A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred & Political

Edited by
Natasha Sardzoska and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly
With an Introduction by the Editors


About the Editors

Natasha Sardzoska, poet, writer, polyglot translator, holds a PhD in anthropology from the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris and University of Bergamo. She has published poetry books, short stories, essays, literary translations, columns, and selected poems in distinguished literary reviews worldwide. She attends international poetry festivals, performing at the Academy of Arts in Berlin and at the Yaffa Theatre in Tel Aviv, among others. Learn more at her Versopolis Poetry profile and her WordPress site.

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly is a professor in the School of Public Administration and in the European Studies Program. He is also the Director of the European Union Centre for Excellence at the University of Victoria, where is also Director of the Jean Monnet Centre, and holds a Jean Monnet Chair in European Union Border and Region Policy. He leads the Borders in Globalization research program and is Chief Editor of BIG_Review.
Introduction to A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred & Political

Natasha Sardzoska

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly

For instance, in 2012, The Paris Review published an interview of James Fenton, famed professor of poetry at Oxford. There, Fenton discussed his works on wars and children in exile. Borders are an omnipresentvoice in his works; yet as noted by Saamans Heaney, Fenton’s verse ‘re-established the borders of a civil kingdom of letters with history and literature and the intimate affections would be allowed their say’. More recently, The Paris Review has published ‘From Border Districts’ by Gerald Murnane (2016) about the gendered crossing of an aisle in a church, Marcoito Hernandez Castillio’s (2020) short essay ‘Going Blind At the Border’, and the works of Troy Michie (2020), which illustrate the complexity of growing up multilingual along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Similarly, in 2017, Poetry International published a ‘Forum: on Poets and Borders’. With texts from Nylia Martinez, Ming Di, Jorge Ortega, Sandra Alcosser, and a few others, this special sectionfocuses on poetry and borders. Borders in Globalization Review invited Natasha Sardzoska, the journal’s poet editor, to curate the collection, because contrary to popular assumptions that poetry is limited to the literary world and literary criticism, poets play a vital role in shaping boundaries, social and borders, and in politics, poets have been fundamental to criticism and dissent. For instance, poet without rival, Percy Besche Shelley’s famous verse affirms, ‘Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world’ (Shelley 2009). The following pages demonstrate the importance of poetry for borders, boundaries, and more tormented and tormenting. Hence, a world poetry of the isolated lyrical voice, outreaching the movements, crossing the world becomes a space of solitude and alienation: a nonsense—the word becomes the body of motion and nonsense—the words becomes the body of motion and the world becomes a space of solitude and alienation: a non-space. In poetry everything migrates in the space of invisible borders. Every element, every verb, every word migrates. Meanings migrate. Images migrate. In poetry every boundary is crossed, breached, reinvented, reversed, abolished, or established the boundary of the transcendent, the transcendental sense, the boundary of selfhood. Through often ungraspable abstractions and analogies, the poetic image breaks through with a kind of violence. The semantically dissociated word reveals unprecedented experiences, feelings, and motions and reduces the form to its purity, to its light, to its abstraction. The haphazard detachment from the conventionally accepted context or meaning. Poetry raises mental maps. Poetry establishes emotional cartographies. Poetry blurs paradigms of borders, raises boundaries and destroys them at the same time revealing their reverse sides. Poetry touches the untouchable zone, tells the unnameable. The tectonic shifts composed of the multifaceted layers of texture of the poetic body go far beyond the subjective poetry of the isolated lyrical voice, outreaching the nomenclature of an outside world where humanity is more and more torn and tormented, a world where the only visible boundary is the strict and cruel
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Agi Mishol

Agi Mishol is one of Israel’s most prominent and popular poets, and the author of 16 volumes of poetry. Mishol was born in Romania in 1947 to Hungarian-speaking Holocaust survivors. When she was four-years old, her family immigrated to Israel and settled in Gedera. After completing her BA and MA degrees in Hebrew Literature at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mishol launched a literature and creative-writing teaching career, at Ben-Gurion University, Tel Aviv University, and The Hebrew University (where she was Poet-in-Residence in 2007), among other institutions. In 2006, she served as the artistic director of the Jerusalem International Poetry Festival, and since 2011, she has led the Helicon School of Poetry in Tel Aviv. She lives in Moshav Kfar Mordechai, where she grows peaches, persimmons, and pomegranates.

Mishol’s poems have been widely translated and published in books and various anthologies around the world. Some of her poems were composed by various Israeli musicians. Her accolades include the Zbigniew Herbert International Literary Award (2019), the Newman Prize for life achievement in literature (2018), the Italian LericiPea Award (2014), and the Israeli Prime Minister and Yehuda Amichai literature prizes (1995 and 2002, respectively). Mishol was awarded three honorary doctorates— from Tel Aviv University (2014), the Weizmann Institute of Science (2016), and Bar-Ilan University (2018). Facebook: Agi.Mishol.

Row Your Boat

You’re not Noah
and maybe it’s awkward
but you can always
sail in me
like an ark from Ararat
to Ararat
with five showers on deck
a bed to stretch out on
and shades on the porthole,
even a kickbox cabin
and a dovecote,
because I’m a good ark,
made of field rafters,
durable in a deluge,
fabulous at floating,
rising and falling on sea waves
and all my sailors dream on Ritalin.

Distances

There’s a tree by the name of Bauhinia
and there are places named Cricklewood
or Connecticut,
where someone is out running now,
steamy in the morning chill,
and someone else rolls over
to the other side of her dream.
I incline to the east,
the end of the west is far for me,
my wings are no longer wings of flight
and if I do venture out,
most certainly the sign
“Road Narrows” will pop up
the one that makes you swing the steering wheel back
to American Comfort,
where the heart is nothing much
and there is no band-aid for sorrow.

Testimony

Even the wheat weatherglass
shows it’s been months,
that now you can pluck
the stalk from the sheath,
pinch it at the edges
and blow the trumpet
all the way to America –

Agi Mishol

Photography © Pony Brzezinski

Translated by Joanna Chen
João Luís Barreto Guimarães was born in Porto, Portugal, in June 1967. He is a poet and a plastic reconstructive surgeon. His first seven books of poetry were collected in Poesia Reunida (Quetzal, 2011), followed by Você Está Aqui (Quetzal, 2013) and Mediterrâneo (Quetzal, 2016).

False life

I don't recall in which shipwreck you said you were coming.

