (Agenda Edition, 2012), by the English poet Caroline Clark.

IULIA COSMA is a Romanian exchange lecturer at the Department of Literary and Linguistic Studies, Padua University (Italy), where she teaches Romanian language and translation from Romanian into Italian. She writes on translation history and translation criticism in Italian, English, and Romanian, and she also translates poetry and scientific literature in Italian and Romanian. She has two mother tongues, Hungarian and Romanian and is trilingual with Italian. Loredana Fortuna, Maria Haiduc, Simona Huțanu, Ramona Daniela Muraru and Andreea M. Toma were her BA students. The translators are of Romanian origin and, with the exception of Iulia Cosma, arrived at an early age, like Maria Haiduc, Simona Huțanu and Andreea M. Toma, or were born in Italy, like Loredana Fortuna and Ramona Daniela Muraru. They are polyglots: besides Romanian and Italian, Loredana knows Russian and English, Maria Spanish, English and some Russian, Simona English, Spanish,

and some French, Ramona English, Spanish and some German, and Andreea English, French, and some Spanish. They are interested in translation as a means of discovering more about themselves and their native cultural heritage, and as an instrument to promote Romanian culture in Italy and beyond.

ISABEL DEL RÍO (also Isabel del Rio) is a British-Spanish poet, fiction writer, and linguist. Born in Madrid, she has mostly lived in London. She has extensive experience in literary, institutional, and technical translation, and worked as a full-time translator/terminologist for a London-based UN agency for over two decades. She has published fiction and poetry in both English and Spanish, including the short story book *La duda* (Tusquets Editores, 2002), shortlisted for two literary awards, *A woman alone: fragments of a memoir* (2021) and *Paradise & Hell* (2018). Her poetry collections include *Madrid, Madrid, Madrid* (2019), *Dolorem ipsum* (2020), and *Cuaderno de notas* (2021). In 2023 she published her short story collection *La autora del fin del mundo*, as well as her translation of *Equidistant Voices*, an anthology of Latin American poets living in the UK. She has a five-year Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Información from Universidad Complutense (UCM) in Madrid, and a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of West London (UWL); she is also a Fellow of both the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIoL) and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI).

LIRIA EVANGELISTA was born to Italian parents in Buenos Aires in 1961. She is a storyteller, poet, textile artist, and scholar of literature. Liria published her first novel, *La buena educación*, with Borde Perdido Editoria in 2009, which was followed by her first work of poetry, *Una perra*, published by Paradiso (2012), and *Niña soviética* (2013), published by Borde Perdido and republished with English translation in 2020. In 2018, she published *Sangra en mí* and *La buena educación* was reissued in an illustrated edition. In 2020 she was a finalist for the Italian literary award Orizzonte Atlantico for her unpublished poetry work *La persistencia*. Liria's work explores complex themes of history, politics, and subjectivity. Her doctoral thesis, completed in 1996 at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, was later published with the title *Voces de sobrevivientes: testimonio, duelo y memoria en la post-dictadura argentina (1983-1995)*, with English editions published in New York and London. *Voces* reflects Liria's commitment to interrogating the intricate relationship between violence, politics, and memory in Argentina. Liria retired from teaching at the University of Belgrano in 2023 but continues to direct the graduate program at the Spanish School of Middlebury College in Buenos Aires.

EMALÚA GCANCHOLA is a transgender Mexican writer born in 2000. Her poetry is intimate, a tool for self-discovery. Her main interest lies in drawing attention to the topic of gender identity and spreads information on the transitioning process, as a way to raise awareness of a less explored subject in the field of literature. Her lexical choices are concise and informal, reflecting the normality of the transitioning process and resulting in work that is accessible to all. Her first publications appeared in the online magazine *Círculo de Poesía* (2020). In 2016 she won the XVI Concurso Nacional de Expresión Literaria La Juventud y la Mar. She was also awarded the 2020 Tiempos de Escritura Prize and, in the same year, obtained the Séptimo Premio Iberoamericano de Poesía Joven Alejandro Aura. Currently, she is a scholarship holder of the program Jóvenes Creadores. Her first poem translated into English by V. Saavedra was 'Mi madre y yo somos la tumba en la que papá se arrojó', which was published by *Arc Poetry Magazine* in 2022.

MARIANGELA GUALTIERI is an Italian poet, performer, and writer. Born in Cesena in 1951, she co-founded the Teatro Valdoca along with Cesare Ronconi in 1983, and today she is widely regarded as one of Italy's most compelling and innovative contemporary poetic voices. Long committed to cultivating the orality of poetry and its communal collective roots, she explores interconnections between verse and theatre in her numerous collections and recitals. Her various books of poetry include *Fuoco centrale e altre poesie per il teatro* (Central Fire and Other Poems for the Theatre) (Einaudi, 2003), *Senza polvere senza peso* (Without Dust Without Weight) (Einaudi, 2006), *Bestia di gioia* (*Beast of Joy*) (Einaudi, 2010), *Le giovani parole* (Young Words) (Einaudi, 2015), and *Quando*

non morivo (When I Was Not Dying) (Einaudi, 2019), and her ‘Voce che apre (rito sonoro)’ (Voice That Opens (Sound Ritual)) was selected for the opening of the Venice Biennale Teatro in 2020. Whether exploring profound existential questions or reflecting upon more mundane aspects of daily experience, she writes with disarming honesty, directness, and compassion – and in a poetic style that can, at times, be deceptively simple. Her volume *Bestia di gioia* has been translated into English as *Beast of Joy: Selected Poems* (Chelsea Editions, 2018) by Anthony Molino and Cristina Viti.

EMILIA IVANCU is a poet, translator, and academic. At present she is a lecturer of Romanian language at Helsinki University, Finland. She has published several collections of poetry. Her collection of poetry *Jocul de a nu fi mai mult decât sunt/Gra w to, aby nie być więcej niż jestem* was published bilingually in Romanian and Polish (Eikon Publishing House, 2012) (translated by Tomasz Klimkowski), while her collection *Washing My Hair with Nettles* was published in Romanian and English in the translation of Diarmuid Johnson (Parthian Books, 2015). Other collections by Ivancu include: *Șamanii și poeții* (Eikon Publishing House, 2014), *Noaptea în care focurile vor arde până la capăt* (Eikon Publishing House, 2016), and *Cărțile vieții* (Eikon Publishing House, 2018). A collection of her poetry is currently being translated into Azerbaijani language, and she is a guest poet in a Romanian-Ethiopian poetry and art project named Poetic Encounters. She has also translated works of fiction and poetry from English, Polish, Welsh and Breton into Romanian. Amongst these we should mention Angharad Price’s novel *Oh, Tyn y Gorchudd* from Welsh into Romanian as well as the poetic work of Diarmuid Johnson and that of Jan Twardowski. Her recent research interests focus on prismatic poetry translation and creative multilingualism.

KYLER JOHNSON is a Midwestern writer bursting with passion and energy for the world, with the goal to bridge the world through the power of language. With a B.A. in English and Creative Writing from the University of Iowa, Kyler is an avid linguist, having studied Portuguese, Chinese, German and French at the undergraduate level. At the University of Iowa, he led the Translate Iowa Project, producing three editions of a yearly literary anthology of translated student works and organizing the school’s first ever Translat-a-thon. A former Rotary Youth Scholar (2018-19) to Belgium and a future Fulbright Scholar (2024) to Brazil, he enjoys the experiences and relishes in the relationships travel and language have provided him. His own creative work has been featured in publications such as *Ink Lit Mag*, *The Broken Clock Magazine*, and his translations have been featured in publications such as *Escrivências e (R)existências* and *Boundless VII*.

PATRICIA LAVELLE is a poet and Literary Theory professor at Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), born in Rio de Janeiro. She lived in Paris between 1999 and 2014 and received her PhD from École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales de Paris. Lavelle has published poetry and theoretical essays in Brazil and in France. Her main poetry publications are *Bye bye Babel* (7Letras, 2nd edition, 2021) and *Sombras longas* (Relicário Edições, 2023). *Bye bye Babel* received honourable mention in Prêmio Cidade de Belo Horizonte, a Brazilian literary contest held in 2016. Jesús Montoya translated *Bye bye Babel* into Spanish (Alliteration, in press) and parts of *Sombras Longas* for *Hostos Review* (2023). The French translation of *Sombras Longas* by Inês Oseki-Depré was published by Les presses du reel in 2023. Lavelle has contributed to anthologies published in Brazil, France and Portugal (Contracapa, 2021).

CRIS LIRA holds a Ph.D. and a M.A. in Romance Languages from the University of Georgia, U.S.A. She specializes in Contemporary Brazilian Literature. Her research interests are mostly related to contemporary Brazilian and Latin American literature and culture. She is interested in women’s writing, the connection between representations of female characters and violence, exile aesthetics, and post-dictatorship, gender and memory studies. Her articles have been published in *Revista Iberoamericana*, *Chasqui*, *Revista Mulheres e Literatura*, among other journals. In 2022, she co-edited the bilingual collection of poems (Portuguese/English) *Raízes: Brazilian Women Poets in Translation*, published by Venas Abiertas publishing house. Cris Lira is also a creative writer. Her most recent book, *Fragmentos do interior* (2021), is part of the third *Mulherio das Letras* (Women of

Letters) collection of single-authored books published by Editora Venas Abiertas. In 2020, she published *O mundo é esse lugar (The World is Such a Place)* as part of the second Mulherio das Letras collection of single-authored books. Her previous books, *No país da infância (My Childhood Country)* and *Ponte para o poente (Bridge to the Sunset)* were both published in 2019 as part of the first Mulherio das Letras collection.

JENNY MARSHALL RODGER is British and has lived in Brazil for 43 years. She has been a translator over the last 30 years. Rodger is a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, London and holds an MA in Translation from the University of Westminster (1994). She is a sworn translator and also works as an interpreter in Brazil and the United Kingdom. Together with other translators, Marshall Rodger was awarded the Stephen Spender Prize for Poetry Translation in 2023. Her co-translation with Osti Magalhães has been published on the Stephen Spender Trust website.

FERNANDA MARTÍNEZ VARELA is a Chilean poet currently working on her Ph.D. in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Georgetown University. She has published three collections of poetry: *Ángulos divergentes [Divergent Angles]* (Color Graphics, 2007), *La sagrada familia [The Holy Family]* (Libros del perro negro, 2015), and *El Génesis [Genesis]* (Cástor y Polux, 2019). She has recently finished her newest, as-yet unpublished collection *Salmos [Psalms]*, which has been partially translated into Arabic, Norwegian, French, and Russian. None of her other collections have been translated. Originally from Doñihue, Chile, she moved to Santiago at age 18 to study sociology. She published her first collection poetry when she was just fifteen. She moved to New York in 2017 to pursue a master's in creative writing at New York University. In 2019, she moved to Washington D.C. to pursue a Ph.D. at Georgetown University. She is the recipient of the 2016 Pablo Neruda Foundation Grant, a 2017 and 2019 Chilean National Council of Culture and Arts Grant, a 2018 Tinker Foundation Field Research Grant, a 2018 New York University Master of Arts Scholarship, and a 2024 Georgetown Americas Institute Research Grant.

TERESIANA MATARRESE was born in Italy and currently lives in San Luis Obispo, California. She is a lecturer at California Polytechnic University of San Luis Obispo, where she teaches Italian language and cultures and coordinates the Italian program. Teresiana is currently pursuing a doctorate in Modern Languages at Middlebury College under Dr. Rosetta Giuliani-Caponetto. Her dissertation, 'Immaginazione, Somalia e Femminismi in Maria Stuarda Varetta', concerns the life and work of a female Italian contemporary artist active in Somalia and in Italy since the 1960s. Teresiana's interests include environmental humanities, race, migration, second language acquisition, and translation. Teresiana holds an MA in Italian from the University of Foreigners of Perugia, an MA in Spanish from Middlebury College, Vermont, and studied Chinese language and culture at Fu Jen University in Taipei, Taiwan. Teresiana's Italian translation of *En la sangre*, a novel written by the nineteenth-century Argentine author Eugenio Cambaceres, was published by Arkadia in 2024 with the title *Nel sangue*.

RIMA MOURABBI is an emerging translator from Italy. After graduating in European Languages and Cultures at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia she moved to Barcelona. Here, she earned a Master's Degree in Translation Studies from Pompeu Fabra University. Throughout her studies she developed a particular interest in texts that pose certain difficulties at a linguistic and cultural level, such as word play and advertisements. This interest stemmed from her recognition of the impact that translation can have on the development of a society, and how it can serve as a tool to raise awareness of the diversity that characterizes the world among the members of a community, thus bringing different cultures together. In 2023 she attended the online professional literary translation course *Las armas y las letras: recursos para la traducción literaria*, held by Professor Amelia Serraller Calvo, thereby gaining the necessary knowledge and preparation to be able to translate any genre of narrative. She is currently working on the creation of her first forthcoming translation projects, primarily consisting of short stories and poem collections.

ALICE B. OSTI MAGALHÃES is a Brazilian poet and translator of English and Portuguese. She has recently undertaken research regarding a retranslation of Emily Brontë's *The Night-wind*. She lived in Ireland between 2011 and 2013 and received a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) from Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin (2013), where she developed a literary translation portfolio from Brazilian Portuguese, and French into English, which included fiction and nonfiction texts, a piece of music and a poem. She also did an annotated translation from chapter 2 and part of chapter 4 of the nonfiction book *Pedagogia do Oprimido (Pedagogy of the Oppressed)* (Paz e Terra, 2011) by Paulo Freire from Brazilian Portuguese into English. Together with other translators, Osti Magalhães was awarded the Stephen Spender Prize for Poetry Translation in 2023. Her co-translation with Marshall Rodger has been published on the Stephen Spender Trust website.

OFELIA PRODAN was born in Urziceni, Romania in 1976 and is currently living in Padua, Italy. Since her debut in 2007 she published twenty poetry volumes, receiving also several awards from Romanian cultural associations (The Ion Vinea Grand Prize, 2007; Outstanding Debut Award from the Bucharest section of the Writers' Association, 2008; Special Poetry Prize at the National Poetry Festival George Coșbuc, 25th edition, 2009; the award for Best Poetry Book of 2016; the Familia cultural review's prize at the International Poetry Festival in Sighetu Marmăției, 2021) and from international literary festivals (the prize for poetry in foreign language from Napoli Cultural Classic, 8th edition, Italy, 2013; the international poetry award Mihai Eminescu, Getafe-Madrid, Spain, 2023). Her poems were published in national and international anthologies (*Cele mai frumoase poeme din 2010*, Tracus Arte, 2011; *Voor de prijs van mijn mond*, Poëzie Centrum, 2013) and magazines (*Asymptote*, *Nuovi Argomenti*, a *Gierik & Nieuw Vlaams Tijdschrift*). Her poetry has been translated into English, French, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch. She is a member of the Romanian Writers' Union and the Romanian PEN Center.

LESLEY SAUNDERS (born 1946) is the author of several poetry collections, most recently *This Thing of Blood & Love* (Two Rivers Press, 2022) and, with the artist Rebecca Swainston, *Days of Wonder* (Hippocrates Press, 2021), a poetic record of the first year of the Covid pandemic. With the poet Philip Gross she co-authored *A Part of the Main* (Mulfran Press, 2018), which was a response to the social and political events of 2016, most notably the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union. Her collection *Nominy-Dominy* (Two Rivers Press, 2018) is an extended praise-song for the Greek and Latin literature she grew up with as a school student. Saunders has also worked and performed with artists, sculptors, musicians and dancers as well as with other poets. Saunders' translations – including the poem that won the 2016 Stephen Spender award – of renowned Portuguese poet Maria Teresa Horta were published as *Point of Honour* (Two Rivers Press, 2019). Saunders has also translated many of the poems of Luís Quintais, two of which were published in *Poetry Review* (Winter 2018) and, prior to the current translations, several of Maria Azenha's poems, which have appeared on the website *Poesia, Vim-Buscar-te*. Saunders' main career was in education and educational research, and she is a visiting professor at University College London Institute of Education.

