

OREAD

**AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
OF LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION**

Winter 2020

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**A MAGAZINE OF LITERATURE
IN TRANSLATION**

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Robert Lalonde

Translation by Jean-Paul Murray

from Lotékha'

All of us are on our knees with weariness and dejection at the beginning of the new millennium, so it's time for me to write about what has lived, lives and will always live for me. This might take time, but I have plenty of it, now that I've passed the age of trying to live at the absurd rhythm of clocks, calendars and those awful demands blindly placed on the entire world.

* * *

Did the engine's noise make the duck fly off? There he goes into the narrow fog patch above the spruce trees. I drive slowly over frozen grass for a moment, and grab the binoculars. A white collar surrounds its neck. The scapulas are a milky pale blue, the edge of its back feathers are smoky gray. No doubt about it: a goldeneye hen. She keeps her nuptial plumage all winter. I turn off the engine, roll down my window, and immediately hear her call. Her wings whistle, flapping at such high speed that I'm stunned over not seeing a small fire ball in the middle of the cloud, grace set ablaze just above the pine trees. It's dusk, the grey hour, my brief eternity of jitters and ambiguity. I think I see a wolf lying at the foot of a dead aspen. The glow of my headlights reveals the neighbour's lame dog, the one that torments our garbage can every night, amid a sinister sheet-metal racket. When I open the window and clap my hands, he scurries off growling, tail between his legs, the yellowish fur around his neck bristling like the mane of a tired old lion who ran away from an invisible circus.

It might snow. The wind blew the clouds over the mountain, to the other side of the world, where the goldeneye hen was first to fly away, earlier.

I drive slowly along the bumpy road. The pickup rattles, like the small car gripped by your angry fingers did over the muddy race track you'd built in the sand behind the shed, long ago.

The goldeneye hen. Each spring, this waterfowl experiences love with extravagance. The male circles around her, while she floats as though dead,

her crimson head half-submerged in the water. (*You mimic death throes to perfection, my sweetest one, but I know that you want me, desire me, that you've chosen me above all others!*)

The ice held her prisoner, or else fatigue, the inexplicable despondency that comes over us, humans, animals and birds, when what awaits us—night, migration, love, survival—suddenly appears beyond our strength.

The goldeneye nests inside a tree, pretty much as I do. And the whistling sound it makes when it flies could be mistaken for my own stridulation on days when everything is fine, when I'm also convinced that sluggishly beating my wings is all I need to fly through the air, high above everything.

* * *

The moon was gliding over a great lake of sky, skimming over the pine trees, coming in and out of a long cloud that was like ink in water. An aquarelle night, with a dozen stars that were like nuggets of golden sand on a wave-licked shoreline. A liquid sky, shifting through twilight, riddled with flashing glimmers, a fire seen through the heel of a bottle. "Follow me!" he said. Nothing else. Spoken in a whisper, two passionate and brief words that still sang inside her. She'd long been waiting for them, without expecting them, that invitation, that sign of life, she didn't dare believe it, walking as though in a dream, treading lightly and gently crushing pine needles, stepping behind him like the shy apparition of an angel. The sand trail shone like a creek, a stream at daybreak. Antoine was her guide and friend—who knows, under this full moon, he might turn into some gentle and impetuous knight. All she could see of him were the back of his black wool sweater, a ripple of light-coloured hair, two long thin and grey legs, and the light mist of breath above his cap...

Thus begins my story, which may or may not have an ending, it all depends. It's night and the full moon is out, in Sainte-Cécile. I've just come in with the dogs and cats. We walked down to the small lake, to catch a glimpse of the deer, but all we flushed out were hoof tracks in the snow. We didn't see the creature, only his recent tracks, fresh holes in crusty snow.

Twenty times I tried to rekindle the fire. The logs our sawyer cut are too large and, especially, still too green. They don't ignite, smoke like the Devil, whistling like grass snakes before gently going out.

Tonight, I'm worried and uncertain, though nothing shows it nor betrays me; neither my hand on the sheet of paper, nor my deceptively peaceful heart, nor my reflection in the kitchen's large window. I'd like to say: I'm

old, but that wouldn't do. My lifeblood whistles, even though I feel like I'm gently fading away. I have a kind of fever, I'm shaking, hoping, waiting: I'd like to write. Yet nothing crops up or happens. This is the prolonged dead time, the one that follows the writing of a book and precedes the one yet unsuspected. Limbo, like the name long ago given to the anteroom of paradise said to welcome children who'd died before being baptized. Between the so-called real world and the heaven of angels, limbo. That's where I am: worried, skittish, uncomfortable. When I'm not inventing or writing, the daily grind weighs me down. I meander, knock into everything, forget my key in the lock, let the dogs out without them asking, light two cigarettes at once, which smoke on their own in the ashtray, laughing at me.

