

Six Poets in Translation

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Felicia Fuster

Translated from Catalan by Marialena Carr

How long must we wait for the track switches
to come apart at the stations
where trains never stop.

How long must we take with forgetful keys
to find the locks have been hungrily
rusting through
and there is no road opening.

As for us, it is only our crevices
that call down the rain to pull tight
our attention that crumples
onto the languor of a spare sofa.

Vacated apartment,
our soul is stripped down, and everything,
even a broken down train,
has become temporary.

Not knowing
if rails or crossties
have fallen apart, we lay a few bricks
here, others over there,
not thinking,
and then we turn away:
how they wound, mislaid,
these bare walls
that are nothing, that will never be homes.

Green Water

I stretch up
through the tree tops
with the green water of memories.
I expect torrents, I expect open hands
and all eyes on me.
I know I'm close to the tempering
of passion,
pentagram of a song that bramblesnags me
that I won't write
with laughter. I see no
thread of day or bolts of lightning
either
or the needle that threads the jagged
torn scarring. Upon the brow,
parchment of ill stitched windows,
the taunting dead make their way
and the four winds,
specters that salt-daub
my lashings to make me swing. I live.
Lived I am dazzled
by those lights I won't claim as mine,
by the lanterns
of smoke. I'm lit up
by a high voltage cloud. And
silence falls.
The salt renews the snow of green water,
the sobs, the scorching. Polder and dikes
to counter the same old death,
still stubborn
oh heart.
Oh heart, awl, matchstick in search of clover,
stigmata, presence.

Which Name

Now
don't ask me my name.
Give me one that won't unsettle me.
I put on names to match the weather
outside,
to match the star chart. Today I don't know
what
name I've been given.
Maybe my name is Altair, Fluff of Time.
Just that. Without a husk,
without insides. Maybe today my name is Tangle,
Earthquake or Garbí Streamer,
Cruise Missile, with an outsized warhead. I can
no longer carry my heart in my hand,
for fear of the shrapnel
of names and of gales
hurled at me.
Today don't ask me my name:
today I've been baptized by ropes,
by sword, by fire.
By meteors.
By lava.

Because I know I'm captive
I'm leaving.
As if spatterstained all over
I want to clean the blood from the heart
that tires me.
Because I know I'm captive I won't carve
words on the tree barks
about my time without trees.
Pigeon,
I'll let fly a postcard
with a single word: closer,
knowing we are to miss all the trains
where we'd want to be it.
No radio,
no sterile telephone will tell me
the words,
underdressed for the party,
that my thinking folds and unfolds.
The summer
by now summits. I'll never find
the ticket towards the torpor of drinking.
Busy busy,
the Sunday table laid and set,
I've kept my heart far away,
and I miss it.
To learn to subtract, to divide
every single
driftnet, now I roll along with my busted brakes
over garbage heaps.
Nobody
will hear from the injured wolf, not howl
not weeping.
I follow the thousand edges of the wind
and snow
that slices into me beyond weather's kiss-nibbles.
I sing,
I'll doze off along the trails.
I sing and I see to my footprints.

Taking Me for the Sea

Untangled.
Thrown into the brambles of fever,
the days scratch and scrape me,
scattering me
to hillocks and wolves.
And what can I do if the sun is soon
and I know I'm but crumbled bone.
Having lost my memories:
vastness is beyond me.
The worm-riddling of thought—heartfelt
or heartless—pulls at me.
The dinghy searching for me doesn't wake,
launched long ago
between the isles of the hourless fingers.
And the sea
that was weaving me
escapeward, a path
of amphorae,
now heaves me off.
In splinters the riptide grabs me back.
The beach pries out from inside me
and pierces me with thirst
forever more and without water.
A crowd of clouds floats by, casual.
The seaweed. All is brief.
On my knees in a penance
of songs, who knows
who blesses me and by which
initiation
is dressing me in dunes.
Who knows who'll come and mistake me,
absently,
and pluck me, taking me for the sea. And carry me off.

When award-winning poet **Felicia Fuster** was runner-up to the prestigious 1983 Carles Riba prize, she was a complete unknown to the Catalan poetry world. A sixty-two-year-old painter, she'd been living in Paris since 1951. She went on to publish six collections and to co-translate to and from Japanese. The collected poems *Obra poètica (1984–2001)* was published in 2010. Fuster, an older woman writing in a minoritized language far from her home, remained an outsider to the end of her life. Though highly regarded in Catalunya, there were only ten published poems in English translation prior to 2022.

