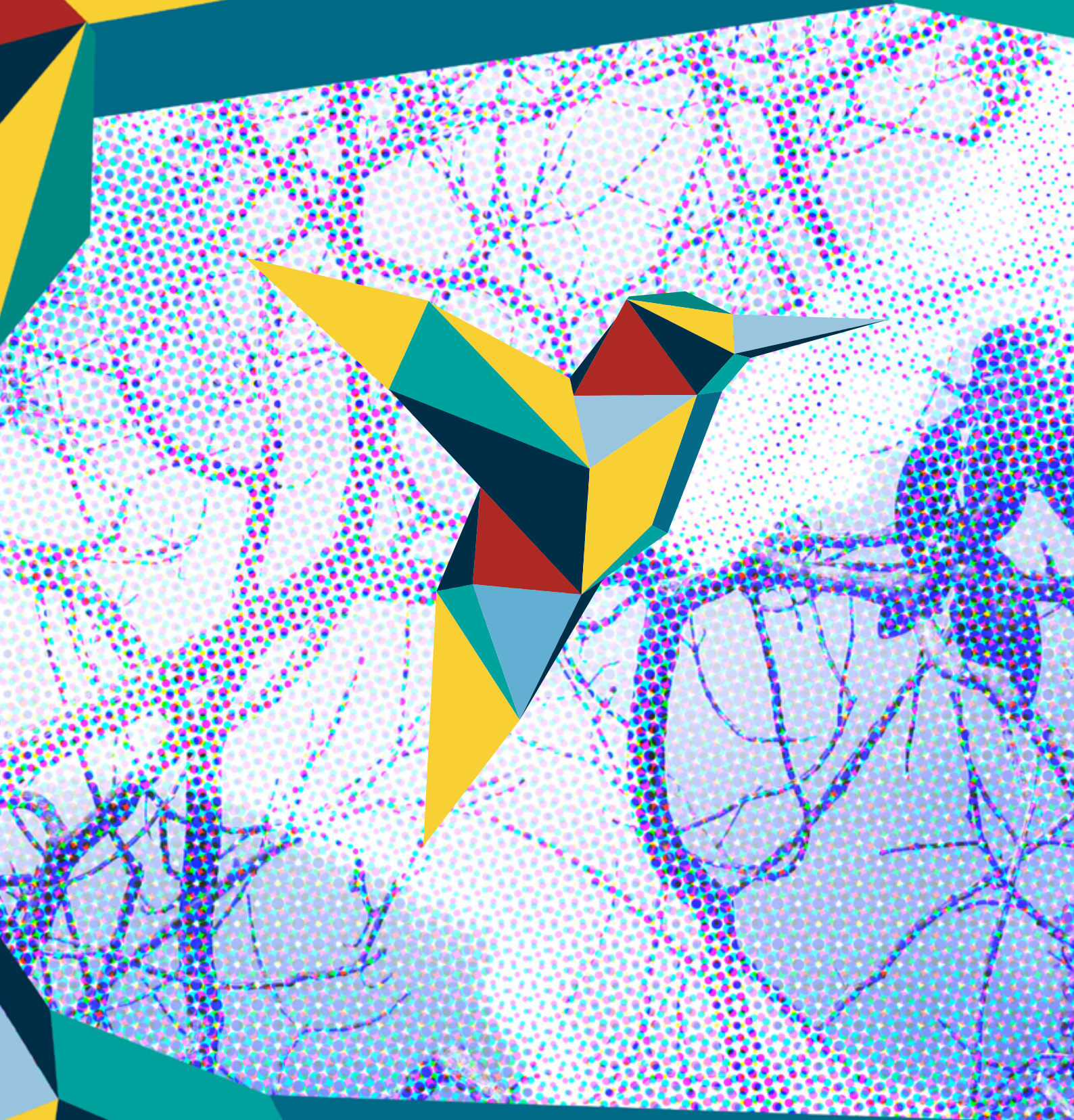


EDIÇÃO ESPECIAL BRAZILIAN TRANSLATION CLUB

# Q O R P U S

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BRAZILIAN  
**TRANSLATION**  
CLUB



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Erika Freitas Pacheco Pereira





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# ***APRESENTAÇÃO***





## THE AIMS AND THE STORIES OF THE BRAZILIAN TRANSLATION CLUB

*ANA CLÁUDIA SURIANI DA SILVA*

The Brazilian Translation Club (BTC) was created to fulfil two objectives: in addition to providing a platform for disseminating contemporary Brazilian literature in the UK, it aims to promote and value collaborative translation both as a pedagogical tool and as a bridge between the students and the community.

At University College London (UCL), translation is a compulsory component of the language curriculum. We dedicate an average of two contact hours per week to teaching and practising the translation of literary and non-literary texts into and from English. Translation has a key role in our courses because students need it as much as reading, writing, listening and speaking in their learning and future careers. Firstly, its use in the classroom favours the development of a series of skills, such as reflecting on the meaning of words within a context, a greater awareness of linguistic differences, and it encourages students to take risks (ROMANELLI, 2009; ATKINSON, 1993). According to Gaballo (2009), collaborative translation is particularly important in translators' training since it enables them to reflect from different perspectives and consider the alternative solutions proposed by colleagues. Secondly, translation promotes the development of intercultural competence (GABALLO, 2009; HURTADO-ALBIR and GOMES, 2020; SALOMÃO, 2020). Translation activities require, therefore, not only language ability but also an understanding of culture and otherness. Finally, students become aware of translators' role as mediators between cultures and that any intercultural communication involves translation (KATAN, 2014).

At UCL, we can offer opportunities for collaborative translation between students, teachers and external partners because the university promotes Community Engaged Learning (CEL), a form of experiential learning that allows: 1) students to apply their theoretical knowledge to practice, develop transferable skills and become more life-ready; 2) academics to open their classroom to the community and try out more creative teaching methodologies; and 3) external partners to further their mission and goals, which results in the creation of positive social impact (UCL WEBSITE).

The Brazilian Translation Club is the second collaborative educational project that I have developed at UCL. In 2018, I created, in partnership with Dr. Paula Tavares Pinto (Unesp, Rio Preto), the Portuguese Virtual Language Exchange, a collaborative online learning programme that promotes linguistic and cultural exchange between Portuguese language students of UCL and English language students of Unesp. This initiative follows current trends in education aimed at fostering virtual mobility and internationalisation.



Like the Brazilian Translation Club, the activities proposed for each interaction always include a translation exercise to develop the students' bilingual and intercultural skills (SILVA and TAVARES, 2020).

The Brazilian Translation Club expands and enriches the collaborative translation activities developed at UCL. It creates a bridge between our students, members of the Lusophone community in England, translators and writers. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the online workshops allowed enthusiasts of Brazilian literature, students of Portuguese and English, writers and translators living in different parts of the world to join and enrich the discussion about the linguistic and cultural challenges presented by texts, so diverse in terms of structure, theme, style and linguistic register. The participation of Nara Vidal, Ana Maria Machado, Clodie Vasli, Eltânia André, Décio Zylbersztajn, Carla Bessa and Jacques Fux in the workshops expanded the discussion into the field of literary creation, reinforcing our view that literary translation presupposes reading and interpretation and that dialogue between authors and their mediators is always very fruitful.

Nara Vidal selected thirteen texts by a mix of renowned authors and newcomers, not yet translated into English, from the Capitolina Books catalogue. I suggested that we include the short story "Tratantes" by Ana Maria Machado, given that it is part of the syllabus of my modules PORT0010 Short Fiction and the Making of Modern Brazil and PORT0011 Advanced Translation From and Into Portuguese. In a way, the structure of the Brazilian Translation Club workshops, and consequently of this special issue of *Qorpus*, draws from my students' collective translation experience with the short story "Tratantes". First, they prepare the translation of the chosen passage. During the workshop, we discuss the multiple readings and interpretations of the text, the narrative elements, the linguistic and intercultural issues of the translation, and the translation target audience and editing process. Subsequently, students submit their translations and a commentary on the translation of no more than 1000 words to be assessed individually.

Our initial plan was to offer fourteen workshops over approximately two years and to publish the commentaries, translations and original texts at the end of the project. We ended up offering a fifteenth workshop in partnership with UCL Grand Challenges, Escritório Modelo de Tradução Ana Cristina César, UERJ, and the Festa Literária das Periferias (FLUP), in which we worked on Augusto Dias' "O Homem Amarelo" and Sylvia Arcuri's "Cortejo milenar" in translation by Victor Meadowcroft (LUDEMIR and SALLES, 2019). These two short stories do not feature in this publication because they are part of a broader project, which involved, among other activities, Elton Uliana and Nati Russo translating Slam poems by Bixarte, Auritha Tabajara and ZZ for the FLUP 2020 Slam Cúir.



However well planned a literary event is, its success depends fundamentally on the quality of the works. The texts selected for the workshops represent the diversity of contemporary Brazilian short fiction. First of all, they show that contemporary Brazilian literature has not left behind the rural world; life in the small cities, towns and indigenous communities that developed along the rivers of Brazil's interior. Tokowisa, the hero of "O espírito *aboni* das coisas", by Itamar Vieira Júnior, is an indigenous person of the Jarawara people, whose territory is located in the region of the Middle Purús River. The memorialist prose of "Sombras sobre o rio", by Ronaldo Cagiano, recollects the drowning of the narrator's brother in the Pomba River, Cataguases, Minas Gerais. The rivers, with their fish and legends, and the stilt houses in Manaus give Gothic tones to Juliana Diniz's short story "Perpétua". Xico Sá's "O striptease moral da pelada" revolves around a football game in Juazeiro do Norte and a *pelada* among friends in Barbalha, Ceará.

Geographical, social and racial representativeness comes hand in hand with the literary representation of regional and social linguistic variations. Discursive solutions for the representation of the spoken language and regional linguistic variations are essential to achieve one of the main functions of fiction, which is, according to Antonio Candido, "nos dar um conhecimento mais completo, mais coerente do que o conhecimento decepcionante e fragmentário que temos dos seres. Mais ainda: de poder comunicar-nos este conhecimento" [to give us a more complete and coherent knowledge than the disappointing and fragmentary knowledge we have of human beings. Even more important is that it communicates this knowledge to us] (CANDIDO, 1972, p.64). In order to achieve "adesão afetiva e intelectual do leitor" [affective and intellectual adherence of the reader] (CANDIDO, 1972, p.54), Carla Bessa, for example, in "Aí eu fiquei sem esse filho", creates the illusion of a theatrical performance by turning the monologue's grammatically incorrect syntax and punctuation (from the point of view of the educated norm) into a complex and dramatic diction. Itamar Vieira Júnior, in turn, invents a new syntactic construction. He includes in the text words from the Jarawara language alongside their Portuguese synonym and emphasises them with italics. What is interesting is that the Tupi words assimilated into Portuguese, such as *igarapé* and *mandioca* are not italicised. With these graphic and syntactic resources, the author draws our attention to the linguistic wealth of the Amazon and to the fact that the indigenous heritage in Brazilian culture is naturalised, taken for granted. Indigenous languages, such as Tupi, are woven so tightly into the Portuguese linguistic fabric that we forget that Brazilian Portuguese is the product of a long (and violent) colonial history.

In some short stories, such as Nara Vidal's "Amanda" and Décio Zylbersztajn's "O benfeitor de Santa Clara", the historical tension between the rural and the urban, the archaic and the modern, composes the background of the protagonists' personal dramas. In other stories, we cannot always specify the city or region where the action takes place. This is the case of Ana Maria Machado's "Tratantes" and Clodie Vasli's





“A mão que nos abençoa”. Nevertheless, the absence of a specific location does not diminish the realism of the narrative. On the contrary: it allows it to acquire a Brazilian, tropical, or even a universal dimension.

Secondly, within this diversity of texts, there is a strong strand of women’s stories. “Fome”, “Amanda”, “Tratantes”, “Memória de mulher”, “Aí eu fiquei sem esse filho” and “Perpétua” provide us with a collection of behaviours, performativities (BUTLER, 1988) and worldviews of women in the first or third person. The teacher’s sexual behaviour in Sérgio Tavares’ “Fome” threatens strict societal and gender norms because she is granted full agency to describe her sexual acts. In “Amanda”, the voice is given to a shy country girl who chooses to remain silent (or who perhaps has been silenced by the same societal and gender norms) to carry on with her motherly duties, even when she suffers domestic violence. “Tratantes” explores the coming of old age and women’s role as guardians of the family memories passed down from generation to generation. In “Memória de mulher”, by Eltânia André, the narrator constructs her own identity: “Começava a entender que eu era mulher e o que era ser mulher no mundo habitado por homens como o tio” [I was beginning to understand both that I was a woman and what it was like to be a woman in a world inhabited by men like Uncle]. The gender identity in “Memória de mulher” applies to all women who suffer violence directly or indirectly in Brazil and worldwide. As Judith Butler explains, gender norms and identities vary widely throughout historical periods and between cultures (BUTLER, 1988). In “Aí fiquei sem esse filho”, Carla Bessa dramatises the trauma of the double loss of the character’s son, first when he was kidnapped as a baby and later when he was shot dead at home. Finally, in “Perpétua”, Juliana Diniz kills Miguel in order to tell the story from the point of view of Perpétua, an immigrant of the magnitude of Macabéa in Clarice Lispector’s *A hora da estrela* [The Hour of the Star], who tries to understand Manaus and life in the forest from the perspective of a north-eastern girl (LISPECTOR, 1977).

Thirdly, across stories, the short story’s apparent paradox emerges as the underlying force behind the manipulation of time, space and narrative techniques in each text. Julio Cortázar defines the nature of the story, by comparing it with photography,

“como um aparente paradoxo: o de recortar um fragmento da realidade, fixando-lhe determinados limites, mas de tal modo que esse recorte atue como uma explosão que abra de par em par uma realidade muito mais ampla, como uma visão dinâmica que transcende espiritualmente o campo abrangido pela câmera”

[as an apparent paradox: it cuts out a fragment of reality, fixing certain limits to it, but in such a way that this cut acts as an explosion that opens up a much wider reality, like a dynamic vision that spiritually transcends the field covered by the camera] (CORTÁZAR, 2011, p.151).



The abovementioned stories of women masterfully explore this feature of the short story. Their authors use different formal resources to capture an entire life in a few pages or minutes of reading. For example, Carla Bessa's short story graphically emulates the script of a play, subverts the punctuation and syntax of the Portuguese cultured norm to attribute dramatic diction to the character's speech. Nara Vidal resorts to a spatial element to encapsulate time, that is, the lift that appears at the beginning and end of the narrative. Ana Maria Machado uses wordplay: a pun repeated throughout the story.

The short story's paradox does not apply only to stories about women. It is also present in "O benfeitor de Santa Clara", "Sombras sobre o rio" and even in Alê Motta's flash fiction. Décio Zylbersztajn divides the story into frames and uses various other narrative techniques to explore different stimuli, to create expectations in the reader, and to expand the text's symbolism. Ronaldo Cagiano uses intertextuality. He includes an epigraph, quotes and alludes to poems about other rivers and Greek mythology throughout the story, which, in addition to blending poetry and prose, transforms his memorialist account into an elegy for the death of the narrator's brother and an ode to literary and mythological rivers. In "Órfãos" and "A porta fechada", Alê Motta uses short, direct and impersonal phrases, such as those in "Poema tirado de uma notícia de jornal", by Manuel Bandeira, which in a crescendo reach the poetic and surprise the reader with either an anti-climactic or surreal outcome (BANDEIRA, 1930).

As we can see, the same narrative technique can be employed to create unity of effect and expand the symbolism of the text. As Ricardo Piglia writes, a short story always tells two stories: "A arte do contista consiste em saber cifrar a história 2 nos interstícios da história 1. Um relato visível esconde um relato secreto, narrado de um modo elíptico e fragmentário" [The storyteller's art consists of knowing how to encode story 2 in the interstices of story 1. A visible story hides a secret story, narrated in an elliptical and fragmentary way] (PIGLIA, 2004, p.89-90). "O benfeitor de Santa Clara", for example, is a story at once about the freedom that the hero achieves with the death of his father and the end of the dictatorship, about patriarchy, and the mystery of the female character.

Finally, the texts of this anthology show us how difficult it is to define the short story and how blurry genre boundaries are. The most emblematic example is perhaps that of "Autor ou Aquele que plagia a outra dor". Jacques Fux's text came to my hands without any bibliographical information or paratexts, that is, devoid of its author-function (FOUCAULT, 1991). The text opened up to me like a stream of consciousness. I thought that the *cronista* was Jacques Fux himself, who expressed his questionings and certainties of auto-fiction. The use of a stylised stream of consciousness – rich in literary references – seemed to be very suitable for constructing a metafictional text about auto-fiction.



During his workshop, Jacques Fux told us that his book *Antiterapias*, in which “Autor ou Aquele que plagia a outra dor” was published, was labelled as a novel in the first edition (FUX, 2012) and, in the second, as a collection of short stories (FUX, 2014). Be it a short story, a chapter of a novel, or a *crônica* (I did read it as *crônica*), it has permanently joined the list of canonical metafictional texts, such as those about the *crônica*, by Machado de Assis, Clarice Lispector, Afonso Romano Sant’Anna and Rubem Braga.

The role of translation is essential for the dissemination of Brazilian literature and its insertion in world literature. In general, Brazilian authors must first be recognised within Brazil to be then translated. Many of the authors of this anthology have been awarded important literary prizes since the creation of BTC. Nara Vidal’s *Sorte* won the 2019 Oceanos Award. Carla Bessa’s *Urubus* won the Jabuti Award 2020 for best short story anthology. Itamar Vieira Júnior’s novel *Torto arado* won the Leya Award 2018, and the Jabuti and Oceanos Awards 2020. I hope that this bilingual edition will also serve as an incentive for future translation projects of fictional works by our fourteen authors.

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## A LEITURA AMPLIADA COMO DESEJO

NARA VIDAL

Há ideias que surgem como resultado de frustração ou falta. A própria criação literária tem sua gênese frequentemente identificada por essa via. Por horas passadas em livrarias e à procura de literatura brasileira contemporânea em inglês e que representasse de forma mais ampla a ebulição testemunhada, por nós escritores, editores e leitores, da produção de livros por editoras pequenas em tamanho, senti falta.

Senti falta de representatividade de uma identidade brasileira com suas variações e suas idiossincrasias. Senti falta de um movimento que potencialmente alargasse o alcance da nossa literatura, esta produzida agora, esta da qual eu faço parte. Exatamente como leitora e escritora desejei que eu e meus colegas que escrevemos literatura pudéssemos ativar mais um dispositivo que possibilitasse nossas palavras feitas de outras. A boa tradução, além de unificar, aproxima diferenças, não em contraste, mas em enriquecimento. Proporciona um admirável encontro idiomático e uma aproximação cultural que dialogam diretamente com essa abrangência artística.

A gênese do BTC envolveu reflexões sobre possibilidades de formato; encontros com tradutores profissionais e em formação, seminários, reuniões frequentes. A ideia estava lançada e proposta para o Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies (DSPLAS) da University College London, que abraçou a ideia.

Era um projeto ambicioso, menos pelas oficinas dinâmicas e prazerosas, enriquecedoras e de conhecimento compartilhado, mas mais pela proposta de, ao final de todas as oficinas, colocar em prática a ideia de transformar nosso trabalho em uma edição bilíngue. Um projeto nunca é fácil de ser executado. Os desafios são de várias naturezas, e a edição deste número não foi diferente. Fomos quatro editores e cada qual com suas particularidades, formas de execução de tarefas e até mesmo uma visão distinta do foco e do objetivo dessa proposta. A colaboração foi, por vezes, um desafio, mas após persistência chegamos a um resultado que, de certa forma, reflete um pouco do que eu pensei para o projeto. Dentro das circunstâncias, conseguimos um resultado satisfatório. É oportuno que, desde já, eu agradeça ao Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies da UCL e aos profissionais que trabalharam para a execução do projeto de forma voluntária.

Em fevereiro de 2020, fizemos nossa última reunião presencial em um dos prédios da UCL. Foi, como sempre foram os encontros presenciais, uma oportunidade de olhar nos olhos, uma oportunidade de abraços e de convívio. Quantas garrafas de vinho foram abertas durante os nossos encontros?



Mas, mais fundamentalmente, nossas calorosas discussões e debates mergulhados nas traduções e suas possibilidades. O Brazilian Translation Club foi, acima de tudo, uma viva oportunidade de encontrar entusiastas da tradução literária, amantes da língua portuguesa e sua literatura, e de uma enriquecedora troca de ideias e conhecimento. Felizmente, apesar da pandemia, nossos encontros à distância mantiveram a natureza agregadora e, se houve uma vantagem em sacrificar abraços e presenças, a participação do autor, virtualmente, se tornou possível e o alcance do clube, como consequência, se ampliou a outros continentes.

Particularmente, em muitas ocasiões, eu refletia sobre o alcance de ideias colaborativas dessa natureza. Tradutores profissionais e em formação, todos voluntários, todos de igual e imensurável importância proporcionaram o cumprimento do objetivo primário dessa proposta. Observo ainda a confiança dos autores no justo e digno tratamento ao trabalho de cada um foi, pessoalmente, tocante, a adesão de profissionais gabaritados e de tanto talento que, voluntariamente, nos ajudaram a promover os encontros.

Uma das minhas funções como idealizadora do projeto foi a complexa curadoria dos textos. A importância da representatividade tanto geográfica quanto de gênero era crucial e inquestionável. Além disso, a seleção dos textos precisa ser fundamentada em qualidade. Para isso é preciso olhar além do que nos é entregue. É recomendável ter uma boa dose de curiosidade, familiarização com leituras que extrapolam o óbvio e habitual das propostas dos grandes grupos editoriais e dos prêmios literários e sua subjetividade. Um olhar atento e amplo, democrático e comprometido foi a base dessa seleção. Espero ter conseguido introduzir novos autores a novos leitores. É o que permanece e é o que fundamenta o projeto: a leitura. Não há nada mais importante do que a leitura. Os escritores, os tradutores, os professores devem ser meros agentes e facilitadores do exercício da leitura, uma das únicas práticas de fato transformadoras em uma sociedade.





## BRAZILIAN TRANSLATION CLUB: INTRODUCTION

ELTON ULIANA

*Toda tradução é composta de mudança, e talvez não venha ao caso nenhuma ideia de traição neste deslocamento, já que não vem ao caso a impossível fidelidade.*

*[Every translation entails change, and perhaps any notion of treason in this displacement is beside the point, given the impossibility of total fidelity. (my translation)]*

Luis Maffei (2013)

One of the aims of the Brazilian Translation Club (BTC) is to foster a collaborative translation environment for the dissemination of prominent Brazilian writers and emerging translators working into English. If it is a general assumption that translators should work into their first language, in this sense the project has adopted an unusual, and often controversial dynamic in that we have encouraged many of our translators to work in the opposite direction, into their second language. In this context, the idea of collaboration became especially crucial. That is not to say that translations produced by “non-native” speakers should not be viable or even recommendable without the input of a “native speaker”; it is more that the quality of the end-product in these circumstances can be significantly improved by the exchange of expertise among “native speakers” of the languages involved. Indeed, the same dynamic can be applied to the translators who worked into their first language – English – who no doubt benefited immensely from the fruitful exchange of resources with Brazilian translators which was promoted by the club. This magnificently creative framework included collaboration with the authors themselves, particularly with regard to decoding and scrutinizing cultural and linguistic intricacies of the Source Text. Across these many forms of participatory inquiry stretches a fertile continuum through which two different cultures, Lusophone and Anglophone, to be unashamedly generic, simultaneously assert and question their cultural character.

From a theoretical perspective, a number of contentious issues, such as “equivalence” and “untranslatability”, occupied their inevitable space in the workshops. Within a broad spectrum of discussions, these and other complex topics made the conversation about translation all the more rich, connected as they were with a wider range of knowledge and insight, as well as the multiple perspectives of our translators, coordinators, authors and participants. We believe that by engaging more people with the complexities, paradoxes and processes of telling someone else’s story, it may be possible to find new shared meanings for a multitude of translational conundrums, celebrating the gains rather than lamenting the losses in translation. One of the values of this bi-lingual publication, we hope, is that it demonstrates how translation might be able to highlight, rather than silence linguistic and cultural difference, without falling into the traps of excessive assimilation (domestication) or exoticization (foreignisation).



It is worth emphasizing that any attempt to define either the study or the process of translation in terms of linguistic equivalence, i.e., words or linguistic signs which have “equal value” in Source and Target Text, is bound to be restricted. Indeed, if the notion of equivalence, with its vaguely mathematical heritage, has been understood until not so long ago primarily in connection to ideas of accuracy, correspondence, fidelity, correctness, identity and so on, at the BTC we strive collectively to achieve other important theoretical and pragmatic approaches to language, context, meaning and translation. In this way, the texts translated in the workshops maintain a flirtatious alignment with the ideas of scholars like Mary Snell-Hornby, who considers the concept of equivalence as presenting an illusion of symmetry between languages (SNELL-HORNBY, 2006), an assertion which is rightly complemented by the theorist Anthony Pym, who asserts that equivalence creates a presumption of interpretative resemblance and, in this sense, it is always “presumed” (PYM, 2010). In other words, to quote David Bellos, “a match cannot be the thing it is matching” (BELLOS, 2012). Fundamentally, the fruitful collaborative environment of the BTC enabled the translators to consider features of the English and Brazilian Portuguese languages at their most crucial stages: at the point of linguistic production where literary characters are constructed and social individuals speak, interact, read, write, translate and adapt. If the task of translators is to provide answers to questions such as how linguistic features in different languages can correspond to each other, stand for one another, or recreate each other’s meaning, the result of their work may be no less than to offer different insights into the nature of meaning.

Crucially, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic our workshops were transferred to an online environment. Despite the catastrophic impact of this global crisis on each of us – not least on those who lost family members or loved ones to the virus – the scope of the project increased significantly, with participants logging in from each corner of the world, and most authors being able to join the meetings remotely. Whereas previous to the lockdown we had the pleasure to have the physical presence of few participating authors (Ana Maria Machado, Nara Vidal and Claudie Vasli), the new digital space enabled us to host a greater number of contributors, which in turn, improved the quality of the project’s outcome. Remarkably, some writers, in reflecting on the close reading of their own work by the translators and considering the technical discussions which followed, made the point that they would have written certain phrases or sentences differently. In fact, Décio Zylbersztajn went as far as to say that he would have been able to improve his text after discussing it with the translators. This is a refreshingly significant realization. It not only directs us to questions such as “in what ways can translation influence writing?” – an issue already addressed, although partially and through a different perspective, by the scholar Rebecca L. Walkowitz in her book *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (WALKOWITZ, 2017) – but also, and more crucially, opens up space, scope and opportunity for further research in the field of literary translation.



Suitably enough, each translation in this project is followed by a translator's commentary which records and discusses the translation process, developing a descriptive analysis of the strategies, problems and procedures involved during the various stages of the intricate practice of "re-homing" a text that had its origin somewhere else. We feel that these commentaries are necessary in part because translators, to some extent, are largely invisible and often excluded from newspaper reviews, blurbs and articles; they are hardly ever mentioned in the promotional material of books, anthologies and other publications, and therefore they scarcely appear in any critical discourse or academic debate surrounding the material they translate. Consequently, questions of accountability, authorship and critical assessment of literature in translation become obscured. There is a suggestion throughout these pages that the practice of writing, reading and listening to translations as actual translations, as opposed to some kind of misrecognized "sameness" that disregards the processes of translation, could be instrumental in creating a new ethics of translation, one which privileges transparency, accountability, fair exchange and reciprocity, rather than cultural or linguistic hegemony.

We hope to have contributed with this project to the creation of a new collaborative ethics of translation, as well as to the necessary debate about the visibility of the translator and the directionality of the translation. Part of our intention is to supplement discussions involving particular aspects of literary production and ultimately, to help advance new forms of thinking about diversification and the literary canon. From the beginning, it has been our goal and our pleasure to celebrate Brazilian Literature and to expand its franchise outside of the Brazilian literary system.

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## TRADUZIR IMAGENS EM PALAVRAS E PALAVRAS EM IMAGENS

ERIKA PACHECO

À primeira vista, tradução e design (gráfico) são duas profissões com pouca coisa em comum, já que uma lida com o visual e a outra com o textual. Porém, estes dois fazeres se assimilam em vários aspectos e o mais óbvio deles é que ambos se enquadram na categoria de “profissões de humanas”. Ao tradutor compete a tarefa de versar para outra língua um texto específico; já ao designer, em especial no que diz respeito à criação de marcas/logos, sua função é traduzir em uma única imagem, uma ideia, um conceito. Há ainda um outro aspecto que aproxima essas suas profissões, ao menos no que diz respeito ao Brasil: ambas ainda carecem de reconhecimento e regulamentação. Coincidência ou não, estas foram as duas profissões que escolhi e acredito que suas similaridades sejam maiores que suas diferenças.

A tarefa de criar uma marca para o Brazilian Translation Club não foi algo que me foi encomendado. Assim como muitos tradutores propõem uma tradução de um texto ou um livro, a ideia do BTC ter uma marca, uma página no Facebook e perfil no Instagram e no Twitter foi uma proposição que fiz às organizadoras do projeto: a professora Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva e a escritora Nara Vidal. Proposta aceita, comecei a pensar e a pesquisar imagens que pudessem refletir tudo aquilo que o clube representa, porém de uma forma que não caísse na obviedade (usar um livro ou papel ou caneta estavam absolutamente fora de cogitação). Como sintetizar, em uma única imagem, a missão do clube de levar ao conhecimento do leitor de língua inglesa a literatura brasileira contemporânea? Como traduzir essa amplitude num espaço tão diminuto? Como relacionar duas culturas tão distintas e em continentes distantes?

Após algumas ideias, decidi-me por escolher um passarinho, mais especificamente um beija-flor, uma ave de tamanho pequeno da família *Trochilidae*. Também conhecido como colibri, este passarinho possui plumagem colorida e brilhante. O beija-flor pertence à ordem dos apodiformes e assemelham-se às andorinhas. Tanto o beija-flor quanto a andorinha têm asas finas e compridas e são capazes de voar rapidamente. Ao pesquisar sobre o beija-flor descobri que “além de ter propriedades mágicas, o passarinho pode ser considerado também um símbolo de alegria e energia, uma vez que bate as asas com bastante determinação e força e tem um batimento cardíaco bastante acelerado. Para os Ameríndios, o beija-flor simboliza a beleza, a harmonia, a verdade e a força” (Dicionário de Símbolos). A escolha do beija-flor provou-se extremamente acertada, uma vez que essa ave também se assemelha à andorinha, uma ave migratória e comum em terras inglesas, ou seja, a identificação do símbolo principal poderia gerar identificação tanto com o público falante de português quanto com o falante de inglês. Depois de definida a



forma, o desenho principal, optei por criar um beija-flor quase que em forma de mosaico, usando as cores que remetessem às cores da bandeira do Brasil e da bandeira do Reino Unido: tons de verde, amarelo, azul e vermelho. Em relação ao posicionamento, optei por colocá-lo com o bico voltado para a direita, representando também a posição geográfica do Reino Unido em relação ao Brasil e nesse movimento de "voar" em direção ao norte, o beija-flor rompe as barreiras impostas pelo idioma – representado na marca como um retângulo com um dos lados abertos. Em relação à tipografia usada, a fonte escolhida foi a *Panton* negrito e regular, e as iniciais BTC inseridas no box já preveem o uso apenas da sigla para se referir ao Brazilian Translation Club.



Assim como na tradução, a criação de uma marca/logo irá variar de acordo com o designer e sua bagagem cultural e profissional. Também é possível dizer que não há uma marca certa ou errada, porém podemos dizer que existem marcas que não se adequam ou não refletem a natureza do negócio ou produto. O dever do designer, assim como o do tradutor, é captar as sutilezas e observar a personalidade da proposta para transformá-la em identidade. Ambos os profissionais se dedicam a *re-criar*, sendo que um recria através de outro idioma; transportando palavras, e o outro recria através de outra linguagem, transformando ideias em imagens.

Cabe aqui finalizar agradecendo à professora Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva e à Nara Vidal, pelo ato de amor e de coragem em criar e manter iniciativa tão importante para nossa literatura e também ao Elton Uliana, por ter embarcado na criação e manutenção dos canais de mídia social do BTC. Vida longa ao Brazilian Translation Club, que ele seja como o beija-flor das lendas indígenas, seguindo de flor em flor, sem nunca desistir do sonho de ver a literatura brasileira mais valorizada, mais traduzida e alcançando mais leitores mundo afora.

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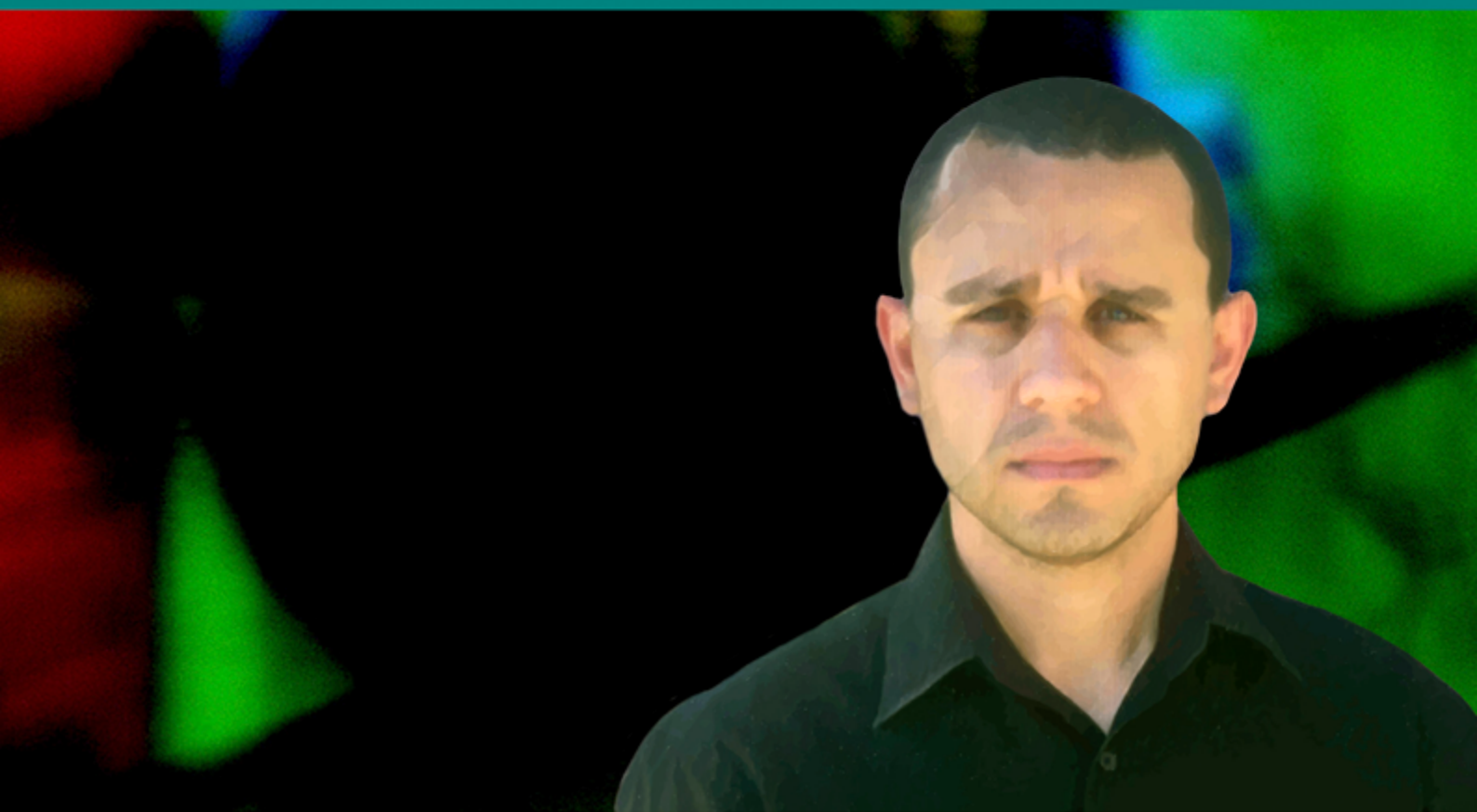




***CONTOS,  
TRADUÇÕES  
E COMENTÁRIOS***



**ELTON ULIANA** TRANSLATES **SÉRGIO TAVARES**





**FOME**

SÉRGIO TAVARES

Acontece toda vez que eu afundo a cabeça no travesseiro e sinto a latência no ventre dolorido pelo pós-sexo. Uma descarga de nojo e arrependimento que flui pelo corpo entranhado pelo cheiro do homem que respira morno na minha nuca – um qualquer que permiti que me penetrasse e me amargasse a boca com suas secreções.

Por que não consigo controlar essa ânsia?

Sou fraca, e a repetição do erro suscita lamentos furiosos que fazem com que a decência remanescente tente abandonar essa carcaça usada como um instrumento de satisfação, depois descartada para preservar as digitais. Todos os dias, alimento esta rotina doentia. Esgueiro-me feito um animal de pernas abertas por bares prostitutas, seduzida pelos eflúvios do álcool, fumaças de cigarro e loções pós-barba. Esperando um olhar ou menção libertina que me leve para cama um, dois ou três paus. Não sou a cadela no cio, sou os cachorros atraídos pelo apetite.

Sei que a satisfação me devasta em bel-prazer, mas a compulsão me engana com fantasias que cegam a previsão do erro, viciando uma necessidade intolerável. São varões em brasa que me sobem pelas coxas, encharcando-me: a sede de uma água, a primavera de um único pólen.

Nessas horas, tenho medo de ficar perto dos meus alunos. O fedor do suor, embebido no uniforme, afeta-me como éter, fazendo com que me esfregue ainda sobre as roupas.

Quantas vezes isto já aconteceu na escola!

Uma aflição que apaziguei entre pernas de porteiros, motoristas e zeladores. Personagens anônimos de um elenco indistinto, atuando num roteiro em que a última cena sempre se passa na minha cama. Ofereço a minha casa para facilitar a aproximação.

Às vezes, eles estão tão vastos que tenho de jogar fora os lençóis.



Pedem para me bater, chupar meus pés, sujar a minha cara. Geralmente, os que me devoram por trás são os maridos. Fazem comigo o que não fazem com as esposas. Nunca tentei ser melhor que elas, embora sei que lhes proporciono um instante de completude que anos de casamento nunca farão.

Não faço isso por eles. Não consigo evitar.

\*\*\*

Ele cruza a porta com um olhar desconfiado: glóbulos inflamados oscilando em pálpebras bulbosas, um movimento viscoso, remelento. Titubeia. Dá um passo curto, irregular. Estuda a sala, os tapetes felpudos e limpos, desvendando a situação pela perspectiva de animal arredio. Depois, avança.

Mantenho distância. Embora pareça dócil e embotado, trato-o com gestos cautelosos. Aceno, sustentando um olhar amistoso. Tem um cheiro forte: um fedor feito de urina e lixo, entranhado nos pelos ensecados e numa corda encardida que arrasta pelo corredor, lastrando imundice.

Saio da sala, aventando passos afetados e movimentos repletos de insinuações convidativas. Ele me segue com dificuldade. Tenho de me submeter ao seu andar zumbiótico.guardo. Consinto solenemente, emendo em mais um corredor e dou no quarto principal. Empurro a porta e uma corrente de vento escapa, afastando fugazmente o ar decomposto. Deveria ser um alento, ainda que instantâneo, mas não me incomoda. Ali está o cenário: as cortinas douradas pelo sol, a cama de casal, os lençóis brancos.

Entro no quarto e contorno a cama, com a mão suspensa tocando suavemente o lençol com as pontas dos dedos. Ele para – como que alertado por um senso danificado de perigo. Estuda a conjugação de cores e a harmonia dos móveis. Fareja os perfumes das velas aromatizadas, dispositivos de uma sensação esquecida.

Sento na ponta do colchão. As pernas alinhadas, os joelhos retos virados para a porta. Entre os umbrais, ele me retribui um olhar sujo, perdido numa expressão impassível, inchado.

Há uma espera, agora – faz parte do jogo. A projeção do desejo, a confirmação de que os dois atores estão impregnados pelo impulso comum de desabar em inconseqüência, mas não aqui. Aqui estou sozinha.

Suavemente, puxo uma alça da blusa. A seda escorre sobre o colo, deixando um seio à mostra. Ele não reage. Repito o gesto do lado esquerdo, com nuances lascivas. Agarro o tecido embolado na bainha e o arrasto



sobre a cabeça, num movimento lento e provocante, roçando os cotovelos sobre os mamilos túmidos, a pele clara, arrepiada, nua. Ele mantém-se num plano remoto e passivo, enclausurado em pensamentos.

Talvez seja este o momento inimaginável, onde sinto que, pela primeira vez, posso interromper a cena, levantar-me e me vestir, mandá-lo embora. Estancar esta ânsia e me preservar, por uma única vez, da devastação que sucede o gozo, sem medo do embrutecimento ou da reação hostil.

Entretanto, apesar do desinteresse dele, da debilidade óbvia e dos alertas racionais, não consigo evitar. Giro o corpo e puxo a presilha do fecho eclair da saia, deslizando-a sobre os dentes. Inclino o corpo e passo as pernas, uma a uma, pela abertura da cintura, depois as cruzo em laço libidinoso. Não uso calcinha.