Poet, you're an old child who dreams of the paradise that men have abandoned. On your shoulders, you carry the world, its sky, men and old age. Sometimes you stop, as though at the end of your journey on earth. Then all you feel like doing is lying down on the ground and quietly waiting for a winter night to numb you once and for all.

But the fire whistles, the dog whimpers, and the cat complains. So you get up, let words loose and pick up the thread of your existence as an obedient ghost.

* * *

SPORES. In 1871, Darwin wondered whether life began "in some warm little pond?" In 1907, the Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius posited the hypothesis that life on earth began when frozen spores that had travelled through the interstellar void landed here. In 1953, Harold Urey and Stanley Miller, from the University of Chicago, claimed it's possible to create amino acids by submitting a mixture of ammonia, hydrogen, methane and water vapour to an electrical discharge that can reproduce, in a test tube, the effects of lightning in the primitive atmosphere. Since then, scientists have discovered that the much-touted amino acids, the main components of DNA, can originate in outer space—they've been found in some meteorites that have landed on earth. Today, components for the molecules of life can be created in laboratories. However, they still can't be properly assembled.

Did the first molecules that took shape come from the sea, were they gathered in a warm lagoon and did they lovingly combine to give birth to DNA? Or did they come from hypothermal sources, at the bottom of oceans, fed by a rich mix of minerals and gases that gushed out of volcanic

chimneys?

Just like the existence of God, the origin of life still requires an extraordinary act of faith.

You smoke a cigarette in a bright room. It's eleven o'clock in the morning.

Light and death joined like the two recumbent statues in Emily Dickinson's poem who, from grave to grave, discover that they're lovers, their lips sealed over the same secret.

I indulge in that brief nervous joy, which may get me to say farewell to friends the wind will carry off. I smoke. I drug myself with guilty satisfaction, swallowing blond smoke, a sharp and subtle poison that suavely murders me, like those philters in old stories that killed while making their victims hear sublime music.

You put out a cigarette with the dreadful sadness of the lover who's just tasted the ultimate kiss and sees his beloved forever returning to the world of the dead.

It may snow. My goldeneye hen doesn't care and neither do I. Both of us experience and inhabit metamorphosis by force of circumstances. Life goes on. Everything can, everything must change.

Dad, who wasn't very talkative, and who only shouted with a flat voice when he was at wits end: "It's too late to close the barn door when the horse has run off."

* * *

In a dream, I heard the goldeneye hen's voice: *"Don't get hooked on me. In the end, I'll fly off, escape, spread my wings in a current of lukewarm air and let it carry me away. I'm already only that tiny black streak at the edge of the cloud, over there, above the pines. Can you see me? Look up, quick! You're so slow, distracted, blind as a mole. I'll soon be within sight of the Aleutian Archipelago; shortly, I'll spot the Alaskan Peninsula, Kodiak Island, the great chain of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Can you imagine? Yes—I know—you can imagine my journey, stopovers, the wind's strength, the constellations that guide me, their reflections in the mirror of lakes, the sandy shoreline where I land to drink and smooth my wings. You're a worried man, and you can also imagine the thunderstorms, squalls, lashing rain, blinding fogs, and the marauding buzzard. I know you don't sleep some nights, since you're busy scanning the sky: you think me swallowed by a cyclone, see me spiralling down the mouth of a volcano, ponder my head smashed against the side of an iceberg,*

which treacherously mimics the blue colour of the sky.”

“But you finally go back to sleep, while I fly over an ocean of fir trees, at dusk, all feathers ruffled, with your image half-erased by the wind at the back of my eye.”

* * *

Water is so difficult to paint! Particularly the back of a river at night, in October. You have to work colours into one another: very dark tea green, dried blood red, leather yellow and midnight blue black. Don't mix the colours: spread them along, smooth the canvas with the flat side of the sponge, saturate it with thin layers, using light brush strokes to approach that semi-transparency, that chiaroscuro of the current that holds a lingering twilight glimmer. Don't hurry, don't wait too long, press firmly, then relax the hand, let it work on its own. You must especially not think about all that spoiled water, all those dreadful attempts that are sulking, face to the wall—botched, multicoloured and impossible rivers.

I sponge the surface (passer l'éponge/wipe the slate clean) and, without looking at the painting I've started, head to the back of the kitchen to wash my hands in the sink. The colour dripping from my fingers is precisely the one I'd need for the river's back at night, for the marsh's oily rust: a shimmering stream of burgundy red, dirty gold and crimson. I grab my windbreaker and slam the door as I go outside, as though someone—but who?—were throwing me out of my own house.

* * *

In a moment, when you get off the bus, you'll light a cigarette, no doubt hastening you're demise. You're looking forward to it, of course. It's gnawing at you. At heart, you're a zealot who remains very Catholic. You suffer to earn happiness; you rejoice to deserve suffering. You beam with the great pleasure of a reprieve before extinguishing yourself. You know you won't bring your cigarettes to paradise!