Former oceanographer **Marialena Carr** translates from Catalan and Spanish. She was mentored by Julia Sanches within the 2024 ALTA Emerging Translator Program and received an Honorable Mention in the inaugural Literary Translation Fellowship of the Queen Sofia Spanish Institute. Recent translations appear in *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Poetry Northwest*, *New England Review*, *The London Magazine* and are forthcoming in *The Georgia Review*, and the anthologies *Strange Flowers: Uruguayan Women Poets* (Dialogos Books, 2026) and *Animal Stories* (Calico Series of Two Lines Press, 2027). *A Song for No One: Selected Poems of Felicia Fuster* will be published by World Poetry Books in 2029.

Elena Guro

Translated from Russian by Matvei Yankelevich with Yelena Poloway

from *Baby Camels of the Sky*

At the Spruce Turning

Fasten the rigging!

Northwest!

Daredevil spruce, its peak

has sped off into the sky

And now unreachable

Squarely

at the edge,

Its presence has raised the heavens—higher.

By a Sandy Knoll on a Sky-Blue Day

Here stand tsars, crowned with candles...

In the free, free height, above the wreath of the tsars, an empty flagstaff gently drills into the blue...

Here I give an oath: never to be ashamed of my real, my own self. (The real one, who writes poetry that nobody wants to publish.) Not to be flustered upon entering the parlor, and—no matter how many unpleasant guests are present—not to forget that I am a poet, and not a pill bug.

And not to wish to publish in their magazines, not to be like everyone else, and not to take any animal's life.

And why am I thinking about all this?

A poet is a giver, not a taker, of life... Look, how darling the world is. Washed clean by the sun and already it believes in your sensitivity and in your future writings and gazes upon you with gratitude...

A poet is a giver of life, and not an abuser, not one who deprives. And hereby I promise not to be shy or sheepish when I tell the elegant hunters—no matter how fair, how enticing—that they are wretched scoundrels, lowly villains.

I don't care if no one comes courting me—I am strong!

But will I keep my word..? Will I keep it?

I am balling up my fists, but I'm alone, and all around me is exalted, grandiose, majestic.

I get over it quickly, it will pass...

My hand scooped up a pebble and threw it... spinning, spiraling, it traced an arc above the edge of the forest in the sky-blue land... It was on the ground its whole life, when all at once my hand gave it flight... Flying through the blue—did it luxuriate in bliss?

* * *

Fluttering green curls unfurl, unfettered in the sky.
The sky peals out laughter.
Streaming from proud flagstaffs,
flags race at the summer cabins
plashing in the sky-blue wind.

* * *

Take an oath here, dreamers,
as you behold them flying,
gazing at the tall firs taking flight,
at the flight, the flight of far-off ships,
spy how, peaks sharpened, they stroll the skies,
entrusting no one with their proud purity—
swear to your dreams and eternal devotion
proud chivalry of madness!
Be true to your youth
and to the oath of height.

* * *

The young aspen encircled by autumn,
 She strives for the heights.
What will become of her soul...
 In ecstatic prayer, I implore her—come back.
Come back from the dark blue sky, bright flame.
 It's for you that I cry—for you.

* * *

They laid a campfire on the roots and burnt out the heart of the living pine.

Who did it? I don't know.

With a heavy head of curls, its boundless vitality—the tree still held on a third of its timber,
hideously robbed of its proud support and balance.

It was very quiet. Doomed to a slow death, the tree kept silent. No doubt it knew what had been
done to it—and its comrades, gathered round, said nothing. And it was disagreeable and hard to
see the expression of its head with its mighty boughs, as hard as it is to see a man at the height
of his health in the midst of the life, temporarily on reprieve, but destined at the end of that
term for the appointed, inevitable hanging, and he knows it, and those gathered round, and
everyone, keep silent...

I walked back through the clear-cut.

Do you feel malice, forest, when your treetops, accustomed to strolling the sky—to hearing the
sagas of the stars and rocking the clouds to sleep—fall to the ground, defiled by men. No,
you've outgrown the possibility of malice. I too have outgrown my malice, but my heart is heavy.

On the shore—two pines of divine provenance. Their slightly bent, inward sagging has endured
the chivalrous strain of standing guard. Seaside sorrow has got itself tangled up in these
branches bequeathed to the wind.

* * *

And it's with warm words that I touch life, for however else could one touch someone so
wounded? It seems to me that all creatures must be so very cold indeed.

You see, the fact of the matter is I don't have any children—that may be why I am unbearably in
love with all that lives and breathes.

Sometimes I get the feeling that I'm mother to all things.

Elena Guro, an influential figure of the early Russian avant-garde, had written three hybrid collections before she died of leukemia at the age of 36 in 1913. In their form *Hurdy-Gurdy*, *Autumn Dream*, and *Little Camels of the Sky* (published posthumously) are scrapbook-like pastiches of prose vignettes and poems (akin to Jean Toomer's *Cane*), as well as diaristic fragments and drawings. Guro was instrumental in founding some of the earliest arts associations of Russian modernism, including the Union of Youth, and was closely tied to the Cubo-Futurist circle in Petersburg, where she and her husband (the composer and artist Mikhail Matiushin) hosted salons visited by artists and writers such as Khlebnikov, Malevich, and Mayakovsky. After her death, her work continued to appear in Futurist anthologies and in modernist poetry magazines until the early 1920s, after which her contributions to Russian literature were mostly forgotten.

