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## Foreword

The woods of Arcady are dead,  
And over is their antique joy;  
Of old the world on dreaming fed;  
Grey Truth is now her painted toy;  
Yet still she turns her restless head:  
But O, sick children of the world,  
Of all the many changing things  
In dreary dancing past us whirled,  
To the cracked tune that Chronos sings,  
Words alone are certain good.

(W.B. Yeats, from “The Song of the Happy Shepherd”)

Words? Foolishness, I know,  
against the darkness coming on,  
but then, what really works? So talk,  
if only some private thought of elves  
or if you think that way, talk facts.  
Speak of amperes or chromosomes  
or the molecules of hydrogen.  
Soon, if your talk is right, it turns  
into a kind of charm. Therefore  
changing into abracadabra  
against the brute descent of the sun.  
Maybe this time the dark will brighten  
almost as if it noticed us.

(R.M. Ryan, “What to Say”)

Communication is everything. It is the bridge between individuals, comprised of words. Words, of course, are not purely “good,” as the happy shepherd of Yeat’s poem sings. In the very next poem of *Crossways*, words are changed to an “inarticulate moan” as a man tries in vain to convey his isolation and sorrow (“The Sad Shepherd”). But words can create magic, “a kind of charm,” where optimism keeps despair at bay. This is the world of poetry. Even poems that are pessimistic in tone are in fact an “abracadabra / against the brute descent of the sun” because in the act of using words, we attempt to make the world better. Communication, “if your talk is right,” leads to empathy. Translating poetry—transferring words and ideas from one culture to another—creates, we continue to hope, a bridge around the world.

On our website ([scholarworks.wmich.edu/transference](http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/transference)), ScholarWorks provides a map tracking in live time the downloads for our journal. We often sit entranced, watching the map light up all over the world, documenting the potential of global communication and empathy. We are grateful for the referees,

translators, and general readers who make *Transference* a reality. We are also excited to present our largest and most diverse collection yet.

This year's issue of *Transference* opens with images of rain and a flooding river, tied to the gathering of friends who "will recall tonight, when scattered across the land" (Gudgel, 9).

Although it is a risky venture to read the translations published here as a single, long poem with many disparate parts and voices, their assemblage does invite a kind of impressionistic reading in which the reader sees unifying elements amidst the wide-ranging diversity. In our personal reading of this collection, we became keenly aware of the sometimes intertwined motifs of water, separation, and memory that recur in a number of poems.

The image of water appears as a separating force in Narni's "white sulfurous river" (Held, 15) and is evoked as "the language of the sea" (Gordon, 20). It appears again with the figure who "drank from a water deprived of light" and "dreamed of the open sea" (Tachtiris, 38). Some of these instances represent suffering, but not all. We see "dew's gleam" and a spirit "surging with the floods of spring" (Ruleman, 53). The spring snow in Bundy's translation of Princess Shikishi is joyful (57). The thirstless skeletons in Takano's translation of Murano have found a measure of "nostalgia-provoking" peace (89).

Separation occurs between lovers, between the living and the dead (Rosenberg, 55), in communities (Ben Lazreg, 77–80), and in the fragmented self.

The power of memory to sustain and move us is portrayed in a multitude of tonalities. We read of "A lonely park full of children ... [that] rubs the rust of ... memory with something similar to flight" and a figure "shredding her grief into tiny pieces at the threshold of wishing" (Morin, Snounu, and Tabbaa, 45; 46). In "Excerpt from A Pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi," the poem's narrator philosophically states: "I yielded to my brush and recorded my impressions of these various places, thinking that perhaps it will be of interest to people of another time," with a calm recognition of personal mortality. Horesh opens with a reference to Jerusalem's "old wall" which is emblematic of wholeness, separation, and memory in complex ways (31).

The recurrence of these elements invites a meditation on the eternal present—here perceived as an instant of stillness in the ever-flowing waters of life and time—and our constant need to look back in an attempt to find wholeness.

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





Andrew Gudel  
Rainy Night in Linqing

Yao Nai  
臨清雨夜

Yesterday our little boat set out on the river's flood.  
On the same boat were wine we brought and all the very best guests.  
Autumn sounds on both banks, though the maples were still green.  
At midnight, the bright moon made the river's water white.  
Wandering friends—close their whole lives—  
Will recall tonight, when scattered across the land.  
The Zhang River flows east while the Wen River runs clear;  
In the cold rain a lonely sail gathers many sorrows.

Andrew Gudel  
Spring Rain

Yao Nai  
春雨

Evening comes and the east wind ceases;  
I close my book when the window goes dark.  
A spring rain comes, rustling,  
and the room gets a little cold.  
Just then, a bird perches and the fluttering sound  
admonishes me to be humble.

Andrew Gudel  
Evening Meditations

Yao Nai  
夕懷

The ridges to the west draw down the slanting sun,  
The last rays of evening are just like the dawn's earliest light.  
The window darkens in the winter sun,  
And with difficulty I put down my book.  
The wind along the eaves sighs;  
The fallen leaves flutter on the stone steps.  
A murder of crows comes and perches on the branches,  
And caws repeatedly from the forest's edge.  
All things are interdependent;  
Who is the host? Who is the guest?  
It's certainly foolish to chase what's before us;  
How can it be right to explore what is past?  
In the darkness I raise my head and say nothing;  
The cold moon is suited to the still night sky.

## Commentary

Yao Nai (1731–1815) was born in Tongcheng in the modern-day Anhui Province of China. In 1763, he passed the Qing Dynasty’s highest imperial examination and achieved the rank of *Jinshi*. He served in several high-level administrative positions and was compiler of the *Siku Quanshu*, an encyclopedic collection of all books in China at the time. He is considered one of the early voices in the establishment of the Tongcheng School of Writing, which he helped spread by teaching at various academies during the second half of his life. The Tongcheng School stressed natural, straightforward prose and harmony between a written work’s theme and form.

Yao Nai was an expert on ancient and classical texts and his poems abound in allusions to earlier poems and poets; sometimes he also plays with their themes. For example, the line “Autumn sounds on both banks, though the maples were still green” in the poem “Rainy Night in Linqing” is modeled after a similar line in the Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai’s “Setting Off Early for Baidi City.” Yet the two poems are mirror images. Both describe journeys by boat, but Yao sets his at night and there is rain; Li Bai sets his at dawn with brilliant morning clouds. Though Yao’s poems are enjoyable in and of themselves, for an audience that was familiar with these earlier poets, the scattered literary allusions and modification of themes would have added additional layers of meaning and emotional resonance.

In translating the poems, I tried to keep the English straightforward and let the images speak for themselves, reflecting Yao’s simple—and sometimes spare—style.

In spring, Cydonian apple trees  
hand-fed by river streams  
in the unspoiled orchard of the Maidens,  
and vine-blossoms too,  
grown fat beneath vine-shade

But for me Love scorns rest  
in every season—

roiling out of its skin all over  
with lightning fire  
like a Thracian stormburst,  
darting forth from Aphrodite  
with manias to parch the tongue,  
night-dark, shameless

violently  
tearing up my wits feetfirst

Cicero called Ibycus of Rhegium the most “afire with love” of the archaic Greek lyric poets. Indeed, little is known about Ibycus other than the fact that he wrote poetry about love. At some point he left Rhegium for Samos, where he likely composed poetry for wealthy patrons under the tyranny of Polycrates; extant sources locate his *floruit* in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. He writes not in “standard” Attic Greek but in the Doric dialect, stippled with Homeric language; in the few poems we have, his subjects are myth, beauty, and love. Otherwise our information about Ibycus’ biography is as tattered as his body of work, which survives only in quotations and fragments of papyrus.

“Fragment 286” (probably a complete poem) is stunning proof of Cicero’s assessment. In a handful of lines Ibycus skillfully shifts his audience from the pastoral lull of a vine-shaded orchard to the twisting, relentless grip of desire. Capturing the rapid shift between the two is the most crucial part of my translation. Structure-wise, Ibycus does the work for me. Halfway through the poem—“But for me” marks the switch—the relative structure of the first stanza breaks down; words begin to run over their line-end, and the meter of the second half does not correspond to the first. While I have dispensed with the notoriously complex meters of Greek lyric poetry and translated into free verse, I have sought to achieve the same sense of restless urgency with language and line breaks.

Translating Ibycus’ contrasting images is as much a challenge as a delight. The poet packs his lines full of antithesis: the orchard is nourished by a river while the madnesses of love are “parching,” and the youthful idyll suggested by the first half contrasts sharply with the adult reality of love portrayed in the second. My efforts to translate the nuances of the Greek language attempt to convey these contrasts. For example, the vines that are “increased” (*auxomenai*) in Greek are here “grown fat” for a stronger sense of the contentment that the next lines are about to disrupt; “stormburst” preserves the sound of the Greek *Boreas* but removes the problem of explaining that the mythological name represents the traditionally fierce north wind.

Indeed, mythological names often pose a problem for the modern translator. For example, some commentators (e.g. Campbell, 1982) propose that the mysterious “Maidens” of the first stanza are nymphs, but admit there is no definite parallel for the Greek *parthenoi* used by itself as a title. One recent commentary (Wilkinson, 2012) suggests the word refers simply to young women. Another (Tortorelli, 2004) makes the argument that the maidens are, perhaps, not nymphs but Muses, which invites tempting parallels between love and poetic inspiration. In light of this latter argument, I have chosen to capitalize “Maidens” to suggest that the word is a title; whatever their specific identity, the reference to maiden divinities (in their “unspoiled” orchard) in the poem’s first half and then to Aphrodite, the goddess of desire, in its second makes for another elegant contrast.

The fragmented state of the poem only compounds its difficulty. Our readings of this papyrus are not stable; in particular, scholars have suggested many

substitutions for the verb in the last line of the poem, from “guards” (*phulassei*) to “shakes” (*tinassei*). A translator must choose from the variety. In this case, not only is there a *comparandum* for the latter in the erotic poetry of Sappho, who likewise compares love to a wind that shakes the heart like a gale on mountain trees, but it is also a far superior fit for the poem.

After all, Ibycus’ view of love, at least in the fragments we have, is a fervent and chaotic one. In the next of Ibycus’ fragments (287), Eros looks up at our poet from beneath dark eyelids; his gaze, the poet tells us, is melting. I have tried, in my translation, to reflect the portrayal of love that Ibycus crafts so masterfully: personified, restless, and physical (“roiling out of its skin”), love darts and parches, is violent, consumes like fire.

IX.10

You want to wed Priscus.  
No wonder, Paula. And wise.

Priscus doesn't want to wed  
You. Also wise.

VIII.19

Cinna wants to look like a pauper.  
And he is a pauper.

VII.93

Narni, encircled by the flood of your white sulfurous river,  
Hard to reach on your twin peaks,  
Why do you so often seduce my noble Quintus  
And detain him so long?

Why ruin the purpose of my little place at Nomentum,  
On which I splurged only because of my neighbor?  
So be frugal, Narni, and don't devalue Quintus' worth:  
Thus may you freely delight in your bridge forever.



Marcus Valerius Martialis (40–104), or Martial, was born in Spain and flourished in Rome. His greatest achievement remains his 1500 epigrams in which he depicts, often satirically, the behavior of his fellow Romans and perfects the form in Latin. His influence appears in the work of virtually every epigrammatist since.

A helpful element in translating Martial is that his epigrams contain many formal cues that can, and should, be carried over into English versions of them. Foremost, perhaps, is the poet's intention to provide what he called a "sting" at the end of every poem. Readers, including translators, usually enjoy a pithy, cutting end-line, especially in satire such as Martial's. This can be seen even in a two-line poem like VIII.19. The first line makes an observation, "Cinna wants to look like a pauper," and the second line offers another take on that observation, "And he is a pauper," but shifts the tone from neutral to sardonic. While the first line sounds slightly sympathetic to Cinna's desire to appear poor and seems to imply that he is wealthy, the second line undercuts his desire as fatuous because of his actual poverty. In the Latin, Martial uses "pauper" as the first and last word of his epigram, creating a remarkable balance, but English syntax is better served with "pauper" at the end of each clause and line. My translation amounts to a rhymed couplet, and though Martial did not use end-rhyme, he was alert to repeating internal sounds in his lines. Moreover, many centuries of translators have made rhyme and meter traditional for Martial.

IX.10 exemplifies Martial's formal skills as comparable to a watchmaker's. His two lines are balanced with infinitives at the head of each and forms of the verb *sapio* ("to be wise") at the end. *Nubere* and *ducere*, the infinitives, create initial rhyme, and in the first line the sound is—*vis, Priscus, sapisti*—occurs three times as internal rhyme. In the second line, *non, Prisco, and sapit* repeat or partially repeat words from line 1, and the *e* sound—in *ducere, te, et, ille*—repeats as internal rhyme, for the sake of aural coherence. This marvel of compression well illustrates its maker's attention to poetic form, not to mention his wit, which here is both formal and linguistic. In my translation I have tried to follow suit.

In longer poems, like VII.93, I sometimes break Martial's traditional block form into stanzas; in this case, two quatrains. The translator must also find a way to transfer Martial's themes, as carried in his language, into the English version. In VII.93, for example, the second stanza suggests an underlying economic theme. An important part of the speaker's reason for seeking to protect the value of his property at Narni, a town in Umbria, besides gaining access to his attractive neighbor, is the sum he spent on it: divert Quintus too often and you wear him out for me, thus reducing the value of my "little place." By addressing Narni as though it were a rival "seducing" Quintus, Martial amusingly implies a sexual struggle between speaker and town. The final line delivers Martial's subversive point. Instead of expressing conventional resentment over Narni's distracting the object of desire, he instead shows the speaker satisfied to compromise over the matter by

sharing the charming Quintus with the charms of the town, such as its twin peaks and bridge. Does Quintus then end up a metaphorical bridge between speaker and Narni?

Jake Gordon  
An Ocean of Tears

Mariam Michtawi  
محيط من الدموع

Between my blame for you  
And my desire to see your eyes  
Lies an ocean of tears  
In vain, I try to forge a way  
But can only live, drowning every day

Jake Gordon  
The Chest

Mariam Michtawi  
الصندوق

I kept the treasure of the past  
Inside a purple chest  
The days and years whiled  
I overcame every trial  
And I am convinced that my chest was the champion of my victories  
Then one stubborn, harsh, rebellious year  
A tsunami swept away all that was mine  
Everything  
But the chest was left behind  
The legacy of my love  
I hastened to it  
I began to contemplate it  
With the love I held for my homeland  
I wiped the dust from it  
Showered it with kisses  
Held it close

This chest of joy  
Treasure of life  
Love of the years  
Friendship of childhood  
Sweetness and perfume of days...  
Gleefully, I danced upon it  
Barefoot for hours  
One of my daily rituals  
And for the first time I resolved to open it  
It was my one chance to live again  
I opened it carefully, with great longing  
As a lover longs for life  
But the chest resisted me a little,  
Concerned for my bliss upon feeling the shock  
Its screeching shook me to my core  
As though it wept for my inevitable misfortune  
I did not yield to it  
For my dreams slumbered inside  
I fought back, opened it, and with it a great grave  
My chest was empty...  
Empty...  
Empty...  
I regarded it a while  
A long while  
I left it open  
For the bats of time  
Then softly, I turned my back and departed,  
Stripped of everything, even my soul

Jake Gordon

Between the Loss & the Delay

Mariam Michtawi

بين الخسارة والتأجيل

Between the loss and the delay  
This day  
Is the beginning of the end  
I feel compelled  
To retreat from love  
Retreat from writing  
For my words have been choked  
By your sandy, desert winds  
I have lost and given up  
And each day I delay the announcement of my loss to the next  
The days, the weeks, and the months go by  
And the delay transforms  
Into an imaginary friend  
I conceal his falseness  
To conceal my pain,  
My failure,  
And my crippling loneliness  
For a powerful bond of love has formed  
Between the loss and the delay  
My spirit is tired  
Above your Bermudian land  
Set it free  
Let it glide  
Through the sensual coral reefs  
Let it float  
Above the water on a leaf  
If only it would teach you  
The language of the sea  
How it has longed to sail  
Beyond the beauty  
Beyond your secrets

Jake Gordon

How Do I Tell You I Love You?

Mariam Michtawi

كيف أصرخ "أحبك"؟

How do I tell you I love you?

While the fear and the shock

Turn my long hair white

While on the balcony

The scent of jasmine and the smell of bullets tear each other to pieces

While the dust

Rips apart my new dress

The shame chokes me

And amidst the truce, our lovers' meeting has been taken hostage

How do I tell you I love you?

How can I possibly say it?

While the blood digs trenches

In your innocent face

Come to me, and I will clean your wounds with my forehead

Come to me, and I will gather your sweat with my hands

Come to me, and I will take you in my arms

O love of my life...

Come to me...