VITOR SOUSA

On the wall of the school's playground

The word freedom was written

in white chalk

by small children's fingertips

On the walls of history

Freedom has penned their names

With blood

I am a human being

Not an animal

Shouted citizen

Ahmad Abdul Wahab

He filled television screens

With his broken voice

Like a captive who has escaped his jail

He escapes

Having broken the chains of fear and silence

The veins in his neck bulge

His eyes drown in anger

In his lifetime he never read Balzac or Victor Hugo

He knows not Lenin or Karl Marx

In that moment

The ordinary citizen became

Extraordinary.

Selmieh

................. selmieh

They came out in the street while singing for peace

With open chest and clean hands

They sung peace

Freedom .......... Freedom

They came out shouting .......... freedom

With nude chest and hand carrying roses

They sung freedom

Yes, it is the singing that makes

the depth heart of fear

shivers and the crow's mask fell down

A wall that traced the praia não faz de ti um ladrão –
soube que te vais embora do país que não te quis
(prometiam-te o passado querias falar de futuro
separados pelo presente). O vento que sopra lá fora
infuses things with a false life
(it's hard to keep yourself alive in a marsh of dead hours) if the beer you'll be drowning your senses in this afternoon already has more medals than you.

Falsa vida

Não me lembro em que naufrágio disseste que vinhas.

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Yes, it is the singing that makes

the depth heart of fear

shivers and the crow’s mask fell down
The children of Syria are shrouded in their coffin
Like sugar candy in its wrapping
But they are not made of sugar
They are flesh, love and a dream

The roads await you
The gardens await you
The schools and the festive Squares
Await you
Children of Syria

It is so early for you to become birds of heaven
And to play in the sky

Where you from?
— From Syria.
— From which city in Syria?
— I was born in Daraa and I was brought up in Homs
— I spend my youth in Lattakia
— I blossomed in Baniyas
— I bloomed in Dier AlZoor and I burned in Hama and flared up in Edlib
— Blazed in Qameshli
— Slaughtered in Dariya
— Who are you?
— I am who fear it.
— Who will lock it up
— who will stock it up
— Who will burn it up
— I am the one who leaves the trees of the heart for its passage
Mountains kneels to her grandnose
History turns upside down for her
The earth colors for its sun
I am the one
Who yells and outcry in the face of the dictator
I am the one who will not abide except only in the head of the nobles
And do not know except only the hearts of the heroes
I am the one who never compromise and not for sale
I am the bread of life and its milk
My name is Freedom.

Meeting I

i came across you in the thick forest
who are you i wanted to ask your name
i don't feel what kind of plant you are your perianth
develops not only at the top of the stalk
when i speak will you have to
kill me and maybe you have only
hallucinogenic properties i don't know in which language
to ask i am frightened i will turn out to be your enemy
my face is smiling and i can pretend
to be any kind of butterfly i do not blame you for your lack
of scent i am not going to analyse the colour of your penis
just please do not mistake me for a praying mantis

Spotkanie I

natrafiłam na ciebie w gęstym lesie
kim jesteś chciałam cię zapytać o imię
nie czuję jaką jestes rośliną twoj okwiat
rozwija się nie tylko na szczycie pedu
kiedy się odezwę czy będziesz musiał
mnie zabić a może masz tylko działanie
halucynogennie nie wiem w jakim języku
zapytać bo się okazać twoim wrogiem
twarz mam usmiechniętą i mogę udawać
każdego motyla nie mam ci za złe
zapachu nie będę analizowała koloru prącia
tylko proszę nie pomył mnie z modliszką

Grażyna Wojciechowska was born in Poland in 1957, is a poet, translator and active culture manager, graduate of Literary-Artistic Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (2005). She has published six collections of poetry and is the recipient of several Polish poetry awards. Her poetry has been widely anthologized and translated into several languages. Two collections of her work have been made available to French readers by Editions Caractères. Her recent work lies at the intersection of poetry, music and film.
Meeting II

i came across you in the thick forest
the green of our pupils loses itself
loses itself in the yellow wedding ring
and yet
let's aim at each other from the depths of our pupils

when i speak are you going to have
to kill me so many shoot here and they all
fall in the rhythm of blunt music and they all
are as similar to each other as their collars

your pupil is getting ever darker
do you still see the green in my eye

i don't blame you for not remembering the shade
of weightlessness but when i remind you of its scent
will i be able to pretend i am a butterfly that you
dry out in your soldier's survival

Spotkanie II

natrafiłam na ciebie w gęstym lesie
zieleń naszych tęczówek zatraca się
zatraca tak samo żółtawą obrączką
a jednak
celujemy do siebie z czeluści źrenic

kiedyś tędezwę czy będziesz musiał
mnie zabić tuż tutaj strzela a wszyscy
padają w rytm tejej muzyki a wszyscy
są do siebie podobni jak ich kołnierze

twoja źrenica robi się coraz czarniejsza
czy widzisz jeszcze zielien w moim oku
kim jesteś chciałam cię tylko zapytać o
imię chciałam cię zapytać o kolor serca

nie mam ci za zle że nie pamiętasz odcieni
lekkości ale kiedy przypomnę ci jej zapach
czy będę mogła udawać motyla którego ty
zasuszysz w swoim niezbędniku żołnierza

Translated from Polish by Sarah Luczaj

Zlatibor, 48 anni – Djacovica, Kosovo

Conta i centimetri quadrati rimasti illesi
diceva, le stoviglie intatte pur mancando la parete:
a tutela del privato una tenda hanno tirato, una lamiera
e uguale situazione anche agli altri. Nella privazione
sembra molto il poco
e così rimane, velata nella tregua
la stessa luce dello stesso cielo
l'accadere della cena e del risveglio.
Rifatto l'attorno non cambia il senso.
Là dove tu guardi, cambia la famiglia
tolto la casa? Scompare l'amore o perdura?
L'intero suolo è casa, diceva
e dal suo fuoco il fango risplendeva...

Zlatibor, 48 years, Djacovica, Kosovo

Count now the square centimetres left unharmed
he said, the intact crockery even with the wall missing
for the sake of privacy they have drawn a curtain, a metal sheet
and similar situations to the others too. In hardship
little seems a lot
and so remains, shrouded in truce,
the same light of the same sky
the event of the evening meal and of the awakening.
The surroundings rebuilt, the meaning doesn't change.

There where you watch, does the family change
taking away the house? Does love disappear or endure?
The whole land is home, he said
and from his fire the mud was shining.
The Promised Wasteland

I’m pulling you out of the water as if out of your own sorrow. We don’t trust being saved is worthwhile, even before we know, it will take you away from water for most of your life. The second time you encounter it you’ll have to break the water. The desert is wide, wild, wasted, Moses, a landscape so widely open that its inaccessible, no nooks for havens of rest for hiding, for intimacy. The embrace of curvaceous swarthy dunes is abrasive. If sand gets in your eyes you tear. Their tongues bring the opposite of saturation. And penetrate determinedly the land that already had so little to offer. This is when you realize promises better kept unfulfilled and you do not enter.