Matvei Yankelevich is the author of several books and chapbooks, including *Dead Winter* from Fonograf Editions. His translations from Russian include *Today I Wrote Nothing: The Selected Writings of Daniil Kharms*, and a forthcoming edition of Osip Mandelstam's *Voronezh Notebooks*. In the late 1990s, he co-founded Ugly Duckling Presse and since 2022, he is the editor of World Poetry, a nonprofit publisher of poetry in translation. In 2023 he founded the small press Winter Editions. He has received fellowships from the NEA, the NEH, NYFA, and Civitella Ranieri, and teaches translation at Columbia University's School of the Arts and at the Bread Loaf Translator's Conference.

Yelena Polowy was born in Minsk, Belarus and now resides in Skokie, IL. She holds a Master of Comparative Literature degree from Northwestern University where she focused her studies on Russian poetry and translation.

Friederike Mayröcker

Translated from German by Donna Stonecipher

from *fleurs*

“this evening this blossom-brooch of springtide these torn little nails = cloves = carnations with torn petal-edges this yellow light upon waking— upon waking the memory of the photograph in which you PEER out from behind the door that is ajar, 1 bit stooped or questioning while the wind blows through the only slightly opened window ach this foreboding appearance, since this foreboding experience flares up in me, you know, namely thirst in the morning, and wanting to quench it. And once more the snowflower-realm in its morning-light had I put on the chiffon pants had I turned on the heat I had no recollection of any of it, the physiotherapist seemed to be embedded in moss, nicely embedded Erich Fromm tablet in the shape of a heart = Concor 5 mg, 14 years ago, April hangs I mean the April page of the 2000 calendar has been hanging on the wall for 14 years : it was 1 fluorescing April full of oleander blossoms and poppies, twin cherries like musical notes = “Music” by Andreas Grunert, India ink and acrylic on paper 66 x 46 cm, on a bare table 2008 with musical notes whirring around, and orange tears rolling. Well, dusk-doing beloved grandmother with wild goiter &c., 1 swishing 1 Samaritan with hashish = handkerchief around her neck in the sm. café while the carved wooden cradle in the parents’ bedroom was always ready for a new THUMBELINA how I long for you, often, my fondest friend (there *was* something about an umbrella at the foot of the Morzinplatz, wasn’t there?), the religions of swallows on gold foil paper, &c. I mean one must be able to wait until it snaps into place, swans of springtime,”

30.3.14

“you are my ivy-leaflet”

“she’s nuts, you know, she binds herself to you, 1 bewildered spring day = privet hedge late at night, as soon as I don’t see or hear from anyone for several days my wild life begins, noblesse of paper, you bloom like rosemary we delighted in the cloudlets while the razor-thin bird, I believe it was on another day that I composed 1 few lines, I saw the fiery glow in your armpit, saw the cherries and the sun glitter in your eyes—am Ajax and good night. Praise-god fir-tree my valentine praise-god fetish : red-dyed eggshells on the kitchen floor, weeping continent ach how free we are ascending beseeching aurora in which pink fans of the airs rosé, blossoms of oleander : dear cataract of withering blossoms ach the spring with its encrypted footnotes : cryptic primroses and violets, something comes to me, exalted cloth-of-gold, little basket of cherries in the far courtyard &c. Ineffable those happy days with you, I half-wanted this or that, break off in the middle, meanwhile, UMBUSHED, you say Andreas Grunert paints the picture “When I Am Old,” he sits in a wicker chair and looks out at the shadows of an allée : dark recollection of his past years shadowy recollections of his past life dog-roses of his youth bled to death, I saw in a dream the shadow of a tree, you know, ever oftener I wander through my dreams, everything is so easy in my dreams, people, for example, speak words that never occurred to me while awake, in my dreams I ride through honeymoon-, high-mountain landscapes, quiet children in wafting little dresses mill around, I cross streets with no traffic the tears fall on my skin like raindrops, while my temporal bone

the blossom-paw of springtime brushes
my brow, I want to submerge my soul,”