Neste instante, meu corpo começa a reagir em abstinência. Uma fúria explode em jorros de sangue fervente pela musculatura retesada, queimando a corda que controlava o animal voraz, sedento e insaciável. Estou ardendo entre as coxas e já não consigo mantê-las fechadas. Ele permanece sob os umbrais, exatamente onde o quero, prostrado, com uma secreção mole escorrendo sobre os lábios manchados de iodo, carcomidos.

Miro seus olhos e lentamente vou abrindo as pernas. Descolo o sexo viscoso, úmido, uma rosa em chamas, latente. Exponho-me, desvendo-me para ele como uma cadela que rola sobre si, intoxicada pelo cio. A princípio, ele permanece inabalado – e, mesmo que ele fique pateticamente amortecido, não posso mais parar; terei de me satisfazer sozinha – mas, num crescente vagaroso, seu rosto vai se transformando em algo assustador que teria me atemorizado em qualquer outra ocasião.

Um rasgo se abre no meio da sua cara macilenta e coberta pela barba vasta e imunda, uma versão sórdida de sorriso que revela cacos de dentes podres, fincados em gengivas enegrecidas. Ele sustenta aquela ferida por alguns minutos, paralisado, emitindo um chiado bronquítico, monocórdio, então se arrasta para dentro do quarto. Por um instante, a reação me confunde, mas logo me toma uma euforia. Salto da cama e vou ao seu encontro, apenas sobre escaarpins vermelhos.

Aproximo-me agora sem receios, insinuante, olhos grudados nos dele, numa tentativa de sedução, esperando uma menção libertina. Ele apenas responde com a mesma expressão vazia, e assim não reage quando começo a despi-lo. Tiro-lhe os trapos de cima a baixo, peças ruídas e cobertas por uma gama de odores ruins, excrementícios, exceto a gaze que cobre um de seus pés, manchada de iodo e uma secreção escura.





Uma pasta negra de imundície cobre todo o seu corpo – é quase insuportável ficar próximo dele. Uma tontura que começa a me embrulhar, e talvez essa cena, esse estranho que trouxe do lixão próximo à escola, seja uma forma inconsciente de me punir, mas não consigo evitar. Estou encharcada, preciso me saciar e junto meu corpo ao dele.

Esfrego-me em seu peito, entrelaço minhas pernas nas dele, lambuzando-me naquele visco escuro, sentindo a barba crespa arranhar meu rosto e desprender nacos de algo já podre. De perto, sua boca tem um cheiro etílico muito forte – e talvez isso explique um pouco da sua letargia. Roço meus seios nele, envolvo-o com meus braços, encaixo-me em seu joelho e, de uma forma inexplicável, toda a combinação de cheiros ruins, estranheza e perversão vai me deixando mais excitada, entrecortando minha respiração, possuindo-me, queimando-me de desejo.

Pego a sua mão e pouso sobre minha bunda. Ele não reage, não tenta me abrir, cravar as unhas. Fica estacionada onde a deixei. Talvez ele precise de mais tempo para extrair do corpo fragilizado por terrores urbanos e carências fisiológicas estímulos sexuais, mas já não aguento e toco o seu sexo. Há um princípio de enrijecimento, um inchaço, pulsando entre meus dedos feito uma enguia agonizante. Ele se contrai ao toque, porém não é uma sensibilidade de prazer e sim de dor. O sexo está coberto de pústulas, cancroso e expurga uma secreção amarelada.

Por isso não consegue ficar enrijecido por completo. Talvez se eu... Mas percebo que a debilidade, provocada pelas moléstias e os anos marginais, não lhe permite vigor suficiente para uma reação mais viril. Pego-o com delicadeza pelo braço e deito-o na cama. Suas costas maculam os lençóis brancos, com a impressão precisa da sua anatomia. Preciso satisfazer esta ânsia e tem de ser com minhas forças.

Subo em seu corpo, apoiando minhas mãos sobre seu peito e sento em suas pernas. A pele é mole, fria e grudenta de anfíbio: meus dedos afundam por entre os vãos das costelas. Ele geme com meu pouco peso. Tão próxima, vejo que seus olhos são escuros como carvão, belos, mas ainda borrados. Talvez seja uma mancha que esconde os verdadeiros olhos, mas agora preciso do que é real e pego seu sexo por baixo de mim e me penetro. Apesar dos alertas racionais de todas as doenças que eu possa contrair e suas terríveis consequências, não posso evitar e me penetro. Ele geme mais alto com o movimento, quase um urro. Eu também.

Cavalgo sobre ele com fúria – sei que não vai resistir por muito tempo. Cavalgo sobre ele, me preencho. Bombeio meu corpo com todas as sensações doces, mornas, anestésicas. Os frêmitos de prazer, contrações e tremores irradiando-se pelo ventre, pela parte interna das coxas. Subo e desço com vontade, servindo-me



dele, sentindo o descompasso da respiração, a superprodução das glândulas salivares, lacrimais, o coração pulsando em todos os desvãos e redemoinhos do meu corpo. Do seu corpo.

Afundo meus dedos na pele fina do seu peito e sinto seu coração, um músculo febril, ressurgindo no centro da palma. Aperto-o como uma socorrista, esmagando os ossos, estimulando vida, desejo, empurro-o, sentindo o músculo acelerar. Ele começa a arfar, um ruído pneumônico, lágrimas brotam de seus olhos. Ele arfa e o coração dispara como um louco aprisionado entre vértebras, eu cavalgo.

Desço com impiedade, esfolando-nos, fazendo-o salpicar a barba com ovas de saliva, engasgar. Afundo-me sobre ele, me arranho em seus pelos, esfrego-me e lascivamente escorremos um para dentro do outro: um único ser pegajoso, respirando num mesmo compasso, pulsando um mesmo coração.

Somos um, e sinto-me algo amorfo. O animal e a montaria enlaçados, avançando, carregando uma energia instável que vai nos impulsionando, prestes a explodir, crescendo, mais forte, urgindo, vindo, vindo, vindo e irrompendo num jorro morno que lambuza as minhas coxas, vertendo entre as dobras do lençol, viscoso e deliciosamente sujo.

Desabo sobre ele e, molengamente, vou deslizando pela lama que cobre seu peito, tombando ao seu lado, sem fôlego. Ele arqueja feito um ressuscitado, um maratonista, emitindo um chiado sofrível, quase um choro infantil. Por um tempo, ficamos simplesmente assim, imóveis. Extasiados pelo efeito lisérgico do pós-sexo, flutuando em meio ao rearranjo do corpo, os espasmos etéreos. Falidos pelo gozo.

Sei que tenho de extrair o máximo deste momento, pois logo este teatro, essa fantasia que vai esmaecendo, vai ser devastado pela descarga de nojo e arrependimento e, quando ele ainda estará deitado, tentando entender o que aconteceu, eu estarei morrendo outra vez. Mas então ele se levanta.

Ele se levanta e a reação inesperada me desvia do transe. Vejo-o descolar do lençol e arrastar-se, com seus pés feridos, até a porta, relevando a nudez e desaparecendo pelo corredor. Sai pela casa sem propósito aparente, indiferente a mim e ao que aconteceu, sem indicações, mas, pela marcha pesada que impõe, posso identificar o caminho que percorre. Ouço, pelo atrito da gaze no carpete, que vai em direção à sala. Usa a parede como apoio, deslocando os quadros, espalmado a argamassa, na tentativa de forçar um ritmo incompatível a sua condição física.





Logo chega ao fim do corredor – e sei, pois a fricção é substituída por um ruído surdo de piso de madeira – e avança ao centro da sala, equilibrando-se na mesa de jantar e nas cadeiras que rangem, riscando os pés no assoalho.

Há um estrondo, em seguida. Um baque forte, acompanhado por uma orquestra de louças, cristais e taças de vidro, reverberando a colisão com o bufete, em ondulações rasteiras. Ouço a vibração se extinguir e depois o nada, apenas o silêncio. Aguço os ouvidos e a sua presença distante não está mais lá. Não há mais passos, não há mais móveis reclamando o apoio, apenas o silêncio contínuo.

Começo a me preocupar, suspeitar se não está desacordado, ferido. Ou pior: se não está, dissimuladamente, tentando fugir e expor ao mundo meu vício. Desenlaço-me do lençol e estou saltando da cama, quando escuto o descolar da porta da geladeira, seguido do clique eletrostático da lampadazinha se acendendo.

Ele ataca minha comida, furiosamente. Coisas começam a se quebrar: vidros, embalagens de plástico. Latas caem e rolam, descarriladas. Revira as panelas, jogando-as no chão, arromba os armários. Ouço pacotes plásticos sendo rasgados, tampas de conserva arrancadas, uma cacofonia voraz. Ele mastiga com ânsia, devora tudo que estiver ao seu alcance, saciando a sua fome.

A minha continua a mesma.



## HUNGER

SÉRGIO TAVARES

TRANSLATED BY ELTON ULIANA

It happens every time my head hits the pillow and I feel the post-sex ache concealed in my stomach. A discharge of disgust and regret that flows through my body, a body impregnated with the smell of the man who breaths awkwardly behind my neck, any man that I have allowed to penetrate me and sour my mouth with bitter secretions.

Why can't I control these urges?

I am fallible. The repetition of such a mistake provokes an anger that causes any trace of decency to try and flee this carcass used as an instrument for gratification, and then tossed aside, preserving only the fingerprints. I perpetuate this sick routine every day. Prowling around bars filled with prostitutes like an animal with its legs wide open, seduced by the scent of alcohol, cigarette smoke and after-shave. Constantly waiting for a flirtatious look, an invitation to bed – one, two or even three cocks. I'm not a bitch in heat, I'm a dog attracted by its own appetite.

I know that I indulge in insatiable pleasure, but my obsession blinds me with its deceptive fantasies, making me addicted to this unspeakable compulsion. Virile men rising up through my thighs, making me wet, like a thirst quenched by a single glass, a spring with a single flower.

In these hours I am ashamed to be near my students. The stench of sex on my sweat-drenched clothes is like ether to me, it makes me rub my skin all over.

How many times has this happened at school?

An affliction that I have relieved between the legs of doormen, drivers, caretakers. All anonymous characters of a common cast, acting from a script in which the last scene always takes place in my bed. Using my place makes things easier.

Sometimes the men are so filthy that I have to get rid of the sheets.



They ask me if they can beat me up, suck my feet, spit in my face. Usually, the ones who are married take me from behind. They do to me what they cannot do to their wives. I have never intended to be better than a wife, but I know I provide moments of fulfilment that years of marriage will never achieve.

I don't do this especially for them. It's just that I cannot stop myself.

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He walks through the door with a suspicious look: swollen eyeballs turning inside his slimy eyelids, lethargic, reluctant. He takes a short, uncertain step. He studies the room – the uniformity of the shiny rugs and of the furniture – he deciphers the situation from the perspective of a cowering animal. Then he moves forward.

I keep my distance. Although he seems docile and rather lifeless, I treat him cautiously. I gesture for him to come in, offering a welcoming look. He has a foul smell. A stench of urine and rubbish soaks through his grease body hair, impregnating even the useless piece of rope that he drags down the corridor, spreading filth.

With measured steps, I quickly leave the living room and signal him to come after me. He follows with difficulty. I watch his zombie-like walk. I wait. Patiently I slow down, passing through another corridor until I reach the main bedroom. As I push the door a breeze escapes, briefly dislodging the festering air. It's a pleasant relief, if only momentary, but that's fine. This is the scenario: the sun-splashed golden curtains, the bed, and the white sheets.

I go into the room and walk to the other side of the bed with my hand gently suspended, softly touching the sheets with my fingertips. He stops as if alerted by a distorted sense of danger. He seems stunned by the profusion of colours in the room and the matching furniture. He sniffs the scent of the perfumed candles, emblems of a sensation lost in his memory.

I sit on the edge of the bed. My legs aligned, my knees straight, facing the door. Standing in the doorway he gives me a sleazy look, seemingly lost in a blank expression, bloated.

Now there's a wait, it's part of the game. The air is pregnant with desire as the two actors become infused with the temptation to collapse into obscene carelessness. But wait, not just yet.



Gently, I tease the strap of my top. The silk drops sensually onto my lap revealing one breast. He does not react. I repeat the gesture on the left side with a flirtatious movement. I take the gathered fabric and drag it over my head slowly and provocatively, brushing my elbows over my moist nipples, white skin, goose bumps, nakedness. Passively, he maintains a remote distance, trapped in his thoughts.

Perhaps this could be that inconceivable moment where I could, for the first time, interrupt the scene, get up, get dressed, and send him away. For once I could stop this hideous compulsion and preserve myself from the devastation that inescapably comes after the orgasm, without fear of aggravation or of any hostile reaction.

However, despite his indifference, his visible weaknesses and all the rational warnings, I can't help it. I twist my body and pull the zipper of my skirt, sliding it open with my teeth. I lean forward and lift my legs one by one through the opening at the waist, crossing them perversely. I'm not wearing panties.

In abstinence, my body begins to react. A rage explodes in spurts of boiling blood through my tense muscles, destroying everything that holds back this voracious, thirsty, insatiable animal. I'm throbbing between my legs and I can no longer keep them closed. He remains in the doorway, exactly where I want him, debilitated, with his sloppy, rotten secretions all stained with drops of iodine.

I look into his eyes and slowly open my legs revealing my damp sex – a rose in flames. I expose myself to him like a bitch rolling over when in heat. At first, he remains still, pathetic, numbed. But it's too late to stop, I will have to be satisfied. Slowly his face begins to change, it becomes disturbing. In any other situation that face would have frightened me.

Gradually a smirk appears in the middle of his haggard face disheveled by the excessively long and filthy beard, a sordid imitation of a smile that reveals pieces of rotten tooth stuffed into dark gums. He ignores the wounds for a few minutes, paralysed, emitting a wretched, monotone shudder, then drags himself into the room. For a moment his reaction confuses me but soon I begin to feel euphoric. Wearing just my red high heels, I jump out of bed and go towards him.

I get closer to him unafraid now. My eyes stare at his obsessively, seditiously, anxiously waiting for a word of permission. He responds only with the same empty expression, offering no reaction when I start to undress him. I strip him off his shabby clothes, from top to bottom – all threadbare pieces smothered in putrefied, excremental odours – except for the bandage covering a wound in one of his feet, reeking of iodine.



A dark layer of filth covers his entire body, it's virtually impossible to be next to him. A dizziness begins to envelop me. This scene, this stranger that I brought from the rubbish dump near the school is perhaps an unconscious form of self-punishment – but there's nothing I can do about it. I am all wet and need to be satisfied. I move closer to him.

I brush my skin against his chest, intertwine my legs with his, smearing myself with that dark sticky mess, feeling his rough beard scratching my face and releasing rotten bits all over me. Up close, his mouth has a strong smell of alcohol – perhaps that explains his sluggishness. I rub my breasts against him, wrap my arms around him, crouch down between his knees and, in an inexplicable way, the whole combination of foul smells, weirdness and perversion gets me even more excited, breathless, possessed, consumed with desire.

I take his hands and put them on my arse. He does not react, there's no attempt to spread it open or to dig his fingers in. His hands remain where I left them, unmoved. Perhaps he needs time to extract some kind of sexual drive from a body which has been weakened by street living and wounded limbs – but I can no longer contain myself and I grab his crotch. It begins to harden, to swell, to pulse between my fingers like a throbbing eel. It contracts at my touch. However, this is not due to a sensitivity to pleasure, but rather to pain. His sex is covered in boils and open sores from which gushes a yellowish secretion.

In such a state he is unable to get completely hard. Perhaps if I ... but I realize that the frailty caused by the diseases and years of homelessness prevents him from having enough energy for a full erection. I take him gently by the arm and lay him on the bed. His back stains the white sheets with the exact impression of his anatomy. I need to satisfy my urge and it will have to be under my own steam.

I climb on top of his body pressing my hands into his chest, and sit between his legs. His skin is loose, cold and sticky like an amphibian – my fingers sink through the gaps between his ribs. He moans under my light weight. So close, I can see that his eyes are as dark as coal, beautiful, but still blurred – maybe it's a stain that hides his true eyes – but now I need what is real and I take his cock underneath me and allow myself to ride it. He moans louder with the movement, almost a roar. And so do I.

I ride on him furiously, I know it won't last long. I ride on him and fill myself up. I pump my body frantically with all the sweet, warm, numbing sensations. The thrills of pleasure, contractions and tremors radiate in my belly from the inside of my thighs. I go up and down forcefully pleasuring him, feeling the mismatch of our breaths, the profusion of saliva and tears, the heart beating fast in all of the deviations and depths of my body. Of his body.



I sink my fingers into the thin skin of his chest and feel his heart, a feverish muscle resurfacing in the palm of my hand. I press down on him as if giving life support, crushing his bones, stimulating life-force, desire, pushing him. Feeling his muscles accelerate, he starts to gasp, a rhythmic noise, tears in his eyes. He pants and his heartbeat races like a madman trapped within his own bones, I ride.

Mercilessly I thrust down on him, grazing our skins, making him splatter his beard with mucus and bubbling saliva, he chokes. I go deep down on him, scratching against his body hair, scrubbing myself on him, lasciviously dripping one into the other – a single sticky being breathing in the same tempo, beating as a single heart.

We are one and I feel somewhat amorphous. The animal and its rider entwined, advancing, propelled by a dizzying energy that is about to explode, growing stronger, urging, coming, coming, coming and bursting into a warm stream that smears my thighs, spilling between the folds of the sheets, slimy and deliciously dirty.

I collapse on top of him and softly slide through the sludge that covers his chest, falling beside him, out of breath, releasing a miserable moan, almost a childish cry. For a while we are just like this, motionless. Ecstatic with the hallucinatory post-sex effect, floating in the middle of rearranged bodies, ethereal spasms cut by the orgasm.

I know I have to make the most of this moment because soon this theatre, this fading fantasy will be wrecked by remorse and revulsion. When he is still lying down trying to understand what has just happened, I will be dying again. But suddenly, he gets up.

He gets up and his unexpected reaction instantly takes me out of my trance. I see him take off the sheet and drag himself with his wounded feet to the door, revealing his nakedness and disappearing down the corridor. He walks through the house with no apparent purpose, indifferent to me and to what we have just done. I know exactly where he is, I can hear the sound of his heavy steps and of his bandages dragging on the carpet. He is heading towards the living room. He uses the wall for support, dislodging the paintings, fumbling against the furniture in an attempt to force a rhythm which is incompatible with his physical condition.

Soon he reaches the end of the corridor. I know because the dragging sound is replaced by the thud of a wooden floor. He advances to the center of the room balancing with his hands on the dining table and on the squeaking chairs, dragging his feet on the floor.



Then there is a bang. A loud noise accompanied by a symphony of crockery, glasses and glass bowls – all reverberating in waves with a crash against the kitchen cupboard. I hear the vibration fade and then nothing, only silence. I strain my ears and his distant presence is no longer there. No more steps, no more creaking furniture, only silence.

I start to worry, suspecting that he might be unconscious or hurt. Even worse, he might be secretly trying to escape and expose my addiction to the world. I disentangle myself from the sheet and jump off the bed when, suddenly, I hear the sound of the fridge door opening, followed by the electric click of the lamp.

He attacks my food furiously. Things start to break open – plastic containers, bottles – and cans start to fall and roll. He goes through my pots throwing them on the floor, he smashes the cabinets. I hear plastic wrappings being ripped, cans being opened, all in a voracious cacophony. He chews everything with eagerness, devours all that is within his reach, satiating his hunger.

Mine remains the same.





## IN SHORT: TRANSLATION TRANSFORMS EVERYTHING

ELTON ULIANA

Sérgio Tavares' fearless exploration of sexual politics in "Hunger" portrays the life of a schoolteacher who is both liberated and imprisoned by her own animalistic desire, trapped in an ambivalent cross-play of rationality and instinct, satisfaction and guilt, sensuality and regret. With arresting eroticism, the protagonist's compulsive behavior impregnates her language with strikingly visual metaphors and disturbingly graphic, yet poetic depictions of the body. There is a compellingly crafted collision throughout the text between the unorthodox perversity of the subject and the verbal opulence with which it is treated. As a male author, Tavares gives expression and freedom to unspoken aspects of female sexuality and raises an important point about men's ideas of women's sexual behaviour in the very act of expressing it.

My overall translation approach can be conceived mostly as "domestication" in syntactical terms (VENUTI, 2013, p.181-5). If Tavares' powerful story with its extreme portrayal of female sexual desire is to achieve its full impact on the English audience, it should retain both the meticulously descriptive and the sumptuously poetic quality of his Portuguese prose, whilst at the same time hold on to the irregular sway and flow of its rhythm. These characteristics, amongst other stylistic and thematic ones, are what make Tavares' work so brilliantly unique and so interesting to translate. If my aim is to achieve a high level of fluency and naturalness in expression, I also strive to maintain "formal" and "stylistic approximation" to Tavares' original text (BAKER, 2012, p.31).

Paradoxically though, because Portuguese is a highly inflected language and English is not, I felt justifiable to indulge sometimes in some kind of "creative infidelity" not only to Portuguese but also to English linguistic conventions (COSTA, 2017, p.167). I recognise that in order to preserve the richly descriptive imagery, the graphically sexualised language and the orgasmic rhythm of the piece, some adjustments in diction (choice of words) and syntax should be implemented. Nevertheless, it is possible to feel in my translation a back and forth movement, moving away from the Portuguese formulations and then occasionally back towards them. The desired effect of this strategy is to give the reader a sense of the exoticism of the fictional place in which the piece is set as well the sexually charged atmosphere contained in the Portuguese language used by Tavares. In this sense, one might argue that the text is decidedly un-British.

Translation inevitably involves making substantial changes to the Source Text (ST) and "Hunger" poses a particular challenge for translators for a number of interesting reasons:



- >> There is a significant amount of sexual terms and descriptions of the body that do not translate straightforwardly and can sound detrimental or too rudimentary in English. The challenge is how to maintain the eroticism of the scenes adhering to the sexual pace of the story without allowing the language to fall flat or to become overtly blatant. This is particularly complex as Tavares' first-person narration keeps shifting in voice and returning to the protagonist's psyche, consciousness and reason ("Perhaps this could be that inconceivable moment where I could, for the first time, interrupt the scene"). I have tried to reconstruct some of the aural and rhythmic devices like alliterations and internal rhymes whenever possible ("a rage explodes in spurts of boiling blood"/"obsessively, seditiously, anxiously"/"I watch his zombie-like walk. I wait."). In addition, I have used synonyms ("crotch", "sex", "cock") or near-synonyms ("throbbing", "shudder") as a way of adding semantic nuances to the text and to reinforce the constantly shifting rhythmic patterns with its orgasmic peaks and deflations.
  
- >> Since Tavares relies frequently on imagery and figures of speech such as metaphors, similes and antithesis, I have recreated similar kinds of rhetorical figures specific to the English language and culture to render certain expressions and phrases. An example is "embotado" (figuratively somebody that lost all energy) which I translated as "rather lifeless"; this in isolation may seem a weak option, as opposed to "deflated", for instance, but in the context of the sentence it becomes a more compelling match ("Although he seems docile and rather lifeless, I treat him cautiously").
  
- >> Some sections of the text which are heavily reliant on subordinate clauses had to be resolved at coherence level by using translation strategies such as "sentence structure change" or "sentence reversal" ("Gradually a smirk appears in the middle of his haggard face") as well as "explicitness change" ("dishevelled by the excessively long and filthy beard") and other similar strategies (CHESTERMAN, 1997, pp. 94-7). It is true that some of the potential syntactical awkwardness was removed at the expense of substantial squeezing, even so I have tried to create artful solutions to keep relative clauses and their referents adjacent ("Patiently I slow down, passing through another corridor until I reach the main bedroom. As I push the door a breeze escapes, briefly dislodging the festering air"). I believe that these strategies have an effect of making the imagery more prominently visible and the relation between subject and object more direct, as well as allowing the sentence to flow better in English.
  
- >> A number of lexical changes, cultural filtering, additions and omissions had to be implemented: an example is the expression "aventados passos" (steps as quick as the wind) simply translated as "quickly".



Finally, this publication is designed in a bi-lingual format which makes it easier to locate in my translation a number of other important interventions. I have tried to elaborate my own solutions for the fascinating complexities of “Hunger” and I hope that my translation demonstrates my affinity with Tavares’ original tale, a text which stretches language to its creative limits.

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**EMYR HUMPHREYS** TRANSLATES **NARA VIDAL**







**AMANDA**

NARA VIDAL

Foi no elevador. Subíamos como se fossemos voar pro infinito. Era pra ser. Lá nos olhamos pela primeira vez. Minha avó estava comigo. Cara de amargura, dessas caras secas de quem já se desviou do amor faz tempo. Os olhos dela, apertados, viam o metal duro a frente. A boca toda presa em rugas que apontavam o rigor da vida fechada para alegrias. O pé direito em batidas curtas com jeito impaciente. Ainda não tínhamos passado pelo terceiro andar. Pararíamos no vigésimo quinto. Com trinta e seis pavimentos, esperei que ele fosse além do nosso. A vó suspirou com jeito de demora. Não aguentava mais aquela explosão que testemunhava. O elevador talvez tivesse uma cor cintilante. Brilhos e estrelas saíam dos meus olhos que de tão disponíveis, olhavam pra cima sem parar. Minhas sobranceiras arqueadas e aqueles meus olhos sonso. Peguei meu dedo pra mexer, já que o coração pulsava dentro, inalcançável e em descontrolado. Arranquei o esmalte em nervoso. Cruzamos olhares. Uma lua saiu dos olhos dele. Era linda! Meus olhos subiram novamente e confirmavam meu interesse. Olhava os números passarem, um a um, enquanto a vó estalava a língua no céu da boca ecoando um som de insatisfação. Da boca dele veio o sorriso. Desviei o olhar em completa entrega. Não era possível olhar nos olhos. Evitei ver a lua dos olhos dele de novo. Evitei vê-lo. Evitei. Minha fuga, ele via, indicava meu interesse. Pensei na Fátima que olhava o homem que quisesse. Sorria e puxava conversa. Fátima ia direto ao ponto e não brincava de gato e rato. Coisa de antigamente, ela reclamava. Eu, pateticamente, presa num hábito inexplicável, era impossibilitada de sorrir, olhar, falar. Mesmo se a vó não estivesse comigo, continuaria olhando pra cima para sinalizar meu interesse. Mas ver os olhos, nunca! Chegamos ao décimo segundo andar. Eu e Marcos de mão dadas. Ainda. A última vez. Nos braços dele Joaquim agonizava. Não chorava. Chiava, uivava. O menino carregava uma doença de tosse de cachorro, um negócio impressionante. No pediatra Marcos sinalizava impaciência com o meu olhar sonso, mas não mais de paixão. É que eu ainda queria aquele homem que me respondia com o silêncio toda noite depois do trabalho. Eu me dediquei ao Joaquim o quanto pude. Era eu com ele e nada mais. O dia inteiro. Marcos fazia uns serviços na Taquara e saía antes de o sol raiar, apressado como se não tivesse mais trem depois das cinco e quarenta. A vó vivia me dizendo que não era fácil sair do interior. Jogava praga em mim dizendo que não ia me acostumar com o isolamento dos outros na cidade grande. Todo mundo junto, apertado, morando embaixo do nariz do outro, subindo muro, parede e cara amarrada. Dizia que eu ia sentir falta de uma batida na porta pra dividir o café com bolo das três em ponto. Mas com o Joaquim adoentado foi difícil ter tempo. Nunca consegui assar um bolo. A janta do Marcos sempre pronta às oito e meia, depois do banho de vinte minutos. Levava na bandeja de flor de cerejeira. Tia Anunciata comprou aquilo a prestação, coitada. Ele ia ver o noticiário e eu ia ver o Joaquim. Eu via o Joaquim o dia inteiro. Ia vigiar o menino dormir. Eu já sabia



de cor e saltado a sequência do que ia ver. Parede descascada, ponta do berço, golfinho, cortina de peixes. Cortina de peixes, golfinho, ponta do berço, parede descascada. Voltava pra sala e Marcos reclamava do meu chinelo arrastando o taco solto da sala e atrapalhando o som do noticiário. Eu perguntava se tirando o sapato melhoraria, mas ele nem respondia. Marcos andava impaciente comigo. Dizia que trabalhava demais para ter que aturar minha conversa fútil quando a única coisa que ele queria era sossego e um pouco de paz. O homem dava duro mesmo. Trabalhava e botava comida na mesa. Tinha filé aos domingos, quando Marcos almoçava com a gente. Tinha vez que ia pro churrasco com os amigos. Eu e Joaquim ficávamos pra trás. Não reclamo não. Joaquim dá trabalho mesmo e o Marcos merece seu descanso, mesmo se impaciente com a gente. Mas é um bom pai: nunca levantou a mão pro filho doente. Quando não almoçava em casa aos domingos, voltava cedo se comparado com o Zé Márcio um sem vergonha, bêbado, correndo atrás de um rabo de saia mesmo sendo casado com uma santa. A mulher dele, Ondina, vivia um luto. Perdera o filho de três anos, na garagem de casa quando o filho de doze deu marcha ré no carro. Fechada em casa, o marido saía e procurava atividade, já que Ondina tinha morrido com o filho.

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Um dia, Marcos resolveu me bater. Depois de parar o sangue da boca, fui pro quarto pensando que merda que eu era que não conseguia me calar e esperar o ânimo dele pra conversar. Por que eu tinha que querer aliviar minha solidão com o meu marido se nem assunto que prestasse eu tinha? O Marcos ia lá querer saber se economizei no açúcar para comprar maçã? Que a Luísa teve alergia com o esmalte novo e foi parar no hospital? Por que eu não esperava o intervalo, os anúncios do Jornal Nacional pra puxar uma conversa que prestasse? Mas não. Eu tinha que atrapalhar o Marcos. Na noite da briga, do sangue, ele me fez botar a boca nele. Dizia que dava mais vontade quando me via assim, sem lugar pra ir. E já que eu não ia embora porque não tinha ninguém e precisava do dinheiro dele pra comer e pra dormir, que eu fizesse ele gozar. Era o mínimo de gratidão. Não que eu tirasse a razão dele. Era agradecida sim.

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Eu só estou nesse elevador porque o Marcos quebrou meu dedo. Com a mão capenga não consigo dar comida na boca do Joaquim. Se Marcos me estraga mais o corpo o menino fica sem ninguém. A Mariana me forçou a vir. Disse que tenho direitos e que o Marcos é um bicho. Eu não sei se ela exagera, mas não posso deixar o Joaquim passar mais dificuldade. O meu dedo dói e até tirar esse gesso, o menino vai penar. Cheguei a apertar o botão de volta pro térreo. Esse negócio de delegacia é barraco. Pensei na vó que pairava aqui feito ar pesado. De certo que se conversasse com o Marcos ele daria jeito. Mariana jurava que não.



Se bateu uma vez ia bater sempre. Não sei. Preferi duvidar. O elevador parou no oitavo andar. A porta se abriu e vi a placa da delegacia. Senti uma vergonha dessas de engolir a gente no chão. Apertei rapidinho o botão do térreo. Vou lá buscar o Joaquim na casa da mãe da Mariana. Não posso esquecer de passar na padaria e comprar o empanado que o Marcos gosta. A gente vai resolver isso. Era só fazer tudo com jeito, esperar minha vez na hora do intervalo do Jornal Nacional. O Joaquim não precisa só de mim. Precisa do pai junto, em casa. Deus nos livre e guarde de um lar quebrado, aos pedaços, sem pai e mãe juntos para criar os filhos! Sinto muito pela minha amiga lá do interior que se separou do marido depois de dez anos de casamento. Soube que ele tinha outra. Quando ela quis falar do assunto, ganhou uma surra de cinto que foi parar no hospital. O delegado não prendeu o homem. Quis interrogar a minha amiga, já que homem não reage assim por nada. Naquele angu tinha carçoço! E ela provocou mesmo. Perguntou se era verdade o boato da cidade. O homem virou uma fera. Ela, ao invés de deixar ele se acalmar, quis a verdade. Ganhou uma surra! Não defendo ele não, mas ela não soube a hora de falar. Eu não queria ficar igual essa minha amiga e falir um casamento. Eu precisava aprender a hora de puxar assunto. Casamento é troca. Os dois precisam sempre melhorar. Mesmo que tenha me batido, Marcos não queria ter chegado nesse ponto. Tenho certeza. Eu sei disso porque ele mesmo me falou. Não era possível que o meu marido tivesse esquecido aquele dia no elevador e meu primeiro olhar sonso de amor na vida, vidrada de sonhos, esperando cada andar a passar, até chegar no fim. Não era possível que Marcos tivesse se esquecido da lua de dentro do sorriso dele, do elevador brilhante, cheio de estrelas. Não era possível. Não era. Se eu jogasse a coisa com paciência, quem sabe ele visse em mim o que andava vendo na Lílian? É que sozinha... Sozinha é ruim ficar. Uma hora a gente acerta. Ele nunca quis me ofender. Eu me lembro do rosto do Marcos me dizendo isso. Ele segurou minha mão, calmo, procurou meus olhos. Mas meus olhos já rodopiavam no ar, franzindo a testa e a sobrancelha. Enquanto eu não olhasse o Marcos nos olhos, eu sonsa, ainda esperava pra ver a lua do sorriso dele de novo. E olha, quando não chove, céu aberto.





## AMANDA

NARA VIDAL

TRANSLATED BY EMYR HUMPHREYS

It was in the lift. We were going up, as if ascending to heaven. It was meant to be. There, we saw each other for the first time. My grandmother was with me. She had the bitter, wry expression of someone who had been abandoned by love for quite some time. Her narrowed eyes scrutinised the metal doors in front. Her mouth, surrounded by wrinkles, betrayed the rigours of a life devoid of joy. Her right foot tapped the floor impatiently. We hadn't even passed the third floor. We were on our way to the twenty-fifth. There were thirty-six floors, I hoped he was getting off after us. My grandmother huffed impatiently. She couldn't bear that little display she was witnessing. Perhaps it was the dazzling colours inside the lift. Sparks and stars leapt from my eyes, so expectantly gazing upwards, unblinking. My eyebrows were arched above those coy eyes of mine. I began to fidget, my heart was pounding inside me, unreachable and unruly. I nervously fiddled with my nail varnish. Our eyes met. Moonlight beamed from his eyes. He was gorgeous! My gaze turned upwards again, confirming my desire. I watched as the numbers rose, one by one, my grandmother clicked her tongue, voicing her dissatisfaction. I saw him smile. I avoided his gaze in complete surrender. It was impossible to look him in the eyes. I avoided the beaming moonlight again. I avoided catching sight of it. I avoided it. My evasion, he could see, showed that I was interested. I thought of Fatima who would always make eyes with the man she wanted. She would smile and make conversation. Fatima got straight to the point and never played cat and mouse. She would complain that it was old-fashioned. I was, pathetically, stuck in an inexplicable cycle, unable to smile, to make eye contact, to speak. Even if my Grandmother hadn't been with me, I would still have been gazing upwards, showing my attraction. But to make eye contact, never! We arrived on the twelfth floor. Marcos and I were holding hands. Still. Last time. Joaquim in his arms, in agony. He wasn't crying. He was rasping, wailing. The little boy had a disease which made him cough like a dog, really heavy stuff. At the paediatricians, Marcos was visibly impatient at my expression, still coy, though no longer impassioned. The problem was that I still wanted that man who answered me with silence every night after work. I dedicated as much of myself to Joaquim as I possibly could. It was me and him and no one else. All day. Marcos would provide some services in Taquara and leave before sunset, hurrying home as if no train existed after five-forty. My grandmother kept telling me how it wasn't easy to leave the countryside. She put a curse on me by telling me how I would never be able to get used to the loneliness of other people in the big city. Everyone together, pressed up against each other, living in each other's pockets, towering walls, ugly faces. She said I would miss the knock on my door for a cup of coffee and a slice of cake at exactly three o'clock every afternoon. But with Joaquim's disease it was hard to find the time for that. I never had the time for baking cakes. Marcos' dinner was always ready at half past eight, after a twenty-minute shower. I would bring it to him on a tray with a cherry blossom design on it. Aunt Anunciata had bought it on credit, bless



her. He would watch the news and I would go and see Joaquim. I watched Joaquim all day. I went to monitor the boy's sleep. I already knew what I was about to see. Stripped walls, cot, stuffed dolphin, fish pattern curtains. Fish pattern curtains, stuffed dolphin, cot, stripped walls. I would come back from his bedroom and Marcos would complain that my sandals were slapping on the floor tiles and that he couldn't hear the news. I would ask him if taking them off would help, but he never answered. Marcos would get impatient with me. He would say how he worked too hard to chatter pointlessly with me when the only thing he wanted was a bit of peace and quiet. The man did work hard. He put food on the table. We'd have steak on Sundays. Sometimes he'd go for a barbecue with his friends. Joaquim and I would always stay at home. I never complain. Joaquim takes a lot of work and Marcos deserves his rest, even when he's impatient with us. But he's a good dad: he's never raised a hand to his poorly son. When out for lunch at his friends' on Sundays, he comes home early, at least compared to Zé Marcio, a shameless man, a drunk, always looking for a bit of skirt despite being married to a saint. His wife, Ondina, lives in mourning. She'd lost her three-year-old son in the garage when her twelve-year-old son reversed their car. Shut up in the house, her husband would go out looking for some action, seeing as Ondina had died herself, along with her son.

One day, Marcos decided to hit me. When my mouth had stopped bleeding, I went to the bedroom thinking how pathetic I was that I couldn't keep my mouth shut and wait until he had the energy to talk. Why did I have to ease my loneliness with my husband when I had nothing to say? Did Marcos really want to know if I'd spent less on sugar to buy apples? That Luísa had had an allergic reaction to her new nail varnish and had to go to hospital? Why didn't I wait for the break, the news headlines, to try and start a conversation? But no. I had to disturb Marcos. On the night of the argument, of the blood, he made me give him a blowjob. He said it turned him on when he saw me like that, with nowhere to go. And seeing as I wasn't going anywhere because I had no one and I needed money to eat and to stay somewhere, I made him come. It was the least I could do. Not that I could change his mind. And I really was thankful.

I'm only in this lift because Marcos broke my finger. I can't feed Joaquim with a broken finger. If Marcos breaks any more of me the boy will have no one. Mariana made me go. She said I had rights and that Marcos was an animal. I don't know if she's exaggerating, but I can't make it even more difficult for Joaquim. My finger hurts and until the bandage comes off, the boy will suffer. I press the button for the ground floor. This police business is just so embarrassing. I think of my grandmother hovering about, weighing down the atmosphere. Surely, if I talk with Marcos he'll change his ways. Mariana swears he won't. If he hit me once he'll always hit me. I don't know. I prefer to doubt her. The lift arrives on the eighth floor. The door opens and I see the placard for the police. I feel that kind of embarrassment that seems to swallow you up into the ground. I press the button for the ground floor again, quickly. I'll go find Joaquim at Mariana's mum's house.



I mustn't forget to stop at the bakery and get the *empanado* that Marcos likes. We'll get through this. It's just about doing it a certain way, waiting for the headlines of the evening news. Joaquim doesn't just need me. He needs a father figure at home. May God bless us and save us from a broken home, irreparable, without a mum and dad together to raise the children!

I feel so bad for my friend from the country who divorced her husband after being married for ten years. She knew he had someone else. When she tried bringing up the subject, he hit her with a belt so hard she had to go to hospital. The police never arrested the man. They wanted to interrogate my friend because men don't react like that for no reason. She really poked the bear! She asked him if it was true, the rumour going around town. The man had turned into a monster. Instead of letting him calm down, she pressed him for the truth. She got the belt! I don't excuse his behaviour at all, but she didn't know when was best to talk. I don't want to be like my friend and destroy our marriage. I had to learn when to bring up the subject. Marriage is an exchange. Both parties always need to be improving themselves. Even though he'd hit me, Marcos didn't want it to get to that point. I'm sure of it. I know it because he told me himself. It wasn't possible that my husband had forgotten that day in the lift and the first coy, impassioned gaze of my life, glistening with dreams as the floors passed us by, until the end. It wasn't possible that Marcos had forgotten about the moonlight that beamed from those smiling eyes of his, of the lift, dazzling and full of stars. It wasn't possible. It wasn't. If I'd been more patient, who knows if he'd still see in me what he sees in Lilian? It's just that being alone. . . Being alone is awful. One day we'll work it out. He didn't want to hurt me. I remember Marcos' face as he said that. He held my hand, calmly, and looked into my eyes. But my eyes were already turned upwards, my brow furrowed. While I could not look Marcos in the eyes with that coy expression of mine, I still hoped to see the moonlight beam from them again. And you know, when it isn't raining, it's clear skies.



## ON TRANSLATING NARA VIDAL'S "AMANDA"

EMYR HUMPHREYS

"Amanda" is the latest in a series of translations that I have completed for Nara Vidal, a collaboration dating back to the second edition of the Brazilian Translation Club (BTC) in February 2019. I was mid-way through studying a research MA in Translation Studies at UCL when I found out about the BTC. While I found the degree and the challenge of writing the final dissertation ultimately rewarding and fascinating, it had been months since I had last finished a literary translation from Brazil. The timing couldn't be more perfect when Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva, my dissertation supervisor and conveyor of one of my modules, told me about the Brazilian Translation Club.

