

Sorry, I didn't
Understand.

**Can you say that
again?**

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Notes on Translation

These translations are ongoing conversations. They are a kind of trying to explain words whose meanings no one really knows, or what is known is only change, constant change. One poem might be another day in a new language, but that day is also shared in its suns and its bright stars. A poem might go forward but may also retreat back to a primordial history before we learned the words we claim to feel so deeply. These translations are attempts; they might as well be others. The worst translators are parasites and conmen, the best ones are parasites and pimps. I tend to think of myself as an honest liar, someone who wants to help you lose yourself in language.

She listened to me translating Aïsha's words into my broken English, full of my Frenches and my Spanishes, trying to reach her Englishes full of her Portuguesees and her Japanesees. She keeps on asking why should we use Englishes as our communal languages as if we weren't able to understand each other in our Portuguesees and our Spanishes, but it seems that our Japanesees and our Frenches have in a way mutated the way we perceive ourselves. Aïsha says that she is no longer standing against but along with her ancestors. We came out with another version in which *she* and I acknowledge not standing but speaking with them, not against them.

As they chose the fragments from a book, as they remembered the exact pages with the phrases they wanted to share with me, the care to guide me through the brief moments we had to be presented a third voice amidst a third idiom... I gestured the attempt to keep the affection towards a text, tending our shared attention and word-searching into another text we encountered ourselves in, temporarily. The words from my text signal their name close to my name (only heard through a third) close to our ancestors, temporarily there, 'cross-pollinizing', as Aïsha said.

Agreeing to change the meaning of your own words is the best way to meet. I think she had a beautiful tenderness for her own language.

She loosened the words, took them in with her breaths and slowly began to recraft them. All words were now both mine and not mine, unintelligible and full of promises. She opened each line and let its meanings spill. All residue is organized in negotiation.

In translating collectively, there is an aspect of permission that is given to the writer. And it is within this process of gaining access that new meanings emerge. Meanings that are canonized by collaboration.

An exercise in listening, appropriation, embellishment, and reverie. An exploration of musicality, serving as a pretext to feign understanding and, possibly, knowledge.

She proposed me an English text for me to translate, but before I said yes she proposed me an Arabic text, and before I could say yes she proposed me an Amazigh text, language which I don't understand at all but I said yes let's go for it, it just makes me curious about language being a Matrioska [Russian doll] configuration that we unveil depending on the complicity or how comfortable we feel with each other. Thank you for letting me into one of your private languages and letting me translate it with you. In the end we did a common translation that brought my own mythological worlds into the ones your poem summons. Some people keep on telling me that I speak a dead language, but how can it be dead if it comes from my guts? My language is absolutely not a dead skin that can be scratched. I consider our proposal not as a translation but as an "excroissance", a skin growth which does not necessarily "respects" the body from which it grows but needs it to give it all its sense and nourishes itself from it.

Longing for an articulation of poems that had to be transmuted before it being translated, there existed a realm of ancient transmissions, calling for goddesses who invented language as they were chanting, and engraved scripts from top to bottom, from left to write, from write to left, loosened their sense of direction, and freed people of vocal restrictions, and vocabulary deprivation.

The poem in French was familiar, too familiar. I had to go through a process of un-learning this language in order to better grasp the shades of emotions that revolve around it, in another language. As much as the French seemed too familiar, Arabic was slipping, bit by bit, forgotten words, forgotten shades..and I realize that whenever I come across the opportunity of writing with it. When she whispers French words of her poem into my ear, she gave me the permission to twist the poem's tongue. "*La chercheuse*" is also looking for a tongue that embraces her act of searching the unrecognizable, a roller coaster of gestures translated, re-translated, de-translated, un-translatable.

Our translation of an image, which was also a sentence, evolved into a conversation, which unfolded certain similarities between cities and countries in transition.

Kindly instruct, in a whispering hush, your recollection of an image of a praying Palestinian man, already in a position of *خشوع* (mistranslated into: humility) being attacked by a man from the Israeli Occupying Forces (IOF). Continue, to sparsely explain, how that image invited questions about weight, force, power, tongues, pre-language and a shipwreck. Instruct swiftly, with your hands and gestures, the notions of power being inflicted upon *downwards* versus the power of a body releasing itself from rubble *upwards*. Please make sure, prior to the discussion, that your translator would make sense of postpositive placement of adjectives to understand the provided Portuguese text; similar to a poor familiarity with Spanish and unlike the standard practice in English.

I cannot mistranslate. I don't even know how.