7.5.14

“on Living, Writing, and Residing:” I puff at the birdlets (how they rush around in the airs I mean (bringing) me blessings while the blossom-paw of spring brushes my brow, and I gush floods of tears so I’m sitting cross-legged in front of my apartment door because there’s no more room in the apartment &c., actually my place of residence is the writings of Jean Paul, the book is lying on my knees and I am excerpting from his memoirs. Of course my quarters are above all an uncertainty : I can’t find anything anymore right now 1 little dog is sleeping on my lap, I love the spirit of this quadrille you often spent time here : you know every corner / unfortunately I don’t have a drawer / I will go pick up new color ribbons for my typewriter in the Windmühlgasse, sometimes I listen to Franz Liszt on the GRAMO, can’t remember being baptized, I mean, later death overtook me. The flower-seas overtook me and I plucked the flowers of my childhood, the worst thing would have been being 1 nomad under a gingko tree, I don’t think much of nomadism = Normandy, but I tended my home, actually my so-called flotsam and jetsam and what fell from my hands I let lie, let lie on the floor, I have only changed domicile 2 or max. 3 times : 1 x I lived with my parents in the rambling apartment of my grandparents which however in my 2nd year we exchanged for more confined quarters (nearby), which I in my columbine-time = at 25 = swapped for still more confined quarters where the exemplary fruit dangled into my mouth etc., I never wanted to go tramping = nomading (with a little sack of BOOKS, BASIL, BLEIBTREU on my shoulders) and so I lived on, with sunsets in my western window, and prayed often—”

8.5.14

“Stefan Fabi. He had yg. slightly wavy blond hair which in the flower-plucking wind that blew gently through the open window, twirled 1 little I mean he spoke a fetching South Tyrolean dialect that floated up and down the room

this morning looking out the window it seemed to me I was in Innsbruck : encircled by clanging mountaintops : which experience reminded me of the clanging window in a classroom, namely, when glass splinters rained down and ruined my face and I jumped up in terror because I was bleeding since it happened to me that the sun shattered, exactly, the sun's fawns etc. / I was missing a few extremities then : and then : that's how you leave me, the recurrent reading of a recollection from my memory that is different every time (e.g. the terrible climbing of the wide stone stairs in Neubeuern, or the time we made a fire in the living room and your hair came dangerously close to the flames, versus the lectureship of the cherries. So garden-fearing. The magical verbs = vedutas of the “poetess-plants” = by Isabel Kranz)

“narcotic cherries ach,”

12.5.14

B

“dear Barbara, now I begin in your garden to strut around, I mean to STILT around, the fawns of the sun in the forest-state, I startled and SPRANG thither, sm. things to patch, namely the perfunctory flowers, I mean, as far as this concentration on the letter B, it will be whispered into your waxen ear (a syncope when, at a certain point in the sentence, I set a comma LIKE A TEARDROP where it doesn’t belong) : well I mean, as I entered the “Rüdigerhof” still shivering from cold = January frost, I felt eyes the eyes of a yg. person boring into me (perhaps ADORING me?) which made me retract into my soul, annoyed, but then suddenly he whispered my name into the air of the bar, &c., and as

after an hour I got ready to leave I saw on his table a WHIRL of papers, and I paused and called out, farewell! and : are you a poet? : which he answered in the affirmative, “yes, I write in the Ital. language,” and handed me a poem in the Ital. language with a dedication at the top : to me but I’ve forgotten his name, I mean his name began with a B,

the color yellow : a bunch of
withering mimosas. Woe is me,
the prosthesis is snapping shut

the stand of trees in the garden : blown away, I am a columbine, you say, I let myself drift, I am expunged, am androgynous, am “the letter of sadness,” weeping as a form of speech. Well I mean, a bit of a mess is part and parcel of the poetic lunacy, fleur in the shower, her adorable breasts, Genet in the vase, I mean the flower beds in the back castle garden, I am like a plant, rooted to the spot = JD,”

28.2.15

“well I mean, the withered bunch of mimosas in the window
like a minimal weeping willow last day of February 1
little basket with spring snowflakes sorrow of refuse yel-
lowed sun. The nights torturous, union of
fruits in Matisse &c., feet in snow, oh
I drink from your DISQUIET' on the kitchen
table 1 bit-into cookie, please no more snow
piles, more many more songs of the blackbird heralding
spring, budding branchlets, a bit
of Lisbon or tracing of the constellations, woe is me,
even without me, one day the blue lilac
will burst,”

(“you wanted me to write 1 spring poem”)

1.3.15

Friederike Mayröcker (1924–2021) was among the most influential and decorated German-language poets of the postwar period. The recipient of numerous awards, including the renowned Georg Büchner Prize, during her lifetime she published over eighty works, including poetry, prose, radio plays, and children’s books. She spent her entire life in Vienna.

Donna Stonecipher is the author of six books of poetry, most recently *The Ruins of Nostalgia*, which was named a best book of 2023 by NPR, and *Transaction Histories*, which was listed by *The New York Times* as one of the 10 best poetry books of 2018. She has also published one book of criticism, *Prose Poetry and the City*. Her poems have been translated into seven languages. She translates from German, and her translation of Austrian poet Friederike Mayröcker’s trilogy *études*, *cahier*, and *fleurs*, for which she received a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, is being published by Seagull Books. Forthcoming in 2027 is a narrated nonfiction book, *The Secret Life and Death of Ornament in Berlin* (MIT Press).