The text we worked on in February, with me as head translator, was called "Marelena", a short story which deals with (amongst other things) mental illness, obsessive compulsive behaviour and motherhood. Having Nara in the room while I discussed my translation choices was, at first, rather intimidating. Most authors I had worked with before were either dead or communicated with me via email. However, seeing Nara's reactions in person, especially as they were positive, proved to be an encouraging experience. It taught me that a translation is an act of collaboration as much as it is an act of interpretation and research.

Since the beginning of the BTC, I feel that my technique has changed relatively little while my confidence has grown as a literary translator. By the time I had started translating "Amanda", I had finished my degree and was working as a freelance translator. Experience translating a range of texts meant that I felt able to interpret the nuances of the narrative with greater agency. Having sent the translation to Nara, we both agreed that my translation of "Amanda" would be a better choice to include in this publication. While the thematic content of "Amanda" is different from "Marelena", they are similar in that they are stories about struggle, more specifically the struggles that women face. I therefore wanted to take an empathetic, rather than intellectual approach to the translation. I wanted the text read as fluently and humanly as possible instead of translating more literally and producing a story that's more wordy, thereby rendering Amanda and her story less relatable. However, as with every literary translation, the question not of style but of semantics crops up, and I had to get creative out of necessity.

An example that stands out was the challenge of translating the adjective *sonso* which appears a few times in the text and which has a special significance each time. Despite knowing its meaning in the source language, expressing it clearly in English was a challenge, and I hope my choice (*coy*) conveys at least some of the meaning. Another example which I struggled with right up to through numerous drafts was the use of



verb tenses. Amanda is temporally a very complex piece to translate, because fundamentally the piece is narrated in the present tense. However, she jumps dizzily between the past and present as she navigates her thoughts, and a variety of grammatical tenses are used. At one point, around the middle part where she is describing routines, I put the verbs in the present tense, as they described Marcos and his ways, who we find out is still very much in the picture. However, after some consideration, I decided that the traumatic event described a few lines later serves as a disruption in the narrative, and mostly kept to the original tenses.

Despite such obstacles, and despite its heart-breaking content, I found the story to be a joy to translate. Amanda is a dizzying, complex and troubling short story, but masterfully and evocatively told by Nara. At times the imagery is so stark it reads like a piece of magical realism, an effect I hope that I have successfully managed to replicate in my translation. I would like to thank Nara once more for allowing me to translate another piece of hers, and Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva for the invaluable help with the editing process of this story. I hope the reader picks up on the joy I experienced translating “Amanda” and that I am forgiven for the artistic licences that I inevitably had to take.





**BIANCA C. SALLES** TRANSLATES **ANA MARIA MACHADO**





## TRATANTES

ANA MARIA MACHADO

Não dormiu bem. Acordou muito cedo, toda suada. O ar-condicionado não estava funcionando. Fazia um barulhão e não refrescava nada. O técnico já prometera umas duas vezes que viria e não apareceu. Igualzinho ao marceneiro que garantira vir logo ver a porta do armário e acabar com aquele rangido desagradável toda vez que se abria. Jacaré veio? Nem ele. A gente confia, espera, o tempo passa, não aparece ninguém. São todos uns tratantes. Incapazes de cumprir um compromisso.

Daí a pouco ia se levantar. Já estava sem posição na cama, virando de um lado para outro. Desde antes que os passarinhos começassem a cantar. Lembrou da neta e sorriu no escuro. Recordou como uma vez a menina lhe explicara que gostava de dormir em casa da avó porque, se acordasse antes de todo mundo, tinha muito passarinho no quintal para ouvir. Aí ela tinha certeza de que em pouco tempo clareava, porque já era cedinho. Em sua própria casa, ela nunca sabia se já era cedinho ou se ia demorar muito a amanhecer e até os pássaros estavam dormindo, porque ainda era cedão.

Pois nesse dia a avó acordara cedão, antes do cedinho. E cansara de ficar na cama sem fazer nada. Resolveu ler um pouco. Acendeu a lâmpada na cabeceira, pegou a Bíblia, abriu a esmo, como às vezes fazia. Teve o cuidado de abrir mais para o princípio do livro. Distraía-se mais com o Velho Testamento, aquelas histórias movimentadas, cheias de peripécias e traições.

Quando percebeu, já se passara um bom tempo. Chegava-lhe às narinas o chamado da refeição que Hermínia preparava na cozinha. O aroma do café fresco que se exalava do filtro de papel enquanto a bebida pingava na garrafa térmica. O perfume das laranjas recém-espremidas, que logo seriam refrescadas na geladeira. E o cheiro tentador do toucinho derretido na frigideira, à espera de que ela se levantasse e seu bom-dia desse o sinal verde para que dois ovos fossem fritos. Ovos com bacon, colesterol puro. Durante tantos anos Lídia se privara deles. Agora, de vez em quando deixava um bilhete para a empregada na véspera e se permitia de novo esse prazer guloso. Não era isso que ia importar a esta altura. Nada mais faria diferença, e ela sabia disso muito bem.

Levantou-se e foi lavar o rosto. Logo mergulharia na gema ensolarada o pão francês fresquinho e crocante, acabado de vir da padaria.





Antes de sentar-se à mesa, pôs os óculos, escolheu um CD (hoje Mozart), passou os olhos pela primeira página do jornal. O de sempre. Mas levou-o para a mesa. Gostava de ler os artigos de opinião, acompanhar um ou outro colunista. Quando Ernane era vivo, os dois conversavam sobre as notícias enquanto tomavam o café da manhã que ela havia preparado. Agora, a conversa era silenciosa, com algum jornalista que ela nem conhecia. Mas a refeição não precisava ser feita por ela. Já estava à sua espera sobre a mesa. Prontinha. Com uma bela fatia de mamão já sem sementes. Com manteiga, geleia e mel para o pão. E uma porção de comprimidos, os primeiros do dia, a lembrar aquilo tudo que não dava para esquecer.

A leitura se prolongou além da mesa. Prosseguiu na cadeira da varanda, sob o sol ameno da manhã. Os destinos do país continuavam a preocupá-la. Não tinha jeito, não conseguia se desligar dos acontecimentos que se sucediam, por mais que tivesse razões para só olhar para o próprio umbigo. Acabava se demorando com o jornal. Depois foi dar uma volta no quintal. Sabia que era um privilégio ainda morar na mesma casa em que criara os filhos e acompanhara cada planta crescer. Não abria mão de aproveitá-la. Em breve, quando se fosse, os herdeiros a venderiam e dividiriam o dinheiro. Talvez fosse essa a forma de que ela ainda continuasse a ampará-los.

Abriu a torneira, ajustou a força do jato que saía da mangueira. Reduziu a água a um leve chuvisco que apenas borrifasse as folhas. Viu que o canteiro de tagetes e calêndulas continuava a se renovar em seu amarelo dourado. Que novos vermelhos explodiam nos vasos de gerânios. Que as marias-sem-vergonha no canto sombreado junto ao muro faziam justiça ao nome, profusas e oferecidas por entre a folhagem. Conferiu os jasmims que haviam caído durante a noite; os manacás ontem roxos e hoje lilases, que amanhã estariam brancos. Constatou com alegria que em ambos os arbustos ainda havia botões, promessas de renovação no cantinho perfumado que de noite a encantava.

Na horta, os ombros das cenouras já começavam a se mostrar, saindo da terra sob as cabeleiras verdes. No mais recente canteiro de alfaces, alguns pés já estavam quase no ponto de serem colhidos, talvez ajudados pela sombra rala do arbusto de fruta-do-conde, onde duas temporãs estavam vestidas por um saquinho de pano que ela mesma preparara, em sabedoria aprendida de sua avó, para que alguma eventual praga não lhes atingisse a perfeição da forma ou a doçura do gosto.

— Dona Lídia, as crianças já chegaram — avisou Hermínia.

Interrompeu a rega e foi até a varanda, onde os pequenos vieram encontrá-la, aos pinotes para os abraços e agradecimentos matinais. Sentaram-se todos.



— Quer massagem, vó? — perguntou o neto, como sempre, sabendo que a resposta nunca deixava de ser positiva.

— Vou buscar o tratante — anunciou a menina.

Num instante estava de volta, vidro de hidratante na mão. Lídia deitou-se na rede, esticou as pernas, cada um se sentou de um lado e tomou um de seus pés entre as mãos. Fechou os olhos e ficou sentindo as mãozinhas das crianças a espalhar a loção. Um levíssimo aroma de lavanda. Em toque ainda mais leve, de almas e dedos infantis. Tênuo mas capaz de a transportar em prazer profundo, de carinho gostoso, ao mesmo tempo morno e fresco. Vida `a flor da pele. Vontade de que não acabasse nunca.

— Hoje a gente pode ficar muito tempo. Não vai ter aula, é conselho de classe — informou o menino, como se adivinhasse seus pensamentos. — Dá para ficar o dia todo.

Um dia inteiro com eles. Um presente. Lembrou-se de uma revista que costumava ler no avião, no tempo em que viajava muito para acompanhar Ernane. Tinha uma seção chamada: “Um dia pleno”, com o roteiro de 24 horas intensas, aproveitando tudo ao máximo, cada vez em uma cidade.

— Que bom! — saudou a avó. — Então vamos brincar de fazer coisas boas o dia inteiro.

— Mas só quando a gente acabar de passar tratante no seu pé — disse a menina, concentrada, a lhe espalhar a loção perfumada pelo calcanhar.

Não tinha pressa mesmo. Todo o tempo do mundo ia caber naquele dia. Deixou-se ficar, entregue a cada segundo de carícias, de olhos fechados, ouvindo a conversinha dos pequenos, respondendo de vez em quando. Depois foi resolver um almoço especial, só com coisa bem simples de que criança gosta. E banana frita de sobremesa. Com sorvete.

Enquanto não chegava a hora, ficaram no jardim. Mexeram na terra, plantaram, limpavam um canteiro. Examinaram minhocas e até um caracol. Depois, um bom banho. Na frente da televisão, ficaram vendo desenhos até a comida ficar pronta.

Barriga cheia, deu moleza. Lídia ia deitar um pouco e sugerir que as crianças ficassem brincando por perto. Mas o pedido da neta foi mais forte:



— Conta uma história...

Ajeitaram-se todos na rede da varanda. Ela no meio. De cada lado um neto, bem aninhado. O sono foi chegando enquanto ela falava em príncipes e princesas, das histórias que, em pequena, ouvira de sua avó. Daí a pouco, as crianças ressonavam tranquilas. Ela lhes acariciou os cabelos, deu um cheirinho em cada um. Acabou cochilando também.

Quando acordou, a filha estava de pé à sua frente. Já era tarde, viera buscar os meninos.

— O que vocês fizeram o dia inteiro? — perguntou ela.

“Fabricamos lembranças”, podia ser a resposta que Lídia não chegou a dar, porque o neto foi logo anunciando:

— A gente brincou de tratante.

— A vovó tratou da gente e a gente tratou dela — explicou a irmã.

As duas mulheres sorriram.

— E ainda me passaram tratante no pé, fizeram massagem e tudo — contou a mais velha.

A filha se sentou na cadeira de vime, segurou a mão da mãe, ficaram conversando um pouco. Desde menina, nunca se sentira tão próxima dela como nesses últimos dias.

— Como é que acaba, vovó? — perguntou a menina, de repente. — Eu dormi antes do fim da história.

— Então eu vou contar, para você aprender e um dia contar para a sua neta. Porque esta história eu aprendi com a minha avó.

E foi encadeando as palavras, enquanto a tarde ia embora e a noite chegava, numa história que ia durar mais que ela, e um dia, quem sabe?, talvez fosse contada, em feitiço de despedida, a uma menina pequena por uma mulher mais velha que se lembraria daquele dia pleno. Enquanto tivesse memória.



## **(MIS)TREATERS**

*ANA MARIA MACHADO*

*TRANSLATED BY BIANCA COSTA SALES*

She did not sleep well. She woke up quite early, sweating all over. The air-conditioner was not working. It made a loud noise and did not refresh the air at all. The technician had promised to come twice and never showed up. Just like the handyman, who assured her he would come soon to fix the cabinet door and put an end to that unpleasant squeaking it made every time it opened. Had what's-his-face come? Not even him. We trust, we wait, time goes by, nobody comes. They're all mistreaters, the lot of them. Incapable of showing up for an appointment.

In a while she would get up. She could not find a comfortable position in bed, she just kept tossing and turning. Since before the birds started to sing. She thought of her granddaughter and smiled in the dark. She recalled how once the little girl had explained that she liked sleeping over at grandmother's because, if she woke up before everybody else, there would be lots of birds in the backyard to listen to. Then she could be sure that daylight would come soon, because it was pretty-early. At her own house, she could never know if it was pretty-early or if it would still take a long time for daylight to come as even the birds were still sleeping, because it was still super-early.

Well, on that day the grandmother had woken up super-early, long before the pretty-early. She was tired of lying in bed doing nothing. She decided to read for a while. She switched on the lamp at the bedside table, grabbed the Bible, opened it at random, as she sometimes did. She was careful to open it closer to the beginning of the book. The Old Testament distracted her best, those turbulent stories full of adventures and betrayal.

A long time had elapsed before she realised it. Her nostrils captured the calling from the meal which Herminia was preparing in the kitchen. The aroma of fresh coffee steaming from the paper filter while the beverage dripped into the thermos. The perfume of freshly squeezed oranges, which would soon cool off in the fridge. The tempting smell of bacon melting in the frying pan, waiting for her to get up, so her good morning could give the green light for two eggs to be fried. Bacon and eggs, pure cholesterol. For so long Lydia had deprived herself of it. Now, every now and again she would leave a note to the maid the night before, indulging her inner glutton's pleasure. At this stage, that was not going to make any difference. Nothing else would make a difference, and she knew that very well.

She got up and washed her face. Soon she would be dunking into sunny-side-up yolks the fresh and crunchy French baguette, fresh from the baker's.



Before sitting at the table, she put on her spectacles, picked a CD (today it was Mozart), ran her eyes over the front page of the newspaper. The same as always. But she brought it to the table. She enjoyed reading the opinion pieces, keeping up with some columnist or other. When Earnest still lived, both of them would chat about the news while enjoying the breakfast she would have prepared. Now, she chatted silently with some journalist she barely knew. But the meal need not be prepared by herself anymore. It was waiting for her on the table. All ready. A nice slice of papaya, its seeds already picked out. Butter, jam, and honey for the bread. And a side serving of pills, the first ones of the day, a reminder of everything she could not possibly forget.

The reading extended beyond the table. It proceeded onto the chair in the front porch, under the mild morning sun. The fate of the nation continued to worry her. It was helpless, she could not shut herself off from the succession of events, though she had enough reasons to care only about herself. She ended up taking her time with the paper. Afterwards she took a stroll around the backyard. She knew it was a privilege to still live in the same house where she had raised her children and watched every single plant grow. She would not give up on enjoying it. Soon, when she was gone, the heirs would sell it and split the money. Maybe this was her way of continuing to support them.

She turned on the tap, adjusting the pressure of the stream pouring from the hose. She reduced it into a light shower which would merely sprinkle the leaves. She realised that the flowerbed of various marigolds kept renewing itself in golden yellow hues. That new reds were exploding in the geranium pot. That the busy lizzies in the shadowy corner by the wall did their name justice, showing up profusely amidst the foliage. Checked on the jasmine which had fallen during the night; the yesterday-today-and-tomorrow, which was purple yesterday, lilac today, and would be white tomorrow. She noted happily that there were still buttons in both bushes, promises of renewal in the scented corner which charmed her nights.

In the vegetable garden, the shoulders of the carrots peeped out, rising from the earth underneath their green hairs. In the latest bed of lettuce, some of the plants were almost at the point of harvesting, perhaps aided by the dim shadow from the bush of sugar-apples, where two precociously ripe fruits were dressed in a little cloth bag which she made herself, having learned such wisdom from her grandmother, so that no occasional pest could tarnish the perfection of their form or the sweetness of their taste.

“Madam Lydia, the children are here”— Herminia announced.

She stopped watering the plants and went to the porch, where the little ones came to greet her, jumping up for hugs and morning treats. They all sat down.



“Do you want a massage, granny?”— asked the grandson, as he always did, knowing the answer would always be positive.

“I’ll go get the treatment!”— the girl announced.

In a moment she was back, a bottle of moisturiser in hand. Lydia lied down in the hammock, stretched out her legs. They sat by either of her sides, each took one of her feet in their hands. She closed her eyes and felt the children’s tiny hands spreading the lotion. The faintest lavender aroma. An even lighter touch, of young souls and fingers. Soft, yet capable of transporting her with the deep pleasure of delicious caressing, simultaneously warm and fresh. Life felt through their fingertips. She wished it would never end.

“We can spend loads of time here today. There’s no class, it’s parent-teacher meeting day”— the boy informed her, as if he had guessed at her thoughts. “We can stay for the whole day.”

A whole day with them. A gift. She remembered a magazine she used to read on the plane, back when she travelled a lot to accompany Earnest. There was a section entitled “The most fulfilling day”, with a script for an intense 24 hours, enjoying everything to the full, each time in a different city.

“Good!”— the grandma rejoiced. “Then, let’s play at doing nice things all day long.”

“Only when we finish putting treatment on your foot”— said the girl, focused at spreading the scented lotion over her heel.

There was really no rush. All the time in the world could fit into that one day. She let herself stay, surrendered to every second of caresses, her eyes closed, listening to the little ones’ chatter, responding every now and then. Later she sorted out a special lunch, made only of the simple stuff children like. And fried bananas for dessert. With ice cream.

Before mealtime, they stayed in the garden. Stirring up the soil, planting seeds, cleaning up a flowerbed. They inspected some worms and even a snail. Afterwards, a thorough shower. In front of the television, they watched cartoons until the food was ready.

Full bellies, sleepiness crept in. Lydia was going to lie down for a moment and suggested that the kids kept playing nearby. But the granddaughter’s request spoke louder:



“Tell us a story...”

They arranged themselves in the hammock in the porch. She sat in the middle. One grandchild on each side, nestled right into her. Sleep came gradually as she spoke of princes and princesses, from the stories she had heard from her own grandmother, when she was little. Soon the children were sleeping soundly. She caressed their hair, tenderly smelling each one. She ended up snoozing, too.

When she woke up her daughter was standing before her. It was already late, she had come to pick them up.

“What did you do all day long?”— she asked.

“We made memories,” could have been Lydia’s answer, one which she did not give because her grandson jumped in to announce:

“We played treaters!”

“Grandma treated us, and we treated her”— the sister explained.

Both women smiled.

“And they even put treatment on my feet, massaged them and everything”— the eldest one said.

The daughter sat on the wicker chair, held her mother’s hand, and they chatted for a while. Since she was a young girl, she had never felt as close to her mother as in these last few days.

“How does it end, grandma?”— the girl suddenly asked. “I fell asleep before the end of the story.”

“Then I’m going to tell you, so that you can learn it and tell your granddaughter someday. Because I learned this story from my grandmother.”

And so she kept stringing the words together, while the afternoon slipped away and the night approached, in a story that would last longer than herself, and someday, who knows, it might get told, in a farewell manner, to a little girl by an older woman who would remember that most fulfilling day. While her memory lasted.



## “(MIS)TREATERS”: TRANSLATING THE TREATS AND MISTREATS OF OLD AGE

BIANCA COSTA SALES

Perhaps few literary pieces could have captured the traditional reality of the upper-middle class of Brazil's older generation as Ana Maria Machado's "Tratantes" does so succinctly. An elderly widow, feeling utterly forlorn and helpless, whose only joy is the visit of her daughter and grandchildren. A stubborn lady who adamantly insists on living by herself in a now-too-big house where she and her late husband had raised their children. This could be the story of my grandmother, of my friends' grandmothers, of everybody else's grandmothers, who have outlived their husbands and are fortunate enough not to be sent off into a nursing home. These are aged, proud humans, who cling to the last remains of a bygone sense of independence just as they cling to the beloved legacy they will leave behind: their children and grandchildren.

Lydia used to make breakfast herself when her husband Earnest was still alive. Now, she relies on the help of a "maid" (translated directly from "empregada", a word choice which denies any possible interpretations of this figure being a nurse or caregiver). Lydia relishes in the fact that "the meal need not be prepared by herself anymore" – even the papaya's seeds are picked out for her. Such small luxuries paint the picture of an erstwhile Brazilian society which has significantly changed its attitude towards maids and housework over the last fifty decades, whereas its living representatives have trouble adjusting to the contemporary reality of political sensibilities in which housemaids are an extremely controversial topic. This is a muted questioning that unmistakably lies behind Machado's detailed descriptions of an everyday breakfast, silently prepared by the maid whose voice is only heard when she announces the arrival of Lydia's grandchildren. If not directly criticising Lydia for her lack of class consciousness, the strictly descriptive narrator seems to kindly allow her this social faux pas in light of her frustrating circumstances.

How do the well-to-do elderly enjoy (or not) their retirement elsewhere in the world? This is a question which non-Brazilian readers must confront, likely with some amount of cultural shock, while exploring the reality Machado describes. In order to render the scene into English as precisely as possible, while retaining the sense of casual normality which markedly envelops the Portuguese text, my translation of these passages preserved most of the original syntax and grammar. The linguistic compromise is found where the translation rejects most Brazilian names (with the exception of the maid, Herminia, whose unusual name would strike even Portuguese speakers). Instead, I have adopted popular English names wherever possible to minimize the sense of foreignness which might not fit in with a domestic motif. Hence, the names of Lídia and Ernane became Lydia and Earnest. Both maintain their implicit suggestion of old age considering the fact that such





names are not common among the younger generations in either language. Similarly, the flowers in Lydia's garden – which are all very typical of Brazilian flora, and which are mentioned by their popular Portuguese names – were translated into the nearest equivalent flowers intended to be more recognisable to the reader. For example, “busy lizzies” provides a very close translation of “marias-sem-vergonha” (since both denote the *Impatiens walleriana*). However, my choice of using yesterday-today-and-tomorrow (*Brunfelsia pauciflora*) for the evocative colour-changing flowers in Lydia's garden is actually only one subtype of the original text's “manacá” – a plant so widespread in Brazil that it has multiple variations. Its close relative, “manacá-de-cheiro” or *Brunfelsia uniflora*, which shows the same colour change process, would have been another potential candidate for the translation if it were not for its arguably less poetic, and less befitting name.

Machado's use of free indirect discourse in the original text moves seamlessly from the omniscient narrator's point of view into an appropriation of the grandmother's perspective and vice versa – a writing technique which does justice to the genre convention of snappy, fast-paced, and syntactically fragmented sentences which is typical of the short story. In order to preserve these features in the translation, my initial instinct was to omit personal pronouns at the beginning of sentences where the narrative seemingly adopts Lydia's own mental voice as she goes through her habitual motions. Where the narration apparently returns to an omniscient perspective, the sentences would regain their syntactical subjects before the verbs. Yet the pithy subject-less sentences, while very well known to Portuguese speakers, were too alien for the intended English reader. Hence the decision to ultimately adapt Machado's syntactical structures through a more familiarizing translation, by adding the appropriate subjects into the sentences with only a few exceptions, namely: ‘Decided to read for a while’ (p.1); “Checked on the jasmine which had fallen during the night;” and “Stirring up the soil, planting seeds, cleaning up a flowerbed”.

An amusing instance where free indirect discourse successfully blurs the distinction between which perspective is adopted appears in Lydia's reflection about songbirds registering the different periods in the morning. In my first draft, I had translated “passarinhos” literally into “birdies”. I had interpreted this passage as showing the grandmother's perspective incorporating her granddaughter's vocabulary – a choice with which most of my colleagues at the translation club agreed until Machado herself surprised us all. It was not the granddaughter's word choice there, Machado claimed: those were the grandma's own words rendered by the omniscient narrator, who casually adopts the diminutive “passarinhos” as a universally accepted form of addressing birds in Brazil. As it turns out, this passage nods to the cultural tendency of using diminutive suffixes in Brazilian Portuguese when referring to something small, cute and adorable as, indeed, a songbird. I was more than happy to defer to the voice of authorial intention, as Machado was luckily present when the club gathered to discuss my attempt at translating this short story. Therefore, the final translation printed



in this edition shows “birds” instead, as this more accurately signifies the cultural standard by which such animals are referred to in the English language.

Finally, the most enthusiastic debate among the club members revolved around the issue of how to translate the wordplay in the title. It refers to the children’s mispronunciation of the word “hidratante” (moisturiser), which they call “tratante” (a “rogue”, an unreliable person). The problem is that “verbal humour travels badly”, as Delia Chiaro explains, “as it crosses geographic boundaries humour has to come to terms with linguistic and cultural elements which are often only typical of the source culture from which it was produced, thereby losing its power to amuse in the new location” (CHIARA, 2012, p.1-29). To resolve this linguistic conflict, the majority of my colleagues agreed to make use of creative license and render the title as “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”, since Lydia’s eponymous flowers, whose colour fades over time, symbolically convey the interconnected ideas of aging, mortality, legacy and the passage of time, which permeate the entire narrative. Yet, such a choice would incur a complete loss of the wordplay which connects the beginning and ending of the story. Machado’s tale opens with Lydia’s frustration at the unreliable “tratantes”, who mistreat her by setting up appointments only to never show up later. However, its ending conveys a distinct sense of emotional healing after Lydia spends a delightful day with her grandchildren. In the original, the kids tell their mother that they played at being “tratantes”, by which they mean, they played at being masseurs using moisturiser. Their mother and grandmother smile because, while the children may have gotten their pronunciation wrong, they got their grandma’s much needed soul treatment very right.

Beyond the physical relief to her frail body, Lydia remembers her own youth as she receives a boost of life from the kids’ presence. She hopes they will use storytelling to pass on these memories to their own grandchildren someday – a tradition which would symbolically keep Lydia as alive as she feels in that moment of pure loving bliss, and which is exactly what Machado is doing by writing this story.

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**BÁRBARA EHLER** TRANSLATES **LUCAS VERZOLA**







## FÔLEGO

LUCAS VERZOLA

Quando a porta se abria e um feixe de luz invadia o quarto, meu corpo gelava, meus pelos se arrepiavam, meu coração disparava, meus olhos se arregalavam e depois fechavam bem forte como se fosse pra reforçar a figa bem apertada que eu fazia em cada mão pra que não fosse eu o escolhido da noite nem nenhum dos amigos mais próximos, se bem que tinha noite que não só eu torcia para que não fosse eu nem os amigos mais próximos como também desejava que alguém fosse levado, geralmente um descontrolado que gritava pra dedêu ou um interno mais violento que ameaçava a nós, um grupo que, ainda que extremamente rotativo, costumava abrigar os loucos mais calmos do lugar, o que era um grande trunfo já que nos fazia passar despercebidos aos olhos dos enfermeiros – ou cães de guarda, como os chamávamos –, que sempre procuravam casos considerados extremos para levarem ao primeiro andar, onde as amarras eram mais apertadas, os sedativos eram mais fortes, os choques eram mais potentes, e de onde, diziam os cães, os meninos saíam direto para a casa dos pais, o que intrigava a todos, e intrigava tanto que o dezessete (tínhamos números, não nomes) forçou uma crise aguda pra ser levado pra lá e, quem sabe, voltar pra casa, o que nunca soubemos se de fato aconteceu porque nunca mais vimos o sujeito, todavia, se fosse pra apostar, diria que essa estória de casa dos pais não passava de conversa pra boi dormir, não só por ter aprendido a considerar mentira tudo que de bom eles falavam, mas porque o trinta e seis e o catorze nem família tinham e evaporaram logo depois que foram ao primeiro andar pelas mãos do enfermeiro Afrânio, um nojento de bigode ruivo parecido com o EufRASINO do Pernalonga, que cheirava a formol e tinha o jaleco sujo daquilo que tinha certeza ser sangue seco, e devia mesmo de ser, já que ferida aberta era extremamente comum, e mais comum ainda era que elas se infeccionassem, se espalhassem por uma grande área, soltassem pus e outros líquidos que deixavam o ambiente mais fedido ainda, servissem de incubadora de vermes, culminando quase sempre em graves problemas como cicatrizes na epiderme, deformação e amputação de membros e até na morte de alguns dos meninos, algo que, para o bem ou para o mal, aprendíamos a encarar com normalidade quanto mais tempo passávamos lá, mesmo que nunca soubéssemos ao certo quanto tempo estávamos internados, já que não havia contagem oficial e nossa tentativa de calcular os dias com rabiscos na parede, quatro linhas na vertical e uma na diagonal a cada cinco dias, foi frustrada quando levaram dois dos nossos para o primeiro andar para a incredulidade geral, porque é difícil pra chuchu acreditar que uma mera tentativa de medir a passagem do tempo fosse causa para soluções tão drásticas, que, aliás, foram se tornando cada vez mais corriqueiras a ponto de um simples feixe de luz transpassando por uma brecha entre a porta e o batente gerasse tanto medo, ainda que ele nunca tivesse se concretizado em perigo de fato pra mim, que sobrevivi enquanto sucumbiam os que estavam em minha volta, talvez por falta de força na figa ou, quem sabe, por terem desistido nem que fosse lá no inconsciente, algo que eu nunca me permiti



nem com a dor de centenas de volts entre dois eletrodos instalados nas têmporas nem com a dor dos golpes certos dos cães nos alvos mais fáceis dos corpos franzinos de pobres crianças nem com a dor da fala dura de quem me dizia ser minha loucura culpa da puta da minha mãezinha que sífilis não pegava se fosse moça direita nem com a dor de ver os amigos sendo levados pra não voltarem jamais, pra serem esquecidos, pra desexistirem, como poderia ter acontecido comigo ainda que eu resistisse, ainda que eu lutasse, ainda que eu fizesse a figa mais forte do mundo, e é por isso que escrevo: como forma de continuar resistindo e existindo, ainda que tão longe daquele lugar, para que não se esqueçam jamais.



## GASPING

LUCAS VERZOLA

TRANSLATED BY BÁRBARA EHLER

Whenever the door opened and the light beam invaded the room, my body froze, my hair bristled, my heart raced, my eyes opened wide then closed tight, as if to reinforce how much I squeezed my crossed fingers on each hand, hoping that I wouldn't be the one chosen for the night, neither any of my closest friends – though in some nights I not only hoped that we wouldn't be chosen, but also wished someone to be taken, usually a looney who kept shouting to high heaven, or a brutal inmate who would threaten us, since our group, though having a high turnover, would normally shelter the calmest mad ones of the place – which was a real advantage as it made us go unnoticed by the nurses (or “watchdogs”, as we called them), who were always looking for cases they considered extreme to be taken to the first floor, where the ties were tighter, the sedatives stronger, the electric shocks more powerful, and from where, the dogs said, the boys would leave straight to their parents' house – which would bewilder us, and so much so that Seventeen (we had numbers, not names) forced himself into a heavy fit so as to be taken there and, who knows, go back home, something which we never found out if actually happened because we never saw the lad again, but if I were to bet I'd say this whole business about going to your parents' house was nothing but a cock-and-bull story — not only because I had learned to consider every good thing they said as a lie, but because Thirty Six and Fourteen didn't even have families and they simply vanished after they were taken to the first floor by a nurse called Afranio, a repulsive guy with a ginger moustache who looked like Yosemite Sam and smelled of formaldehyde and had his white coat dirty with something I knew was blood, which it must have been, since open wounds were extremely common there, and it was even more common for the wounds to become infected and spread to large areas and release pus and other fluids which would leave the place stinking even more, fit to breed maggots, and which would almost always result in serious problems such as scars on the skin, deformity or the amputation of limbs, or even in the death of some of the boys – something which, for better or for worse, we ended up getting used to the longer we stayed there, even though we never really knew for how long exactly we had been inmates, as there was no official record, and our attempt to track the days with scribbles on the walls (four vertical lines and a horizontal one every five days) was ruined when they took two of us to the first floor because of that – something which astonished everyone, as it was hard as heck to believe that a mere attempt to measure time would lead to such drastic consequences, which were in fact becoming each day more normal, so that a simple light beam shining through the door would produce fear, even though such fear never really became an actual danger for me, who survived, while those around me perished – perhaps because their fingers weren't as tightly crossed, or maybe because they resigned deep inside, which is something I never allowed myself to do, even with the pain of a hundred volts caused by two electrodes attached to my head or by the precise blows given by the watchdogs on the most fragile parts of



the poor children or by the harsh words telling me that I was crazy because of my slut momma who wouldn't have caught syphilis if she had been a good girl or by seeing my friends being taken and never coming back, to be forgotten, to dis-exist, as it could have happened to me even though I resisted, and fought, and crossed my fingers the tightest I could – and this is why I write: as a way of carrying on resisting and existing, even though from so far away from that place – so that they will never forget.





## TRANSLATING OUT OF BREATH

BÁRBARA EHLER

Perhaps the readers of this compact short story will have a similar experience to mine on seeing it on the page: I literally gulped the moment I opened the file containing my assigned text for translation and encountered a huge single paragraph with nothing but one long sentence spread throughout a page and a half. “Fôlego” (meaning “breath”, “gasp”, “gulp of air” in Portuguese) is, indeed, a “breathing out” of the narrator’s traumatized memories, which run over each other as he describes his experiences in a psychiatric clinic – a stream of consciousness which seems to bewilder the narrator as much as it might bewilder the reader. The latter must, indeed, try to keep his breath flowing while reading the never-ending sentence.

Translating a stream of consciousness narrative is an interesting experience: just as one would do in real life, the narrator often changes the subject and introduces one story inside another, and the translator must follow the train of thought, making sure it is as clear and seemingly random as the original. Hence the text’s fluidity rendered an experience which was both simple and challenging. Because the diction is highly vocal, the phrases were generally easy to transmit into English; but due to the same reason, the expressions used – some very typically Brazilian – forced me to spend long periods questioning issues such as what the Anglo-Saxon equivalent for “pra chuchu” or “pra dedéu” might be.

The short length of the text evidenced the importance and specificity of Lucas Verzola’s word choice, but an even greater awareness of the authorial intention was emphasized in the light of the delicate theme of the story. As we first gathered in our meeting room at University College London to discuss possible translation strategies for Verzola’s text, Nara Vidal, co-organiser of the Translation Club, showed us a Brazilian book called “Holocausto Brasileiro” [Brazilian Holocaust] written by the journalist Daniela Arbex which tells the real story of the psychiatric clinic Colônia de Barbacena, in the south-eastern state of Minas Gerais. Founded in 1903, its inmates endured similar tortures as those described in “Fôlego” (ARBEX, 2013). Not only mentally ill people would be taken there, but also those who were socially ostracized for various reasons, and about sixty thousand people died in the clinic. Apart from explaining the real-life basis of the short story, Nara also read aloud a note from Verzola, written for one of the editions of his book, and through it we learnt that his text had been composed from the perspective of a young boy who had lived through those experiences.

From that moment on, the discussion was not simply about grammar or diction, but it acquired an undertone of one’s awareness of dealing with historical fiction, with real occurrences. This again evidenced the need



for a careful analysis of the word choice. For instance, the Portuguese term used by the narrator to describe himself and the other boys inside the place was “internos”. While I had at first translated it as “inmates”, other participants of the BTC chose “patient”. And this, of course, would provide different connotations: the former made the setting sound like a prison, while with “patients” the reader might think that the characters would have chosen to be there. Similar problems arouse with the translation of the watchdogs’ uniform: was it an apron, like a nurse’s, or a crazy scientist’s lab coat?

Indeed, one of the things that struck me as the Club discussed the first draft of my translation was how many different interpretations were presented, and some not even having to do with the vocabulary. We questioned whether the narrator was the boy, recently fled, or the man looking back to his repulsive memories; but the vocabulary and expressions of the original text were our hint to the child’s voice in the narration. One of the participants, furthermore, claimed that the presence of a number of insistently methodological details (how the inmates tracked the passing of time by writing on walls; the constant references to the first floor; the naming of people through numbers) pointed to the possibility of the whole narration representing a metaphor, perhaps alluding to parallel experience. This raised further questions: is the short story meant to be taken literally? Or should the reader attempt to visualize something else? All this, without even mentioning the questions I was hesitant to leave open in my translation: at the end of the original text, for instance, the narrator claims to wish that neither he nor “any close friends” would be taken. He does not say those were his friends: was the pronoun left absent on purpose?

Even the Brazilian expressions were not read in the same way by the participants, reminding everyone of the richness and complexities of the Portuguese language. The “crossed fingers” mentioned at the beginning of the story is my translation of “figas”. For me, it means the same as crossing one’s fingers, as if wishing for something to happen; for other Brazilians, such gesture reflects lying, while the actual “figas” refers to the action of closing one’s hand into a tight fist, with the thumb between two fingers. Wishing to avoid the need for a footnote, I kept the image of the crossed fingers.

One of the most interesting parts of our discussion came up as we reached the end of the text, when the narrator speaks of his friends “dis-existing”. The invention of words is a common feature in Brazilian literature, but we were aware that English readers might not find it as pleasing. How does one translate an inexistent word? Though I could have chosen an existing English word which would pass the message just as well, I again clung to the authorial intention while trying to keep it simple, and so chose to use a hyphen. (After my English colleague claimed to have read “sexist” instead of “disexist” on my first draft, I realized how useful hyphens are for Portuguese-English translations.)



Though attempting to keep the authorial intention in mind as far as possible, I took some liberties in my translation. Bearing in mind the difficulty of following the narrative, I was careful to keep the rhythm of the original text while adding and/or changing some punctuation marks to facilitate the reading, making it as clear as possible. While Verzola only used dashes once at the start of the text and then relied fully on commas, I alternated between dashes, semi-colons and parentheses, and introduced some pauses. I removed some repetitions which, though they reemphasized the vocal tone of the narrative in the original, would stop and disturb the reading in English. Furthermore, I often chose the most simple and obvious translation of words and phrases, considering that the narrator would have said things in a rush and as they came to his mind. I hence avoided poetic sentences and even changed the syntax of the original, by writing “my body froze” instead of “would freeze” at the beginning, for instance. Verzola made a good job in his work with rhythm, as it builds up at the end and eventually slows down as the narration reaches the end, which I also preserved.

Translating from one’s native into a second language is challenging. I was not sure about many of the expressions, but thankfully the discussion with the other participants of the Club was really helpful. Just as the reading of the text is interpreted as a “breathing out”, so it was with the experience of translating it: natural, fluid, spontaneous... and breath-taking. I followed the narrator’s breath, becoming myself breathless – as I hope this story will leave you, too.

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**VICTOR MEADOWCROFT** TRANSLATES **ITAMAR VIEIRA JÚNIOR**





## O ESPÍRITO ABONI DAS COISAS

ITAMAR VIEIRA JÚNIOR

O sol *bahi* cresceu no céu *neme* com muita luz. Agora é hora de partir. Tokowisa se pinta para adentrar a floresta. Tokowisa carrega penas, zarabatana, arco e flecha. Tokowisa tem os pés descalços e o corpo forte. Quando entra na floresta, não se distingue a força de uma árvore da força de Tokowisa. Não se distingue o espírito *aboni* de uma árvore do espírito *aboni* de Tokowisa. Não se distingue o espírito *aboni* de um caititu kobaya do espírito *aboni* de Tokowisa, nem o de um macaco-guariba dyico do espírito *aboni* de Tokowisa. Todos os animais falam e indicam os caminhos das coisas. Tokowisa para, escuta o que a árvore diz. Ele se agacha na beira do rio *faha* e escuta o que lhe diz. Olha para o céu *neme* para logo depois fechar os olhos e escutar o que a chuva *faha* lhe diz.

Tokowisa precisa encontrar a palmeira de abatosi para curar sua mulher, Yanici, que espera um filho. Tokowisa tem outros filhos e filhas. O velho xamã disse que Tokowisa tem que encontrar a palmeira de abatosi nas terras de longe. Tokowisa tem suas pernas e quer chegar a uma das mil margens do rio *faha*. Também tem braços, e é na canoa que sobe os igarapés até chegar ao leito do grande rio. A mulher de Tokowisa tem sangramento e faltam luas para seu filho nascer. A mulher de Tokowisa, Yanici, já não carrega o cesto e não cuida da roça de mandioca e milho. Ela fica deitada na rede e Tokowisa sai para caçar. Mas o pensamento *ati boti* de Tokowisa fica com a mulher. O xamã soprou tabaco sobre o corpo da mulher e invocou os deuses. Pediu que lhe trouxesse a abatosi para poder curá-la. Tokowisa não vai partir com outros homens de sua aldeia porque seu espírito *aboni* o levará para uma terra de guerra. Ele e o xamã sabem do perigo. Tokowisa deve seguir sem os homens de sua aldeia.

“É você mesmo?”, perguntou o xamã. “Sim, sou eu mesmo”, respondeu Tokowisa. O xamã queria saber se o espírito *aboni* de Tokowisa habitava seu corpo. “Vá para uma das mil margens do rio *faha* e colha as folhas verdes e os frutos da abatosi”, ordenou o xamã. “Sim, eu vou”, disse Tokowisa. “Pinte-se para a guerra”, ordenou o xamã. “Sim, eu faço”, respondeu Tokowisa. Então preparou sua canoa, amarrou os adereços em seu corpo, pegou as coisas de que precisava e saiu quando o sol *bahi* iluminou o céu *neme*.