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. In addition, he has explored the intricate relationship between mathematics and linguistic theory during the twentieth century, sometimes approaching this topic from an historical perspective, and sometimes analysing distinctive mathematical techniques in contemporary linguistic theories. 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, and which resulted in the publication of *Translation and Multimodality: Beyond Words* edited by Monica Boria, Ángeles Carreres, María Noriega-Sánchez, and Marcus Tomalin (Routledge, 2020). His many other 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).

GIANCARLO TURSI is an Assistant Professor of Translation Studies in the French and Italian department at UC Santa Barbara. His recently defended dissertation, entitled 'Dialectal Dante: The Politics of Translation in Risorgimento Italy', looked at the phenomenon of dialectal translations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in nineteenth century, unification era Italy. He is currently working on turning this dissertation into a book. He is also currently working on an English translation of dialectal poet Giuseppe De Dominicis' 1900 *Canti de l'otra vita* (Cantos from the Other Life), a parodic rendition of the *Divine Comedy* as an uprising of the damned in hell against the unjust laws of heaven. In 2011, he was shortlisted for the Susan Sontag Translation Grant for a translation of selected poems by the Italian poet Angelo Maria Ripellino. He is Italian from his father's side and Salvadoran from his mother's side. His interests in Translation Studies and Comparative Literature have recently led him to a deeper exploration of Latin American literature, in particular the works of Spanglish writers. He is fluent in English, Italian, French, and Spanish.

Acknowledgements

The editors and *Il Pietrisco* would like to thank the translators and the authors for granting us permission to publish their work in our journal. We would also like to thank the editorial board of *Il Pietrisco* and our external reviewers for their precious expert advice.

We are especially grateful to the copyright holders for permission to reproduce the following material in this issue:

‘Certe mattine’, ‘Al mio angelo’, ‘Amo lo spazio che ti sta intorno’, ‘Il tempo del congedo’, ‘Dio breve nell’erba’ in *La Bambina Pugile, ovvero la precisione dell’amore*, by Chandra Livia Candiani (Einaudi, 2014). ©2014 Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino.

‘La casa che abiti non ti appartiene più’, ‘I sentieri che attraversi non portano segnali’, ‘Poi c’è una terra che è tua solo d’estate’, ‘Highlands tour 2’, ‘Highlands tour 3’ in *Il passo dell’obbedienza* by Laura Corraducci (Moretti e Vitali, 2020). ©2020 Moretti & Vitali, Bergamo.

‘Reflexo de Safo’, ‘Fios entremeados’, ‘Filomela (I)’, ‘Nomear’, ‘Filomela (II)’ in *Sombras Longas* by Patrícia Lavelle (Relicário Edições, 2023). ©2023 Relicário Edições, Belo Horizonte.

In line with the multicultural nature of the publication, we have retained the different varieties of English spelling. 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 thrilled at the publication of the second issue of *Il Pietrisco Translations*, devoted to contemporary women poets writing in one of the more widely spoken Romance languages. The idea for this issue arises from the desire to give greater visibility to women writers, and to women poets in particular. Notwithstanding the advances in gender equality, and the efforts to promote women's intellectual work through dedicated literary prizes, translation prizes, women-only publishing houses, and an ever-increasing amount of academic research, disparities in the publishing world are still apparent. In the USA context, the Women in the Literary Arts organisation (VIDA) has been denouncing the entrenched gender bias of the sector for over twenty years, pointing out that the gender-gap widens when poets are in focus (Abramson 2017). The first survey on *Gender in Poetry Publishing in Ireland, 2008-2017* produced similar findings, with 63% of male poets and 37% of female poets published (Falvey 2019). The imbalance is replicated when we look at translated works. According to the 2023 Manifesto on Literary Translation published by PEN America "at least twice as many books in English translation by men authors are still consistently published in the U.S." It would be naive to dismiss these trends as die-hard Anglophone misogyny. Recent surveys in the Spanish-speaking world – the fourth largest publishing market – paint a similar picture. A report by PEN International, VIDA and UNESCO on five Latin American countries (Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua) published this year, has found that women represent only about 30% of all writers and journalists. In Spain, despite great strides in women's participation in the publishing industry as writers, editors, publishers, the top jobs are still firmly in men's hands, and so is male writers' visibility (Casellas López 2021: 14-19). In its prestige and international vocation, the Nobel Prize for literature provides the ultimate example of gender imbalance. Since its inception in 1901, only 17 women writers received the prize (compared to 113 male writers). The Swedish award also encapsulates the winds of change: the highest number of Noble Prizes to women writers (8) was awarded in the new Millenium.

The other driver behind this issue is the desire to offer a taste of the linguistic and poetic richness of Romance cultures scattered around the world. For reasons of space, we decided to focus on French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish, and to bring to light connections, common substrates, and transnational grafts that underlie the experience of women poets today, including trans women. We are delighted to feature translations between Romance languages, and in a variety of combinations (Italian/French, Romanian/Italian, Spanish/Italian, etc.). While recognising the role of English as the language of international communication (hence the use of English here and in the para-texts), we also acknowledge the need to translate more into English. Despite the recent increase in the number of translations of literary works published in English, the figures remain very low: only approximately 6% in the UK in 2023 compared to up to 30% in some European countries (Hahn 2023). We are therefore proud to make the work of women poets – including both novel voices and well-established ones – more widely available to an Anglophone readership.

At the core of this journal's mission lies the foregrounding of the task of translation. We asked translators to provide a brief reflective commentary to give readers a flavour for the sorts of challenges they encountered and how they went about addressing them. Together,

the commentaries make up a variegated tapestry that offers an insight into the process of translation in all its multifaceted richness. Perhaps not surprisingly when dealing with poetry, capturing the particular soundscape of the original was mentioned as a high priority by several translators. Lesley Saunders comments on the impossibility of rendering in English the delicate Portuguese rhymes. In her translation she makes effective use of assonance and alliteration to try and replicate a similar effect. Isabel del Río was inspired by the poet's public reading of her feminist work. The force and passion of that performance sparked her desire to emulate "both the sense and the tempo" of the poem. Osti Magalhães and Jenny Marshall Rodger faced the difficulty of rendering in English a prosodic feature of Brazilian Portuguese aimed at conveying a particular kind of emphasis, opting to typographically split the word in question. Marcus Tomalin offers a perceptive account of the subtle decisions that went into translating the poet's carefully crafted soundscapes from Italian into English. He aims to replicate in English the nuanced strangeness of some of the original's phrasing, providing a number of illuminating examples of how departing from literalness is often the only way to approximate a 'faithful' translation. Arianna Autieri chooses to foreground and explore her own situatedness as an expat by opting to translate into English, her second language. A plethora of metaphors have been used over the centuries to describe the act of translation. Alain Bourdy sees his work as akin to that of "plant[ing] the seeds of these poems into the soil of the French language", an image that conveys the sense of care, of loving patience, as well as hinting at the many variables – some within the translator's control, some beyond – that come into play in the creation of the final product. In translating an Argentinian poet of Italian descent writing about her dead mother, Teresiana Matarrese is keenly sensitive to the need to capture the Italianness in the author's Spanish – a quandary that reminds us that languages are living entities in flux, interlaced with one another. Rima Mourabbi echoes a premise shared by many translators that, as far as possible, the translation should read as though the text had been originally written in the target language. In her commentary Chiatelli exemplifies how the translator must sometimes test the boundaries of the target language in order to remain as close as possible to the source text. To preserve the ambivalence of the original images – stemming from the polysemy of the Romanian original – she opts for solutions that introduce a level of strangeness in the Italian. Translation is most often carried out by individuals working in isolation; yet in many ways collaboration epitomises the process of negotiation that is at the core of any act of translation. Again translating from the Romanian, Iulia Cosma and her students Loredana Fortuna, Maria Haiduc, Simona Huțanu, Ramona Daniela Muraru and Andreea M. Toma offer us an inspiring account of translation as a truly collaborative endeavour. Cosma describes the dynamic and thorough process of exchange and mutual feedback that produced the versions presented here. Kyler Johnson explains how, after producing an initial literal version, he "let it simmer" for a few months. This allowed him the necessary distance to find the space for play and experimentation, a creative freedom evident in the highly effective final versions. Reflecting on his experience of translating an experimental prose poem, Tursi alludes to the need to preserve the fragmentary, non-normative nature of an experimental source text, resisting the temptation of 'tidying it up'. The thoughts and reflections shared by the translators make for fascinating reading. In our view, they greatly deepen and enrich our appreciation of both original and translation.

In what follows, we provide a brief overview of the contributions as they appear in the issue, to give readers a flavour of the variety of themes and tones featured.

Lesley Saunders translates four poems by the Portuguese poet Maria Azenha. Azenha's poetic voice is condensed and enigmatic, combining an element of storytelling with allusive

– and sometimes startling – symbolism (‘When she’s about to go away / she generously hands me two prostheses / which she plucks from her eyes’¹). Her poems explore the themes of love, poetry, gendered power relations, often through a subtle ironic lens.

Isabel del Río translates from Spanish into English a feminist poem by the Chilean author María Eugenia Bravo-Calderara. A fervent denunciation of the centuries-long oppression of women, the poem is also a call to action: ‘And among us, women, / the call was awakened, and we left behind / and forever the poor little / trapped mermaid, / the angel with clipped wings [...] with no room of their own’. While the poem exudes outrage and intensity, it also conveys a sense of hope, joy and empowerment.

Arianna Autieri renders into English five poems by Italian poet Chandra Livia Candiani. There is a simplicity and a precision both in imagery and language that Autieri’s translation aims to capture. A girl wakes up to her weary image in the mirror after a night-long fight against an unnamed enemy. An all-to-human guardian angel drinks too much and goes around town in white flannel trousers. A god is to be found in a drop of water, in a lizard’s tail, in an egg, ‘for every place is sacred / if absent in us’.

Alain Bourdy translates into French five poems by Italian poet Laura Corraducci. Love demands courage, and yet this is often smothered by the fear of loss. In the dead of night a soldier advances through the darkness of the woods, whose stillness masks the dangers that beset him. The remaining three poems, inspired by and dedicated to England and Scotland, contain striking images that convey a sense of awe and longing. The landscape becomes a language of the soul to be deciphered, and nature acquires a transcendental quality that rises above mortality – ‘la mort ici n’est qu’un signe effacé par le matin’ (here death is but a sign erased by morning).

Teresiana Matarrese translates into Italian a text by the Argentinian author Liria Evangelista, written on the occasion of her mother’s death. The work sits at the crossroads between genres, part autobiography, part elegy, part meditation. ‘Voglio scrivere morti. Scrivere mia madre morta [...] Lei è tutti i morti. Lei è tutto ciò che è morto’ (I want to write the dead. Write my dead mother [...] She is all the dead. She is all that is dead). Writing about the mother merges with writing without, with, through the mother. The two voices, daughter and mother, dialogue as if engaged in an intimate dance – lines from Argentinian tango make up the headings for each of the short sections of the book. In writing about her mother, Evangelista reflects on female experience more generally, exploring the nature of love and memory.

Transgender Mexican writer EmaLúa Ganchola’s prose poem is translated from the Spanish into Italian by Rima Mourabbi. The first part of the text captures the sense of anger and entrapment the author might have experienced as a trans woman: ‘la mia tomba è questa fotografia’ (my grave is this photograph). The second part opens up the possibility of action and self-determination, beyond the static image in the photograph. The simplicity of the language speaks to the reader all the more forcefully.

Five poems by the Italian writer and performer Mariangela Gualtieri are translated here by Marcus Tomalin into English. Gualtieri’s unhurried gaze probes the nature of reality with a

¹ All quotations included in this introduction are taken from the translated poems published in this volume. The English translations of the translations are the editors’.

microscopic lens. The poems reveal endless fascination for the minute details of the natural world – the wing of a butterfly, a fragment of a sage leaf, the locules and pistils of flowers awaiting pollination, the stars in the night sky. As Tomalin observes, the focus is on *seeing*, on noticing. The scientific seamlessly blends into the lyrical and the spiritual. In the process of seeing and painstakingly describing what we see, discoveries are made which are imbued with meaning beyond the realm of objective reality.

Elena Chiatelli translates into Italian three poems by the Romanian poet Emilia Ivancu. As other poets published in this volume, Ivancu, too, draws on the world of nature to distil her own personal poetics. The poet falls asleep over an old book, only to wake up to ‘[a] world turned poem’, and to the sound of the sea inside her ear: ‘Così ho cominciato a scrivere / di come ho cominciato a parlare la lingua dell’aria e dell’acqua, / della terra e del fuoco’ (Thus I began to write / about how I began to speak the language of air and water, of earth and fire).

Five poems by Brazilian author Patrícia Lavelle are translated into English by Alice B. Osti Magalhães and Jenny Marshall Rodger. The poems centre on figures and myths from Ancient Greece in order to lay bare the often brutal oppression endured by women throughout the centuries, and the strategies they developed in order to survive. The translators have sought to render the fragmented nature of the language used by Lavelle, where at times we find a single phrase is enjambed over several lines, a single word split over two lines, mirroring the violence portrayed.

Kyler Johnson translates into English five poems by Brazilian author Cris Lira. The poems capture fleeting moments of transition: from sleep to wakefulness in the arms of a beloved, from her native country to the American Midwest, from one month to another (‘this is the way to say farewell to January’). Johnson’s sensitive, imaginative translation aptly captures the understated depth of feeling of Lira’s poetry. In it some of the main themes explored by the poet – memory, exile, the fleeting nature of beauty – are approached through a connection with nature.

The text by Chilean author Fernanda Martínez Varela translated here into Italian by Giancarlo Tursi resists categorisation. The fragmented, often jarring discourse is marked by irregular spacing and capitalization. As Tursi explains, Martínez Varela’s background in sociology permeates her approach to aesthetics, which she regards as a dimension of the social, also intersected by the religious and the political. In the passage selected by Tursi, the author combines her own childhood memories with an inclusive agenda to construct a coming-of-age narrative of sorts.

The translation into Italian of five poems by the Romanian poet Ofelia Prodan is the result of a collaborative endeavour by Iulia Cosma and her BA students at the University of Padua. Prodan’s preoccupation with social issues as they affect women and girls is evident in these poems. A young girl plays hide-and-seek against the bleak backdrop of a derelict power plant. A sex worker goes about her daily business. Death drops by to share a cup of coffee, while music from an old radio plays in the background. Immigrant care workers fight for their rights in Italy. Whether told in the third or first person, each poem tells a story. The matter-of-fact tone employed by Prodan comes tinged with a dose of irony: ‘La signora elegante / con sorriso elegante infila elegante i soldi / e le calze rovinate nella borsa elegante’ (the elegant lady / with an elegant smile elegantly slips the money / and the torn tights in her elegant bag).

We trust this summary gives some idea of the range and scope of the work published in this issue, and that it will spark the reader's reflections on the relationship between translation and poetry, women's poetry in particular.

We hope you will enjoy the issue.

Monica Boria and Ángeles Carreres, September 2024

References

Abramson, Seth. 2017. 'The widening gender gap in contemporary American poetry', *Huffpost*, 6 December 2017, <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-widening-gender-gap-i_b_4213440> [accessed 7 July 2024]

Casellas López, Mercedes. 2021. *El Sector Editorial en la Balanza de Género*. TFM Máster en Edición Digital 2019-2021. Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, <<https://openaccess.uoc.edu/bitstream/10609/128226/6/mcasellasTFM0121memoria.pdf>> [accessed 10 July 2024]

Falvey, Deirdre. 2019. 'Two-thirds of published poets are male, so does poetry have a gender issue?' *The Irish Times*, 17 August 2019, <<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/two-thirds-of-published-poets-are-male-so-does-poetry-have-a-gender-issue-1.3984922>> [accessed 7 July 2024]

Hahn, Daniel. 2023. 'Literary translations from 3% to 6%. And now what?', Talk held at the London Book Fair, 19 April 2023, <https://www.londonbookfair.co.uk/en-gb/whats-on/seminar-programme/programme/session-details.3159.186109.literary-translations-from-3-to-6--and-now-what.html&utm_source=Google&utm_medium=calendar&utm_campaign=sessionreminder> [accessed 10 July 2024]

Nobel Prize, 'All Nobel Prizes for Literature 1901-2023', <<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/lists/all-nobel-prizes-in-literature/>> [accessed 10 July 2024]

Pen America. 2023. *The 2023 Manifesto on Literary Translation*, <<https://pen.org/report/translation-manifesto/>> [accessed 7 July 2024]

Pen International. 2024. 'Women Seizing the Word. The Participation of Women Writers in Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua', <<https://www.pen-international.org/news/pen-vida-unesco-count-report>> [accessed 10 July 2024]

MARIA AZENHA

translated from the Portuguese into English by Lesley Saunders

Era primavera e fazia frio

Apaixonei-me algumas vezes durante a vida.
Fui outras tantas traída.
Nunca falei mal dos amigos pelas costas.
Um dia salvei um pássaro de morrer. Por causa dele
o meu coração esvaziou-se da tristeza que tinha entrado
com o vento
pela janela da Terra.