After they die, the Iroquois go to a village where, unable to discern things, they remain seated, motionless, elbows on their knees, head in their hands. Blind and discouraged, they wait. They wait to know where they're going!

* * *

A waning moon, intense cold, great solitude. I should be writing. I am, in fact, writing. I write all the time, even when the pen is resting on the table, between pots of gouache and the ashtray. I don't write in my head, no, that's not at all how it works. I catch sounds, glimmers, voices. For example, I listen to those two women talking in the coffee house, and I remember. I remember my aunt, my aunt Géraldine. She'd come to live with us and she wanted to kill herself. She'd set fire to her kitchen cupboards and ran away through the streets, wearing her bathrobe, in the middle of the afternoon. I can see her running, crossing a vague patch of land in front of the general store. I write her story; I write the emotion of her story, which I know, without knowing it. That's how I work. I'm haunted and I regurgitate my fears, in fact I'm distraught that my aunt Géraldine suffered long ago for no reason. I don't know. But that's really how it works. A poor madwoman running through the streets of a village conjured up by the voice of an unknown woman in a coffee house. A voice, a glow, a light wafting odour and I write, without knowing, without understanding. I pull on the thread and words sometimes come. At times easily, at times meagrely, filling my heart with pure joy, like the pleasure of running in the rain, or sapping all my strength and exhausting me like heavy spring cleaning. No way to know in advance: you have to go for it and make a real effort. There isn't another way. At least, not for me.

* * *

CLEANLINESS. She's at least seventy years old and still blond. She's wearing a very elegant coat with a harlequin plaid pattern of yellows and purples, as well as a large violet beret. On her hands and knees over the sidewalk, in front of a coffee house, small broom in one hand and a dustpan in the other, she's energetically cleaning a concrete slab that's about two metres wide. To let me go by, she gets up, but just barely—as though she were sitting and begging, comically perched on her knees. She smiles at me and says:

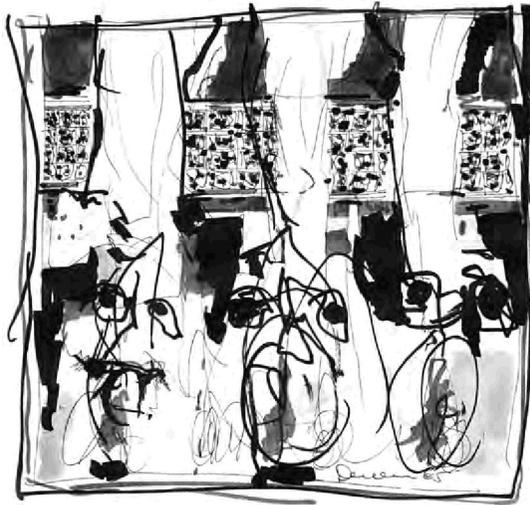
“Won't this be so much nicer?”

I raise my eyebrows, smile back at her and continue on my way. Under my arm is the morning paper with a photograph of thirty dead Palestinians, lying in a pool of blood, who were killed by Israeli militias.

There's cleaning, and then there's cleansing, I muse, as I walk on.

In September 1985, René Derouin—painter, engraver, sculptor—sought refuge in Oaxaca, following the earthquake in Mexico. He locked himself in a large room at the Tamayo Museum, and drew away frantically. “I was looking for a meaning to the continuity of history in the face of chaos,” says Derouin.

In fact, René Derouin, reproduced a few mysterious details taken from great pre-Columbian frescoes, exhibited in large pastel-coloured alcoves



DESSIN TITRE TRIMESTRE 1987 NEUF ANTONIN PLUME PAPIER

The sweeper and the artist engaged in serious cleaning. Wash the eye, purify the gaze, and erase the devastation to imagine the future of the world.

* * *

Night has fallen by the time I get home. I feed the cats, while they complain and rub against my legs. A river of cold air flows from the window, a cool moist current. I'll go for a walk, in a moment, to the back of the field, where the woods begin. Alone in the night, I'll breathe the mild wind, hope turned into a breeze. I want to live. I want to breathe, taste the night deep in my lungs.

I may stop smoking.

Let's say this new, masochistic, extravagant little game of counting puffs,

reducing them to their simplest form, to their most intense expression is asceticism, and not madness nor miserable nastiness against myself.

* * *

I didn't see the goldeneye hen again, nor did I spot the deer. Yet I'm awake, on the watch and on the alert. It's no use. I notice everything without seeing anything. It happens. I'd have to get lost in the woods, and not only walk in them. I would then try to find my way through the bushes with great passion!

Immersed, gone astray, lost, arms outstretched, head tucked down I rush forward. I have to set a trap, get caught in it and try to escape from it. It's the only way to make me move. To get rid of my lethargy, I need that fear of losing my life, that urgency deep inside me.