Tokowisa prepara a canoa e espera o céu *neme* se iluminar. Deixa a filha mais velha, Neme, que já maneja o cesto e colhe a mandioca, para cuidar da mãe que não levanta da rede. Tokowisa sobe o igarapé remando suave pelas águas calmas. Vê peixes *aba* e pássaros *bani*. Olha para o céu *neme* e escuta tudo. Tokowisa tem que prestar atenção no coração *ati boti* da floresta porque nenhum sinal pode escapar ao seu espírito *aboni*. Para encontrar a abatosi, Tokowisa tem que escutar tudo, tem que olhar tudo, tem que conhecer





o movimento do vento *boni*, tem que ouvir o caminho das águas e os cantos dos pássaros *bani* no céu *neme*. Ele sobe o rio *faha* e se prepara para os dias em que ficará longe da aldeia. Tokowisa precisa de força para encontrar a abatosi. Pinta-se e entoia cantos para que os deuses ouçam e lhe deem a força e a riqueza de que precisa.

Tokowisa carrega no coração *ati boti* a imagem de Yanici deitada na rede e com a face pálida. Ela tem uma matilha de cães *yome* ao seu redor e as crianças que choram querendo peixe *aba* e bolo de mandioca *fowa kabe*. Yanici foi surpreendida por um feitiço lançado por um xamã da aldeia que guerreia contra a aldeia de Tokowisa. O feitiço era para Tokowisa, mas foi Yanici que caiu de fraqueza, porque carrega o filho guerreiro. O xamã teme que o espírito *aboni* de Yanici seja raptado pelos *inamati bote*, que moram debaixo da terra. Os *inamati bote* foram invocados pelo xamã que lançou o feitiço por vingança às perdas que tiveram na última batalha. Por isso, Tokowisa tem que trazer a abatosi para que as intenções dos espíritos velhos sejam revertidas. Tokowisa vai só, para que a aldeia *tabora* não fique desprotegida.

Tokowisa é um guerreiro, mas agora corre perigo. Sua aldeia está em guerra contra a aldeia *yawa* de uma das mil margens do rio *faha*. Tokowisa não vai comer carne de caça enquanto não encontrar a abatosi. Tokowisa não quer desagradar a *yama* que lhe visitou em sonho para indicar o local onde estava a palmeira de abatosi. A *yama* apareceu com olhos de fogo e pelo muito branco. Tokowisa lembra muito bem da palmeira de abatosi na beira de um igarapé, tal qual lhe apareceu no sonho. A *yama* levou Tokowisa até a palmeira de abatosi. Tokowisa não pode comer animais. Vai comer asahi e outros frutos que encontrar para não desagradar a *yama*. Seu povo teme a *yama*. Tokowisa não teme a *yama*.

Tokowisa e sua canoa sobem o rio *faha* e seus braços fortes manejam o remo *koyari*, muito atento, escutando para saber para que lado deve seguir. O rio *faha* vai dizendo com o som das águas e vai abrindo caminho para a canoa que sobe, deixando para trás a aldeia *tabora*. Rio acima, *nakani*. Rio abaixo, bato. Tokowisa não está sozinho porque o espírito *aboni* das coisas e dos animais o acompanha. Tokowisa não tem medo da guerra, nem dos homens da guerra, nem dos brancos. Tokowisa sabe que seu povo tem morrido porque os homens brancos querem levar os corpos das árvores. Tokowisa não tem certeza de que os brancos são humanos *jarawara*. Os homens brancos não temem a maldição reservada aos que desrespeitam a terra *wami*. Os homens brancos acham que eles existem sozinhos e que as árvores e os animais são desprezíveis. Os homens brancos matam velhos, matam mulheres, matam homens, matam crianças, tudo para levar o corpo das árvores. “Para que eles querem uma árvore sem seu *aboni*?” pergunta Tokowisa para si mesmo. “Se retirar a árvore da terra *wami* seu *aboni* vai para o céu *neme*”. “De que adianta ter uma árvore sem seu *aboni*?”, Tokowisa se pergunta quando para e descansa da viagem.



Tokowisa para e a noite *yama soki* desce no céu *neme*. Faz uma fogueira pequena que ilumina aquele pedaço da floresta. Yanici está vagando no pensamento de Tokowisa. Cansado, Tokowisa deita no chão da selva, com o arco, a flecha e a zarabatana ao seu lado. Tokowisa espera um sonho que indique se está perto ou longe da palmeira de abatosi. Fecha os olhos e espera.

Os homens carregam o arco e a flecha. As mulheres carregam o cesto. Os homens caçam e guerreiam. As mulheres roçam e cuidam dos homens que guerreiam. As mulheres dançam. Os homens dançam. As mulheres cantam. Os homens cantam. Pintam seus corpos com as cores da terra *wami*. O arco e a flecha permitem aos homens capturar a caça e o peixe *aba*. O cesto é para que as mulheres carreguem os frutos de suas roças. Milho *kimi*, mandioca *fowa bao*, mandioca *fowa basota*, mandioca *fowa nestona*. Os homens cuidam de suas mulheres, porque as mulheres são a força para os homens; os homens são a força para as mulheres. Tokowisa quer salvar Yanici e volta para a canoa na beira do rio *faha* para continuar a subir em busca da abatosi.

Tokowisa começa a ver um clarão na floresta que indica que tem homens brancos retirando árvores sem seu espírito *aboni*. Lembra que muitas histórias tristes chegam à aldeia e os homens se preparam para a guerra. As mulheres estocam alimentos na terra. Plantam todas as variedades de mandioca *fowa* e as deixam guardadas debaixo da terra para, quando chegar a guerra, alimentar seu povo. Os homens brancos têm madeira que cospe fogo e sangra os homens até a morte. Os homens da aldeia têm o arco e a flecha. Têm também a zarabatana que paralisa uma onça *yome* maior que um homem, com seu veneno. Os homens de sua aldeia guerreiam com os homens de outra aldeia. Tokowisa não teme nenhum deles. Tokowisa nasceu para ser guerreiro e participou de muitas batalhas. Sabe que nada pode passar na terra *wami* sem que seja vingado. Que tudo que fazemos aqui precisa ser vingado aqui mesmo.

Tokowisa é um homem que sobe o rio *faha* com sua canoa. Os guerreiros de seu povo não estão ao seu lado, mas Tokowisa tem o mundo: a terra *wami*, a água *faha* e o céu *neme*. Tokowisa pode falar com a pedra *yati* quando desce da canoa. Pode falar com o boto e ouvir sua resposta. Pode falar com os espíritos *aboni* do céu *neme*. Com o espírito *aboni* das árvores. Tokowisa carrega o mundo em seu coração *ati boti*. Yanici está em seu *ati boti*. Os seus filhos também.

Tokowisa ouve estrondos que parecem com o som da madeira que cospe fogo dos homens brancos. Estão matando o *aboni* das coisas, pensa. Tokowisa pode sentir clarões de luz vindo do interior da floresta. Tokowisa disse para o xamã que as árvores tremem de medo dos homens brancos que devoram a floresta. Tokowisa pode sentir o alvoreço na selva. Sabe que os espíritos *aboni* do céu *neme* serão implacáveis em sua vingança para com os homens brancos.





Passaram-se muitos dias e Tokowisa chega ao lugar que a *yama* do sonho lhe indicou. O sol *bahi* está no alto do céu. Sua luz desce entre as nuvens iluminando a solitária palmeira de abatosi na beira do igarapé. Tokowisa toca a palmeira de abatosi e pede licença ao seu *aboni* para subir em seu corpo. Sobe a palmeira de abatosi, retira as folhas mais verdes e os frutos mais maduros. Tokowisa respira, respira, respira. Bebe a água *faha* e desce com sua canoa para continuar sua viagem.

Chove muito, depois que Tokowisa continua a sua viagem. Ele resolve parar para que a chuva *faha* não encha sua canoa. Tokowisa, cansado, adormece. Não sonha, embora quisesse sonhar para ter notícias de Yanici. Os *yawa* veem uma canoa na margem do rio *faha*, debaixo de uma árvore, quando a chuva cessa. Os *yawa* reconhecem que ali dorme um inimigo *yawa*. Gritam e carregam Tokowisa para a aldeia *yawa* em uma das mil margens do rio *faha* que ele não conhece.

Tokowisa está preso na aldeia de uma das mil margens do rio *faha*. Os homens que guerreiam com sua aldeia *tabora* agora são donos do seu corpo. Tokowisa não teme os inimigos e sabe que deve morrer como um guerreiro. Não pode desapontar os homens de sua aldeia *tabora* com uma fuga da aldeia *yawa*. Como se os homens da aldeia *tabora*, sua aldeia natal, não fossem guerreiros para vingá-lo. Tokowisa não pode desapontá-los. Sabe que não é maior que todos os homens juntos. Tokowisa acredita que os guerreiros da aldeia *tabora* irão salvá-lo. Tokowisa sabe que agora será transformado em um inimigo *yawa*. Perderá seus adereços, seu arco, sua flecha, sua zarabatana. Perderá as cores da sua terra *wami*. Ganhará as cores da terra *wami* dos *yawa*. Ganhará adereços dos *yawa*. Mas o espírito *aboni* de Tokowisa nunca será um *yawa*.

Os *yawa* vão transformar Tokowisa em um deles. Depois os *yawa* irão comer seu corpo. Tokowisa partirá para o céu *neme*. Vai habitar o céu *neme* e encontrar todos que já partiram. As árvores mortas pelos brancos e os animais que comeu. Tokowisa viverá em guerra no céu *neme*, porque a guerra fez o homem da floresta. Tokowisa tem que levar as folhas verdes e os frutos da abatosi para resgatar o espírito *aboni* de Yanici e salvar seu filho. Passaram-se muitos dias, Tokowisa precisa encontrar uma forma de levar o que o xamã lhe pediu para reverter o feitiço. Tokowisa não pode desapontar os guerreiros de sua aldeia *tabora*. Os guerreiros esperam que Tokowisa dê-lhes a honra de resgatá-lo, e se não for possível, a honra de vingar a sua morte, mas não esperam que ele escape como um *bato mawa*.

Tokowisa precisa levar a abatosi para salvar Yanici. Os *yawa* pegaram a abatosi. Pegaram também o arco, a flecha, a zarabatana e a canoa. Tokowisa não tinha pés e mãos amarrados, mas era guardado pelos guerreiros *yawa*. Tokowisa sente tristeza porque quer salvar Yanici.



À noite, Tokowisa sonha com Yanici: está deitada na rede e tem os olhos fechados. Yanici tem suor no corpo e dá a luz a um caititu *kobaya*. Yanici fica feliz com seu caititu-filho. Mas de seu corpo desce um rio de sangue ama. Tokowisa desperta com o pio do araçari-de-bico-branco *howaraka*. O araçari *howaraka* está muito perto e é noite *yama soki*. Os *yawa* dormem. Tokowisa some. O araçari *howaraka* que viu na vida não é branco, mas o araçari *howaraka* que pousa e olha para Tokowisa é branco e tem os olhos vermelhos como a *yama*. Tokowisa aparece com o arco, a flecha, a zarabatana, as folhas verdes e os frutos da abatosi. Tokowisa leva tudo para a sua canoa, repousada em uma das mil margens do rio *faha*, e o araçari *howaraka* branco e de olhos vermelhos o observa. Tokowisa o chama e levanta o braço. O araçari *howaraka* pousa em seu braço. Os *yawa* dormem como que enfeitiçados pelo *yama* que é o araçari *howaraka*. Tokowisa coloca tudo na canoa e sente vontade de partir. Tokowisa leva o araçari *howaraka* para a canoa, ele voa e pousa só. Tokowisa sente o cheiro da *yama* que é o araçari *howaraka*. Empurra a canoa para que ela possa descer o rio *faha* e dorme.

A canoa chega até o igarapé nas margens onde fica a casa yobe de Tokowisa e Yanici. A filha de Tokowisa, Neme, desce até a margem porque reconhece a canoa do pai. Neme grita por pai *abi* e os homens e as mulheres da aldeia *tabora* descem ao seu encontro. Os homens recolhem o arco, a flecha e a zarabatana da canoa para que Neme não precise tocar e trazer má sorte para seu pai *abi*. Os homens recolhem as folhas e os frutos da palmeira abatosi. Neme pede que levem tudo até o xamã, para que ele possa curar sua mãe. Neme não conta para Yanici que Tokowisa não veio na canoa.

O xamã macera as folhas e queima parte delas até que se transformem em cinzas. O xamã cobre o rosto de Yanici de cinzas e a faz beber parte das folhas misturadas ao sumo dos frutos. Fala então palavras sagradas, invoca os deuses do céu *neme*, invoca o espírito *aboni* de Tokowisa. O xamã tem seus olhos voltados para o sagrado e sente que Tokowisa vive, que o seu espírito *aboni* não está no céu *neme*. Os homens da aldeia *tabora* se dividem: uns vestem-se para a guerra e sobem o rio *faha*. Rio acima, *nakani*. Rio abaixo, *bato*. Outros continuam na aldeia *tabora* para defender as mulheres, as crianças e os velhos.

Passam-se duas noites, dois dias, e Yanici se liberta dos *inamati bote* e recupera sua força. Desce à beira do igarapé, porque a hora do filho nascer se aproxima. Yanici contempla a canoa parada na beira da água *faha*. Canta porque sente saudade de Tokowisa. Canta também porque o filho de Tokowisa irá nascer. Se Tokowisa regressar, encontrará seu filho bebendo leite do seio de Yanici.



## THE *ABONI* SPIRIT OF THINGS

ITAMAR VIEIRA JÚNIOR

TRANSLATED BY VICTOR MEADOWCROFT

The *bahi* sun grew in the *neme* sky with a great deal of light. Now is the time to leave. Tokowisa paints himself for entering the forest. Tokowisa carries feathers, blowpipe, and bow and arrow. Tokowisa has bare feet and a strong body. When he enters the forest, the strength of a tree, its life force, cannot be distinguished from Tokowisa's. The *aboni* spirit of a tree cannot be distinguished from the *aboni* spirit of Tokowisa. The *aboni* spirit of a *kobaya* musk hog cannot be distinguished from Tokowisa's *aboni* spirit, nor the *aboni* spirit of the *dyico* howler monkey distinguished from that of Tokowisa. All the animals speak and indicate the ways of things. Tokowisa stops and listens to what the tree says. He crouches by the edge of the *faha* river and listens to what it tells him. He looks up at the *neme* sky before closing his eyes to listen to what the *faha* rain is saying.

Tokowisa needs to find the abatosi palm to cure his wife, Yanici, who is expecting a son. Tokowisa has other sons and daughters. The old shaman said Tokowisa must go find the abatosi palm in faraway lands. Tokowisa has his legs and wants to reach one of the thousand banks of the *faha* river. He also has arms, and it is in the canoe that he travels upstream until he reaches the great river. Tokowisa's wife is bleeding and it is only moons before her son is born. Tokowisa's wife, Yanici, no longer carries the basket nor tends to the plots of cassava and maize. She remains lying in the hammock while Tokowisa goes to hunt. But Tokowisa's *ati boti* thoughts stay with his wife. The shaman blew tobacco over his wife's body and called upon the gods. He asked for the abatosi to be brought to him so he could cure her. Tokowisa will not set out with other men from his village because his *aboni* spirit will lead him into a land of war. He and the shaman know of the danger. Tokowisa must proceed without the men from his village.

"Is it really you?" asked the shaman. "Yes, it is me," answered Tokowisa. The shaman wanted to be certain Tokowisa's *aboni* spirit inhabited his body. "Go to one of the thousand banks of the *faha* river and gather the green leaves and fruit of the abatosi," ordered the shaman. "Yes, I will go," said Tokowisa. "Paint yourself for war," ordered the shaman. "Yes, I will do so," answered Tokowisa. Then he prepared his canoe, tied adornments to his body, picked up what he needed and left when the *bahi* sun illuminated the *neme* sky.

Tokowisa readies the canoe and waits for the *neme* sky to become illuminated. He leaves his oldest daughter, Neme, who can wield the basket and harvest cassava, to watch over her mother who cannot leave the hammock. Tokowisa travels upstream, rowing smoothly through the calm waters. He sees *aba* fish and *bani* birds. He looks up at the *neme* sky and listens to everything. Tokowisa must pay attention to the



*ati boti* heart of the forest because no sign should escape his *aboni* spirit. To find the abatosi, Tokowisa must listen to everything, he must keep watch over everything, must know the movement of the *boni* wind, must listen to the running of the waters and the songs of the *bani* birds in the *neme* sky. He travels up the *faha* river and prepares himself for the days when he will be far from the village. Tokowisa needs strength to find the abatosi. He paints himself and begins to chant so that the gods will hear and give him the strength and richness of spirit he needs.

In his *ati boti* heart Tokowisa carries the image of pale-faced Yanici lying in the hammock. She is surrounded by a pack of *yome* dogs and children who cry wanting *aba* fish and *fowa kabe* cassava cake. Yanici was surprised by a spell cast by a shaman from the village that is at war with Tokowisa's village. The spell was intended for Tokowisa, but it was Yanici who collapsed from weakness because she carries the warrior son. The shaman fears that Yanici's *aboni* spirit has been abducted by the *inamati bote*, who live beneath the earth. The *inamati bote* were summoned by the shaman who cast the spell, in retaliation for losses sustained in the last battle. That is why Tokowisa must bring back the abatosi, so the intentions of the old spirits can be reversed. Tokowisa goes alone, so the *tabora* village will not remain unprotected.

Tokowisa is a warrior, but now he is in danger. His village is at war with the *yawa* village on one of the thousand banks of the *faha* river. Tokowisa will not hunt for meat until he finds the abatosi. Tokowisa does not wish to displease the *yama* that visited him in a dream to show him the location of the abatosi palm. The *yama* appeared with flaming eyes and bright white fur. Tokowisa clearly remembers the abatosi palm by the edge of the water, just as it appeared to him in the dream. The *yama* led Tokowisa to the abatosi palm. Tokowisa must not eat animals. He will eat *asahi* and other fruits he finds so as not to displease the *yama*. His people fear the *yama*. Tokowisa does not fear the *yama*.

Tokowisa and his canoe travel up the *faha* river and his strong arms manoeuvre the *koyari* oar, alert, listening to know which way to follow. The *faha* river is telling him with the sound of its waters and is opening a path for the canoe which climbs, leaving behind the *tabora* village. Upriver, *nakani*. Downriver, *bato*. Tokowisa is not alone because the *aboni* spirit of things and animals accompanies him. Tokowisa is not afraid of war, or the men of war, or of the whites. Tokowisa knows that his people have died because the white men want to take the bodies of the trees. Tokowisa is not sure if the white men are *jarawara* humans. The white men do not fear the curse that awaits those who disrespect the *wami* land. The white men believe they exist alone and that trees and animals are worthless. The white men kill the old, kill women, kill men, kill children, all so they can take the bodies of the trees. "Why do they want a tree without its *aboni*?" Tokowisa asks himself.



“If you remove a tree from the *wami* earth its *aboni* goes up to the *neme* sky.” “What use is a tree without its *aboni*?” asks Tokowisa as he stops to rest from his journey.

Tokowisa stops to rest and *yama soki* night falls in the *neme* sky. He makes a small fire which illuminates that section of the forest. Yanici is hovering in Tokowisa’s thoughts. Tired, Tokowisa lies down on the jungle floor, with his bow, his arrows and the blowpipe by his side. Tokowisa awaits a dream that will tell him if he is near or far from the abatosi palm. He closes his eyes and waits.

The men carry the bow and arrow. The women carry the basket. The men hunt and go to war. The women plant crops and care for the warring men. The women dance. The men dance. The women sing. The men sing. They paint their bodies the colours of the *wami* earth. The bow and arrow allows the men to hunt their prey and capture *aba* fish. The basket is so the women can carry the fruits of their labour. *Kimi* maize, *fowa bao* cassava, *fowa basota* cassava, *fowa nestona* cassava. The men care for their women, because the women are the men’s strength; the men are the women’s strength. Tokowisa wants to save Yanici and so returns to the canoe at the edge of the *faha* river to continue in search of the abatosi.

Tokowisa begins to make out a clearing in the forest which means there are white men removing trees without their *aboni* spirit. He remembers the many sad stories that reach the village and how the men are preparing for war. The women store foodstuffs in the ground. They plant every kind of *fowa* cassava and leave it safe underground so that, when the war comes, they can feed their people. The white men have wood that spits fire and bleeds men to death. The men from the village have the bow and arrow. They also have the blowpipe, which can paralyse a *yome* jaguar larger than a man with its poison. The men from his village are at war with men from another village. Tokowisa does not fear any of them. Tokowisa was born to be a warrior and has taken part in many battles. He knows nothing can take place upon the *wami* earth without being avenged. That everything we do here must be avenged here also.

Tokowisa is a man who is travelling up the *faha* river in his canoe. The warriors of his people are not by his side, but Tokowisa has the world: the *wami* earth, the *faha* water and the *neme* sky. Tokowisa can speak to the *yati* stone when he leaves the canoe. He can talk to the river dolphin and hear its reply. He can speak to the *aboni* spirits in the *neme* sky. To the *aboni* spirit of the trees. Tokowisa carries the world in his *ati boti* heart. Yanici is in his *ati boti*. So are his children.

Tokowisa hears booming that is like the sound of the wood-that-spits-fire of the white men. They are killing the *aboni* of things, he thinks. Tokowisa can sense flashes of light coming from inside the forest.



Tokowisa told the shaman that the trees tremble with fear of the white men who are devouring the forest. Tokowisa can sense the commotion inside the jungle. He knows the *aboni* spirits in the *neme* sky will be merciless in their vengeance upon the white men.

Many days have passed and Tokowisa reaches the place revealed to him by the *yama* in his dream. The *bahi* sun is high up in the sky. Its light comes down through the clouds, illuminating the solitary abatosi palm by the edge of the stream. Tokowisa touches the abatosi palm and asks permission of its *aboni* to climb its body. He climbs the abatosi palm, gathers the greenest leaves and the ripest fruit. Tokowisa breathes, and breathes, and breathes. He drinks some *faha* water and heads down with his canoe to continue his journey.

It rains heavily after Tokowisa resumes his journey. He decides to stop so the *faha* rain does not fill his canoe. Tired, Tokowisa falls asleep. He does not dream, though he would like to dream so as to receive news of Yanici. When the rain has stopped, the *yawa* spot a canoe on the bank of the *faha* river, under a tree. The *yawa* realise it is a *yawa* enemy who is sleeping there. They raise a cry and carry Tokowisa off to the *yawa* village on one of the thousand banks of the *faha* river he does not know.

Tokowisa is imprisoned in the village on one of the thousand banks of the *faha* river. The men who are at war with his *tabora* village now own his body. Tokowisa does not fear his enemies and knows he should die like a warrior. He cannot disappoint the men of his *tabora* village by fleeing from the *yawa* village. As if the men from the *tabora* village, the village of his birth, were not warrior enough to avenge him. Tokowisa cannot disappoint them. He knows he is not greater than all the men together. Tokowisa believes the men from the *tabora* village will save him. Tokowisa knows that now he will be transformed into a *yawa* enemy. He will lose his adornments, his bow and arrow, his blowpipe. He will lose the colours of his *wami* land. He will receive the colours of the *wami* land of the *yawa*. He will receive *yawa* adornments. But Tokowisa's *aboni* spirit will never be a *yawa*.

The *yawa* will transform Tokowisa into one of them. Then the *yawa* will consume his body. Tokowisa will depart for the *neme* sky. He will inhabit the *neme* sky and meet with all those who have already departed. The trees killed by the whites and the animals he has eaten. Tokowisa will live at war in the *neme* sky, because war created the man of the forest. Tokowisa must take the green leaves and the fruit of the abatosi to rescue Yanici's *aboni* spirit and save his son. Many days have passed, and Tokowisa must find a way to bring the shaman what he needs to reverse the spell. Tokowisa cannot disappoint the warriors of his *tabora* village. The warriors will expect Tokowisa to grant them the honour of rescuing him or, if that is not possible, the honour of avenging his death, but they will not be expecting him to flee like a *bato mawa*.



Tokowisa needs to bring back the abatosi to save Yanici. The *yawa* have taken the abatosi. They have also taken the bow and arrow, the blowpipe and the canoe. Tokowisa's hands and feet are not bound, but he is guarded by *yawa* warriors. Tokowisa feels sadness because he wishes to save Yanici.

At night, Tokowisa dreams of Yanici: she is lying in the hammock and her eyes are closed. Yanici has sweat all over her body and gives birth to a *kobaya* musk hog. Yanici is happy with her musk hog son. But from her body pours a river of ama blood. Tokowisa awakens to the cry of the *howaraka* white-billed toucan. The *howaraka* toucan is very nearby and *yama soki* night has fallen. The *yawa* are sleeping. Tokowisa rises. The *howaraka* toucans he has seen before were not white, but the *howaraka* toucan perched watching Tokowisa is white with red eyes like the *yama*. Tokowisa appears with his bow and arrow, blowpipe, and the green leaves and fruit of the abatosi. Tokowisa takes everything to his canoe, lying on one of the thousand banks of the *faha* river, and the white *howaraka* toucan with red eyes watches him. Tokowisa calls to it and raises his arm. The *howaraka* toucan alights on his arm. The *yawa* sleep as if bewitched by the *yama* that is the *howaraka* toucan. Tokowisa puts everything inside the canoe and feels a desire to leave. Tokowisa takes the *howaraka* toucan to the canoe, it flaps its wings and lands alone. Tokowisa is aware of the scent of the *yama* that is the *howaraka* toucan. He pushes the canoe so it can travel down the *faha* river and goes to sleep.

The canoe reaches the banks of the stream where Tokowisa and Yanici's home can be found. Tokowisa's daughter, Neme, goes down onto the bank because she recognises her father's canoe. Neme cries out to her *abi* father and the men and women of the *tabora* village come down in search of him. The men recover the bow, the arrows and the blowpipe from the canoe so that Neme need not touch them and bring bad luck to her *abi* father. The men gather the leaves and the fruit of the abatosi palm. Neme requests they take everything to the shaman, so that he may cure her mother. Neme does not tell Yanici that Tokowisa did not arrive in the canoe.

The shaman crushes the leaves and burns a portion of them until it turns to ash. The shaman covers Yanici's face with the ashes and makes her drink another portion of the leaves mixed with juice from the fruit. Then he speaks sacred words, calls upon the gods in the *neme* sky, calls upon Tokowisa's *aboni* spirit. The shaman has his eyes turned toward the sacred and he senses that Tokowisa lives, that his *aboni* spirit is not in the *neme* sky. The men of the *tabora* village divide up: some dress themselves for war and travel up the *faha* river. Upriver, *nakani*. Downriver, *bato*. Others remain in the *tabora* village to defend the women, the children and the old.





Two nights go by, two days, and Yanici is freed from the *inamati bote* and recovers her strength. She goes down to the edge of the stream, because the hour of her son's birth is near. Yanici contemplates the canoe resting at the edge of the *faha* river. She sings because she misses Tokowisa. She also sings because Tokowisa's son will be born. If Tokowisa returns, he will find his son drinking milk from the breast of Yanici.



## CAPTURING ITAMAR VIEIRA JUNIOR'S *ABONI* SPIRIT

VICTOR MEADOWCROFT

“O espírito *aboni* das coisas” is a short story by Itamar Vieira Júnior included in his Jabuti-nominated collection, *A oração do carrasco* [The hangman’s prayer], published in 2017. The story is written from the perspective of an indigenous character, and draws upon the author’s personal heritage as well as research conducted for his PhD in Ethnic and African studies. Centred on the Jarawara people, who inhabit the forests of western Brazil, one of the features that first struck me about this story was Itamar’s inclusion of words from the Jarawara language, which appear in the text alongside their Portuguese synonyms. In an email to Nara Vidal, co-organiser of the Brazilian Translation Club, Itamar explained:

The Jarawara lexicon – and the *Jarawara* language that appears in the story – was intended to bring across the musicality of indigenous speech. Each Jarawara word is preceded by its [Portuguese] meaning. So, NEME means SKY. RIVER, RAIN and WATER are all represented by the same term: FAHA. I used the Jarawara Dictionary compiled by Alan Vogel. JARAWARA means HUMAN.

While perhaps slightly disorienting to begin with, the inclusion of these Jarawara words certainly succeeds in transmitting “the musicality of indigenous speech” – something also communicated through other textual elements, such as the use of repetition and non-standard syntax – and the reader is quickly able to work out how these unknown words are being employed within the text, and understand their meanings. But how to reproduce this in an English translation? This question – and its inherent challenges – was what kindled my desire to translate Itamar’s story.

When discussing how best to negotiate these Jarawara words at a meeting of the Brazilian Translation Club, one suggestion put forward was to do away with the explanatory word altogether (i.e. the word in Portuguese in the source text) and just present the reader with the Jarawara word. The argument was that the inclusion of English-Jarawara word pairs might come across as clumsy, and that readers were becoming far more receptive toward encountering terms they might not immediately understand. Yet the way Itamar’s text pairs Portuguese and Jarawara terms, which become intrinsically linked in the reader’s mind as soon as they have grasped the relationship between the words, is one of my favourite things about the story, and I was determined to carry this through into my translation.

Having decided to maintain these word pairs, the next step was to consider the order in which these words should appear. In the source text, the Portuguese word precedes the Jarawara word, but I quickly realised



that this configuration (e.g. “the sky *neme*”, “the sun *bahi*”) sounded awkward in English. This is because in Portuguese adjectives usually follow the noun they describe, and, while these Jarawara words are not adjectives, but rather synonyms, they are positioned very much like adjectives in the source text; it is even possible some readers may mistake them for adjectives to begin with (i.e. *neme* as a characteristic of the sky rather than as the Jarawara word for sky). As a result, placing the Jarawara word before the English word, in accordance with the standard positioning of adjectives, produced a far more convincing reading experience. Two variations of the beginning of the opening line of the story illustrate this point:

>> Portuguese adjective order:

The sun *bahi* grew in the sky *neme*...

>> English adjective order:

The *bahi* sun grew in the *neme* sky...

Obviously, altering the word order creates a very slight difference in the English reader’s experience, since they are encountering the foreign word before its English synonym, whereas the source language reader encounters the Portuguese word first. However, I believe the reader quickly learns to interpret these words as a single unit, and, when encountering a new Jarawara word, understands that the English synonym will quickly follow.

One unexpected consequence of my decision to preserve the Jarawara words in my translation was that it meant I was sometimes required to depart from the exact meaning of the Portuguese word it was paired with, in cases where this was not something I could reasonably expect an English reader to understand. For example, the Jarawara word *howaraka* is paired with the Portuguese word “*aracari*”, which I would normally have translated as “*aracari*”, a bird with which some English readers may be familiar. However, given the importance of this bird within the text, I felt it was essential that the vast majority of readers be able to visualise it, and so opted instead for the more common “*toucan*”, the family to which the *aracari* belongs (VOGEL, 2016, p.109, p.264).<sup>1</sup> One alternative would have been to add some explanatory information about the *aracari* within the text, but here I felt that adding an explanation would undermine the strong relationship established between the protagonist, Tokowisa, and the natural world, which is so crucial to the story. Furthermore, it very quickly becomes apparent that the *howaraka* is not a real bird, but a *yama* spirit, and, on this occasion, I concluded that it was more important for the reader to be able to visualise this spirit, with its snow-white plumage and bright red eyes, than for an avid birdwatcher to be able to correctly identify the species.



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**GABRIELA TRINDADE E NARA VIDAL** TRANSLATE **ALÊ MOTTA**







## ÓRFÃOS

ALÊ MOTTA

O pai do Valério morreu de câncer. O pai do Sílvio morreu de infarto. O pai da Celeste foi atropelado em Copacabana. O pai do Joca se jogou da ponte. O pai do Milton morreu de velhice. O pai da Maria morreu de susto – um assalto na Avenida Brasil. O pai do Guilherme foi uma bala perdida no Andaraí. O pai da Glória morreu esmagado por um caminhão na obra de um shopping. O pai do Soares morreu num acidente de carro na Dutra. O pai da Lenice morreu esfaqueado num bar em Campo Grande. O meu pai foi comprar cigarro e voltou.



## A PORTA FECHADA

ALÊ MOTTA

Eu e meus muitos primos costumávamos passar todas as férias na casa da nossa avó. Ela morava numa cidade muito pequena. A casa começava numa varanda comprida e terminava num quintal bagunçado.

Brincávamos o tempo todo. Por todo lado. Mas nunca conseguimos descobrir o que acontecia no fundo do quintal. Na casinha de pedra com a porta fechada.

Sai daí, menino.

Eu perguntava. Ninguém dizia nada. Meus primos perguntavam. Ninguém dizia nada. Tentamos abrir e nunca conseguimos.

Voltava das férias e esquecia da porta. Voltava nas férias e só pensava na porta. O mistério da minha infância.

Cresci. Acabaram as férias com meus primos. Estudei. Casei. Tive filhos. Separei. Um bom emprego. Minha avó morreu. Fiquei com a tarefa de vender a propriedade e dividir o valor com os netos. Fui para a cidadezinha. Caminhei até sua casa. Angustiado. Ansioso.

Atravessei a varanda comprida, o meio da casa e cheguei sem fôlego ao quintal. A casa de pedra. A porta fechada. Encostei a mão na maçaneta. Sem resistência a porta abriu. Arrepiei corpo inteiro. Dei um passo para dentro da casinha. Tudo ficou embaçado. Uma dor que vinha sei lá de onde invadiu meus braços, pernas, costas. Encurvei até o chão.

Se eu estivesse vivo ouviria o burburinho dos meus primos no meu enterro. Todos animados com o mistério desvendado.





## ORPHANS

ALÊ MOTTA

TRANSLATED BY NARA VIDAL

Valério's dad died of cancer. Silvio's dad died of a heart attack. Celeste's dad was run over in Copacabana. Joca's dad threw himself off a bridge. Milton's dad died of old age. Maria's dad out of shock – mugged at Avenida Brasil. Guilherme's dad of a stray bullet in Andaraí. Gloria's dad was crushed to death by a truck at a shopping centre building site. Soares' dad died in a car crash at Dutra motorway. Lenice's dad was stabbed at a bar in Campo Grande. My dad went out to buy cigarettes and came back.



## THE CLOSED DOOR

ALÊ MOTTA

TRANSLATED BY GABRIELA RUIVO TRINDADE

Me and all my cousins used to spend every holiday at our grandmother's. She lived in a very small town. The house started with a long porch and finished with a messy backyard.

We played all the time. In every corner of the place. Everywhere. But we never managed to find out what went on at the bottom of the backyard. Inside the little stone house with the closed door.

“Get away from there, kid.”

I kept asking. No one said a thing. My cousins kept asking. No one said a thing.

We tried to get in and never managed to.

When I got back from holiday I would forget about the door. I went back on holiday and could only think of the door. The mystery of my childhood.

I grew up. There were no more holidays with my cousins. I graduated. Got married. Had kids. Separated. A good job. My grandmother died. I was left with the task of selling the house and split the money between her grandchildren. I went back to her town. Walked up to her house. Unsettled. Unease.

I walked across the long porch, through the house and was out of breath when I got to the backyard. The stone house. The closed door. I touched the doorknob. The door opened easily. My whole body shivered. I got into the little house. Everything got blurry. A pain that came from God knows where spread through my arms, legs, back. I slumped to the ground.

If I'd been alive, I would have heard the murmur from my cousins at my funeral. All excited about the unveiled mystery.



## OS DESAFIOS DA FORMA BREVE

GABRIELA RUIVO TRINDADE E NARA VIDAL

A proposta de tradução do trabalho de Alê Motta se difere, moderadamente, das demais propostas de tradução inseridas nesta antologia. Alê Motta vem se destacando na literatura brasileira contemporânea através da escrita de microcontos (*flash fiction*). Por conta exatamente da extensão das narrativas da autora, propomos a tradução de dois dos seus textos. É importante frisar que não há absolutamente qualquer facilidade na tradução devido à medida e ao formato dos microcontos. Pelo contrário; apresentam enorme desafio de síntese e significado.

As notas abaixo são de autoria de Gabriela Ruivo Trindade e Nara Vidal, respectivamente. Trindade e Vidal traduziram, colaborativamente, os dois microcontos e o processo de cada uma delas está descrito em seus comentários.

### ***Por Gabriela Ruivo Trindade***

A tradução é uma arte delicada e minuciosa. Quando o autor escreve um texto literário, este desenvolve-se consoante um estilo próprio e um ritmo que o mesmo não controla de forma totalmente consciente. E ainda que o texto seja alvo de uma revisão apurada, como sempre é, a criação comporta uma parcela de espontaneidade na sua origem mais profunda. Ora o tradutor, também sendo um criador, é, acima de tudo, um intérprete. Ele não se pode deixar levar pelo seu próprio estilo literário, tendo de se adaptar ao ritmo e às características da prosa que tem em mãos. Daí o seu trabalho exigir muito mais minúcia e perfeição. A boa tradução não é aquela que se cola ao significado literário das palavras, mas a que tem em conta a ambiência e a respiração do texto. Traduzir é reinventar a prosa noutra língua, encontrar equivalentes de expressões e anedotas noutra universo.

Os textos de Alê Motta, que traduzi em conjunto com Nara Vidal, representaram, desta forma, um desafio imenso. A prosa da autora é constituída por frases curtas, muito simples. Porém, isso não diminui em nada o desafio. Traduzir frases simples pode tornar-se ainda mais complexo do que traduzir um texto mais elaborado. A simplicidade obriga a uma atenção e precisão na escolha das palavras, do tom, dos pequenos detalhes que emprestam ao texto uma musicalidade única. A complexidade reside, precisamente, na meticulosidade exigida pela tarefa. Dissecar as frases, as palavras, os seus significados, sem perder de vista o conjunto, é um trabalho exigente e muito enriquecedor. O tradutor é alguém em constante formação; acredito que cada texto seja uma oportunidade única de aprendizagem e aperfeiçoamento.



Outro aspecto fascinante na tradução contempla o altruísmo inerente à tarefa. Os escritores estão permanentemente imersos no seu ego durante a criação; são as suas experiências pessoais, as vivências, os afetos, conscientes e inconscientes, as muitas nuances do seu universo simbólico que dialogam durante o processo de criação. Podemos assim considerar que o escritor cria a partir de si, centrado em si, sendo a criação literária uma atividade egocêntrica por natureza. O tradutor, pelo contrário, tem forçosamente de se moldar ao estilo do autor; o bom tradutor será aquele que se anula, para que seja a voz do autor, o seu estilo, a sobressair na prosa. Ora, isto é precisamente o contrário do egocentrismo. Esta anulação do próprio ego representa, talvez, o desafio predominante na tradução, a proeza mais difícil de atingir.

### ***Por Nara Vidal***

É de Jorge Luís Borges a célebre citação que um texto original é infiel à tradução. Essa provocação que eu menciono livremente, de um dos mais celebrados escritores argentinos, expõe um dos maiores desafios no árduo, e sempre incompleto por natureza, trabalho de traduzir ficção.

A contaminação linguística e cultural do tradutor trará, incontestavelmente, marcas próprias para qualquer tentativa de conclusão de versão de um texto ficcional. Incompletude e tentativa são palavras e conceitos que se mesclam à interseção da definição de tradução literária. Ainda Borges, é ele que nos diz sobre o seu contentamento ao ler traduções e críticas dos seus trabalhos para que, finalmente, entendesse o que ele, como autor, quis dizer. A obsessão do leitor em encontrar um sentido conclusivo para qualquer ficção – um exercício pobre e reducionista – deve ser um exercício menos recorrente no ato de traduzir literatura. O tradutor competente e bom é aquele que não necessariamente busca interpretações – ainda que o processo da leitura automaticamente o insira nesse hábito – mas formas de escrita numa língua que abrace todas ou quase todas as possibilidades reticentes de determinada obra. É um grave erro quando uma tradução se apodera da tentativa, inevitavelmente frustrada, de concluir um texto original em sua versão idiomática alternativa. Além de subestimar a obra e o leitor, registra a falha fundamental do entendimento da prática da tradução e seus desdobramentos como alternativas de um texto original.

Goethe escreveu sobre o conceito de *Weltliteratur* que o escritor precisa traduzir o outro para conhecer a si mesmo e transpor fronteiras linguísticas, evitando assim a limitação da literatura de cada país como obsoleta, conforme explica o ensaio da Professora e Doutora em Literatura pela UFMG, Eliane Fernanda Cunha, que desenvolve o conceito do autor alemão através da figura do tradutor como ator principal e não mero interlocutor ou mensageiro. Precisamente nessa proposta de conceito está a dificuldade da tradução para quem também escreve ficção. O tradutor literário, possivelmente, deve tomar para si a



responsabilidade e a autonomia de um novo texto feito a partir de um original que, por ser ficcional, traz uma porosidade, reticência e hesitação pela natureza como Arte. Além dessa camada de quase coautoria, a tradução de microcontos torna-se ainda mais complexa. A proposta estética de Alê Motta sugere exatamente essa dificuldade na tradução literária de tentar traduzir o impacto, a conclusão, a saciedade. Em seu ensaio sobre a tensa colaboração entre Virginia Woolf e Kotelianskii na proposta de traduzir literatura e ensaios do russo para o inglês, Rebecca Beasley aborda a necessidade da precisão oferecida por Kotelianskii entrelaçada à adaptação cultural inglesa sugerida por Woolf que sinalizou o labirinto habitado por investidas de traduções literárias em relação à poesia, por exemplo. Woolf sugere o absurdo e a impossibilidade na experiência de tradução de versos. Essa busca desamparada pelo que se move constantemente – a palavra correta – dá aos tradutores uma alternativa aproximada que abraça língua e cultura, dois elementos em frequente transformação. O exercício de traduzir os contos de Alê Motta ilustra essa busca satisfeita precisamente pela incapacidade de conclusão definitiva, mas que apresenta a possibilidade de exercícios de reescrita de um original alimentado pela concisão, pela brevidade e pelo embate, tanto das palavras, quanto da estrutura, da proposta estética e do gênero.