ΛΞΘ οΘ οΛϚοΘ
οΙΚΟϚ ΛΞ +οΓοο+ [tâmour]
ΛοϚΙΥΗ οΙϚοΟ [anzar]
Λο+οΗΞ +οϚΛΞ+ [tasadith]
ΘοΗΞ+ ΘοΗΞ+
ΘοΗΞ+ ΛΞΛΙΥ +οΗΘοϚ+ [tapsuit]

We were longing for times,
That would've had to happen
We will harvest the land
You will come under the names
That we've called you before
Anzar, Tlaloc, Simbi
The Palm trees will rise
ΘοΗΞ+, ΘοΗΞ+, ΘοΗΞ+ ! [*Salit, Salit, Salit !*]
Uprise for the black spring

გზისპირა

მე ვხედავ მიწას, რომელიც იწვის.
კლდეები ეხვევა მზის საკვამურს
მწვანე ზოლები ხაზავს გზებს
ნარშავი ჯერ ყლაპავს,
შემდეგ კი ათავისუფლებს უცნობ სილუეტებს.

წყლის ქერქად გადავიქეცი
ვფარავ ასფალტს,
ვირეკლავ ცას.

სატვირთო მანქანა თხევადი სხეულივით ეცემა მიწას,
მისი კუთხეები იღვრება,
მიახლოვდება და ისევ მკვრივდება.
მცენარეების ფოთლების ორთქლი
აქცევს მწერებს
ისევ ათავისუფლებს მათ

ცხელი ჰაერი არღვევს მიმართულებებს

ყველა წინადადება კარგავს სასვენ ნიშნებს,
ხანდახან
ბლაგვდება
ერთმანეთში იზილება

ასე მითხრეს, სიცხე „ მთლიანად ყლაპავს შორეულ სხეულებს“
ზოგ შემთხვევაში,
სხეულის საზღვრები ირღვევა,
იღვრება მდგრად განუსაზღვრელობაში.

Chiara for Diyae

I gather my water fortune, I count almost each drop of water I need for my face, for my mouth, for my ears, for my body.

Each drop a piece of my body.

What is water? Who said water does not have colour, taste, or smell.... H₂O, is this it?

What is this ecstasy that opens the epidermis to take us there, across the body, in its regions where we can get closer to butterflies' impressions?

Water is the air that distills the palpable depth of light.

Water... the murderers' water, mixed with blood of the thirsty, of those who risk their life for water.

Water that lit up Bedouin wars in ancient times.

Water that allows better conditions of negotiations, for those whose dried-out humanity remains untouched by water.

We have been
transformed into guardians of pipes.
We stalk the sound of the water that we've been made to wait for so long.
The subtlest gurgling heralds the onset of celebrations.

We gather all that has been granted to us by mercy. All hollow objects prepare themselves to become vessels for water: plates, mugs, deep pockets of old leather jackets, carved bones, the palm of our desiring hands.

For me and those like me, who are cauterising their wounds with wounded water, I present you with other names and words, and feelings, and images of water.

I present you with

ponds, streams, rivers, seas,
morning dew,
sperm, youth,
rejections,
sweat,
irritated gallbladders,
laughs,
suspicion,
greed,
sores,
parties,
diseases,
tides,
losses,

and others
and others
and others

and others...

Еще раз – напомни мне, человек, каково наказание за геноцид?
Что знают законы, созданные простыми смертными, о том, насколько огромен укус Зверя? И какого другого зверя мы призываем, чтобы он помог нам это понять? Что говорят эти звери?
Есть ли справедливость достаточно широкая, чтобы объять все украденные жизни?
Есть ли время достаточно долгое, чтобы вместить наказание виновных?
Сколько еще оборотов вокруг солнца мы должны совершить? Неужели солнце еще не устало от нас?
Должны ли мы наказать и самих себя за то, что поверили в это? Это... Что видели Это? Слышали Это? Должны ли мы?
Какой дорогой нам идти назад?
Как нам вернуться назад?
Куда нам идти?
Почему мы продолжаем верить в сфабрикованные фантазии и сказки смертных?
Куда нам идти?
Что мы все это время ели? Корм воображаемых «завтра», а иные – суп из стали и гнили.
Как мне сказать об этом иначе?
Как мне вернуться назад?
Сколько раз еще я должен родиться?
Удастся ли мне пожить?
Куда нам идти?
Что нам взять с собой?
Может ли одна душа быть свидетелем тысяч жизней?
Еще раз – куда нам отсюда идти?

وَضِعَ ضَعُضَةً لِلْمَوْضُوعِ
تَحْتَ وَزْنٍ مُفْرَطٍ
لِلْمَوَاضِيْعِ، الَّتِي نَفَّتْ
بِتَزَايِدِ
كَيْفَ لَنَا اِنْ نَزِنَ حَزْنُهَا؟
تَحْتَ اَوْزَانِ اَلْسِنَةٍ غَارِقَةٍ
تُودُ اِنْ تَنْفِي نَفْسَهَا مِنَ الرُّكَامِ
لُغَةً لَاهِيَةً، مُثَابِرَةً، لِدَّ"هُوَ"
زَائِدَةً، مَجْرَّاةً

نوع معين من الحياة أليسون جريمالدي دوناهو

بهاء نوفمبر
هناك نوع معين من الحياة
أن نقفز مسرعين إلى صقيع الماء
ونلامس سخونة الحافة
معرفة خاصة جدًا للمعاناة
صغيرة كفاية لتكون طفيفة
وكل ما يدور يمكن أن يكون
صغيرًا وطفيفًا على كل امرئ