Há entre nós um grande segredo.

It was spring and it was cold

I fell in love many times in my life.
I was betrayed many other times.
I never bad-mouthed my lovers behind their backs.
One day I saved a bird from death. Because of him
my heart emptied itself of the grief that had entered
with the wind
through the window of Earth.

Between us there is a great secret.

Violência doméstica

(Como numa suite para um violoncelo)

Por certo não há ninguém por perto.
Só eu e ela.
– É jovem e bela –
Como numa suite para um violoncelo
o som da chuva acompanha as nossas falas.

Quando já está para se ir embora
entrega-me generosamente duas próteses
que retira dos olhos.

Uma lágrima
invade a escuridão da sala.

Move-se na névoa como um barco.

Domestic violence

(As in a suite for the violoncello)

No-one's around, for sure.
Just me and her
– she's young and lovely –
As in a suite for the cello
the sound of the rain accompanies our words.

When she's about to go away
she generously hands me two prostheses
which she plucks from her eyes.

A tear
spreads through the shadow of the room.

It moves through the mist like a boat.

Confissão a um telefone de outro mundo

Em criança queria escrever um poema.
Um poema sem defeitos, um poema perfeito.
Em casa, sozinha, parecia-me o lugar eleito.
Assim, sentada no chão com os olhos para cima
esperava que algum poema me visse, mas nada acontecia...
Fui então à confissão com o rosto cheio de brilho e com as mãos vazias,
o padre aconselhou-me a rezar e a pedir perdão.
Mas eu não me lembrava do mal que tinha feito
apenas ouvia a voz de minha mãe a ralar comigo e com o gato
que dormia no pátio...
- eu, que só pedia um poema sem defeitos -
Que arrelia! ...

Agora ligo em vão todas as noites para um telefone de outro mundo
na esperança de ouvir o poema perfeito.

Confession to an otherworldly telephone

As a child, I wanted to write a poem.
A poem without a defect, a perfect poem.
At home on my own was the place I selected.
And so, sitting on the floor looking skywards,
I waited for some poem to find me, but nothing happened.
So I went to confession with my face all glowing, empty-handed;
the priest counselled me to pray and beg forgiveness.
But I could not remember having done anything bad,
only hearing my mother's voice scolding me and the cat

who was asleep on the patio...

– I, who asked only for a poem without defect –
what a joke!

Now I shout in vain every night into an otherworldly telephone
in the hope of hearing the perfect poem.

Todos os meus poemas foram escritos a três dimensões

Todos os meus poemas foram escritos a três dimensões.
Deles avisto a Terra Prometida
e o Infinito
em papel de Bíblia.

Bem sei,
os poetas mentem demais.

All my poems were written in three dimensions

All my poems were written in three dimensions.
In them I glimpse the Promised Land
and Infinity
on thin Bible paper.

I know,
poets tell too many lies.

Context

Maria Azenha is a regular contributor to the website *Poesia, Vim Buscar-te*, where I first encountered her work. Her poems are characteristically short, allusive, lyrical, metaphorical; many are laced with something like irony although this is never heavy-handed. Her subject matter is often gendered female and her brief scenes are frequently set in nature, which plays an active role. These same qualities are evident in these new poems.

The primary challenge for a translator is to feel one's way into a poem, what it is accomplishing as a whole through its imagery and its soundscape. This is particularly true of Azenha's work, because there is often a surprise towards the end of a poem.

Another challenge is that a poem is as much about the sounds its words make, in the mouth and on the ear, as about the marks on the visible page. Even so, Azenha's poetry makes the most of that visual space – her line- and stanza-breaks are acutely sensitive to, and creative of, the dynamic of the whole. Musically, Portuguese generates a large variety of natural rhymes, which Azenha exploits with an easy delicacy, but which English does not have the capacity to emulate

without sounding forced. I therefore have used assonance and alliteration to try to achieve similar effects.

Translator's note

Let me now make a few comments on the individual poems.

'Era primavera e fazia frio' is a short lyric whose surface simplicity of lexis and apparently factual recounting disguises its depth. The visitation of the bird in the fourth line brings with it a poignancy, a reflection of a life lived with others and alone. The 'great secret' is not revealed, but might imply for this poet now a sense of connection with nature rather than with individual lovers. And the title – 'it was spring and it was cold' – suggests the poet feels the chill of exposure to the elements as well as the warmth of spring.

'Violência doméstica' is a phrase that might be a documentary headline, except for the subtitle '*Como numa suite para um violoncelo*' – an immediate contradiction in tone and content. These do an immense amount of work in signifying how we might read what follows; without them, we might well understand the poem as a lament for lost love. With them, we must accommodate the violence and the violoncello, both. Love has been lost; how it has been destroyed is where the violence must lie, though we are never shown it except in the startlingly surreal image of the 'prostheses' which the woman takes from her eyes. The grief that ends the poem is a presence, a process, almost a being, like the elegiac sound of a cello made visible.

'Confissão a um telefone de outro mundo' looks like a poem about penance and penitence; it is also a poem about poetry. The confessional imagery tells us there is a kind of suffering, even a sin, in not finding the right words. And, because the poet's need for perfection started in childhood, it takes on the connotation of original sin. And yet, all of this is couched in language that undermines any tendency towards self-dramatisation; the phrase 'Que arrelia!' shows us how to take the final two lines, as a quest that is both endless and entertaining.

'Todos os meus poemas foram escritos a três dimensões'. The poet's quest is given a truly other-worldly significance in this six-line piece. The phrase 'em papel de Bíblia' is beautiful and precise: we understand that a poem is a sacramental text, a holy act. And then the poem wrong-foots itself, and us, in the final two lines: poets are liars!

MARÍA EUGENIA BRAVO-CALDERARA

translated from the Spanish into English by Isabel del Río

Germinación de las guerreras

A Las Tesis de Valparaíso, Chile

I

Ayer
aplastaron impulsos libertarios
mutilándolas.
Ataron sus pies y las ataron al dolor
de huesos machacados.
Impedidas de caminar,
de correr,
de avanzar o retroceder,
inmovilizadas, fueron
obligadas a permanecer tras
los cuatro muros de los
gineceos,
de los serrallos,
del harén,
de las prisiones
simulacros de hogar.

Fueron
atadas a la cama del señor,
al lecho del amo,
al trono del rey,
y fuesen esposas o cortesanas
novias o rameras
mujeres adultas
o niñas,
todas no fueron
sino una cosa
entre otras cosas,
seres transables,
desechables,
millones de veces
simple mercancía,
en la mayoría de los casos
seres oscuros,
a menudo sin nombre propio,
apenas un ente
y un signo que por siglos
fue el silencio.

II

Fuimos silencio por milenios.
Pero,
en los gineceos
en los serrallos
en los patios traseros de las casas
se gestaron idiomas secretos,
alfabetos extraordinarios
lenguas alternativas
para poder decir lo prohibido
para desenmascarar por fin
el poder putativo del rey
y sus lacayos,
ir recuperando poco a poco
el uso de los pies,
la respiración libre de corsé
de fajas opresoras,
y el paso largo, ligero,
libre de tacones altos,
y poder por fin acceder a los libros,
al conocimiento universal
hasta entonces apropiado
por unos pocos.

Y germinó entre nosotras
el reclamo,
de dejar atrás y para siempre
a la pobrecita
sirena atrapada,
al ángel de alas cortadas,
la musa silenciosa y apaleada,
la nereida ignorada,
la sílfide sin alimento propio,
la náyade, vestal o diosa
sin cuarto propio.

III

Luego se negaron a verse
como náyades vaporosas,
celestes musas,
ángeles alados,
madres santas,
mujeres fatales,
o cualquier otra distorsión
de sí mismas,
de lo que no eran, ni fueron
o no quisieron ser.
Y dejaron atrás la imagen de la doncella

indefensa y ruborosa,
de la moza inocente que espera
un príncipe azul o de cualquier otro color
para completar su vida.
Decididas dejaron atrás a la inocente
jovencita que pensaba que valdría más
si era ingenua e ignorante.
Dejaron atrás a la señorita casta y pura,
a la odalisca de danza embrujadora,
a la vestal inalcanzable que fue un invento
de afiebradas mentes patriarcales enemigas.

IV

Y así,
ni nereida, ni sirena,
ni sílfide, ni ninfa,
ni diosa, ni puta,
ni cortesana,
ni tigresa o vampiresa,
ni carne de burdel
ni de convento,
se convirtieron en guerreras,
mujeres insurgentes,
en las valerosas mujeres de hoy.

Londres, junio 2021

The awakening of women warriors

dedicated to Las Tesis of Valparaíso, Chile

I

Yesterday
they crushed women's yearning for freedom
by mutilating them
and they bound women's feet, chaining them
to the pain of shattered bones.
And so, unable to walk, to run,
to move forwards or backwards,
thus immobilised, women were forced
to remain behind the four walls of
the gynaeceum, the seraglio,
the harem and
the prison that was a make-believe home .

and they were
tied to the bed of the lord,
to the couch of the master,
to the throne of the king.

And whether wives or courtesans,
brides or harlots,
adult women
or young girls,
they became only one thing
amongst many things:
lives that could be traded
and discarded,
again and again and again,
as a mere merchandise,
most of them
living in obscurity,
often without a name,
barely a being
signalling silence
for centuries.

II

For millennia we were silenced.
Yet
in gynaecea and seraglios,
and in the backyards of houses too,
were borne secret languages,
extraordinary alphabets
and alternative languages
to express what was forbidden and
finally unmask
the purported power of kings
and their lackeys.
And women gradually regained the use
of their feet,
their breathing was unconstrained from the oppression
of corsets and bodices,
and their stride became long and light,
freed as they were from high heels.
And finally, they were able to gain access to books
and universal knowledge
that had been appropriated
by the few.

And among us, women,
the call was awakened, and we left behind
and forever
the poor little
trapped mermaid,
the angel with clipped wings,
the quiet and trampled muse,
the ignored nereid,
the sylph unable to feed herself,

the naiad or the vestal virgin or the goddess
with no room of their own.

III

And so, they refused to see themselves
as ethereal naiads,
as celestial muses,
as winged angels,
as holy mothers,
as femmes fatales,
or as any other distortion of
themselves
or of what they were not or
had not been or had not wanted to be.
And they left behind the image of
the helpless and bashful maiden, and of the
innocent lass waiting for her
prince charming (or whatever other adjective you
care to add to the word *prince*)
in order to make her life complete.
In their determination, they left behind the guiltless
young lady who thought she would increase her worth
if she showed herself as naïve and ignorant.
And they left behind the chaste and pure missy,
the odalisque and her bewitching dance,
the inaccessible vestal virgin who was but
an invention
of those enemy minds, fevered and patriarchal.

IV

Thus,
neither naiad, nor mermaid,
nor sylph, nor nymph,
nor goddess, nor whore,
nor courtesan,
nor tigress or temptress,
and neither fodder for brothels
or convents,
they became warriors,
insurgent women,
the courageous women of today.

London, June 2021

Context

The poem is dedicated to Las Tesis de Valparaíso (aka Lastesis), a feminist performance collective that was established in Valparaíso, Chile, in 2019, as a global movement in the fight

against gender-based violence. The first manifesto by Lastesis was *Quemar el miedo* (*Set fear on fire*); it was published as a book with the caption ‘The feminist call that set the Americas ablaze’, and the movement quickly became viral.

As a feminist poem, María Eugenia’s text is a call to both resistance and empowerment, depicting with vivid and heart-breaking imagery the submissive role of women throughout history. It portrays the long and painful journey of women’s emancipation, from vestal virgins and references to mutilation and foot-binding, to women treated as merchandise and forced to live separately from the world of men.

The poem includes four sections: the status quo (I); the urge for change (II); the call for action (III); the situation today (IV). The text is imbued with intensity and drama, but then how else can the damage inflicted on women, the roles they were demanded to play, the ideas about love and fulfilment that they were forced to adopt as their own, be described? And as these enforced roles were left behind, women refused to see themselves, the poem tells us, as distortions of who they truly were and thus began their fight for freedom.

Although the poem describes the painful process of women’s deliverance, there is a sense of joy in how women developed their own vocabularies and willed themselves to survive in the midst of cruel and prejudiced patriarchal ideologies, gradually unshackling from the terrible limitations imposed on them and gaining access to freedom and the world of knowledge.

Translator’s note

I first saw María Eugenia Bravo-Calderara read her feminist poem live in 2022, at the National Poetry Library in London. Her reading was part of a performance by the collective Las Juanas, and I was entranced by the wise and lucid verses she recited with such passion and conviction.

I have produced a version of the poem in English aiming to emulate both the sense and the tempo of the original, and thus I have taken minor poetic licences. Regarding the title, the original Spanish is especially melodic as it includes first a soft *g* (*voiceless velar fricative*) and then a hard *g* (*voiced velar plosive*): **germinación** de las **guerreras**. For the English title I added *women* to *warriors* to determine the gender, and also decided on a parallel interpretation of ‘germinación’ (or ‘germination’) as ‘awakening’ (when seeds germinate, they awaken to what they are meant to develop into, and thus begins their journey to a fully grown plant or tree). The alliteration I produced for the English title plays on the *w* sound (*voiced labial-velar approximant*): **awakening** of **women warriors**.

Another section requiring adaptation was the reference to *príncipe azul*, the Spanish equivalent of *prince charming*. The original verse states: ‘un príncipe azul o de cualquier otro color’ (literal translation: ‘a blue prince, or of whatever other colour’). I decided on an equivalent derisive remark: ‘prince charming, or whatever other adjective you care to add to the word *prince*’.

Structurally, the verses are enjambed with a powerful sense of rhythm and dramatic urgency to depict the frenzy of roles, events and impositions that women have had to endure since the beginning of time. It is ultimately a universal poem, speaking for women from all periods of history and all cultures. The poem’s ending surges forth with hope and expectation about today’s women as courageous warriors.

CHANDRA LIVIA CANDIANI

translated from the Italian into English by Arianna Autieri

I

Certe mattine
al risveglio
c'è una bambina pugile
nello specchio,
i segni della lotta
sotto gli occhi
e agli angoli della bocca,
la ferocia della ferita
nello sguardo.
Ha lottato tutta la notte
con la notte,
un peso piuma
e un trasparente gigante
un macigno scagliato
verso l'alto
e un filo d'erba impassibile
che lo aspetta
a pugni alzati:
come sono soli gli adulti.

(© 2014 Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino)

I

Some mornings
waking up
there's a girl boxer
in the mirror,
the signs of a fight
around her eyes
and at the corners of her mouth,
the fierceness of a wound
in her glance.
She's fought all night
with the night,
a featherweight
and an invisible giant
a massive rock thrown
upwards
and an unperturbed wisp of grass
awaiting it
dukes up:
how lonely adults are.