I can scent the traces of a homeland in you still

My interest in the effects that the agency of interpretation and translation can have on an interactive performance of poetry is what led me to translate these four Arabic prose poems. They are taken from a collection entitled *Halloween Al-Firaaq Al-Abadei* by the Lebanese poet Mariam Michtawi.

I was struck by Mariam's very distinct performance style, a style typical of Arab poets and going back to the roots of Arabic poetry, which was performed in cultures of primary and secondary oral literature. Poems were read at tribal gatherings named *majālis*, which played an important role in village communities. These performances were tempered by mnemonic devices, including repetition, rhyme, epithet, and alliteration. Mariam's poetry is many times removed from this kind of oral culture, and yet her style of performance resembles it. She speaks slowly and clearly in a voice laden with emotion and stress. It is almost sermon-like which serves to create a mystical feeling, impressing the poem upon the audience. Furthermore, she does not shackle herself to the written form of her poem but rather departs from it, repeating lines to add power and emphasis and occasionally adding or omitting lines. From a translation perspective, this is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, one is obliged to attempt a faithful rendering of the original, and yet how to accomplish that for a poem that is different each time it is performed? On the other, the fluidity and creativity of this kind of poetry is both attractive and liberating.

My approach therefore has been two-fold. First, to reproduce to the best of my ability all rhythmic and mnemonic devices present in the source text, the translation reproduces the potential carried by the source text for transformative performance. I have purposefully given precedence to structural fidelity over semantic fidelity where appropriate, though no decision has been taken lightly. Second, to concurrently make sure that the translation is structured and punctuated in such a way that allows room for interpretative reading, not only by myself, but by anyone.

In terms of themes and content, Mariam states that Gibran Khalil Gibran has been an important influence on her work. Yet Mariam's style does not always reflect that of the Romantics. This is partly apparent in her treatment of death. The Romantics treated death in a mystical fashion, as a path to salvation. Gibran himself dealt with painful deaths with understanding and composure. Mariam, on the other hand, is consumed by her grief and rails against death, loss, and separation. The bitter, almost nihilistic undertones are an important aesthetic of Mariam's poetry, more representative of modern poets such as Khalil Hawi, and I attempted to recreate this emotion. Furthermore, romantic poetry is preoccupied with universal values of love, peace, humanity, and freedom, whereas Mariam's poetry is personal, introverted, and limited in its allegiance to ideas greater than itself. On the other hand, the Romantics' love of nature and the special significance that poets like Gibran and Al-Rihani invested in the natural imagery of the sea, the forest, and the night can be seen very clearly in Mariam's poems. For

Mariam, nature is symbolic of her struggles; the garden is her refuge, the sea is unpredictable love, and the night is the mystical source of dreams. In my translation I have attempted to carry across this treatment of natural imagery, and maintain consistency in reproducing terms for natural concepts.



Dean A. Brink  
Twelve Tanka  
on Scooters

Huang Minhuei  
スクーターを題にする  
十二首の短歌

Working itself to the bone  
the lovely scooter  
is the pal of ordinary people

Taking precautions left, right, back and front  
out of nowhere buses and taxis  
are the great enemy

It is our fate  
to endure the ordeal  
getting wet rainy days  
riding against cold winds

One thing I take solace in  
my skin sensing the change of seasons

The whole family riding on the scooter  
though cramped infinite happiness

A baby held by a parent through the red light  
smiles to me having no idea of the danger

A love scene unfolds on a scooter  
though I cry out "a breach of traffic etiquette!"

Though I still worry about my friend getting used to life in Taiwan  
and riding a scooter I'm glad too

After the demonstration flying the flag of Taiwan  
heading toward the founding of the country on a scooter full speed ahead

Grateful all thanks to the protection of the gods  
two accidents and not a scratch

On the handlebar I tie a talisman  
taking to heart my mother's words *slow down*

I worry about my old and rusted pal  
these days not sure to ride you or scrap you

Huang Minhuei (黃敏慧, Kō Binkei), a younger member of the Taiwan Tanka Association, is of a postwar generation of Taiwanese who are interested in Japan and Japanese poetry. She composed this sequence of twelve tanka in a classical Japanese idiom while being devoted to the most mundane of contemporary topics in Taiwan: scooters. Through the scooter, associations are formed with class differentiation, national identity and politics, love, immigration, health and aging, and even religion. The first verse indicates the scooter's class identification as "the pal of ordinary people." The first-person account then situates the poet in light of being the underdog in relation to buses and taxis, and next in terms of the weather. In rendering this sequence of twelve tanka in English, the problem arose when trying to situate political and cultural details alluded to in the poet's often tongue-and-cheek affection for her scooter without adding background information in the poems. The remaining eight poems focus more on the object-relation between a citizen and her scooter, which in Taiwan is something between a national icon and a common convenience. Taiwan has more scooters per capita than any place on Earth, and is also rather densely populated. The tanka referring to worrying about a foreigner adjusting to Taiwan and riding a scooter suggests a core irony I try to convey in the diction throughout the sequence: scooter-driving is a world unto its own. This impacts her worry about her friend in light of wondering if the friend can master the unwritten rules of traffic in Taiwan (and adapt to variations in different cities, neighborhoods, and situations). Interpersonal relations also take on this other-worldly coloring as the family crowded on a scooter out of necessity becomes an embodiment of "infinite happiness" (modeled after "a world in a grain of sand"), as do the poems that highlight the otherworldliness in "A baby held by a parent through the red light / smiles to me having no idea of the danger" and the comic distancing of the poet from "A love scene unfolds on a scooter / though I cry out 'a breach of traffic etiquette!'" The other-worldliness surrounding the materiality of scooters and cultural implications is also reflected in the spiritual language of "protection of the gods" and "on the handlebar I tie a talisman," while the line "flying the flag of Taiwan / heading toward the founding of the country on a scooter full speed ahead" suggests a political vision for Taiwan that, being a utopian hope in the current context, also carries a sense of an other-worldly dimension. The materiality of the scooter itself is highlighted in the closing: "not sure to ride you or scrap you." Thus, by focusing on rendering the description of various relations in a lightly ironic tone, these translations attempt to capture how the poet presents her scooter within a spectrum of divisions and personal aspirations. The poet herself assured me that she now has a new scooter.

I looked far out over the expanse of the ocean, and to the west were Awaji Island, Suma, Akashi Bay, and other such places. I thought, “If only I could take the boat to go over and look,” but of course, taking into account people’s fears as a result of the conflicts in this world, I did not. Instead, we spent one night and returned to the Capital at dawn.

Bound for Awaji,  
parting the mists—  
a sailing ship,  
its ultimate destination unknown,  
going over the waves

I looked at Suma Bay, and I saw the rising plumes of smoke from the salt fires.

Like the smoke  
rising from the salt fires,  
vainly,  
whose yearning is it  
that smolders so?

I looked at Akashi Bay.

The poem I composed  
out of leaves of words alone—  
in the dawn sky,  
the moon, bright over Akashi Bay  
and its stretch of sandy beach

Then I went once more before the god of Sumiyoshi. After offering words of farewell, I departed from its presence.

Like the fence I saw at Mitsu,  
how many thousands of years  
will you protect us?  
See us through to our destination,  
O god of Sumiyoshi!

In this single scroll, I yielded to my brush and recorded my impressions of these various places, thinking that perhaps it will be of interest to people of another time.

Early in the Fourth Month

Yoshiakira [seal]

A *Pilgrimage to Sumiyoshi* (*Sumiyoshi no môde* 住吉詣) describes a journey to the Sumiyoshi Shrine in the early summer of 1364 by the second Ashikaga Shogun, Yoshiakira 足利義詮 (1330–1367, in office 1358–1367). It is a short travel journal, comprised of only fifteen poems with relatively short prose passages throughout. Although its authorship is uncertain, it has traditionally been attributed to Yoshiakira. The journal opens with observations about the scenery as the party travels by boat along the Yodo River into Settsu Province to Naniwa Bay, what is now Osaka Bay.

The failure of the Kamakura shogunate in the early fourteenth century led to a series of military conflicts between the rising Ashikaga warriors of the Northern Court, who occupied the traditional imperial palace in the Capital (present-day Kyoto), and followers of Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐天皇 (1288–1339, r. 1318–1339), who had fled to Yoshino to establish the rival Southern Court. In this context, it may appear unusual to see Yoshiakira pausing to take in a series of landscape views and to compose poems about them. In this case, however, the acts of traveling to a famous pilgrimage site and composing poems along the way are a means of declaring and legitimizing claims to political and military power over the area, with the additional support of divine favor and protection of the Sumiyoshi deity.

The passage translated here is the climax of Yoshiakira's journal, describing the moments when he surveys the views from the shore at Sumiyoshi, approaches the main shrine, offers his poems as prayers, and then returns to his residence in the Capital. The poems exhibit an imaginative engagement with the landscape—as commentators are careful to point out, the smoke of salt fires at Suma would not have been visible from Sumiyoshi, which lies on the opposite side of the bay. Likewise, the sailing ship “bound for Awaji” is a metaphor for Yoshiakira's unfulfilled desire to visit the island. And although he ostensibly made this journey during the violent rivalry between the Northern and Southern Courts, the only indication of such hardship lies in his decision not to approach Awaji because of “people's fears as a result of the conflicts in this world.” His caution was surely well founded; Go-Daigo and his successors frequented Sumiyoshi, Suma, Akashi, and Awaji Island, to spend months at a time at temples in the area. Such seeming inconsistencies in representing the journey or its geography are not so much a sign of inaccuracy or fabrication, but instead are the product of the poet-traveler's construction of a historical and literary ideology within the landscapes that he describes.

Despite their brevity, these poems are complex in their allusions to past famous poems. Each name—Awaji, Suma, Akashi, and Sumiyoshi—is an *utamakura*, or a famous place in the poetic canon. Each of the names is linked to the others through their geographical proximity and through their occurrence together in such texts as the *Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*, ca. 900) and the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*, ca. 1008). As a result, much of the poetic imagery is shared:

white waves, mists, the moon, and the cries of the plover create an impression of the region. Against this backdrop are layered those important poetic associations that are specific to each name, such as the boat rowing toward Awaji, the smoke of salt fires at Suma, and the ancient sacred fence surrounding the Sumiyoshi Shrine. In this way, a rich description of the landscape is constructed in the words of each poem by using poetic imagery, linking famous place names to past travelers, and gesturing toward canonical poems about the respective famous places.

Perhaps the most challenging poem to translate was the one composed at Akashi Bay. A more literal gloss of the poem reads: “Words are all that remain beneath the lingering light of the moon over Akashi Bay and its stretch of sandy beach.” There are two pivot-words (*kakekotoba*) in this poem. First, a pairing of the verb “to be” (*ari* 有り) and the moon at dawn (*ariake* 有明) emphasizes the fragility of words—until it is canonized, a recited poem may simply fade like a moon that pales in the light of daybreak. The second pivot-word is in the place name (Akashi 明石), a homophone of the adjective “bright” (*akashi* 明かし). In the light of dawn, one wouldn’t expect the moon to shine brightly, except that the name Akashi insists upon it here. The poem thus posits two contradictions: the permanence of words against an image of fading moonlight, and a brightly lingering moon even as dark night dissipates into morning. If we take the “leaves of words” to be the poems from the old tales and poetic anthologies, then the poem reflects Yoshiakira’s awareness that a canonized text becomes the only physical trace that remains of his predecessors; that the people who recited, wrote, and read before him are now gone.

This awareness is echoed in Yoshiakira’s notion, articulated in the final line, that his own journal would be “of interest to people of another time.” This statement in particular resonates with us, the contemporary readers, as we suddenly see ourselves in a new light, a gleam in the imagination of Yoshiakira as he contemplated a future in which his own story had become part of history.

In Jerusalem, I mean within the old wall,  
I walk from one era to another without a memory  
guiding me. And the prophets there distribute  
the history of the holy amongst themselves... They ascend to the heavens  
and return with less frustration and sadness, for love  
and peace are holy, and both come into the city.  
I used to walk above a slope and ponder: how  
could the narrators differ when speaking of light in a stone?  
Is it that from a scarcely lit stone wars erupt?  
I walk in my sleep. I stare while I dream. I do not  
see a soul behind me. I do not see a soul in front of me.  
All of this light is for me. I walk. I am light. I fly.  
Then I transform into someone else. The words  
grow like grass from the prophetic mouth of  
Isaiah: "If your faith does not remain firm, then you will not remain secure."  
I walk as if I am someone other than myself. And my wound is an evangelical  
white rose. And my hands are like two doves  
on the cross, soaring and bearing the earth.  
I do not walk, I fly, I transform  
into someone else. There is no place and no time. So who am I?  
I am not myself in the moment of ascension. But I  
think: on his own, the prophet Muhammad was  
speaking in Classical Arabic. "And what next?"  
What next? Suddenly a female soldier yelled:  
It's you again? Haven't I killed you?  
I said: you've killed me...and I, like you, have forgotten to die.



Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008) was the informal poet laureate of Palestine, though he was forced to live in exile for many years. He wrote poems about the land and its unique traits as well as his strong connection to it, which was representative of his fellow Palestinians' connection to the land that has known decades of colonization, occupation, and oppression. All of these are present in his widely esteemed body of work.

The original poem, I feel, works diligently to create a very delicate and precise balance among the symbols of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Darwish includes a short citation from the Old Testament Book of Isaiah, which he most likely had read in the original Hebrew. For that reason, I chose the NET Bible version over the King James translation, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established," as it more closely resembles the stylistics of the poem and more literally represents both the Arabic version of the Old Testament as used by Darwish and the Hebrew original: "אִם לֹא תִאֱמְנוּ בִּי לֹא תִאֲמְנוּ."

Darwish was also a talented orator of his own poetry. I urge the readers of this poem to listen to the poet's oration, even if they cannot understand the original Arabic. When translating, I often reverted to the poet's oral rendition of the poem, as the vocalization in the written version was occasionally questionable. A good example of Darwish reciting the poem may be found here: [http://youtu.be/o1V\\_HlXmg8g](http://youtu.be/o1V_HlXmg8g).

Arabic is not my native language. I grew up between Tel Aviv and New York speaking Hebrew and English. It was only in high school that I began studying Arabic, and it took me several years of studying and specializing in Arabic to be able to read poetry. Mahmoud Darwish's works—both poetry and prose—are never as simplistic as their linguistic style may cause one to think. Darwish was a poet, yes, but also a displaced citizen; a Palestinian who had been banished from his own land; a multilingual and multicultural intellectual who knew how to communicate with his fellow Palestinians in Arabic as well as he did in Hebrew with Israelis and with followers in the West who spoke French and English. Yet his vision, like this poem, was not one of all-encompassing friendship and harmony.

Jerusalem had become a city of two peoples but it is, in fact, two cities in one. There is no symmetry between the occupying people and the people whom they oppress. Darwish treats the ancient traditions embodied in the city with almost impeccable equity. The three monotheistic religions are all given their fair share of attention: the Christian Evangel, the Jewish prophet Isaiah, and Muhammad, messenger of Islam, are all mentioned very briefly. But the ending breaks the idyllic balance. We are not told that the soldier is Jewish, but we know she is. We are not informed of the religious or ethnic background of the narrator, but the context reveals he is a Palestinian.

Translating this poem invoked my skills as a linguist, as a person who can communicate in Arabic, English, and Hebrew. Yet it also involved my great appreciation for Mahmoud Darwish as a symbol of the Palestinian struggle for freedom, a struggle I have been an ardent supporter of since childhood.

Darcy L. Gauthier  
Ennui

Abe Kōbō  
倦怠

O spider  
When your body blazes like spirit  
Dream casts its net into the immaterial  
O shroud of death  
Wrapped in its endless web you hallucinate  
A herd of beasts, thirsty, running for shore

Abe Kōbō (1924–1993) is perhaps best recognized for his novels, film adaptations, and plays. However, his first work of literature was a small collection of poetry, self-published in 1947 (and later published by Shinchōsha in 1997). The collection, *Mumei shishū* 無名詩集 (*Poems by a Nameless Poet*), was printed one year after Abe relocated to Japan from his childhood home of Manchukuo (Manchuria), a puppet state Japan established during the Fifteen Years War (1931–1945). Though poetry sometimes appears in his other writing, this is Abe's only attempt at a full collection. Rather obscure and infrequently discussed in academic criticism, its poems have, aside from a few isolated excerpts, never been translated into English.

I have translated here one poem from this collection, “Kentai” 倦怠 (“Ennui”), which is in many ways representative of the whole in terms of its style and thematics. *Mumei shishū* is philosophically abstract, esoteric, and at times impenetrably cryptic. These qualities, as well as its romanticism focusing on themes of life's suffering and death's appeal, are due no doubt in part to Rainer Maria Rilke's influence. In the postscript to a collection of Abe's short stories published in 1968 (*Yume no Tōbō* 夢の逃亡, or *Dream's Flight*), he reflects,

Actually for me Rilke was “the symbol” during the Second World War. If I look at it now, I also feel the meaning of that symbol might have been “the tranquillity of the dead.” In order to establish a liaison with death, I chose a guide map to the country of the dead. In the post-war period, for me, it was necessary that I first start from the image of death.  
(my translation)

Perhaps, then, Abe has self-reflexively embedded himself into the poem “Ennui” as a spider weaving his web of death yet trapped in it as well. We also see his attempt to communicate a certain experience of the immediate postwar, a trauma that cannot be fully grasped or calculated, the ineffability of which is perhaps best suited to poetic expression.