هناك نوع معين من الحياة
بكل ما تحمل من خصوصيات وغرائب
نوع معين في الحياة مدونة مبتكر
من الأخطاء وأحادية اللغة
من سرقاتها وسخائها
من يقظاتها ونعاسها

بهاء نوفمبر مصنوع
من الانهماؤ وحفلة
من فقدان الشهية
لإمكانية
ابتلاعك كاملاً
الكثير من الكوامل اللانهائية
كل منهم منفردٌ ومعين
في اكتماله

بهاء نوفمبر الذي وجب عليه
ان يجعل الأيام أقصر
ولكنها تبدو وكأنها
يومٌ واحدٌ فقط
يستمرُّ إلى الأبد
والشمسُ تبتعدُ
بشكل ملموس عن يدي

هناك نوع معين من الحياة
مصنوع من الخضروات المسلوقة
الاستيقاظ قبل الفجر
شامةً في وسط ظهرك
قد تكون مصنوعة من احباطاتك
والحسرات التي إن كنتي محظوظةً
تكون أيضًا احباطات

شيء يحترق قد يبدو لين
شيء ذهبي قد يبدو خدعة للعين
الآن، هناك معرفة
وعلينا أن نتعايش معها

COM
VISI

A certain kind of life

november splendor
there is only a certain kind of life
so we go rushing into cold waters
go brushing up against the hot brim
knowing very particular suffering
so small to be negligible happening
all around can also be neither
small nor negligible for everyone

there is only a certain kind of life
in its own specificities and particularities
a certain kind of life made of its
own mistakes and monolingualisms
its own thieveries and generousities
its own gettings up and its own goings to sleep

november splendor made
of a downpour and a party
of a loss of appetite
at the prospect
of devouring you whole
so many infinite wholes
each discrete and particular
in their completeness

november splendor that ought
to make the days shorter
but they feel like
just one day
going on forever
and the sun tangibly
further and further from my hands

there is only a certain kind of life
it can be made of boiled vegetables
waking before dawn
a mole at the center of yr back
it can be made of daily boredoms
and heartbreaks which if yr lucky
are also boredoms
something burning might look soft
something golden might be a trick of the eye
now there is this knowledge
now we have to live with it

There's a certain kind of life
that's made of boiled vegetables. Waking
up before dawn with a
young woman in the middle
of your back can be made of your frustrations
and regrets, which if you're lucky...

باطات ايضا

A certain kind of life

November splendor

There is a certain type of life that
has an outlet directed to the cold of water
and the heat of the edge. We know

a certain type of suffering, a very
special knowledge of suffering.
Small is a euphemism for it to be minor,
and everything that goes on can
be small and pleasant for every person.

There is a certain kind of life
With all the peculiarities and oddities of a

certain type of life, God is a certain innovator

Of errors and materialistic language

From its thefts and generosity from
its vigilance and its people

The splendor of November is a creative

creation of selfishness, a "drip" and
"party" of anorexia, the

possibility of

swallowing a whole work,

many infinite completenesses, each of them

individual and specific from

its completion.

The splendor of November that

should make the days shorter

and painful, but they seem

just one day that

lasts forever and the

sun is tangibly

moving away from my hand.

Burning may appear soft

ليس د
من ذبي قد يبر خده للعين

knowledge of BR Alaa, Janab
pension with her and we have to

Caption: Google-translated image of Allion's poem, from hand-written Arabic to English.

الترجمان

هل يستطيع المرء امتلاك لغتين؟ هل بإمكانه أن يبرع فيهما معاً؟ قد لا نهتدي إلى جواب ما لم نطرح سؤالاً آخر: هل يمتلك المرء لغة من اللغات؟ أتذكر أنني سمعت كلاماً لم أعثر بعد على مرجعه، يصف فيه أحد القدماء علاقته بالعربية، فيقول: «هزمتها فهزمتني، ثم هزمتها فهزمتني»، مشيراً إلى أن علاقته بها متوترة، وأن الحرب بينهما سجال، مرة له ومرة عليه؛ ولكن الكلمة الأخيرة لها، لهذه الكائنة الشرسة التي تأبى الخضوع والانقياد. ينتهي القتال دائماً بانتصارها، ولا يجد المرء بُدّاً من مهادنتها ومسالمتها والاستسلام لها، وإنّ على مفضل.

هذا الكلام مع لغة واحدة، مع اللغة، فكيف ذلك مع لغتين أو أكثر؟ أليس ذلك من شأنه أن يخلق لغة جديدة، يمزج فيها لغات، يخلق لغة مع ما يخلقه من زبده مستوحاة من لغات أخرى؟ هذا الموضوع يستحق إلى حد ما، إلى كتاب لا يعرف بالكتابة، بل بالكلام، مع العلم أن في حقله عدة مقالات أخرى، كما في بعض المقامات.