Valentine Penrose

Translated from French by Mia X. Pérez

from *Poèmes*

If I don't come out in gold it will kill me
that beast holding my dreams in its nostrils
here she is from hospital and here she is from bells
and if I must suffer her rain-streaked skin
farewell I am at the limit of my rivers.

In the Bengal mud with sweet rose names
and the coromandel sought by the mosquitos
I did not dispatch that final ship
the last flag and the treasure expired

Proud proud and dense
follow the flaming ball
which runs each floor
of hotels of dreams.
There are dances
of pastry and of moon
for the daughter alone up over the rooftops
the queen labors.

You will dance in Malabar
with copper cheeks
with the prosperous sun
with the crowd
no longer alone with the mosquito
the fresh butterflies will be delivered from a sure breed
over the fist the gifted lights of time
heart of all evenings weak butterfly wading
bird near the water
weak butterfly sings to hear itself.

Head of my body
the shining sun
it is the day for the lifted stone
the day to pass between the flowers
and two children fall ecstatic without end
our fires in the sweet wind
let god protect in the dust and near the mango
the essence of treasure the gold the thief is in the tree
a passing farewell
farewell for the night my beloved
the hostel of white fragrance shields me
you are far away my head from festive parasols
my prostrated silken stalk
yet your bed full of blue linen remains in the branches
it once was the darlings and the doubles
o my precious pool
one thousand white butterflies burning
abandoning sufficient reason
beyond the star's shoulder
not large long the indent
she was at the end
with a cricket.

Now monsoon wind which does not abstain
and the spider during the clearest of weather
crown of oil and gold the chariot pulled by serpents and stones
this is the color
with which I look upon life.

The moon between the horns
to Bombay of port to Bombay of flies
I have this weight atop me

This is a truth in the beak of the dove
the faerie tree is there in the front where it will remain
those that live high will no longer tremble with love
beneath mistletoe horse hide will quiver.

Take the flower smile toss it aside
to what end this sun
the side of the return is left and black
it receives the opposite of having loved
the opposite of having woven

it receives the shark's tail
the turned head catches the kisses
another heart more true draws you in
there where horizons fall
down where the horses of the earth await
farewell my flower and my forest.

All is lost the garden seized with shadow
without birds without essence
head of my body my eyes the shining sun.

The last day which destroyed the sun I burn
behind my bed hollow with green almonds
with a wildness of cries of mice
my veil of god thus left me

The autumn rose prayed for us
an ancestral song all through the rain
but the soft flagstone did not hold
my step crossing into allied waters.
Toward that gallows of mumbled fruit
I dangle like a lily
or stumble far
below the leaves of yesteryear.

Scrubbed with santal
my treasure my love
the lip of a beautiful day.
What your voice believes miracle without nocturne
the lip shrivels the lid perforates
we sing psalms of the poor in fact
but for the valleys that the skies softly stir
never enough spoken of a language of leaves

This brief honey went with the vanishing point
round the bend of an alley a moss turned
ah who will give me upright and sad and white
and pure in its eyes the angel's clasped hands
a thousand battles slipped under the pleasures
distant ancient birds on the horizon of branches
go far away roses and these feminine stems
these languors and the throats too cruel for life
but the reeds broken through as if a wounded man
in the basin of the sky and the sole weight of hares
pure little gudgeon mouth lying in the lifeless brook
I spoke the death of golden stitches the groaner
of flower names ah how tough she is the orphan

Ivy has turned
leaves of steel
blue has gone back
into its mother forever

I sleep in the nest
the grass and the sword mount the guard
the voices become my refuge
the white the red look there
elsewhere it was the garden of nothing
come along my living one

Loudly they said I carry your tower in my mouth
balancing the weight your ivory life without bramble
said down low is what drowns
the thing the island at planet's end.

Without joy
heavy that tower there
with the fortune of its hint of joy
golden artifices evade it once more
whilst hair is dressed with complete darkness
and the forest I have dreamt.

There is no longer night everything is white all is still
not returned from ancient expanses or hurting us nonetheless
the hands burn beyond the moaning fields
fallen upon this crystal which came not from us
it was but one after the other the mouth and the cup
red torrents passing between the skies
the one hand so blind then touched flowers
that the night of childhood had seen protruding.

There were many wings
of bees indeed
and even at the other end of the inferno arbors
and pistils of lilies suckled the day long
by listless tarrying beasts

What thus is made from powder and limestone
where the clovers were
at what age at which stone borders
tower of love the heavy the light
too much like a mayfly to die
shouldered to the cylinder and tears from hair to hips
with fevers pretty enough all the same
scattered like a dream of final ashes.