Arrival

Will it be hard to fall for this one. Does gratitude measure up to happiness? I land in Mexico City. After a long flight, a long-life spouse, children, my shortcomings and short-lived travels. This arrival is long. And so is my becoming. Will this one break me in order to sustain longer in my body? The ability, or disability, to split into different fractures of life. I’m on the lookout for a moon within reach. Compromising on the one of Mexico City that when I turn my back to switches from orange to silver.

Writing on a Brick

It’s daytime on any old day and we wonder: what have we written that can change it all?

La gente avanza sobre el invierno y cruza un puente oxidado en la avenida. Por debajo pasa un río de metales grises, rojos, blancos.

Dice un graffiti: “si no tuvieras miedo, ¿qué harías?”.

Vivimos en una tarde azul. Alguien se queda afuera y la humedad de las baldosas le disuelve los pies como a una figura de arena.

Porque hay cuerpos apretados y gruesos que forman un muro de espaldas, cerrado. Cuerpos que no dejan salir una gota de sombra. Cuerpos que pelean y atesoran la verdad, la maldición.

A mi hija le gustan los graffitis, una vez rayó en la pared del colegio: “más amor, por favor”, y otros hicieron lo mismo después en la calle y en ese muro de espaldas, cerrado.
Es una frontera en ruinas, construida alrededor del tiempo. Adentro quizás qué, sus caras de mármol, un aire convicto, los brazos reunidos sobre el cuello del demonio y esas venas oscuras que tienen cuando la carne es de piedra.

Las naves tiemblan sobre el horizonte, el sol es una piedra con metal.

Apoyado contra el muro bebe ahora un capitán la espuma silenciosa de las horas, y llega tarde al sueño cada noche.

La dársena escondía una sirena entre los fierros carcomidos por la sal.

Pensamos en el frío, en la luna desgarrada por las grúas y soñamos con fantasmas de humedad en la pared.

Es cierto, el cielo ha sido brutal este año, pero ¿qué hemos escrito que lo cambie todo?

Prisca Agustoni is a poet and translator of Swiss origin. She currently lives between Switzerland and Brazil, where she teaches comparative literature at Federal University of Juiz de Fora (BR). She writes (and translates herself) in Italian, French and Portuguese. Her poems have also been translated into German, Rumanian, Macedonian, Croatian, English, Spanish, French and Swedish. Some of her recent publications include Un ciel provisoire (Geneva, Samizdat, 2015), Animal extremo (São Paulo, Patuá, 2017), Casa dos ossos (Juiz de Fora, Macondo, 2017), L’ora zero (Como, 2020) and O mundo mutilado (São Paulo, Quelônio, 2020). Email: prisca.agustoni@yahoo.fr.

Translated by Katherine Hedeen

They don’t know they’re angels, those angels living with us in the camp: used to digging through garbage, in their stomachs they know hunger, in their muscles, a cramping pain.

They scan tongues like fallen fruit rotting on the ground, in a tower of babel made horizontal

here, where Slavic Latin snaps open its seeds slow to flower

and in the day’s liver we distill our alcohol

* The angels, elusive, wander the outskirts of Idomeni:

carrying consorts other specters, faces of the fallen lying in their memory

together they go round and round in limbo, in the camp

where perpetual fugitives occupy the land of pendulums
enquanto esperam
enfileirados
a volta do tempo dos humanos.

A língua não
tem arame farpado nem
renúncia possível:

o refúgio
somos nós,
e as fronteiras perenes
entre as palavras,
portas onde batemos
esperando os vivos
balsa que nos leva
de uma orla a outra

waiting in single file
for the return
of the human age.

The tongue has
no barbed wire,
no denial of entry:

our refuge is nothing
but ourselves
and the enduring borders
between words,

doors on which
we knock waiting
for the living,

barges taking us
from one shore
to the other

Translated by Johnny Lorenz

Sui ponti delle navi, i bambini salvati dal mare
hanno coperte d’argento per il freddo e assomigliano
a piccole uova di Pasqua, pronte per essere aperte.

“Possiamo aprirle, è ora?”, chiedono altri bambini,
icho non sanno che lo statuto dei bambini,
in Occidente, è cambiato. Dei morti in mare
—centocinquanta, oggi— scrivono in molti,
tra cui Annarita, che dichiara di sé un discreto
umanitarismo, e dice: Buon appetito ai pesci.

Il mare oggi è limpido, non sembra che intenda ribellarsi
né che voglia ristabilire una giustizia qualsiasi.
Mia figlia gioca in acqua con altri bambini,
one di loro potrebbe essere morto oggi,
mi stupisco, mentre esco dall’acqua,
di non vedere cadaveri in mezzo all’acqua limpida.
Di chi sono questi bambini, quanti sono
i figli del mare, tutti infine torneranno al mare.

On the decks of ships, the children saved from the sea
have silver blankets for the cold and they look
like little Easter eggs, ready to be opened.

“Can we open them, is it time?”, other children ask,
who do not know that the statute of the child,
in the West, has changed. Of the dead in the sea,
—one-hundred-fifty, today— many write,
among them Annarita, who declares for herself a discreet
humanitarianism, and says: Buon appetito to you, fish.
The sea today is clear, it doesn’t seem like it plans to rebel
nor that it wishes to set straight any kind of justice.
My daughter plays in the water with other children,
one of them could be dead today,
I am amazed, while I get out of the water,
not to see cadavers in the middle of the clear water.
Whose children are these, how many
sons and daughters of the sea, in the end everyone will return to the sea.

Translated by Johnny Lorenz
Giselle Lucía Navarro (born in Cuba, 1995) is a poet, writer, designer and cultural manager. She holds a Bachelor in Industrial Design from Havana University and is a Professor in the Ethnographic Academy of the Canary Association of Cuba. She has also obtained diverse literary awards: Jose Viera y Clavijo, Benito Pérez Galdós, Edad de Oro, Pinos Nuevos and David 2019, such as some Mentions in the international awards: Angel Gavinet (Finland), Poemas al Mar (Puerto Rico) and Nosside (Italia). She has published the books Contrapeso, El circo de los asombros and ¿Qué nombre tiene tu casa? Her texts have been translated into English, French, Italian and Turkish, and published in anthologies in various countries. Visit http://www.gisellelucia.com/

CONTRAPESO

Congelar el cuerpo de un hombre es una tarea difícil.
Congelar el cuerpo de una mujer, una tarea imposible.
Congelar el cuerpo de un país es tener miedo a todo lo que crece.