٢٧

Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language - Abdelfattah Kilito

مَشْتَعِي دَوِي

تَبُوا

كيف الواحد يملك لغتين؟ (0:11) هو الواحد يتعلمهم كيف كيف؟ (0:21) مرات ما نلقوش الاجابة لعند ما نسألو سؤال تاني. (0:29) هو الواحد بقدر يملك أي لغة؟ (0:39) نتذكر سمعت حاجة، مصدر مزال ملقبتهش من وين بالزبط. (0:56) على واحد من القدم (1:01) اللي دوي علي علاقته باللغة العربية (1:08) وقال: (1:12) غلبتها، بعدين غلبتي، بعدين غلبتها، بعدين غلبتي مرة ثانية علاقته باللغة العربية واعرة (1:27) والحرب بيناتهم فوق ولوطا (1:33) أما اللغة (1:53) كائن واعر وماكن (2:01) ما يببش يخضع (2:08) وديما عندها الكلمة الأخيرة (2:15) المعركة ديما اتم بانتصارها (2:20) وهذا يخلي الواحد معنداش أي خيار الا انه يدير هدنة، يستسلم، لكن هو قاعد رافض.

مَشْتَعِي كَلَامِي

إِنجِي

(0:03) هل ممكن شخص يستولي على لغتين؟ (0:12) هل يعدر يجيد لغتين بنفس القدر؟ (0:22) ممكن ما نعرفش الإجابة لحد ما نسأل سؤال تاني. (0:26) هل ممكن لشخص إنه يستحوذ على أي لغة؟ (0:34) أنا فاكرة إني سمعت حاجة مصدرها مش فادرة أحده، عن شخص منذ قديم الزمن. (0:45) اللي وصف علاقته باللغة العربية بالشكل التالي. (0:51) أنا غلبتها، بعدين غلبتي، بعدين غلبتها، بعدين غلبتي تاني. (1:00) علاقته باللغة كانت حادة. (1:03) الحرب بينهم كان فيها انتصارات وهزيمة (1:14) بس اللغة، الكائن الشرس ده، كانت بترفض التطوع. (1:22) دايماً عندها الكلمة الأخيرة. (1:26) المعركة بتنتهي بانتصارها. (1:29) وده بيخلي الواحد معداموش أي اختيار غير إنه يعمل هدنة، يستسلم، حتى لو بالرفض.

[um endereço de um cartão postal
um nome ao lado do seu nome]

falo ao lado dos meus ancestrais, não contra eles
coreografo como te chamaria
coreografo como te buscaria
numa grafia
ao chamar meu nome perto do teu nome
não consistentemente:
ao perder o cartão em trânsito...
entre tantos outros

genealogias sem documentos
em línguas estrangeiras,
em tons impostos

[mas ainda esperamos futuros postais

Danae for Noemi

Ποιητική αντι-βιογραφία

Περπατάμε σε πέτρινα μονοπάτια των οποίων τα απόκρημνα αναχώματα
γνωρίζεις καλά, κάποιες φορές ανάμεσα σε μυρωδιές μανιταριών αρχαίων
φυλλοσιών

Τα πέντε μου χρόνια κριτσανίζονται κάτω από τις σόλες μου σαν χαλίκια που
σπάζονται από ένα εχθρικό παρόν,

φτιαγμένο από τριξίματα
φτιαγμένο από δωμάτια άδεια και μέρη ξένα

Μυρωδιά από σίδηρο
ηχώ από τους κροτάφους

Γέρνω
και αγγίζω την υγρή φθινοπωρινή γη

Χαϊδεύω
την πράσινη θάλασσα από βρύα πάνω στην οποία γλιστράμε σιωπηλά.

2

Άκου:
Σε είδα να φτάνεις εκεί

ξύνοντας την επιφάνεια του ξεφλουδισμένου γύψου με νύχια ήδη
κουρασμένα

μου θύμισες την έντονη μυρωδιά των ελαιώνων, την πούδρα των καστανιών
των γλυκών πεύκων που μαζέψαμε για να ξεχάσουμε το κενό

μεταξύ των υπολειμμάτων, των ερειπίων και
των αμμόλοφων που ολισθαίνουν μεταξύ των πτυχών των δακτύλων,
εμποτισμένοι με αλάτι

ως ηφαίστειο

σε είδα να φτάνεις.

Πες μου πώς γίνεται
να αλλάζει κάποιος το δέρμα του σαν φίδι
χωρίς κανέναν να τον δει

الباحثة ... هي، التي تبحث

بجثت عن جُرأتي في كل أرجائي، ولم أجد
فَرَكْتُهَا، هَجَرْتُهَا، وَأَكَلْتُ المشي حافية
خوفاً، حذراً من أن تَحْتَرِقَ قوقعتي

كل يوم على الشاطئ أجد... أجدها،
حُرُوفُهَا المبهمة وسط الضباب
أترقبها

في كل مرة تغمس، تغطس، تغرق يداها
تلتقط دون تردد

كل شيء

ترفع يداها إلى أفق عينها
تفحص هيئة الأشياء وتقولها

تُهمهم... نتكلم لغة لا أفهمها
تحاول أن تبحث عن شيء يمثلها دون تجميده، دون تجريده
كم أود أن تلامسني دون أن تجردني
من الألوان.. ومن الظل

هي لا تريد أن تحتل

هي تحاول فحسب

هي تريد شيئاً آخر، شيئاً بسيطاً

شيئاً لتضعه في كأسها الزجاجي

طحالب

أصداف

صدف

عطر مياه مالحة أو عطر زهر البرتقال

بالصدفة...