* * *

You smoke like a fire at the edge of a field, or the river at daybreak. Sometimes you smoke like a chimney—the chimney of a house where a nice fire has been lit for visitors. At times, you smoke like a pile of manure rotting in the sun, at times like a waking volcano, at times like a child climbing a hill when it's twenty below zero to try his new sled for the first time. You smoke to take a good look at the breath you exhale. You smoke because you began smoking forty years ago, in the woods behind the house, Sweet Caporals that made you sick.

You smoke like a stove pipe, you no longer know why.

* * *

FEATHERS AND QUILLS: To dive, a loon must grow lighter, which is to say, it must expel the air that's between its feathers. When moulting, the loon is unable to fly: it moves about in the grass and hops like a frog: its first feathers are completely useless on the ground. It can only fly after growing new feathers. It then runs clumsily over the water, before taking flight awkwardly. In the air, its flight is swift and direct.

I write with a quill. Sometimes it holds no air and I dive; sometimes it swells with breath, and I take off as well.

Joanne Morency
Translation by Jill Varley

from A Thousand Pieces

Fragments

Quand j'échappe une main, je ne m'en aperçois pas.

Je marche au bord de la mer, absorbée par chaque pas. Je laisse tomber un doigt, un autre, et puis une main entière. Je m'allège sans y porter attention. Je les reprends au retour : « Tiens, une main droite ! »

Souvent, j'oublie mes pieds sous mon bureau. Je les laisse traîner tout l'avant-midi. J'échappe parfois une forêt, voire tout un continent.

J'ai rarement la chance d'avoir un corps entier. Le plus clair du temps, j'ai les morceaux tout à fait épars. Une main qui écrit, des genoux absents, un dos invisible.

Il y a pourtant sans arrêt de l'air qui force mes poumons, des vêtements qui se frottent à ma peau, une tête qui oscille sur l'épine dorsale. Un poids qui me colle au sol... Je pourrais m'écraser.

Mais je participe si nonchalamment à cette présence. Je respire à peine. Le cœur fait son travail sans moi. Je ne dirige presque rien, ou de si loin.

Je vis par habitude. Je m'oxygène par accoutumance. Je mange par désœuvrement.

Je ris. C'est ma plus grande contribution.

Je fais bien du vélo quelquefois. Je marche tous les jours le long de la baie et, en même temps, je bouge énormément en dedans. Je me déplace dans

ma tête. Je parle sans arrêt entre mes deux oreilles.

Fragments

When one of my hands goes missing, I do not notice.

I walk along the shoreline, absorbed by each step. One finger falls, another, then an entire hand. I get lighter without noticing. I pick them up again on the way back: “Look at that, a right hand!”

Often, I forget my feet beneath my desk. They might be lying about all morning. Sometimes, I misplace a forest, if not an entire continent.

It is a rare day when my whole body is with me. Most of the time, my pieces are widely scattered. A hand that writes, absent knees, an invisible back.

Yet air continues pumping through my lungs, clothes rub at my skin, my skull oscillates on its spine. A weight binds me to the ground...I could be crushed.

But I hardly play a part in this presence. I barely breathe. The heart does its work without me. I direct next to nothing or from so far away.

I live by force of habit. Custom makes me take these breaths. I eat out of idleness.

I laugh. This is my greatest contribution.

At times, I leave on long bike rides. And every day, as I walk the length of the bay, I am travelling much further on the inside. I move within my mind. I speak constantly between my two ears.

Quand je tente un silence, je m'ennuie tellement que je m'endors illico. Je glisse hors de moi jusqu'au matin.

J'ignore ce qui me ramène dans ma peau. Je m'éveille enveloppée à nouveau. Je me remets alors debout sur mes bâtons... Je fonds, toute la journée, jusqu'au soir.

When I try to be silent, boredom brings about sleep in an instant. I slip out of myself until morning.

I do not know what brings me back into my skin. I awaken, wrapped within it once more. So I rise yet again, get back up on my pins... And begin melting, all day long, until night falls.

Le bruit du monde

Je ne sais pas quoi faire des fourmis, de tout ce petit monde qui court partout et qui s'agite à longueur de journée.

Quoi faire de l'herbe qui n'arrête pas de pousser sous mes pieds. Quoi faire du son de la mer, omniprésent, de l'interminable roulis de bleu devant mes yeux, de ce vent qui me sème, de ces cailloux qui se déplacent sur mon chemin.

J'oublie mon regard dans le ciel. Je ne sais pas être entièrement là, sans m'échapper quelque part.

J'ai chaud sous le manteau du chat. Voudrais m'étendre sous mon ombre.

Je ne sais comment faire taire le bruit des guerres. Ni comment retirer les cadavres de ma soupe.

J'effleure les gens, du bout des mots. J'aime en sourdine. J'entends des voix. Tantôt la mienne. Ou tout ce qui, partout, se dit tout bas.