COUNTERWEIGHT

Freezing the body of a man is a hard task.
Freezing the body of a woman is an impossible task.
Freezing the body of a country is being afraid of everything that grows up.

OTRA VEZ EN EL PRINCIPIO

En el Malecón

Alguien supo que las aguas no serían mansas y el muro difícil de olvidar.

Ningún golpe de suerte lo desterraría.
Las piedras de las otras orillas son inciertas como los rostros de las barcas que se asoman a la costa, como los planes de los ojos que se van sin mirar atrás.

Alguien supo que la noche estaría fría debajo de las estrellas de esta incertidumbre, la maldita incertidumbre que no avanza ni retrocede, solo permanece, permanece como las rocas del muro, el aire que sostiene a los aviones o la distancia embalsamada en los ojos de aquellos que nunca la han visto.

Cualquier espacio sería necesario, cualquier orilla la adecuada.

Sobre los muros breves nunca hay espacio libre.

Todos saben que la noche es fría y deben cuidarse de las aguas indóceles, por eso están espaciados sobre la piedra.

Hay música
ojos
bocas
idiomas
y preguntas.

El muro es lo suficientemente grande para cubrir la orilla y protegernos de todo, pero aquel que se sienta en el muro solo ve la distancia.

Translated by Osmany Echevarría

AGAIN IN THE BEGINNING

In the Sea Wall

Somebody knew that the waters would not be meek and the wall difficult to forget.

No stroke of luck would banish it.
The stones of the other shore are uncertain as the faces of the boats that lean out to the coast as the plans of the eyes that leave without looking back.

Somebody knew that the night would be cold under the stars of this uncertainty the damned uncertainty that doesn’t advance neither go back just it remains it remains as the rocks of the wall the air that sustains to the airplanes or the distance embalmed in the eyes of those that have never seen it.

Any space would be necessary any shore the appropriate one.

On the low walls there is never free space.
Everybody knows that the night is cold and they should take care of the indolent waters for that reason they are spread on the wall.

There is music eyes mouths languages and questions.
The wall is sufficiently large to cover the shore and to protect us of everything but for anybody that sits down in the wall only sees the distance.

Translated by Noel Alonso
Gjoko Zdraveski (born in 1985 in Skopje, Macedonia) writes poetry, short prose and essays. He has published four books of poetry: Palindrome with Double ‘N’ (2010), House for migratory birds (2013), belleove (2016), daedicarus icaral (2017), and one book of short-short stories: Reality: cut-outs (2019). His poetry has been translated into several European languages, and he has taken part in poetry festivals in Europe. Since 2015 he is part of the Vensopole project.

freedom

1. my grandad enclosed his courtyard with a fence and thus won a plot of land, though he lost the world. and then he started to partition that plot of land and name the gardens. I was a child and I loved most the little connecting doors.

2. we stake in poles – bounds, we draw maps with some boundaries and place people there that scan through our bags asking us where we are going as though it really mattered to them.

3. we are centuries away from freedom. for we still set ourselves free from other people’s chains. and we do not feel in the guts the key from the cell in which we are locked.

where are you heading, gojko? the border guard asks me at five o’clock in the morning, and I, still not fully awake, say to him: home. while thinking to myself: back and forth the earth or up and down? in space or in time? now or always and for eternity?

Translated by Lazar Popov
MIGRANTS’ POINT

Europe –
To understand each other better,
I’ve learnt a couple of your languages,
but you haven’t even tried to pronounce my surname correctly.

On our first date
I guffawed – as my people used to do,
then howled of pain – as I used to,
but you warned
that after 10 PM any sound is considered to be a noise.

Europe –
You’ve surprised me as I did myself
by becoming much paler and blonder than you,
by feeling in my waters screaming at your protests
against those not chosen by me.

In the nights of your blue-eyed, blue-blooded, red-passport men
I’ve seen your dream,
but your mornings have never belonged to me, Europe.
You’ve made love with me, but never asked for my hand.

Europe –
You’ve expected the tales of thousand and one nights,
but I couldn’t recall any from my childhood darkness
full of bombings and screams of war . . .

All the children inside me have grown up . . .
All the soldiers inside me are tired . . .
All the wanderers inside me are wholly lost . . .
I’ve come to sit on your laps and to be nothinglike, to calm down for a while . . .

Europe –
My heart is heavier than this 56 kilos you see –
But if you don’t care of my hearts,
then also connive my body . . .

Translated by Tatev Chakhian
THAT WINTER . . .

I had no passport that winter.
Meaning I existed
neither for the tax service,
nor the police,
nor the local bodies,
just like any other body, except for the one
whose heart I still lived in.
That winter that one was rushed to hospital
with a heart attack.
That winter my name was infected in a thousand unfamiliar ways-
Take, Tatyana, Tanya, Tinah...
I silently succumbed to all,
ilike one accepts the height and the weight of a stranger
at the first meeting.
I hit the gym that winter not to lose the last connection with the one,
who articulates words through my mouth...
And when I asked my trainer: Where do my lost kilos go?
he pleaded to save a simple guy like him from tough questions
and joked to the best of his humour: Aren’t you happy to disappear?

Translated by Ruzan Amiraghyan

Punctuation in the rift

I find no respite in the machine
monologues tracing my desires
not even the hook of a comma
to suspend me to infinity
yet upon the walls
on the fringes of darkness
a void dowser taps
feverish nurse
restlessly searching
for a final vein to puncture
in a body burnt by delights

Translated from Polish by Iris Colomb
Indrė Valantinaitė (born in 1984, in Kaunas) is a Lithuanian poet. After graduating from the Kaunas Jesuit Gymnasium, she studied arts management at Vilnius University and at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Her first book, Of Fish and Lilies, earned her the first prize in the poetry category of the 2006 First Book Contest of the Lithuanian Union of Writers. Her second book, Tales about Love and Other Animals (2011) has won the Young Yotvingian Prize in 2012. In addition to writing poems, Indrė is a singer, a winner of several singing festivals and also she is a TV journalist and producer.

Laisvės alėja

Senamiestyje, name,
kuirame tarpukariu gyveno
mano močiutė ir gimė tėvas,
po palėpe, kuriö je badavo,
įrengtas madingas restoranas,
kuriö atidaryme aš,
įmantriausiu maistu burnoje
ir keistos kaltės pilve,
tik lubomis teatskirta nuo erdvės,
įšventų gyvenimą
už mus abi.

Freedom Boulevard

In the Old Town house where
my grandmother lived between the wars
and my father was born –
under the loft in which they starved,
a trendy restaurant has set up.
I attend the opening, standing with
pretentiously prepared food in my mouth
and a strange feeling of guilt in my belly.
For only the ceiling separates this space
from the one in which she left her note.
Lifting a glass with a ringed hand,
I celebrate life
for both of us.