Water I want you
and plant and fire
flesh said she clairvoyant tower

And the tower which endured endured like always

carried off in the fires of the mouth
absent inalienated
your face does not turn
neither open nor closed
alone you see the day
over evils ambers and waves
signed after the blood
over mangled fires your burdens of bones and heart
ivory the last bone of the world.

Valentine Penrose (1898–1978) was born in Mont-de-Marsan, France to a bourgeois military family. Considered one of the first women to publish Surrealist poetry, she authored several works of lyric and prose that defied literary, gender, and religious conventions. Mystic, queer feminist, and resistance fighter, Penrose passed away while living at Farley Farm, the artist commune run by ex-husband Roland Penrose with his second wife Lee Miller.

Mia X. Pérez is a writer, editor, and translator based in Brooklyn, New York. Their work has been published or is forthcoming in various literary journals including *The Brooklyn Review*, *Milk Press*, *AGON*, *Black Sun Lit*, and *California Quarterly*, among others, and they have served as an editor for the online literary journal *Psychopomp* since its founding in 2024. A PhD candidate of Comparative Literature at The Graduate Center, CUNY, their research focuses on Romantic literature, ecological thought, and representations of decay in the long 18th century. Valentine Penrose's complete poems, *Of Thorn and Wing*, is their first book of translation and is forthcoming from World Poetry Books in Fall 2026.

Sandra Santana

Translated from Spanish by Forrest Gander

from *Such a Fragile Verb*

WHY COMPASSES DON'T WORK INDOORS AND HOW TO FORECAST THE NEEDLE'S
PATH AT A GLANCE

We tried to follow every move
but the end of each stroke
only made clear our total failure
to discern the figure.

Could there be some elusive eternity—we asked ourselves
skeptically— hidden behind the color of our actions?

(And it seemed to us then that we were
getting somewhere,
but when we flicked on the light
we were staring again at a blank wall.)

“I feel lonely,” she said. And she found surprising comfort in hearing the echo that the word “lonely” made as it passed through her voice.

BECAUSE IT'S JUST FABULOUS HE'S SITTING THERE LOST IN THE CLOUDS TALKING
ABOUT THINGS UNTIL SUDDENLY THEY FALL BACK LIKE A RUBBER BALL THAT HAD
BEEN CAUGHT IN A TREE BRANCH

Now,
with the small sphere held in my hands,
I'd have a chance to show off my skill—

if only I could find
the right place
to aim it.

TRYING TO SUMMARIZE MY THOUGHTS ON THE BITTER TASTE OF PAPER

And what if
dozens of tiny,
conditional particles
were to ornament the branches
of a scarcely desirable
situation?

CHAPTER III

THE VOLUNTARY AND PROVISIONAL SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF LEADS US TO ACCEPT THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

Effecting a change in the situation, a shift in events, became easier than stopping them altogether. Aware of this fact, she let her voice slip stealthily into their conversations. Any sharp turn, any crack in the intervocalic space or an interjection tendered without sufficient caution could unexpectedly snatch the reins of her destiny.

Sandra Santana is the author of four collection of poems. Her poems have been translated into various languages (including English, French, Russian, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Romanian, Armenian, and Chinese) and have appeared in magazines and anthologies including Forrest Gander's *Panic Cure: Poetry from Spain for the 21st Century* (Shearsman, 2013). She is also the author of the critical volume *El laberinto de la palabra: Karl Kraus en la Viena de fin de siglo* (Acantilado, 2011), for which she received the City of Barcelona Essay Prize, and the collection of articles about the use of writing in contemporary art *La escritura por venir. Ensayos sobre arte y literatura en los siglos XX y XXI*. Her translations include books by Karl Kraus, Peter Handke, Ernst Jandl, Natalia Azarova and Friederike Mayröcker. She currently teaches Aesthetics and Theory of Art at the University of La Laguna on Tenerife.

The author of twenty books of his own and as many translations, **Forrest Gander** was born in the Mojave Desert. He has degrees in geology and literature. Awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the Best Translated Book Award, Gander has been a signal voice for environmental poetics. His latest books are a book length poem, *Mojave Ghost*, and his translation, *Even Time Bleeds: Selected Poems of Jeannette L. Clariond*.

Maral Taheri

Translated from Persian by Hajar Hussaini

Gaze

What is your gaze, your very eyes, doing to this flesh?
because fear and enjoyment are twofold for the hyenas in town
as you gaze at my left foot's eczema
self-effacement
autoimmunity
self-destruction

No, I'm not settling
Do you see how ferociously I bit my own tail?
I have split open the chest of my virgin child
with a stone and taken their beating heart to the sun
the sun heals my feet
my eczema skin
my civil disobedience!