هي لا تبحث عن شيء محدد

هي تنقذ، لا أعرف ما الذي تنقذ

هي تحس بثقل العيون حين تُحُطُّ على أفقها..

أبقي نفسي بعيدة، أترقبها من على صخرة

هي المبهمة وسط الضباب

وأُكَلِّ حروفها بما تبقى لي من عطرها

Cities & Desire

OROPA

Instead of arriving, now we shall leave.

My presence in this city is missing.

In this city you will see me everywhere.

—J.L. Hüber

Oropa can be left behind in two ways—by foot or by death.

Leaving behind the mountain, the streams. the small bonfires of the night she feels both nostalgia and liberation. There is no knowledge of the future but equally no knowledge of the past. The first step leads downward, the hill steep and the earth dry. Ground crackles under foot as if rain has not come for millenia. A small lizard runs by, a moth lands on a branch.

The journey is not long but it is arduous to arrive at the next town. She feels her knees and the weight of her prayers. She has left them all behind and once the gate closes at her back all recollection of those sacred wishes will melt into the subconscious. They might, and might is the real word here, return in future dreams, when she can see this mountain only as a foggy memory.

Below, after having reached the village, after talking to the baker of foreign bread, after discerning stamps for letters she no longer has a reason to send, below in the village the villagers look at her perplexed. “On that hill there is no life,” they say. “Just look, look, it is a glacier, it is only frozen water.”

Ә [ä] exprime la surprise, le plaisir. "Ә!" - est le son exprimé par l'enfant, souriant en attendant de jouer.

І [i] est cri silencieux d'une douleur soudaine, qui s'arrête aussi vite qu'il a commencé, avant de devenir un sanglot infini ЫЫЫЫ.

Ң [ng] est le chant guttural du chaman, et dans les mots *ashiq* and *arish* – amour et cosmos -, nous retrouvons F [gh]. Leurs contours embrassent l'infini.

Les trois Us Kazakh entretiennent un lien particulier. Un Y (ü) chaleureux peut devenir un Y froid, prévenant le danger (comme poison) qui peut à son tour changer pour un Y (ū), mécontent et impatient, comme les mots *ыр* (*battre*), *ұят* (*honte*), *дұшпан* (*ennemi*)...¹

Қ [Q] signifie sarcasme. La sensation d'un rire au fond de la gorge, comme une blague suspendue dans le temps, jamais partagée.

Avec Ә [ö], les lèvres se resserrent comme pour embrasser. Ә se cache au coeur du mot - "söz" (mot)². Sans le Ә, le mot perd son centre, devient interminable, un sooooooz, (prolonger)³ un délai administratif sans fin.

Һ est le murmure du corps en vie, imperceptible à une température de 37 degrés, une inspiration et une expiration laissant des traces sur les miroirs de poche. Sans le Һ, le corps inerte revient à la terre.

¹ "U" is a Kazakh noun for Poison. "Ur" means "Beat" (imperative); "uyat" stands for "Shame", "Dushpan" is the word for "Enemy".

² "Söz" is a Kazakh noun for Word

³ "Soz" is a Kazakh verb (imperative) for "Stretch, prolong"

Un poème pour Joyce & A Poem for Joy

Chère Joyce.

Dear Joy.

_ Dear, Dear, Dear...

as-tu répété,

but Dear who? Who is the text speaking to?

Le texte que tu as posé entre nous,

sur le tapis,

is a counter-text, not a curatorial text

tu l'as pensé comme une correspondance.

You were unhappy with the existing French translation

provided by the institution,

but you could not refuse it.

Le mot correspondances,

They were so generous.

je l'entends au pluriel,

et j'imagine une série de mots

Correspondences:

articulés les uns aux autres

par une chaîne de liens souples et lâches

a loose string of dissonant meanings

pas toujours bien ajustés

I always misspell the verb "lose,"

it becomes "loose"

comme cette clé qui rentre dans la serrure

hence Nona's confusion

when I asked you all

how the languages you cohabit with,

or that inhabit you,

relate to Mirene's verbs,

mais refuse obstinément d'ouvrir la porte

"languages like objects that we could smoke, lick, or lose."

de l'espace dans lequel nous travaillons.

Are languages really comparable to objects?

Is an object smokable?

T'est-il déjà arrivé d'oublier
ta langue
chez une personne aimée ?