Viešbučio kambarys

Jis daug keliauja.
Kiekvieną kartą jam rodos,
kad išnuomotas kambarys
primygtinai siūlo
visus septynis kelius.
Nors jame tėra
mini baras ir Biblija.
Du būdai
įsitverti rytojaus.

Hotel Room

He travels a lot.
Every night it seems
that the rented room
urges him to take
all seven roads.
There is, though,
a Bible and a mini bar:
Two ways
to grasp at tomorrow.

Translated by Rimas Uzgiris
Luca Benassi was born in 1976 in Rome. He is poet, writer, essayist, journalist and translator. He has published five poetry collections, including anthologies of his poetry in Japan (with the poet Maki Starfield, 2016), in Serbia and Macedonia in 2019, and he translated and published The Path (2002) by the Dutch poet Germain Droogenbroodt. As journalist and critic, Luca has published a book of essays Throttled Streams – Italian poets in the third millennium (2010).

*(costruire confini)*

Non chiedete a noi
solo questo sappiamo: chi siamo e cosa vogliamo
per il resto ci sarà una ragione
un perché fondato su una norma
una legge certa da non interpretare.
Se le cose stanno così
è perché si saranno incontrati
avranno portato carte, grafici obiettivi
intorno a un tavolo, fino a sera
avranno chiuso l'accordo e firmato la tregua.
Ci saranno state tazze di the
certezze da dare, un aereo da prendere.
Se le cose sono andate così
ci sarà un motivo
vedrete: saltarà fuori un libro
carta intestata che galleggia su un fiume giallo
una sentenza di tribunale, bibliografie.
E qualcuno avrà preso una decisione.

*(building borders)*

Do not ask us
we know just this: who we are and what we want
for the rest there must be a reason
a way based on a norm
a firm law not to be interpreted.
If things are like this,
it is because they had met,
brought in papers, charts, objectives
around a table late at night
made a deal and signed the truce.
There must have been tea cups
assurance to be given, flights to catch.
If things were like that,
there must be a reason
you will see: a book will pop out
stationery floating on a yellow river
a Court sentence, bibliographies.
Someone will have made a decision.

*(varcando il confine della foce)*

Bisogna aspettarli al varco i salmoni
al collo di bottiglia della foce
spauriti, mentre accalcano l'acqua
bisogna tendere la rete dove
la superficie si increspa di pinne
gills fumbling the desire
that doubles the passage of new
generations. That is the moment
to shoot the net, to stretch tight
the noose to the throat, the sharp spear.
At the metro exit we are
oblivious salmon to the slaughter.

*(crossing the boundary of the river mouth)*

Salmon are to be waylaid
at the bottleneck of the river mouth,
when they are scared, cramming the water;
you have to let the net down where
the surface ripples with fins,
gills fumbling the desire
that doubles the passage of new
generations. That is the moment
to shoot the net, to stretch tight
the noose to the throat, the sharp spear.
At the metro exit we are
oblivious salmon to the slaughter.

Translated by the author
Nurduran Duman is a Turkish poet, playwright, and editor based in Istanbul. Her books include *Yenilgi Oyunu* (2005 Cemal Sureya Poetry Award), *İstanbul'la Bakı* (2016, US), *Selected Poems* (2017, Macedonia), *Selected Poems* (2019, Belgium), and *Steps of Istanbul* (2019, China, Poetry Collection of the Year, 2nd Boao International Poetry Award). Her poems have been translated into Finnish, Spanish, Azerbaijan Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Slovak, French, German, Occitan, and Italian. She is featured in the #InternationalWomensDay2018 (#IWD18) Modern Poetry in Translation (MPT) list of ten international female poets in translation in 2018. She is a member of Turkish PEN.

*Doves’ Coo*

—for bird-watchers who cannot look at the children flying through the immigration sky—

you’ll be an angel after three wishes after three stages what can your hands do now But Because And After Yet look how beautiful these conjunctions walk on their wide runway young life rings walk through peppery air do your feet see them Or is also a conjunction, in our basket a tricycle for our neighbour country border in connecting lands and seas this lame circle will also turn this age overturn and turn you’re always with white perched quenched either or Or is a conjunction quenched and perched you’re snow white standing by white besides you didn’t see didn’t hear if it befalls you have in mind Or is also a conjunction if it contricts your throat you’re human after all don’t expect to bury children’s red shoes no colour no song, don’t expect a lullaby go on beating emptiness your wings will happen somehow

Translated by Grace Wessels
Stéphane Chaumet (born 1971 in Dunkerque) has lived in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and the United States. He is the author of the novels: Même pour ne pas vaincre (Even for not winning), Au bonheur des voiles (The veils’ Paradise, chronicles of Syria), Les Marionnettes (The Puppets), L’île impasse (Dead-end island); of the books of poetry: Dans la nudité du temps (In the nudity of time), Urbaines miniatures (Urban miniatures), La traversée de l’errance (The crossing of the wandering), Les cimetières engloutis (The sunken cemeteries), Fentes (Cracks), Le hasard et la perte (Chance and loss), Insomnia (Insomnia), Cellules (Cells); and a book of photographs: L’Hôte, l’autre (The host, the other), photos of Syria before the war. He has translated many contemporary Latin American and Spanish poets, as well as the German poet Hilde Domin and the Iranian Forough Farrokhzad.

tu as pris la route

your family does not know if you are alive or dead

perhaps they prefer to believe in your abandonment

or that your are hidden in shame and silence

nobody here knows who you are and where you come from

nobody does not even care

they have given to your cadaver the last trace of humanity

and engraved with a piece of wood

two letters in a layer of cement

N.N.

and nulie one there is calling you

maybe you are one of those that after their death

nobody will name

Translated by Natasha Sardzoska

Hay caminos que no tienen regreso

I read at the Mexican immigration office.

Roads

how many have I taken, abandoned

how many delighted, deceived me

how many where I’ve gotten lost

lost and open, lost and found

where I’ve found another.

What have my soles mapped out? What have I brought back?

Roads that are always the same? Mine?

There are roads that have no return

others that don’t lead anywhere.

But the return is a lure

and nowhere is called the quest.

Your road is only the web

woven by and weaving your life.

Translated by Hugh Hazelton
Colonizing

One body of water – but every shore
names its sea:
A sea of graveled fog at midnight’s North Cape
can scrape your throat bloody as a child’s knees
and drive you to drink
A sea of wilted cardboard prayers
6 a.m. in the Canaries along the resort fronts
pushes a melancholy history into your lounge
A sea of watermelon taunts you in Stavanger’s harbor
when the algae melt in spring
though no watermelons grow
– or have ever grown there –
but because a story stormed through immigration
speaking its own language
dropping consonants in the tide pools
and in the landlocked waters
like fish eggs
And another story will slip between porous membranes
during a deep kiss between strangers at an airport somewhere
and they will stake a new claim.