II

Al mio angelo spuntano le foglie
in momenti impensati,
è spesso ubriaco
per farsi scolaro del senso fluttuante,
e al posto dei sensi di colpa
ha molliche di pane,
integrale,
le semina un po' ovunque
poi non sa più
se sono tracce da seguire
o cibo per volatili ingenui.
Vola soprattutto in città
verso le periferie, impara
come abita la gente,
sta seduto sui fili della luce
e pensa a me. Ha pantaloni
di flanella bianca da tennista
anni Trenta e una faccia consumata
da angelo di chi sta nei guai.
Scarpe molto impolverate, fa chilometri
per non perdermi nei bassifondi
della notte. Non dà mai consigli
non salva e non protegge,
nei momenti di intensa disperazione
occupa tutto il letto
e mi fa cuccia
universale
con le ali.

(© 2014 Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino)

II

My angel grows leaves
at unexpected moments
he often gets drunk
to become a disciple of flickering meaning,
and instead of a sense of guilt
he has breadcrumbs,
wholemeal,
he scatters them everywhere
then he cannot tell
if they are tracks to be followed
or food for gullible birds.
He flies over the city
suburbs, he learns
how people live,

he sits on wires of light
and thinks of me. He wears white
flannel trousers, like a tennis player,
thirties-style, and his worn-out angel's face
is that of someone in trouble.
With dusty shoes, he walks miles
so as not to lose me in the back alleys
of the night. He never gives advice,
does not save or protect,
in moments of deep despair,
he takes over the whole bed
and makes me
a universal nest
with his wings.

III

Amo lo spazio
che ti sta intorno,
scampato.
Come ti accoglie,
e lo attraversi
stracciando attimi
quasi seminassi
furtivamente perle.

(© 2014 Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino)

III

I love the space
around you,
a rescued space.
How it holds you,
and you walk across it,
tearing moments asunder
as if scattering,
furtively, pearls.

IV

Il tempo del congedo
è coltello giusto
la sua lama più evidente
della mia pelle –
rotta –
simile all'amore

introvabile:
un adulto di spalle
ti fa vedere l'anima.

(© 2014 Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino)

IV

Farewell time
is the right knife,
its blade, more evident
than my skin –
broken –
similar to love,
nowhere to be found:
adults from behind
reveal their souls.

V

Dio breve nell'erba
ingarbugliato in goccia d'acqua
e grandine furiosa
dio coda di lucertola
passi sbadati
tra sedia e letto
dio belva e piuma
insonne asfalto
dio uovo
che ogni acqua è santa
e ogni luogo è sacro
se assente in noi.
Saprai mai inchinarti
tanto
da cogliere la bisbigliata
creatura?

(© 2014 Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino)

V

Brief god in the grass
entangled in a drop of water
and in ferocious hail
lizard's tail god
clumsy steps
from chair to bed
beast and feather god
sleepless asphalt
egg god

for all water is holy
and every place is sacred
if absent in us.
Will you be able to bow
enough
to grasp the whispered
creature?

Context

The poems selected here are included in *La bambina pugile ovvero la precisione dell'amore* (Einaudi, 2014), a collection of poems which is central to understanding Chandra Livia Candiani's philosophy and poetry. The collection displays key themes of her whole work, including the child's gaze on the adult world, a delicate spirituality, harm, and the estrangement that is felt when reality, even a painful one, is viewed with new eyes. The collection is especially rich in existential interrogations. Her poems are a delicate answer to the "danno/che ci vive" (Candiani 2014: 7), that harm that, for those who have experienced it, lingers throughout life.

La bambina pugile is informed by Buddhist philosophy. This influence is made evident by the repeated image of a path that individuals walk through, a metaphor for spiritual learning (Di Tanna 2019). Essential to this learning path is the figure of the child, whose views of the world are a model for the poet in her own spiritual and poetic journey. This figure is so important for Candiani that it becomes embodied by real children's voices and poems in *Ma dove sono le parole?* edited by Candiani with Andrea Cirolla (Effigie, 2015). A new, childlike, gaze on reality and everyday objects is also the gift of meditation, of which Candiani writes, poetically, in her *Il Silenzio è cosa viva* (Einaudi, 2018).

The language in *La bambina pugile* is delicate, almost suspended, and rich with oneiric images. Simultaneously, her words are "precise, of matter", and frequently portray ordinary objects. Playing with these contrasting elements, Candiani writes "words that become sound, vital oxymorons that break the silence, widening cracks" (Ruina 2017; my translation). The distinctive use of language, the carefully chosen vocabulary, and the thoughtfully crafted collocations have the power to transform readers' perception of their world, to encourage them to view the quotidian with childlike wonder, to excavate the existential within the ordinary, and to embark on their unique journeys of self-discovery and learning.

Translator's note

By translating Candiani's poetry into English, my second language, I challenge the traditional assumption that translators should only translate into their mother tongue, in line with recent translation studies (e.g. Pokorn, 2007) who proved that native speakers are not always able to discern whether translators are native speakers themselves, and Collischonn (forthcoming). Candiani's verses, rich in unusual collocations, where language already expresses the ineffable by surprising the reader, make the traditional accusation that translation into a non-mother tongue affects fluency somehow irrelevant. The foreigner's enraptured and surprised – almost

childish – gaze on the materiality of English may appear more suited to her poetry than that of an “adult” native speaker. While my translations emerge from a foreigner’s engagement with English, I would also like to thank the English native speakers who have kindly offered their ears, as well as their literary experience, to my translations: Esthie and Johan Hugo, Chantal Wright, and Charlotte Spear.

My translating approach is informed by Boase-Beier’s theory (e.g. 2021), where the author’s style, in the translator’s reading, serves as a clue to interpreting meanings in the source text (ST). In my reading of Candiani’s style, the introduction of unexpected words to the ST’s syntax, the frequent use of unusual collocations, and the juxtaposition of aethereal and quotidian words prompt readers to see their reality with new eyes, engaging with Candiani’s existential quest. These elements are therefore pivotal to my stylistic choices in the target text. Translating Candiani’s work into English has also been a personal learning journey, where my exploration beyond the conventional linguistic boundaries of translation echoed my exploration beyond the borders of my home country. The selected poems resonate with my expat experience of learning to “walk” in a new “adult”, hyper-urbanised world while striving to integrate it with my native, slow-paced world, where my love and family live.

References

- Boase-Beier, Jean. 2020. *Translation and Style*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge)
- Candiani, Chandra Livia. 2014. *La bambina pugile ovvero la precisione dell’amore* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore)
- Collischonn, Lúcia. Forthcoming. *Literary Exophonic Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- Di Tanna, Vernalda. 2019. ‘La bambina pugile ovvero la precisione dell’amore – Chandra Livia Candiani’, in *Laboratorio di Poesia*, 21 February 2019, <<https://www.laboratoripoesia.it/la-bambina-pugile-ovvero-la-precisione-dellamore-chandra-livia-candiani/>> [accessed November 5, 2023]
- Pokorn, Nike K. 2007. *Challenging the Traditional Axioms: Translation into a Non-mother Tongue* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins)
- Ruina, Francesca. 2017. ‘Chandra Livia Candiani. “La bambina pugile ovvero la precisione dell’amore”’, *Charta Sporca*, 21 April 2017, <<https://www.chartasporca.it/chandra-livia-candiani-la-bambina-pugile-ovvero-la-precisione-dellamore/>> [accessed November 5, 2023]

LAURA CORRADUCCI

translated from the Italian into French by Alain Bourdy

la casa che abiti non ti appartiene più
cade polvere dai muri e dagli occhi
sulle favole raccontate ai bambini
eppure vedi sei il solo che ritorna
nei fiori bianchi di questa primavera
per riannodare ogni filo con le mani
a ricordare che il coraggio dell'amore
si nasconde sempre nel timore della resa

la maison que tu habites ne t'appartient plus
il tombe de la poussière de ses murs et de ses yeux
sur les fables racontées aux enfants
et vois-tu pourtant tu es le seul à revenir
parmi les fleurs blanches de ce printemps
pour renouer chaque fil de tes mains
nous rappelant que le courage de l'amour
se dissimule toujours dans la peur de l'abandon

a mio nonno Giuseppe Corraducci, partigiano, mai conosciuto sulla terra

i sentieri che attraversi non portano segnali
la rotta l'hai cambiata nel percorso
si impara l'immobilità dai boschi
a sigillarsi il cuore nella canna di un fucile
a dimenticare il nome dentro un fazzoletto
quanti alberi hai visto corteggiarti le mani
seguirne il pulsare lungo le vene
e quando il buio ti veglia le spalle
cadi in ginocchio davanti alla notte
per sentire odore di figlio sulla corteccia
e l'alito dolce di lei che in gola scende
insieme al sonno ed al tabacco

à mon grand-père Giuseppe Corraducci, partisan, jamais connu sur terre

les sentiers que tu traverses ne sont pas balisés
l'itinéraire tu l'as changé dans ton parcours
la forêt vous apprend l'immobilité
à sceller son cœur dans le canon d'un fusil
à oublier son nom dans un mouchoir

combien d'arbres as-tu vus cajoler tes mains
en suivre la pulsation le long des veines
et quand l'obscurité veille dans ton dos
tu tombes à genoux devant la nuit
pour sentir son haleine d'enfant sur l'écorce
et sa douce exhalaison qui descend dans la gorge
en même temps que le sommeil et le tabac

poi c'è una terra che è tua solo d'estate
quando il sole di luglio sa di vento d'autunno
con un dramma recitato in mezzo al cielo
questa lingua che spinge aria nella gola
e un odore acre di cannella sulle labbra
lasciami ora al ciglio di questo bosco
dentro labirinti di verde senza uscita
dove la casa non conosce porta
ed io possa entrare senza chiave

alors il y a une terre qui ne t'appartient qu'en été
quand le soleil de juillet évoque un vent d'automne
avec un drame qui se joue au milieu du ciel
cette langue qui propulse l'air dans la gorge
et une odeur âcre de cannelle sur les lèvres
laisse-moi à présent à la lisière de ce bois
dans des labyrinthes de verdure sans issue
où la maison ne connaît pas de porte
que je puisse y pénétrer sans avoir de clef

Highlands tour 2

girarti la vita e risalire la gola
dai campi d'ericca e di erba
la pioggia si arrampica sul volto
sul riso delle donne nelle case
i piatti qui danzano sui tavoli
e seguono il canto dei pastori
nella coppa rovesciata delle valli
anche il vento sa stordirsi col silenzio

Highlands tour 2

tournant autour de la taille et gagnant la gorge
à partir des champs de bruyère et d'herbe
la pluie vous grimpe sur le visage

sur le rire des femmes dans les maisons
ici les assiettes dansent sur les tables
et suivent le chant des bergers
dans la coupe renversée des vallées
même le vent sait s'étourdir grâce au silence

Highlands tour 3

in ogni parte io vedo lo svelarsi dell'enigma
in questo cielo strappato come una veste
nella danza solenne che fa l'aria con i fiori
mi basta bagnarti i capelli con la voce
e sentire la preghiera di un eremita fra le rocce
cantano le volpi stanotte nel buio della brughiera
voglio vedere ancora la luce annegarsi nell'acqua
e riportarti domani i nostri occhi intatti sulle mani
la morte qui è solo un segno cancellato dal mattino

Highlands tour 3

de tout côté je vois se dévoiler l'énigme
dans ce ciel déchiré comme une robe
dans la danse solennelle de l'air avec les fleurs
il me suffit de t'humecter les cheveux de ma voix
et d'entendre la prière d'un ermite parmi les rochers
les renards chantent cette nuit dans la bruyère obscure
je veux voir encore la lumière se noyer dans l'eau
et demain porter à nouveau nos regards intacts sur tes mains
la mort ici n'est qu'un signe effacé par le matin

Context

The poems are all taken from Corraducci's latest collection *Il passo dell'obbedienza* (Moretti e Vitali, 2020) (The step of obedience). The very first poem included here, opens the first section and the book itself and it is about the struggle between love and the deep fear of it. The second one is from the third section 'Il rovescio della luce' (The opposite of light) which is the historical section of the collection, this one in particular is dedicated to Corraducci's grandfather who fought and survived the Second World War but died before the poet's birth. The remaining three poems are inspired and dedicated to the UK, especially England and Scotland, where Corraducci spent several summers, and which she considers a part of a beloved dreamland.

The word 'step' in the collection's title may be considered the concept word of the collection, a step towards the light which is often difficult to find and to see in the struggle of life. There

is often this idea of fighting and surrender to something or someone who is stronger, and in some moments it could be love, in some others peace or God, as in the lines:

*a ricordare che il coraggio dell'amore
si nasconde sempre nel timore della resa*

(to remember that the courage of love
is always hidden in the fear of surrender)

or

*nella coppa rovesciata delle valli
anche il vento sa stordirsi col silenzio*

(in the overturned cup of the valleys
even the wind can stun itself with silence)

Corraducci's poetry often presents us with this battle between light and darkness where the former keeps its strength over the second; her choice of words also reflects this sense of brightness that shines even in the terrible moment or situations described, as in the section dedicated to the people and the events of World War II:

*e quando il buio ti veglia le spalle
cadi in ginocchio davanti alla notte
per sentire odore di figlio sulla corteccia*

(and when the darkness watches over your back
fall to your knees before the night
to smell the son on the bark)

Translator's note

I tried to keep Corraducci's sense of lightness in my translations, remaining as much as I could faithful to the original, and probably thanks to the Latin root which is common to the two languages this has been possible in many cases. Corraducci's poetry is full of a sense of waiting and hope which is sometimes hidden in the tragic moments of life, like the ashes which only seem poor dust but they still keep burning for a new fire.

Throughout all the poems of this book, Corraducci invites us to listen to the voice of our own heart that is always longing for freedom and beauty despite the troubles of our existence. Through the evocation of her grandfather, a partisan soldier in the war, or the depiction of the beauty of the Scottish Highlands, we can see a nature that echoes with hope and fear, and we take it inside us. Fabio Pusterla, a famous Italian poet and translator, in his interview for the literary blog *Inchiostro* says that "Translating is very hard and it begins with a humble attitude, the author is the person who wrote that poem – you are the translator, not the author". The work of translation is often compared to that of the gardener who does a transplant fearing that the plant can't take roots, or the soil will not be fertile enough, or the exposure to the sun not sufficient, etc. Perfectly aware of these obstacles and of the difficulty of reproducing the music of Italian, I planted the seeds of these poems into the soil of the French language trying not to lose the taste and the sound of the original version.

LIRIA EVANGELISTA

translated from the Spanish into Italian by Teresiana Matarrese

El eco del eco de su voz

Yo quiero escribir muertos. Escribir mi madre muerta y los demás.

No somos –todos, ellos, mi madre y yo– más que historias contadas hasta el infinito y vueltas a contar. Este es el páramo donde se escucha el murmullo de los ya idos. Ella habla a través de mí y me los convoca. Yo escribo su palabra que no es la que se dice. Es la palabra de silencio, de lo que nunca es lo dicho.

Pero es así, una cuestión gramatical, determinada por el uso de las preposiciones: esto que escribo es acerca de ella. Quiero rodearla, describirla, construirla como un objeto de saber (mi madre sería fuera de

mí, un imposible). Es sobre ella –sobre esa carne, sobre esa piel, en el clivaje de su pecho arrugado–. Es con ella también, en tanto transcribo –con inexactitud, una vez más– nuestras voces que se cruzan, se confunden, se repelen. Extraño duetto el nuestro. A veces es un coro, las voces se van multiplicando hasta saturar el espacio y el tiempo de sonidos. Otras veces el vacío. Podemos enmudecer hasta la enfermedad.

¿Quién habla desde nosotras? ¿Qué pila de muertos nos ocupa?

Escribo, entonces, desde ella, para saberlo.

Repaso la lista de preposiciones: a mi madre, ante mi madre, bajo mi madre, cabe mi madre, con mi madre, contra mi madre, de mi madre, desde mi madre, en mi madre, entre mi madre, hacia mi madre, hasta mi madre, para mi madre, por mi madre, según mi madre, sin mi madre, sobre mi madre, tras mi madre.