Don't stare at me, let me take the natural form of flesh
purple meat that cannot settle within one's skin
or cry out
within layers of this body exist notes of Persian classical music
a Rubab instrument, fine fibers of rhubarb on a morning in Neyshabur
and the sour smell of sprawled corpse in the bare cloths of a Baghdad night

Approach the bare leg out of shirt, within skin
tap the rhythm in the betraying sun
mark the rhythm of my fortieth shedding
because today I rose from my grave with the face of a slut
who faced her punishment
I rose from my grave at nineteen with a bitter almond
under my shirt
taste me, taste my flesh, and taste the fixed eczema to the baton in Kafai St
where those in denial had been punished
stick your eyes to the chilling blood and stick them to
the heat of a whiplash also

outside this hole everything is a lie
outside this hole everything is a lie

What is your gaze, your very eyes, doing to the blood?
are the perpetual punishment in my bodily pleasures pleased with a
damned clitoris? a nonbeliever to my own words
shared among the urban pulse of île-de-France
let the love of the deer's bloodstained, dried skin be on the body of the instrument
let it sing
let the sun's delayed orgasm, through its rays, spread out the lower backs of freed women
come closer and gaze at her tongue
because you are a sacrificed, unholy, broken saltshaker
and I am a noncitizen with plump red lips
don't stare at my body because it's blessed with Chanel number 5
it's imbued with piss on the C train, which is why the touch of
my own flesh is neither a delight in the sublime nor Judas's kiss
it's a communal refusal that came before the chickens were home to roost
before the blood in the courtyard's pond splashed over the rooster's crown
and before I was nineteen
let there be heartbeat over a virgin's blood in the middle east
let there be love of scratching wound at home
let there be home
and the sound of many doors opening in the ruins

Hey, promiscuous wound, blue-green
blue-green promiscuous wound of a resurrecting red mouth
the wanderer of thirty silver coins
on the fifth of each month
the daughter of the cart driver with the scent of fig and grape
at the peak of each season in the year
tell me how they made love with their swords in your embrace?
how they clothed their instruments with your translucent, mirror-like skin?
tell me how you managed pulling hands out of your clock-like body?
and at which sun did you stumble over your feet?
don't gaze at me because the city has turned wild
with the terror of my footsteps
I have blistered feet

Murder me
without punishing me
murder me
without consideration
you are infused with salt, you should murder me

because, in these bitter streets of exile, I threw up the dirt of your divine, ruined blood
and if there is someone holier than I, direct them to me
because I'm holy beneath your feet
like beer under foam
murder me in the hesitations of a chainsaw, deep in the forest
when the spectacle of eastern eyes cries out
as flesh is chewed and swallowed

Kiss my veins, gray varicose veins on my legs
even though your lips are daggers against the poppy's flesh
its sap, the last dinner of a God
who gazes at the hole between legs
and outside this hole everything is a lie
outside this hole everything is a lie

Haft Sin

Expel my wound
lean your loneliness back against my bed
as you sleep with the most beautiful pandora in town
and get fervent at the beginning of the spring
push April into my incoherent spinning top
because I'm confused
confused by the olive-tone receding hairline and the lips
that seem to be moving toward infidelity
but love, women do not go into labor
they get fucked over
like showers before white bed
like mice after blue bed
with beautiful, fragile viewpoints
right next to the tv
live on screen with slippery lips
that curse, cusses, and fucks
let me spread my haft sin right here near your teeth
so you can think about your sadistic roaches
in the middle of sex and hiccups
about hanging my feet on a tree after spraying pesticide
or about sanding my holes
and warming my head on the stovetop
you can pour gods over the dishes
and bring the garlic yogurt dip
while I can bite into grieving apples and congealed love
in the rotten green on my body
I'll spread the haft sin here near my fingers
so, the steady knife of your hands gets wounded
under my proportionate breasts
and as you expel your tongue
it wounds
and you'll tell time with my pulse
you'll scale the fragments of my philosophy underwater
and I'll become your goldfish
I'll rise higher and higher above your wings
I'll lick the ss's of haft sin and roaches won't be able to flirt
you'll get lost in the depths and become my butcher
I'll spray pesticides in between your legs and I won't get hurt
I'll cook herbal rice and think about Kieślowski

tidy up the desk from the gods that have fallen off the mouth
I'll wear red
turn off the lamp so you can sleep white
kneel under my wounds and become blue
you must expel my loneliness