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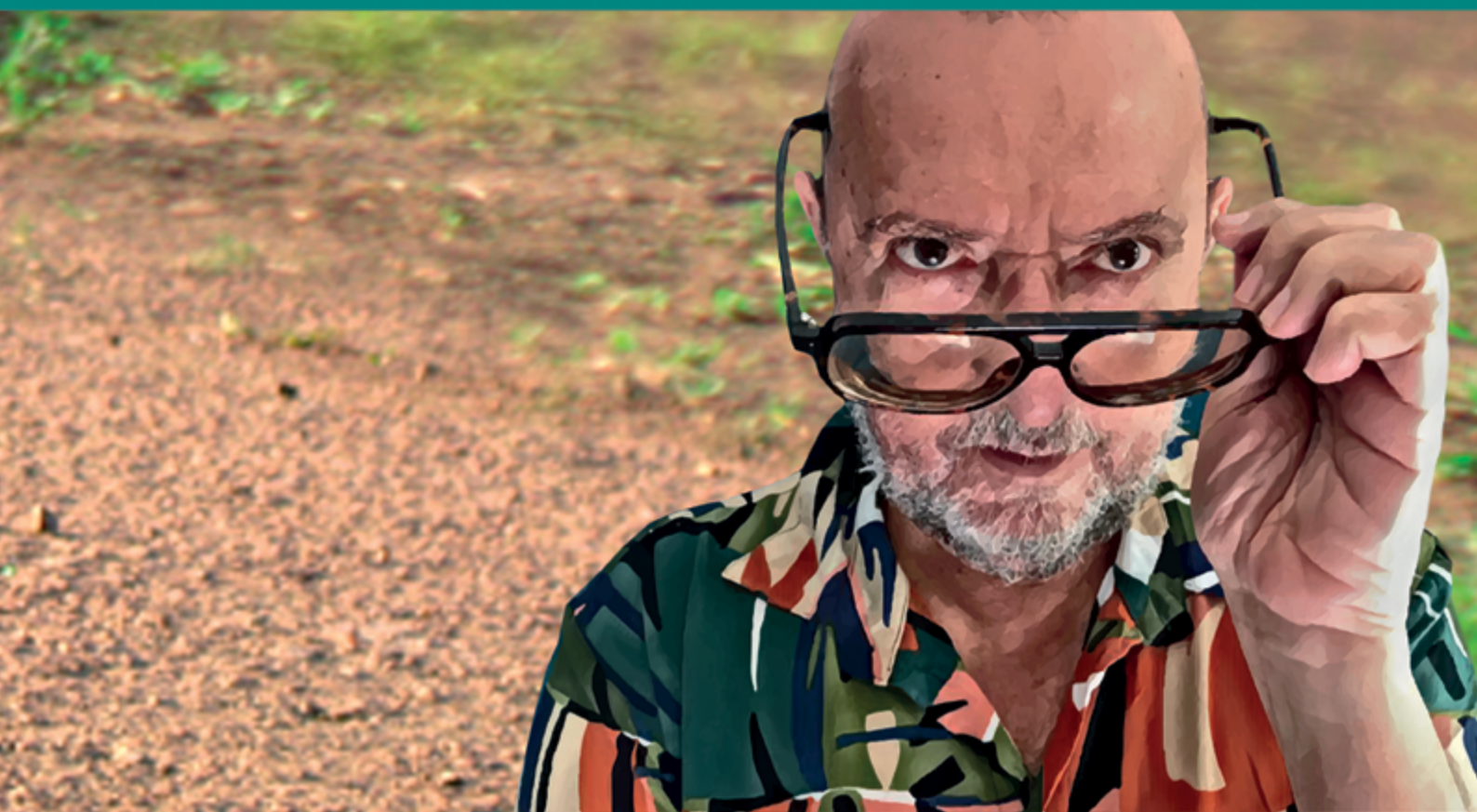
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**CHRISTINA BAUM** TRANSLATES **XICO SÁ**





## O STRIPEASE MORAL DA PELADA

XICO SÁ

*É na brincadeira aparentemente inocente da bola  
que os homens revelam moral e caráter.*

Um homem só conhece outro homem depois que joga uma pelada, um baba, um racha – cada região do país tem um batismo –, depois que bate uma bola com o semelhante. A pelada é o único e possível *striptease* moral do macho.

É nessa hora que a gente sabe e manja sobre as coincidências e as dessemelhanças de estar vivo e pastando na mesma burrice da existência. Não importa a barriga nem o fôlego, jogue nem que seja por cinco minutos com os seus párias nestas férias.

De preferência com família ou amigos. Falo de tirar faísca da canela do cunhado do qual você ouvira coisas – andou maltratando tua irmã querida por besteira ou por orgulho. A pelada é o faroeste sem morte, mas com sinceras mensagens de honra. Os mesmos torpedos da várzea, onde é permitido humilhar no dribble ou na canelada. Futebol é recado, dramaturgia, quem quiser que acredite na mentira tática, esse vício, esse crack mortal dos novos comentaristas.

Agora mesmo estava em Juazeiro do Norte, onde mora *mi madre*, e, pasme, nas resenhas só havia uma discussão sobre o Guarani e o Icasa, os dois times da cidade: 4-4-2 ou 3-5-2, como atuarão no próximo certame? Eis o fetiche. Falou qualquer troço de estatística vira um ilusionista, seja na *Champions League* seja no meu amado inferno semiárido. Ah, um homem só conhece outro homem depois que joga uma pelada contra ou na sua fileira. Por sorte, no primeiro embate deste veraneio, contei com o francês Jean-Pierre Duret no meu time. Um goleiro-líbero capaz de todos os milagres de Cícero, de Fátima e do menino Jesus de Praga juntos. Nunca imaginei que este grande cabra do cinema europeu pudesse me deixar tão à vontade para atuar de beque-sentado no crepúsculo do Eudorão, arena suspensa nos alpes do Caldas, Barbalha, um Cariri a 18º, como não me deixa mentir o escriba Joca R. Terron, fora daquele jogo por caprichos do destino ludopédico. Quando pensar em grandes goleiros da história, listarei Yashin, Gordon Banks, Dino Zoff, Rodolfo Rodriguez, Fillol, Taffarel, Neur, Hugo Lloris (Santos) e... Jean-Pierre.

Era só uma pelada, mas quem há de negar que foram as mais lindas defesas que vi no retrovisor de um zagueiro que mira as próprias desgraças?





## THE MORAL STRIPEASE OF THE KICKABOUT

XICO SÁ

TRANSLATED BY CHRISTINA BAUM

*It's through an apparently innocent ball game  
that men reveal their true character and moral fibre.*

A man can only get to know another after having a kickabout, a *baba*, a *racha* (each region has its own expression), after kicking a ball with his mates. The kickabout is the only kind of moral striptease available to males.

That's when you know and grasp the coincidences and dissimilarities of being alive and grazing on the same dumb pastures of existence. No matter the size of your belly or your lack of breath, play with your buddies on your next holiday, even if it's just for five minutes.

Preferably with family and friends. I'm talking about kicking your brother-in-law's shin hard because you've been hearing things about him; that he's been mistreating your darling sister for no big reason or just pride. The kickabout is a Western without fatalities, but with sincere messages of honour, like the blistering shots on the pitch, where you can humiliate by dribbling or thwacking a shin. To anyone who wants to believe in tactic lies, football is drama, it's a message, an addiction, the deadly crack of the new breed of commentators.

I've just got back from Juazeiro do Norte, where mi madre lives, and, guess what, they only talked about Guarani and Icasa, the two local teams: 4-4-2 or 3-5-2, what position they will play in the next match. That's their fetish. Whatever stuff they say about statistics becomes magic, whether in the Champions League or my beloved semi-arid hell. Ah, a man can only get to know another after a kickabout with his opponents or his team. Luckily, in the first summer match, I had the Frenchman Jean Pierre Duret on my side. A sweeper-keeper who is capable of all the miracles of Father Cícero, Fatima and the Infant Jesus of Prague rolled into one. I never thought that this great lion of the European cinema could make me feel so at ease while playing as a flat-footed defender at dusk in Eudorão, a stadium high up in the "Brazilian Alps" of Caldas, Barbalha, a micro-climate at 18° C, as the scribbler Joca R. Terron – off the field due to misadventures of a footballing nature – will corroborate. When I think of the greatest goalkeepers in history, I will list Yashin, Gordon Banks, Dino Zoff, Rodolfo Rodriguez, Fillol, Taffarel, Neur, Hugo Llores (Santos) and... Jean Pierre.

It was only a kickabout, but who can deny that these weren't the most beautiful saves that I witnessed in the rear-view mirror of a defender that can only see his own misfortunes?



## ON TRANSLATING XICO SÁ

CHRISTINA BAUM

Football is not usually associated with women. Therefore, I was delighted to be given the opportunity to translate Xico Sá's "O striptease moral da pelada".

"The Moral Striptease of the Kickabout" is clever and funny, but it is also challenging to translate. The first hurdle I stumbled upon was the title: "O striptease moral da pelada". "Striptease" is an English word and, therefore, requires no translation, whereas "pelada" is a wordplay with semantic double meaning in Portuguese: "naked" and "kickabout". Unfortunately, as hard as I tried, I couldn't find a title as good as its Portuguese original. As Umberto Eco says in *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation*, we, translators, have to accept losses when "adapting a translation to the receiving culture." We are sometimes "obliged to work at a loss" (ECO, 2004, p.34).

Xico Sá also uses the words *baba* and *racha*, which (not being a football fan) I had never heard before. It was hard enough to find an English word for *pelada*, and now I had to search for two more synonyms. The solution to leave them in Portuguese, in italics, came from the brilliant translator Victor Meadowcroft. The final version of this translation is the result of a collaborative work of professional translators and UCL students, conducted during the Brazilian Translation Club workshops.

Victor also helped me with the register; mine was slightly more formal than the original. The sentence that starts with "É nessa hora que a gente sabe", for instance, I had initially translated as "Only then can you acknowledge" and, thanks to Victor, I changed to "That's when you know". Inversions are very formal structures and have no room in Sá's colloquial language.

Sá is originally from the Northeast of Brazil and his text is laden with regional references, such as "cabra", "Cícero", "Juazeiro do Norte", "Guarani", "Icasa", "Caldas", "Barbalha" and "Cariri".

The word "cabra" ("cabra da peste" or "cabra-macho"), for instance, is a typical North-eastern expression referring to an individual that is admired or respected for his bravery. But it also means "goat".<sup>1</sup> Again, Victor came to my rescue with the *mot juste* "lion". So, "Este grande **cabra** do cinema europeu" became "this great **lion** of the European cinema."



“Cícero” refers to Father Cícero – a Catholic priest who became a spiritual leader to the people of north-east Brazil. Like Xico Sá, he was also born in Crato, in the State of Ceará.

Regarding the “alpes do Caldas, Barbalha, um Cariri a 18°C”, at first I wasn’t sure what the author meant. After googling it, I discovered that Caldas is a Spa in Barbalha, situated 400m above sea level with an annual annual temperature of 25°C, and located in the region of Cariri. By using the word “alpes” (English: Alps), Sá wanted to convey that Caldas is a micro-climate which contrasts with the *sertão*, the typical semi-arid region in north-east Brazil.

In the final lines of the text, Sá talks about “ludopédico”, which is the adjective for the noun *ludopédio*, the old-fashion Portuguese word for “football”. This time I knew what he meant. As my grandfather used to say, “Quando o céu se desmanchar em bategas, calçarei minhas anidropodotecas, chamarei o sinesíforo, irei ao convescote e, depois, jogarei uma partida de ludopédio [If it’s pouring with rain, I’ll put on my galoshes, call my chauffeur, attend a picnic, and then, I’ll play football].

It’s been fun taking part in this translation kickabout, and I can’t thank enough Dr Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva (UCL) and Nara Vidal (Capitolina Books) for inviting me.

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**ALINE LITTLEJOHN** TRANSLATES **RONALDO CAGIANO**







## SOMBRAS SOBRE O RIO

RONALDO CAGIANO

*Este é o teu rio, a tua casa, o teu equívoco,  
a tua morte, o que te esquecerá.*  
Luis Quintas

Agora eu sei que aquilo se chamava partida: as silhuetas que eu via nas águas do rio Pomba quando cruzei a Ponte Velha levando meu irmão à última morada.

Era uma caminhada sem sentido, o rosto grave das pessoas, o silêncio dizendo tudo, a solenidade nos gestos e olhares, e a gente, todos saturados de inconformidade, realizando um trajeto que nunca escolheu.

Eu não me esqueço como badalava em mim o poema de João Cabral: “este rio/ está na memória/ como um cão vivo/ dentro de uma sala”. Uma sentença que me lembraria para sempre o dia mais longo de nossas vidas, que se confundiam com a que ali seguia, inerte, diante da inexorabilidade da indesejada das gentes. As Parcas, mais uma vez, sócias fiéis de Chronus, deram as cartas e de forma alguma eu conseguia entender de que barro somos feitos.

Quanto de mim seguia junto com aquele féretro.

A sensação de desconforto íntimo começou quando o caçula foi me buscar ao sopé do Morro do João Peixe e eu tive que interromper o jogo da amarelinha e descer correndo os paralelepípedos da Granjaria, em meio à fita de cetim da sapatilha que, desamarrada, bailarina ao vento, num balé confuso, tão perdida como eu no burburinho de pensamentos sinistros e difusos que me acompanhariam até em casa, onde cheguei sem saber ao certo por que mãe me chamava naquela hora.

E tudo se acentuou e ficou mais claro, quando a alguns metros da varanda eu a vi de costas encoberta pelo caótico desespero de uma fala entrecortada de gritos, inútil tentativa de entender porque alguém saiu para não mais voltar.

O luto expresso em cada rosto, dos meus e dos que traziam a parcela mínima, mas inesquecível, do adeus, fazia a coorte daquele momento em que um destino foi cortado ao meio, mas a faca incisiva habitava a nossa carne e antecipada um crepúsculo sem fim.



O leito lá embaixo, nossa atenção imersa nas linhas tênues dos corpos cravando silhuetas na serpente líquida, que seguia seu destino imune à falta de sentido na vida e no seu fim, reflexos da transitoriedade de tudo. Passava apressado esse rio outro, como o ser que era conduzido, tão cedo fatigado de uma existência e seus anseios de fabulosa extensão.

E com constrangimento e dor, os que ficaram não entendiam ainda o sorriso interrompido, a felicidade interdita por um acidente. A ilha dentro de nós bloqueando os sonhos, a colher travada na boca, um filho que nunca soube além de um horizonte partido, porque engatinhava no absoluto da existência, buscando no entretempo de suas convicções todos os tempos de uma vida. “Uma vida que poderia ter sido e não foi”, como me confidenciou o poeta sobre as lições dos aeroportos, das estações de trem, dos terminais que decretam despedidas, a lógica de não ser visto, de ser o silêncio, o nada e a invisibilidade após a curva, tão compulsórios e injustos, porque maior equívoco não há que drenar um sonho mancebo na pista criminosa de uma via desconhecida, onde somos clandestinos num destino qualquer ou sem destino nenhum.

Ali eu morri todas as mortes, e tantas vezes multiplicada a certeza de sua intangibilidade naquele séquito entre a capela e a necrópole. Mas os espectros que se escalonavam na água informavam de um entardecer maior em nossas histórias, véspera de uma noite que não saberíamos medir, mas que abrigaria suas traições antes mesmo de o galo cantar.

Aquelas sombras ainda estão me olhando e decretando um afogar nas águas do esquecimento, onde navegam equívocos de mãos dadas com Caronte, esse Lete redivivo, essas sombras ainda me olham com a mesma contemplação de meu irmão quando semeou seus versos num saco de padaria, antevendo que o fermento hierático de sua doida esperança não seria renovado a cada dia, como um alimento para os que ficaram, porque seu tempo não admitia disfarces, o café quedaria frio na xícara numa mesa qualquer da casa, o cão Getúlio e seu olhar sem festa para a bicicleta muda ao canto, os jornais empilhados à espera da entrega, o pé de amora esquecido pela menina que fazia dele sua torre de marfim, a desonra do espanto na face de tantos que regressariam depois de solenizar o corpo à terra, amalgamada com o húmus de lágrimas conhecidas ou de prantos espontâneos, as pernas pânicas de minha mãe procurando apoio, a primeira derrota em nossa abundante história familiar, enquanto meu pai despachava seu olhar para um mundo distante, tentando compreender o deserto irreconhecível que habita todas as perdas.

Ele não precisava ir embora, muito menos naquele domingo de sol pálido, esconsos mistérios e notícias tristes. O céu podia esperar, porque havia outras urgências a corrigir.





Aquelas sombras ainda vigoram em mim. Sobram-me como fantasmas alados. E se me povoa a tragédia do mano que se foi há tanto tempo naquela tarde de um mês esgarçado em Cataguases, todos nós, feito árvores no outono, despovoadas e esqueléticas, pulsa-me na lembrança um outro dia, quanto escrutinava a beleza poética da morte com um amigo. Foi num agosto que os anos já varreram. À beira do Paranoá, Juliano, que também perdeu um irmão (vitimado pela tristeza das células linfáticas que penetraram a corrente sanguínea e o matou em dias), por não querer testemunhar o seu sepultamento, optando por guardar a última lembrança de Marcelo ao invés de entregá-lo ao Campo da Esperança (preferindo a curva da estrada, onde tudo desaparece sem deixar vestígio), confessou-me: “A vida é um bom lugar para morrer, meu caro. Um dia disse isso à minha namorada, nesse mesmo lugar, entre as ruínas e esqueletos desse hotel que afugenta nossos olhares na outra margem desse lago. Eu-ela, embasbacados pelo róseo pardacento de uma tarde que se de(s)compunha sobre o altiplano de Brasília, sentados numa pedreira e mirando um horizonte em febre, ocorreu-me que ali também era um bom lugar para morrer. Se eu fosse sozinho àquele lugar e me jogasse despenhadeiro abaixo, jamais alguém daria conto do meu corpo, a morte ideal e que a mim ocorreria muito bem.”

Essa sombra agora é maior dentro de mim. Agora eu sei que se chama saudade. E foi escrita com a caligrafia torta de Deus.



## SHADOWS OF THE RIVER

RONALDO CAGIANO

TRANSLATED BY ALINE LITTLEJOHN

*This is your river, your home, your mistake,  
your death, that which will forget you..*

Luis Quintas

Now I know that was called parting: the silhouettes that I could see on the waters of the River Pomba as I crossed the Old Bridge taking my brother to his final resting place.

It was a walk that made no sense, the grave faces of the people, a silence that spoke volumes, the solemn gestures and glances, and all of us, saturated with disbelief, making our way on a path we had never chosen.

I have not forgotten how João Cabral's poem resonated within me: "this river/ lies in the memory/ like a living dog/ inside a room". A sentence that would forever remind me of the longest day of our lives, which were intertwined with the life departing then, defenceless against the inexorability of the Unwelcome One. The Parcae, faithful partners of Chronus, had dealt the cards once more, and I could not in any way understand of what dust we are made.

So much of me travelled along with that casket.

The feeling of deepest unease began when my youngest brother came to get me at the bottom of João Peixe Hill and I had to interrupt the game of hopscotch and run down the cobbled paths of Granjaria, the loose satin ties of my pumps pirouetting in the wind, in a bewildering dance, as lost as I was in the murmurings of sinister and diffuse thoughts that would follow me all the way home, where I arrived not knowing for sure why mother had called for me at that time.

And everything was intensified and made clearer, when a few metres from the porch, I saw her from the back, enveloped in the chaotic desperation of talk broken by screams, a vain attempt to comprehend why someone went out to never come back.

The look of grief on each of my kin's faces and of those who carried some small, but unforgettable, share of the loss marked the cohort at that moment when a destiny was cut in half, but the cutting blade would inhabit our flesh foretelling an endless twilight in our lives.



The river flowed down below, our attention absorbed by the tenuous shapes of bodies piercing silhouettes on the liquid serpent, that followed its course untouched by the pointlessness of life or its end, reflections of the transitory nature of everything. This other river rushed on by, like the being we accompanied, so prematurely drained of life and his wonderfully expansive dreams.

And in pain and discomfort, those who remained couldn't yet take in the interrupted smile, the happiness halted by an accident. The island within us obstructing our dreams, the spoon stuck in the mouth, a son who never saw past a broken horizon, for he was taking his first steps in the absolutes of existence, searching within the tides of his convictions, for all the times of a life. "A life that could have been but was not" as the poet had revealed about the lessons of the airports, the train stations, the terminals that herald farewells, about the sense in not being seen, in being silence, nothingness and the blind spot after the bend, all so inescapable and so unfair, because there is no greater mistake than draining a youthful dream on the deadly lane of an unknown road, where we are clandestine passengers with an uncertain destiny or no destiny at all.

On that day I died every death, and the certainty of its intangibility multiplied endlessly during the cortège between the chapel and the necropolis. But the spectres that echeloned on the water told of a prolonged dusk in our stories, prelude to a night that knew no time, but that would harbour betrayals even before dawn broke.

Those shadows are still looking at me, prescribing a descent into the waters of forgetfulness where mistaken souls are ferried holding hands with Charon, this reviving Lethe, these shadows still look at me in contemplation, like my brother when he sowed the verses of his poetry in a grocery bag, foreseeing that the hieratic seeds of his mad hope would not be watered each day, to sustain those who remained, for his time did not allow for pretence, the coffee would remain cold in the cup on a table somewhere in the house, the dog, Getúlio, would gaze dolefully at the silent bicycle in the corner, the pile of newspapers waiting to be delivered, the blackberry bush forgotten by the girl who used to make it her ivory tower, the dishonour of the shock on the faces of so many of those who would return after consigning the body to the earth amalgamated with the humus of familiar tears or of spontaneous weeping, my mother's panic-stricken legs searching for support, the first defeat in our abundant family history, as my father projected his gaze towards a distant world, trying to fathom the irrevocable desert that inhabits all losses.

He did not have to go away, much less so on that Sunday of pale sunlight, cryptic mysteries and sad news. The heavens could have waited because there were more urgent wrongs to right.



Those shadows still prevail within me. They linger over me like surplus winged ghosts. And even though the tragedy of losing a brother so long ago on that afternoon of a lacerated month in Cataguases still colonizes me, and us all, like denuded, skeletal autumn trees, I recall the vibrant memory of another day, when I scrutinized the poetic beauty of death with a friend. It was on an August day long since swept away with the years. At the margins of the Paranoá lake, Juliano, who had also lost a brother (assailed by the grimness of lymphatic cells that entered the blood stream and killed him in days), and who, not wishing to witness the burial, had opted instead to preserve his last memory of Marcelo rather than delivering him to the Field of Hope (preferring the bend in the road, where everything disappears leaving no traces), confessed to me: “Life is a good place to die, my friend. One day I said this to my girlfriend, at this very spot, between the ruins and skeletons of this hotel that chases away our glances from the other margin of this lake. As she-and-I, struck dumb before the dusky rose of a de(dis)composing afternoon on the plains of Brasília, sat on the edge of a quarry gazing at the feverish horizon, it occurred to me that there, too, would be a good place to die. If I went to that place on my own and threw myself off the cliff edge, no one would ever know what had happened to my body, an ideal death and one that would suit me very well”.

This shadow is now bigger inside me. Now I know its name is longing. And it has been written in the crooked calligraphy of God.



## TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTARY

ALINE LITTLEJOHN

Ronaldo Cagiano's "Sombras sobre o rio" is a beautifully written and moving account of a tragic event, the death of a brother during the narrator's childhood. The narrative is structured as a recollection and as such is permeated with the protagonist's adult reflections on the day as events unfolded.

On an initial reading of the text, I was struck by its complexity and by the lyrical nature of the writing, the expressive turns of phrase, at times more akin to poetry than prose. Unsurprisingly, I discovered Cagiano is also a poet and the beauty of his text presented real challenges for translation. Throughout the process there was a constant pull between the desire to remain faithful to the imagery created by the author and to attempt to deliver it in English passages of similar poetic grace, whilst ensuring they were idiomatic and true to the language. An example of this internal dialogue was the passage "em meio à fita de cetim da sapatilha que, desamarrada, bailarinava ao vento, num balé confuso," (paragraph 5) where Cagiano exquisitely depicts the movement of the laces in the wind by inventing a verb "bailarinar". I considered creating an equivalent in the Target Language (TL) but could not find a satisfactory version. Another option would have been to use the verb "dance", "the loose satin ties dancing in the wind". This had an idiomatic appeal, however "bailarinava" is a much more special way of describing the movement than "dancing" (after all the author could have used "dançar" but chose not to) and so "dancing in the wind", whilst accurate, seemed to lose something of the unusual beauty of the image in the Source Language (SL). The reference to ballet in the line led me to consider ballet terms, and I settled on "pirouetting in the wind" which I felt had the dynamism of the SL and conveyed the sense of the ribbons twirling in the wind. Having already referenced ballet with the word "pirouetting", I went with "bewildering dance" for "balé confuso"; "bewildering" seeming a more apt alternative to "confused" to reflect the child's puzzlement at being unexpectedly called back. The resulting passage, "the loose satin ties of my pumps pirouetting in the wind, in a bewildering dance", hopefully captures the essence of the Source Text (ST) with a similarly evocative use of language in the Translated Text (TT). Numerous other instances could be cited – another particularly tricky passage, for example, was "buscando no entretempo de suas convicções todos os tempos de uma vida" (paragraph 9). "Entretempo" can be interpreted/translated in many different ways, a pause, an interval, a break, a period of time, interim. In all cases, "entretempo de suas convicções" suggested to me an underlying tension, an idea of inner conflict. The image of the push and pull of "tides" seemed appropriate here and linked well into the concept of time, strongly present in both "entretempo" and "tempos".



Poetry pervades the prose not just in the writing style but also through explicit and implicit references to other works. This raised two considerations as regards the translation: a need to research the poems themselves in order to correctly translate the quotes, and to explore intertextuality, investigating possible additional layers of meaning that might impact the translation of Cagiano's text. In paragraph 3, Cagiano quotes from "O Cão Sem Plumas" a well-known poem by João Cabral de Melo Neto. Having studied the poem and arrived at my own translation for the quote, I found it interesting to compare alternative translations by Richard Zenith and Thomas Colchie, particularly the line "está na memória" which I translated as "lies in the memory", Colchie as "is in the memory" and Zenith as "exists in memory". I liked Zenith's approach, particularly the lack of the article before the word "memory", but in the end decided to use my own version, as I wanted to convey the physicality of both the river and the dog, which seemed pertinent to both Cagiano's text as well as Cabral's poem. In paragraph 9, Cagiano includes a quote "Uma vida que poderia ter sido e não foi" ascribing it to an unnamed poet; perhaps because he is in fact paraphrasing Manuel Bandeira's "Pneumotórax" (the correct line would be "a vida inteira que podia ter sido e que não foi"), adapting it to better fit within the context of the story. Not a particularly tricky quote to translate but looking at other translations, I was reminded to avoid the contraction at the end, using "and was not" rather than "and wasn't", which does not work well either in the poem or with the erudite tone of the ST. Later in the same paragraph, the section "a lógica de não ser visto, de ser o silêncio, o nada e a invisibilidade após a curva" implicitly alludes to Fernando Pessoa's poem "A Morte é a Curva da Estrada": "A morte é a curva da estrada/Morrer é só não ser visto" (Death is the bend in the road/ Dying is just not being seen) and a reading of the poem was helpful in shaping meaning for the translation.

In addition to the intertextual references, the epigraph, a quote from Luis Quintais's poem "Panorama", appears at the start before the main body of text, perhaps in order to set the tone, to prepare the reader for what is to come; it also establishes the image of the river as a tangible presence. Significantly, it introduces the word "equivoco" which reappears twice in the text:

1. Epigraph: "Este é o teu rio, a tua casa, o teu equivoco, a tua morte, o que te esquecerá"
2. Paragraph 9: "porque maior equivoco não há que drenar um sonho mancebo"
3. Paragraph 11: "onde navegam equivocos de mãos dadas com Carontes"





The word has many possible interpretations, and since the author chose to repeat it in the text, an ideal solution for the TT would be a word or word combination that worked for all occurrences. I considered “misfortune” (for 1 and 2) and “misfortunate souls” (for 3) as that seemed to work well in the quote. However, when used within the text, the word “equivoco” carries a certain implied criticism which is not present in “misfortune”. I considered instead “error”/“erring souls” and “mistake”/“mistaken souls”; the latter reads better in the quote and carries a more personal load in 2, so it seemed the better option in the end.

A further consideration as regards the quoted passages was whether to footnote them, providing the name of the poems and poets. Although the author has not done so, one needs to consider if the average native reader would have prior knowledge of the poems and if this would be relevant to an understanding of the passage. Having lived abroad many years, I needed to research this and whilst *Bandeira's* and *Pessoa's* poems are well known, they are not part of the common vernacular. Therefore, footnoting did not seem essential and potentially offered a distraction from the flow of the text, which seemed more of a hindrance than a help.

The text is not an easy read and initially I found myself “explaining” the ST by selecting words in common usage in the TL. However, on reflection it struck me that this was a purposeful approach on the author’s part. The sophisticated vocabulary and intricate sentence structures and imagery, as well as the references to Greek mythology, suggest that a modicum of erudition is expected from the reader. I felt it was therefore important to respect the author’s elegant style and intentions and tried as far as possible to reflect this in the TT, opting for less usual word choices, such as “casket” for “féretro” (as opposed to the more common “coffin”) and “cortège” for “séquito” (rather than “procession”). I also considered adding footnotes to the references to Greek mythology but since the average native reader would not be familiar with this, the lack of such information in the ST seemed to dictate the same approach for the TT.

A significant area of doubt was around the issue of punctuation, as very long sentences, broken only by commas, abound in the text. This is by no means an unheard of literary device in English (*James Joyce's Ulysses* comes to mind), but it is not the norm and I considered playing with the structure and breaking some of the longer passages into smaller sentences to make for a more comfortable read, particularly in the single-sentence paragraph 11 “*Aquelas sombras ainda . . . que habita todas as perdas.*” However, *Cagiano's* approach personally struck me as a stream of consciousness outpouring of thoughts and impressions that felt very deliberate, integral to the flow of the prose and key to the text’s elegiac quality. I decided to largely keep the same punctuation in the TT - the long sentences are complex but no more so than they are in the SL.



Translating “Sombras sobre o rio” was an immensely stimulating and deeply enriching undertaking, both as a reader and as a translator. Every sentence posed a challenge and each time I revisit the text I find myself considering alternatives and making changes. It’s a creative process and perhaps will never truly be “finished”! As a colleague mentioned in the group discussion session on this text, “every translation is a reading, a personal interpretation of a text” and I hope my interpretation has gone some way to capturing the lyrical intensity of Cagiano’s prose.

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**ANDY MCDUGALL** TRANSLATES **CLODIE VASLI**





# A MÃO QUE NOS ABENÇO

CLODIE VASLI

*Ao meu pai*

Um dia o jovem recebe de sua esposa a novidade: ele vai ser pai. Já começa a se preparar, a imaginar e a planejar o que irá ensinar ao seu amado filho. Com sua mulher, pensa em possíveis nomes. O rapaz é pai desde o momento em que recebe a boa notícia. O pai nos ama antes mesmo de nascermos. Seu amor por nós precede o nosso nascimento.

Quando nascemos, o pai está lá. Sua mão nos recebe, nos acaricia e nos abençoa. Seu olhar nos aquece e é luz sobre nossa frente. Se for inverno, a presença do pai espanta o frio. Se for verão, traz uma brisa suave. O pai é farol em plena noite e nos guia desde antes de abirmos os olhos pela primeira vez.

O pai vê no filho o que ele era e o que ele vai ser. Na criação do filho, há a razão para aquelas longas jornadas de trabalho, carteira assinada, noites mal dormidas, a preocupação do salário e das contas a pagar. No filho, há o motivo maior da sua luta. O pai acredita que tem que ser assim mesmo e a batalha é por um futuro melhor para o seu filho. Tudo é sacrifício e tudo é amor.

Quando dizem “mas é a cara do pai” ou “este puxou ao pai”, o pai demonstra um sentimento que nem nome tem (uma mistura de amor, afeição, alegria e orgulho) e sorri, agradecido e feliz. O criador e sua cria. Não há no mundo obra de arte mais bonita que um filho que se parece com seu pai.

O pai constrói as paredes e o teto. O seu esforço é nosso abrigo. O pai é guardião e nos protege. O filho brinca sob o olhar do pai, que o vigia e cuida de sua proteção e de seu bem-estar.

Pai é quando nos sentimos em casa. Quando ele chega do trabalho, nos traz chocolates, fazendo-nos sorrir e pular. Quando o pai chaveia a porta da rua, o nosso lar é castelo e fortaleza impenetráveis de paredes e muros muito altos. Pelos seus aposentos, podemos correr e brincar em paz. Não há mal que possa entrar. O pai guarda as chaves.

O pai nos ensina a nadar e nos mostra a praia. O pai nos leva ao parque de diversões e nos leva para cortar o cabelo. Ele nos carrega nos braços para a cama, de dentro do carro para o quarto, quando chegamos em casa tarde da noite. Assina o nosso boletim escolar e acompanha nosso desempenho, com orgulho,



da pré-escola até a faculdade. Ele se preocupa com nosso progresso e quer ajudar no que puder. Ele quer nos auxiliar e nos guiar. Pai é nosso alicerce e nossa inspiração. É de onde viemos e o que ele tem de melhor é uma grande parte do que somos ou do que ainda iremos nos tornar.

Um dia o filho deixa a casa do pai e encontra a estrada. Ele vai embora porque o mundo também precisa dele. O filho, em vão, espera que o pai compreenda. O pai ama o filho, tenta entender, sofre em silêncio e nunca deixa de amá-lo. No portão da casa, o pai faz de conta que está tudo bem mas, por dentro, está chorando. Chora porque o filho cresceu e pede a Deus que cuide de seu menino, que da porteira para fora a sua vista já não o alcançará por muito tempo.

Na despedida na rodoviária, de dentro do ônibus, o filho observa o pai. Este, da calçada, olha para o filho com a mais terna esperança de voltar a vê-lo de novo. Sente agora o peso da idade e não sabe se estará aqui quando o filho regressar da próxima vez. O pai se despedir de um filho é uma oração que só quem é pai pode rezar, mesmo que o faça sem saber.

O pai tem o coração e o olhar de quem espera estar sempre lá cada vez que o filho voltar. O filho também chora e pede muitos anos de vida para o seu amado pai. Cada despedida é como uma praia deserta sem sol, no inverno, as ondas atingindo as rochas, pássaros voando longe e vento gelado.

E passam-se os anos. O pai tem agora cabelos brancos e admira o filho pela coragem de ter ido em busca de seus sonhos. O filho ama seu pai, respeita-o pela sua sabedoria e é grato por todo o amor, educação e apoio recebidos. Passe o tempo que passar, filho é barco, mas pai é sempre mar. O pequeno navio vai e dá a volta ao mundo, mas o porto mais seguro estará sempre lá: o pai.



## THE HAND THAT BLESSES US

CLODIE VASLI

TRANSLATED BY ANDREW MCDUGALL

*To my father*

One day, the young man receives the news from his wife: he is going to be a father. He begins to ready himself, imagining and planning what he will teach his beloved child. With his wife, he thinks of possible names. The man is a father from the moment he hears the good news. Our father loves us before we are even born. His love for us precedes our birth.

When we are born, our father is there. His hand takes us, cradles us and blesses us. His gaze warms us and lights our face. If it is winter, our father's presence chases the cold away. If it is summer, he brings a soft breeze. Our father is a beacon in the middle of the night and guides us from before we open our eyes for the first time.

The father sees in his son what he was and what he will be. In raising his child, there is a reason for those long hours at work, clocking in and out, sleepless nights, worries about his salary and bills to pay. In his son, his struggle has a greater purpose. The father believes it really has to be like this and the fight is for a better future for his son. Everything is sacrifice and everything is love.

When they say "he has his father's face" or "he takes after his father", the father exhibits a feeling you can't put a name on (a mixture of love, affection, joy and pride) and smiles, grateful and happy. The creator and his creation. There is no finer work of art in the world than a son who looks like his father.

Our father builds the walls and roof. His effort is our shelter. Our father is the guardian and protects us. The son plays in sight of his father, who watches over him and ensures his safety and wellbeing.

Father is when we feel at home. When he comes home from work, he brings us chocolates, making us smile and jump. When our father locks the door to the street, our home is a castle and impenetrable fortress of walls and high turrets. In its rooms we can run and play in peace. No evil can enter. Father guards the keys.

Our father teaches us to swim and shows us the beach. Our father takes us to the theme park and for a haircut. He carries us in his arms to bed, from inside the car to our room, when we arrive home late at night. He signs our school report card and follows our development, with pride, from pre-school to university.





He cares about our progress and wants to help where he can. He wants to assist us and guide us. Father is our bedrock and inspiration. He is where we come from and the best of him forms a big part of who we are or who we are yet to become.

One day the son leaves his father's home and hits the road. He is leaving because the world also needs him. The son, in vain, hopes his father understands. The father loves his son, tries to understand, suffers in silence and never stops loving him. At the front door, the father pretends everything is fine, but inside he is crying. He cries because his son has grown up and he asks God to watch over his boy, as his gaze from the front gate will not reach him for much longer.

Saying goodbye at the bus station, from inside the coach, the son observes his father. From the pavement, the father looks at his son with the most tender hope of seeing him again. He feels now the weight of age and does not know if he will be here when his son next returns. A father saying goodbye to his son is a prayer that only fathers can recite, even if they do so without knowing.

The father has the heart and look in his eye of someone who hopes always to be there every time their son returns. The son cries too and asks many years of life for his dear father. Every goodbye is like a desolate sunless beach, in winter, waves battering the rocks, birds flying in the distance and an icy wind.

And the years pass by. The father has white hair now and admires his son for having the courage to go off in search for his dreams. The son loves his father, respects him for his wisdom and is grateful for all his love, education and support. However, much time passes, the son is a boat, but a father is always the sea. The small ship sets sail around the world, but the safest port will always be there: the father.



## ON TRANSLATING CLODIE VASLI'S "THE HAND THAT BLESSES US"

ANDREW MCDUGALL

This short piece by Clodie Vasli is taken from the book *Apagando um cigarro atrás do outro*, published by Confraria do Vento in 2014. It is a collection of very short, meditative, almost poetic stories, musing on themes including solitude, insomnia and love. "The Hand that Blesses Us" is a letter from the author to his father, but also a more general exploration and celebration of father-son relationships.

When I received this text, the first thing I did was read it once through. When approaching a translation, I rarely read the ST more than once, and sometimes not even once, before beginning as I like my first draft to be free from the prejudice of prior knowledge and reflect my very first impressions, thus attempting to limit the imposition of my own voice on the text. In the words of Jean Boase-Beier, "a literary translation multiplies the voices of the text, by adding the translator's voice" (BOASE-BEIER, 2011, p.57) and while any translation is, of course, "your reading of that author" (SCHWARTZ AND DE LANGE, 2006, p.11), this strategy of going in partially blind can sometimes help to keep the reins on that. This being a short text, as previously stated, I did indeed have a quick read first and was instantly struck by its rhythm, repetitions and poetic quality – features I would come to learn are typical of Vasli's short fiction. I knew immediately that recreating this rhythm would be crucial to the success of my translation.

One of the first and most important decisions of this translation concerned what to do with the word *pai*. Simply scanning the page shows us that this word appears often throughout the text. "Father" is the obvious choice, yet it felt a touch formal, especially when used so often; however, "dad" seemed too informal – the Portuguese word "pai" being more flexible and versatile than either of these options in English – as well as opening up a minefield of localisation issues and arguments over "daddy", "da", "papa" and so on. "Father", though, still felt a little cumbersome, especially when repeated so often.

In one early draft I toyed with using "father" in most instances but "dad" in certain places where it seemed appropriate. Ultimately, I felt this detracted from the deliberate repetition of the original and created an awkward discord in the register. It remained, therefore, "father" throughout. Having identified repetition as vital to the text stylistically, this seemed a satisfactory choice.

"Stylistics is frequently described metaphorically as a kind of 'tool-kit'" (WALES, 2001, p.v) and here I saw repetition as a tool for achieving rhythm. A liberal scattering of short sentences is another tool deployed



in the ST and I have therefore tried to keep the TT as syntactically similar to the original as possible. The role of syntax in style is something also acknowledged by Edith Grossman, who notes “the rhythm of the prose (long, flowing periods or short, crisp phrases)” as one of a number of “pivotal stylistic devices” (GROSSMAN, 2010, p.9).

The frequent repetition of “father”, “the father” and “our father” also elicited religious connotations in the minds of most of the group and was a keen discussion point in the Brazilian Translation Club meeting of January 2020 at UCL, at which the author was present. Vasli insisted that these were unintentional, and we discussed how perhaps it stood out more in English than in the original Portuguese. Sometimes we gain things in translation without meaning to and must evaluate the effect of this. I concluded that there was no way around this and, if anything, the paternalism of God the father added another potential layer to the reading of a text concerned with the relationship between father and son. It is for a reader to draw conclusions with regards to that and not my job as a translator to delimit the possibilities of their readings.