Comment être en vie sans m'ensevelir sous le nombre.

The Noise of the World

I do not know what to do about the ants and their tiny world, running everywhere, agitating all day long.

What should I do with the grass that grows beneath my feet? And what about the ocean's omnipresent sound, the interminable blue rolling before my eyes, this wind that scatters me, and these pebbles that scramble on my path?

I forget my point of view in the sky. I do not know how to be entirely here, without losing myself along the way.

It gets hot beneath the cat's coat. I long to stretch out under my own shadow.

I do not know how to silence the noise of wars. Or how to pluck the corpses from my soup.

I brush up against people with the edge of words. I love in silence. I hear voices. Sometimes my own. Sometimes, everything, everywhere, when it is spoken softly.

How do I stay alive and not become buried beneath the rabble?

Muc

J'ai décidé de m'envelopper tout entière dans une pellicule plastique. Étanche, moulante et translucide. Il n'en paraît rien. Elle adhère en silence à ma peau.

Elle me protège des aspérités rocheuses, des brûlures intérieures, de la pression ambiante et des transferts d'humidité. Me retient en une seule niche.

Je suffoque un peu sous la surface, mais au moins je ne tombe pas sans cesse en mille miettes.

Le chat lèche les plis. L'emballage s'use à la saillie des coudes. Les bouts de doigts percent au grand jour.

Je m'expose donc malgré moi aux attaques. Les épaules se soulèvent, tentent une riposte en forme d'élastiques. Et puis se rendent à l'évidence : je survis.

Aucun monstre aux abords, ni virus fatal, ni menace nucléaire, ni cataclysme amoureux en vue. Plus de débordement à cœur ouvert ni de sécheresse solitaire à marée basse.

Je me pèle tout d'un pan, la mie de l'âme à l'air libre.

Shedding

I have chosen to seal off myself within this plastic shroud. Air-tight, skin-tight and translucent. Nothing shows. It sticks silently to my skin.

I am protected from rocky outcrops, internal burns, room pressure, and the moods of others. It keeps me in one piece.

Somewhat stifled under the surface, at least I am not constantly crumbling into a thousand pieces.

The cat licks at the plastic folds. The wrap becomes worn at the elbows. The fingertips break through the barrier.

I am again at risk in spite of my efforts. My shoulders rise to retaliate. Then they face the facts: I have survived.

No villain in the vicinity, no fatal virus, no nuclear threat, no amorous upheaval in sight. No more overflowing heart or solitary drought at low tide.

I remove my peel in one piece, and expose the soul's flesh to the open air.

Sur la pointe des pieds

J'ai toujours peur de déranger...

J'essuie mes pieds avant d'entrer sur la plage. Je retire mes sandales pour me promener dans l'eau. Je marche entre les cailloux, contourne le vent. Je ramasse çà et là des bouteilles égarées.

Ma maison se cache entre les branches. Le voisin contourne les marguerites avec sa tondeuse. J'arrose les mauvaises herbes, nourris les fourmis.

J'empile les petits papiers ; c'est mon unique péché. Aux alentours, on fait les foins. J'engrange de longues soirées d'été.

On Tiptoes

I live in fear of offending...

I dry my feet before I walk on the beach. I remove my sandals to splash in the water. I walk between the rocks, avoiding the wind. Here and there, I pick up abandoned bottles.

Even my house hides between branches. The neighbour skirts my daisies with his lawnmower. I water the weeds, feed the ants.

My only vice? I pile up these little papers. While others make hay around me, I am harvesting the long summer nights.

Le grand bac

Je récupère les sacs de plastique. Je récupère les cartons de lait. Je récupère les emballages cadeaux, les paniers de fraises, les petits bouts de savon glissants.

Je récupère les couchers de soleil après qu'ils ont déjà servi, les cheveux de mer abandonnés, les souvenirs de vacances échoués. L'amour échappé des regards. Le vent à sa sortie de l'arbre.

Le calme traîne derrière le chat.

Les miettes de silence au bout de la nuit, les lambeaux de plaisir glissés au pied du lit, je les récupère aussi, ce qui flotte encore du jeu des enfants sur la plage, ce qui demeure du chant de la terre dans mon bouilli de légumes.

L'ombre des nuages sur le sol.

Je récupère. Sans cesse.

Je ne laisse rien se perdre. J'attrape chaque seconde au vol avant qu'elle ne s'écrase par terre.

Recycling

I salvage plastic bags. I salvage milk cartons. I salvage gift wrapping, strawberry baskets, and small slippery shards of soap.

I salvage sunsets after they have sunk, strands of straying seaweed, and recollections of vacations washed ashore; the love that leaks out when eyes meet, and the wind as it leaves the tree.

The stillness shuffles behind the cat.

Scraps of silence at the end of the night, and shreds of pleasure that have slipped to the foot of the bed, I salvage these as well. What is left floating when children leave the seashore, and what remains of the earth's song in my vegetable stew.