Ren (Katherine) Powell is a poet and teaching artist/mentor. She is a native Californian, now a Norwegian citizen settled on the west coast of Norway. Her poetry collections have been purchased by the Norwegian Arts Council for national library distribution, and her poems have been translated and published in eight languages in chapbooks and anthologies.

THE WANDERER BUTTERFLY

Beyond coral reefs
a deserted sea where a light breeze and a bird in the sky announce the longed-for land of scuba diving harmony.

It is where Vietnamese bamboo rafts cross the ocean in search of bread and when they see a butterfly they remember for ever each of its pores breathing in spouting colours because that means the land is near and they are not going to drown or die of thirst.

There beyond the seabed of petrified lava lies Australia.

Tomica Bajić was born in 1968 in Zagreb, Croatia. A poet, artist, and literary travel writer, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb and has published five poetry books, two prose books, and two picture books. He has been the recipient of numerous national awards for poetry and recently showed two photography exhibitions in Zagreb: Amazon Breathes and Brazilian Rainforest. His most recent poetry collection with drawings, Nevidljivo more / Invisible Sea, was awarded the Croatian Ministry of Culture’s highest literary merit in 2019. He serves as president of the Croatian PEN Center and coordinator of Lyrikline, a multilingual poetry platform in Croatia.
POSTCOLONIAL POEM

The lions at Trafalgar Square in London,
in quarter Montparnasse and all over Paris, lions
at the tomb of King Richard in the Rouen Cathedral,
the Tiergarten park and the Museum Island in Berlin.
They guard the Chain Bridge in Budapest, the entrance
to the Royal Palace of Brussels; slumber
at the foot of the Columbus monument in Barcelona,
daydream at the Marquise Pombala square in Lisbon.

Long ago their gaze of stone escorted the grand ships
of East – India Company out of Port of Amsterdam.
We have more of them here than in Africa and India.
The capitals of the former European Empires
are not adorned with dolphins or birds, but lions,
whose strength is in their loneliness.

One harsh winter as a twelve year old
I went ice skating in park near our ZOO.
On the frozen lake no one but me.
Sliding under one of the bridges
I felt the presence of a lion.
Through the snow frosted trees
I could barely see the winter’s den
but the lion’s roar frightened me
and made me return to where I started.

But when it seems that they see you, you’re wrong,
lions are actually looking straight through your bones,
through the walls, bars and trees, across the lake
where I skated and all the way over the Roman Colosseum
the wilderness carved deeply into their memory,
their gaze steadfastly rooted to the grasslands of Africa
before the colonies.

con passi che vorrebbero piantare
sassi e semini in cadenza
vada a rendere alle foglie
l'albero che hanno perso,
alle piume cadute l'animale.

Poi incrocio le braccia
e il cuore torna in gabbia.

Translated by John Taylor

Franca Mancinelli (born in Fano, 1981) is the author of four books of poetry, which have won several prizes in Italy, where she is considered to be one of the most compelling new poetic voices. In John Taylor’s translations, The Bitter Oleander Press has published At an Hour’s Sleep from Here: Poems (2007-2019) and The Little Book of Passage—a translation of her book of prose poems, Libretto di transito (2018). Her most recent book is Tutti gli occhi che ho aperto (All the Eyes that I have Opened) issued by Marcos y Marcos in 2020. Her work has been published in several foreign magazines and anthologies.
**Tiago Alves Costa** (born in Vila Nova Famalicão, 1980) is a Portuguese poet, essayist and translator. He published *Zizek Vai ao Ginásio* (2019), *Mecanismo de Emergência* (2016) and *Wi:Constâncio* (2012), with editions in Portugal, Galicia and Brazil. Collaboratively, he participated in the “Current Ibero-American Poetry Anthology” (2018). He received Honorable Mentions in the Glória de Sant’Anna International Poetry Award 2020 and 2018, and the Manuel Murguía for Short Stories Prize 2019. He is the editor-in-chief of the digital cultural magazine *Palavra Comum*. He is a member of the Association of Writers in Galician Language (AELG). He holds a Degree in Advertising (ISCET, PT) and a postgraduate in Creativity and Innovation (TC3, USA).

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**IT’S THE NIGHT DOCTOR, THAT HURTS**

It’s the night doctor, it’s the night that hurts
Yes, you can examine the distance
that goes from my existence to the doubts that lie within me
You can examine as I have nothing else to hide,
I don’t even carry a wallet anymore, neither my instinct,
permanently carried over my shoulder in timeless days,
neither my other wretched self
who ran away,
as soon as he realized that the X-ray proved he was also guilty.
If it hurts when I breathe?
It hurts when my inside feels inhabited, doctor
when my dreams feel like those airports on a Monday night
where we arrive and leave but never hold ourselves
to contemplate the airplanes
So many airplanes, doctor... so many airplanes
Ah, doctor, of course it hurts!
Yes, there! Next to that spot, where one day someone will ask whom it was
from,
Right after the place only accessed by my mother
during my childhood
Please don’t insist, doctor,
You need to understand once and for all
that one thing, is the pain hurting from the inside, and another, to the outside
You need to understand ... that one thing is the scientific method
and another, to get here with it won’t be anything serious
and leave with that’s the way Life is
I will calm down, I will calm down, doctor
But please, don’t press The Night that way
as if you were searching for a heart in the garbage,
as if we’ve known each other forever
as if I was already dead!

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**É A NOITE QUE DÓI DOUTOR (portuguese version)**

É a noite doutor é a noite que dói
sim, pode revistar a distância que vai do meu interior ao benefício da dúvida
pode revistar que já nada tenho a esconder,
já nem a carteira levo
nem o instinto, que sempre carreguei ao ombro
em dias sem tempo
nem o tafúl do meu outro eu
que fugiu,
assem assin are a radiografia a provar
que ele também era culpado
Se dói quando inspiro?
Dói quando isto está desabitado por dentro, doutor
quando o sonho se parece aqueles aeroportos a uma segunda à noite
onde chegamos e partimos mas nunca ficamos
para contemplar os aviões
tanto avião doutor tanto avião
Ai ai doutor, claro que dói!