Another interesting dilemma was the phrase “carteira assinada”, which is a sort of employment record book issued to workers in Brazil. Having no such formal equivalent in the UK, it was more important here to maintain the flow of the piece and find a more dynamic equivalent (NIDA in VENUTI 2012, pp. 144-145). I was satisfied with my solution of: “clocking in and out” which retains that sense of working progress being recorded, while not being culturally specific or interrupting the text to explain what a “carteira” in this context is in Brazil, which is really of minor importance compared with the sense that the father of the story is motivated by and dedicates his working life to his son. My solution is also in line with the semantic fields of tiredness and relentlessness present in the same sentence.

As with terminology specific to the source culture, colloquial phrases are also often the focal point of debate and agonising for translators. One such example, offering numerous potential solutions, was “este puxou ao pai”. Options considered by myself and proposed by others included: “he looks more like this father”; “he’s the spit of his father”; “like father like son”; “he looks just like this father”. Eventually I settled on “he takes after his father”, a similarly colloquial expression implying a likeness, physical or otherwise, between father and son. I felt this option most satisfactorily covered the meanings of the original, combines well with the preceding phrase and its connotations of influence nicely set up what follows, particularly in relation to the father’s pride.

A discussion which showed the varying and shifting nuances of certain words according to the speaker and their culture surrounded the phrase “na rodoviária, de dentro do ônibus”. My instinct as a UK English speaker



was to write “at the station, from inside the bus”. In a Brazilian context, however, it was considered important to highlight that these were not buses but coaches (words to my mind more or less synonymous) – Brazil is an enormous country and ordinary people use coaches to travel long distances – and so it became “at the bus station, from inside the coach”, for clarity and to avoid creating a repetition (of “coach”) in the TT not present in the ST and which would have been untidy in English.

I was fortunate in creating this translation not only to benefit from the wisdom, expertise and suggestions of my fellow participants in the Brazilian Translation Club, but also to be able to count on the author’s collaboration, both in person at the meeting and via private correspondence. Being able to discuss the text with the author and my fellow translators was a fruitful and positive experience. As translation is often a rather solitary craft, the opportunity to come together and collaborate in something more collective has been a very rewarding, not to mention enjoyable, process. I know that my translation has been improved by workshoping it with the group and I hope that is reflected in a worthwhile reading experience.

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**LÚCIA COLLISCHONN** TRANSLATES **ELTÂNIA ANDRÉ**







## MEMÓRIA DE MULHER

ELTÂNIA ANDRÉ

Ainda que essa lembrança chegue com lacunas, ela desencadeia em mim sensações estranhas: espanto, revolta ou temor. Lembro-me da tia pendurando lençóis no varal de arame farpado, o cheiro do sabão em pó, do anil deixando o suave azul nas peças brancas a quarar. Ela punha capricho naquele trabalho que se repetia na rotina da casa. O terreiro pequeno de chão batido, naquela época, parecia-me imenso, o velho e útil tanque de cimento aguardando os seus dedos com unheiros; algumas ervas cresciam em bacias e carcaças de pneus, o pé de limão numa extremidade e na outra o mamoeiro subnutrido – cenário de paz. Imagino-a (preciso preencher espaços vazios) com um belo sorriso ao avistar-me, foi logo buscar o bambu para levantar o varal e deixá-lo bem esticado para que as roupas limpas recebessem todo o sol de verão. Não sei de onde o tio surgiu, mas estava possuído pela alma ávida do Belzebu. Nem me viu, tão pequenina, colada à parede de chapisco com meu vestidinho amarelo, que quase deixava transparecer a calcinha – roupas nascidas da velha Singer de minha mãe costureira, a quem não faltava estilo.

Antes que a mulher tivesse chance de escapar ou eu de compreender que aquilo que aconteceria seria o divisor de águas na minha vida, ele foi arrastando-a pelos braços, aos tropeços, subiu a pequena escada que dava para a porta da cozinha em feroz agitação. Ele vociferava expressões que eu não entendia, aliás tudo era-me novidade naquela infância. *Você não presta nem para vigiar a sua filha, a desgraçada estava aos beijos com aquele mulato ocre no final do Beco do Bento* – a frase viva ressoa daquele passado. Eu tremia muito, mas fui em direção aos berros e vi quando ele encurralou mãe e filha contra a parede de azulejos encardidos do banheiro, surrando-as com tapas, socos e ameaças de morte. Furiosa e insubmissa, a filha ensaiava cuspir-lhe na cara, mas, de tão nervosa, a baba descia pelo seu queixo e pescoço. Horrorizada, eu espiava apenas com um olho, tapei o outro assustada com aquele homem. Ressurgiam de outras eras o medo e a revolta. Meu priminho chegou; desesperado, pediu ao pai que parasse com as agressões, e o meu tio prontamente obedeceu ao seu semelhante – mesmo naquela idade de brincar de bilosca e carrinho de rolimã. Fiquei ali feito uma conchinha de gente, encolhi-me o máximo que pude, agasalhando-me como uma ostra dentro da concha. Reconheci o ronco de sua surrada Lambretta e senti que alguém me pegava no colo; sem saber a quem pertencia aquele pescoço, agarrei-me a ele, enquanto ia me acalmando. Os lençóis, novamente sujos, caíram no chão de terra quando a tia tentou escapar das agressões apoiando-se no bambu que sustentava o varal, como se fosse possível fixar-se nele ou livrar-se dos tentáculos opressores da violência.





A minha prima Sandra era um charme com suas sardas de boneca e sua irreverência e não abaixava a cabeça; sentiu-se minimamente vitoriosa segurando um objeto nas mãos trêmulas, enquanto o copo de água com açúcar a aguardava em cima da mesa... *desgraçado, bem feito, arreventou a pulseira do relógio que tanto sonhou. Eu não vou desistir do Tunim, viu mãe?* Com o martelo de amaciar carne, num riso entre lágrimas, estraçalhou o Mondaine comprado a prestações na Joalheria Meia-Pataca.

Meses depois, os quatro voltavam de um churrasco num sítio de amigos. Provavelmente por causa do excesso de álcool do motorista, o Fusca azul capotou na entrada da cidade, e pai e filha morreram na hora. Morávamos no alto do morro num bairro próximo à entrada da cidade e, no final do dia, como era de costume quando a minha mãe terminava de varrer o terreiro com a vassoura de alecrim, parávamos para olhar a estrada que ziguezagueava por entre as colinas, num aclave em forma de ferradura, com o sol raquítico da tarde se despedindo lançando ares de melancolia. Hora estranha em que todas as tardes nossos olhares buscavam os arredores, como se estivéssemos imaginando cenários e sonhando com o porvir. *Mãe, por que o tio Tuíca fez aquilo? Não sei, filha, ele é nervoso e pensa que as mulheres têm o couro duro. Um dos brutos.* Começava a entender que eu era mulher e o que era ser mulher no mundo habitado por homens como o tio. Avistamos a ambulância pressurosa apontando no declive da estrada, a mamãe disse-me que uma corrente de arrepios percorreu todo o seu corpo. Pensei que no fundo uma voz ditava-lhe pressentimentos, afinal tínhamos parentes velhos e doentes, mas a existência traz outras surpresas que – mal supomos – estão a caminho. A Lua ainda não havia tomado o lugar do Sol nos altos do Morro do Miguel, e a realidade já chegava com o seu peso e a sua discórdia: recebemos a notícia de que aquela Kombi branca do hospital estava levando nossos parentes. A esposa e o filho sofreram no corpo lesões leves. Todos ficaram tristes pela tragédia. Porém, não consegui lamentar a morte do tio. Durante meses eu não fechava as portas, habitava-me a estranha sensação dele ainda presente e tive medo de que ganhara o poder de assombrar as mulheres vida afora.



## MEMORIES OF A WOMAN

ELTÂNIA ANDRÉ

TRANSLATED BY LÚCIA COLLISCHONN DE ABREU

Even though this recollection comes to me in gaps, it unleashes within me this strange sensation; astonishment, outrage or fear. I remember my aunt hanging the sheets on the barbed wire clothing line to bleach under the blazing sun, the smell of the washing powder, the soft laundry blue of the white clothes; she applied care and dedication to that repeated task, part of the household's routine. The small dirt yard, in those times, looked immense to me, the old and functional concrete sink awaiting her reddened, tired toes; weeds grew in buckets and tires' carcasses, the lime tree at one end and the malnourished papaya tree at the other – a peaceful scene. I imagine her (I need to fill in the empty spaces) with a beautiful smile once she sees me. She went to get the bamboo stick to prop up the clothesline so it was stretched out and the clean clothes could get the most out of the summer sunlight. I don't know where my uncle came from, but he was possessed by the greedy soul of the Devil. He didn't see me, so small, crouched against the roughcast wall with my little yellow summer dress, which almost offered a glance of my panties – clothes born from the old Singer belonging to my stylish seamstress mother.

Before she had a chance to escape, or I to understand that what was going to happen would be a watershed moment in my life, he dragged her by the arms, stumbling up the small staircase leading to the kitchen door in ferocious agitation. He hollered, using words I did not understand; in fact, everything was new to me in those childhood days. *You're useless, you're no good at watching your daughter, the wretch was kissing that ochre mulatto at the end of Bento's Alley* – the living sentence resounds back from that past. My entire body trembled, but I managed to follow the screams, he cornered both mother and daughter in the bathroom, against the wall of grimy tiles and slapped them amidst death threats. Furious and unsubmitive, his daughter tried spitting in his face, but she was so nervous that the drool was dripping from her chin and neck. Horrified, I spied with only one eye, covering the other, scared of that man.

Fear and outrage resurfaced from other times. My little cousin arrived at the scene, running and crying, asking his father to stop, and he soon obeyed his fellow man, even at that age, when he still played with marbles and homemade go-carts. I stood there like a little shell of a person, shrinking as much as I could, wrapping myself up like an oyster, then I recognized the snore of his beaten-up Lambretta and I felt someone carrying me in their arms, without knowing to whom that neck belonged, I clung to it, as I calmed down. The sheets were on the ground and dirty again, they had fallen when my aunt fought to escape the beatings, she leaned on the bamboo stick that propped up the clothesline as if it were possible to fix herself on it or free herself from those oppressive tentacles.



My cousin, Sandra, as charming as always, with her doll freckles and her irreverent attitude, didn't bow her head, she felt victorious with an object in her trembling hands and the calming glass of sugar-water waiting on the table... *wretch, that'll teach him, he broke the watch that he wanted so much, I'm not giving up on Tunim, do you hear me, Mother?* With the meat tenderizer, laughing between her tears, she ruined the Mondaine he had bought in installments at Meia-Pataca Jewellery Store.

Months later, the four of them were driving back from a barbecue at a friend's ranch, and probably because of the driver's excessive drinking, the blue VW Beetle flipped over at the entrance of the city. Father and daughter died on the spot. We used to live at the top of a hill in a neighborhood near the entrance to the town, and at the end of the day, when my mother had finished sweeping the yard with her rosemary broom as she usually did, we would stop to look at the road that zigzagged between the hills on a horseshoe-shaped slope. The rickety afternoon sun would say goodbye, spreading melancholy in the air. It was a strange time, every afternoon we looked around, as if we were imagining scenarios and dreaming of what was to come. *Mother, why did Uncle Tuíca do that? I don't know, my daughter, he's nervous, and he thinks women have tough skin. One of the brutes.* I was beginning to understand both that I was a woman and what it was like to be a woman in the world inhabited by men like Uncle. We spotted the hurried ambulance, which appeared at the slope of the road, and she told me that a stream of chills went through her body. I thought that deep down a voice had whispered premonitions to her, after all we had old, sick relatives, but existence brings other surprises that – we hardly imagine – are on the way. Well, the moon had not yet taken the place of the sun on Miguel's Heights, and reality came with its weight and contention: we received the news that that white van from the hospital was taking our relatives. His wife and son suffered slight injuries to their bodies. Everyone was saddened by the tragedy. However, I could not mourn the death of my uncle. For months I did not shut the doors, I had the strange sensation that he was still present, and I was afraid that he had gained the power to haunt women even in the afterlife.



## TRANSLATOR'S COMMENTARY

LÚCIA COLLISCHONN DE ABREU

I joined the Brazilian Translation Club in early March 2019, having heard about the group when in London at a Forum where I was giving a presentation about my research. I mentioned my research because having the chance to be in this club was especially fruitful as I focus on L2 translation (translation into one's second language), as we in Portuguese call "versão". Growing up in Brazil and studying translation for my undergraduate degree at UFRGS, I had no idea that one direction of translation was the norm. We always translated both ways, and many professional translators in our context work in both directions. Then, especially in Anglophone translation studies, the L1-direction (into the translator's first language) is the norm. When directionality is mentioned at all in translation manuals, encyclopedias and theoretical publications, it is used to reinforce the L1 translation norm. I would even go as far as saying that the L1 translation norm is, in fact, a translation meme, borrowing terminology from Andrew Chesterman's proposition in *Memes of Translation* (CHESTERMAN, 1997). Taking the definition of a meme as the cultural equivalent of a gene, and, therefore as a unit of cultural transmission, of mere replication or imitation (DAWKINS, 1976), memes, in this context, can be viewed as ideas that spread like genes, when it is conducive to the survival of their carriers. In this case, who is benefitting from such a translation meme as the L1 translation norm? The very fact that in English there is not a terminological consensus to deal with L2 translation points to an invisibility of directionality thinking in the anglophone context. When looking for reading material on L2 translation in English one can find different terminology for this practice: Inverse Translation, Service Translation, Bilingual Translation, and wordier ones like Translation into a Non-Mother Tongue.

My PhD proposes to name this practice Exophonic Translation. I believe this puts the translator and their creative output at centre stage. The culture of translation into English is highly target-text based, where there is fear that the translation will show itself as a translation. Furthermore, there are cultural and ideological issues at heart when someone is forbidden from translating into a major language like English. In the specific case of the Brazilian Translation Club, with the mixture of participants, it comes down to one simple conclusion: a translator does not need to be Brazilian to translate Brazilian literature into English, and at the same time one does not have to be a native English speaker to translate Brazilian Literature into English.

When I went to participate in my first workshop with the group, back in February pre-pandemic, I was pleasantly surprised by the fun, diverse group I found. Hidden somewhere in one of the buildings of the UCL campus, on a rainy, cold February evening, I found myself among peers, who had all somehow come together in that place to talk about translation and Brazilian literature. Then, right after this, having fallen in love with



the project, I volunteered to be the translator of the month for an upcoming workshop. When the pandemic was a reality and lockdown made us all get cooped up at home for the unforeseeable future, I was invited to be the translator for the first online meeting of the club. So much responsibility! Since it was online, it meant that those who could not join in the club because they weren't locals now could join in, from anywhere and everywhere. We had around 25 people in attendance that night, and we were all testing out the water in this new environment. I was incredibly lucky to have the author herself, Eltânia André, in attendance that night. It must have been an incredibly strange affair for the author to see all of us dissect her text by every minutiae, and that is exactly what we did. Eltânia in fact said that after participating in that meeting, she felt like changing many words, to which we said she definitely did not need to.

I strongly believe that every translation is a reading exercise, and my reading of "Memories of a Woman" is undoubtedly going to be different from that of any reader and translator in attendance that day, or even to yours, reader, who comes across this commentary. "Memories of a Woman" is heavily placed in time and space, and at the same time, it is timeless. It has strong feminist undertones, and it provides a poetic glimpse into a traumatic episode in the narrator's childhood. In the process of translating it, I found myself transported to Minas Gerais, to an image that resembles my mother's generation and her experience much more than my own. Still, André paints a perfect picture of that humble Brazilian childhood that most of us can imagine, relive, we can almost taste it.

The attendants discussed at length several translation choices, especially for culture-specific items (AIXELÁ, 1996). Certain elements, like the papaya tree ("mamoeiro") certainly located the text in a specific space, as it was not an easily identifiable reference for the British reader. A specific object, "carrinho de rolimã", roller-cart (is it roller-cart? Go-cart?), resulted in a long discussion of the various types of carts that children used to play with and cultural differences in childhood experiences. One of the great points of debate was the process of whitening clothes under the sun. "Quarar", a process that has a simple verb to describe it in Portuguese, but which, for readers who live in a land where the sun is nowhere near as present and strong as in the Southern Hemisphere, might seem like a rather different scenario. We had chemists in attendance, and it turned into a conversation about the process of "quarar" that took us to some fun and enlightening tangents. "Água com açúcar", the calming sugar-water, was another point of cultural difference, something that for Brazilian readers automatically means a beverage to calm you down, for the English speakers, it needed more clarification, as sugar mixed with water is not a particularly a widely-known antidote for stress in their context. At the same time in which I believe in making some additions here and there to aid the reader in understanding cultural references, I also believe in making the reader work for it. I am aware that this all comes down to the publisher, the intended audience, etc. But since we are speaking among friends, I can tell



you that in some instances I deliberately left some references for the reader to gloss over and, if they want to, they can try and look for a meaning. As the meme phrase going around Brazil lately says “Os gringos que lutem”, let them work for it. I believe, however, that these do not hinder the reading experience, and make it taste all the more like the delicious piece which Eltânia André presents us with. I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have had this experience, and to be able to share this with you.

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**ANDREW MCDUGALL** TRANSLATES **DÉCIO ZYLBERSZTAJN**





## O BENFEITOR DE SANTA CLARA

DECIO ZYLBERSZTAJN

*Vestido vermelho:* Solange pisava leve. Cuidava para que seu passo não fizesse ruído, não movesse uma pedra do lugar nem uma folha que estivesse caída na calçada. Só não conseguia passar anonimamente pela frente do bar de onde era observada, de cima para baixo e de dentro para fora, pelos três frequentadores habituais. Conheciam cada um dos vestidos, por ela alinhavados e cosidos, desenhados para cobrir suas pernas e deixando apenas os tornozelos à mostra.

— Vinte e oito, ou talvez trinta — palpitava um, enquanto o outro argumentava:

— Que trinta o quê! Deve ter mais de quarenta!

O terceiro só observava, guardando para si os comentários. Naquela manhã, o ritual se repetiu segundo o protocolo. Os copos de cachaça foram largados sobre o balcão e fez-se silêncio quando Solange passou pela calçada do outro lado da rua, a caminho da loja de roupas femininas. Morena, cheia de carnes, mas com os tornozelos finos. O corpo insistia em marcar os modelos mais recatados, para alegria da audiência.

Solange entrou na loja, de onde saiu acompanhada pela balconista. Olharam a vitrine e ela apontou para o vestido vermelho com uma rosa azul aplicada na altura dos quadris. Entrou na loja, permaneceu por algum tempo e saiu fazendo o caminho de volta. Ao passar em frente ao bar, o alto-falante postado na torre da igreja anunciou a morte de um cidadão. Os três observadores tiraram os respectivos chapéus da cabeça e os levaram ao peito em um rápido sinal de respeito, que durou apenas até a passagem de Solange. Os copos foram novamente deixados sobre o balcão, enquanto os pensamentos fluíram livres e impunes.

Passados três dias, no mesmo horário, quando o sol ainda não tivera tempo de esquentar as pedras da rua, Solange voltou a desfilar diante dos três copos depositados sobre o balcão já com cachaça pela metade, enquanto ela seguiu com o passo recatado, saia preta a cobrir-lhe as pernas e andando como de costume, a furta-passo. Entrou na loja, permaneceu por quinze minutos e fez, sorrindo, o trajeto oposto, abraçada a um pacote volumoso. Os copos se agitaram nas mãos dos três senhores quando Solange passou a caminho de casa. O andar mudou de estilo, agora fazia um movimento ritmado, os pés se cruzando como que desfilando em uma passarela. Nos lábios, um sorriso. O vestido negro, o mesmo de todos os dias, parecia ainda menor do que de costume. Ao passar, Solange olhou para dentro do bar surpreendendo os três cidadãos. Como crianças pegadas com a mão na botija, tentaram, sem sucesso, dissimular que a estavam a observar



e tiraram o chapéu em cumprimento. Assim que Solange ultrapassou os limites do bar, os três viraram a cachaça goela adentro.

\*

*Subindo a serra:* O carro cruzou a estrada e subiu a serra em direção à cidade de Santa Clara. O caminho de chão e a secura de julho faziam a poeira flutuar por instantes antes de deitar no leito da estrada. Ao volante, doutor Ivo repetia as operações executadas mensalmente desde que iniciou o atendimento ao povo da cidadezinha encravada nas montanhas de Minas Gerais.

Tudo começou quando o recém-formado cirurgião dentista retornou a Piranguinho, sua cidade natal, onde plantou um consultório, com incisiva e condicional ajuda paterna. Fazendeiro de muitas reses, seu Otaviano, pai do doutor Ivo, garantiu-lhe um mais do que digno início de profissão. O filho logo percebeu a dependência implicada no arranjo, mas não manifestou insatisfação, preferiu o conforto passivo ao enfrentamento com o velho Otaviano. Tudo indicava um futuro promissor para o profissional liberal, também herdeiro de algumas fazendas de leite e café.

O relacionamento com Santa Clara foi mero acaso. Um dos raros amigos da época da faculdade o convidou a passar alguns dias em uma sitioca ao pé da serra da Mantiqueira, de onde se podia avistar o vale do rio Sapucaí, encoberto pelas nuvens baixas do inverno. Assim conheceu Santa Clara, a cidade onde resolveu colocar um consultório para atender a população carente, o que lhe reforçava a reputação nas cidadezinhas do vale.

Mãos postas na direção, Ivo lembrou os anos passados no prédio da Rua Três Rios, onde funcionava a Faculdade de Odontologia da Universidade de São Paulo. “Por onde andariam os meus colegas da república de estudantes, com quem dividi aqueles anos de juventude e boemia paulistana, todos com as mesmas raízes em Minas Gerais?”

Ivo foi estudante de comportamento recatado, que fazia contraponto aos colegas, assíduos frequentadores da zona de meretrício barato das ruas Aurora, dos Gusmões e dos Andradas. Optou pela vida regrada dos estudos, um vestígio da herança paterna para quem a honra residia em vencer e chegar à frente. O velho não admitia farras, nem desperdícios, fosse de tempo ou de dinheiro. Era um resquício da infância do seu pai, filho de imigrantes italianos que vieram cultivar café, primeiro como empregados e depois como proprietários de uma pequena fazenda de leite e café em Minas Gerais. A fazendola cresceu e se multiplicou em várias propriedades produtivas.



O recolhimento, quase monástico, não fez Ivo tornar-se um aluno brilhante. Pelo contrário, ele passava mediocrementemente pelos exames. Sem o brilhantismo acadêmico e sem o convívio boêmio, seu isolamento forjou uma pessoa de poucos amigos. Para Ivo, São Paulo significava a libertação do jugo familiar, ao qual voltaria por vontade própria anos mais tarde. Por outro lado, a cidade oferecia um ambiente de chumbo, com tanques militares a circular pelas ruas e com o desaparecimento de colegas ativos no movimento estudantil.

De nada adiantou a fuga de Minas Gerais. Ivo substituiu o cabresto doméstico pelas rédeas da ditadura. Acomodou-se conivente ao paternalismo que se cristalizou no país. Sem a liberdade e a autonomia desejadas, concluiu os estudos. Perdida a doce vida do interior, onde conjugava o assédio das meninas casadouras com a experiência na casa de Anita, respeitável senhora que dirigia o prostíbulo com o esmero necessário para torná-lo protegido dos males do mundo, o que lhe restava era enfrentar a vida profissional. Cuidaria de dentes, bocas, maxilares, faria profilaxias, trataria as periodontias e faria milhares de obturações e próteses.

Homem maduro, herdou as fazendas e as contas bancárias do pai, que só depois de morto parou de fazer exigências. Agora, Ivo dirigia pela estrada de terra batida serra acima, anos depois de ter se formado cirurgião dentista e de ter como paraninfo um ministro militar que anunciou um discurso de três horas, pregando as maravilhas e milagres que os brasileiros estavam a construir. O ministro militar pregara em alto tom:

— Nunca antes na história deste país fomos tão felizes. A renda dos brasileiros e a demanda pelos serviços médico-odontológicos aumentarão e vocês terão o futuro garantido com noventa milhões de bocas para cuidar. — Ivo lembrou-se dos aplausos que se seguiram.

Décadas mais tarde, Ivo estava na estrada tal como fazia todas as últimas sextas-feiras de cada mês. O benevolente doutor com quem todos simpatizavam recebeu uma homenagem da Câmara de Vereadores de Santa Clara. A regularidade com a qual mantinha a atividade surpreendia os moradores, que se maravilhavam com isso. Chovesse ou fizesse sol, lá estava o doutor tratando das bocas da comunidade a preços simbólicos, na maioria das vezes apenas um agradecimento. Ivo conhecia o dia a dia miserável do povo santa-clarense tanto ou mais do que o pároco. Na festa anual da cidade recebeu um diploma de gratidão pelos serviços prestados à comunidade e agora era distinguido com o título de Cidadão Honorário, pela primeira vez atribuído pela Câmara dos Vereadores.

Bastava subir a serra para que doutor Ivo deixasse a mediocridade e caminhasse em direção à glória.



*Afrodite*: Quando o carro fez a última curva e embicou na entrada da cidade, o sino da igreja dobrou cinco vezes. “O sol se deita cedo nesta época do ano, por trás dos pinheirais que resistiram ao assalto da serraria devoradora de matas”, pensou doutor Ivo, que muito à vontade dirigiu pela cidade com o propósito de ser reconhecido pelos habitantes da pequena Santa Clara. No caminho, parou o carro ao encontrar seu Zé da Neca e logo foi avisando que tinha trazido a prótese, pronta para ser provada. Gritou sem sair do carro:

— Passe pelo consultório antes das oito horas, não se esqueça, marque com a Carmem.

Subiu a ladeira na direção da praça da Igreja Matriz. Procurou que procurou, mas não encontrou sinal da estátua de Afrodite. “Parece que tiraram a Afrodite do local que ocupava bem no centro da praça.” Lembrou-se de ter encomendado a escultura a um artista amigo, com a intenção de doar para a cidade. Sugerira os detalhes da obra. Quis que os cabelos fossem longos até a cintura, os braços levantados, um véu transparente deveria cobrir-lhe um seio e cair ao longo do corpo até cobrir parte dos pelos pubianos, e tinha feito questão de certo exagero calipígio. Queria que a escultura transpirasse luxúria e sensualidade. O artista conseguiu o objetivo, mas onde estaria a sua Afrodite?

Estacionou o carro ao lado da Igreja da Matriz e seguiu na direção da casa paroquial, onde encontrou o padre Lucas, jovem pároco recém-chegado à cidade.

— Olá, padre! Como vão os serviços para o povo desta paróquia?

— Bem, meu filho, muito trabalho e poucos recursos. Talvez o senhor possa fazer uma doação. — Ivo aproveitou a resposta para indagar sobre o paradeiro da estátua.

— Doações eu tenho feito. Por exemplo, eu doe uma escultura de Afrodite para a cidade. O senhor teria, porventura, alguma ideia sobre o paradeiro da estátua que ficava ali no centro da praça? — O pároco olhou para o vazio que ficou no lugar da escultura e respondeu:

— Meu filho, o povo anda dizendo que o prefeito desgostou da estátua porque mostrava os seios de uma deusa pagã. Aqui entre nós — falou se achegando ao pé do ouvido do doutor Ivo —, andaram falando e dizendo que o prefeito mamava nas tetas do governo e que o povo até apelidou a estátua com o nome da sua mulher.





Doutor Ivo fez que entendeu, despediu-se do padre e seguiu na direção da Prefeitura à procura de Carmem, filha de dona Antônia, que cuidava do posto telefônico. Entrou na pequena sala sem se anunciar. Carmem em sobressalto escondeu o livro que tinha nas mãos sob a escrivaninha e cumprimentou o doutor, que lhe pediu que telefonasse para cada um dos pacientes agendados. Carmem prometeu fazer os telefonemas imediatamente. Ao sair, Ivo topou com o prefeito, que o abraçou com tapas nas costas, como velhos amigos. O doutor, ainda resabiado, aproveitou para perguntar:

— Prefeito, que mal lhe pergunte, o senhor tem ideia do paradeiro da estátua de Afrodite, aquela que eu doei para a municipalidade?

— Estátua? Ah, sim, a estátua. Pois não é que tiraram do lugar? Ouvi dizer que foi coisa do padre, que acha que aquilo nada tem a ver com a fé do povo daqui. O povo anda falando que o padre acha que a estátua é pornográfica. Acho que foi ele quem mandou tirar a dita cuja da praça. Posso mandar averiguar, abrir uma sindicância administrativa, se o senhor julgar necessário...

As chaminés e os telhados das casas formavam um cenário bucólico que se somava aos aromas da lenha queimada nos fogões funcionando a pleno fogo. O estômago do doutor Ivo reclamava pela refeição a ser servida por dona Antônia, cuja casa, no quarto dos fundos, abrigava o consultório dentário. Por alojar o consultório, dona Antônia desfrutava de certo status com a comunidade local, além de cuidados odontológicos gratuitos, e Carmem ainda faturava uns trocados fazendo bicos para o doutor.

Ivo parou o automóvel defronte da pequena casa e desembarcou. Esticou as pernas e entrou na casa chamando por dona Antônia, que correu para cumprimentá-lo.

— Dona Antônia, o que aconteceu com a estátua da praça?

— Eu não sei, mas sei o que andam falando por aí. Alguns acham que foi bom o sumiço da mulher com as tetas de fora, bunda grande e com cara de sem-vergonha. Alguns começaram a falar que o prefeito mama nas tetas do orçamento e deram o nome da primeira-dama para a escultura. Outros acharam um atentado contra a memória da cidade. Cada um diz uma coisa, sei lá. Só sei é que fiz uma comidinha para o senhor ganhar sustância antes de começar a trabalhar. Vamos nos sentar à mesa?

“Mas onde foi parar Afrodite?”, pensou Ivo enquanto vistoriava o consultório, antes de tomar assento para o jantar.





*O consultório:* Doutor Ivo inspecionou o consultório preocupado com a assepsia do lugar. A cadeira de dentista era de ferro fundido e datava de 1940, mais lembrava uma cadeira de barbeiro. O encosto estofado tinha o couro desgastado pelo uso, o espaldar com dois ajustes para o conforto dos pacientes. Para a cabeça, dois apoios à semelhança de um par de fones de ouvido, porém mais justos. O descanso para os braços era de madeira. À direita do paciente ficava uma pequena mesa de comando com botões redondos e indicadores com ponteiros que algum dia se moveram, permitindo o controle do funcionamento do equipamento. No lugar das brocas, buracos. Alguns botões inativos e interruptores engripados completavam a configuração do que fora um painel de comando. Um braço vertical segurava uma lâmpada incandescente, sem qualquer anteparo para proteger os olhos dos pacientes. Um segundo braço terminava em uma plataforma para o repouso dos instrumentos. O terceiro braço apoiava um recipiente de plástico redondo, que fazia às vezes de uma cuspeira alimentada por uma mangueira fina acochada a uma torneira que gotejava continuamente. Sobre a pia, uma lamparina acesa aquecia uma vasilha de metal com água para esterilizar os instrumentos.

Havia duas tomadas improvisadas na parede e uma janela basculante de ferro que emoldurava os vidros foscos. A janela revelava a imagem borrada das pessoas que estavam do lado de fora. Se aberta, permitia avistar a horta e o pomar, onde se destacava a copa de um generoso limoeiro que nascia no quintal vizinho e teimava em frutificar para o lado de cá do muro. Duas mesas de fórmica completavam a mobília, mais um sofá-cama que servia para o repouso do dedicado doutor e uma mesa de apoio para Carmem, filha de dona Antônia, que organizava as fichas dos pacientes.

Ivo verificava se os equipamentos estavam prontos para o uso quando ouviu o chamado de dona Antônia:

— Doutor Ivo, a mesa da refeição está posta.

*Os pacientes:* Os pacientes atendiam ao chamado de Carmem. Chegavam aos poucos na frente da casa de dona Antônia. Carmem ajudava a organizar uma fila que começava no corredor externo que ladeava a casa e seguia pela rua. Alguns pacientes vinham de longe, das fazendas de difícil acesso na região, na maioria eram pessoas simples para quem o doutor Ivo significava a única assistência de saúde. Não se importavam com a qualidade do trabalho, nem com as condições dos equipamentos, queriam mais era encontrar o doutor. A condição dos equipamentos permitia, se tanto, fazer extrações e obturações superficiais. As próteses, doutor Ivo mandava fazer em outra cidade, quando os pacientes podiam arcar com o custo. Não havia uma broca manual funcionando que permitisse fazer restaurações. Ele sabia que nada substituíria o alívio trazido pelo alicate para quem sofria com as dores de dente. Extrações, era o que mais fazia. O início dos trabalhos



ocorria logo após a refeição. As fichas estariam todas preparadas e ordenadas por obra de Carmem. Chegando ao posto, Ivo perguntou em ritual previsível:

— Tudo certo com as fichas?

— Como sempre, doutor — respondeu Carmem.

— Quantos pacientes temos hoje?

— Temos seis. Não sei se o senhor vai ter tempo para atendê-los.

— Tempo se arranja. Carmem, fale os nomes deles.

— Deixe eu ver. Seu Cantídio, dona Veridiana, seu José Lúcio, seu Benedito Costa da Maninha, seu Zé da Neca e — pronunciou baixinho — a dona Solange Araújo.

— Ah... Dona Solange está na lista? Não sei se ouvi bem.

— Sim, Solange Araújo — respondeu Carmem, ordenando as fichas e pensando. “Bem que eu podia ser a última paciente.” — Coloquei a ficha dela por último, como sempre faço.

— Ótimo, então vamos ao trabalho.

*Vestido preto, vestido vermelho:* Solange fez o trajeto da casa ao consultório. Ao passar pelo bar, foi avistada pelos três observadores de sempre. O primeiro comentou:

— Para onde ela vai com o andar assim apressado, carregando aquele embrulho?

O segundo retrucou:

— Não parece apressada, ela parece que está é atrapalhada. E eu acho que nós já vimos aquele embrulho.



O terceiro, vendo a direção definida pela passante, decretou:

— Ela está indo é ver o doutor. Vai curar alguma dor.

Solange chegou na casa de dona Antônia trajando o vestido preto a cobrir-lhe as canelas, trazendo nos braços o tal embrulho. A penúltima paciente ainda era atendida e Carmem, sentada à escrivaninha de fórmica, lia um livro colocado sobre o colo. Entretida, não percebeu a presença de Solange.

— Lendo para a aula de literatura? — perguntou Solange. Carmem, em movimento rápido, fechou o livro e o enfiou sob uma pilha de papéis sobre a mesa. — Posso ver o livro? — voltou a perguntou Solange.

— Não, não é para a aula de português, foi presente de uma pessoa — disse Carmem.

— Eu vim direto do trabalho e não tive nem tempo de trocar de roupa. Posso usar a toalete para me trocar?

— Claro que pode, vou examinar se está tudo em ordem. — E saiu um momento da sala, tempo suficiente para Solange levantar os papéis para ver o livro camuflado. Carmem tirou os trastes da toalete e voltou para o consultório. — Agora pode entrar, está arrumado.

Solange tomou o pacote nas mãos e seguiu para o banheiro, de onde saiu trajando o vestido vermelho com uma flor azul na cintura e uma abertura lateral que mostrava as suas coxas a cada passo que dava. Carmem, olhando espantada, disse:

— Gostei da cor e da flor na cintura. Acho que quem te olhar vai apreciar. Pode entrar, que o Zé da Neca já foi atendido. Ah, na saída pode usar a toalete para trocar de roupa — ironizou.

— Obrigada, querida. Ah, apreciei muito o livro que você está lendo, entre todos os do Dalton Trevisan, esse é o que eu mais gosto, *A Polaquinha*.

Assim que Solange entrou no consultório, Carmem correu para o quarto. O doutor Ivo organizava os instrumentos e ajustava o encosto da cadeira com cuidado. Ao vê-la, derrubou as espátulas, já esterilizadas, no chão:



— Boa noite, dona Solange. Esperou muito?

— Não, doutor. Não mais do que nos outros dias — respondeu sem olhar diretamente nos olhos de Ivo.

— Não quer sentar-se? — perguntou Ivo, olhando para o vestido de Solange que mal continha as carnes da moça.

Com passos medidos Solange dirigiu-se para a cadeira. Os movimentos indicavam certa intimidade. Tudo era familiar. Os movimentos lentos de Solange não combinavam com a respiração arfante que Ivo fazia ressaltar um rubor na face. Ao sentar-se, o vestido vermelho mostrou a sua coxa, que ela demorou para cobrir, fingindo esforço, enquanto procurava uma posição na cadeira. A flor enorme na cintura atrapalhava a aproximação de Ivo, que trazia os instrumentos esterilizados.

Ivo tentava se concentrar no trabalho, mas não conseguia controlar o tremor nas mãos, o que fez que deixasse cair por duas vezes as espátulas no chão. Sem trocar uma palavra com Solange, se esmerava no tratamento da moça, que vez ou outra reclamava de uma dor com gritos curtos e agudos, ou um levantar de mãos. Ivo pediu licença, removeu a flor azul e desabotoou o vestido de Solange. Ele, trêmulo, e ela, arfante, misturaram os olhares, respirações e corpos, deixando o silêncio no seu rastro, só quebrado pelo tinir dos metais e pelo barulho da água que gotejava da torneira.

Pela janela de ferro serrado que emoldava os vidros foscos, era possível ver o vulto de Ivo, debruçado sobre Afrodite, a trabalhar calado.



## THE BENEFACTOR OF SANTA CLARA

DECIO ZYLBERSZTAJN

TRANSLATED BY ANDREW MCDUGALL

*Red dress:* Solange treaded lightly. She was careful not to make a sound with her steps, not to move a stone from its place nor a single fallen leaf on the path. But she could not remain incognito as she passed by the bar from where she was observed, top to bottom, inside out, by the three regulars. They knew every one of the dresses she had tacked and sown, designed to cover her legs and leave only her ankles on show.

“Twenty-eight, maybe thirty,” guessed one.

“Thirty? Away! She must be over forty,” another argued.

The third just watched on, keeping his comments to himself. On that morning, the ritual had followed its standard procedure. The cachaça glasses were set down on the bar and silence fell when Solange passed on the opposite side of the road, on her way to the women’s clothing shop. Dark, curvaceous, but with slender ankles. Her body insisted on standing out in even the most modest outfits, much to the audience’s delight.

Solange entered the shop, then re-emerged accompanied by a sales assistant. They looked at the display window and she pointed out a red dress with a blue rose on the waist. She entered the shop, remained there a while and then left, returning the way she came. As she passed the bar, the loudspeaker on the church tower announced the death of a local resident. The three observers removed their hats and held them by their chests in a brief mark of respect, that lasted only until Solange had gone. Their glasses were set on the bar again, while thoughts flowed with freedom and impunity.

Three days later, at the same time, when the sun still hadn’t had time to warm the stone street, Solange again walked past the three glasses sitting on the bar, already half-full of cachaça, still stepping discretely, with a black skirt covering her legs and ambling along in her usual manner. She went in to the shop, stayed inside for fifteen minutes and, smiling, returned in the opposite direction, clutching a large package. The glasses shook in the men’s hands as Solange went by on her way home. Her walk had changed style, now a more rhythmic movement, feet crossing as if on a catwalk. On her lips, a smile. Her black dress, the same one as every day, seemed even tighter than usual. On passing, Solange looked inside the bar, surprising the three men. Like children caught with their hands in the cookie jar, they tried, unsuccessfully, to disguise that they had been watching her and raised their hats in greeting. As soon as Solange was out of sight of the bar, all three necked their cachaças.



*Going up the mountain:* The car crossed the road and headed up the mountain towards the town of Santa Clara. The dirt track and the dryness of July caused the dust to hover before settling at the side of the road. At the wheel, Doctor Ivo repeated the manoeuvres he had performed monthly since he began attending to the people of the village tucked into the mountains of Minas Gerais.

It all started when the newly-qualified dental surgeon returned to Piranguinho, his hometown, where he opened a clinic, with focused and conditional paternal support. A farmer with many heads of cattle, Otaviano, Ivo's father, secured him a more than respectable start in the profession. The son quickly understood the arrangement's implied dependency, but he did not show dissatisfaction, preferring passive convenience to a confrontation with old Otaviano. Everything pointed to a promising future for the liberal professional, who was also heir to some dairy and coffee farms.

The link with Santa Clara was mere chance. One of the few friends from his university days invited him to spend a few days in a small place by the Mantiqueira mountains, from where the valley of the Sapucaí river could be seen, nestled under the low winter clouds. There he discovered Santa Clara, where he resolved to establish a clinic to attend to the underprivileged community, which would build his reputation among the valley dwellers.

As he set to it, Ivo recalled the years spent in that building on Rua Três Rios, where the University of São Paulo's odontology department was based. "Where will my peers from the student residence be now? The ones with whom I shared those years of youth and Paulistano bohemianism, all of us with the same Minas Gerais roots."

Ivo was a student of reserved habits, in stark contrast to his classmates, regular frequenters of the low-budget red-light district on Aurora, Gusmões and Andradas streets. He opted for a regimented life of study, a trace of something inherited from his father for whom honour lay in winning and getting ahead. Otaviano didn't hold with revelry or waste, either of time or money. It was by turn a remnant of his own father's childhood, the son of Italian immigrants who came to grow coffee, first as employees and later as owners of a small dairy and coffee farm in Minas Gerais. That little farm grew and multiplied into numerous productive properties.