Nous partons d'un titre,
We depart from a title,
qui n'est pas toujours de toi,
or rather, titles,
l'auteure,
which were translated and retranslated,
qui se charge et se recharge au gré de ses passages
entre les langues,
recharged,
comme on le dirait d'une pile électrique,
like an electric battery,
avec ce que cela implique de perte,
a dance of particles, words,
de dépense,
constantly alternating
d'immatérialité,
d'excès insaisissable
between loss and excess
dans la traduction.
in the movement of translation.

Partir d'un titre
A drifting title, always escaping full capture,
qui parfois se déguise en question,
always in disguise,
parfois séjourne dans l'infinitif,
et dans ce mouvement
in which a "we" appears and disappears,
perd, gagne ou retrouve un « nous ».
*according to verbal tenses that refuse to surrender
to fixation.*

Un nous qui demande à qui ce titre s'adresse,
qui sera touché*e par cette question ?
Who will hear the question

if they do not listen?

Where is we?

*The question echoes the tissage of voices and stories
poignantly weaving through the images you filmed
in Tripoli.*

_ L'anglais est devenu *my writing language* préférée,
as-tu dit.

_ *Let's check* le dictionnaire des synonymes,
ai-je proposé.

Pour traduire *scale*, échelle n'est pas satisfaisant.

Trop vertical, trop mathématique.

On pourrait traduire *scale* par amplitude, magnitude.

Magnitude

a cette dimension géologique,

holds a geological dimension

qui traduit la résonance sismique

that exceeds human comprehension

qui traverse *transcends* les corps

despite our instruments of measure.

face à la destruction de ce que nous devrions habiter.

It reverberates inside our bodies,

imprints them,

inhabits them.

C'est le séisme qui, en retour, habite « nous »

et que le langage échoue à décrire.

What you are interested in,

is the failure of language to describe such events.

Could we find an alternative language

to describe the impossible

in translation?

A language for crisis and ruins.

Une langue

_ *to return home,*

a dit Omar,

en pleurant.

Une langue pour rappeler la joie,
aussi.

*A language to reclaim joy,
too.*

La joie de cet autre nous fragile,

*The joy of another we,
a fragile we,*

irréconcilié,

an irreconciled we,

emerging (un verbe que nous n'avons pas traduit)

qui se fabrique dans le geste imparfait

from translation.

de la traduction.

« Nous faisons parfois l'expérience d'événements dont la magnitude nous excède et nous laisse à vide. Le langage échoue alors à les décrire, ils restent confinés au domaine de l'affect, du vécu. Dans ce schisme — cette perturbation — entre ce qui résiste à la description et ce que cela nous fait, d'autres possibilités se dessinent »,

did you write

in another language

Et ensemble,

in the presence of other languages

ce n'était pas facile,

ce n'était pas parfait,

in the presence of other, assembled bodies

mais nous l'avons traduit.



© Mariam Natroshvili & Detu Jincharadze, *Burn after reading*, mixed media, 2018, curated by Nona Markarian, Misamarti festival, Batumi. Photo: Liya Morozova

Notes

The English translation of this sentence is what this sentence means however, translation fails in finding an equivalent to the way “this kind of dream” is evoked in the Georgian language.

Also, there are many tenses that are present in this sentence.

In Arabic, I decided to translate it to

لقد رأوا هذا الحلم

Cara Virginie,
Querida Virginie,

Comment on traduit ce qui est intraduisible ?

How can we translate what is untranslatable?

Tu as pensé ça avec nous et écrit, écrit, écrit dans tes cahiers pendant ces jours.

You have been thinking about this with us those days, and you have been writing, writing, writing in your notebooks.

How do we all manage to find a common ground and stick to it, despite what has been, historically, dividing us? Omar, Emma, Akina, and I have been widely speaking about this in the kitchen.

Vir asked me to translate your poem into Italian and Portuguese. Is it possible ?

Joyce, Joy, Gioia, Felicidade.

On perd quoi, dans la traduction ? On gagne quoi ?

Comment puis-je m'adresser Joyce en portugais sans perdre son nom, sa vie, ses films et ses langues?

Why do I even need to turn to English to explain this, to ask it?

Now that I am not physically in the same room as you all anymore, please let me ask:

What is joy for you?

Cosa é esser felice per voi?

C'est quoi la joie pour vous ?

O que é ser feliz para vocês?

ما هو الفرح بالنسبة لك؟

Τι είναι για σένα η χαρά?

(do those sentences even make sense, as they are written in Arabic and Greek?)

Is joy a sound, a place, a memory, or the smell of the people you love?

Is it being able to protect our communities and build our futures? Is it freedom?

Is it being allowed to live, love, and take care of our peoples?

I might have got lost in translation /// REWIND

Joyce e Virginie sono sedute sul tappeto, in mezzo alla stanza (l'ho visto in una foto scattata da Vir). Dietro di loro, il fiume Cervo scorre. Il rumore dell'acqua accompagna la loro conversazione. Due finestre ampie e luminose lasciano passare la luce chiara del mattino, mentre loro due parlano leggendo il foglio stampato che

Joyce ha portato, e che parla del suo film. Staranno parlando in inglese o in francese? O forse in entrambe le lingue? Parlano assieme, traducono assieme, ma questa volta è Virginie che deciderà che forma prenderà la trasposizione del dialogo tra loro due. Fa parte di questo esercizio che abbiamo scelto di fare assieme, a coppie ma tutti assieme, per tradurre quello che abbiamo vissuto in questi giorni.