Es el espesor de su lengua lo que quise siempre, lo que quiero, la densidad de su palabra dicha –por ella y por los otros–. Todas las voces se cruzan en el eco de la palabra de mi madre. Ella es todos los muertos. Ella es todo lo que ha muerto. Literalmente lo que fue habla por su boca (y yo le doy la letra).

El lenguaje es mi casa embrujada.

Eco dell'eco della voce

Voglio scrivere morti. Scrivere mia madre morta, e gli altri.

Non siamo –tutti, loro, mia madre e io– altro che storie raccontate all'infinito che ritornano a ripetersi. Questa è la landa desolata in cui sospirano coloro che se ne sono andati. Mia madre parla attraverso me, e me li invoca. Io trascrivo la sua parola che non è quella che si dice. È la parola del silenzio. È la parola del mai detto.

È così. Una questione grammaticale governata dall'uso delle preposizioni: ciò che scrivo la riguarda. Voglio circondarla, descriverla, costruirla come oggetto di conoscenza (fuori di me mia madre sarebbe un'impossibilità). È *su* mia madre –su quella carne, su quella pelle, sulla scollatura del suo petto rugoso–. È anche *con* lei, mentre trascrivo –ma imprecisamente, ancora una volta– le nostre voci si incrociano, si confondono, si respingono. Strano duetto il nostro. A volte è un coro, le voci si moltiplicano fino a saturare lo spazio e il tempo di suoni. A volte è il vuoto. Riusciamo ad ammutolire fino alla malattia. Chi parla da noi? Che mucchio di morti ci occupa?

Comincio a scrivere, dunque, *da* lei, per sapere.

Ripasso la lista delle preposizioni: a mia madre, prima di mia madre, sotto mia madre, presso mia madre, con mia madre, contro mia madre, di mia madre, da mia madre, in mia madre, tra mia madre, fino a mia madre, per mia madre, attraverso mia madre, secondo mia madre, senza mia madre, sopra mia madre, dopo mia madre.

È lo spessore del suo linguaggio ciò che ho sempre desiderato, ciò che voglio, la densità della sua parola detta –da lei e gli altri–. Tutte le voci si incrociano nell’eco della parola di mia madre. Lei è tutti i morti. Lei è tutto ciò che è morto. Letteralmente, ciò che è stato parla attraverso la sua bocca (e io le do parola).

Il linguaggio è la mia casa stregata.

Context

‘El eco del eco de su voz’ is the opening to *Sangra en mí*, a book published in Buenos Aires (Modesto Rimba, 2018). Standing at the intersection of poetry, literary essay, autobiography and meditation, *Sangra en mí* comprises a collection of brief, evocative passages each titled after a line of an Argentinian tango (with the exception of ‘Mamma, solo per te la mia canzone vola’, titled after the Italian song ‘Mamma’ by Bixio Cherubini and Cesare Andrea Bixio).

Sangra en mí was written following the death of the author’s mother, Lidia Elena Moschella. It deals with the theme of a mother who ages and passes away while her daughter contemplates the mother’s transition through the transformative pain of loss. *Sangra en mí* raises profoundly personal questions: what does it mean to remember? How has one loved? Like speaking bodies, the voices of the author and her mother unite, blend, and are joined forever.

This text occupies a strategic position in the global literary landscape. The elegy engages in a dense dialogue with current issues concerning the relevance of female autobiography, traditionally considered too intimate, domestic and particular. The problematic gaze of others upon the woman’s body is countered through the bond of writing and reading; the choral dimension of the text, allows the woman to free herself from the subjugating gaze through the narrative of a woman who speaks not just of herself and her mother, but of every mother and every woman.

Translator’s note

The text seamlessly blends elements of elegy, poetry, literary essay, and theoretical dialogue. Translating across these different genres while maintaining a coherent and harmonious flow posed a significant challenge, given the different stylistic conventions associated with each.

Another challenge lay in capturing and rendering the ‘Italianness’ woven into the fabric of the relationship between Liria and her mother, who descended from Italian immigrants in Argentina. According to the author, *Sangra en mí* exudes a distinctly Italian essence. In other sections of the work, in fact, we find expressions from both Sicilian dialect (e.g. ‘massunara’, ‘sticchio lordo’) and Italian (e.g. ‘il tuo sguardo mamma’, ‘bella ragazza’, ‘ti dò uno schiaffo’). Liria Evangelista also expresses the need of crossing her ‘lengua atávica’, the atavic Italian language of her mother (76). In the passage translated here, we read the initial invocation of past voices and the establishing of the particular relationship with language as a ‘casa embrujada’, a haunted house.

The main difficulty I had with the passage was the rendering of the idiomatic series of prepositions, for which there is no linear, univocal correspondence between Spanish and Italian. One of the questions on which I lingered was how to translate the title, *El eco del eco de su voz*, taken from 'Ninguna' (tango, Fernández Siro and Homero Manzi, 1942). To maintain the relation with music, I considered the option of adopting the title of a song by Claudio Villa, 'L'eco del cor' (Claudio Villa, 1958), but the usage of the Romanesco dialect in that text dissuaded me from it.

EMALÚA GCANCHOLA

translated from the Spanish into Italian by Rima Mourabbi

Fotografía del envés

a) Me esfuerzo por contener la lluvia
aprieto los dientes
y con mis ojos de rama seca
miro fijamente a la cámara. Mi niña,
dice la muerte, endereza la espalda.
Con el dedo más ciego de su mano
oprime el obturador:



mi tumba es esta fotografía
de truenos y nubarrones.

b) En esta casa no hay puerta
se entra por los ojos
no hay luz eléctrica ni muebles
hay silencio
y una niña de piernas cruzadas
que dice que el anverso no existe.
La fotografía no miente:
a pesar del blanco y negro
algo en esos muros de carne
huele a ramaje y humedad.
La niña dice de nuevo que no existe
el anverso. Yo, dice ella,
no habito la casa
yo
soy la casa.

Fotografía del verso

a) Mi sforzo di contenere la pioggia
stringo i denti
e con gli occhi come un ramo secco
guardo fissamente l'obiettivo. Bambina mia,
dice la morte, drizza la schiena.
Con il dito più cieco della sua mano
preme l'otturatore:



la mia tomba è questa fotografia
di tuoni e nembrostrati.

b) In questa casa non ci sono porte
si entra attraverso gli occhi
non c'è luce elettrica né mobili
c'è silenzio
e una bambina a gambe incrociate
che dice che il recto non esiste.
La fotografia non mente:
nonostante il bianco e nero
qualcosa in quelle mura di carne
odora di fronde e umidità.
La bambina dice di nuovo che non esiste
il recto. Io, dice lei,
non abito la casa
io
sono la casa.

Context

'Fotografía del envés' is one of the first compositions by EmaLúa Ganchola, written under the pseudonym of Emi G. Canchola and published in 2020 by the online magazine *Círculo de Poesía*. This prose poem aims to disrupt the concept of recto and verso of a medallion through the personal experience of the writer. On the one hand, there is a photograph that portrays a boy, but on the other hand, a young girl hides inside of that body. This is a profound poem that expresses all the anger, sadness, anguish, and inappropriateness of feeling inside a body that society labels as wrong. The text is divided in two parts: A and B. The first section depicts an image of death and irredeemable sorrow, hence creating the impression of a static moment. In the second passage the house is the symbolic equivalent of the author. Although a feeling of emptiness is firstly perceived, the closing verses convey a dynamic sensation of movement, provided by the branches (*ramaje*) that belong to an interior tree destined to grow and flourish.

Therefore, the poem ends with a positive note: the self-determination, the self-acceptance of one's own being and the hope for a rebirth. The poem induces the reader to think about the dilemma of what appears versus the true essence of something. The presence of numerous metaphors (e.g., *mis ojos de rama seca*, *mi tumba es esta fotografía*, and *dice la muerte*) combined with a visual element creates a greater impact and allows one to fully identify and empathize with the protagonist. EmaLúa Ganchola perfectly achieves an emotional involvement of the audience, thus expressing what a transgender person goes through during the first step of a gender transition process.

Translator's note

The primary aim of this translation is to preserve the original poem's style: the prose, defined as an artistic form of personal expression, free from any metrics or schemes. The second most important priority established is the preservation of all the features that characterize the poem. Firstly, the direct tone is retained by employing a dry, simple, and strictly informal vocabulary.

Secondly, all the figures of speech that involve the reader emotionally are maintained (e.g., *Con il dito più cieco della sua mano, mura di carne*, and *io sono la casa*), as well as the visual element that provides significant depth to the text. Given the absence of specific culture-related concepts or word play, and thanks to the similarities between the Spanish and the Italian language, the original poem did not pose major obstacles during the translation process.

However, one notable difficulty encountered was the word *ramaje*: a group of branches belonging to a plant, used to refer to the limbs of an interior tree destined to blossom in the external world. In this context, the word conveys a positive message. Unfortunately, there is no direct equivalent in the Italian language. The translation proposes the more generic term *fronde*, which indicates both the branches and leaves of a tree and conveys an image of life and hope.

EmaLúa Gcanhola aims to arouse empathy for her feelings in the reader. Hence, the third purpose set is to write an equivalent text that evokes the same emotional reaction as the Spanish poem, without losing the natural flow of the target language. In other words, the goal of this translation is to be perceived as if it were originally composed in Italian.

MARIANGELA GUALTIERI

translated from the Italian into English by Marcus Tomalin

L'ala della farfalla

L'ala della farfalla
è fatta di piccolissime ali impunturate.
Una di queste si è staccata
e campeggia al centro del vetrino.
Tolgo il vetrino dal microscopio
ma l'occhio nudo non la vede – tanto
è minuta. L'ala della farfalla
ha migliaia di squame alate
e così pare un pesce, vista da vicino.
Un apparato molto elaborato
che molto bene s'intende d'aria e di peso.
Manufatto d'un altro pianeta.
D'una mano, d'un arto più evoluto
che non ha ancora finito la creazione.
Si nota una perfezione tesa come spalancata
a migliorarsi ancora.

L'ala della farfalla è silenziosa
basta un soffio minimo e si leva, vola
in una traccia di gioia – anche così
staccata, morta, spaiata.
È un bel regalo. Io avrei fatto
un viaggio in capo al mondo
per penetrare una simile veduta.
E tu. Tu l'hai trovata nel campo sotto casa.
Che fortuna sfacciata. Che giornata d'oro
amico mio.

a Nicola

The butterfly wing

The butterfly wing
is a thing made of tiny, top-stitched wings.
One broke off
and occupies the centre of the glass slide.
I take the slide from the microscope
but the naked eye can't see something
so small. The butterfly wing is a thing
that has thousands of winged scales
and so seems a fish, when viewed up close.
A carefully crafted device,

it knows much about air and weight.
Made on another planet.
By a hand, a limb more evolved
that has not yet completed creation.
One observes a taut perfection, as if wide open
to further improve itself.

The butterfly wing is a silent thing
only needing a small puff to rise, to fly
in a trail of joy – even though
separate, dead, decoupled.
It's a fine gift. I would have journeyed
to the ends of the earth
to seek such a sight.
And you – you found it in the field near the house.
What a lucky bugger. What a golden day
My friend.

to Nicola

Io vedo un arcipelago di luce

Io vedo un arcipelago di luce
fiumi di luce d'oro
isole d'un verde lussureggiante
tante, spopolate, fitte di piante
verdissime d'una vita di foglie
e di radici. Un posto del mondo
dove regna una pace avventurosa –
il sogno di chi è intrappolato
fra faccende e incombenze pesanti
un paesaggio incantato, isole
galleggianti su fiumi d'acqua e luce.
Solo per te. Solo solo per te.
Nessun'orda viaggiante ci approda.
Nessuno qui inchioda assi per costruire
finte capanne di paglia, hotel.
Grande come la testa di un chiodo
è solo un pezzo di foglia di salvia.

I see an archipelago of light

I see an archipelago of light
rivers of golden light
islands of luscious green
plenty, deserted, dense with
plants so very green with a life of leaves
and roots. A place in the world

where an adventurous peace reigns –
the dream of anyone burdened
with tedious chores and tasks
a magical landscape, islands
floating on rivers of water and light.
Only for you. Only only for you.
No travelling mob docks here.
No one nails boards to create
fake straw huts, hotels.
As large as the head of a nail,
it's only a sliver of a sage leaf.

La polvere dell'impollinata

La polvere dell'impollinata
è fatta di microscopiche sfere
trasparenti. Ognuna colma
d'una sostanza che poi nell'intimo del fiore
– nello stimma –
rende feconda la pianta.
E così a marzo siamo immersi
in un'aria ingravidante
dentro l'enorme gittata
di sperma delle piante
dentro la spalancata attesa
di ovari vegetali
ricettacoli e loculi e pistilli
a più non posso gonfi e tesi.

Non è solo per noi
l'oscura tormentosa dolce potenza di Eros –
pervade e pompa – spinge
seduce ogni tronco
ogni filo d'erba lo abbellisce
d'un verde, d'una infiammata
a cui nessuno può fare resistenza.

La città annusa appena
l'incanto che propulsa le sue
polveri feconde e traveste
e adorna e ammanta il secco
in veste di baldanze dentro una luce
che ogni giorno avanza in pompe.

E cresce la mancanza – e tutto tutto
seduce l'un l'altro ogni vivente
adempie la bellezza assegnata
splendendo un poco abbagliando

col bianco col celeste sul prato.
Ascolta ora l'alleanza della terra col sole
il sodalizio con l'aria e dimmi tu
se non c'è in tutto questo
fiducia una contentezza
di tutti i respiranti d'esserci ancora
d'esserci adesso
dentro la primavera.

The dust of pollination

The dust of pollination
is made up of transparent microscopic
spheres. Each one filled
with a substance that, in the intimacy of the flower
– in the stigma –
makes the plant fertile.
And so, in March, we're immersed
in an impregnating air
within the vast range
of plant sperm,
inside the wide-open anticipation
of vegetal ovaries,
receptacles and locules and pistils
totally swollen and taut.

It's not for us alone
the dark, tormenting, sweet power of Eros
– it permeates and pumps – urges
seduces every trunk,
each blade of grass graces it
with green, with a blazing
no one can resist.

The city barely senses
the enchantment that propels its
fertile powders and disguises,
adorns, and veils the dryness
in clothes of boldness within a light
that expands in pomp more every day.

And the absence grows – and everything, everything
seduces each other all living things
fulfil the assigned beauty
shining a little, dazzling
with white and blue on the meadow.

Listen now to the alliance of the earth with the sun,
the melding with the air and tell me

if in all of this there's no
trust, contentment
for all the breathers to be here still
to be here now
within this spring.

Ricorda

Ricorda.
Metti il capotto. Esci nel buio grande
annusa. E ora alza lo sguardo.
Volta la faccia. Ispeziona
il puntiforme mistero. E di giorno ci sono.
Sono lì, le semenze di luce – le stelle guardiane
delle parole notturne.
Quel capogiro che dura e pare identico,
identica la specie.
Questa notte, il cielo denota
trasparenza. È sereno di certo
questo panorama e tace così forte.

Togli il cappotto sopra il pigiama.
Torna a letto ora. Anche
sotto le lenzuola porti addosso
quella gettata misteriosa che sta
sopra le travi del tetto sopra il tetto
sopra tutta la casa. Sopra il bosco,
e l'autostrada e la città e la terra,
quell'aria sconfinata dove vacilla
il pensiero. E si è piccolissima cosa
buttata lì. Sotto il cielo. O sopra.

Remember

Remember.
Put on your coat. Go out into the huge dark,
sniff. And now, raise your gaze.
Turn your face. Inspect
the point-like mystery. And they're there by day.
They're there, the seeds of light – the guardian stars
of nighttime words.
That dizziness which lingers and seems the same,
the same species.
Tonight, the sky reveals
transparency. It's truly serene,
This view, and so very quiet.

Take off your coat over your pyjamas.
Go back to bed now. Even
under the sheets, you carry with you
that discarded mystery that's
above the roof beams, above the roof,
above the whole house. Above the wood,
and the motorway and the city and the earth,
that boundless air where thought
wavers. And we're a very small thing,
discarded there. Under the sky. Or above.