Clouds' shadows on the ground.

I collect. Constantly.

I will not leave anything behind. I catch each second in flight before it crashes to the earth.

Pelin Batu

from It Began with a Story

Leydi Kaos

Daha sonra
tartırırız kaosun kökenini
ağızsız dilleriyle
eskilerin
cezbeden
ıslâğını
fırtınaların
izlerini
yolsuz patikaların.

Kolay iş değildir
organlarımızı onca sütle doldurmak,
doğmamışın sütüyle,
ölmemişin sütüyle
sonsuz göklerin memelerinden çalınmış sütle.

Olgunlaşmış,
(kızgın)
bir hayvan kadar hazır
aheste aheste kaldırır
gecesini kadın.

Kolay iş değildir
öylece öldürmek, hepsini,
fiillerini yeniden çekmek için
nabza
benzeyen
bir şeye.

Lady Chaos

Later
we'll discuss the etymology of chaos
with the mouthless tongue
of ancients
tempting
moisture
out of tempests
and tracks
out of trailless paths.

It was no easy task
filling our organs with so much milk,
milk of the unborn, milk of the undying
stolen milk out of the udders of ceaseless skies.

Ripe as she is
and as ready as a beast
(in heat)
she takes time
lifting her night.

It is no easy task
killing all, just like that,
to reconjugate
into
a semblance
of a pulse.

ta tam
ta tam
ta tam

yavaşça
karanlıktan

şakır
kadın
ilk nefesini.

ta tam
ta tam
ta tam

Ve mütevazı yelinin yağmur sonrası toprak kokusundan
patlar
çiçeklerin en alı, en mavisi
(bize müsaade edilen ışık bu kadar).
Onun mağaralarından çıkınca
biz
körlüğüz
karanlıgız
yüzmeyi öğrenen,
Japon ihtiyarların kara dişleriyle
sayısız emziğinden
emzirtip
ışığını verir ki varoluşa
heceleyelim kendimizi.

ta tam
ta tam
ta tam

slowly
and

out of darkness
she sings
the first breath.

ta tam
ta tam
ta tam

And out of the petrichor of her humble breeze
pop
the bluest and reddest of flowers
(this is as much light as is allowed us).
Out of her caverns
we are blindness
we are
darkness
learning to swim
with the black teeth of Japanese ancients
sucking
on her countless teats
licking as much shine
so as to spell ourselves out.

“Başlangıçta Kaos vardı...”
ama ondan evvel
müzik vardı
sazendesiz
ve
Kelam vardı
düşüncesiz.

Dalgalanan bir ritim
çıkart ve iner
iner ve çıkart
ölmek için tekrar tekrar.

Böyle doğartız
böyle yok olacamız
kadının içinden.

“In the beginning was Chaos...”
but before that
there was music
without the musician
and
Word
without thought.

An undulating rhythm
that rises and falls
falls and rises
to die over and again.

Thus we are born
thus we will perish
inside
her

İcat

İnsanlar neyin kutsal olduğunu bilsin, bilsinler, o kadar. Şayet bir Yunanlı Phidias'ın sanatı vasıtasıyla tanrıyı hatırlarsa, hayvanlara tapınarak yaparsa bunu bir Mısırlı, başka bir âdem bir nehre, diğeri ateşe – uyuşmazlıklarına öfkelenmem; yeter ki bilsinler, sevsinler, hatırlasınlar.

Sur'lu Maximus
Milattan Evvel II. Yüzyıl

Hepsi rüya içinde
rüya içinde
rüyaydı
fazlasıyla sıkılmış
mayhoş hayvanların
tasarladığı:
kumsuz bir yengeç,
ulumasız bir kurt
ve ferahlığı
elinde bulacağına dair
umudunu yitirmiş bir adam.

Önce ekmeği böldüler
sonra yasalarını sıraladılar
göze göz ve diş diş
basit bir matematiğe benziyordu
dolayısıyla taşa kazıldılar.
Ölçülemeyen şeyler için
korku ve titremeye dürtülmeleri icap ederdi
o yüzden şimşek tanrının kılıcı olarak biline geldi.
Ya görünmeyen
ve sonsuz?
Onu fizikçiler
ve feylesofların
tetkik
ve tefsirine bıraktılar.
Onu düşünmeye başladığımızda
kazanacaktı evren anlamını,
bu yüzden düşündüler onlar da.

The Invention

Let men know what is divine, let them know that is all. If a Greek is stirred to the remembrance of God by the art of Phidias, an Egyptian by paying worship to animals, another man by a river, another by fire – I have no anger for their divergences; only let them know, let them love, let them remember.

Maximus of Tyre
II. Century Anno Domini

It was all a dream
within a dream
within a dream
thought up
by sour animals
bored out of their minds:
a crab with no apples,
a wolf without a howl
and a man who, without so much as a hope
to find contention
in what he had.