Virginie se ne va, viaggia, e sceglie una poesia.

Me ne vado anche io, anch' io "traduco" a distanza.

Joyce e Virginie estão sentadas no tapete, no meio do quarto (vi-o numa foto que o Vir tirou). Atrás delas, corre o rio Cervo. O som da água acompanha a sua conversa. Duas janelas amplas e luminosas deixam passar a luz clara da manhã, enquanto elas falam lendo o papel impresso que a Joyce trouxe, e que fala do filme dela. Estarão falando em inglês ou em francês? Ou em ambas as línguas? Falam juntas, traduzem juntas, mas desta vez é Virginie quem escolherá a forma que vai tomar a transposição do diálogo entre elas as duas.

Faz parte desse exercício que escolhemos fazer juntos, em duplas, mas todos juntos, para traduzir o que vivemos nesses dias.

Virginie vai embora, viaja, e escreve uma poesia.

Também vou embora, também "traduzo" à distância.

"Cara Joyce.

Querida Felicidade.

_ Cara, Cara, Cara...

hai ripetuto,

ma cara chi? A chi parla il testo?

Il testo che hai appoggiato tra noi,

sul tappeto,

é um contra-texto, e não um texto curatorial

lo hai pensato come se fosse una lettera."

Mia madre continua a parlare, senza tregua, senza lasciarmi tradurre veramente e letteralmente le tue parole - *o cotidiano também interfere na forma em que comunicamos. Disseste-me para intervir no teu poema, para ativá-lo em tradução como quisesse. Assim faço.*

How do we deal with translation(s) at a distance? How do we deal with joy, hope, rage, and suffering at a distance? How to deal with absence?

«Nous faisons parfois l'expérience d'événements dont la magnitude nous excède et nous laisse à vide. Le langage échoue alors à les décrire, ils restent confinés au domaine de l'affect, du vécu. Dans ce schisme — cette perturbation — entre ce qui résiste à la description et ce que cela nous fait, d'autres possibilités se dessinent »,

did you write

in another language

Et ensemble,
in the presence of other languages
ce n'était pas facile,
ce n'était pas parfait,
in the presence of other, assembled bodies
mais nous l'avons traduit. »

I have always been forced to deal with absence. With the absence of memory, of letters, of archives, of spoken and transmitted memories; even from the will to remember. Yet, both re-membering, knowing (in the sense of getting aware of) and re-significate are so vital not just to our own understanding of ourselves and of our family history, but also to a much wider awareness of our beloved ones around erasures, violent processes, and ways of overcoming them. To deal with this contradiction is a permanent work of mediation, listening, and questioning. The absence corresponds, at least, to a possibility of creation, of invention. We can think of absence as an empty page, as a translation to an infinite possibility of languages. Languages we can exchange in infinite combinations, whether we can speak them or not.

Virginie's text now depicts Joyce's feelings towards the French version of the curatorial text the institution gave her:

“Não estavas contente com a tradução que já existia, em francês, elaborada pela instituição, mas não pudeste recusá-la.”

How do we hack language? How do we hack institutions?

Virginie ora scrive a proposito della parola corrispondenza – correspondances, in francese, che io ho tradotto con “lettera”. *“Correspondência”, em português, mas é singular e não plural como em francês, o jogo de palavras não rende justiça ao original. E agora ?*

“Le mot correspondances, *They were sogenerous.*
je l'entends au pluriel,
et j'imagine une série de mots
Correspondences »

(Have you seen it? Even brackets differ between languages: “» |} &etc.)

Adesso inizia un paragrafo che non posso tradurre:

parla di una serie di parole legate le une alle altre, come da una catena.

Il testo parla, se lo dovessi tradurre letteralmente, di una catena di legami, di stringhe, di lacci delle scarpe. Questa parola, “stringhe”, oggi in italiano si usa poco. Oggi la gente, forse, direbbe lacci: forse perdiamo davvero le lingue, forse a un certo punto davvero confondiamo e ci confondiamo su cosa sia una “mothertongue”.

Esse conceito de uma corrente atando palavras, na minha língua, oprime, reprime, que ata e que prende. Não foi isso que Virginie quis dizer. Ela pensou, parece-me, em algo mais fluido, mas gentil, mas leve. Ha pensato – credo - a un susseguirsi di parole, che a volte si legano, a volte si slegano, proprio come i lacci delle scarpe, in “ a loose string of dissonant meanings »

“Have you ever forgotten your language near a person you love?” – she asks.

Then, she mentions:

“A language for crisis and ruins.

Une langue to return home

A language to reclaim joy”

Shall we avoid translating the crisis?