Io non vi credo cose che vedo

Io non vi credo cose che vedo
perché chiudendo gli occhi
una vitalità di costellazioni
d'altro mondo
vi sopravanza
e la supremazia del visibile
s'incrina in felicità.
Non c'è spina
oltre le vostre sponde
niente confina o crolla
niente s'impolvera
in quella luce.

I don't believe you, the things I see

I don't believe you, the things I see,
because closing my eyes
a vigour of constellations
from another world
overcomes you
and the supremacy of the visible
breaks into happiness.
There is no thorn
beyond your shores
nothing limits or crumbles
nothing becomes dusty
in that light.

Context

The five poems selected here all come from the sub-collection 'Esercizi al microscopio' (Microscope Exercises) that forms part of the volume *Le giovani parole* (Young Words)

(Einaudi, 2015). The poems focus on different details of the natural world – a butterfly’s wing, a fragment of a sage leaf, the process of pollination, the stars at night, and so on – encouraging us to look at these ordinary things anew, recognising their *extraordinary* nature. The language of the poems frequently draws upon scientific vocabulary – whether referring to the use of a microscope to see tiny objects in a disconcertingly vivid manner, or meditating upon specific phenomena such as locules, pistils, and constellations – yet the responses are invariably lyrical and poetic rather than matter-of-factly scientific. The insistent emphasis is on looking and *seeing* – noticing miniscule details that might otherwise elude us in our daily lives, whether they be the ‘taut perfection’ (‘perfezione tesa’) of the butterfly’s wing, the ‘archipelago of light’ (‘arcipelago di luce’) glimpsed on the surface of the sage leaf, or the ‘discarded mystery’ (‘gettata misteriosa’) of the night sky. And the encouragement to attend to these things is not always passive: some of the poems urge us with imperatives: ‘Go out into the huge dark’ (‘Esci nel buio grande’). It is this insistent prompting to recognise the beauty and significance of the natural world that gives the poems an almost spiritual quality. Accordingly – perhaps inevitably – the scientific observations are sometimes ultimately lost in something not unlike a visionary experience, where ‘the supremacy of the visible / breaks into happiness’ (‘la supremazia del visibile / s’incrina in felicità’).

Translator’s note

I tried to translate these poems in a manner that captures something of the experience of reading the originals. The Italian texts are essentially written in free verse, yet they contain subtle internal rhymes and assonance-based interconnections that create subsections of overt form and structure. For example, the opening line of the first poem, ‘L’ala della farfalla’, is distinctly patterned using lateral approximants and low front vowels. Obviously, the available lexical choices in English do not offer exactly the same (or even closely similar) structural opportunities: ‘ala’ can only really be translated as ‘wing’, and ‘farfalla’ as ‘butterfly’. Consequently, I chose to introduce phonological patterning of a different kind – ‘The butterfly wing / is a thing made of tiny, top-stitched wings’ – which relies instead on high front vowels and velar nasals. This line also reveals another complexity presented by these poems: ‘top-stitched wings’ is a rendering of ‘ali impunturate’, and the Italian adjective here refers to a very particular kind of decorative stitching. Throughout these poems, precise technical language is often used in this way, and translating the specific vocabulary and phrases into English is not always straightforward. Yet these details are crucial since they reveal just how precisely and carefully we should observe the natural world: we should not merely see (generically and distantly) flowers, but rather (specifically) their very locules. At times, the linguistic structures used in the Italian are slightly unconventional, and I have sought to retain the subtle strangenesses in my translations: ‘Solo per te. Solo solo per te’ is insistently unusual in the original, and hopefully my somewhat literal ‘Only for you. Only only for you’ is equivalently odd in English.

EMILIA IVANCU

translated from the Romanian into Italian by Elena Chiattelli

Înserată

Părul îi acoperă ochii,
dar, totuși, vede lumea.
Marea îi acoperă picioarele,
dar, totuși, înoată.
Frunzele îi acoperă florile,
dar, totuși, dă rod.
Tăcerea îi înghite cuvintele,
dar, totuși, se aude.
Este.
Precum lumina.

Oscurata

I capelli le coprono gli occhi,
ma, ancora, può vedere il mondo.
Il mare nasconde i suoi piedi,
eppure, sta nuotando.
Le foglie ne avvolgono i fiori,
ma, ancora, dà frutti.
Il silenzio inghiotte le sue parole,
eppure, si sente.
È.
Così come la luce.

Somn de cântec

Am adormit într-o după-amiază
cu capul pe umărul de piele al unei cărți vechi
cu foile îngălbenite de nescris.
Când m-am trezit, lumea devenise un poem
și aveam marea în urechea dreaptă,
iar cerul pe umărul stâng.
Așa am început să scriu
despre cum am început să vorbesc limba aerului și a apei,
a pământului și a focului.

Sonno cantato

Mi sono addormentata un pomeriggio
con la testa sulla spalla di pelle di un vecchio libro,
i fogli ingialliti di parole non scritte.
Al mio risveglio, il mondo era diventato un poema
e avevo il mare nell'orecchio destro,
e il cielo sulla spalla sinistra.
Così ho cominciato a scrivere
di come ho cominciato a parlare la lingua dell'aria e dell'acqua,
della terra e del fuoco.

Delfinul

O umbră printre valuri,
o pată albă în adâncurile de turcoaz,
speranța mea când norii se întind în zare
și plumburiul amenință malul încărcat de pietre
Delfinul – promisiunea zilei
că marea se va întoarce mereu
acolo unde inima de nisip
freamătă între cer, pământ și ape.
Strata Florida, Țara Galilor, 2017

Il delfino

Un'ombra fra le onde,
una macchia bianca negli abissi turchesi
la mia speranza quando le nubi sono tese all'orizzonte
e il plumbeo minaccia la riva grave di pietre
Il delfino – la promessa del giorno
che il mare tornerà sempre
lì dove il cuore di sabbia
freme tra cielo, terra e acqua.

Strata Florida, Țara Galilor, 2017

Context

The two poems 'Somn de cântec' and 'Delfinul' were published in the collection of poems *Cărțile vieții* (The Books of Life) in 2018 by Eikon Publishing House, in Bucharest. The book was designed to be made up of three parts: 'Cartea mării' (The Book of the Sea), 'Cartea morții' (The Book of Death), and 'Cartea iubirii' (The Book of Love), and these two poems are part of 'The Book of the Sea'. Both poems, together with the poem 'Înserată', published in the collection *Șamanii și poeții* (Shamans and Poets) in 2014, were the material for the prismatic

poetry translation workshop which Emilia Ivancu organised with l'Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, in the spring of 2023. I attended the multilingual workshop and translated the poems into Italian. All three poems, characterized by a highly literary language but, at the same time, concrete, and tangible, are held together by a subtle thread that leads us to recognize in the poetics of Ivancu a contemporary symbolism, a vision of life as inevitable and often in a dramatic and yet dynamic relationship with nature: nature as cruel matter and nature as an opportunity to reinterpret life. In a Dickinsonian use of the senses, by writing dry and free verses, Ivancu reveals anguish and confidence, through puns and metaphors that outline perfectly recognizable and universal portraits and images, with a gaze that looks at all human beings, a gaze that is free, but also situated and enclosed in the specification of the place of birth of many of her poems, as if the poetic production were in the first instance the writing of a travel diary.

Translato'rs note

As a poet I know that one word is not at all equal to another and that a poet uses a term because only in that term is the truth of his/her feeling. The first difficulty in dealing with these three poems by Emilia Ivancu was immediately apparent from the title of the poem 'Înserată' ('twilighted') and with the need to render, with a single word, the fact that despite the obscuration everything happens. Life itself happens. So, the choice of 'Oscurata' respectfully rendered the sense of being covered that recurs in the text and that it was decided to translate from time to time with synonyms that consistently held together the dialectical relationship between who hides/covers and who is hidden.

Even in the case of 'Somn de cântec' the first challenge was the translation of the title. The poetic word play sought by the author by transforming the expression 'cântec de somn' (close to the English 'lullaby' and to the Italian 'ninna nanna') into 'somn de cântec' – with an inversion of the meaning in which the singing is no longer to make one fall asleep, but becomes the very substance of sleep – forced me to look for a non-literal solution, probably 'wrong' from a grammatical point of view. The literal translation 'Sonno di canto' would have been stilted in Italian and not as musical as the original. I thought it appropriate to give in to the participle, to maintain, in this way, a link with the deeper texture of the text and with the play on words contained in the title itself. In the same poem, there is another play on words, a metaphorical use of the word 'umăr' ('umărul', with the article, in the text) which means 'shoulder' (the Italian 'spalla') to refer to the spine of a book. I chose to retain the metaphorical use intended by the author, even after an interesting discussion with her, as there is a definite intention to acknowledge a bodily presence to the book: the book becomes someone on whose shoulder one can lean, it represents a possibility of trust, of hope. Soon after, the same word 'umărul' returns in its literal sense: it is the shoulder of the poetic I, now stronger. Aware that in Italian we would never say 'spalla di un libro', it seemed to me, however, necessary to keep the word 'spalla' with its two different senses, and to respect the original metaphor: replacing it with the Italian 'dorso' or 'costa' would have cancelled that hope and perhaps it have even broken that thread that leads, in the poem, from sleep to awakening, from unwritten words to the beginning of life. Again, in 'Somn de cântec', the last challenge: the translation of 'de nescris', where the original form (preposition+participle), so essential, tells us that the pages are yellowed by what is not written. The solution in Italian required, in my opinion, a periphrasis that guaranteed to retain the most painful truth: what is not there (the unwritten, the void) sickens the pages, and the soul, by yellowing them.

[ficar enredado
na teia de suas tramas
Penélope desfez do fio
fidelidade
e teceu em vida sua própria mortalha
Seu ardil de espera e renúncia foi assim muitas
[vezes louvado

Threads entwined

Philomela was the king of Athens's youngest daughter; her voice like a honey-toned lyre was famous throughout Greece. She lived at her father's court among verses and looms, when Tereus, the uncouth King of Thrace came to pick her up at the request of her sister, Procne to whom he was married. But instead of taking his sister-in-law to his house for a visit, as promised, he raped her on the way. And to prevent her from screaming, perhaps for fear of having his crime reported, or, who knows only to steal what he could not have,

cut out her tongue

So Philomela made herself a new voice out of the threads

Ariadne used her thread that had been entrusted to Theseus as a way out of the labyrinth

So she spun the end of Minotaur, but her mistake

was trusting Theseus

who then abandoned her on an island because he feared
[getting entangled

in the web of her plot-weaving

what Penelope unravelled from the thread was

loyalty

and during her lifetime she wove her own shroud

Her scheme for waiting and renouncing has since often
[been praised

Filomela (I)

A-melódica, música
que me falta
e faz
aquém e além da língua o corte:
canto que ecoa mudo
fluxo e fio.

Minha voz é essa falta
que trans
 borda:
imagens costuradas
na pele fina
do pensamento

Philomela (I)

A-melodic –
that music I miss
makes
the cut above and below the tongue:
a song that echoes silently
flow and spin.

My voice is this longing
that over
 flows:
images sewn
on the fine skin
of thought

Nomear

Um farfalhar de asas na palavra
muda
aquém de toda metamorfose,

“A minha Musa antes de ser
a minha Musa avisou-me
cantaste sem saber
que cantar custa uma língua
agora vou-te cortar a língua
a minha Musa é cruel
mas eu não conheço outra”

A barbárie das transmissões e das perdas cortou aqui e ali

partes da história que o poema de Adília subverte e desloca, muitos séculos depois de Ovídio e da voz medieval anônima que se esconde no nome Chrétien de Troyes. Da fábula de Esopo, vestígio ainda mais antigo, sobrou uma conversa entre Procne e Aédona, ou Andorinha e Rouxinol, na maioria das traduções. Mas antes de figurar a arte épica dos aedos, Aédona designava um outro pássaro de papo vermelho-sangue e fio frágil de voz num canto entrecortado, o tordo. O corte, anterior ao conto, cindiu o mesmo nome em duas aves

“Eu hesito”, dizia Safo, “pois sinto um duplo pensar em mim”

Na língua cortada da poeta, uma ausência hesitante
nomeia o corte no canto
o canto no
corte
a musa
na muda

Filomela
é aquela que ama o canto,
como a filósofa
busca o saber,
e a filóloga,
as belas palavras
em seus palimpsestos

Naming

A rustle of wings in the mute
word
beneath every metamorphosis,

Adília Lopes says:

“My Muse before being
my Muse warned me
you sang without knowing
that singing costs a tongue
now I will cut out your tongue
my Muse is cruel
but I don’t know any other”

Barbarism of transmissions and losses cut out here and there parts of the history that Adília’s poem subverts and displaces many centuries after Ovid and the anonymous medieval voice that is hidden in Chrétien de Troyes’s name. Out of Aesop’s Fables, an even more ancient remnant, there has remained a conversation between Procne and Aedon or Swallow and Nightingale, in most translations. But before featuring the epic art from the aoidos, Aedon

referred to another bird with a blood-red crop and a fragile thread of a voice in a broken song,
the thrush. The cut, before the tale, split the same name into two birds

‘I hesitate’, said Sappho, ‘I am in two minds’
In the tongue cut out of the poet, a hesitating absence
names the cut within the song
the song within the
cut
the muse
in the mute

Philomela
is the one who loves the song
like the philosopher
seeks knowledge
and the philologist,
beautiful words
in her palimpsests

Filomela (II)

Com o fio da navalha
na urdidura do silêncio
o que tramo é quase
um grito
quase um canto

Philomela (II)

With the razor’s edge
on the warp of silence

what I weave is almost
a scream
almost a song

Context

These five original poems are from the book *Sombras longas* (Relicário Edições, 2023) by Patrícia Lavelle, published in Brazil. The poems revolving around the figure of Philomela constitute one of the six parts of a set that converges ideas within the realm of intertextuality, quotations, and reinterpretations. In this series, the author quoted a poem by the Portuguese poet Adília Lopes and took up passages from Ovid, a fable from Aesop, and the medieval anonymous narrative *Philomène*. The poem *Reflexo de Safo* (*Sappho’s Reflection*) refers to

Sappho's renowned fragment 31 of the book *Eros, the Bittersweet: An Essay* by Anne Carson, translated into Brazilian Portuguese (Carson 2022, 31-38).

This selection of poems relies on ancient Greek literature and mythology to unravel events that show how powerless women were against the will and physical strength of men. For instance, Philomela was raped by Tereus and had her tongue cut out by him. In other words, he twice silenced her possibility to stand up for herself. Conversely, in *Fios entremeados* (Threads entwined) and *Filomela II (Philomela II)*, the author implies how the power of women was tied to their ability to find solutions to deal with patriarchy. This poem conveys that the strength of women lies in their scheming to persuade or deceive men.

Translator's note

In *Reflexo de Safo (Sappho's Reflection)*, we wanted to make it clear that the incomplete tag question 'your loved one?' refers to the lyric I's enquiry to his/her beloved one about his/her thoughts. Hence, we included a dash before "my precarious image". The poet plays with words in this poem by breaking them, so as to express the lyric I's heartbreak. In order to emphasise how difficult a feeling is, Brazilians speak slower and stress a syllable of a given word. That is why, the poet separated the word "apenas". In English, this word translates as 'just', a one-syllable word. Thus, we broke up "the time to come" ("porvir") into two lines to convey that something could still happen in future.

In *Fios entremeados* (Threads entwined), the author intended, by using only one word, to convey two thoughts at once – 'to weave' as in "wove" in the sense of textiles and 'to weave' a plot (scheme) as in "plot-weaving". Our challenge in *Nomear* (Naming) was to adapt the respective Portuguese and English quotes: "Eu hesito, pois sinto um duplo pensar em mim" (Safo 2020, 159) and "I do not know what to do, I am of two minds." (Sappho 2016, 58). 'I am of two minds' is an archaic way of saying 'I am in two minds'. For this reason, the former could be unclear. Sappho's quote "Eu hesito, pois sinto um duplo pensar em mim" sustains two thoughts. Hence, we chose to translate it as "I hesitate, I am in two minds", in order to maintain the hesitation idea. This, therefore, avoids the impression of indecision between two possible actions.