First they broke bread
then they listed their laws
eye for and eye & tooth for a tooth
seemed an easy mathematics
so it was set in stone.
For that which cannot be measured
one had to incite fear and trembling
thus thunder came to be known as god's sword.
What of the indivisible
and infinitesimal?
That they left for the physicists
and philosophers
to expound
and explore.
The universe would make sense
once we started thinking it
and so they thought.

Bütün bunlardan
doğduk biz.
Kocaman sağlıklı bir sakala sahip bir tanrı
incir gibi yarılabilen doğurgan bir tanrıça...
Yıldızları okuduk
okyanusları okuduk
unutabilmek için
mutlak önemsizliğimizi.

Unuttuk ama
bilmeyi, sevmeyi ve hatırlamayı,
tekrar ettik savaşı
sanki büyük patlama
bizdik
bizi yaratan.

And out of those
we were born.
A god with a great healthy beard
a fecund goddess who could be split like a fig...
We read stars
we read oceans
to forget
our utter insignificance.

Manolis

from Red in Black

ΤΡΥΤΟΣ

Μαγευτική η φωνή σου στο τηλέφωνο
μέρα ζεστή Αυγουστιάτικη
κι αμπέλια ονειρεύτηκα
και ώριμα σταφύλια
ρόγες γεμάτες ζάχαρη και μέθη

και δροσερό ίσκιο φαντάστηκα
κάτω απ' τους πλατάνους
με το κελαρυστό ρυακάκι

και το κορμί σου να τρυγώ
κι από τις ρόγες σου
που να γευτώ αποζήτησα
το μέλι και τη μέθη τους να παίρνω

HARVEST

Your voice sounded enchanting
on the phone
that warm day in August
and I dreamed of grapevines
and ripen grapes
full of sugar and drunkenness

and in the cool shade
under the plane trees
along the babbling brook
I imagined

your body that I liked to touch
and from your nipples
that I longed to taste
their sweetness and drunkenness to suckle

Η ΠΡΑΞΗ ΤΟΥ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ

Η πράξη του θανάτου μοναδική
μονόπρακτη, προσωπική
αλάνθαστη
σχισμή στο βράχο
του καιρού σημάδι αμετάκλητο
ένδειξη γεναιότητας
καθώς αφήνεις το κουφάρι
κι εισέρχεσαι σ' ολόλευκο διάδρομο
προς τα Ηλύσια Πεδία

πράξη περήφανη
ανδροπρεπής
που προκαλεί και προσκαλεί
σε συνεστίαση το Χάρο

η πιο γενναία της ζωής απόκριση
εν απουσία άλλων, μοναχική
εκδήλωση συγκίνησης
όταν κραυγάζει η ψυχή

άρατε πύλας

μ' άκρατο ενθουσιασμό τρέχοντας
στ' άγνωστο γνώριμο δρομάκι
που μόνο οι γενναίοι ενεργούν
κάτω απ' τη σκέπη της αυτογνωσίας

εκεί που να γνωρίσεις μέλλεται
τον μέλλοντα συνοδοιπόρο σου
τα βήματα του ήλιου να ωροσκοπίσεις

THE ACT OF DEATH

The act of death unique
singular
errorless, personal
schism in the rock
irreversible incision in time
underscoring valiantness
when you leave the dead flesh
and you enter the whitewashed hallway
on your way to the Elysium

proud, manly act
of courage
that dares Hades and
invites Him to dinner

valiant answer of life
when you walk away from all others
emotional apex
when the soul cries out

open the gates

and as if in delirium it runs
to the unknown yet familiar path
only the courageous follow

where it'll meet
its constant companion
the steps of the sun to rediscover

μοναδική η πράξη του θανάτου
που μαρτυρά το θάρρος του μονογενή
η πράξη του θανάτου, αλάνθαστη
μονόπρακτη, προσωπική
μοναδική, ιδιόρρυθμη
δήλωση τελική το κέλυφος
που αφήνεις του κορμιού
και εισχωρείς στο διάφανο εαυτό σου

errorless act of death
witness to the courage of the few-begotten
the act of death unique
single-handed, errorless
idiomorphic, individual
when you leave the husk of flesh
to enter your diaphanous self

ΚΑΦΕΣ

Καυτός αρωματικός καφές
αναριχώμενη ευωδία
μικροσκοπικά τραπέζια
τα πόδια μας ακουμπούσαν
και στα κρυφά μπλέκονταν
τότε που κάρφωσες τα μάτια σου
στα δικά μου κι' η ανεπαίσθητη
κίνηση των χειλιών σου μαρτυρούσε
μια προσμονή ένα κάποιο έναυσμα
για το κλυδώνισμα του νου
στη μέση θάλασσας αγριεμένης
σ' ερωτικό κυματισμό
κι ασίγαστη λαγνεία