I have tried to make this translation as faithful to the original as possible, realizing that this is to a large extent a futile effort. Abe's poetry has much to unpack and, as is the case when “unpacking” anything (language no less than luggage), the contents seem to have magically increased in volume as they inhaled their new atmosphere, making it impossible to fit them all back in their original container. The translation is as literal as possible in terms of word choice, line breaks, and line order, and it remains free-style, with no stress patterning or rhyming (rhyme is not typical in Japanese poetry). However, I was unable to convey certain nuances of the original. For example, the final line ends with a particle, *wo* を, which would typically be followed immediately by a direct object. Instead, it is left suspended, and the direct object it marks (the “herd of beasts”) is in the previous line. The final two lines thus invert the order of clauses that is typical

in a Japanese sentence (direct object–verb, i.e. “herd of beasts hallucinate”). In Japanese, this form of anastrophe is not uncommon, but I felt it would sound strange in English, so I decided that replicating it (“you, wrapped in its endless web / a herd of beasts, thirsty, running for shore, hallucinate”) would make the lines inappropriately awkward—and would, moreover, weaken the emphasis in the original on the herd of beasts as the final image of the poem. However, in doing so, I have perhaps sacrificed a certain literary flourish, as well as the sense of suspension or return accomplished by ending with a particle.

I would like to thank Dr. Atsuko Sakaki for her insightful commentary on my translation.

Corine Tachtiris  
First Poem for Her

Marie-Célie Agnant  
Premier poème pour elle

she wanted to be dawn she wanted to be spring  
she wanted to be wind stone  
and water  
but she was just a tree waging war  
against its branches  
her life a broken clock  
a motionless clock  
at the window

she thought of love as her due  
refused to accept the journey's end  
halfheartedly she murmured:  
“a time for everything”  
but she was always offering  
she offered her heart  
as a doormat or a spittoon  
with a feeling of fearsome bliss

they told her pond  
she cried ocean  
hands stretched out she made for shore  
her arms clawed the void  
pitiable  
she sank into the sludge

however much she closed her eyes  
convinced herself that the waters were blue  
that the waters were clear  
all that resurfaced in her  
was the certainty of her weakness  
the deep bitterness of shame  
the excruciating pain of time

the calm water gently lapping  
she would sit

her face streaming with tears  
distraught  
waiting for a miracle

above all she feared and hated tornadoes  
desires disheveled

flooded river  
running over on all sides  
inside her  
despite her

so as not to lose face  
then  
she clenched her teeth  
simply moaned  
moaned  
biting her fists  
gently moaned  
like a wounded dog  
begging for a few lousy pats  
a dog  
at the foot of the table

ever since her hair had taken on  
that stormy hue  
she had lost her bearings  
incessantly counted and recounted  
the rosary of the years  
drank from a water deprived of light  
blowing without conviction  
on the tinder of a back-parlor passion  
a damp and lifeless passion

she would see a pond and  
like an idiot would smile  
crinkle up her eyes in pleasure  
she would say arms outstretched  
let's go to the sea to look at the boats

she never lost hope  
for that grand crossing  
dreamed of the open sea  
of brave sailors  
she crinkled her eyes smiled  
and her misty hair  
called to mind a frantic garden  
the garden of a madwoman fighting her last battle  
convinced that love is her due

Corine Tachtiris  
Poem for My Shadow

Marie-Célie Agnant  
Poème pour mon ombre

when around dreams  
the mists grow hazy  
gray or golden bronze  
disenchantment remains

palms skyward to confront renunciation

appeal if your heart tells you  
to women who tell fortunes  
entreat them to retell  
the marvel  
the miracles  
beg for giddy spells  
lying face-down curse the sirens' song

there is a man they always say  
looking at you  
looking at us  
love is there  
it was there  
at the beginning  
it was

soon enough you'll learn  
the weight of thirst  
freshwater hydra with bitter flesh  
shapeless rock  
heavily  
at your very core

from organic matter  
soon enough you'll be  
inert matter  
will become  
from a whole  
will become  
won't be  
but  
anything but



nothing but  
sparse fragments

time continues on its way  
endless voyage  
no land in sight

stubbornness is often a tenacious enemy

reinvent if you can the first glimmers  
relearn if you wish desire  
but most of all

invite your shadow to keep you company

## Commentary

Marie-Célie Agnant was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and has lived in Montreal since 1970. She is the author of four novels (*La Dot de Sara*, 1995; *Le Livre d'Emma*, 2001; *Un Alligator nommé Rosa*, 2007; *Femmes au temps des carnassiers*, 2015), a collection of short stories (*Le Silence comme le sang*, 1997), and two collections of poetry (*Balafres*, 1994; *Et puis parfois quelquefois...*, 2009) as well as various books for young readers. Her work has appeared in translation in English, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, and Korean.

Agnant's poems caught my attention for their successful combination of politics and aesthetics; for their stance against sexism, racial discrimination, and other forms of social injustice; for the strong female voice that emerges, pronouncing not only words of protest but also of tenderness and passion; for the sometimes sly, ironic humor that slides in and prevents the poetry from becoming overly grandiose or cliché. The poems here from *Et puis parfois quelquefois...* do not fall under Agnant's political poetry but rather her representations of women's experiences, which often involve confident assertions of female desire as well as longing and loss.

In translating these two poems which express the often unfulfilled drive for love and companionship, my aim was to avoid slipping into a maudlin tone. The best strategy I found was to follow Agnant's oscillations between bitterness and sympathy, between the acerbic and the tender, which undercut one another to keep the poems from falling too deeply into either side. This is exemplified, for example, in the "fearsome bliss" (*bonheur terrifiant*) of the subject of the first poem.

Agnant also often uses repetition with variation, playing around a few words in compact lines such as: *de matière vivante / très tôt tu seras / matière inerte / deviendras / d'un tout / deviendras / ne seras / que / plus que / rien que / fragments épars*. Translating these lines, fragmented themselves, proved to be one of the main challenges of the poems. While I tried to keep the meaning and the sense of repetition with variation, the rhythmic quality of these lines was also important to me, and I decided to allow the English a rhythm of its own. The *plus que / rien que* thus became "anything but / nothing but." In this regard, I am most pleased with the translation of *en elle / malgré elle* as "inside her / despite her" which gains a near rhyme and a clearer rhythm to compensate for other places in the translation where these qualities were sacrificed to meaning.

Joshua Solomon  
I Am a Child of the Sun

Fukushi Kōjirō  
自分は太陽の子である

I am a child of the Sun,  
a child of the Sun who has not yet begun to burn.

Now a little spark has caught  
and soon I will start to smolder.

Ah, and the smoke turns into a flame!  
I am caught up in this brilliant daydream and cannot escape.

The dream is a field of bright white light,  
it is the center of a city brimming with light,  
it is a mountain range where pure white snow sheepishly glows at the peaks.

I am pursued by this daydream:  
now I smolder stronger and stronger,  
belching more and more thick, black, choking smoke.

O, dear world of light!  
O, skies of light!

O, dear men of light!  
O, you who open your whole bodies up to the world!  
O, you whose whole bodies are as if carved in ivory!  
O, you who are so clever and healthy and strong!

I raised my first infant cry from a place damp, watery, and dark, but  
I am a child of the Sun,  
a child of the Sun forever yearning to burn.

Fukushi Kōjirō (1889–1946) was a pioneer of free verse in Japan, publishing his first collection, *Child of the Sun* (*taiyō no ko*), in 1914 and his second, *Prospects* (*tenbō*), in 1920. His poetry employs modern spoken-style language rather than rarified classical written Japanese, and was unrestricted by the metrical limitations of the popular contemporary *shintaiishi* form. “I Am a Child of the Sun” (“*jibun ha taiyō no ko dearu*”) is one of Fukushi’s most well-known works of poetry and is representative of the best of his free-verse experimentations. It was published in *Child of the Sun* along with several pieces exploring similar themes, including “Sun Worship” (“*taiyō sūhai*”) and “Children of the Sun” (“*hi no ko*”).

“I Am a Child of the Sun” has appeared in a number of slight variations. In one instance, the word *jibun* (“self”) is changed to *watashi* (“I”) (*Fukushi Kōjirō chosakushū*). Difficult kanji were also replaced with simpler characters when it was published in middle school textbooks in 1947 as part of Japan’s expanding compulsory education initiative. However, none of these changes significantly alters the poem’s reading.

There were a few considerations concerning diction in the translation. Fukushi employs the *dearu* copula and vocative final particle *yo*, both of which lend a bit of formality to the entire piece, inviting a slightly scriptural tone to accompany the deific personification of the sun. Fukushi also uses the interjection “cry/sigh” *aa* three times in this short poem to emphasize the depth of the speaker’s emotion. The repetition is aesthetically effective in Japanese, but a static repetition of “ah” or “oh” in translation is unsatisfying and difficult to combine with the translation of the more prominent function of *yo* in the latter two instances. I tried to express the sunny feeling of *aa* in conjunction with the hailing *yo* through the addition of the word “dear” in “O, dear world of light!” and “O, dear men of light!” My boldest interpretation is of the line that literally reads, “O, you whose entire bodies are like eyes” (*sōshin me no gotoki hito yo*) as “O, you who open your whole bodies up to the world!” The speaker is describing a human figure whose beauty and strength are derived from a fundamental integration with the universe; the eye-like body is not merely perceptive, but receptive. The more interpretive reading seemed to better capture the nuanced meaning of “eye” in the original.

There he walks on two feet that he thinks  
are his soul, not caring about the full-blown  
clouds that shade his way. Shade took him by  
surprise, so he took shelter in the fire.  
He dried his name on a shriveled branch.  
He sat down to rest and became ecstatic  
as leaves were falling on him like kisses.

He portrayed his sleeping but never slept.  
He shut his heart and lay down upon an  
ancient perception which he boasted about.  
The earth was revealed to him as an apple  
in the hand of a child playing hopscotch.  
There was a bluster in her laugh  
he had never encountered before.  
Horror invaded his blood, and a sigh  
of agitation he wished had evaporated.  
His hands were squeezing jasmine that  
the wind forms as necklaces for transients.  
Transients don't care about passing time  
that dances by itself. And the duration  
relaxes on a wise man's couch.

In a box, he's collected obscure things,  
such as blue wind and two names flavored  
ginger, and he passed by a sixth evening  
on the fifth day of a week, which occurred  
in a month that forgot to pass. He kept seeing  
fickle people's changes, as he has mentioned:  
like gravity that tired of attracting.  
The country does not mature, its prisons  
don't get built, for it is all one prison  
whose jailer is a deformed history.

He usually pulls his shadows behind him

and passes the evening in a diffused echo.  
His night is matches that don't ignite,  
and his soul is full of all kinds of fuel.  
He wishes he might burn like a butterfly  
in a flame. The wood is insufficient  
and the trees have declared their sadness  
to the dew upon the darkness that is  
tired of the curse of women who are  
wet with heat and the humidity  
of the nearby sea—all are tired.

A lonely park full of children  
escaping fear and drowsiness  
sprinkles them with its confusion,  
rubs the rust of his memory  
with something similar to flight.  
He surrenders his imagination  
to the windows illuminated  
with an eagerness that still dreams.  
He walks on his feet, assured that they  
are his soul, and walks, losing his way,  
walks happy with his shadow, he walks.

I ignite the city with morning roses  
and a yearning that is about to scream.

I saw him teaching his steps confidence  
along paths that bear no trace of footprints.  
His eyes were drawing light out of his blood  
to his eyes and spreading light as dancing tears,  
released into the wind that washes  
his face with what it carries of the scent  
of the seas over which it has passed.  
With his hands, he removes the heaviness  
of air so as to lighten his heart,  
and his heart begs for rain and its meaning.  
That meaning emerges panting from his chest  
and rain in the landings of other souls waits  
for a take-off that would land in his soul.

I put out the flame of my sleeping  
with questions and certain answers  
that scream in the doorway of my heart.

I saw her shredding her grief into  
tiny pieces at the threshold of wishing;  
each time a smiling transient passed by,  
she gave him a piece of her sadness.  
So much that the whole city became sad;  
as for herself, she rode her lust and struck  
various poses that were most unlike her.  
She offered her hair to the wind and taught  
her breast constant vigilance and attention.

She culled whatever she desired from days  
full of joy that is unaware of itself  
till her waist adopted the poise of dancing  
and the meaning of desire. When a very

quiet night arrived, the streets slept,  
and silence closed the windows of houses  
that were worn down by surprise. As for her,  
she slept tired on a bed of tears.  
She was visited only by nightmares  
of her emptiness, and she awoke.



Tired, she raises her sad shadow  
upon a wall; colors in that shadow  
are saying goodbye to their radiance.  
Blue alleys are engraved on the palm  
of a hand. A tear often rolls down  
in a red light anticipating  
and questioning its own pulse. The heart  
dances its way on two cups of amazement.  
The road proceeds from ghosts of coal,  
of fire that exhibits the power  
of balance inside the body.  
Smoke climbs over naked arms  
wrapped around the neck of nothingness.  
I'm not optimistic about the stories  
of dew on the gossamer of wings.  
I am not pessimistic about  
the answers of days on the pavement.

I raise my shadow as a white rose  
on a passing cloud. I train my  
fingers to forget the aroma  
and remember drowsiness. I mix tales  
with water of passage and drink silence  
that time utters as a quiet sadness  
and a dance. Music is my favorite drowning;  
in it starts a breath, clearly seen.  
I steal all I can of avoidance.  
Its night is crucified between eyelids  
of wakefulness, and a string blinks  
in pain at branches that are burdened  
with what they carry. The air gets lighter  
while my blood rushes. The world is  
immense longing, and many memories  
fly from their nests as a postponed  
departure flurries. Stars also fall,  
blanketed with unbearable haste.

I color my name, and an incomplete age  
I color; I draw my heart on a discarded  
newspaper and I color that too.  
I sculpt my fingers on the wall  
and I splash them with panting colors.  
The lines on my palm I read in the language  
of color and see in them a path  
to myself disguised with a mask of extreme  
sensitivity at the gate of autumn  
that stares with sad eyes on tired trees.  
I color the trees, autumn, those eyes,  
and the sadness with writing; I color  
the concrete crawling upon my soul,  
and its dreary towers. I color  
them with irrepressible insight  
and the dances of parapets overlooking  
the blue that is occasionally calm.

In my chest I carry lonely pavements  
that are unaware of passersby,  
exhausted by the absence of laughter  
and the collapsed dreams of teenagers  
replete with pulsation. I color  
the sidewalks, loneliness, the passersby,  
the dreams, and I kindle the pulse  
with rhythm and playful imagination.  
I color my name and the empty space  
as a swing, and the young women  
dancing as butterflies composed  
by joy as songs made of gossamer.  
Likewise I am composed by a shadow  
that walks under skies, and by the moon  
that winks at sleeping women, and I color  
them with the femininity of absence.

Access to the author and his published work incurred one obstacle but was generally easy. Although the Israeli authorities severely restrict the mailing of letters and parcels into and out of Gaza, Yousef used the Internet and Skype to communicate with us translators. Yasmin Snounu and I spoke with him on Skype when we needed clarification of difficult or ambiguous passages in his poems. Yousef is typically more cheerful and upbeat in person than on the page.

Yousef uses both colloquial and Modern Standard Arabic in his poems. Yasmin is an expert in colloquial usage and Yasser Tabbaa adds additional capability in Modern Standard Arabic.

Yousef writes his poems in paragraphs—a prose-poem format now popular in the Middle East. His densely-textured, image-packed sentences can be difficult to read in Arabic, so in translating them I chose to break continuous passages into discrete lines, usually breaking a line at the end of a sentence, clause, or phrase. The length of these units in the original language lends itself to this adjustment, which increases readability.

Yousef shares the desire of all Palestinians for the restitution of their homeland. One distinction between him and the “Resistance Poets” of an earlier Palestinian generation is that his poems avoid militant fervor and instead express skepticism toward the cant of the contending parties claiming to speak for all Palestinians. He is sometimes inclined to blame himself more than anyone else for his deprivations. In an idiom that combines classical and colloquial Arabic, embracing imagism and surrealism, he practices an art which in itself gives him one reason for hope.