We would like to acknowledge that our translations into English of *Reflexo de Safo (Sappho's Reflection)*, *Filomela I (Philomela I)* and *Filomela II (Philomela II)* were first published on *Exchanges: A Journal of Literary Translation* in April 2024.

References

Carson, Ann. 2022. 'Artimanha' in *Eros, o doce-amargo: Um ensaio*, trans. by Julia Raiz, 1st edn (Rio de Janeiro: Bazar do Tempo), pp. 31-38

Safo. 2020. *Fragmentos completos*, trans. by Guilherme Gontijo Flores, 2nd edn (São Paulo: Editora 34), II

Sappho. 2016. *Complete Poems and Fragments*, trans. by Stanley Lombardo, 1st edn (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company)

CRIS LIRA

translated from the Portuguese into English by Kyler Johnson

Amanhecer dos corpos

Com um beijo um sussurro
Com um laço mil espaços
Teu corpo se perde no meu braço
E toco, revelo, sossego
No teu lábio

É manhã-mansã em mim
E eu te tenho assim-assim
Dedo a dedo no meu toque.

Os olhos piscam perdidos na manhã.
Sinto tuas mãos na minh'alma
que se prostra toda entregue
E me convidas para ser tua
Nesse desnudo
amanhecer dos corpos.

The Body Awakening

Like a kiss-whisper
the lace-stitch of a thousand spaces
Your body loses itself in my embrace
And I touch – unveil – calm myself
upon your lip.

Morning glory is within me
And I hold you thus-thus
Finger by finger in my touch

Eyes blinking lost come morning.
I feel your hands onmysoul
that bares itself fully delivered
and you invite me to be yours
in this bare-bodied
awakening.

Pintura

Do avião

avisto os quadrados distantes
alvos da fase azul de um cubista sem
pincel

Da janela
veem-se o coração e sua brasa
muda

Parto. E meu olhar é nórdico
No chão, resíduos glaciais ardem
nas pupilas.

A chegada é bem-vinda como a lufada
que me engolfa

Algo em mim ainda canta
Sabiá
E as esperanças de março.

Portrait

From the plane
I can see the distant canvas
subjects of some blue-phase cubist without
a brush

From the window, they
see each other, heart and silent
ember

I depart. My gaze is Northern
Upon the floor, glacial traces burn
the eyes

The arrival is welcome like a gust
that envelops me

Something in me still sings
a *Sabiá*
and for March, the waiting goes on.

Estilhaços

Dentro daquele olhar onde
Habitaram tantos sonhos
mora agora um disfarce

À primeira vista, ressaca
À segunda, ondas

Dentro daquele olhar agora mora a
rainha louca

Ao primeiro toque, fantasia
Ao segundo, sotaques

Distribuem-se as imagens entre as
luas agigantadas

À mulher que fora, ausência
À que fica, saudade

Dentro daquele olhar sabido
agora mora um espelho

Ao relance, prismas
Ao fixar, eu

Ao modo de dizer adeus a janeiro.

Shrapnel

Inside that gaze where
so many dreams once dwelled
now lives a masquerade

at first glance, a hangover
at second, ripples

inside that gaze there now resides
the mad queen

at first touch, a disguise
at second, accents

pictures spread themselves between
swollen moons

for the woman that left, absence
for who remains, yearning

inside that wizened gaze
a mirror now resides
at a glance, prisms
trying to find, myself

this is the way to say farewell to January

Manhã

Quando o fogo-fátuo
do céu da minha boca
soa no céu da sua

escorrego flácida
pelos seus ouvidos

E o oceano reverbera
todas as incertezas
caladas e úmidas
do seu céu lilá
na minha língua nua.

Morning

When the foolish-fire
of my mouth-sky
soars into yours

I rush limp
against your eardrums

And the ocean bubbles with
all the silent,
muggy uncertainties
of your lilac sky
upon my naked tongue.

Permissão

Deixemos que os entremeios dos
sorrisos
acordem desnecessários
numa Copacabana esparramada
de
azul

Deixemos que as flores se
encarreguem brancas
de
perfumes ventosos
nos galhos circunspectos da
Clinton Street

Deixemos que a música arda nos
ouvidos úmidos de abril
Na passarela entre campos da manhã

Deixemos que a vida escorregue
Líquida
nas veias desabitadas da américa
que queima

Deixemos mudas todas as esperanças
de que a vida
seja

não apenas a residência das
certezas
mas aquele filete
aquele
de Ana C.
nas gengivas dessa lua gorda.

Permission

Let's allow the in-betweens of
smiles
to wake uselessly
upon a Copacabana sprawled
in
blue

Allow the flowers to transform
themselves white
from
windblown aromas
passing along the looming branches
of Clinton Street

Allow the music to burn our
wet april ears
along the path between morningfields

Allow life to rush
fluidly
into the deserted veins of an america
that burns

Allow for all the hopes of what life
may be
to rest silent

that it is not merely a place
of certainties

but rather of that trickle of blood,
that one
by Ana C.
in the gums of this swelling moon

Context

The five poems within this document come from Brazilian author Cris Lira's book *Ponte para o poente* (Bridge to the Setting Sun), a manuscript published in 2019 by the Brazilian feminist writers' collective Mulherio das Letras. Centering itself on themes of ephemerality, transition, memory, and exile, the collection tugs on the author's experiences living in the Midwestern state of Iowa while simultaneously weaving in references to Brazil and Brazilian literary figures such as Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Ferreira Gullar, and Ana Cristina César.

The sky and the seasonal force of winter make themselves frequent subjects within Lira's poems. The first is a space of constant change, beckoning in changing colors and weather patterns. The second is simultaneously a neighbor in her northern home and a stranger to her Brazilian roots. The tensions of both these natural spaces demonstrate a wider tension in the book: the beautiful diversity held within the ephemeral is matched by forces that can feel dastardly. In waiting, we experience beauty, and, in waiting, we develop endurance.

Amongst these and other images of liminal spaces that pervade the collection's pages, the body appears as an object of examination. Contrasting many of the wider tensions in the collection, the poems highlighting experiences of the body color the collection with rich moments of physical and spiritual connection. These moments of connection, while themselves transitory, proffer a hand to the reader to further question where borders lie, what defines the places in which we feel at home, and where is it that we remain strangers.

Translator's note

In translating each of Lira's poems, I began with a literal translated draft that I let simmer for a couple of months, knowing when I returned there would be problems with rhythm and vocabulary. Indeed, coming back I discovered a number of places where the literal had led me astray, and the translations bordered on the non-sensical and the awkward. It was, however, in bridging this literal draft to its second iteration where I found interesting possibilities.

Structural elements such as those in the opening line of 'The Body Awakening,' where I'd originally written 'With a kiss a whisper,' became a place for play. The way in which Portuguese flows so nimbly is something I always strive to carry over into my translations, and utilizing hyphens to bring words together became an effective instrument in bringing over the lush rush of sound that is often so difficult to capture.

A recurring challenge in translating Lira's work were many of the short, fragmented lines. In 'Shrapnel,' for instance, many of the lines end on a single word, opening up cleaving possibilities around single words. To translate 'fantasia,' is the better choice 'fantasy' or 'disguise'? For a word like 'ondas,' that translates simply to 'waves,' is there a comparable

word that stands more vividly on its own in English? While not straying simultaneously too far from the original?

Poetry is often considered one of the most economic forms of writing; yet maintaining this economy while not sacrificing poetic force becomes all the more challenging when crossing the bridge of translation. It is my desire (and hope) to have sacrificed neither qualities in instances like these, and that, as a result, the translations champion the same impact as their originals were constructed to have.

FERNANDA MARTÍNEZ VARELA

translated from the Spanish into English by Giancarlo Tursi

La sagrada familia [extract]

Hay cosas que no recuerdo pero ella era el
objeto más bonito de la casa Papa la decoraba le ponía flores Cuando la quería hacía ruido
Si al cabo de tiempo no oía gateos Yo me alegraba Era la primera nieta sobrina más llorona
caprichosa Poco educada aunque astuta Para intercambiar faldas por pantalones El eje de la
tierra Quería ser astronauta

Mamá hacía jugos de zanahoria por la mañana Y nos obligaba a tomarlos en ayuna Mamá
agarraba la camioneta y perseguía al furgón Si se nos olvidaba la mochila Mamá aprendí
cosa que no todos los niños saben Elegir sus propios zapatos Salir con uno azul y otro
verde Que las telas finas para niños incomodan Que la mejor manera de ser amado Es
no amar a ninguno

Cuando nacieron mis hermanos pensé en la muerte Y buscando la manera de morir como
animal Descubrí la asfixia era ortodoxa Mamá nunca supo empuñe culpas en la mano Un
gato un perro dos palomas un gorrión Aprendía cosas mamá que no todos los niños
saben La sensación de morir por ejemplo Era casi o más despampanante que abrir regalos
en navidad Y lengüetear por debajo del vestido de barbies con azúcar A manzana sabía
confitada

Mamá desde chica soñó ser madre Y cuando lo fue Leyó enciclopedias de cuidados
específicos manuales de salud Hervía las cucharas si caían También mis pulgares Alrededor
el movimiento traslativo Mamá dejó de ser el florero Y yo era el centro de la mesa de
reuniones El trofeo de un hombre al que ponía en hombros Y preguntaba opiniones sobre
política Entonces ponía ejemplos absurdos y papá siempre me daba la razón Incluso si
decía unas tremendas idioteces

Nunca pensé la tierra se movía en torno al sol Yo miraba mis zapatos Y era muy
maravilloso pensar mis zapatos de charol blanco Causaban estos movimientos Por eso
quise ser astronauta o preferí escalar árboles altos Hasta que un día papá llamó a los
bomberos e hicieron tremendo alboroto Luego otros de sombrero pero esa parte se me
escapa Yo imaginaba embetunada la cabeza Con esa cera roja de pintar madera Pensaba en
la belleza de mi hermano lustrado con betún

Las cosas que no entendí las escribía Primero una paloma en la palmera tropezó Cayó al
suelo de boca y se hizo la tonta cuando otras miraron Mamá mis manos hurgaba Se las
mostraba a la señora de la biblioteca Y yo las escondía por debajo el calzón

Hasta que hubo un día que no sé decir fue uno pues caían juntos al unísono y encima
Vi manos creciendo bajo el cráneo pujando mi cabeza a dos les disparé Pues el eje era de la
tierra Y dos pensé es un mundo estático Así ataúdes puse en lugares raros el baño en pieza
de visitas armarios de oregón Mamá nunca supo temía siempre que en ella pensara Ganas
tuve de tocarla amarla papá me dijo es

ruidosa Hay cosas que no recuerdo Pero ella se fue confundiendo con otras
que sí me dejaron

Pensaba en bruscas formas de la abulia Seguía siendo el florero de la mesa la Y la
orquídeas rancias mis pies sin zapatos de charol Ni vestidos glamorosos ni cachitos Me
daban estatura pechos Y tuve a hombres y mujeres que quise Era el eje de la tierra y aunque
no quería ser astronauta Quise ser piloto y mirarme Desde tal altura fármacos extraños
ascensores de emergencia en general Casi llego por un pelo al cielo Un día abajo me vi con
sangre de nariz despegado el cuerpo contento por irse Esa noche dormí con papá Y por la
mañana mamá me llevó a una casa de colores tan feos Que papá se sentó en el maletero
para que no se llevaran mi ropa

A veces se me olvida ese lugar sólo algunas cosas recuerdo La mujer por ejemplo que decía
ver a satanás Y era muy entretenido por las noches dar vuelta las cruces de su cuarto Para
escucharla gritar en la mañana

Hay cosas que no recuerdo Pero ella la otra ella que fue más grande que mamá Más grande
que todas las santas marías Que de rodillas me puse por gusto Y a través de mechoneos me
guiaba Aunque poco entendía qué sucedía cuando hacia ella la misma maniobra Lo demás
no quiero decir Algunos poemas me echaron la culpa Y señora delgadísima alegó Palabras
técnicas sobre la lírica que nada tuvieron que ver conmigo Yo escribía sin saber que la
palabra Era cosa de hombres importantes Que escribían sobre cosas importantes
también Hasta que hubo un día que no sé decir fue uno pues caían juntos al
unísono y encima Rodaron las cabezas por mi cuarto riéndose de mí alrededor del pie Yo
me encaramaba al escritorio Ella habló de pronto con lenguajes raros decía perder la cabeza
Cientos tienes sobre los hombros no Pareces una avestruz! Luego creo haber escrito en mi
pizarra Si la noches fueran así entretenidas sería lindo matarse

Lo demás no recuerdo Mamá había hecho mis maletas Era una casa bonita Papá no se sentó
en el maletero Había estado escribiendo sobre cosas que sabía Alicia va en el
coche Carolín que aparece porque sí Y ella que era más grande que todas las santas marías
Que de rodillas me puse por gusto Mecía coches enchapaba el peine de oro Decía escribe si
no quieres las cabezas por el cuarto riéndose de ti canten la canción completa Cuando
dije eso a zapatitos blancos y le eché la culpa Que ella hablaba por decirlo extraño la
cabeza en mis pies La noche era entretenida Me dieron dulces de colores y gratis que quise
quedarme para siempre

Han pasado muchas cosas desde entonces Ya no quiero
ser astronauta Y las noches me suceden casi siempre entretenidas Tampoco vuelvo a ese
lugar bonito Pues otro elegí para quedarme Acá las ventanas no cierran Porque cerraron
hace tiempo Solo queda una ampolleta en mi cabeza Pero han entrado las polillas Cuando
veo las cabezas por mi cuarto Nos ponemos todas a reír

The Holy Family [extract]

There are things I don't remember but she was
the most beautiful object in the house Dad would decorate her put flowers on her When he
cuddled her he made noises If I didn't hear crawling after a while I was happy She was the

first granddaughter the most whimpering capricious niece Uneducated but clever enough
To exchange skirts for pants The axis of the earth I wanted to be an astronaut

Mom would make carrot juice in the morning And force us to drink it on an empty stomach
Mom would grab the truck and chase the bus If we forgot our backpacks Mom I learned
something not all children know How to pick your own shoes Go out with one blue and
one green That thin fabrics are uncomfortable for children That the best way to be loved is
not to love at all

When my brothers were born I thought about death And looking for a way to die like an
animal I discovered suffocation was orthodox Mom never knew I brandished guilt in my
hands A cat a dog two pigeons a sparrow I learned things mom not all children know The
feeling of dying For instance It was almost as or more stunning than opening gifts at
Christmas and licking barbies under their dresses with sugar It tasted like candied apple

Ever since she was a child Mom dreamed of being a mother And when she became one she
read encyclopedias of specific health care manuals She would boil spoons if they fell As
well as my thumbs All around the translational movement Mom stopped being the center of
attention And I became the centerpiece of the reunion table The trophy of a man who
would put me on his shoulders And ask me opinions about politics So I would give absurd
examples and he would always agree with me Even if I said some tremendously idiotic
things

I never thought the earth moved around the sun I looked at my shoes And it was very
wonderful to think that my white patent leather shoes Caused these movements That's why
I wanted to be an astronaut or preferred to climb tall trees Until one day dad called the
firefighters and they made a terrible racket Then there were other men with helmets but
that part escapes me I imagined my head was covered With that red wax for painting wood
I thought about how beautiful my brother would look covered in bitumen

I wrote down the things I didn't understand First a dove stumbled into a palm tree It fell on
its face to the ground and played dumb when the other doves looked Mom was rummaging
through my hands She showed them to the lady in the library And I hid them under my
underwear Until there was a day I'm not even sure was one because they all fell together
in unison and on top of that I saw hands growing beneath my skull pushing my head I shot
at two of them Well the axis was of the earth And two I thought is a static world So I
started putting coffins in strange places in the bathroom in guest room in closets Mom
never knew She was always afraid that I would think of her I wanted to touch her love her
dad would always tell me she's noisy There are things that I don't remember
But she became confused with the other women that did leave me