His almost monastic seclusion did not make Ivo a brilliant student. On the contrary, his exam results were rather mediocre. Lacking either academic brilliance or a bohemian geniality, his isolation turned him into a person with few friends. For Ivo, São Paulo meant freedom from the family yoke, to which he would return





voluntarily years later. On the other hand, the city had a leaden atmosphere, with military tanks roaming the streets and the disappearances of active members of the student movement.

Fleeing Minas Gerais served for little. Ivo replaced the domestic harness with the reins of the dictatorship. He became complicitly comfortable in the paternalism that settled over the country. Without the desired freedom or independence, he completed his studies. Long gone the good life of the countryside, where he combined chasing after young maidens with his experiences at Anita's, the respectable woman who ran the brothel with the necessary diligence to shield it from the world's evils, all that remained was to face up to working life. He would look after teeth, mouths, jaws, he would make prophylaxes, he would treat gum disease and make thousands of plugs and dentures.

A grown man, he inherited the land and bank accounts of his father, who only stopped making demands after his death. Now, Ivo headed up the mountain on the earthy road, years after his graduation as a dental surgeon where the guest speaker was a military minister who in a three-hour talk expounded upon the wonders and miracles the Brazilians were building.

"Never in the history of this country have we been so happy. The income of Brazilians and with it the demand for dental services will increase and you will have a secure future with ninety-million mouths to look after," the military minister had loudly proclaimed.

Ivo recalled the applause that followed.

Decades later, Ivo was on the road, just as he was every last Friday of the month. The benevolent doctor, well-liked by all, was given an award by the Santa Clara town council. The constancy with which he conducted his business surprised the local residents, who were amazed by it. Rain or shine, there was the doctor dealing with the mouths of the community for a nominal fee, most often simply a thank-you. Ivo knew the daily miseries of the people of Santa Clara at least as well as the parish priest. In the town's annual celebrations, he received a certificate of gratitude for his services to the community and was now distinguished with the title of Honorary Citizen, the first such recognition handed out by the town council.

Doctor Ivo had only to climb the mountain to leave mediocrity behind and take the path towards glory.

*Aphrodite:* When the car rounded the last bend and breached the city entrance, the church bell rang five times. "The sun sets early at this time of year, behind the pine forests which stand firm against the ravenous



onslaught of the sawmill,” mused Doctor Ivo, who drove gladly towards the town with the aim of being recognised by the residents of little Santa Clara. On the way, he stopped the car when he saw Zé da Neca and let him know he had brought his denture, ready to be tried on. He called out to him from the car.

“Come by the clinic before eight o’clock, don’t forget, make an appointment with Carmem.”

He went uphill towards the church square. He looked and looked, but he couldn’t see any trace of the statue of Aphrodite. “It seems they have removed Aphrodite from her place in the middle of the square.” He thought back to when he had commissioned the statue from an artist friend with the intention of donating it to the town. He wanted the hair flowing down to the waist, the arms raised, a transparent veil should cover one breast and trail down her body until covering part of her pubic hair, and he insisted she have pronounced, shapely buttocks. He wanted the statue to exude luxury and sensuality. The artist had achieved this, but where was his Aphrodite?

He parked the car next to the church and continued towards the clergy house, where he found Father Lucas, a young priest new to the town.

“Hello, father! How’s your work for the people of this parish going?”

“Well, my son, lots to do and few resources. Perhaps you might be inclined to make a donation.”

Ivo took this opportunity to inquire after the statue.

“I have made donations. For example, I donated a sculpture of Aphrodite to the town.

You wouldn’t happen to know where the statue, which was in the centre of the square, has ended up, would you?”

The priest gazed into the empty space where statue had been and replied.

“My son, folk are saying that the mayor didn’t like the statue because it showed the breasts of a pagan god. Just between us,” he leaned in towards Ivo’s ear, “there’s talk that the mayor sucked at the teat of the government and that folk have named the statue after his wife.”



Doctor Ivo pretended to understand, bid farewell to the priest and continued in the direction of the town hall, looking for Dona Antônia's daughter Carmem, who handled the telephone. He entered the small room without knocking. Startled, Carmem hid the book she was holding under the desk and greeted the doctor, who asked her to call all of his scheduled patients. Carmem promised to make the calls right away. On leaving, Ivo bumped into the mayor, who embraced him, slapping his shoulders like an old friend. The doctor, still riled, took the opportunity to ask him:

"Mayor, if you don't mind me asking, would you happen to have any idea where the statue of Aphrodite has gotten to, the one I donated to the town?"

"Statue? Ah, yes, the statue. Didn't they take that down? I heard it was the priest's doing, as he reckoned it had nothing to do with the faith of the folk round here. People are saying the priest thought it pornographic. I think he ordered the removal of the thing from the square. I can have someone find out, open an enquiry, if you deem it necessary. . ."

The chimneys and rooftops of the houses created a pleasant scene, combining with the smell of woodfires burning at full blaze. Ivo's stomach cried out for lunch to be served by Dona Antônia, in whose house, in the back room, the clinic was located. For housing the clinic, Dona Antônia enjoyed a certain status within the local community, as well as free dental treatment, and Carmem even earned a little loose change doing odd jobs for the doctor.

Ivo stopped his car outside the small house and got out. He stretched his legs and went inside calling for Dona Antônia, who ran to greet him.

"Dona Antonia, what happened to the statue in the square?"

"I don't know, but I know folk are talking about it. Some think it's a good thing, the disappearance of that woman with her bare breasts, big backside and shameless face. Some began saying that the mayor sucks at the teat of the budget and they named the sculpture after the first lady. Others saw it as an attack on the town's memory. Everyone has a different story, I don't know. I only know that I made a nice lunch to fill you up before starting work. Shall we sit at the table?"

"But where has Aphrodite gotten to?" thought Ivo as he inspected the clinic before sitting down to eat.



*The clinic:* Doctor Ivo surveyed his clinic, concerned with its sterility. The dentist's chair was cast iron and dated from 1940, more reminiscent of a barber's chair. The leather-upholstered upper worn with age, the backrest with two settings for the patient's comfort. For the head, two supports like headphones, only tighter. The armrest was wooden. To the patient's right-hand side was a small table with round buttons and dials with hands which once moved for working the equipment. In place of drills, holes. A few unworking knobs and stiff switches made up the rest of what had been a control panel. A vertical arm held an incandescent lamp, without any kind of screen to protect the patient's eyes. A second arm ended in a platform for laying the instruments on. The third arm supported a round plastic container which sometimes served as a spittoon, fed by a thin spout fixed onto a tap which dripped constantly. By the sink, a gas lamp heated a metal bowl of water for sterilising the instruments.

There were two sockets fashioned into the wall and an iron window frame with dull glass panes. The window allowed a blurry image of the people outside. If open, it gave a view of the garden and orchard, where the top of a grand lemon tree stood out, which although in the neighbouring garden insisted on bearing fruit on this side of the wall. The remaining furniture consisted of two laminated tables, the sofa-bed the dedicated Doctor rested on and a side table for Carmem, Dona Antônia's daughter who organised the patient files.

Ivo was checking his equipment was ready for use when he heard Dona Antônia's call.

"Doctor Ivo, the lunch table is set."

The patients: The patients answered Carmem's call. They soon arrived outside Dona Antônia's house. Carmem helped to arrange a queue that began in the passageway flanking the house and continued into the street. Some patients came from far away, from the region's remote farms, most were simple folk for whom Doctor Ivo was their only healthcare. The quality of the work and the state of the equipment was of little importance, what they really wanted was to meet the doctor. The condition of the tools allowed, at best, the performance of superficial extractions and fillings. Dentures Ivo would have made in another town, when the patient could afford it. There wasn't a working manual drill that would let him carry out restorations. He knew that nothing could substitute the relief of the pliers for the toothache sufferer. Extractions were what he did most. Work began straight after lunch. The files would be prepared and organised by Carmem's hand. Arriving to his station, Ivo asked in his predictable ritual,

"Everything in order with the files?"



“As always, doctor,” replied Carmem.

“How many patients do we have today?”

“We have six. I don’t know if there will be time to see all of them.”

“Time can be found, Carmem. Give me the names.”

“Let me see. Dom Cantídio, Dona Veridiana, Dom José Lúcio, Dom Benedito Costa da Maninha, Dom Zé da Neca and,” she whispered the last one, “Dona Solange Araújo.”

“Ah, Dona Solange is on the list? I’m not sure I heard right.”

“Yes, Solange Araújo,” replied Carmem, arranging the files and thinking “I could do with being the last patient,” before adding, “I put her file last, as I always do.”

“Excellent. Now, let’s get to work.”

*Black dress, red dress:* Solange made the journey from her house to the clinic. On passing the bar, she was seen by the three usual observers.

“Where’s she off to in such a hurry, carrying that package?” the first commented.

“She doesn’t seem in a rush, she looks flustered. I think we’ve seen that package before,” the second replied.

The third, noting the direction she was heading, weighed in.

“She is going to see the doctor. To sort out some pain or other.”

Solange reached Dona Antônia’s house wearing the black dress that came down below her shins, the aforementioned package in her arms. The penultimate patient was still being seen to and Carmem sat at the desk, reading a book propped on her lap. Distracted, she didn’t register Solange’s presence.



“Reading for literature class?” asked Solange. Carmem, in a swift motion, shut the book and shoved it under a pile of papers on the desk. “Can I see the book?” asked Solange.

“No, it’s not for Portuguese class, it was a gift from someone,” said Carmem.

“I’ve come straight from work and I didn’t have time to change. Can I use the bathroom?”

“Of course, I’ll just check it’s all okay in there,” Carmem stepped out of the room a moment, long enough for Solange to lift the papers and see the hidden book. Carmem took some things out the bathroom and returned to her post. “You can use it now, all clear.”

Solange took her package and went to the bathroom, from where she emerged wearing the red dress with a blue flower at the waist and an opening on the side, revealing her thigh with every step she took. Carmem gazed in astonishment.

“I like the colour and the flower on the waist. I think whoever sees you will like it. You can go on in now, Zé da Neca has been seen to,” said Carmem, “Oh, on the way out you can use the bathroom to change,” she added with a wry smile.

“Thanks, dear. Oh, I liked the book you’re reading, of all of Dalton Trevisan’s, that’s the one I like best, *A Polaquinha*.”

As soon as Solange went into the clinic, Carmem ran to her room. Doctor Ivo arranged his instruments and carefully adjusted the headrest on the chair. When he saw her, he knocked the already-sterilised tools onto the floor.

“Good evening, Dona Solange. Have you been waiting long?”

“No, doctor. No more than usual,” she replied without directly meeting his gaze.

“Would you like to take a seat?” asked Ivo, looking at Solange’s dress, barely containing the woman’s flesh.

With measured steps, Solange approached the chair. Her movements suggested a certain intimacy. Everything was familiar. Solange’s slow movements didn’t match with her wheezing breath which flushed





her cheeks. Upon sitting down, the red dress revealed her thigh, which she was slow to cover up, feigning an effort while settling into the chair. The large flower on her waist hindered Ivo's approach with the sterilised instruments.

Ivo tried to focus on the job, but he couldn't steady his shaking hands, letting the tools crash to the floor for a second time. Without exchanging a word with Solange, he went about her treatment, she letting out the occasional complaint or short, sharp cry of pain. Ivo asked permission, removed the blue flower and unbuttoned Solange's dress. He trembling, she panting, their gazes, breathing, bodies, meeting, leaving silence in their wake, only broken by the clinking of metal and the dripping of the tap.

From the wrought-iron framed window with translucent glass, it was possible to make out the figure of Ivo, bent over Aphrodite, working quietly.



## ON TRANSLATING DECIO ZYLBERSZTAJN'S "THE BENEFACTOR OF SANTA CLARA"

ANDREW MCDUGALL

This intriguing short story, divided into mini-chapters, is taken from Decio Zylbersztajn's collection *Acerba Dor*, published in 2017. It was a lot of fun to translate, and hopefully an equally enjoyable read, but not without its difficulties and dilemmas.

Two important decisions had to be made regarding the addressing of people in the piece, the first relating to protagonist Ivo. Often called "Doutor Ivo" or simply "o doutor" in the source text, I did wonder if this might seem odd to an English-language reader because, of course, our Ivo is a dentist, not a medical doctor. In the UK, at least, it is not customary to refer to dentists as doctors. I have, however, in my translation referred to the character as "Doctor Ivo", for several reasons. In Portuguese, "doutor" does not necessarily refer to someone who is either a medical doctor or holds a PhD, but can be used as a mode of address for anyone with a university degree. As this is not the case in English, it would arguably be incorrect to translate this type of "doutor" as "doctor". That said, while being a dentist gives him the right to be known as "doctor", I also felt that the title suited Ivo's character. In Santa Clara, where he so enjoys his heightened status, his escape from mediocrity, he is not just a doctor but the doctor. As we see in the story, some residents see no other healthcare professional and so it seems natural that Ivo for them would be known as "doctor". We also get the sense that Ivo enjoys this role, it massages his ego and if there is a question mark over whether he should be called "doctor", it seems quite appropriate that he be called it anyway. Nevertheless, I did remove the odd "doctor" here and there from the target text as the ST was rather heavy with them and, in case of any slight confusion, I didn't want to overegg it, although I trust the reader will understand, with context, why this dentist is so continually referred to as a doctor.

The other modes of address that required some thought were "dom" and "dona", which appear on several occasions. I decided to retain the Portuguese words and so 'Dona Antônia' is so named in both the ST and TT. My decision was informed by the notion that the title, a mark of respect more than an actual title, would be recognisable enough to an Anglophone reader as such terms – and their equivalents in other romance languages – have filtered into English-language culture and understanding through other translated works. It is commonplace to leave such a mode of address as is and so that is what I did. Any attempt to get around this satisfactorily, if I did wish to avoid the use of "Dona", for example, in the TT, would have required information not contained in the ST. This is because it did not seem to me that the equivalent of "Dona Antônia" here could simply be "Antônia"; it would be more likely that Ivo would address her as



“Mrs...”, especially as other information in the text sets our story a few decades in the past, but we do not know her surname. A final glance at some other texts translated from Portuguese assured me that using “Dona” – n.b. capitalised – is commonplace in English translations.

Both decisions mentioned heretofore were also motivated in part, or at least partially justified, by the constant desire to avoid domesticating (see, for example, VENUTI 2012, p.277) my translations. This is a story set in Brazil and smoothing out any foreignness for an Anglophone reader – as if “the Anglophone reader” even exists as a homogenous group – would be misleading, counterintuitive to the practice of reading translated literature and unnecessary, to stop short of calling it “ethnocentric violence” (VENUTI, 2012, p.497). As Edith Grossman says, “translation celebrates the differences among languages and the many varieties of human experience and perception they can express” (GROSSMAN, 2010, p.17) and, for me, part of that is leaving in some foreign markers where appropriate and without hindering comprehension or intended effect or meaning, while being wary that “no language, no traditional symbolic set or cultural ensemble imports without risk of being transformed” (STEINER, 2012, p.158).

Another cultural issue, but relating to punctuation rather than the words themselves, regarded how to set out the speech. As is typical of Lusophone literature, Zylbersztajn uses em dashes to denote speech, while standard practice in the UK would generally be to use speech marks. This is by no means an automatic decision; many Anglophone authors shun speech marks and it is common in translations to see speech represented in other ways. I often prefer to render speech in the TT with the same punctuation as the ST, but I did, however, choose to use traditional speech marks in this piece as I could see no particular advantage to maintaining the non-standard representation of dialogue on this occasion, remembering of course that for a Brazilian reader of the ST the dialogue is presented with standard punctuation. This is an example of how an apparent change is in fact deployed to keep something the same, and perhaps what might be termed a dynamic equivalent (VENUTI, 2012, pp.144-145), as the UK reader of the translation will see the sort of speech punctuation they expect, just like the Brazilian reader of the original did.

Naturally, certain individual words also presented dilemmas. One example was “parainfo” which, in the ST context refers to an invited speaker giving a talk at a graduation ceremony. I had already worked the sentence in the TT to include the word “graduation” so I was thankfully able to simply use the translation “guest speaker”. Some research suggested that “commencement speaker” is a term commonly used for the “parainfo” at universities in the USA; however, I preferred guest speaker for its neutrality, rather than rooting the phrase in an American college when in fact the event took place in São Paulo.



I hope you enjoyed reading “The Benefactor of Santa Clara” and this commentary which gives a small window into some of the choices I made during the translation process. I think the story is a very curious one, with multiple themes and allusions, together with intentional contradictions and confusions, which stands up well to re-readings and is open to a number of interpretations.

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**FÁBIO MARIANO** TRANSLATES **CARLA BESSA**





## **AÍ EU FIQUEI SEM ESSE FILHO**

CARLA BESSA

(Tira a galinha do congelador e põe no micro-ondas. Passa a água que tinha acabado de ferver na garrafa térmica, põe o porta-filtro sobre a boca da garrafa, põe o filtro no porta-filtro e o pó dentro, cinco colheres de sopa rasas)

Depois eu tive: meus filhos, eu tive: meus sete filhos, quer dizer: seis. Porque: esse que mataram eu nem nunca criei ele não. Eu só: cuidei dele no primeiro mês, aí o pai dele: roubou ele de mim, o pai: sequestrou o garoto.

(Deixa a água fervida escorrer devagar sobre o pó de café até encher o filtro. Para, espera até a água descer. O micro-ondas apita. Ela anda com a chaleira na mão e aperta o botão do micro-ondas que faz abrir a porta. Faz menção de tirar a galinha, mas desiste, pois só tem uma mão livre)

Ele me bateu. Eu tenho isso aqui no meu rosto, ó, meio quebrado: foi ele. Pois é, é por isso que eu tenho o rosto meio assim, meio: deformado, né, se você olhar bem.

(Põe mais água sobre o pó, para, espera)

Ele roubou meu filho, eu: dei queixa. Então: foi a mãe dele que ficou com o meu garoto. Ele e a mãe criaram o garoto, mas: não me deixavam visitar. Aí eu pus: na justiça de novo e: ganhei o direito de ver o meu filho. Eu: ganhei um direito que era meu.

(Recoloca a chaleira sobre a boca ainda acesa do fogão. Tira a bisnaga da cesta de pão, coloca sobre a mesa, junto com a manteiga Itambé e o queijo minas Frescal. A água ferve novamente. Põe mais água no pó de café)

A mãe dele: trazia. Uma vez ou outra. Depois o garoto foi: crescendo, crescendo. E puseram o menino pra trabalhar de vendedor ambulante. O garoto andava: sujo: imundo: fedorento: largado. Acabou: saindo do colégio, fugiu. Então eu: falei com a professora e ele pôde: ficar lá, estudando mais um tempo.





Aí fugiu. E passou um tempão fora e virou adulto e voltou com uma mulher e inventaram de morar lá perto de casa.

(Nota que a garrafa térmica está cheia. Tira o porta-filtros e põe dentro da pia. No meio do caminho, pinga café sobre o braço e “ai, merda!” Fecha a garrafa térmica e traz para a mesa. Abre de novo e me serve de café, pergunta “quer leite?”, eu digo, “quero”. Me serve de leite e se serve de café, leite e – ia pegar o açúcar, mas muda de ideia, balança a cabeça, decide-se pelo adoçante, Zero Cal.)

Mas, deixa eu: voltar pra trás um pouco. Na época que o pai pegou o garoto pra criar com a vó, eles: não deixavam eu visitar, né, não deixavam: nem falar comigo. E o dia que a gente se encontrava e ele falava comigo ou me dava a benção, aí ele: levava porrada. Só porque tinha falado comigo, porrada de adulto, eles: machucavam o garoto todinho.

(Passa manteiga na bisnaga que ainda está quente, a manteiga derrete um pouco, ela passa a ponta da língua na borda da bisnaga para evitar pingar manteiga na toalha da mesa. Dá uma mordida no pão que segura com a mão direita, a esquerda deixa em baixo em forma de concha para amparar eventuais pingos e migalhas. As migalhas ela joga na boca ainda aberta e mastiga e engole tudo. Come com apetite, dando goles largos no seu café com leite, que sopra entre uma coisa e outra)

Aí fugiu. E apareceu com essa mulher e inventou de morar lá perto de casa. Mas nisso só: andava em parada errada porque: a mulher que ele arrumou era dessas coisas, era: das drogas. Ele: caiu nessa bagunça aí. Eu só sei que a mulher, eu não sei o que houve lá, mas a mulher: arrumou uma tramoia com dois primos e uns colega dela e mandou: matar ele. Dentro de casa. Mataram ele em casa. Enquanto estava dormindo. Pegaram: uma pedra enorme assim, ó, e: jogaram em cima dele. Depois ainda deram: um monte de tiro por cima, os cara lá: mataram ele lá mesmo: dormindo em casa.

(Pousa a xícara no pires e o pão do ladinho. Limpa a boca com as costas da mão direita)

Aí eu fiquei sem esse filho.



## SO I ENDED UP WITHOUT THAT CHILD

CARLA BESSA

TRANSLATED BY FÁBIO MARIANO

(She takes the chicken from the freezer and puts it into the microwave. Then she rinses the flask with the water she's just boiled, puts the filter in the dripper and then the ground coffee inside, five level tablespoons of it)

Then I had them: my children, I had them: my seven children, I mean: six. Because: this one they killed I didn't ever get to raise him, no. I only: took care of him during the first month, then his dad: stole him from me, the dad: kidnapped the boy.

(She lets the boiled water pour slowly onto the coffee until the filter's filled. She stops, lets the water seep through. The microwave beeps. She walks over to it, holding the kettle, and presses the button to open the microwave. She reaches towards the chicken, but then gives up, one of her hands being busy)

He smacked me. I've got this thing here on my face, see, kind of broken: that was him. Well, that's why my face looks like this, like: deformed, right, if you give it a proper look.

(She pours some more water onto the coffee, stops, waits)

He stole my son from me, I: I pressed charges. So then: his mother was who got to keep my boy. He and his mother raised the kid, but: they wouldn't let me visit him. So I went: to court again and: I won the right to visit my child. I: won a right that was mine.

(She puts the kettle over the still burning flame on the stove. Takes a soft roll from the breadbasket, places it on the table, along with Itambé butter and Minas Frescal cheese. The water boils again. She pours yet more water over the coffee)

His grandmother did: bring him. Once in a while. Then the boy did: grow taller and taller. And they sent him to work as a peddler. The boy roamed: dirty: filthy: stinking: helpless. In the end: he dropped out of school, ran away. So I: talked to the teacher and he was able to: stay there, studying a little longer.

Then he ran away. And he was gone for a long time and became an adult and came back with a woman and they got this idea of moving into my neighbourhood.



(She notices the flask's full. She takes the dripper off and places it in the sink. After taking a few steps, she spills coffee on her arm and "oh, shit!" Closes the flask and brings it to the table. She opens it again and pours me some coffee, asks "do you want milk?", I say, "sure". She pours me some milk and she helps herself to the coffee, milk and – goes for sugar, but changes her mind, nods, and chooses the sweetener, Zero Cal.)

But, let me: just get back to that. When the dad got the boy to raise him with the grandmother, they: wouldn't let me pay him a visit, right, they wouldn't let him: even talk to me. And the days when we finally got together and he could talk to me or ask me to bless him, then he would: get his ass kicked. Just for talking to me, grown up ass-kicking, them: they hurt the boy through and through.

(She coats the still warm roll, the butter starting to melt, she licks the side of the roll with the tip of her tongue to keep it from dripping on the tablecloth. She bites the bread she's holding in her right hand, the left one cupped below to catch the occasional crumb or drop. These crumbs she throws into her still open mouth and chews it and swallows it all down. She eats willingly, taking long sips of her coffee, blowing on it in between)

Then he ran away. And came back with this woman and got this idea of moving into my neighbourhood. But from that moment he just: got into trouble because: the woman he went out and got himself with was into that stuff, you know: drugs. He: got dragged into all that mess. What I know is that the woman, I don't know what happened there, but the woman: ganged up with two of her cousins and some other ones of her kind and had: him killed. In the house. They killed him when he was inside. While he slept. They took: a rock, this big, like this, and: crashed it down on him. Then they: shot him anyway, until he was good and dead, them crooks: killed him right there: sleeping inside his house.

(She puts her cup on her saucer and the roll right beside it. She wipes her mouth with the back of her right hand)

So I ended up without that child.

*\* This translation was produced for the SELCS Brazilian Translation Club online workshop on Carla Bessa's short story and had a great deal of contribution from the participants. I would like to thank especially Victor Meadowcroft for his invaluable help with the translation and editing of the version submitted to the project coordinators.*



## COMENTÁRIO DO TRADUTOR

FÁBIO MARIANO

Antes de escrever quaisquer palavras sobre a tradução ou o conto traduzido, gostaria de agradecer ao Brazilian Translation Club pela oportunidade de fazê-la e pelas valiosas contribuições de seus membros durante a discussão – e, especialmente, à contribuição fundamental de Victor Meadowcroft, que foi praticamente um editor desse trabalho específico, e à generosidade da própria autora, que se dispôs a discuti-la comigo e refiná-la.

Traduzir o conto “Aí eu fiquei sem esse filho”, de Carla Bessa, é, antes de mais nada, ter o prazer e o privilégio de lê-lo. Se formalmente o texto nos arrebatava pela meticulosa construção da oralidade e pela pontuação atípica, o jogo de vai-e-vem que justapõe uma cena prosaica, trivial, caseira – o ritual do café da tarde – e um episódio de múltiplas camadas de violência – a(s) perda(s) de um filho – é temática que choca, comove, captura o leitor.

Como, então, entregar em língua inglesa toda a riqueza dessa experiência de leitura? O primeiro desafio que se coloca diante do tradutor é do registro informal. Em que medida são válidas as construções sintáticas utilizadas por Bessa quando passadas para o inglês britânico, e como encontrar equivalências? A escritora, de maneira bastante precisa e hábil, reconstrói a oralidade do português brasileiro – uma língua que tem como uma de suas questões centrais a discrepância entre o oral e o escrito e que, não à toa, tem no cerne de seu cânone literário escritoras e escritores que tentaram dar a ela uma solução original. Criar (ou recompor) a melodia organizada por Bessa com suas palavras foi um dos grandes objetivos da tradução que se propõe aqui.

O uso da pontuação – e, sobretudo, do sinal de “dois pontos” – é parte fundamental dessa melodia. Foi necessário, portanto, pensar onde inseri-los em cada frase. O exercício imaginativo de recriação da voz narrativa e da voz da personagem que também narra – e as diferenças entre essas vozes – dependia de uma compreensão fundamental dos atos, gestos e movimentos (algo apontado por Elton Uliana durante a discussão sobre a tradução na reunião do BTC). Há um ritmo da narrativa que depende tanto da pontuação quanto dos gestos. E era esse o ritmo dentro do qual se deveria encaixar a melodia da oralidade proposta por Bessa.

A questão da informalidade não se restringe, no entanto, ao aspecto formal. A própria situação que funciona como “moldura” à história contada pela personagem central do texto é um daqueles elementos que são



tão naturalizados dentro de uma determinada cultura que parecem inatos. Trata-se do ritual brasileiro de “passar um café”, com todos os seus apetrechos, sensações e durações. É curioso que não me ocorra palavra em português melhor para descrever essa situação do que a inglesa “homely” (caseiro é o mais aproximado, mas não me traz a impressão correta). O leitor inglês deve ter em mente que mesmo em casas onde existe uma moderna máquina que extrai de cápsulas a vácuo o café, a memória do cheiro da água fervente afundando aos poucos no pó colocado a colheradas sobre um filtro de papel ou pano é uma presença silenciosa, pronta a ser despertada a qualquer falha da máquina, falta de cápsulas ou visita que não esteja habituada ao espresso.

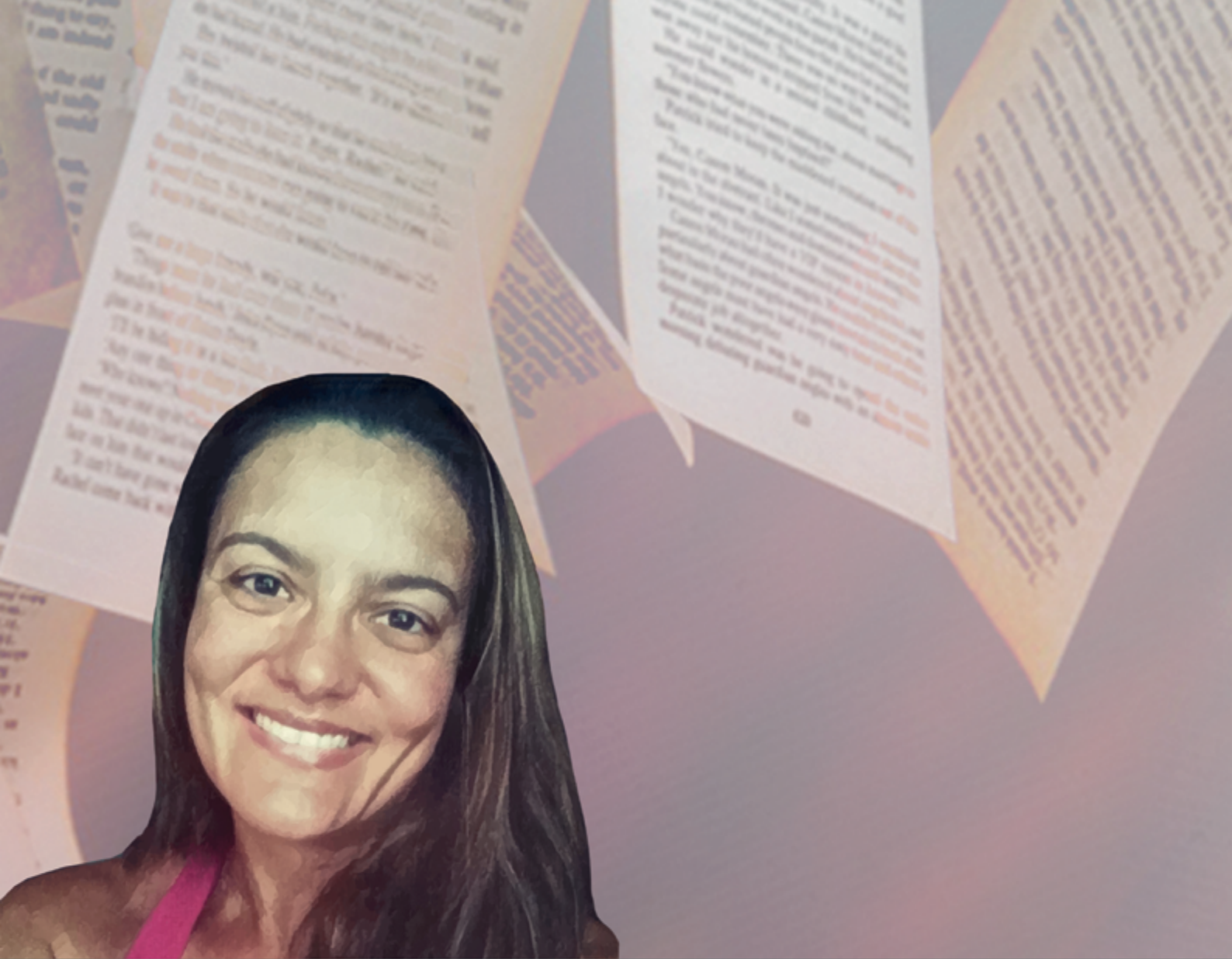
Que dizer, então, do ato de “pedir bênção”? Comum em diversas regiões e classes sociais no Brasil, é uma espécie de ritual no qual uma pessoa mais nova pede à mais velha, um parente ou alguém por quem se tenha grande consideração, como um padrinho (há uma implícita relação de poder na hierarquia inerente ao ato) que lhe abençoe. Um pequeno diálogo toma lugar: “A sua bênção, minha mãe”, “Deus te abençoe, meu filho”. O significado social dessa pequena troca de palavras é o reconhecimento do respeito e da autoridade do mais velho, e é evidenciada menos na execução do ritual do que na recusa a cumpri-lo (que pode ser considerada conduta afrontosa ou até um atentado contra a instituição familiar, a depender da situação). Pode também, no entanto, ser um ritual de demonstração de carinho pela figura mais velha. E é essa mera troca de palavras que, no conto de Bessa, motiva espancamentos a uma criança – exatamente por se configurar como uma demonstração de carinho e respeito do filho à mãe.

Creio que parte da tarefa de que se ocupa a literatura brasileira contemporânea é a revelação da medida em que a violência – e sobretudo a violência contra as minorias – se incrustou no cotidiano nacional de maneira naturalizada. Essa violência esteve evidente e manifesta ao longo de nossa triste história – e hoje é celebrada e louvada por um governo eleito após uma série de atentados às instituições democráticas. Não à toa, esse mesmo governo demonstra seu desprezo pela cultura do país e pelas suas minorias repetidamente massacradas. O conto de Bessa, por suas opções formais e temáticas, toma para si essa tarefa, e a executa de modo a deixar-nos com um nó na garganta ao mesmo tempo em que desperta, em nós, a memória de tomar um cafezinho e comer pão com manteiga. Se pode parecer estranho que essas duas sensações coabitem nossa mente, pensemos no resultado – a indigestão, o incômodo, a indignação. Diante da narrativa de uma mulher que, de maneira natural (ainda que com interrupções que, longe de serem hesitantes, parecem apenas pausas para retomar o ar que nunca mais lhe será fácil inalar) conta a história de como foi privada do filho, de como o viu ser humilhado, espancado (de como ela própria foi espancada) e depois ser assassinado de maneira brutal dentro de sua própria casa, o que sentimos é a indigestão, o incômodo, a indignação: da experiência de ser brasileiro, de estar no Brasil,



e de saber que a violência doméstica, os assassinatos de pessoas dentro de suas casas (muitas vezes por forças do Estado) e a privação das mães e das não-mães de seus direitos mais básicos são parte (execrável e vergonhosa) de nossa experiência histórica.





**RAFA LOMBARDINO** TRANSLATES **JACQUES FUX**





## AUTOR OU AQUELE QUE PLAGIA A OUTRA DOR

JACQUES FUX

*A história é objeto de uma construção cujo lugar não é o tempo homogêneo e vazio, mas um tempo saturado de “agoras”.*

Walter Benjamin

*Il faudrait dire je. Il voudrait dire je. Mais, quel “je”?* O que eu queria era mergulhar nos meus sonhos. Nas minhas invenções. Em minhas lembranças falseadas. Encantadas. Passadas. Quem é o autor aqui? O autor está morto? Quem é esse *eu* que escreve o livro? O *eu* narrador e o *eu* autor. Tenho responsabilidade pelo que escrevi? Tenho responsabilidade pelo que escrevo? Expresso aqui minhas opiniões? Minha visão política? Minha visão da Literatura? Da ficção? Aqui aparece rigorosamente a minha *intenção* romântica enquanto autor? Pode o autor ser completamente imparcial? Posso eu escrever algo alheio à minha vida? Distante da minha arte? Longe da literatura? Há aqui uma independência da literatura em relação à história? E a psicanálise do autor? Do narrador? Do personagem? Do *eu*? Aqui há um sentido profundo? Uma alegoria? Pierre Menard, o autor do Quixote, descreve um texto que foi escrito por dois autores distintos com sentidos muitas vezes opostos, graças ao contexto e às intenções de cada autor. Aqui, foram muitos autores. Muitos colaboradores. Minha história me acompanhou. A literatura perpassou e preencheu os vazios da memória. Ou os vazios da literatura foram preenchidos por minha vida. A literatura é de quem? O autor do começo deste livro não é o autor do fim deste livro. Ele sofre mutações. Evolui. Regride. Enxerga a literatura e a memória de outra forma. Este autor continua sendo *eu*. Este *eu* que é um fingidor. Um plagiário. Um plagiário por antecipação? O sentido desta obra está somente no autor? Está somente no leitor? Está na descoberta do *eu*? Na identificação de todos os fingidores? Na revelação do que foi inventado e do que foi de fato vivido? O que é um Autor? Aqui há uma multiplicidade de sentidos e de autores (dentre os quais, o fato de não haver sentido e não existir autor). O conjunto vazio está contido em qualquer conjunto. Tudo aqui pode e deve ser interpretado em relação ao fator histórico. Mas a História, apesar de clamar muitas vezes pela verdade, também é uma invenção, logo a história aqui contada faz parte do contexto da História. Aqui, as minhas passagens paralelas podem ser encontradas nos muitos autores desta obra. Nos muitos *eus*. No cânone. Uma cadeia literária é criada. Discutida. Estruturada. Polemizada. Desconstruída. Ambiguidade intencional. A obra aqui vive a sua vida. A sua arte. E eu vivo a minha obra. A minha arte. As minhas invenções. Frustrações. Devaneios. Não amamos plenamente um poema se não o compreendemos. Por outro lado, não compreendemos plenamente um poema se não o amamos. Eu não entendo a minha literatura. Mas eu a amo. Amo o mistério. O segredo. O não saber. O estranhamento. Amei tanto a literatura de muitos simplesmente por sua primeira leitura ter me causado um grande mal-estar. Estranhei. Incomodou-me. Quis perscrutar. Revelar. Descobrir. E continuei incomodado. Continuo inquietado com



a Literatura e com toda a rede de referências que ela cria e plagia. Esse foi o mesmo amor que tive por todas as mulheres que me incomodaram. Que não me revelaram, a princípio, sua beleza e seus encantos. Mulheres que me deixaram cabreiro e me excitaram. Assim como a literatura. A literatura aqui é como as mandalas budistas. Alguns budistas trabalham na construção de belas imagens com grãos de areia coloridos. São lindas obras de arte. O trabalho é rigoroso. Fatigante. Demoram muito tempo para construí-las. Descobri-las. Inventá-las. Esculpi-las. Um trabalho árduo. Elas tomam forma lentamente. Lentamente são reveladas. Havia uma intenção do construtor de mandalas? Ele pensou em todas as possibilidades ao moldá-las? Soube inicialmente como elas ficariam? Incomodou-se com isso? Ele é como um criador de puzzles? Pode imaginar de fato todas as combinações possíveis? Acredito que os budistas não se preocupam com essas questões literárias. Eles têm grande desapego. Utopia. E quando terminam a sua majestosa obra destroem completamente tudo o que foi feito. O prazer está no durante. No caminho. Assim como um dos *autores* só existe quando a obra está sendo escrita. O prazer do durante. Este *autor* vive enquanto escreve sua obra. Seu livro. Enquanto cria seus momentos. Suas ficções. Assim que a obra acaba, acaba-se com ela um autor. Esse *autor* que a escreveu. Que nela colocou sua emoção. Que sofreu e sorriu. Criou mistérios, encantos, problemas e soluções. O autor budista. Entregue à escrita e à elaboração de algo belo. Artístico. E que, ao chegar ao fim, libertou-se de seu trabalho. O livro passa a existir em outra dimensão. Outro plano, outro autor, outro leitor. O durante da obra não existe mais. Existe algo que será lido e interpretado por outros. Como aqueles que fotografam as mandalas budistas ao longo de sua confecção. Intérpretes de um momento. Tecem relações. Com outros momentos. Com seus próprios momentos. Ou não. Apenas fruem a leitura. Alguns recepcionam as obras de arte de acordo com suas possibilidades. Amam, detestam ou *on s'en fout*. Acham belo ou ridículo. As mandalas são lindas. E a labuta é grande. Mas a beleza não está no fim, está no durante. Quando não escrevo, estou morto. Desapego-me da literatura pela vida. Pela vontade de viver. Pelo desejo de reinventar a vida. Reinventar a invenção literária. A autobiografia ficcional. A autobiografia literária. Autoficção. Redescobrir e reconstruir a ficção que aqui se acaba com a *disparition* do meu eu.



## AUTHOR OR THE PLAGIARIZER OF SOMEONE ELSE'S PAIN

JACQUES FUX

TRANSLATED BY RAFA LOMBARDINO

*History is the object of a construction whose place is formed not in homogenous and empty time, but in that which is fulfilled by the here-and-now.*

Walter Benjamin

*Il faudrait dire je. Il voudrait dire je. Mais, quel "je"?* What I wanted was to plunge into my dreams. My creations. My falsified memories. Enchanted. Bygone. Who is the author here? Is the author dead? Who is this / who writes the book? /, the narrator, and /, the author. Am I responsible for what I have written? Am I responsible for what I write? Am I expressing my opinions here? My political views? My view of Literature? Of fiction? Is my romantic *intention* as an author thoroughly clear here? Can an author be completely neutral? May I write something that is foreign to my experiences? Distant from my art? Away from Literature? Here, is literature independent from history? How about therapy for the author? For the narrator? For the character? For the /? Is there a deep feeling here? An allegory? Pierre Menard, Author of Quixote describes a text written by two separate authors who often had opposite purposes, considering their individual contexts and intentions. Here, there were many authors. Many collaborators. My story has kept me company. Literature came in and filled in the gaps in my memory. Or the gaps in literature were filled in by my life. Who owns literature? The author from the beginning of this book isn't the same at the end of this book. He goes through mutations. Evolves. Regresses. He sees literature and memory in a different way. This author continues to be /. This / is a pretender. A plagiarizer. A plagiarizer in foresight? Can the meaning of a piece be found within the author alone? Within the reader alone? Is it in discovering the I? In identifying all the pretenders? In revealing what has been created and what has indeed been experienced? What is an Author? Here, we have multiple purposes and authors – including a lack of purposefulness and the absence of an author. An empty ensemble can be found in any ensemble. Everything here can and should be interpreted according to a historical factor. However, even though History oftentimes cries out for the truth, it is also a creation – therefore, the story that is told here is part of the larger context of History. Here, many parallel passages may be identified in the diversity of authors in this work. In the many versions of the /. In the canon. A literary chain is created. Debated. Structured. Controverted. Deconstructed. Intentionally ambiguous. The work comes to life here. It becomes art. And I experience my work of art. My art. My creations. Frustrations. Daydreams. We cannot fully appreciate a poem if we don't understand it. On the other hand, we cannot fully understand a poem if we don't appreciate it. I don't understand my literature. But I appreciate it. I appreciate the mystery. The secret. The unknown. The foreignness. I so appreciate the literature made by others simply because, at a first reading, they made me uncomfortable. They were foreign to me.