Here is Yousef el Qedra’s own description of his work: “As a human being living on this planet, I write to breathe the stolen freedom; I write to open windows in the walls that imprison me; I write to pull out the beauty from the dream that I fashion in life through words. I write because I believe that the word is free; it is the conduit between hearts and continents. Nothing can stop the word; neither occupation nor geography nor siege. I write because the scream of life is stuck in my throat. And when the text comes out from me to the public, it is attempting to search for a mysterious reader whom I know nothing about, neither his place or time; that is exactly the reader to whom I write! Isn’t that what the writing life expands and makes more beautiful? And with writing my passion overflows with the kind of gift that does not come twice.”

Jun Tang  
*Whether You See Me or Not*

Tan Xiaojing  
见与不见

Whether you see me or not,  
I am still there,  
not happy, not unhappy.  
Whether you miss me or not,  
the attachment is still there,  
not coming, not going.  
Whether you love me or not,  
love is still there,  
not increasing, not decreasing.  
Whether you are with me or not,  
I'll put my hand in yours,  
not drawing away, not letting go.  
Stay in my arms.  
Or,  
let me live in your heart.  
Love doesn't need words.  
Neither does happiness.

Tan Xiaojing (1978–) is a Buddhist believer and freelance writer who publishes under the pen name “Trashi Lhamo Duoduo.” She first published “Whether You See Me or Not” (also known as “Padmasambhava’s Silence”) in her blog on May 15, 2007. The poem was repeatedly reproduced in personal blogs and posted messages and had been misattributed to Tshangs-dbyangs-rgya-mtsho (1683–1706), the sixth Dalai Lama who is well known for his poems about passionate love. The misattribution was further supported by the October 2008 issue of *Readers*, a Chinese magazine with an average monthly circulation of over 8.9 million. In 2010, “Whether You See Me or Not” gained enormous popularity on a national scale because the Chinese movie *If You Are the One 2* (known as *Fei Cheng Wu Rao 2* in Chinese) used it in a scene to create emotional appeal.

“Whether You See Me or Not” was originally intended as a religious reflection on the teaching of Padmasambhava. However, Chinese readers have persistently presented and interpreted it as a poem reflecting an unusual philosophy of love—love unconditionally rather than love for reciprocity.

Many Chinese-speaking translators are expected to translate into English at some point in their careers. Hence translation trainers must increase the intercultural awareness of translation trainees. This poem has been used in one of the postgraduate translation courses I’ve taught to underscore the difficulty of translating from one’s native language into a non-native one. This translation has been done upon requests from postgraduate students to demonstrate how to tackle linguistic problems (e.g. lexical ambiguity, sentence structure, subjectless sentences) to produce an adequate version.

William Ruleman  
Life's Fount

Hugo von Hofmannsthal  
Lebensquell

My spirit's surging with the floods of spring:  
I feel a kindred turmoil spill and grow  
Throughout a million budding blooms that know  
A new life streaming, steaming, circling.

It is the fount of youth's eternal flow  
That yields, each year, the same rich gathering  
Luring, moistening, and lathering  
All in beauty's freshly-transformed glow.

O thoughts, come drink your fill of this new thriving;  
O timid hope and almost faded feeling;  
O half-despondent travel-weary striving;

Let life's waters wash you with their healing;  
O dreams and images I daily see,  
May this dew's gleam lave you eternally.

## Commentary

This and other early sonnets by Hofmannsthal fill me with excitement, and I have tried to capture the rapturous mood of spring with all the energy and turbulence that the original poem conveys. A strictly literal version would be mechanical and rob me of the freedom to give the sense of Hofmannsthal's music. The form (a variation on the Petrarchan sonnet) seemed taxing enough to duplicate, but attempting to do so would channel my own wayward energies: I needed such stricture to keep me from slipping into total chaos as I realized that, with all the helter-skelter savagery of the season the poet describes, I would have to wreak havoc with the original's syntax. To paraphrase T. S. Eliot in a somewhat different context, I felt the need to "force, to dislocate if necessary" the German language into a recognizable English meaning. Thus subjects turn to objects in places, nouns become verbs; and all in all, the order of Hofmannsthal's sentences, in order to make them work in English and in the meter and stanzaic form he uses, had to be dealt with violently, I felt. I also took liberties with actual wording at times; Hofmannsthal does not use a German equivalent for "lathering," for instance; but I felt that it caught the sensation of trees in flower—blooming as if they were slathered with foam—and it also calls to mind other mighty forces of nature like the spray of raging ocean waves and froth from the mouths of charging steeds. So again, I have tried to avoid a rigid transcription and be faithful instead to what I considered the original's spirit and gist. If I have been carried away by my own ecstatic feelings, I hope to be forgiven.

c. 101

Many the nations and many the seas I have crossed  
to arrive now, o brother, at these pitiful rites  
so as to give you these last gifts for the dead  
and fruitlessly speak to unanswering ashes,  
for uncaring fortune has torn from me you your own self.  
Ah, pitiful brother, unduly wrested from me!  
But now, as things stand, these gifts that tradition prescribes,  
sad gifts that custom demands at these rites—  
receive them with a stream of brotherly weeping.  
Now and forever, brother, hail and farewell!

c. 48

Your honey-colored eyes, Juventius,  
if I were granted leave to kiss them at will,  
I'd give them hundreds—no, thousands—of kisses,  
nor would I ever appear to be sated,  
not even should our harvest of kisses lie thicker  
than heads of dry wheat in the fields.

c. 81

Was there no proper fellow, Juventius, in this whole population  
pleasing enough to catch your amorous eye,  
apart from that washed-out pale statue of yours,  
that stranger from the moribund town of Pisaurus  
who now fills your heart, whom in preference to us  
you dare choose, not knowing what crime you commit?



The Latin poet Gaius Valerius Catullus lived under the late Roman republic in the last century of the pre-Christian world. In his thirty years of life he produced a body of poetry in several forms, generally tied to his immediate surroundings, loves, friendships, and adversarial relations. Over a hundred of his *carmina* are preserved; they have been edited and widely translated countless times over the centuries.

The great love of his life seems to have been a married woman whom he calls Lesbia and to whom he addresses a number of poems. That passion did not stop Catullus from showing an interest in homoerotic relations, especially concerning a young man addressed as Juventius. Two of these pieces are included in my set of three translations. Number 48, for all its light-hearted exaggeration, is a touching lyric, whose suggestion of chromatic reprise (“honey-colored eyes”—“heads of dry wheat”) is embedded in a subtle recognition that pleasures tend to fade in time. Number 81 turns the experience of a lover’s spiteful disappointment into a single question that effaces derision and leaves only heartache. The first poem, no doubt one of the best known of the entire corpus, is a moving tribute to his late brother, to whose grave the poet has made a long voyage.

I chose to translate these three works as much for their captivating poignancy as for their stylistic challenges. My effort in all three versions was to remain as close as possible to the sense, tone, and register of the Latin and at the same time to its poetic structure. I attempted, if not to imitate, then at least to be guided by the rhythmic patterns of the original texts, to incorporate similar phonic echoes and repeated lexical choices, and to avoid any regular rhyming. Catullus does not rhyme, but instead relies on meter to express the poetic principle of regular recurrence. The Latin texts show prosodic variety, but it seemed to me useful to adopt for all lines a somewhat generalized Latinate style in which every English verse would end with a sequence of syllables arranged as *aBaaB(a)*, where *a* marks an unstressed syllable and *B* a stressed one. I wanted the Latin to be discernible, if only as a suggestion, behind a scrim of English, and it seemed to me that, of the various ways to achieve that end, the most telling was to create a rhythm reminiscent of the original. Latin meter is based on the contrast between long syllables and short; I considered the English equivalent, especially in the all-important final segment of each line, i.e., the main site of regular recurrence, to be the contrast between stressed and unstressed syllables.

A Poet's Eye: Poems of Princess Shikishi

“Spring”

So clearly I see  
The first sign of springtime:  
The color of the sunlight,  
Rising above the snow  
On Otowa's mountain peak.  
[Zenshū 1]

On broken eaves  
Thick with moss, I see  
Spring has come,  
And untouched by years the scent  
Of plum blossoms close by.  
[Zenshū 106]

An image of blossoms  
Opens in my yearning heart,  
As I await their time,  
Till at last they are transplanted  
To the slopes of Yoshino.  
[Zenshū 211]

Come here and see!  
Where blossom petals swirl  
Down the slopes in Yoshino,  
Carried by fierce winds  
To my hut far beneath.  
[Zenshū 116]

I see this morning  
A breeze stir the treetops  
Around my dwelling,  
And on the ground so many layers  
Of an unfamiliar snow.  
[Zenshū 217]

Flowers all scattered,  
Thoughts troubled, I gaze  
After absent colors,  
And from the empty sky  
Fall spring showers.  
[*Zenshū* 219 (SKKS 149)]

“Summer”

Close by my window  
Bamboo leaves rustle,  
Stirred by a breeze,  
Making all the more fleeting  
The dream as I dozed.  
[*Zenshū* 314 (SKKS 256)]

As I gaze out,  
Moonlight spread in my garden  
Fades away,  
Leaving only the fleeting glow  
Of fireflies in the dark.  
[*Zenshū* 28]

“Autumn”

Thoughts troubled, I weary  
Of gazing and wish for a dwelling  
Beyond autumn’s reach;  
But does not the moonlight  
Shine on all fields and mountains?  
[*Zenshū* 248 (SKKS 380)]

No trace of footsteps  
Remains in my garden  
Where deep in low reeds,  
Soaked in droplets of dew,  
The song of waiting crickets.  
[*Zenshū* 240 (SKKS 474)]

Fallen *paulownia* leaves too,  
How hard now it would be  
To walk among them—  
But no matter, it is not as though  
I was truly waiting for him.  
[*Zenshū* 255 (SKKS 534)]

Do they bid farewell  
To autumn that will not be stayed?  
As I gaze out,  
Fallen leaves in my garden  
Drift off, all one way.  
[*Zenshū* 55]

“Winter”

Winter approaches  
Before my very eyes;  
Where wild ducks swim  
Along the shores of an inlet,  
Spreads a thin layer of ice.  
[*Zenshū* 259 (SKKS 638)]

As autumn rains fell,  
Everywhere the colored leaves  
All scattered,  
And hailstones clatter  
Beneath the trees in my garden.  
[*Zenshū* 260]

It is always so—  
The loneliness of my dwelling,  
But I see it afresh  
On frost that covers the leaves,  
Fallen across my garden.  
[*Zenshū* 59]

Imperial Princess Shikishi or Shokushi (Shikishi or Shokushi Naishinnô) was active as a poet near the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Japan. She was the third daughter of Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192). Her birth year is unknown, but she served as Kamo Priestess from 1159, resigned owing to illness ten years later, became a nun in 1197, and passed away in 1201. Despite leaving relatively few poems—fewer than four hundred in number, among which there are three, hundred-poem sequences—she is among the most celebrated poets of her time; *Shinkokinshû*, the royal anthology compiled soon after her death, includes nearly fifty of her verses, making her the second best represented poet in the collection and by far the best represented woman. I have chosen to translate a number of her seasonal compositions that display what I see as two interrelated features of many of her poems on seasonal topics—a focus on dwellings and their associated parts and explicitly on the speaker’s act of perceiving the world outside.

Before immediately concluding that Shikishi composes with a personal voice, it is important to remember that the vast majority of her verses were composed on set topics in hundred-poem sequences, where adherence to the established parameters of images and sentiment for each topic was required. Such sequences were no place for the expression of private emotions. Hundred-poem sequences, including the three in Shikishi’s personal collection, begin with poems of the four seasons, then love topics, and finally miscellaneous topics. The first signs of spring must be greeted with joy; cherry blossoms must be celebrated above all other flowers. “Blossoms” or “flowers” without further modification are always cherry blossoms, and contemporary readers would have readily recognized “unfamiliar snow” as a metaphor for fallen cherry blossom petals. Though moonlight and the bright hue of leaves are celebrated, deepening autumn and winter are times of loneliness and the fading of all things. Shikishi composes within these parameters.

In addition, the pose of a poetic speaker looking out into his or her garden and finding there a scene that conjures up mood is commonplace enough. For instance, a number of Shikishi’s poems may be read (though such a reading is not required) as invoking the common theme of the “waiting woman”—a woman waiting, usually in vain, for a lover’s visit. Thus the autumn poems beginning with *Zenshû* 248 may bring to mind such a woman through such lines as “Thoughts troubled, I weary,” “No trace of footsteps,” and “song of waiting crickets,” in which the name of the insect *matsumushi* contains the verb *matsu*, to wait. “Soaked in droplets of dew” may also suggest tears. The “Fallen *paulownia* leaves too” verse seems most clearly to summon up the theme, although the original speaks not of “him” but of *hito* (person, ungendered).

A number of Shikishi’s poems translated here also allude to earlier compositions by other poets, thus participating in a larger world of poetic meanings. Such allusions were a common practice in her day. To give several examples, Shikishi was most likely influenced in composing the *paulownia* verse by a love

poem (770) from the tenth-century royal collection, *Kokinshû*, that describes a garden path buried by leaves while the speaker awaited an unfaithful lover. Likewise, the spring poem “Come here and see” alludes to a *Kokinshû* miscellaneous poem (982), in which the speaker invites visitors to his hut at the foot of Miwa mountain. The spring poem “Flowers all scattered” alludes to a verse in episode 45 of *Tales of Ise*, but I feel it more closely mirrors the mood of Ono no Komachi’s famous *Kokinshû* spring poem (113) that invokes the fading colors of the blossoms and of the speaker’s own beauty while she gazes at the rain, time, and youth passing to no purpose. Shikishi also borrows the images of the bamboo and *paulownia* leaves from the Chinese poet Bai Juyi (772–846) in the “Close by my window” and “Fallen *paulownia* leaves too” compositions.

Thus Shikishi fully participates in the poetics of her time. And yet, so many of her compositions suggest a speaker living in solitude who gazes out into the world, often no larger than a garden, and who calls attention to separation from it by the insistence on barriers—dwellings, eaves, windows—and on the perceiving eye. In the first of the three hundred-poem sequences in Shikishi’s personal collection, twenty compositions of the seventy seasonal verses make reference to dwellings and gardens; in her second, nine; and in the third, twenty again. Likewise, in the first hundred-poem sequence, fifteen seasonal compositions among seventy employ verbs of visual perception; in her second sequence, the number is sixteen, dropping to thirteen in the third. Taken singly, Shikishi’s verses may not be unique, but as a body of work they summon up a poetic persona, more often than not isolated in a lonely dwelling and experiencing the world through visual perception. And those perceptions are often sharp and fresh—moonlight fading to be replaced by the glow of fireflies, fallen leaves drifting off all in one direction, the world of her garden contracting to the sound of hail beneath trees.

The seasonal compositions translated here date from the mid-1190s to 1200. I have arranged them not by date but by season, beginning with spring poems and ending with winter. When composing hundred-poem sequences or compiling anthologies, Japanese court poets were highly attentive to resonances between verses. Whatever resonances there are among the translated compositions are not those intended by Shikishi, but perhaps she would have found them interesting and revealing.

Jane Beal  
The Dream Vision  
from the *Song of Songs*

Jerome  
Somnium  
*ex Cantica Canticorum*

*Song of Songs 3:1, 5:2–6, 6:2*

On my bed, through the nights, I sought him whom my soul  
loves:

I sought him, and I did not find him...

I sleep, but my heart wakes. The voice of my beloved  
knocking...!

Open to me, my sister, my friend, my dove, my immaculate  
one—

for my head is full of dew  
and my hair curled with the drops of long nights.

I have taken off my tunic: how can I put it on?

I washed my feet: how can I dirty them?

My love reached his hand through the door,  
and my womb trembled at his touch.

I arose to open to my love.

My hands dripped with myrrh  
and my fingers were full of the finest myrrh.

I opened the bolt of my door to my love,  
but he had turned aside, and he had passed by.

My soul was melted, as I said:

I sought him, and I did not find him;

I called, and he did not answer me...

for my beloved has gone down to his garden.

The *Song of Songs*, first written in Hebrew, was later translated into Latin by Jerome in the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*. The Vulgate became the Bible of the Catholic Church, and the *Cantica Canticorum*, as the *Song of Songs* or the *Song of Solomon* was known, became one of the most widely translated and commented-upon books of the Bible during the late medieval period (see E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*). It held an important place in the lives of contemplative Christians living monastic or anchoritic lives, for it informed the language they used to express their love for Jesus (affective piety), journey toward intimacy with him (through the stages of illumination, purification, and unification, or spiritual marriage to Christ), and even behold him in their mystical vision during times of ecstatic prayer.

The *Song* was widely read and usually interpreted allegorically as a representation of the soul's relationship to Jesus. Although some medieval commentators could acknowledge that the *Song* had a literal sense concerning sexual love, most of the people who read it were unmarried and had taken vows of virginity or celibacy. These medieval contemplatives saw Jesus as their beloved in a spiritual sense.