κι αφήνοντας την κούπα του καφέ
το χέρι σου έβαλες πάνω στο δικό μου
σημάδι έτοιμη πως ήσουν
για του κορμιού τον υπέρβατο ρυθμό

COFFEE

Boiling hot aromatic coffee
upward whirling fragrance
tiny table
our legs were touching under it
entangling slowly
when your eyes
dived deep in mine
imperceptible movement of your lips
meant your anticipation
for my prodding
of your mind to lustful thoughts
erotic undulation amid
waves of a sea
angered and passionate

and leaving the cup of coffee
you put your hand over mine
sign that ready you were
for the transcending rhythm of Eros

ΗΛΙΟΒΑΣΙΛΕΜΑ

Τελευταίο αντιφέγγισμα των ηλιακίνων
στα φύλλα της λυγιάς ο ήλιος
και πάνω στον υγρό βράχο που στέκεται
φρουρός στις θάλασσας τη στερνή κίνηση

σαν η ζωή δηλώνει την ύπαρξή της
φύση φλεγόμενη, τραγουδιστή
προτού η νύχτα κατακτήσει
τις χαραμάδες των ωρών
κι η πόρτα κλείσει ως το πρωί

μην κοιμηθείς, τότε θα πω

την άνθιση των αισθήσεων σου
να γευτείς
στιγμές αιωνιότητας
μόνο για λίγο που διαρκούν

SUNDOWN

Last reflection of the sunrays
on the leaves of the oleander
and onto the moist rock that stands
guard opposite the sea's slow movement

life declares its benevolence
transcending earth with its songs
before the night conquers
the cracks of hours
and the door shuts till morning

stay up, I'll tell you

taste the bloom of your emotions
eternal moments
that only last a short while

Contributors

Emmanuel Aligizakis, (Manolis) is a Cretan-Canadian poet and author. He's the most prolific writer-poet of the Greek diaspora. Born in the village of Kolibari on the island of Crete in 1947, he emigrated to Vancouver in 1973, where he worked as an iron worker, train labourer, taxi driver, and stock broker, and studied English Literature at Simon Fraser University. He has written three novels and numerous collections of poetry, which are steadily being released as published works. He now lives in White Rock, where he spends his time writing, gardening, traveling, and heading *Libros Libertad*, an unorthodox and independent publishing company which he founded in 2006 with the mission of publishing literary books. His translation *George Seferis: Collected Poems* was shortlisted for the Greek National Literary Awards, the highest literary recognition of Greece.

Pelin Batu was born in 1978. After graduating from Marymount School, she studied drama and literature at New York University. She received her B.A in history and M.A. in Western Languages and Literature from Bosphorus University. She is currently a PHD candidate in Literature at Bosphorus University. She has had a number of notable performances in theatre and film. Her first book *Glass* was published by Yapı Kredi in 2003 and her second book *The Book of Winds* by Artshop in 2009. Her book of paintings and lyrics *Resim Defteri* was followed by the latest book of poetry, *The Divan of Lost Things* which was published by Everest Publishing in 2015. Her collected edition of poetry previously published in various literary journals under the heading of *Labirentine* and her mythological poems *It all Began with a Story* were published by the oldest publishing house İnkilap Yayınları in 2018. Pelin Batu is an active political and environmental activist. She currently lives in Istanbul.

A star of film, stage and television, as well as a playwright and translator, **Robert Lalonde** is one of Quebec's leading novelists. Born in Oka, Quebec, in 1947, he studied at the Séminaire Sainte-Thérèse and Montreal's Conservatoire national d'art dramatique. The author of over 20 books, his first novel, *La belle épouvante*, won the 1981 Robert Cliche Prize, while his *Le Petit aigle à tête blanche* won the 1994 Governor General's Award for French Fiction, as well as the 1995 Prix France-Québec. His translation of Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces* was a finalist for the 1999 John Glassco Prize.

Joanne Morency lives on the Gaspé Peninsula in eastern Quebec. She has published five poetry collections with Montréal's Éditions Triptyque and two books of haibun (poetic prose and haiku) with Ottawa's Éditions David. She has received several awards including the 2015 CBC poetry prize and the 2010 award for a first collection in Paris.

A writer, certified translator, researcher and communications specialist, Jean-Paul Murray has translated nineteen books. From 1995 to 1998, he was managing editor of *Cité libre*, a magazine founded by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. He was the magazine's English translating coordinator from 1998 to 2000. Among his *Cité libre* translations are works by Allan Cairns, Jacques Hébert, Mordecai Richler, F.R. Scott and Pierre Elliott Trudeau. In 2015, he was French-language translator for the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. An experience from which he is still recovering.

Jill Varley's studies in literature and languages have taken her to the University of Regina, Université Laval, and Montréal's McGill and Concordia Universities. She holds a Masters in English Literature and is currently completing her Masters in Translation Studies.

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