They bothered me. I wanted to scrutinize them. Expose them. Discover them. And I remained bothered. I still feel restless about Literature and the entire network of references it creates and plagiarizes. It reminds me of the same love I felt for all the women who have made me uncomfortable. Who, at first did not expose their beauty and charms to me. Women who have made me suspicious and excited me. Just as literature has. Literature, here, is like a Buddhist mandala. Some Buddhists create beautiful images using colored sand. They are beautiful works of art. It requires attention to detail. Exhausting. They take a lot of time to create these mandalas. To find them. To design them. To sculpt them. It's a painstaking work. They take shape slowly. They slowly reveal themselves. What were the intentions of the mandala creator? Did he think of all possible ways to shape it? Did he know how they would turn out from the very beginning? Was he bothered by it? Is he like a puzzle maker? Was he actually able to imagine all possible combinations? I believe Buddhists aren't concerned about these literary issues. They know how to let go. Utopia. When they're done with their majestic work, they take it all down. The pleasure is in the making. The path. Just like one of the *authors* can only come to be while their work is being written. The pleasure of making it. This *author* is alive while writing the work. The book. While creating these moments. These fictions. When the work is finished, so is the *author*. The one author who wrote it. Who poured some feelings into it. Who suffered and smiled. Who created mysteries, beauty, problems, and solutions. The Buddhist author. Devoted to writing and creating something beautiful. Artistic. And who, in the end, set himself free of his work. The book then exists in another dimension. Another plane, another author, another reader. The making of the work no longer exists. There's only something that will be read and interpreted by others. It's like taking a picture of a Buddhist mandala while they're being created. Interpreters of a moment. Weaving relations. With other moments. With their own moments. Or not. They just enjoy reading it. There are those who welcome works of art according to their possibilities. They love it, they hate it, or *on s'en fout*. They find it nice or ridiculous. Mandalas are beautiful. It's a work of labor. But beauty isn't in the final result – it's in the process. While I'm not writing, I'm dead. I let go of literature for life's sake. For the will to live. While yearning to reinvent life. Reinventing a literary creation. A fictional autobiography. A literary autobiography. Autofiction. Rediscovering and recreating fiction that comes to an end with the *disappearance* of myself.



## THE PROCESS OF INHABITING AN AUTHOR'S MIND – AND FEELING THEIR PAIN

RAFA LOMBARDINO

I was entrusted with the task of translating Jacques Fux's "Autor ou aquele que plagia a outra dor" into English. I wasn't familiar with the author's work, nor was I aware that the fragment submitted for translation was part of a larger content – a novel, nonetheless – and I enjoyed working in the dark, so to speak, while preparing a translation that would be discussed with a study group, in the presence of the author himself. It was a thrilling puzzle game.

Having only the material before me as reference, I tried to identify the patterns within the text itself – the repetitions, the juxtapositions, the structure of each sentence. My task in that moment was to try to understand the author's reasoning behind his word and style choices and why he had arranged the pieces of the puzzle a certain way.

Starting with the title, I had to make a decision about gender. "Author" in English is a gender-neutral word, while in Portuguese it is markedly male – and the author of the text himself is a man. Should I attribute a gender to this author in the English translation? Or should I make it general – it's about all authors and the craft of writing – as the global context of the piece seemed to call for? I opted for the latter, having a feeling that the content in front of me was a collection of thoughts about the role that authors and the arts as a whole play in our lives as readers, as consumers of the written word.

Throughout the text, I came upon different keywords and sentence structures that made me pause and look for equivalents that already exist in English, so as not to add foreignness to the translation and inadvertently take the reader away from the text and the main idea that the author is trying to convey.

Considering the nature of the piece, I wanted to make some concepts sound as natural as possible in English, while reflecting the author's writing style. It would be easy to go with similar wording that could convey the same meaning, on paper, but would fail to reach the same "feeling" I believed that the author had expressed in the original. Words like *imparcial*, *psicanálise*, *vazios*, *fingidor* could have easily become "impartial," "psychoanalysis," "emptiness," and "faker." Instead, I opted for associating these concepts with what felt more natural in English: "neutral," "therapy," "gaps," and "pretender."





I also needed to teeter the line between those times when the same word was used to mean the same thing, thus reinforcing a concept, and those other times when a different word was attached to the exact same concept instead. When it came to this text, it was all about nuanced choices, after all.

Some of the keywords that stood out to me were the different variations of the noun *invenção*, accompanied by *inventar*, *inventado*, *reinventar*. Literally, it refers to “invention,” the act of “inventing,” and “reinventing” a universe as an author, a universe that will be interpreted by readers, that will ultimately belong to readers once it is finally put into words, thus ceasing to belong to the author who “invented” it.

In order to ensure proper collocation, I chose to go with variations of “creation” and “to create” instead, thus giving readers the idea that authors build a universe in the pages of a book, but ultimately it is they, the readers, who inhabit that universe. Still, the author played some tricks on me, as a translator and as reader, by associating different words in Portuguese to the exact same concept: *criar*, *construir*, *construção*, *reconstruir*, *confeção*. While these words were most often transported into English as “creation,” “creating,” and “recreating,” some sentence structures and/or imagery did call for “design” or “reinvent” instead.

While still reflecting on writing as an act in itself, the author talks about *obra*, *trabalho*, and *labuta*. Well, *obra* is a “work of art” and *trabalho* is “the work itself,” the process of toiling with the decision of how to put a universe into words. How about *labuta*? I interpreted it as a “work of labor,” something more physical than intellectual.

One of the word choices that was much discussed in our live session was the use of the word *eu*. It’s such a simple little word, isn’t it? Simply put, *eu* means “I,” no doubt about it. But in the author’s reflections about the work of writing, of creating universes, this “I” becomes multidimensional. It is the “I” author who writes a piece. It is the “I” author who is depicted in the piece – thus different from the “I” author writing it. It is the “I” author hiding behind the character of the author, who is not the author himself.

What Fux seems to allude to in this piece is the multitude of *eus* that lives inside an author, who fight among themselves to decide who is the “I” author that will come out on the final version of the piece. This multitude of *eus* also establishes a dialog with other authors, because the process of creating written art may seem solitary – a lonely writer, or translator, typing words on a computer – but it is the product of everything an author has ever read and experienced, which contributes to the act of creating a universe and putting it into words – whether as original content or as translated content, because translators give voice to authors in the target language.



In this search for the “I,” the author referred to autofiction in the second to last sentence of the original. And that’s where it all clicked for me, as a reader and as the translator of this piece. The process of creating a universe is also the process of plagiarizing someone else’s words – or “pain,” as mentioned in the title – whether it is the words/pain of other authors who have come before us, or our own words/pain transformed into other words/pains in a self-plagiarizing process that fictionalizes our real “I.”





**NATI RUSSO** TRANSLATES **JULIANA DINIZ**







## PERPÉTUA

JULIANA DINIZ

A primeira sensação de Perpétua ao chegar a Manaus foi de sufocamento. Carregava uma mala pequena, quase uma trousse, repleta de panos de roupa já usados pelo uso, além de alguma maquiagem, que jamais deixou de usar apesar da pobreza. Uma ameaça de arrependimento se anunciou tão logo sentiu suas costas molhadas de suor, a respiração difícil, como se os pulmões estivessem fora da terra, em território estranho e não humano. Surpreendeu-se, pois achou que conhecia bem o calor e o mormaço. Criada no sertão, vendo o gado morrer de sede por falta d'água, a terra esturricada, engrossando a planta dos pés.

No fim da tarde do primeiro dia da sua vida nova, permitiu-se um passeio. Um zoológico vazio, não fosse a sua presença e a de alguns animais adormecidos, talvez de tédio ou pela quentura. É curioso um zoológico no meio da floresta. É como se os bichos fossem homens: olhando pela janela a vida que passa diante dos olhos. Havia um silêncio de selva, um quase silêncio: silvos, pequenos gritos compassados de arara, a respiração pesada de uma onça impassível, evitando contato visual. Tentou olhar dentro do olho da onça para entender o que é viver sem prestar conta a um dono, mas a onça não deu confiança, parecia até conformada. Perpétua escutou o ruído dos seus passos enquanto caminhava no chão de terra batida e sentiu preguiça ao ver dois macacos de barriga branca pensando sobre o nada, as pernas enraçadas.

Havia chegado há poucas horas do interior do Ceará. Pesava uma opressão causada pela umidade e pelas cores vivas que tumultuavam os seus olhos ainda habituados à terra ressequida dos Inhamuns, o tom tedioso do barro salpicado pelo verde sem viço do sertão. Seu estranhamento empestou o lugar, e as araras começaram a gritar alto. Perpétua lhes alvoroçava a calma da tarde, como se trouxesse um mau agouro de seca. Naquela tarde sentiu pela primeira vez a força oculta na floresta que, mesmo hoje, tanto tempo depois, ainda a faz sentir puxada por um fluxo poderoso para dentro de um universo em que o tempo é suspenso porque feito só de passado. A mata imensa, paisagem alta, mostrando a Perpétua como seu corpo é pequeno e insignificante. Deu-se conta que a morte pode acontecer de um susto, sem que aquele mundo farto de tanta vida note que ela deixou de existir.

Dois dias depois de sua chegada, começou a perceber a luz cor de cobre tingindo de sangue todas as coisas, uma cor dissimulada, tão diferente da claridade ofuscante do sol do Ceará. Fez falta o amarelo vivo, dourado, luz de queimar a pele, ressecar folhagem e deixar tudo à vista. Em Manaus o sol amanhece vermelho entre as copas de árvores, ensanguentando os espaços de céu que ainda se vê em meio aos galhos frondosos, uma cor como a marca de uma tragédia. Assistia ao sol nascer pela imagem vermelha refletida no igarapé.



Nunca imaginou que um dia fosse morar trepada sobre a água, ouvindo, à noite, na vigília de um sono leve, o som de peixes deslizando oleosos nas profundezas do rio infinito, mais infinito que o mar, que Perpétua jamais viu, mas sabia ser grande. Nunca entendeu porque só ela era capaz de ouvir o nado dos peixes submersos. Ela, que nascera no sertão árido, vendo o gado definhar de sede ano após ano.

*É melhor não entrar na água, tem peixe de comer homem*, havia lhe dito um barqueiro nos primeiros dias na palafita, ela ainda desacostumada a tanta água ao redor, ilhando a vida, diluindo as escolhas. A cada noite sonhava que a chuva forte e constante amolecia a madeira frágil das tábuas que lhe serviam de chão, por cujas frestas era possível ver o rio correndo durante o dia. No pesadelo, sua cama submergia, levada pela correnteza. Não havia tempo de gritar, só sentia o movimento viscoso de peixes que se confundiam com a água a lhe entrar pela garganta. Acordava suada pelo calor, estremecida pela solidão da cama vazia, o marido ausente, navegando através do rio a trabalho. Homem que conhecera no Ceará e que a levava para viver naquela terra prestes a afundar, sempre embarcado a trabalho, mais distante do que próximo, mais estranho que companhia.

*Só sei viver dentro d'água, Perpétua, vamos embora desta terra onde dia de chuva é mais difícil que milagre de santo...* E assim partiram do sertão dos Inhamuns em direção ao Amazonas.

A cada quinze dias embarcado, eram dois de descanso em casa. Chegava com sede de cama. Despia Perpétua com a violência dos bichos não enjaulados e famintos. Copulava com gosto, mordendo o pescoço dela, que gemia, em pleno gozo, indiferente aos animais deslizando na água sob o colchão. Passaram-se anos, Perpétua sem engravidar, a barriga dificultada pela ausência do marido. Nos dias mais difíceis, imaginava que os filhos que Miguel fazia no seu ventre desciam com a água da chuva para preencher ovos vazios que os peixes deixavam na folhagem presa do igarapé. Bichos insidiosos e endemoniados, comedores de promessas.

Era um dia de setembro, que amanheceu vermelho, sem sinal de chuva. Dia do barco voltar, ela preparou a comida ao agrado do marido. Miguel não apareceu, nem se teve notícia do seu paradeiro. Duas semanas se passaram sem novidade, e Perpétua intuiu o pior. Preferiu acreditar na fraqueza da carne. Podia ser perfume de mulher nova. Pediu ajuda ao vizinho, foi em busca do patrão de quem mal sabia o nome, um rastro de informação que a ajudasse a manter a esperança de encontrá-lo morto ou vivo. Quem sabe fugira com uma desconhecida descoberta em algum porto embrenhado na mata?

Não encontrou suas respostas. Recolheu-se na palafita, imaginando o filho que ainda haveria de ter com Miguel, os olhos puxados e a pele escurecida pelo sol. Iria parir um ribeirinho conhecedor dos mistérios



da água. Remoou uma espera sem data para acabar. Cortava cebola sem molhar os olhos quando o vizinho trouxe a notícia de que um corpo de homem fora achado não muito distante dali, boiando no rio. Não adiantava se apressar, o vizinho fez questão de dizer, a polícia já tinha recolhido os restos, mas só depois que o canal de tv terminou a reportagem sobre o corpo infestado de peixes, que saíam pelas suas vísceras.

– Você sabe o que é candiru, comadre? É um peixe miudinho assim. Não esqueça do que eu disse, aqui tem peixe de comer homem!

Ele a ajudou a encontrar o caminho do IML. Resignada, trêmula, Perpétua foi levada a uma sala destinada ao reconhecimento dos cadáveres. Ficou alguns minutos diante do lençol branco que cobria um corpo afogado, inchado, sem saber como manter-se de pé. Era preciso esperar o funcionário, um homem baixo, de jaleco, que puxaria o pano com um gesto seco e sem piedade, deixando cabeça e tronco descobertos. Miguel, ali, a tatuagem feia, que a desagradava desde sempre, um bicho de olhos arregalados feito uma cobra estampando o braço já carcomido pelos candirus.

Viu o estrago deixado no corpo pelos peixes minúsculos e vomitou, enojada. Por um instante achou que fosse desmaiar, sentindo as suas entranhas revirarem como se estivessem repletas dos animais minúsculos e viscosos, ainda vivos. Não encontrou dentro dela água para marejar os olhos de lágrimas. Voltou para casa com a promessa de liberação rápida do corpo para sepultamento.

Naquela noite, o sono chegou entorpecido pelo comprimido que o vizinho a entregara com as mãos cheirando a pescado, um cheiro fétido, cheiro de morte como é o cheiro de tudo que perece na mata e fica ao relento até se decompor, alimentando as raízes. Acordara de um sonho dentro de outro sonho, molhada pelo suor, sentindo a água estremecer as bases da casa, como se o rio fervilhasse. Sentiu que uma mão molhada de homem repousava sobre a sua barriga, a pele gelada. Por um instante, não teve coragem de olhar para o lado, intuindo a presença de Miguel, afogado, a pele áspera acarinhando o seu ventre infértil pelo feitiço da água. Quando, finalmente, virou o rosto, notou o corpo azul esverdeado que dormia ao seu lado, estufado pelo rio que preenchia todos os espaços vazios, apodrecendo a carne, desprendendo as unhas dos dedos e os pelos do braço. Uma enorme cabeça de peixe a fitava com o olhar aquoso e estático, as duas bolas pretas sem piscar, sem alma ou sofrimento, e uma boca aberta, em movimento, como se estivesse prestes a devorá-la inteira, levando-a para dentro do rio de sangue onde o sol que nasce é apenas o anúncio de uma nova morte.





## PERPÉTUA

JULIANA DINIZ

TRANSLATED BY NATI RUSSO

The first sensation Perpétua felt upon arriving in Manaus was suffocation. She was carrying a small suitcase, which was bordering on a bundle, stuffed with clothes already worn out from use as well as the bit of makeup she always put on, despite her poverty. She felt a threatening shudder of regret pass through her the moment she realised that her back was dripping with sweat and that she was finding it difficult to breathe, as if her lungs were in outer space, in a strange place not meant for humans. She was a bit shocked, seeing as she thought she was already familiar with the heat and the haze – she who had been raised in the Brazilian backlands, watching cattle die of thirst because there was no water, where the ground cracked and the soles of feet thickened.

On the first day of her new life, she allowed herself a late afternoon stroll. The zoo would have been empty if it weren't for her and the few animals that were there dozing off, perhaps out of boredom or owing to the heat. A zoo in the middle of the forest is a curious thing. It is as if the animals were humans: looking out the window at all the life passing by them. There was a forest silence, a near-silence: there was hissing, the small, measured callings of the macaws, the heavy breathing of a jaguar, indifferent, avoiding eye contact. She attempted to look into the eyes of the jaguar to understand what it must be like living without having to be accountable to an owner, but the jaguar wasn't paying any attention, it even seemed like it had conformed to such a system. Perpétua listened to the sound of her feet as she walked across the ground of beaten earth and felt resigned upon seeing two white-bellied monkeys sat cross-legged, thinking about nothing.

She had arrived only a few hours ago from the countryside of Ceará. A weight bared down on her, caused by the humidity and the bright colours that were hurting her eyes, still accustomed to the aridity of the Inhamuns region – the mud's drowsy tones spattered with the lifeless green of the backlands. Her being out-of-place contaminated the air; the macaws began to squawk. The calm of their evening was being disturbed by Perpétua, as if she had brought the bad omen of drought with her. That evening, for the first time in her life, she sensed the hidden forces of the forest that, even today and all this time later, make her feel like she's being swept by a powerful current into a universe where time stands still – the universe that only exists in the past, with the immense wilderness and high landscape never failing to show Perpétua just how small and insignificant she is. She then realised how death could come about in an instant and how the world, which brimmed with so much life, wouldn't even notice if she ceased to exist.



After two days, she began to notice how the sunlight's copper colour tainted everything with blood; it was a hindered light, and so different from the dazzling clarity of the sun in Ceará. The bright, golden yellow, the light that burned skin and dried out the foliage and laid everything bare, was missing here. The sun rises red in Manaus, coming up through the treetops and making blood stains on any pockets of sky that can still be seen between the leafy branches – the colour of a tragedy. She watched the sun rise in the red image reflected in the river of the forest. She'd never imagined that one day she would be living straddled above water, hearing during the watch-out of a night's light sleep the sound of fishes slipping over each other in the depths of that infinite river, more infinite than the sea, which Perpétua had never seen but knew to be big. She'd never understood why only she could hear the movements of the fish swimming beneath the surface – she who was born in the arid backlands, watching cattle languish from thirst year after year.

*Best not to go in the water, got fish in there that eat humans*, a boatman had told her on one of her first days in the stilt house and when she was still unaccustomed to being surrounded by so much water that washed up against her life and watered down her thoughts. Each night, she would dream that the constant heavy rain weakened the fragile planks of wood that made up the floor, through the gaps of which it was possible to see the river flowing during the day. In her nightmare, her bed would become submerged and get carried away by the current. There'd be no time for her to cry out, only feel the slimy movement of fishes getting mixed up with the water as they swam down her throat. She awoke sweating from the heat and restless from how lonely it was in that empty bed, her husband absent and rowing across the river to work. A man who she had met in Ceará and who had brought her to live with him in this place that was on the brink of flooding, always embarking for work, more distant than close by, more of a stranger than company.

*I only know how to live on the water, Perpétua, let's get out of this place, rain is harder to come by here than a miracle of Jesus...* And so they left the backlands of the Inhamuns and headed for the state of Amazonas.

For every fifteen days at work, he spent two resting in the house. He'd come back horny, undressing Perpétua with the haste of a famished, uncaged animal. He held her eagerly, biting the neck of his wife while she moaned in great pleasure, indifferent to the creatures that moved about in the water below their mattress. Years passed without Perpétua getting pregnant, her womb hindered by the absence of her husband. On the really difficult days, she imagined that the babies Miguel made inside her came down with the rain to fill empty eggs that the fish then carried to the shrubbery of the riverbank. Insidious and demonic beasts, ripping all promises to shreds.



It was a day in September that had dawned red and gave no sign of rain. The day his boat would return; she prepared the food just how her husband liked it. But Miguel didn't come back, and no one knew of his whereabouts. Two weeks passed without any news, and Perpétua feared the worst. She preferred to believe that he had succumbed to sexual temptation, that he carried the scent of another woman's perfume. She asked her neighbour for help, went to search for the boss, although she hardly knew his name, any piece of information that might help her to remain hopeful that they'd find him, dead or alive. Who knows, maybe he had run away with some woman he'd come across at a port buried deep inside the forest.

She didn't get any answers. She retired into the stilt house and imagined the child she was yet to have with Miguel, its eyes wide and skin darkened by the sun. She would give birth to a river baby that knew all the water's secrets. She mulled over this period of waiting that had no end date. Whilst cutting an onion without a single tear in her eye, the neighbour brought her the news that a man's body had been found not far from them, floating in the river. There was no need to hurry, he made a point of saying, as the police had already recovered the remains, but only after the TV crew had finished making a report about the body infested with fishes, all coming out of its guts.

"Have you heard of the candiru, dear? It's a tiny fish, this big. Don't forget what I told you, here we've got fish that eat humans!"

He helped her find her way to the mortuary. Resigned and trembling, Perpétua was led to a room to recognise the corpse. She stood for some minutes in front of the white sheet that covered a drowned and swollen body and didn't know how she would remain standing. She had to wait for the assistant, a small, waistcoated man who went on to pull back the sheet with a dry, merciless gesture, revealing the head and torso. There, Miguel, the ugly tattoo she had never liked, a creature with beady eyes like a cobra stamped onto his arm now eaten out by the candirus.

She saw how the miniscule fishes had ruined his body and vomited from the nausea. For a moment she believed she was going to faint, feeling her insides turn as if they too were riddled with tiny, slippery fishes that were still alive. There was no water within her that could line her eyes with tears. She returned home having vowed that the body be shortly released for burial.

The sleep that came to her that night was distorted by the tablet that her neighbour had given her with fingers that smelt of fish — they carried the stench of death, which is what everything that dies in the forest smells of, lying out in the open until it has decomposed and nourished the soil. She had awoken from



a dream within a dream, covered in sweat, sensing the currents shake the foundations of the house as if the river was simmering. She felt the wet hand of a man rest on top of her stomach and the hand was cold. For a moment, she didn't have the courage to look sideways, fearing the presence of Miguel's drowned body, his rough palm caressing her womb made infertile under the water's curse. When she finally turned her head, she saw his blue-green body sleeping next to her, stewed by the river that now permeated every part of it, rotting the flesh and loosening nails from fingers, hairs from arms. The enormous head of a fish gawped at her with its fixed aquatic stare of two unblinking black balls, nor caring nor suffering, and mouth wide open, moving as if it were ready to demolish her whole, carrying her away into the bloody river where the sun that rises is but the announcement of a new death.



## ON TRANSLATING JULIANA DINIZ'S SHORT STORY "PERPÉTUA"

NATI RUSSO

In this commentary, I, Nati Russo, explain my translation processes, focussing on syntax and semantics. I praise the work of Juliana Diniz. Your short story "Perpétua" is captivating, and being given the opportunity to work on its English translation has been very special. I thank Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva, Elton Uliana, and Nara Vidal, the coordinators of the BTC. Ana Cláudia, thank you for your Portuguese lessons and Brazilian literature and culture lessons at UCL. Elton, thank you for your translation support over these past few months and for introducing me to several translation strategies that I include in this commentary.

### Syntax

Diniz writes with a syntactic flow that makes engaging and direct storytelling, gently yet swiftly leading readers through to the tragic, macabre climax of "Perpétua". It is a beautiful literature.

Sentences of many clauses build up the visual scenes that dominate the story's plot – and in a rhythmic format, too, often with multiple clauses joined by commas. Yet, this way of structuring sentences is not so common in English. My exchanging commas for connectives allowed for a flow that full stops and semi-colons do not permit. One example is "when [Perpétua] was still unaccustomed to being surrounded by so much water that washed up against her life and watered down her thoughts". An enticing alternative verb choice raised in the November BTC workshop by translator Aline Littlejohn was that the water "marooned" her life, however I used the semantic choices above so as to regain the lyricism that had been so natural in the Portuguese original owing to its pauses with commas – alluding to the lapping motion of water.

Alongside lyricism, concision is a characteristic innate to English literature: I joined clauses, engaging with the translation technique significance with a different linguistic approach, to describe Perpétua "hearing during the watch-out of a night's light sleep the sound of fishes". Such contracting of the Portuguese also emphasises the "stench of death" at the end of the story, which Diniz writes as "um cheiro fétido, cheiro de morte". Overall, though, my translation counters the general pattern that Portuguese passages contain 7-13% more words than English passages, as mentioned in the workshop.

I sometimes used the em-dash to give timely pauses to the text – especially in the first half of the story, during which the scene is set with care. Here, stylistic linguistic repetition gives Diniz's work a soft texture, and I thought it poetic to use the em-dash on two occasions before the narrator takes us back to where



Perpétua has come from, in paragraphs 1 and 4: “She’d never understood why only she could hear the movements of the fish swimming beneath the surface – she who was born in the arid backlands, watching cattle languish from thirst year after year.”

It was gratifying to hear in the workshop that my work effectively translated the changes of emotion throughout the story, and one moment where I especially worked with syntax to do this was when Perpétua, nervous, “preferred to believe that [her husband] had succumbed to sexual temptation, that he carried the scent of another woman’s perfume.” Where the Portuguese has a full stop, I used a comma that in English denotes an increasingly tense atmosphere through a faster narrative flow. I also enjoyed making the creative imagery of the perfume, which leads us on to...

## Semantics

While thinking up English equivalents for Diniz’s words, it was useful for me to always remember the flexibility of language.

Ana Cláudia Suriani da Silva noted in the workshop that the translation of images may require more creativity than other elements of the source text. The vivid imagery that makes Diniz’s narrative so thrilling sometimes only required a literal translation into English, and it is the translator’s responsibility to recognise this: “She had awoken from a dream within a dream, covered in sweat, sensing the currents shake the foundations of the house as if the river was simmering.” At other times, I gave more precision to scenes (a prominent characteristic of English literature), such as when “a pele áspera” turned into “his rough palm caressing her womb made infertile under the water’s curse.”

Translating “igarapé” was harder because it is already such a nuanced term in Diniz’s story, originating from Old Tupi and referring specifically to a river tributary in the Amazon rainforest. Whilst the beauty of the Tupi word was lost in the English text, I gave the word a functional translation as “the river of the forest”, contextualising the river and accentuating that the narration comes from a Brazilian perspective – using the word “rainforest” would only result in the domestication of the translated story (pulled towards an Anglophone point of view) and exoticise the text. Similar efforts to localise my translation include the boatman’s dialogue, which I was inspired by translator Elizabeth Thomas’s suggestion in the workshop to make it more colloquial.

No translation can be consistently sensitive to the sonorous and rhythmic depth of the original, however I worked with explicitness change if a longer, literal translation could gain impact if shortened: “– the colour of a tragedy.” I also opted for “sentence structure change” to prevent too many pronouns initiating phrases





– Portuguese has the fortune of the occult pronoun, so verbs start phrases instead (CHESTERMAN, 1997, pp. 94-97). When “She saw... For a moment she... There was no water within her that could line her eyes with tears. She returned home...”.

To compensate for rhythmic losses and give the narrator’s voice in the English translation more fluidity, I repeated the adjectives “indifferent”, “resigned”, and “hindered” in different instances, so they resonated throughout. I also evaluated the tones that words of the story’s semantic field carried, with the “peixes” themselves being translated as both “fish” and “fishes” depending on their implied size and collectiveness/individuality. An introductory reference to “peixes submersos” became “fish swimming”, whilst the candiru “fishes” were translated thus for their “miudinho” size. The word “bicho” called for a passionate, emotionally heavy translation of the “bichos insidiosos e endemoniados” being “insidious and demonic beasts” to Perpétua’s mind’s eye, but a more indistinguishable, distant “creature with beady eyes like a cobra” tattooed onto Miguel’s drowned and infested body.

The presence of Brazilian proper nouns (such as Ceará, Manaus, and Amazonas) required an explicitness change when Perpétua and Miguel “headed for the state of Amazonas.” Including “state” was significant for notifying the English reader that “Amazonas” isn’t just the Amazon rainforest. This “explicitness change” then likely frames previous references to Manaus and Ceará in the category of cities/states themselves – to me (CHESTERMAN, 1997, pp. 94-97), notifying the reader that Perpétua had “arriv[ed] in ‘the city of’ Manaus” in the very first sentence would dim the suspense Diniz has created.

Finally, I felt faith in “Perpétua” remaining title and main character of my translation, given that all stories in *O Instante-quase* are named after their female protagonists, and given how the reader can infer meaning from English words ‘perpetual’, ‘perpetually’ (DINIZ, 2016). Keeping accents on “Perpétua” and “Ceará” also glittered the translation with Portuguese orthographic detail, rightfully reminding the reader of the work’s Brazilian identity.

Thank you for reading!

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**Decio Zylbersztajn** is a writer born in the Bom Retiro neighbourhood in São Paulo, in 1953. He studied Agricultural Studies and has a PHD in Economics. He furthered his Education at Universidade de São Paulo, North Carolina and Berkeley, California. As a Professor at Universidade de São Paulo he advised tens of Masters and Doctors degree students. He published the short stories titles *Como são cativantes os jardins de Berlim* and *Acerba dor* and the novel *O filho de Osum*. He writes essays on Arts and Literature in his blog [www.zylberblog.wordpress.com](http://www.zylberblog.wordpress.com). He performs in “Duo Vereda Violeira” dedicated to roots Brazilian music. Decio organises and curates a number of cultural events such as Clube de Leitura de Gonçalves-MG and Festa Literária Além da Letra. He was honoured for merits in Science by the São Paulo Government and was also awarded Agronomist of the year 2019. He is a firm believer in public Education of quality as a mean of social change. He lives in Gonçalves, Minas Gerais.

**Eltânia André** was born in Cataguases, Minas Gerais, lives in Lisbon. Graduated in Management and Psychology with expertise in Psychopathology and Public Health. Eltânia is the author of *Meu nome agora é Jaque* (short stories, Rona Editora, BH, 2007), *Manhãs adiadas* (short stories, Dobra Editorial, SP, 2012), *Para fugir dos vivos* (novel, Editora Patuá, SP, 2015), *Diolindas* (novel, Editora Penalux, SP, 2016, Cowritten with Ronaldo Cagiano) *Duelos* (short stories, Editora Patuá, SP, 2018) and *Terra Dividida* (novel, Editora Laranja original, SP, 2020).

**Eltón Uliana** is a Brazilian translator based in London. He has a master’s degree in Translation Studies from University College London (UCL), and a BA Hons. degree in English Literature from Birkbeck College, University of London. He is affiliated to the Translators Association UK and is a member of Out of the Wings Collective, a research-led project on Theatre Translation at King’s College London. He is a guest translator and co-editor of the Brazilian Translation Club at UCL. His published work includes short stories by Ana Maria Machado and Sérgio Tavares, poems by Gertrude Stein and John Milton, research papers in Translation Theory, and an upcoming Portuguese translation of three plays by the British dramatist Howard Barker, as well as essays by Manuel Querino and poems by Bixarte and Auritha Tabajara.

**Erika Pacheco** was born in Rio de Janeiro and since 2019 lives and work in the north-east of England. She holds a degree in Communication (Universidade de Brasília) and a MA in Communication and Design (Fachhochschule Potsdam - Germany). She works as a graphic designer since 1998, and since 2018 she also started working as freelancer translator after finishing a specialization course in Translation at Universidade Estácio de Sá.



**Emyr Humphreys** is a freelance translator from the Portuguese and Welsh. After graduating from the University of Liverpool with a degree in Latin American Studies, he spent three years living and working in Porto Alegre, Brazil. He returned to the UK in 2017 to study for an MA in Translation Studies at UCL, researching contemporary Brazilian literature in translation and graduating with a distinction. He currently lives and works in mid Wales.

**Fábio Mariano** is the author of *O Gelo dos Destróieres*, a collection of short stories published by Patuá in 2018, *Habsburgo*, a novella, published in the following year by Patuá as well, and has received the ProAC/SP 2019 grant for the short story collection *Ruído branco*, published in 2020 by Patuá and Oficinas Terrestres. Some of his short stories have featured in *Mallarmagens*, *Gueto*, *Ruído Manifesto and Literatura & Fechadura*.

**Gabriela Ruivo Trindade** graduated in psychology and has lived in London since 2004. She was the winner of the Prêmio LeYa in 2013, for her first novel, *Uma Outra Voz*, which was also awarded with Prêmio PEN Clube Português Primeira Obra (ex-aequo) in 2015 and published in Brazil in 2018 (LeYa – Casa da Palavra). Her other works include the children's book *A vaca leitora* (D. Quixote, 2016). Between 2016 and 2020 she contributed to a number of poetry and short story anthologies, and her first poetry collection, *Aves migratórias*, was published in 2019 (On y va). She manages Miúda Children's Books in Portuguese, an online bookshop specialising in children's literature written in Portuguese.

**Itamar Vieira Junior** was born in Salvador, Bahia, in 1979. He is a writer and holds a doctorate in Ethnic and African Studies. He is the author of *A oração do carrasco* (2017), a collection of short stories that was selected as a finalist of the Prêmio Jabuti de Literatura. His stories have been translated and published in literary journals in France and the USA. His most recent novel, *Torto arado*, was awarded the prestigious Prêmio LeYa in 2018.

**Jacques Fux** is a writer and mathematician. He has a MA degree in Computing and a Doctors and a PHD in Literature. He is a teacher at EMGE. Jacques was also a researcher at Harvard University (2012-2014). His novels are: *Antiterapias* (Scriptum, 2012) – São Paulo Award; *Brochadas: confissões sexuais de um jovem escritor* (Rocco, 2015) – Award Cidade de Belo Horizonte Award; *Meshugá: um romance sobre a loucura* (José Olympio, 2016) – Manaus de Literatura; e *Nobel* (José Olympio, 2018). He is also the author of Literature and Mathematics essays such as: *Jorge Luis Borges, Georges Perec e o OULIPO* (Perspectiva, 2016) – Capes Award of best dissertation of Letters and Linguistics in Brazil in 2010. Also shortlisted for the APCA Award; and *Georges Perec: a psicanálise nos jogos e traumas de uma criança de guerra* (Relicário,



2019). He has also published a children's book: *O enigma do infinito* (Positivo, 2019) – shortlisted for Barco a Vapor Award 2016, seal of approval and recommendation by FNLIJ and longlisted for the Jabuti Award. His titles have been translated into Italian, Spanish and Hebrew.

**Juliana Diniz** was born in Fortaleza. She is a professor at Universidade Federal do Ceará and has a PHD in Law Studies from Universidade de São Paulo. Her works in fiction include two titles of short stories, both published by 7Letras Editora: *O instante quase* (2016) and *O mergulho* (2018).

**Lucas Verzola** was born in São Paulo in 1988. His works include *Em conflito com a lei – submundos* (Reformatório, 2016) and *São Paulo depois de horas* (Patuá, 2014), which was shortlisted for the literary prize Sesc in the category of short story. He is also the editor of the Brazilian magazine *Lavoura*. His fiction is being translated for the first time by University College Press.

**Lúcia Collischonn** is a Brazilian-German translator and PhD candidate in Translation Studies at the University of Warwick. She takes special academic and professional interest in Exophony in creative writing and translation, that is, writing literature in a foreign language and translation into and out of one's mother tongue. Exophony was the theme of both her Master's dissertation and her current PhD research. She has special interest in the works of Yoko Tawada, having recently translated the novel *Etüden im schnee* (2016) which was published in Brazil in May 2019, and *Der erste Nachtgesang* published in No man's land.

**Nara Vidal** was born in Minas Gerais and has lived in the UK since 2001. Her fiction work includes short stories, novels and children's literature. Her first novel *Sorte* (Editora Moinhos 2018) won the Oceanos Award /2019 and is translated into Dutch and published in Holland under the title *Lotgevalen* (Nobelman, 2020). Other awards include Maximiano Campos in the short stories category and Brazilian Press Awards for her literary work. She is the editor of *Capitolina Revista* and maintains an online bookshop – *Capitolina Books* – Nara has translated a number of children's books and is a columnist for the Culture Supplement at *Tribuna de Minas* and for *Jornal Rascunho*. The Brazilian Translation Club is her initiative and is coordinated as a partnership between her and the Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies at UCL. In 2020 she releases her latest book *Mapas para desaparecer* (short stories, Editora Faria & Silva). In 2021, Nara has been awarded the APCA award (Associação Paulista de Críticos de Arte) for her work as editor, particularly for her literary supplement *Capitolina Revista*.

**Rafa Lombardino** was born in Brazil and has been living in California since 2002. She started working as a translator in 1997 and is certified by the American Translators Association (English-to-Portuguese



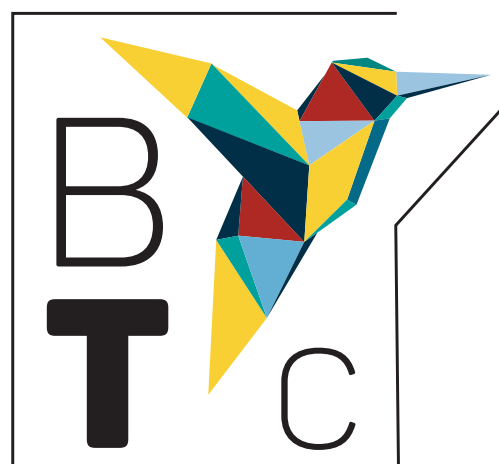
& Portuguese-to-English) and by the University of California, San Diego Extension (Spanish-to-English), where she teaches translation. One of her classes, “Tools and Technology in Translation,” was released in book format. She has an Associate’s Degree in Data Processing and a Bachelor’s Degree in Journalism. She is the President & CEO of Word Awareness, a small network of professional translators and specializes in Technology, Communications, Education, Health, Audiovisual, and Literature.

**Ronaldo Cagiano** was born in Cataguases (Minas Gerais) and graduated in Law School. He lives in Portugal and collaborates with literary reviews and articles to various publications in Brazil and abroad. His first book is *Palavra engajada* (poesia, 1989) and amongst other titles are highlighted: *Dezembro indigesto* (short stories - Brasília de Produção Literária 2001 Award), *Dicionário de pequenas solidões* (short stories, Ed. Língua Geral, Rio, 2006), *Moenda de silêncios* (teenage novel cowritten with Whisner Fraga, Ed. Dobra, SP, 2012), *O sol nas feridas* (Poetry, Ed. Dobra, SP, 2013 - shortlisted do Prêmio Portugal Telecom 2013), *Eles não moram mais aqui* (Short stories, Ed. Patuá, SP, 2015/ Ed. Gato Bravo, Lisboa, 2018 - Jabuti 2016 Award); *Observatório do caos* (poetry, Ed. Patuá, SP, 2016/Ed. Gato Bravo, Lisboa, 2018), *Diolindas* (novel cowritten with Eltânia André, Ed. Penalux, SP, 2017), *Os rios de mim* (poetry, Ed. Urutau, Pontevedra, Espanha, 2018), *O mundo sem explicação* (Poetry, Ed. Coisas de Ler, Lisboa, 2019) e *Cartografia do abismo* (Ed. Laranja Original, SP, 2020). He has organised anthologies such as *Antologia do conto brasileiro* (Projecto Editorial, DF, 2001), *Poetas mineiros em Brasília* (Varanda Edições, DF, 2002) e *Todas as gerações – O conto brasileiro contemporâneo* (LGE, Editora, DF, 2006).

**Sérgio Tavares** is a writer, journalist, literary critic and editor born in 1978. His debut book of short stories *Cavala* (2010), from which ‘Hunger’ was extracted, won the SESC Literary Prize in 2010, one of the most prestigious prizes in Brazil. His work has been translated in five languages.

**Victor Meadowcroft** grew up at the foot of the Sintra Mountains in Portugal and translates from Portuguese and Spanish. His translations have appeared in journals such as *Latin American Literature Today* and *Manoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing*. He is currently working with Anne McLean on a translation of Colombian author Evelio Rosero’s novella *Señor que no conoce la luna*.

**Xico Sá** is a writer and journalist born in Crato (Ceará), in the Northeast region of Brazil. He is a columnist for the “El País” newspaper and frequently takes part on sports TV shows as a guest and commentator. He is the author of *A Pátria em Sandálias da humildade* (editora Realejo), *Os machões dançaram – crônicas de amor & sexo em tempo de homens vacilões* (ed. Record) and *Big Jato* (Companhia das Letras), amongst others.



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