The brief passages of the *Song* that I have translated here are from the dream vision of the *Sponsa* (the Bride), as the *Shulamite* or female speaker of the *Song* was called. The dream vision reveals the Bride's deep longing for her beloved, the frustration of his nearness and departure, and her continued, ardent seeking after him despite every delay and obstacle. The tension between seeking and not finding causes the Bride pain at both the beginning and near the end of the poem as I have constructed it here ("On my bed, through the nights, I sought him...I called, and he did not answer me"). Yet that pain is relieved when she realizes (verse 6:2) where he is: in his garden.

Specific details from the verses I have translated were given allegorical significance in the medieval commentary tradition. Mary Dove's translation, *The Glossa Ordinaria on the Song of Songs*, provides readers with many of these details. For example, the Venerable Bede remarks on verse 3:1 ("On my bed, through the nights, I sought him..."):

The soul seeks God in her bed at her leisure when she has a desire to see God and longs to go forth to him from the prison of the flesh. But this is not permitted, and the bridegroom hides himself so that, not having been found, he may be sought the more ardently (trans. Dove, 62).

As this annotation reveals, medieval interpreters saw the Bride not only as the Church, but as the individual soul devoted to Christ in mystical contemplation: any man or woman who longed for Jesus.

The idea that the Bride represents the individual soul (and, by extension, not only the individual souls of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene but also



corporate Israel and the universal Church), originates with Origen in his 2<sup>nd</sup> century *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. Bernard of Clairvaux preached a series of sermons on the *Song* in the 12<sup>th</sup> century that emphasized this idea. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, both Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross would write elaborately in the same vein. These are only a few examples of such allegorical interpretation of the *Song* and of the tendency of Christian contemplatives to view their own souls as the *sponsa Christi* or Bride of Christ.

The medieval commentary tradition on the *Song of Songs* is rich with allegorical interpretations, and this is especially true of the fifth chapter of the *Song*. In an annotation of verse 5:2 (“I sleep, but my heart wakes...”), one commentator urges readers, “Arise from the leisure and quietness of contemplation, and open [your] hearts; with the obstacles of vice cleared away, let them clearly let in the light of truth” (trans. Dove, 105). The Church is urged to preach to the world as well as contemplate the Beloved, who is Christ Jesus. Anselm understands the garment of 5:3 (“I have taken off my tunic”) as “any worldly impediment” (trans. Dove, 108); the myrrh of 5:4 is both “an example of suffering bitter things” and “that which makes things incorruptible” (trans. Dove, 110).

For medieval commentators, every detail in the *Song* was imbued with spiritual meaning.

Kent Dixon  
The Stranger

Charles Baudelaire  
L'Étranger

“Whom do you love the best, enigmatic man? Tell me. Your father, your mother, your sister or your brother?

—I have neither father nor mother, nor sister, nor brother.

—Your friends?

—You use a word there whose sense leaves me clueless to this day.

—Your country then?

—I don't even know which latitude it resides in.

—Beauty?

—Beauty, capital B? I would love her willingly, were she a goddess and immortal.

—Gold!

—I hate it as much as you hate God.

—Well! What *do* you love, extraordinary stranger?

I love the clouds,...the clouds that pass, *comme ci, comme ça*...above and beyond...the marvelous ineffable clouds!”

The word “Stranger” is a disappointing translation of the title “L’Étranger,” though the only one I’ve ever seen. This stranger is the stranger in Mark Twain’s *Mysterious Stranger*, begun, one should note, some 50 years after Baudelaire’s stranger, under the title “Chronicles of Young Satan.” Baudelaire’s outsider is alienated from either everything or almost everything, depending on how you read *là-bas...là-bas...* in the last line.

I did this translation for a reading whose majority audience would be students and “stranger” cut more to their core, I felt, delivered more adolescent spleen, was closer to home (I’ve read their journals for 30 years), than “outsider” or *anomie* or “Young Satan.” And with luck, there’d be a few French majors there, familiar with Camus’ *Meursault*.

“Closer to home” would be my next point. Baudelaire couches his colloquy in the familiar *tu/toi*. He’s talking to himself—there are double quotes around the whole poem—even if, perhaps, he surprises his own estrangement in his last line—which I will get to. But the *aises-tu* interrogative in the first line, followed immediately by the colloquial nudge of the imperative *dis* (*dites-moi* would suit the polite authority of the interrogator, or even *dis-moi*), sets the familiar tone; then the intimacy is sustained through lines 3 and 5 by the possessive pronouns *tes* and *ta*, only to run headlong into the Stranger’s formal use of *vous* instead of the familiar *tu*: *vous vous servez de*, “you avail yourself of.” That’s a nice collision: somewhat rudely, certainly curtly, the Stranger is rejecting the *tutoiement* of the Questioner. Subtly, it puts us auditors of this dialogue slightly on guard; as well it should, for by the next *vous* our Stranger is telling his Questioner that he, the Questioner, hates God: “I hate gold like you hate God.”

That *donc* in the penultimate line (*Eh! qu’aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?*) is the French cornerstone for rationality (*je pense, donc je suis*); it is argumentative and so, so Gallic. *Si gaulois aussi* is the *extraordinaire* which has all the French breezy irony of a *formidable*. How to get to those flavors in my *mixité*: the Gallic shrug, the lower-lipped *bofl*, the finality of *donc*. The English “therefore” (*donc*) seemed lame, so I put it into the voice’s emphasis: “what *do* you love (then, therefore)”; and the very French *Eh!*, recoiling from the you-hate-God, helped me along: “Well (*eh, eh bien*), what *do* you love (...then, if you’re going to be so nasty about it)?”

And finally he replies: he loves the clouds, the passing clouds... (*là-bas... là-bas...*). *Eh bien, là* = there, and *bas* = low, down low, at/on the bottom. Put ‘em together, you get “Over-there,” “at a remove,” “far off,” “remote,” and so remote, I think, that it’s a kind of you-can’t-get-there-from-here Over-there. The *merveilleux*, I believe, actually plays down the “faraway” of *là-bas* repeated. It’s a minor note, almost a grace note, to end on, a *demi-cliché* high up on the abstraction ladder—like “wonderful” or “amazing”—that in its obviousness sends you back in the sentence for meatier stuff. In French, the irony comes through because of the triteness. Then again, *le merveilleux*, the noun, can mean the supernatural.

I therefore tried to have it all ways to Sunday: the Gallic shrug, the indifference (in my *comme ci, comme ça*), the enhancement of *là-bas* in “above and beyond,” and the boosting of the cliché “marvelous” with an illegitimate directive “ineffable.” So in my version the irony, the *tristesse*, of the clouds’ inaccessibility runs across the whole line, not just slyly oozing out of Baudelaire’s rueful *là-bas*’s. Further translator’s agony: what to do with that line on Beauty?

- *La beauté?*

- *Je l’aimerais volontiers, déesse et immortelle.*

*Déesse* is a noun meaning, of course, “goddess” or “stunningly beautiful woman,” and one precise translation of the line would be: “I would love her willingly, goddess and immortal.” But I got hung up on the conditional in *j’aimerais* (“I would love”)—calling for, I felt, a phantom conditional “if-then” clause, which often sets up a kind of subjunctive: “I would love her willingly if she were [a] goddess and immortal.” In other words, in my translation, she’s not. She’s a sham, a bad place to set up your altar. That’s significantly contrary to Baudelaire’s general use of women, who are at times almost redemptive and usually serve as some sort of intermediary to happiness or even grace, as for instance in the sonnet “Parfum exotique” in *Les Fleurs du mal*:

*Quand, les deux yeux fermés, en un soir chaud d’automne,  
Je respire l’odeur de ton sein chaleureux...*

[“When, both my eyes closed, on a hot autumn night,  
I breathe in the fragrance of your warm breasts...”]

Here he sees happy shores roll out before him (*Je vois se dérouler des rivages heureux*). But happy shores notwithstanding, you can’t just ignore that wishful conditional and, notice, neither can the catechismic interlocutor who moves quickly from goddess to gelt:

—If not beauty, what about gold?

—Gold! I hate it more than you (*vous*) hate God.

And finally, as for my technically unjustified *comme ci, comme ça* for a lazy dismissal of the ideal, I remember a Parisian concierge’s exquisite wave of her wrist in reply to my asking about a new exhibit at the Centre Pompidou in the 4<sup>th</sup>. Her hand lolled back and forth with her *comme ci, comme ça* to say in sum, “Eh, there’s some good, but aren’t we tired of him too, he’s stuck back there in time, you should go, but don’t expect atonement.”

I could have kissed her, I could have breathed in the fragrance of just her *ennui*-laden hand. Here’s to her, *déesse et immortelle*.

It was...

I was...

It was the spring holidays just before I started girls' high. Our tabby cat Buchi had kittens, only one though. But then she was very old. She twisted it out using up all her strength, wearing herself out, furious like the edge of a knife, *eeeek-mew eeeeek-mew*, the tiny mouse-like creature snuggled tight against her breast, as she tried desperately to hide the little one from view. Like an unwed mother birthing a bastard child.

A while ago, that first bleeding happened, to me. On the narrow back deck where we handed over the money to the newspaper boy in the evenings, suddenly, stained, my flared skirt. The next day, mother cooked up twenty cups of celebratory red bean rice:

“Miss, you’re finally one of us women,”

says Kat-chan, one of the weaving girls, pulling up the skirt on the clothesline to expose the inside...

‘They’re the latest fashion,’

says Misa-chan giving me some peach-coloured panties...

Shimo-yan, who fixes the looms,

strokes my bottom with his work-gloved hands, saying, “Such a pearl, a beautiful pearl!”

It’s not a newspaper story! My period!

Mummm!

Buchi was originally a stray. But then, at that time there were no pure house cats. Scrounging for food scraps under the eaves, slyly crawling in under the *kotatsu*, she’s absolutely shameless. When I try to stroke her back she slips past me with a hiss. She snorts and turns away. I never manage to get my arms round her.

It was hard wasn’t it? It was for me. When Shimo-yan, with his tobacco stink, stroked my bottom, my blood oozed out in a slimy glob. An’ then thinking about having to go out into town wearing the same panties as Misa-chan. And then at the 3 o’clock break, when the front teeth of the factory workers lined up for the red bean rice, my inner void clenched in emptiness. They’re saying somebody’s buried a house mouse in Kat-chan’s lower belly. Six months already.

It was the night when we took down the New Year pine decorations.

Huh? An abandoned child?

It’s a factory girl again.

The crying was so heart wrenching, coming from the factory yard. I pulled on my *hanten* jacket to look around near the base of the fence, and there she was. That Buchi. Yowling with a cry that would melt frost, rubbing her belly along the ground.

*Waaah-meiooooowww*

As the tomcat starts to ride her, the cougar forces up her tail and sticks out her arse. After the deed is done,—raaww—her unyielding willfulness returns and she drives him off, that male cat from next door.

The daughter and heir, the only child, I'm the same.

I'll finish girl's high, get a husband, inherit the factory, continue to pay Kat-chan and Misa-chan, their children, and even their mothers-in-law. My marital intercourse will feed them.

It's my monthlies—my moon drops

That feed them!

The factory house mice

All of you—congratulations!

It's rising up

In me

The blood red new moon

Quivering like a trembling heart

Shining

Dripping

A sticky ..... trail of drops

This is it           genuine red rice!

Look at it!

Shimo-yan! Don't slip and drown.

Hey, Kat-chan. Tasty isn't it.

Newspaper man! Come on, go ahead                   take as many photos as you like

My smiling my shamelessness                   inside my flared skirt

Don't stand on ceremony! Go for it!

The next morning, when mum opened the shutters—it was stained. The *tatami*, where we had the altar to the family dead. There was Buchi. She looked up at us with dark shadowed eyes, her mouth thick with a filthy wetness.

She'd eaten it. Her own lovely sweet little house mouse. Impaled on her canines.

I don't want to be

A woman,

I want to go back

As the mouse

In mum's belly, me too  
Hey, Buchi,  
Couldn't you squeeze anything out  
Of those bony breasts  
No one fed you any did they?      Any white rice?

With only a sidelong glance, ignoring me crying, the cat soon left the factory.

The clatter and chatter of the looms and the women had faded into the dusk,  
There I was, still in the thread storeroom  
Leaning on the spools of thread, the stiffness in my neck has disappeared  
A tang of sulphur, the night air the silk spits out  
Is a magic lantern  
Alone, a single bulb glows  
Peering through the hole in the wooden door, the factory  
Is a magic lantern

Cold fingers  
About to touch the healds of the loom  
Just at night, when the looms are at rest, he appears, the man  
The warp threader  
About to push through, the thread  
Into the healds, glittering in a draft of dry wind  
Under the filament of the bulb  
Into their tiny, tiny eyes  
Forbidden to blink  
Vacant eyes,  
Because the looms  
Before they are hands  
Are the transformations of numberless, nameless eyes  
Because they are such eyeballs that  
Watch every single threaded intersection  
The hanging healds can be called the artificial eyes                      of the factory girls  
The night man  
First one, then the next  
Lightly moistening each with his tongue  
Must push it through  
It will hurt  
The man's back too is trembling hard  
Grimacing, the healds  
Will look away  
Through the window grating towards the new moon



Are the looms  
Perhaps marionettes? At this textile factory  
If they don't let it in they can't work  
If they let it in, they can get moving eyes, the healds  
Towards the man  
With a clack  
Fold their necks  
Releasing a pale breath, along the needle  
A spreading blur  
This ruby red blood gives them vision

Hung up, one beside the other  
From the ceiling,  
The sneaking whirlwind catches  
This thread  
Then that  
All entangled  
Arms lift in *banzai*, legs kicking  
Leaning forwards, embracing shoulders, holding bellies, laughing jaws  
The man  
Races over, desperate to untangle them  
Each demanding more attention  
More more, penetrate me  
Make me come!  
Slyly exposing their breasts  
The feminine wiles                    of the marionette factory girls  
When their coaxing gaze  
Returns to the moon  
Running down both cheeks  
Sweat drips from the man's temples

Just about now  
The real flesh and blood bodies of the factory girls  
Taking their baths at home, boarding houses or public bathhouses  
    or watching the sleeping faces of their daughters, or just about to hang up their phones  
No,  
No,  
Combing their locks  
Their rich hair, tangles in the wind  
At precisely eleven o'clock

They try to force it through their hair, the comb  
Is reflected in the mirror

Leaning forwards, embracing shoulders, holding bellies, laughing jaws  
The marionettes are tangled in threads  
The healds are  
No, we are  
Being manipulated, allowing ourselves to be manipulated, manipulating him  
to manipulate us  
As the man rolls up the warp beam  
All pulled up  
The roots of our hair, each and every hair follicle  
How good does that feel!  
Delicately  
First one strand, then the next, weaving them together  
Hoisting them up, the man works on  
The multicoloured threads, our hair,  
How alluring it looks!

The night factory, the night factory girls, the night coiffeur  
All a magic lantern  
The single light bulb  
Like a pendulum  
Swinging  
Suddenly  
Vanishes  
With the warp threader  
Before the echoing of the motor bike delivering the bottled milk

The morning light  
Makes the marionettes  
Look like looms  
But you know  
About that wooden comb the man leaves behind

If you're a factory girl, that is.

Arai Takako was born in Kiryū in Gunma Prefecture in 1966. A graduate of Keio University's literature department, Arai now lives in Tokyo. Kiryū has a long history as a textile-manufacturing town and Arai's family was engaged in this industry for many generations. Since the Meiji era, carrying the burden of industrial change, Kiryū became the home to great numbers of female factory workers involved in the textile industry. However, economic change has meant that this once-strong local industry is now facing an increasingly rapid decline. In what seemed like a blink of the eye, these factories disappeared leaving nothing but empty lots. Few even remember what once stood on these vacant plots. Through her poetry, Arai brings these factories back to life, fighting back against the enormous powers that so easily wipe away the past. Beyond that she hopes to highlight something of the complexities of women and work—holding up the stubborn strength and the fragility of these factory women.

Arai Takako's first collection of poetry, *Hao-bekki (The King's Unfortunate Lover)* was published in 1997. Her second collection, *Tamashii dansu (Soul Dance)* was published in 2007 and was awarded the 41<sup>st</sup> Oguma Hideo Prize. Several of the works from that collection have been translated into English by Jeffrey Angles in *Soul Dance: Poems by Takako Arai (Mi'Te Press, 2008)*. Arai is the editor of *Mi'Te*, a magazine featuring poetry and criticism (<http://www.mite-press.net/index.html>). Her third collection, *Betto to Shokki (Beds and Looms)*, was published in 2013.

The two poems translated here are included in *Betto to Shokki*. "The Healds" was first published in *Mi'Te* Issue 105 (Dec. 2008) and "Flared Skirt" was first published in *Mi'Te* Issue 117 (Dec. 2011). In her poetry, Arai creates her own distinctive language, which appears to Japanese readers as a form of colloquial regional dialect. This is not the language of Kiryū or any other actual place, but rather an imagined dialect that helps her create her own poetic world. Although it is impossible to transfer this specific sense of dialect into the English, we have worked to evoke the effect of her language in our translations.