Did I get lost in translation again? // // //

Sì, ci dimentichiamo la nostra lingua tante volte.

Ci dimentichiamo le nostre lingue tante volte.

Como a Mirene dizia, será que alguma língua foi, alguma vez, verdadeiramente nossa?

Há uma língua a que possamos recorrer, como um abrigo, em tempos de crise, de destruição? Há uma língua que seja casa quando, como dizia Achebe, “things fall apart”?

Volto à tua pergunta, Virginie: “Have you ever forgotten your language nearby a person you love?” Esqueci, muitas vezes. Todos esquecemos, eventualmente. Nessuno è esente dall’oblio, dalla crisi, dallo sconforto. Ma, come ci ricordi nel tuo testo, nessuno è esente dalla gioia. Non possiamo permetterci di esserlo. James Baldwin ha detto, in un’intervista abbastanza crudele, con gli occhi pieni di lacrime: “Love has never been a popular movement, and no one’s ever wanted really to be free. The world is held together, really it is, held together, by the love and passion of a very few people”.

Omar says in his language you’d translate this for:

لم يكن الحب أبدًا حركة شعبية ولم يرغب أحد أبدًا في أن يكون حرًا. فإن العالم متماسك، حقًا متماسك، بالحب والشغف الموجود عند القليل من الناس.

Avons-nous traduit ton poème, maintenant ?

Parlons-nous tous la même langue, au moins dans l’espace de ce moment-là ?

Avons-nous trouvé un «nous», «noi» ; o «nós» ?

Serons-nous capables de re-trouver ce «nós» nel presente e in un presente prossimo?

Seremos capazes de sermos livres?

Isn’t this a poem for joy?

Não será esse um poema para a Liberdade?

A poem for freedom

Una poesia per la libertà

Hijacking the Space of the Bio¹

They pick up the words their fathers might waste. But then again, perhaps poets are the ones who waste what their fathers would save. They know translation is every act of writing and that it is endless and boundless. They know the world relies on these endless translations but they also make a pledge to be unreliable when it serves. They are not translators so much as a tightrope walker between two unreliable dictionaries. Unreliability, a choice, a desire, a form of refusal. They know translators are the keepers of secrets.

They share a table full of baby carrots, Arak, Baklava, and paper. They also stand for the right to vote for all immigrants and residency papers for all undocumented ppl living in Europe. They gather across the room for coffee and tea pods next to a (not) working printer. They listen, they invite, they suggest; they open, they care.

They whisper, for much has been whispered into their ear. They vibrate according to landscapes accorded to be tended towards, purposefully. Their spelling composes memories in transits they do not know from. They acknowledge that both Europe and the USA rely on the work provided by workers from the global south.

Sometimes their tongues clench, clinch, glitch, as they address each other. 404 error 404 error, their tongues keep crafting spaces in between.

They spoke aloud languages unshared, they uttered alphabets their tongues hadn't touched before. They stretched their mouths and opened up space to calibrate to each other's vocabularies. Somewhere between the mouth and the larynx they held space for what couldn't be said in words.

They only drank a glass of water a day for one week. They stand for the recognition of art labour and thus for a minimum wage available for all artists and art workers. As of 2023, they have collectively presented questions of a question of a process of something. They call for more understanding towards the definition of "productivity."

¹ In his article 'Notes on Craft: Writing in the Hour of Genocide', in *Protean Magazine* (2023), Fargo Nissim Tbakhi called for "hijacking the space of the bio" as one of the possible strategies of escalating the narrative and meaningfully sabotaging the infrastructure of the arts. This strategy is modeled after Rasha Abdulhadi, who recently published a hijacked bio alongside a poem on poetry.onl.

Meanwhile, they searched for new meanings, for meaning to say what they mean in times of continued occupation that continue to ridicule, seize and oppress the voices of the oppressed even further.

Between them, they had thoughts in many different languages, and only spoke in their occupied tongue. None of them remembers how they learned English, yet they speak only in it. Everyone nodded, in consensus. A language that oppressed their tongues, taming others who sat on the same tongues.

They try to inhabit linguistic in-betweenness, which is neither there, nor here, neither on land, nor at sea. And in that very in-betweenness they find alternative languages, which do not always consist of words. Their mother tongues can be smelled, but their father lands cannot be traced.

They share a poetic relationship with the space between two languages. They think it's attractive.

They are pursuing acts that reveal the importance of (not)translating, while collectively vocalizing words, phrases and textual karaoke as means of communication and coming together, vibrating multilingual vibrations, through moutherrrrrtongues, imposed tongues, re-learned tongues, limbo tongues in search of valuable linguistic encounters without compromises, or isolating labor.

We call upon refusing to engage in catering for a discourse whose aim is to perpetuate silence. In working across non-ethical modes of working which undervalue cultural and artistic labor. As we gather today under the circumstances which are proving our world to be a place that is becoming unlivable, we value process over form, solidarity over intellectual debates, taking a stance over remaining silent. Departing from the belief that artists can act as social and civic agents.

Contributions by/with/from

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