I thought in abrupt forms of apathy I was still the center of attention And the rancid orchids
My feet without patent leather shoes Nor glamorous dresses nor little pieces gave me
height breasts And I had men and women I loved I was the axis of the earth and although I
didn't want to be an astronaut I wanted to be a pilot and look at myself From such a height
in general drugs emergency elevators I almost reached heaven by a hair's breadth One day
I saw myself below with a bloody nose my body detached happy to go That night I slept
with dad And in the morning mom took me to a house with such ugly colors Dad sat on the
trunk so they wouldn't take my clothes

Sometimes I forget that place only some things I remember
The woman for example who said she saw satan
And it was very entertaining at night to turn over the crosses in her room
to hear her scream in the morning

There are things that I don't remember
But she the other she who was bigger than mom
Bigger than all the holy marys
That I got on my knees with pleasure
And pulling me by the hair she guided me
Although I hardly understood what happened when she made the same
move
The rest I don't want to talk about
Some poems blamed me
And a really skinny lady
lady cited Technical words about poetry that had nothing to do with me
I wrote without knowing that having a voice
Was a thing for important men
Who wrote about important things too
Until there was a day I'm not even sure was one because they all fell
together in unison and on top of that
Heads rolled on my bedroom floor laughing at me
circling my feet
I was climbing onto the desk
She suddenly to speak in strange languages
said she was losing her head
You have hundreds on your shoulders no
You look like an ostrich!
Then I think I wrote on my blackboard
If the nights were this entertaining
it would be nice to kill yourself

I don't remember the rest
Mom had packed my bags
It was a nice house
Dad didn't sit on the trunk
He had been writing about the things he knew
Alicia gets into the car
Carolin who shows up just because
And she who was bigger than all the holy marys
That I got on my knees with pleasure
I rocked cars
I plated the comb with gold
I said write if you don't want
the heads circling around the room
laughing at you
sing the whole song
When I said that to the pair of little white shoes
and blamed her
That she was talking to say
I miss the head at my feet
The night was entertaining
They gave me free colorful candy
so that I wanted to stay forever

Many things have happened since then
I no longer want to be an astronaut
And the nights are almost always entertaining
I don't return to that beautiful place either
Well I chose another place to stay
Here the windows don't close
Because they closed a long time ago
There's only a light bulb left in my head
But the moths have got in
When I see the heads around my room
We all start laughing

Context

Fernanda Martínez Varela says in an interview with the Pablo Neruda Foundation that *La Sagrada Familia* (The Holy Family) was largely informed by her studies in sociology in Santiago. In it, she says, she “reflects on what founds society, on its nucleus,” in an attempt to “rethink this foundation due to the urgency of incorporating all families and not just heteronormative ones.” The section I have chosen to translate is the opening section of the work. The section constitutes a kind of coming-of-age story in miniature, as Varela reflects, in a fragmentary, hallucinatory way, on early childhood memories. Stylistically, the text can be seen as a prose poem. It can also be seen as a poem with internalized line breaks marked by capitalization instead of blank spaces. Indeed, this is one of the most striking formal features of the text. Instead of the last word of a line holding the place of honor, it is the first. This gives the text a breathless style that represents well the child's voice. Varela says of her subsequent two collections of poetry, *El Génesis* (Genesis) and *Salmos* (Psalms), that they represent a kind

of “dialectic,” the former being more “interior,” the second more “exterior” in nature. *La Sagrada Familia* straddles this line, offering at once a snapshot of family life and a view into the innermost recesses of childhood memories and experiences. The style itself vacillates between the plainspoken and the mystical. Like her other collections, *La Sagrada Familia* also plays with the religious dimension. As she explains in her interview: “I studied sociology and somehow I chose that first look at the world. This implies, for me, observing the aesthetic dimension as another dimension of social life, one which is also crossed by religious and political conceptions [...]”.

Translator’s note

In translating Fernanda Martínez Varela’s prose poem of sorts, the main feature I tried to respect was the capitalization, which, as I mentioned, functions as a kind of internalized line break. Indeed, the first words of each sentence appeared to me as important as the last words in a rhyming poem, creating a rhythm that is at once staccato and breathless. I also respected the indentations of varying lengths one finds within the paragraphs, which seem to divide the text up into so many mini strophes. The temptation is strong when translating a poetic text that borders on the unintelligible and plays with the ungrammatical to tidy it up and make more sense out of it than is necessary. I tried to resist this temptation, only occasionally introducing words that in English aided comprehension or contributed to the rhythm. There are some – I believe intentional – grammatical ambiguities in the original that were hard to capture in the translation. For instance, in the first paragraph, in which Varela reflects on the attention bestowed upon a newborn child in the family, the Spanish verbs ‘era’ and ‘quería’ could refer at once to this third person or to the first-person narrator. I kept everything in the third person, only switching to the first person in the final sentence, ‘Quería ser astronauta’ (‘I wanted to be an astronaut’) in light of the clarification towards the end of the text. I also had to make some executive decisions with respect to some of the grammatical ambiguities that result from the lack of punctuation and that put the onus on the reader to reconstruct the subject and object of a sentence.

OFELIA PRODAN

translated from the Romanian into Italian by Iulia Cosma, Loredana Fortuna, Maria Haiduc, Simona Huțanu, Ramona Daniela Muraru, Andreea M. Toma

de-a v-ați ascunselea

fetița cu chibrituri se joacă de-a v-ați ascunselea
în uzina dezafectată de la marginea orașului
cu niște băieți în pantaloni scurți
cu multe brichete noi și frumos colorate în buzunare.

a nascondino

la piccola coi fiammiferi gioca a nascondino
nella centrale abbandonata dei sobborghi
insieme a ragazzini in pantaloncini
con tanti accendini colorati, luccicanti in tasca.

Eleganță

Doamna elegantă trece elegant strada.
Ciorapii eleganți i se agață cu eleganță de diplomatul
elegant
al unui domn elegant. Doamna elegantă
îl privește cu eleganță în ochi pe domnul elegant.
Domnul elegant o invită cu eleganță într-o
cameră elegantă dintr-un hotel elegant.
Doamna elegantă și domnul elegant fac sex elegant
în timp ce-și șoptesc vorbe elegante.
Domnul elegant îi oferă doamnei elegante
o sumă elegantă. Doamna elegantă
ia banii zâmbind elegant și îi strecoară elegant
împreună cu ciorapii ruși și eleganți în poșeta elegantă.

Eleganza

La signora elegante attraversa elegante la strada.
Le eleganti calze, le si impigliano eleganti nella valigetta elegante
di un signore elegante. La signora elegante
guarda elegante negli occhi il signore elegante.
Il signore elegante la invita elegante
nella camera elegante di un elegante albergo.
La signora elegante e il signore elegante fanno sesso elegante

mentre sussurrano parole eleganti.
Il signore elegante offre alla signora elegante
una somma elegante. La signora elegante
con sorriso elegante infila elegante i soldi
e le calze rovinate nella borsa elegante.

tachinare

moartea stă pe scaun în bucătărie cu mine
ascultăm muzică la un radio vechi
bem cu înghițituri mici din ceștile de cafea neagră
din când în când ne tachinăm din priviri
eu nu am curaj să-i spun nimic
ea se preface politicos că mă ascultă

stuzzicare

la morte seduta in cucina, davanti a me
ascoltiamo musica da una vecchia radio
sorvegliamo l'amaro in tazze da caffè
ogni tanto ci stuzzichiamo fra sguardi
io non ho il coraggio di dirle nulla
lei, educata, finge di ascoltarmi

la muncă în Italia – badante versus babe

așa acum că m-au ales în consiliu o să lupt
pentru drepturile badantelor doar eu le reprezint
și le reprezint când e ceva de schimbat
în bine eu schimb chiar și noaptea în timp ce dorm
păi ele au în contract să stea doar 12 ore cu baba
dar stau 24 de frică să nu le dea baba afară
că altă babă de unde la început facem rost de un loc
spațios
unde să se întâlnească la sfârșit de săptămână
să vobească și ele să se simtă ca acasă le e dor și lor de
casă
au venit aici să se umilească pentru un salariu
tot pentru cei de acasă și de ce să stea afară în frig
apoi le educăm să nu stea de frică lângă babă
că în contract scrie clar 12 ore
dacă baba dă foc la casă când ele sunt libere
nu e vina lor dar ele stau de frică
și babele abuzează astea sunt la putere babele
și când sunt senile mai ales atunci

dacă le dăm în judecată pentru abuz
se schimbă lucrurile momentan o luăm ușor
parcă văd după ani cum mă aleargă pe stradă
să mă linșeze că le-am stricat treaba
dar fac ceva și pentru babe să mă ierte
mai întâi le sugerez să-și ia o badantă pentru noapte
apoi le fac un club fain de noapte
unde să danseze alea mai energice și cu chef
iar celor dornice de cultură le dau poezii să se bucure
și ele că doar au și babele dreptul inalienabil
la bucurie și fericire ca orice om ca și badantele noastre

lavorare in Italia – badanti contro vecchie

bene, ora che sono nel consiglio mi batterò
per i diritti delle badanti, son io a rappresentarle
e le rappresento quando serve un cambiamento
in meglio, io cambio persino la notte mentre si dorme
beh, il loro contratto prevede solo 12 ore con la vecchia
ma ne fanno 24 per paura di essere cacciate
dove la trovi, un'altra vecchia, per iniziare ci vuole un posto spazioso
dove incontrarsi il fine settimana
per parlare e sentirsi così a casa, anche loro hanno nostalgia di casa
sono venute qua umiliandosi per uno stipendio
da mandare a casa, ma perché stare fuori al freddo
poi insegniamo loro a non stare con la vecchia per paura
il contratto è chiaro: 12 ore
se la vecchia dà fuoco alla casa quando sono libere
loro non ne hanno colpa ma restano per paura
e le vecchie se ne approfittano, 'ste qua sono al potere, le vecchie
e in età senile soprattutto allora
se gli facciamo causa per abuso
cambiano le cose, per ora andiamoci piano
già le vedo dopo anni rincorrermi per strada
e linciarmi per aver sabotato i loro piani
ma per farmi perdonare farò qualcosa anche per le vecchie
intanto gli consiglio di prendersi una badante per la notte
poi apro un bel night club
dove far ballare quelle più energiche e briose
e per le desiderose di cultura, poesie per farle contente
anche le vecchie hanno il diritto inalienabile
alla gioia e alla felicità come chiunque
come le nostre badanti

mă reprofilez inventez rețete

de mâncare vegană

intru în baza de date secrete CIA
virusez mă electrocitez
downloadez rețete de prăjituri
în limbaj codat stop uciderii animalelor

stop defrișării pădurilor
eu sunt un sequoia bătrân de 3000 de ani
am fost contemporan cu profeții
omul alb a ucis a ținut
în sclavie omul cu pielea
de culoare întunecată
albul este culoarea tradițională
de doliu în cultura chineză
șamanii intră în transă în conexiune

dansuri tribale sacrificii ritualice
ochii mei scanează
prin beznă sunt o insectă
într-o boabă de chihlimbar
din buzunarul unui puști
cu insectar clasoare cu timbre
sunt secretul puștiului mă privește noaptea
sub pătură cu ledul de la telefon

toți dorm afară e viscol
puștiul își imaginează febril
că sunt prizonieră în boaba de chihlimbar
încă din epoca dinozaurilor
puștiul mă întoarce
pe toate părțile se miră cât de perfect
mi se văd nervurile aripilor
adoarme cu mine în pumnul strâns
se trezește cu mine în pumn

puștiul vrea să mă scoată
din boaba de chihlimbar să mă elibereze
puștiul sparge boaba de chihlimbar
eu tresar aripile îmi tremură convulsiv
trupul mi se zbate
mă transform în particule infinitezimale
de praf sub ochii lui mari nedumeriți

mi aggiorno, invento ricette

di cibo vegano
mi infiltro nel database segreto della CIA
ci inserisco il virus, mi prendo la scossa
scarico ricette di dolci

linguaggio in codice, basta uccisioni di animali

stop alla deforestazione
io sono una sequoia vecchia 3000 anni
contemporanea ai profeti
l'uomo bianco ha ucciso, tenuto
in schiavitù l'uomo dalla pelle
color notte
bianco, il colore tradizionale
del lutto nella cultura cinese
gli sciamani in trance entrano in connessione

danze tribali, sacrifici rituali
i miei occhi scannerizzano
nell'oscurità, sono un insetto
in una goccia d'ambra
nella tasca di un ragazzino
con teche di insetti e album di francobolli
sono il segreto del ragazzino, mi osserva di notte
sotto le coperte con la torcia del telefono

tutti dormono
fuori bufera di neve
il ragazzino febbricitante mi immagina
prigioniera nella goccia d'ambra
già dall'epoca dei dinosauri
il ragazzino mi scruta rigirandomi
tra le mani, si meraviglia della perfezione
con cui si intravedono le nervature delle mie ali
si addormenta con me stretta nel pugno
si sveglia con me in pugno

il ragazzino vuole tirarmi fuori
dalla goccia d'ambra
liberarmi
il ragazzino fa a pezzi la goccia d'ambra
sussulto
le ali mi tremano convulse
il corpo si dimena
mi trasformo in particelle infinitesimali
di polvere davanti ai suoi occhioni sconcertati

Context

The selected poems were published in *crash test dummies* (Charmides, 2022), with the exception of 'mi aggiorno, invento ricette', which was taken from *lexus pe cărbune* (lexus on coal) (Limes, 2023), written while Ofelia Prodan was living in Padua. Both volumes are representative of the author's preferred themes: identity, in the broadest of senses, trauma, the

transformative power of poetic creativity, the poet's inner vision, and the outward representations of it, the poet as a creator of reality. The translated poems explore two main topics: childhood and womanhood. The first one is present in 'a nascondino' and 'mi aggiorno, invento ricette', while the second, with its variations, in the rest of the texts. Childhood is depicted as a dangerous and colorful game against a desolated industrial background, or provides the inspiration to rewrite the bleak ending of a well-known Romanian poem by Elena Farago, 'Gândăcelul' (the Bug): the insect encapsulated in amber is being freed by the child, and not crushed in his closed hand, like in the original poem. The intertextual episode is garnished with other provocative images of the past and the present pop culture, while futuristic and historic references are present throughout the text. Women of different social extraction and at various stages in their lives are the protagonists of the remaining poems: the elegant seductress who is a sex worker in disguise, the blasé intellectual flirting with death in a Mitteleuropean bohemian setting, and the middle-aged caregivers who migrated into Italy in search of a better life and in need of political representation. The social issues in Ofelia Prodan's poems are dressed up in irony and self-criticism.

Translator's note

These translations are the result of a collaborative practice, each of the translators being in equal proportion a shareholder of translative authoriality and agency. The translators were divided in two groups based on their affinity. Each of them translated individually and then discussed their work within the group in order to arrive at a common version. Next, these versions were thoroughly examined during a unified meeting moderated and supervised by Iulia Cosma. The aim was to reach a consensus among all the translators on a version to be subsequently perfected. All the previous versions were considered and used as potential options until a final decision was reached. The last step was the request of feedback from Italian readers without any previous explanation being provided to them: as far as they knew, they were reading Italian poetry. Five reviewers, all university students, male and female, some of whom were poetry readers, were asked to signal out any incongruences, dissonances, positive and negative perceptions about the texts handed to them. In translating, we were following a cognitivist approach and were interested in recreating mental images and eliciting a reaction to the visual and musical dimension of the text. For example, in a literal translation, the last verse of the first poem reads as: 'with a lot of new and beautifully coloured lighters in their pockets', 'frumos colorate' being a typical Romanian expression, similar to 'colourful'. In Italian, the syntagma 'bei colori', 'beautiful colours', does not imply the quality of being colourful, just the pleasantness of the colour palette. And since in Romanian we had the image of children playing with new and colourful, but dangerous objects, we aimed at reproducing something similar with 'accendini colorati, luccicanti', literally 'coloured lighters, shiny', 'shiny' being a substitute for 'new' and implying the idea of 'colourful'.