Arai likes to play with word order and grammar to challenge the accepted language patterns of the Japanese language and as a result her punctuation and word order add a sense of dislocation to her poetry. We have tried to recreate this linguistic deconstruction in our translations. While we have used Arai's line order as far as possible to maintain this sense of dislocation, we have modified the punctuation and included a number of empty spaces within poetic lines to better express her idiosyncratic language usage.

With regard to our translation process, we choose to translate together as one native speaker of Japanese and one native speaker of English. We find this creates an interesting negotiation around the meaning in both languages. It is not a case of one of us translating from Japanese into English and then the other checking that work, but rather a jointly shared process.

We would like to thank Arai Takako for her support and encouragement.

## Translators' Notes—"Flared Skirt"

**Buchi:** Buchi is a common name for a tabby cat because in Japanese it also refers to the brown splotches on a tabby cat.

**kotatsu:** A *kotatsu* is a low, square-shaped Japanese-style table that is used as a heater. The tabletop sits on top of a quilt which is placed over the frame and the heater warms from underneath the table.

**eeek-mew eeek-mew:** This phrase is Arai's original onomatopoeia, which is a combination of the squeaking noise of a mouse combined with the meowing of a kitten. We chose to combine the English onomatopoeia for a mouse's squeak with a kitten's mew rather than romanising the Japanese sounds (*chiimyaa, chiimyaa*: チィーミャア、チィーミャア) as we felt that our English readers would better understand the imaginative link between a mouse and a cat using English animal sounds.

**celebratory red bean rice:** While a number of Japanese dishes are now commonly used within English, such as sushi or soba, *sekihan* is not sufficiently familiar. In this rice dish, small red *azuki* beans are cooked together with white rice to celebrate special occasions, as the color red is associated with happy occasions in Japan. This dish was commonly made by households to share with their neighbours on the birth of a child or a marriage or, as in this case, the start of womanhood, allowing them to share the happiness symbolically as they shared the red bean rice.

**Kat-chan, Misa-chan, Shimo-yan:** These are three names of workers in the factory. Both *-chan* and *-yan* are suffixes used in Japanese for addressing or referring to people or animals to indicate familiarity and affection, and are therefore commonly used by "in-group" family members or very close friends. While *-chan* is most commonly used for females or young boys, *-yan* tends to be used to refer to men.

**hanten jacket:** A *hanten* is a short padded jacket that was worn over kimono, pajamas, or other relaxed home clothes.

**waaah-meiooooww:** Like "eeek-mew eeek-mew", this phrase *ogyaua-aan* (オギャウアーン) was also invented by Arai, combining the cry of a wailing baby and the yowl of a cat in heat. This example also demonstrates one of the characteristics of Arai's "imagined" language, her distinctive mixing of *katakana* and *hiragana* within a single word or phrase.

**The *tatami*, where we had the altar to the family dead:** We chose to use this somewhat explanatory phrase to express *Butsuma no tatami* (仏間の畳). In a traditional Japanese-style house, this is the room for the family Buddhist altar where the memorial tablets for deceased relatives are placed.

## Translators' Notes—"The Healds"

**heald:** A heald frame is part of a weaving loom. Technically, the frame works to separate and lift some of the warp yarns above others, thus allowing the shuttle to

pass through holding the weft threads. Heald frames are rectangular and are supported by a set of thin wires called “healds” or “hettles.” The healds are attached to the frame vertically and the threads move through their eyeholes to weave the fabric.

**magic lantern:** The term *gentō* (幻燈) used by Arai is the Japanese translation of the Western term “magic lantern” referring to the early slide projectors, first developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, that directed light through small rectangular photographic image slides onto a wall or screen.

**the warp threader:** The Japanese term used for this profession is *tsumugiya* (繋ぎ屋) which translates literally as the “vertical thread or warp connecting professional”.

**filament:** This refers to the wire filament in an old-fashioned electric incandescent light bulb.

**whirlwind:** The Japanese word used here is *kamaitachi* (鎌たち) which is a term used to describe the cutting turbulent winds common in Japan’s northern snow country. Traditional folk tales tell of weasel-like creatures that fly on the whirlwinds slashing at human skin. In this poem the focus is on the wind rather than these mythological creatures.

**banzai:** Roughly translating as “hurray” and literally as “long life.” In contemporary Japan, *banzai* is used to express congratulations, although the term was most commonly used during WWII to express respect for the emperor.

**warp beam:** A part of a loom. The ends of the warp threads are wound onto the warp beam roller at the back of the loom.

**coiffeur:** The Japanese term *kamiyui* (髪結い) refers to the traditional profession of a Japanese hair dresser or barber.

I praise you *Allah*  
And I fear none but You  
And I know I have a destiny that I will surely meet  
I was taught in childhood that my Arab identity is my honor  
My dignity, and my guide  
In school we used to repeat melodies  
And sing to ourselves songs like  
“The Arab world is my homeland, and all Arabs are my siblings”  
And we used to draw the Arab with his head held high  
With a chest that repels the howling wind, revered in his cloak  
We were mere kids moved by our emotions  
Lost in tales that recall our heroism  
I was also taught that our land knows no borders  
And that our wars were for the sake of Al-Aqsa Mosque  
And that our enemy, Zionism, is a devil with a tail  
And that the armies of our nation are as strong as the torrent  
I will sail when I grow up  
I will pass by Bahrain’s beach in Libya  
I will harvest the dates of Baghdad in Syria  
I will cross Mauritania to Sudan  
I will travel through Mogadishu to Lebanon  
Hiding my songs in my heart and soul  
“The Arab world is my homeland, and all Arabs are my siblings”  
But when I grew up, I was denied a visa to the sea  
I didn’t sail  
I was stopped at the counter with a red seal on the passport  
I didn’t cross the border when I grew up  
I grew up but the child in me did not grow up  
Our childhood is at war against us  
And ideas we learnt them from you  
Oh rulers of our nation  
Were we not brought up in your schools?  
And taught your curriculums?  
Did you not teach us that the sly fox is lurking, waiting for the stupid shepherds to sleep in  
order to eat their sheep?

Did you not teach us that sticks are protected when bundled, weak when divided?  
Then why does this foolish division rule us?  
Did you not teach us to hold fast to the bond of *Allah* and unite?  
Why do you cover the sun with your flags?  
You have divided us, and among you we have become like animals  
The child in my heart will remain your enemy  
We have been divided by your hands, so may all your hands perish  
I am the Arab, and I feel no shame  
I was born in the green Tunisia from Omani origins  
And I am more than a thousand years old and my mother still bears children  
I am the Arab, I have palm trees in Baghdad, and my artery is in Sudan  
I am the Egyptian of Mauritania and Djibouti and Amman  
A Christian, Sunni, Shiite, Kurd, Druze, and Alawi  
I do not learn the rulers' names by heart as they leave  
We are sick of being scattered while all the other people are gathering  
You have filled our creed with lies, forgery and falsification  
Does the bond of *Allah* unite us, while FIFA's hand divides us?  
We have deliberately abandoned our religion and reverted to being *Aws* and *Khazraj*  
We entrust the ignorant among us, and we expect salvation from the fool  
Oh rulers of our nation, the child in my heart will remain your enemy, your judge  
And he will announce the union of all Arabs  
Then, Sudan will not be divided, and Golan Heights will not be occupied  
And Lebanon will not be broken and left alone to treat its wounds  
He will collect and plant the pearls of our Arabian Gulf in Sudan  
And their seeds will grow like wheat in the Maghreb  
People will extract olive oil in lofty, resilient Palestine  
And families will drink in Somalia forever  
From Algeria, he will light unwavering torches  
If Sana'a is suffering, then all our nation will be in pain  
He will ardently revolt against you  
He is the populace, not you  
He is the ruler, not you  
Do your legions hear me?  
Do the offices of your government's strongholds hear me?  
He is the populace not you  
And I fear none of you  
He is Islam, not you, so enough manipulation  
Or he will become an apostate  
And do not overestimate the patience of people  
And if the camel is slaughtered, you will neither get its milk nor its calves

I warn you

We will remain despite your attempts at division because this nation is connected

If your bonds weaken, still *Allah*'s bond will remain steadfast

I will remain

And so does my love for our Arab nation

We have been served humiliation in jugs

We have been served ignorance through supplications

We have grown tired of this serving and of those who serve it

I will grow up and leave the kid my brush and paints

He will continue painting the Arab with his head held high

And the sound of my songs will remain

“The Arab world is my homeland, and all Arabs are my siblings”



Hisham Al Gakh is an Egyptian poet who was born in October 1978. He has written about 30 poems, mostly in Egyptian dialect. In this poem entitled **التأشيرة** (“The Visa”), he harshly criticizes the Arab leaders for not only dividing the nation but also for preventing him from sailing to other Arab countries due to the visa restrictions imposed. In addition to that, he is one of the voices that chanted the union of Arab countries in the wake of the political tsunami that has shaken North Africa and the Middle East, thus toppling oppressive regimes and sparking off further uprisings around the Arab world. While Hisham Al Gakh’s poem rings alarm bells over certain issues such as dictatorships, identity, nationalism, and Arab union, it posits some challenges when translating it to English, notably on the stylistic and cultural level.

On the stylistic level, the metaphor, “my Arab identity is my honor / My dignity, and my guide,” is a tricky one. It cannot be translated literally because some interpretation is needed for the two words: **ناصيتي** and **مُخَوَاتِي**. In Arabic, the first one (**ناصيتي**) has many meanings: while it physically refers to the forepart of the head or the frontal lobe of the brain, it also has the meaning of dignity and pride. During the translation process, I chose the word “dignity” because it is related to the previous word “honor.” The second word, **مُخَوَاتِي**, cannot be translated literally as the address. Among the meanings associated with it, I can cite “home,” “guide,” and “direction.” Since the poem glorifies the united Arab homeland, I chose to translate **مُخَوَاتِي** as “guide” in the sense that the Arab identity is like his compass that enables him to situate and define himself in the world. In addition to that, satire was present in the poem in the line **عباءتكم - رعاها الله - للجمهور مُتَوَدًا سَيُخْرِجُ مِنْ**, which posits a challenge to me as translator because I had to understand the hidden meaning of the sentence first and then render its meaning into English.

On the cultural level, there are many concepts and words that are culture-specific, such as **عباءة** (*Abbaya*), **فتنة** (*fitna*), and **ديوان** (*diwan*). *Abbaya* is a traditional men’s cloak, popular in the Arab Peninsula. *Fitna* is a word that is fraught with connotations related to temptation, trial, affliction, distress, and civil wars. *Diwan* is the equivalent of an administrative office. While translating this poem, I domesticated these foreign concepts to make it easier for a non-Arab reader to understand. Besides that, I provided cultural explanations in the notes for other cultural references that were mentioned in the poem.

In a nutshell, this poem is a call for union and a pan-Arabist agenda that would shield the Middle East from future fragmentations, divisions, and, most importantly, sectarian strife fueled by foreign powers. Thus, translation in this context becomes a political and ideological act.

## Translator's Notes

**Al-Aqsa Mosque:** Al-Aqsa is the third holiest site for Muslims. It is located in Jerusalem.

**Sunni, Shiite, Kurd, Druze and Alawi:** Sunni, Shiite, Alawi, and Druze are religious denominations in Islam while Kurds are an ethnic group in the Middle East.

**FIFA's hand:** FIFA is a metonymy in this poem and it refers to an intense World Cup qualifying game that opposed Egypt to Algeria and led to diplomatic tensions.

**Khazraj:** *Aws* and *Khazraj* were the two main pagan Arab clans in Medina.

Steve Light  
My Bones

Yoko Mihashi  
私の骨

Crush my bones into sand  
And scatter them upon the canal  
A gondola passes, the voice  
Of a tenor echoes in the dirty alleys  
As if offering an excuse,  
Yet with each successive passing  
The beauty of Venice sways gently

Because Venice is sinking over time  
I want to flow with the scattered dust,  
Leisurely, past the Rialto Bridge  
Upon which prostitutes tread in their heels,  
Back to the original Venice  
When it was nothing but a delta

Crush my bones into sand  
And because only the pillars remain  
Of a temple ransacked by the Greeks  
Standing on a hill above a Turkish amphitheater  
Scatter them there so that the winds  
May carry them away while  
The cheerful noise of selfish gods  
Will not cease even for a moment

Steve Light  
Journey

Yoko Mihashi  
旅

I am going to Turkey  
But no sooner do I have my ticket in hand  
The journey ceases

Without recourse  
There is no dream  
Which doesn't end

But there is nothing we dream  
That we do not already  
Know in its entirety

Why do I travel?  
To return,  
I who did not wish to be born,  
Desiring only to go  
Far beyond my mother's womb

Steve Light

Winds of Betrayal:

On Artaud's Van Gogh

Yoko Mihashi

風の背信-

アルトーのゴッホ論によせて

Over there and here  
An awakened, a mad perception,  
A ripened time  
That cannot be entered.  
Observe Van Gogh  
Live Van Gogh  
In rushing winds of betrayal,  
In time which crashes down with noise,  
There is nothing.  
Madness, ceaselessly turning towards zero,  
Seeks equal value, balance.

Memory, lacking foundation,  
Breaks apart,  
Over there and here  
Beyond the time  
Which begins to float.  
He who holds on to this perception  
That should not be named  
Is neither singular nor plural.  
Traverse the body,  
Live the body,  
Freedom of eyes  
Which seek equality,  
Become penetrable skin  
Leaving only a light weariness.

Every day is a bright yet cloudy day.  
Guessing at light, measuring shadows  
Needing no map  
I am here.

Do not sing until you are spoken,  
Walk freely in front of objects,

Do not become weary,  
After weariness  
Expression is spoiled.

Artaud walks  
Seeking self-acknowledgment  
Artaud expresses  
Without being swayed by his epoch.

Yoko Mihashi, one of contemporary Japan's stellar poets, brought out a two-volume collection of poetry in 2001, *Madobe-no Garibā* (*Gulliver at the Window*) (vol. 1: *Kasa Tatamaseru* [*To Have the Umbrella Closed*]; vol. 2: *Kaze-no Haishin* [*Winds of Betrayal*]) which in its affective and ideational registers gives rise to that kind of resonance within us whereby we immediately recognize that poetry's most sought-after promise has not only been offered but has been kept in sounded depths and expansive charms.

Yoko Mihashi is a poet who has that marvelous ability to combine and unify force and tenderness in her poems, and it is one of the most difficult of combinations, but one that seizes readers perhaps more than any other and brings readers the most splendid kind of poetic adventure and happiness. In this she bears kinship to one of the greatest poets of the pre-war period, Marina Tsvetaeva, although in other respects there are significant differences between these two poets.

Mihashi began her poetic life primarily writing in traditional Japanese forms, particularly the *waka*. Hers was and remains always a verse of concision and compression, the flavor and rhythm of which endure in a special poetic vibrato where affection and ideation find that sustained breath always propelled by true poetic gratitude. Here our poetic experience opens up in the wider horizons of our fraught and friable, but also fancied and tremulous existence. In her verse ideation always shimmers with—and within—the sentiment of the idea. A poet of sentience, of immersion, and of existential and quotidian surprise, she is also and certainly a philosophical poet in the best sense of encompassment and intensity.

As for the three poems translated here, they come from the second volume of *Gulliver at the Window*, the volume of free verse, and were chosen by Yoko Mihashi herself because she has special affection for them.

In translating these three poems the Artaud poem gave rise to the greatest number of challenges. Already in the first stanza of “Winds of Betrayal: On Artaud’s Van Gogh,” the characterization of time as full, matured, advanced, ripe, pregnant could all be carried within the signifying thrust of the Japanese character but in English either one had to have recourse to a free combination or judge that a singular choice would work. “Ripe time”? It seemed too static and so the choice for “ripened” was made which in my interpretation comes closest to the connotation intended by Ms. Mihashi. But there was also the problem of the further characterization of time. Ms. Mihashi's phrase here, *fumicomennai kanjuku-no jikan*, can be literally rendered as “time into which one cannot step.” Time as forbidding, a restricted time in the spatial sense, time that cannot be entered, is also available within the resonance of the original Japanese. In English it seemed best to use the latter possibility, i.e. “time that cannot be entered.”

There was also a difficulty of determining a proper English sentence structure in the immediately subsequent characterization of time: *ototatete hokaisuru jikan-no nakani-wa nanimonai*: “In time which crashes down with noise / There is nothing.” Was the referent for *nanimonai* (“there is nothing”) time alone? It seemed to me that it was. Rhythmically it seemed best, therefore, to put the rhythmic emphasis on *nanimonai*, “there is nothing,” and so I used an inverted sentence structure.