**Translated by Joanna Magalhães**

Aí, mesmo ao lado de onde um dia alguém irá perguntar: de quem era?

logo acima de onde em pequeno
só a minha Mãe chegava
Por favor não insista doutor,
entenda de uma vez por todas
que uma coisa é a dor doer para dentro
e outra é doer para fora
entenda... que uma é o método científico
e outra é chegar aqui com um Isso Não Deve Ser Nada
e sair com um É Assim a Vida
Eu acalmo-me eu acalmo-me doutor
mas não me pressione assim na noite dessa forma
como se estivesse à procura de um coração no caixote do lixo,
como se nos conhecêssemos desde pequeninos
como se eu já estivesse morto!
Eu estou morto, doutor? Ah?
Eu não estou morto
aqui quem manda ainda é o meu corpo veja!
foi ele quem hoje me arrastou até aqui
é ele quem continua a pagar as contas do sonambulismo precoce
e é ele quem repõe a ordem,
quando eu quero ir para lá das órbitas da madrugada
Olhe que a cisma doutor
faz aumentar tudo ao que o corpo respeita
não venha agora dizer que é impressão minha
quando eu sei bem o que ali está escrito:
ESTA VIDA É MAIS SEIS MESES
Mas eu aponto... aqui, na mão de todos os significados
não vá eu chegar a casa ainda vivo
e esquecer a razão do lado de fora da chuva
que está prevista para o final do ano
Ai doutor dê-me ouvidos de uma vez
é a noite é a noite que dói

---

على قيد وهم

سحابة غاضبة
تهدد أحلاماً
نحن على قيد وهم
ننازلنا عن الحياة
منذ أمد

ننبض مغرمون
سحابة غاضبة
تلالقنا
فلا تجد غير ضلال شاردة

لم تقرا في الغدير
إلا سمحة ماء

Illusioned

Angry clouds
Threaten our dreams
We are illusioned
We gave up on life
Long ago

We breathe against our will
Angry clouds
Are chasing after us
Finding nothing but stray shadows

Nothing is left in the stream
Except for a minute cloud of water
Escape

I left my tent
On this seaside

I entrusted it with what I own
Unwritten poems
My forgotten dreams
A bit of myself
Or what’s left on it
Drops of dew
Moments of melancholy
And the eternal cactus flower
That my grandfather presented me

The curtain has come down
On a smile of a woman
Whose sent almost brought me back to life

I left my tent
On the sand dune
And retired my memory in it
Summer will certainly come back
Yet I will not find my tent

Translated by Ghassan Al Khuneizi

Dragan Jovanović Danilović, Serbian author, art critic and essayist, was born in Požega in 1960. He studied at the Faculty of Law and at the Department of History of Art at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Danilović’s poetry has been described by Italian, French, English, Bulgarian, Romanian and Slovak-speaking critics. He has appeared at numerous international poetry festivals and has hosted several one-man literary evenings and poetry readings in France. His poetry books have been translated into English, French, German, Italian, Greek, Bulgarian, Slovak, Romanian and Macedonian. His essays on visual art have been translated into English and French.

Speaking of solitude, I distance myself from it. I’m not reexamining the frontiers of the void nor the possibilities of the poetic language; I’ve no interest in the shrill intricacies of the epic, the feats of Kazakh chieftain; I don’t have my own website on the internet; my wild shadow is alone in a room gone wild and terrifying.

Tender like a foot sole of a child, I left myself in some seaside town for the night to descend and cover my body with the immensity of someone who is calm and who is everywhere.

Motherland, I’m your poor child,
I’m a piece of paper on which a heart beats.
The smell of the sea dreamed of long ago wafts into my chaos, it watches me with eyes of a blind man, tells me that I’m the great traveler who doesn’t budge from his home.

There, too, I had my travels.

Translated by Charles Simic
How shall we write about love
We who lost our members in trivial wars?
We who let the ghosts caper in our dark rooms?
And made of sleep a meeting for tepsters of absence,?
How shall we go to love on our little feet?
We Who sat long behind the windows,
Then we got confused like the the roads on closed doors.
How shall we taste steadily the honey of all those poets?
We, son's of the bitter language,
With the deep scars
Until the very end of death.

Ghosts are back to their wanderings
People to their homes
The gloom suspended in the void,
A swing between life and death.
God has thrown a dice in the air,
And it was this living metaphor
The poet has thrown a dice in the water,
And we all drowned in the illusions of the leave.
We, the complicit beings, flow in the prayer's processions to repent our Joys.
Then, we align behind our guns to defend our prayers
In an old myth, I was thrown as a dice into language
So, I wrote so much about ghosts
Yet they returned back to their wanderings
And, here I am, in a house haunted by humans
Where winds don't caper
Nor do loss and delusion wander in a scene that stumbles on affinity and boredom.
In a weather that needs a pair of gloves and a hat,
A long kiss in the backyard,
God's promised paradise,
Or his virtual Hell
Tiziano Fratus (born in Bergamo, 1975) grew up in north Italian landscapes, the great plain at the foot of the mountains. When his natural family was dissolved he began to travel, crossing and touching conifer woods in California, Japan and around the Alps where he coined the concepts of Rootman (Homo Radix), Wandering Forest (Bosco itinerante) and Primordial Root (Radice primordiale). He practices an everyday zen meditation in nature and the discipline of Dendrosophy (Dendrosophia). Along twenty years of writing he has published a wide forest of words—travelogues, meditation books, novels, collections of poems—some by leading Italian publishing houses, some by independent ones. His poems have been translated into ten languages and published in many countries while his photography has shown in solo exhibitions. Visit Studiohomoradix.com.

BOSCO ITINERANTE

C’è un bosco che mi abita dentro, un silenzio cantato e interminabile, ruscelli che sgorgano e animali che corrono. Io non so chi sono, ripete la voce, non so chi sono. Ma sento che c’è questo mondo di fine trama che abita un luogo senza confini, qui, nel petto, nel cuore, nella mente. Popola le ore del sonno e nutre le ore di pensiero.

Ecco perché quando faccio ritorno nel bosco reale mi viene voglia di urlare, di amare come ama una madre che non distingue un figlio da un altro figlio.

Sono un bosco che cammina, un bosco che radica e si sradica

WANDERING FOREST

There is a forest living inside me, a sung and endless silence, streams flowing and animals that run. I don’t know who I am, the voice is repeating, I don’t know who I am. Yet I feel there is this world of fine weaving living in a place without any border, here, in my chest, in my heart, in my mind. It settles in my hours of sleep and feeds my hours of thought. This is why when I go back to a real forest I feel like I want to scream, to love as a mother who doesn’t discern a son from another son would do.

I am a forest who walks, a forest who roots in and roots out

Translated by Eleonora Matarrese

Francesca Cricelli is a poet and literary translator. She holds a PhD in Literary Translations (University of São Paulo), is the author of Repatria (Selo Demônio Negro 2015), 16 poemas + 1 (Sagarana 2017) and Errância (Macondo Edições 2019). She has translated into Portuguese Elena Ferrante, Igiaba Scego, Jhumpa Lahiri and other authors. Francesca currently lives in Reykjavík, where she studies Icelandic Language and Literature.

