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Foreword

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Foreword

“A major difficulty in translation is that a word in one language seldom has a precise equivalent in another one.”

(A. Schopenhauer)

“Poetic translation is the transmigration of poetic souls from one language into another.”

(J. Rosenberg)

Some might say that a translated poem is an impossibility—metaphors, cultural references, and the play of sound and sense do not transfer from one language system to another the way a set of instructions can. So why propose a journal of literary translation called *Transference*? Both “translation” and “transference” derive from the Latin verb *transferre*, which literally means “to carry across.” “Translation” refers to something that has already been brought across passively and in a completed state, while “transference” is the act of someone bringing something or someone else across always in a state of incompleteness. “Transference,” therefore, reflects more closely what literary translation is: the bridge between cultures and centuries that is ever changing and, by necessity, never perfect, never complete. This bridge, however, remains essential if we wish to continue to see beyond our own horizons into other perspectives on the human condition.

Each of the poems and the commentaries gathered in this volume posits an interpretation of various experiences common to all people, among them grief, joy, desire, and wonder. It is our hope that as an ensemble, the pieces form a single, kaleidoscopic work bringing these discrete intersections together into a unified representation of the language work and play that makes us quintessentially human.

It is in our nature to desire to communicate with others in order to understand and to be understood. All of the contributors to this volume have attempted communication, both with the poets of the original texts and the readers of our journal. This act of transference is distinctly different from how the term is used in psychology—whereas a patient unconsciously redirects feelings from one person to another, a translator consciously takes the feelings of

another and tries to experience them, and therefore have an audience experience them, through the means of a different language. We encourage our readers to seek out the original poems in the original languages, as well as other translations of the poems, to continue this mode of communication, both with our contributors' translations and their personal commentaries.

So maybe a translated poem is a paradox, but the impossibility of a "pure" translation presents its own advantages. In the attempt to reproduce the poetic experience of the original poem's reader in a different idiom, new poems come into being. Layered with form and content resulting from this transfer across language boundaries, the new poems offer an opportunity to engage in the inherent playfulness of language. It is a serious game, an undertaking that is fraught with challenges, but, as is the case with confronting most paradoxes, well worth the travail, and necessary.

David Kutzko and Molly Lynde-Recchia, editors-in-chief