In the second stanza the references to time also gave rise to difficulty. I initially had trouble with the spatial references *vis-a-vis* the initial subject of the stanza, “memory.” *Fuyushihajimeru jikan-no*: “[Beyond] the time / Which begins to float.” The poem speaks of memory breaking apart and existing at once here and there. But after initial uncertainty it seemed clear that the referent for existing “beyond the time” had to be memory and not the holder of this perception which immediately follows upon this line: “He who holds on to this perception...”

The volatilities in Artaud’s life—and in Van Gogh’s—are rendered in the volatilities of Ms. Mihashi’s poem—and poems—and in the concatenations of striking and unexpected images. Consequently, beyond the immediate linguistic difficulties of connotation, denotation, word choice, and sentence structure, there was the crucial problem of transitions of either an asyndetic or syndetic manner. When should one employ standard conjunction and when should one employ parataxis so as to most successfully render or capture in English the syndetic or asyndetic rhythms of a language, Japanese, that is more paratactic than is English?



Goro Takano  
*A Community in the Open*

Shiro Murano  
空地の群落

Clusters of wild chrysanthemums are  
Too crowded on a desolate empty lot and even overflow into a road  
Among them, the end of a corroded steel framework is partly visible

Although I always pass on the road with anxiety  
Strangely enough, nobody has been hurt there before  
Beautiful ladies flutter  
Their thin-cloth skirts and  
Pass by the chrysanthemums indifferently  
Ah, only unconcern and oblivion  
May be barely able to sustain humans

While burying rusty memories into themselves  
The wild chrysanthemums continue to prevail  
And, obviously, around this wilderness  
Finding the skyline is already impossible

Goro Takano  
*An Autumnal Fossil*

Shiro Murano  
秋の化石

This autumn, after the latest typhoon veered off course—  
I wonder how many had passed before it—I opened a morning paper  
And found an intriguing article, unexpectedly:  
“A Giant Horn of the Prehistoric Creature Megaloceros Is Unearthed”  
The article said that this Pleistocene deer had perished  
Because the very horns on their heads  
Had developed too heavily for them to endure

Now, perhaps  
No bush hides

Such a ridiculously dreamy animal  
What still lingers in my mind is  
Such logic had remained safely fossilized  
In the underworld for thousands of years  
With no decay at all  
That may be the way it goes  
Now I cannot help seeking after an illusion  
Of the eyes of the unfortunate deer  
In the cotton-rose-like thin sunshine of this autumn—  
The season of an eclipse

Goro Takano  
On Skeletons

Shiro Murano  
骸骨について

Dead-ended, no more shelters to rely on  
Totally at a loss, finally transformed  
And—what a woeful defenseless result  
No more thirst to quench  
No more worries over getting drenched  
Nothing but the stiff present which will simply *plock* if you rap it  
Neither a shell, nor a stone  
Behold this jawbone and those eye sockets  
This is a vestige of my distant days  
Burning every meaning and blood into this  
And fossilizing laughter, sobs  
Love, hate  
Light, and shadows into this  
The old unlimited pressure was gone, eventually

Left here now is only one lime object  
So hollow, so infinitely nostalgia-provoking

Mind you—he may be now absent from his grave  
Sometimes, he turns to me and  
Walks through my own metaphysics

Goro Takano  
*Orpheus at the Butcher Shop*

Shiro Murano  
肉屋のオルフェ

Whenever I pass by the veil-like rank  
Of fat masses of meat facing this street  
My soul thaws, oddly

Each of these faceless torsos  
Lines up with uncanny politeness  
While showing one another intimately  
Their own selves injured all over, as if  
They are the very worst wounds imaginable  
They are interwoven like a parallel-striped pattern  
And seen now like the vast expanse of numbness

Call this neither the illusion of death  
Nor the dizziness lasting forever  
Rather, this is something more condensed  
Or something you may call the sunset of existence  
Looming out of this reddish-brown trail  
Is a chain of small bloodless hooves  
Kicking the air obstinately yet, which  
Now remains weathered on this street  
With now-or-never wretchedness

The four poems I chose for my translation are originally included in *On Lost Sheep* (*Boyo-ki* or 亡羊記) by Shiro Murano (村野四郎, 1901–1975).

Murano is one of the influential poets you can never disregard in surveying the history of the modern poetry in Showa-era Japan (1926–1989). *On Lost Sheep* was Murano's ninth poetry collection in his roughly fifty-year poetry-writing career and was awarded the prestigious Yomiuri Prize for Literature in 1960. While his early poetics were deeply affected by surrealism, imagism, and German objectivism, Murano's later years were strongly influenced by existentialism.

One of the difficulties I had to face in translating the first poem "A Community in the Open," was which English word to choose for the word 群落 ("community") in the original title. There were several other options for this Japanese word such as "colony" or "stock," but I ended up picking the word "community" because the chrysanthemums in the original poem seemed almost like an independent, self-governing "community" of people.

The eighth line of the second stanza in the original of the second poem, "An Autumnal Fossil," was a difficult puzzle for me to solve. さもあらばあれ was the original sentence, and, although Japanese is my native language, it was difficult for me to grasp its nuance accurately. This line could even be translated as, say, "It is alright even if that's the case" or "Let it be so then," but, eventually, I chose the expression "That may be the way it goes." I'm still wondering, though, whether or not it was the very best choice for the original.

Some people may argue that putting the phrase "Mind you" at the top of the last stanza in the third poem, "On Skeletons," might be too audacious an act. There is certainly no precise counterpart in the original's same stanza, but I felt the entire stanza in the Japanese was somehow warning the reader implicitly of the skeleton's vagrancy. I still believe that the use of the phrase "mind you" for this translation is a nice idea.

The most difficult part in the whole translation process of the fourth poem, "Orpheus at the Butcher Shop," was how to treat its second stanza. Its syntactic structure in the original seems peculiarly complex, and I had to paraphrase the whole stanza in my translation to better its readability. I hope here that my own interpretation of this stanza, which soaked inevitably into this act of paraphrasing, suits Murano's original intention.

B. N. Faraj  
Enduring Scars

Ahmad al-Safi al-Najafi  
جِرَاحٌ لَا تَنْدَمِلُ

In jail I feared if freed  
I'd never be at peace  
And madness would precede  
The day of my release

So on the day I left  
My faithful cell to gain  
My freedom, it just felt  
Like being jailed again

## Commentary

Ahmad al-Safi al-Najafi (1897–1977) was an Iraqi poet who travelled throughout the Middle East. I met him when I was a child in Lebanon during some of his visits to my maternal grandfather. I was too young to appreciate the specifics of poetry, but old enough to be awed by it and wise enough to recognize that poets are a cut above all others. In the case of al-Najafi, the cut was literal. He slit his *dishdasha* from ankle to knee to gain more freedom of movement. Freedom to him, in every respect, was more than a state of mind; it was life itself. So the image of that slit in his *dishdasha* stayed with me all this time as a simple, Diogenesque manifestation of how a person can choose to exercise his personal freedom in defiance of all societal norms. In other words, he lived his life in poetry and, as I was to discover later, in poverty. As I got older (that is, by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade), I became enamoured with poetry and poetics. So it was only natural that I allayed my early poetic affliction with a good dose of al-Najafi's poetry. Its ease of flow was remarkable, as was its conciseness. And the wit it delivered in an unrelenting tempo was enough to ensure its mnemonic quality.

He was jailed a number of times for doing what a conscientious poet does—agitating against an oppressive occupier. The chosen poem was written in 1941 when he was imprisoned in Lebanon by the French at the behest of the British for participating in a demonstration against the British. It appears in his *diwan*, *Hassad al-Sijin (The Prison Harvest)*—the fortunate, unintended outcome of his imprisonment—the undeniable failure of the oppressor's attempt to silence him.

This short poem is reminiscent of Byron's closing lines in "Prisoner of Chillon," where the prisoner confesses that "My very chains and I grew friends," and shocks us with "even I / Regain'd my freedom with a sigh." The poem is written in *al-bahr al-khafif* (light meter), which has no exact equivalent in English. The translation is presented in two iambic trimeter quatrains. It is felt that the trimeter captures, to the extent possible, the rhythm of the original poem.

Emily Anhalt  
A Man Out of Time

Sophocles  
Αἴας 646–692

Long and uncountable Time makes manifest  
The hidden and obscure and hides the rest.  
No thing is unexpected. All's ensnared,  
The rigid mind and each dread oath declared.  
Thus I who once endured like tempered steel  
Am softened by the force of her appeal.  
With pity for this woman and my child,  
I dread to leave her widowed, him reviled.  
In going to the shore at meadow's end  
To cleanse these stains, I know I will defend  
Myself against the dread Athena's wrath.  
I'll go where human foot has made no path,  
That I may dig a hole and hide this blade,  
Most hateful and despised of weapons made,  
Where none will see but Hades down below.  
This gift received from Hector, my worst foe,  
Has never won me prizes from the Greeks.  
And I perceive the truth the adage speaks:  
Of enemies no gifts are gifts, nor gains.  
Thus I will learn for all that now remains  
To mighty gods and fate perforce to yield,  
Yet worship power mortal monarchs wield.  
It seems one must obey, and this is why:  
As winter storms make way for summer sky  
So all that's dread and strong must yield to worth,  
As snow subsides while fruits bedeck the earth.  
And changing place the circle of drear night  
Gives white-horsed day the space to shine its light.  
The blast of dreadful winds has caused to cease  
The groaning of the sea and brought it peace,  
While always-present, all-controlling Sleep  
Despite his power chooses not to keep  
Us always shackled, fettered, ever-bound.  
Then how will we not know discretion sound?  
For I myself have just now come to learn

An enemy is one whom we must spurn  
Insofar as soon he'll be our friend.  
And he to whom my love I shall extend  
I'll wish to aid and profit and maintain  
Just as the friend he never will remain.  
For friendship offers mortals but defeat,  
And faithless is its harbor and retreat.

Still, things are sure to turn out well today.

And you, my woman, go inside and pray  
That all my heart's desire come to be.  
And you, companions, with her honor me.  
When Teucer comes his tasks must be disclosed:  
To care for me, to you be well-disposed.  
But I am going there where one must go.  
And you, do as I say and soon may know,  
Although by Fate I now have been ill-served,  
That yet, perhaps, I still have been preserved.



Sophocles' *Aias* (or *Ajax*, in most modern translations) re-interprets an ancient tale of a mythical injustice. According to tradition, after Achilles died at Troy, his immortal armor was to be the prize of the best Greek warrior still living. That was Ajax. Everyone knew it. But a tribunal awarded the armor to Odysseus instead. No one, not even Odysseus, ever denies that Ajax deserved Achilles' armor. Sophocles anachronistically likens the tribunal to a 5<sup>th</sup>-century Athenian jury trial, and his portrayal of the mythical injustice reveals a fundamental opposition between archaic values and democratic procedures.

Ajax embodies the inflexible and uncompromising archaic value system. He has always pursued traditional goals familiar to Homer's world and to many places in ours: help friends, harm enemies, earn honor for success in battle. Enraged by the tribunal's failure to acknowledge his supreme martial skill, Ajax tries to murder all of the Greek leaders. Athena distorts his vision so that he attacks sheep and cattle instead of men. After regaining his senses, Ajax makes this speech, which is sometimes called the "deception speech" because it has the effect of misleading listeners (Ajax's spear-won concubine Tecmessa, the Chorus, and perhaps the audience as well) into thinking that Ajax intends to soften and accept the tribunal's decision. Hearers may misunderstand, but Ajax speaks only the truth. He cannot give up his anger and never states that he will. (For self-preservation, he should *revere* the gods and *yield* to the Greek leaders, but Ajax emphasizes the impossibility by reversing the verbs: "To mighty gods and fate perforce to yield, / Yet worship power mortal monarchs wield.") He will indeed bury his sword in the earth. Only later do we learn why.

Unable to change, Ajax cannot adapt to the new realities of his day. This speech expresses his realization that his traditional talents and priorities no longer suit a society that uses group consensus, not fact, to identify and reward the "best" individual. Ajax defended the Greeks against the Trojans, but the tribunal's unfair decision has made the Greeks his enemies. Understanding now that human loyalties alternate like the seasons, Ajax can no longer help his friends and harm his enemies. He wants no part of a world that cannot recognize and justly reward talent, merit, loyalty, and integrity. Ajax would rather die. And he does, falling on the sword whose hilt he has buried in the ground. Ajax kills himself not out of frustration or shame (as readers of English translations of the play tend to conclude) but in absolute rejection of life itself and the changes that time causes in nature and in human relationships. For this understanding of the play, see further B. Knox's interpretation in "The *Ajax* of Sophocles" in *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theater* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), pp. 125–160.

The tribunal's "democratic" decision thus robs the community of its best defender. Ajax's example suggests, perhaps, that modern efforts to cultivate democratic institutions in traditionally undemocratic societies must somehow recognize and address this incompatibility between an absolute, unchanging conception of loyalties and enmities and the democratic emphasis on flexibility and

group consensus. Sophocles' *Aias* warns against over-confidence in the value of the procedures alone. Unjust democratic decisions can violate individuals' rights and fracture communities. They may produce rather than prevent injustice and conflict.

In Greek, the meter is (non-rhyming) iambic trimeter. In English, heroic couplets in iambic pentameter seemed appropriately anachronistic for a translation of this powerful monologue uttered by a character defined by the *ethos* of an age earlier than his own.

1. The Universe from A Fly's Perspective

On a turning spindle  
a fly sings,  
“Look! Look! The whole universe  
is spinning around me!”

In the Roman church, a philosopher  
instructs a swarm of flies,  
“Yes, I concur that the sun outside the window  
does spin around us in flight!”

2. The Universe from A Mosquito's Perspective

Sir Newton stands on the podium  
lecturing to his students,  
“All the apples on Earth's surface and everything else  
succumb to the gravitational pull.”

A mosquito listening to the lecture from underneath a desk  
is not at all persuaded;  
he flies across Newton's face, challenging him:  
“Where is the pull?”

3. The Universe from A Lover's Perspective

The universe is merely a frame,  
within it your portrait lies.  
The rest is but a backdrop  
despite the stars and sun.

When the end of the universe finally arrives,  
starlight will vanish in the blink of an eye;  
you and I will cling to each other in the dark,  
in the long night of God's power failure.

Hsinmei Lin  
Commentator

Yu Kwang-Chung  
批評家

They say a commentator is like a barber:  
He trims the excess,  
evens out the rest,  
and applies gloss to it all.

This was probably true  
in the times of St. Augustine and the Tang Dynasty.  
Yet I sympathize with barbers  
if their clients are mostly bald.

Hsinmei Lin  
*The Birth of a Masterpiece*

Yu Kwang-Chung  
傑作的產生

Fate is a dogged blacksmith  
swinging a giant, tormented hammer  
and smashing a genius' heart day and night  
till it's broken to pieces.

Yet a genius' heart is an anvil,  
made robust by constant blows;  
in the dark it never darts away in fear  
but bears the spark of revolts.

One after another,  
hammers are shattered and replaced.  
When the worn-out blacksmith drops to the ground,  
A masterpiece has been cast.

Yu Kwang-Chung (1928–) is a major figure in modern Sinophone literature and culture. He is a poet, essayist, and translator who was born in China and relocated to Taiwan. By the time he graduated from National Taiwan University in 1952, Yu had acquired mastery of Mandarin, English, German, and Spanish. He has translated numerous literary works from English to Mandarin, among them *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway and “Bartleby the Scrivener” by Herman Melville. *Night Market in Heaven* (天國的夜市), from which I have translated the present poems, showcases a particular phase of Yu’s poetry writing which is imbued with witticism, sarcasm, elegance resulting from his training in Chinese classical poetry, and the poetico-oratorical force influenced by modern poetry in the West.

In “The Universe in Perspective,” I attempt in the first two parts to represent the light-hearted, whimsical, and elegant tone in the Chinese original by using simple, childlike diction, depicting the anti-civilization points of view of a fly and a mosquito. The contrast between a learned philosopher and a fly, between Newton and a mosquito, serves to generate an outsider vision of the Universe that is conventionally considered human-centric. On the other hand, the universe between lovers is of a smaller scale. Yu depicts the power of love as altering lovers’ vision and sense of the world and as making it smaller because, when in love, the lovers become the embodiment of each other’s world. In the last line of this poem, I play with the pun “power failure,” which suggests the literal blackout and God’s failing to save the universe that is about to end. This pun works perfectly in both Chinese and English.

The last two poems, “Commentator” and “The Birth of a Masterpiece,” use figures such as a barber and a blacksmith as metaphors to portray the relationship between critics/commentators and writers. A barber’s job is to trim the excessive hair and make it shine and look nice while a commentator’s job is to edit out words and refine each piece of writing to make it publishable. In my translation, I try to stick to the terminologies used in barbering and metal-forging industries to make the metaphors work efficiently in English. I did not encounter difficulty translating and representing the metaphors and their implications from Chinese to English because both lines of work are common and familiar to people in both Chinese- and English-speaking cultures.