É UMA LONGA ESTRADA REPATRIAR A ALMA

It’s a long road to repatriate the soul

Silence is needed for to read the fingers in the old railway piano it’s a long road to repatriate the soul the route’s in the marrow a steep descent or stall-less climb— demolishing to erect never running from the nameless terror of not being contained held, understood got to carry on forward breathless, on fire and if pain persists got to be fearless to reflect your face in other eyes distant like in a mirror.
Minha língua aqui
é muda
ou quase
só existe no silêncio
diálogo íntimo assoprado
desenlace da tradução.
Minha língua, flor inversa,
palavra que é corpo e é linguagem
e não posso transpor.

* Adent ar o figo
sua polpa-essência
é adentrar um jardim de vespas mortas
a língua a saborear a planta
o bojo doce um dia à espera da fecundação.
* Que gesto é esse que se repete há 34 milhões de anos?
* Adentrar essa língua
sua milenar essência
é adentrar minha memória de pedra
a língua antes dos dentes
o bojo sem contornos da existência primordial.
* Não só na queda se perdem as asas
(há de se deixá-las do lado de fora)
também ao percorrer o corredor afunilado
à procura de alimento e perpetuação.
Ao penetrar o figo, abandonamos o voo.

* My tongue here
is mute
or almost
it is only in silence
an intimate whisper
the outcome of translation.
My tongue is an inverted flower
a word that means body but also language
and I can’t bridge it.
* When you bite a fig
its flesh and essence
it’s like entering a garden of dead wasps
the tongue tasting the plant
its sweet bulge, once waiting to be fertilized.
* What is this gesture that repeats itself even after 34 million years?
* When I enter into this language
its ancient essence
I bite into the stone memory inside me
of language before the teeth
the borderless bulge of my primitive existence.
* It’s not just when falling that we lose wings
(one must leave them on the outside)
it happens as we slither in through the funneled corridor
searching for food and perpetuation.
As we penetrate the fig, we give up on flying.

Para cavar uma saída da uma silente
serem mandíbulas fortes
dentes ferozes e olhos minúsculos
– saber se orientar na escuridão.

* A muda de hortelã não morreu ao ser arrancada do solo
– sobrevive num vaso –
inventou raízes e uma nova folhagem.

* Na minha cidade aguardamos o degelo do solo
como a língua espera pela dentição –
roçar as coroas que apontam das gengivas
preparar a mordida –
o que sobrevive sob o manto branco?
Nossos corpos estranhos se preparam
(come a vespa-mãe depõe seus ovos no figo)
raízes de hortelã
em busca do chão.

In order to dig an exit from the silent vessel
one must have strong jaws
fierce teeth and minute eyes
– one must know how to get around in the darkness.

* The mint sprout didn’t die from being removed from the ground
– it has been living in a vase –
it has invented roots and new leaves.

* In my city we wait for the frost to undo itself
as tongues wait for teething –
to rub the crowns as they stick out from the gum
be ready to bite –
what lives through under the white cloak?
Our foreign bodies get ready
(as the wasp mother lays her eggs in the fig)
mint roots
searching for soil.

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mint roots
searching for soil.

Translated by the author
Of all recounts

A biographical evaluation of inner poet’s borders

Back then I was writing false and emphatic verses and in the darkest hours of thick liquor the city was another skin to wrap myself in.

There were years that were barely a few months that went from palate to palate and mouth to mouth whispering the mystery.

A stick and sombrero were enough to travel all day.

And the dust from my boots oozed the forbidden juice of some place in Africa so close to the cards that my clover tongue did not sleep.

And attentive to the capriciousness of an undone heart in my notebook fell stolen scents and dates.

A bowl of salt was my home and a pigeon my only neighbor.

Later others arrived with an axe tattooed on their beak.

Dressed in grey they were adults and soon offered me a stable job and a lethal debt with a guarantor.

Translated by Gwen Osterwald
Lali Tsipli Michaeli is an Israeli independent universal poet. Born in Georgia in 1964, she immigrated to Israel at the age of seven. She has published six poetry books so far, attended international poetry festivals, and was part of a residency program for talented writers in New York in 2018. Her books have been translated into foreign languages in New York, India, France, Italy, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Romania and Iran. Lali was defined by Professor Gabriel Moked in his book as “Erotico-Urban Poet” and was highly regarded by critics, who describe her as innovative and combative. In 2011 Lali conducted an anthology for protest: Resistance, in which she presents her personal poetic manifesto, claiming that “poetry as a whole is a revolt...The poem is not purely individual. It is common ground and should be heard in a great voice”. Lali teaches Hebrew at Ben Gurion University. She has one son and lives in Tel Aviv by the sea.

Blues of the night

Tonight
The wall separates
between us
All day long we healed the wounds we had created
Last night
Memory will wilt with fangs
Chews us and emits
The Chapters of My History at Nights
Without love
I want to get rid of the book
The words of darkness are enough for me
Days of Darkness
We are impatient twins
The enemies of peace
Our belonging cries out to each other about
shore line
Passion collapses into an illusion
The wrinkles are filled with tears
And the hands
The hands as always are disappointed
Most of the time, the road is erased
return.

Anarchist, you
Ancroycist, you
Anarchist who corrects me
His language into my language
The one who will not see me on his land
The one that I will not see on my land
But our voices are floating
Like bombardments in the world
Your history is written
In ink that was produced
In the factory of my love.

Translated by Michael Simkin
Tareq al Karmy, born in 1975, is a Palestinian poet from the city of Tulkarm who plays a Nai flute. He has published 11 poetry collections so far. His poems have been translated into various languages and he has participated in local and international poetry festivals. Al Karmy’s poems attempt to write poems without ending, in a way that creates a deliberate interruption in the poem, leaving space for the reader to engage in writing the ending of the poem and leaving space for imagination. This is a unique and unusual act in the landscape of Palestinian poetry that makes al Karmy one of the most interesting young voices in contemporary Palestinian poetry.

My heart is a bell of your secret love

Here you are, under my skin, a sleeping tremor
You milked the dawn in your perfume bottle
Behold, I love you my heart
My fingers blindly penetrate through a fence
To pick you up
Your fingers dip it in the new Berlin Wall
To pick me the coal flower
Did I change the flute between my glowing fingers?
Your fingers are all beaks
Under these fingers I'm
Never tired piano
And from the clash of our fingers we are born...
You are a bell and I am a bell
We knock on each other in all silence...

* Evening / Tulkarem