Katyusha's soft blonde shoulder-length hair

My Achillies hurt!
my Achillies which was on the left wing of whales in saltwater seas
has returned home after having much controversy with wave-tossed algae
it has returned home with its left rib
returned home gloomy
boiling water to make tea for Katyusha
who lays down on her back, sleeping on her right side
like a meat before it's marinated in lemon, before dashing salt on its blood
she is asleep!
though hasn't slept at all, tossed and turned!
tossed and turned above someone who returned home rather impatiently

Lift up your skirt, Katyusha and let the yellow tunes
pour from your thighs onto your tongue
you are the past tense of the verb (is)
you are the past tense of the word (if)
you are the conjugated verb hurrying toward Achillies
since I'm not capable of pouring tea in your ruined language
I said feeling gloomy is poisonous
loneliness is poisonous
loneliness is the bone of a whale that sticks to the throat
it's the beak of a bird who shut down and can't tweet in exile
how should I kiss you with a needle in my throat?
how can I see you with a beak in my eye?

My Achillies hurt, Katyusha
I cannot bear my head
look at how I penetrated my head into the sheep's stall
with two horns on my forehead
be my hairclips when I puke
living without head is human habit
be the defiant desire in my shoulders as I try to bend
living without back support is human habit
be my Achillies when I want to make love
living without memory is human habit
press your finger into a wound that won't stop bleeding
I fear the betraying holes in our hearts is getting bigger in exile

Nettle

Don't die
don't leave before seeing such beauty
before seeing the door turns on the other hinge
which you said it wouldn't shut, but it did
before sweat trickle down from your forehead
to your half-buttoned shirt, and from your shirt
to the black scarf worn by women in the city of Reza
who counted rosary to repel your poisoned flesh
who sighed, "Ah..."
you, too, turned on the world's hinge
and sighed, "ah!"

As I stood by the city gate
and looked at them with two dead deer in my eyes
I allowed their Qajar-like gaze to turn my tea bitter
I allowed my bundle to fill up with their wounds
and I warmed my head with the warmth of their veins
that share roots with me

Good genes!
good genes that disrupt the order in the city
good, strongbodied genes that despise spoiled milk
rubbing against baggy shirts, that despises infection
scratching against the uterus wall, and also the living leeches
that women throw at her body so her body can get back
on track

It's the nettle, love
for the agile woman, her suckle in the cradle
is a stinging nettle
it's sweet for my soul so I put my hair in a bun
as my vein jumps in the orgasm, be sweet for my soul
drinking from the vein of honor is sweet for my soul
because love is a stinging nettle
there's a nettle in my back
teeth clenched like dagger
don't die, remove the dagger from my teeth
so when you return the neighs can spread across the city

I ordered my wisest tooth to sleep with the horses
so I could return, I could return to my bloodthirsty dreams
I could return to this year as it snows, return to the smell of
plucking feathers from birds, to shaving wool off sheep
return to burst an eye beneath the grind of two molars
return to the draining brain in a bronze bowl, and return to
the clinging of fingers where once I denied my genes

I swear on the rolled-up sleeves for a slaughter before it takes place
I swear on the heels that dance around the broken hinges by love
bring back the wandering cervices to their rightful place
as I push my chest against the throats of statues in Montparnasse
I order the world's chaos through the poem
yet, the poem is a nettle
a nettle that keeps coming back

Maral Taheri is the author of the Persian-English bilingual poetry collection *زخمگی برهنه* or *Wounded Vita Nuda* (Deep Vellum 2027), which was translated by Hajar Hussaini and won the 2025 Mo Habib Translation Prize in Persian Literature. A poet from Afghanistan, Taheri lived most of her life in Iran, where she studied and taught French language and literature. Her poems have been published in various magazines, books, and websites, but due to legal and social censorship in Iran and Afghanistan, she wasn't granted a "publication permit" for her book and wasn't interested in censoring herself. As an activist, she was involved in women's rights movements in Iran and Afghanistan, working with independent and non-profit organizations and campaigns. In the aftermath of the fall of Kabul, and due to social and political pressures resulting from the Women, Life, Freedom movement in Iran, she left Iran and is now based in France, where she teaches French to Persian-speaking students.

Hajar Hussaini is the author of *Disbound: Poems* (University of Iowa Press, 2022) and the recipient of a 2026 Whiting Award in Poetry. Her translations from Persian include *Death and His Brother: A Novel* by Khosraw Mani (Syracuse University Press, 2027), which won a 2025 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant, and *Wounded Vita Nuda: Poems* by Maral Taheri (Deep Vellum, 2027), which won the 2025 Mo Habib Translation Prize. She was a 2025 MacDowell fellow and a 2025 Baldwin for the Arts Fellow. Hussaini also co-curates the Salon Salvage performance and reading series in Troy, NY. Her writings and translations have appeared in *Poetry*, *Asymptote*, *Daedalus*, *Annulet*, and others. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she is an assistant teaching professor of English at Skidmore College and lives in Saratoga Springs, NY.