Susanne Petermann  
*Orchards* 52

Rainer Maria Rilke  
*Vergers* 52

The long life of the landscape, the bell,  
the pure deliverance of evening—  
all this prepares us for the approach  
of a kindly, unfamiliar figure...

Our life goes on, strangely suspended  
between the faraway bow and the stab of the arrow,  
between a world that hesitates to seize the angel  
and She whose powerful hand prevents it.

Susanne Petermann  
*Orchards* 54

Rainer Maria Rilke  
*Vergers* 54

In the eyes of animals, I've seen  
lasting peace, the impartial  
calm of nature  
that cannot be shaken.

Every animal knows what fear is;  
nevertheless, it moves along,  
and on its field of plenty  
grazes a presence  
that has no taste for elsewhere.

Susanne Petermann  
Orchards 57: *The Doe*

Rainer Maria Rilke  
Vergers 57: *La Biche*

Doe, the deep, ancient beauty  
of forests flows from your eyes,  
circles of trust shot through  
with utter fear.

The lively grace of your leaping  
expresses all these things,  
yet nothing can shake  
the calm insouciance  
on your face.

Susanne Petermann  
Orchards 59

Rainer Maria Rilke  
Vergers 59

I've said my goodbyes. Since childhood  
countless departures have gradually honed me.  
But I return, I begin again,  
which is what sets my attention free.

All I can do now is fill my gaze.  
All I can do, without holding back,  
is feel the joy of having loved what reminds me  
of all the losses that move us.

The series of fifty-nine poems called *Orchards (Vergers)* was composed in 1924–1925. It was Rainer Maria Rilke’s first literary production written originally in French, published by Gallimard in 1926, the year of his death. Rilke particularly loved a handful of French words he considered untranslatable, at least in sound, rhythm, and spirit. One of them was *verger*, “orchard.” The title poem of the series begins thus:

Perhaps, dear borrowed language, I’ve been  
so bold as to write you because  
of the rustic name whose unique domain  
has taunted me forever: *Vergers*.

The title poem, “29: Orchard,” occurs in the middle of the series, like the fountain at the orchard’s center from which all else flows. In this series, the poet contemplates aspects of nature as well as those of his personal environment demonstrating that, more than being mere symbols for humanity, these represent actual indifferent projections of our being. We can look into them as into a mirror. The last two lines of poem #21 inform us that “...orchard and road are no different / from anything that we are.” The orchard is a container, a kind of hologram for all of life and its seasons, most especially the poignant decline at the turning from summer to autumn. The joy, magic, and perfection of ripe fruit brings immediately to the poet’s mind the end of a happy season. Summer, by definition, betrays us with its bright promises.

I selected this group of four poems from the very end of *Orchards* to emphasize this poignancy. As the end of the series approaches, it becomes more and more obvious that these poems comprise Rilke’s poetic farewell to his beloved world. “I’ve said my goodbyes,” he declares in the last entry. In “Orchards 52,” the poet tells us that the angel of death is both welcoming and firm and that often we feel ambivalent about continuing to struggle through life. A careful reading of “Orchards 54” and “Orchards 57” reveals that true beauty and peace are not possible without darkness and shadow. Over and over an archetypal paradox is shown to us, the fact that growth lies within “the deep, ancient beauty / of forests” seen in the eyes of the doe, and in the push-pull between the fear and peace of a cow or horse grazing in a pasture. Life for Rilke, as he looked back, was a series of “losses that move us” forward.

The difficulty of translating Rilke will cause the heart of any Rilke translator—and there are many, though not of the French poems—to lurch with familiarity, affection, and dread. Rilke in German is notoriously labyrinthine; whether by choice or by inclination, or in the name of lyricism, Rilke sometimes turns the syntactically simpler French language into a Germanic tangle. Still, most of these poems are more straightforward than the German ones, thank goodness. That’s not to say they are easy to translate. They simply present a less ornate doorway



into the same complex, paradoxical ideas as those in Rilke's German poems.

The French language obviously offers a different set of cognates and similarities to English than does German. At times in my translation process, the seemingly simplest word choices did not offer the most poetic translation, nor did they result in a translation I myself could enjoy. To give a specific example, "Orchards 57: The Doe [*La Biche*]", begins, in French:

*Ô la biche: quel bel intérieur  
d'anciennes forêts dans tes yeux abonde;  
combien de confiance ronde  
mêlée à combien de peur.*

Literally: "Oh, the doe: what a beautiful interior / of ancient forests in your eyes abounds; / what round confidence / mixed with such fear." To begin with, there is the *Ô* and the *quel*, followed by two occurrences of *combien*, all of which lend a tone of breathless drama. I acknowledge the romantic style of Rilke's poetic heritage, but there are other ways to convey the urgency of this poem. Personally, I am far more interested in the fact that this poet sees a deer and has instant, serious respect for this being.

Gary Miranda, a translator I admire, gave us a marvelous new version of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* (Tavern Books, Portland, 2013). In his afterword, he says this on the pesky subject of *Ô*: "...a modern American reader has far less tolerance for 'O' than a European reader of Rilke's day, and one has to assume that Rilke would have been sensitive to that fact had he been writing for a modern American audience. So, if you're aiming to approximate the original experience for a modern audience, you're going to have to jettison some of those Os. This is just one reason that it's always seemed silly to me to talk about a definitive translation. Definitive for whom?" (pp. 66–67)

There is another "false friend" in Rilke's word *intérieur* which is a simple matter of "interior" or "inside." However, here, as in many of the French poems, I have taken the risk of assuming that the poet used that particular word in service of his rhyme scheme. I do pay attention to rhythm, but attempting to replicate Rilke's rhymes has never been my goal; I am satisfied with resonances such as those between "doe" and "deep," and "forests" and "flows." The more I studied this poem, the more I felt that Rilke was referring to the fearful and beautiful darkness of a Grimms' fairy tale forest, seen reflected in the black eyes of the doe. So, I chose to rearrange these lines a bit, and render the idea of "interior" in the adjective "deep." My hope is that I have transferred the drama of the original to the third and fourth lines of the verse, using the short and emphatic "shot through" and "utter fear."

Rilke wrote more than 300 poems in French in the last four years of his life while living in an ancient tower in Switzerland, his physical condition deteriorating. These poems reveal his intuition that he was seriously ill; doctors diagnosed leukemia only days before his death on December 27, 1926. He was just 51 years old. Many of the French poems were found among his papers and published posthumously.

## Notes on Contributors

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*Exquisite Corpse; Going Down Swinging; New Writing; Portland Review* (online); and elsewhere, including the anthology *In Protest* (2013). He maintains two blogs: *Taiwan Scooter Poet* and *Broken Traffic: English Translations from Japanese, Chinese, and French*.

Roselee Bundy is Professor of Japanese Language and Literature at Kalamazoo College. She has published a number of studies on the poet Fujiwara Teika and the poetry of the *Shinkokin* period, including “Solo Poetry Contest as Poetic Self Portrait: The One-Hundred-Rounds of Lord Teika’s Own Poems,” in *Monumenta Nipponica* (2006). More recently, she has turned to issues of gender in Heian *utaawase* and other texts and has published several pieces related to this topic in the *U.S. Japan Women’s Journal* (2007, 2009), *Japanese Language and Literature* (2012), and *Monumenta Nipponica* (2012).

Kent H. Dixon is primarily a fiction and non-fiction writer—published in *TriQuarterly; Carolina Quarterly; Iowa Review; Georgia Review; Shenandoah; Gettysburg Review; Antioch Review; Kansas Quarterly; Florida Review; Energy Review; and American Prospect*. Awards include first prize at *Story’s Love Story Competition*, and several Ohio Arts Council awards. He has translations of Rilke, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Sappho online, and Japanese *hibakushu* poetry in *Luna*. Forthcoming is a full graphic novel rendition of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in collaboration with his artist son Kevin. He teaches literature and creative writing at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, where he lives with his writer wife and four kayaks.

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Jake Gordon is a translator from London. He recently graduated from an MA course in the theory and practice of translation at University College London, where he focused on the performative aspects of modern Arabic poetry for his dissertation. When he is not translating the work of contemporary Lebanese poet Mariam Michtawi, he works in television production.

Ana Maria Guay received her BA from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor)

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Andrew Gudgel received a BA in Chinese from The Ohio State University and an MA in Liberal Arts from St. John's College, Annapolis. He spent a decade-plus working for the U.S. government, mostly in U.S. embassies overseas, before becoming a freelance writer and translator. He currently lives in Maryland.

Carol Hayes is a senior lecturer in Japanese language and Japanese studies at the Australian National University, Australia. She has a PhD in modern Japanese literature from the University of Sydney. Her research focuses on modern and contemporary Japanese cultural studies, literature, and film. Past work has focused on Hagiwara Sakutarō and other modern poets, the portrayals of the Pacific War in Japanese film, and *zainichi* cultural identity in literature. Recent translations co-authored with Rina Kikuchi have appeared in the 2015 edition of *Poetry Kanto*.

George Held has translated more than 100 of Martial's epigrams and published many of these translations in such journals as *Circumference*; *Ezra*; *5 AM*; *International Poetry Review*; and *Notre Dame Review*, as well as in *Martial Artist* (Toad Press Translation Series, 2005). An eight-time Pushcart Prize nominee, he has published eighteen collections of his own poems, most recently in the chapbook *Bleak Splendor* (Muddy River Books, forthcoming 2016).

Uri Horesh holds a PhD in sociolinguistics from the University of Essex. His research focuses on language variation and change in the Middle East, and especially on language contact between Arabic and Hebrew in Palestine. He has published research articles in *Journal of Sociolinguistics*; *Journal of Jewish Languages*; *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik*; and in edited volumes, most recently in *Semitic Languages in Contact*, edited by Aaron M. Butts, as well as entries for *The Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. He has taught courses in Arabic language and linguistics at Georgetown University and the University of Texas at Austin. He was the founding director of the Arabic Language Program at Franklin & Marshall College and has just finished a two-year term as Language Coordinator in the Program in Middle East and North African Studies at Northwestern University.

Rina Kikuchi is an associate professor at Shiga University, Japan, where she has been teaching English language, literature, and cultural studies since 2003. She has a PhD in contemporary Irish poetry from Chiba University, which included a

period of research at Trinity College, Dublin; and an MA in comparative literary theories from University of Warwick, U.K. Her research interests include comparative literature and translation studies, with a current focus on the translation of modern and contemporary Japanese women's poetry into English. The poetry included here is part of the joint translation project of Japanese women's poetry with Dr. Carol Hayes from the Australian National University.

Steve Light, a basketball point-guard following upon Nate Archibald, Pete Maravich, and Willie Somerset—and akin as well to Steve Nash, Chris Paul, Stephen Curry, and Earl Boykins—is also a philosopher and poet. He is the translator of Jean Grenier's *Islands: Lyrical Essays* (Green Integer Press, 2005) and his translations of poems from the Friulian and Italian of Pier Paolo Pasolini; the Italian of Sergio Solmi, Umberto Saba, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Salvatore Quasimodo, and Carlo Carabba; the French of Alain Suied and Jean-Baptiste Para; and the German of Rainer Maria Rilke have appeared in journals and reviews in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. His own writings have appeared in the U.S., Jamaica, Canada, Australia, the U.K., France, Italy, Russia, Turkey, Argentina, Brazil, and Japan.

Hsinmei Lin, a PhD student in English at the University of Washington, was born and raised in Taipei, Taiwan. She is interested in both English and Mandarin Chinese poetry. Lin is currently conducting research on nineteenth-century American poetry and its literal and literary translatability in the context of world literature through the lens of transnationalism and the intersection of human and nonhuman spheres in terms of language and perception.

Edward Morin has graduate degrees in English from the University of Chicago and Loyola University (Chicago). He has taught English and writing at Wayne State University, University of Michigan, the University of Cincinnati, and elsewhere. He has edited and, with Fang Dai and Dennis Ding, co-translated an anthology, *The Red Azalea: Chinese Poetry since the Cultural Revolution* (U. of Hawaii Press, 1990). They have also co-translated a book-length manuscript of poems by the contemporary Chinese poet Cai Qijiao. Collections of Morin's poems include *Labor Day at Walden Pond* (1997) and *The Dust of Our City* (1978). He has a new chapbook of poems soon to be published by Cervena Barva Press in West Somerville, MA. He lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Susanne Petermann graduated with a BA in German and French from Macalester College in 1979. She spent almost a decade traveling in Europe and teaching English in Morocco before returning to the U.S. After discovering Rilke's French poems in 1993, she began to re-translate them, while also writing original poetry as well as essays on the relationship between healing and writing. Her translations have appeared in *Agni*; *Epiphany*; *Solstice*; *Jung Journal of Culture and Psyche*; *Inventory*; *Rhino*; and elsewhere.

Samuel N. Rosenberg, professor emeritus of French and Italian at Indiana University, is a medievalist chiefly interested in textual edition of lyric poetry and in translation. Recently, he has wandered from Old French into Modern, notably with the publication of *Berlioz on Music* (Oxford UP, 2015), and has ventured far afield with lyric pieces translated from Gascon and Latin. He is now preparing an English verse rendering of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century romance, *Robert le Diable*.

William Ruleman's translations have appeared in many journals including *The AA-Litra Review*; *Ezra*; *The Galway Review*; *The New English Review*; *Poetry Life and Times*; *The Recusant*; and *The Sonnet Scroll*. His books include two collections of his own poems (*A Palpable Presence* and *Sacred and Profane Loves*, both from Feather Books), as well as the following volumes of translation: *Poems from Rilke's Neue Gedichte* (WillHall Books, 2003); *Vienna Spring: Early Novellas and Stories of Stefan Zweig* (Ariadne Press, 2010); *Verse for the Journey: Poems on the Wandering Life; A Girl and the Weather* (poems and prose of Stefan Zweig); and *Selected Poems of Maria Luise Weissmann* (the last three from Cedar Springs Books). He is a professor of English at Tennessee Wesleyan College.

Yasmin Snounu was born in Gaza City, Palestine, and as a Fulbright scholar earned a Master of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at Eastern Michigan University (2011). During her undergraduate studies, she volunteered in many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Gaza. Upon earning her bachelor's degree at Al Azhar University with majors in English and French Literature, she worked at the Women's Affairs Center, which promotes the welfare of women in Gaza. Yasmin lived at home with her family through Israel's attack on Gaza in December 2008–January 2009. After earning her master's degree, she returned to Gaza and taught literature and English as a second language. She is currently pursuing a PhD in urban education at Eastern Michigan University.

Joshua Solomon is a PhD candidate in the University of Chicago's East Asian Languages and Civilizations program. His research centers around the Japanese concept of *furusato* (home/origins) and the Tsugaru region in northern Honshu, with emphasis on folk music, regional literature, and avant-garde art. He has previously published several translations of scholarly works as well as the academic article "*Nanji futatabi kokyo ni kaerezu: Terayama Shuji to kokyo no sai 'sozo'*" ("You can't go home again: Terayama Shuji and the reconstruction of *kokyo*"). He enjoys wrestling with vernacular poetry and translation, as well as performing Tsugaru folk music on his *shamisen*.

Kendra Strand is a visiting professor of Japanese at St. Olaf College, where she teaches Japanese language, literature, and culture. She received her PhD in Japanese literature from the University of Michigan. In her dissertation, she translates four travel diaries by political elites in the fourteenth century and examines how



landscape and travel are used in these texts to address issues of social and political authority. Her research focuses on premodern Japanese travel writing, poetry, and visual culture. She is also interested in issues of translation, canon, and reception in modern and contemporary cultural production in Japan.

Yasser Tabbaa has graduate degrees in anthropology and art history of the Middle East. He has been a curator of antiquities in museums of two Arab countries and has also been a teaching and publishing scholar for over two decades at U.S. universities, including the University of Texas, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Michigan, and Oberlin College. His books include *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (U. of Washington Press, 2002) and *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (Penn State Press, 1996).

Corine Tachtiris has published translations of poetry and short fiction by contemporary Haitian women writers as well as articles on translation theory, world literature, and Haitian immigrant writing. She holds an MFA in literary translation from the University of Iowa and a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Michigan. She has taught translation theory and practice as well as world literatures at Hampshire College, Kalamazoo College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the Université Paris Diderot.

Born in the city of Hiroshima, Goro Takano (高野吾朗) is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Saga University, Japan, where he teaches English and Japanese/Western literature. His first novel, *With One More Step Ahead*, was published in the U.S. by BlazeVOX in 2009. His first poetry collection, *Responsibilities of the Obsessed*, was published in the U.S. by BlazeVOX in 2013. His second poetry collection, *Silent Whistle-blowers*, will be out soon.

Jun Tang is Associate Professor of Translation Studies at Southeast University, China. She is the author of over forty articles (in English and Chinese) and two books (in Chinese) on translation studies. Her English articles have been published by international peer-reviewed journals such as *META; Perspectives; Target; and European Journal of English Studies*. She has also served as a peer reviewer for five international journals.

