

THALIA PANDIRI

IN THIS ISSUE

All translation involves interpretation, and whether self-consciously or not, every translator makes choices consonant with the assumptions of some theoretical approach, or an eclectic mix of theoretical approaches. Among the poetry selections in this issue, we feature Christopher Michael Brunelle's refreshingly unusual but also fundamentally "accurate" limerick translation of the Cretan queen Pasiphae's passionate affair with a bull (from Ovid's *The Art of Love*) into limericks. Translations of three contemporary Russian women poets, (Galina Gamper, Galina Usova, and Alla Mikhalevich), by poets from the Dublin based women's poetry collective Word of Mouth, illustrate most clearly how the transformation and recreation of a poem into another language is shaped by the cultural and aesthetic criteria of the translator and the target audience. Two of the translators, Gráinne Tobin and Natasha Cuddington, talk about how they translated "The Seagull's Creaking Cry" and "We Are Going Out," respectively--both poems by Galina Gamper. Tobin relied on Russian speakers to gain access to the sound of the original, literal meaning, answers to questions about nuance, tone and register. She then sought to create the strongest English poem she could, conveying the sound, imagery, feeling of the original. Cuddington stresses her attention to the "drive and music" of the poem. She too relied on literal translations and transliterations, a dictionary, and a "more fluent friend." "For me, translation, though fraught with difficulty, blind spots on the road, is akin to the best kind of close reading," she says. "It is also shape-shifting, which any good reader does too." The reader will also find two very different versions of Galina Usova's "The Laurel Branch," by Eilish Martin and Ann Zell--a striking dem-

onstration of how a translator's decisions about whether or not to use rhyme, about diction and register, about what to stress and what to omit, create a distinctive new poem that transforms the source text. Readers of Russian will see other examples of this kind of choice in Sally Wheeler's version of Alla Mikhalevich's "Two Almost Equal Seasons Fill the Year"--notably in the third stanza, where "fate" has taken the place of a line about turning radiators on and off as the seasons change.

Translation is also a never-ending process, both in the life of an original text and (as anyone who translates knows) for individual translators, who will always think of a better, different, choice they could have made. Veteran translator Eric Sellin, in his essay on "Poetic Compromises in and the Uncertainty Principle: Translating Verhaeren's 'Le Navire'" leads us through his own fifty-year-long voyage from his earliest version of the poem to the version with which he ends his essay, a poem far more effective in its own right, and much more faithful in content and intent.

A source text is given many lives through the shape-shifting of translation. We have in this issue new translations of several old friends: Samuel Danon's superb translations from Old French of three of Villon's *ballades*; Lance Levens' formally ambitious translations of two sonnets by a long-ignored 16th-17th century religious poet, Jean de la Ceppède; Dan McNerney's translation from Portuguese of two poems by Camões, another 16th-century poet; Jan Owen's translation of the wine poems from Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*; and Derek J. Updegraff's translation from Old English of "The Life of St. Æthelthryth, by the Anglo-Saxon monk Ælfric of Eynsham"--a translation rated as the best he has ever seen of this poem, by an eminent scholar of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Modern and contemporary poets represented in-

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clude the revered and notoriously original, subtle and quirky Argentinean Aldo Pellegrini (translated by Leora S. Fridman with Argentineans Marina Kaplan and Robert Kaplan and Basque-Iberian Reyes Lazaro); Portuguese poets Gastão Cruz translated by Alexis Levitin, eminent translator of Portuguese poetry, and a newer and less established Portuguese poet, Paula Gândara, translated by Philip Eugene Krummrich, who translates from several languages. María Luz González Rodríguez gives us a translation into Spanish of Penn Kemp's "Not Waving But Drowning," that to my mind shows how a translation can both accurately reproduce and improve on its source.

Finally, from Xánath Caraza, whom I had the great pleasure of meeting during the ALTA conference in November, 2011, comes poetry that in different ways integrates her indigenous (Nahuatl) heritage, her Mexican (Spanish) upbringing, and English, the language of her adoptive country. She composes original poetry in Spanish that includes Nahuatl cultural elements, and then translates it, sometimes with a native speaker of English, into English. One poem we have is also recreated in Nahuatl, by the poet working with a native speaker of Nahuatl. Another poem is trilingual, blending English, Spanish and Nahuatl.

Short fiction ranges from a modern fairy tale by 19th century Danish author Meir Aron Goldschmidt, no stranger to these pages, translated by Ingrid Lansford, who is also a welcome and familiar friend to readers of *Metamorphoses*. Also from Denmark, another gripping and alarming piece by Jan Sonnergaard, that places us inside the mind of a stalker. Sonnergaard's favorite translator Ingrid Lansford brings us this story as well. From Goa, we have Epiácio Pais' moving short story "Munu," translated from the Portuguese by Paul Melo e Castro. Marguerite Itamar Harrison offers a translation from Brazilian Portuguese, Adria Lunardi's "Victoria."

Monica Lavín's "The Letter" is translated from Spanish by Pat Dubrava, and finally from the Greek, we have Ilias Venezis' "The Seagulls" translated by Miltiades and Susan Matthias.

The spring 2013 issue, still in progress, will include poetry and prose from a wide range of countries, languages and literatures. Latvia, Hungary, Brazil, France, Greece, Nigeria, Spain, Italy, Germany, India, Vietnam, China, and others, will be represented. We already have tentative plans for a special issue dedicated to Galician literature, including contemporary, rising poets, to be guest edited by Marta Dahlgren (University of Vigo, Spain) and Manuel Forcadela, to appear in 2013 or 2014.

I would like to thank our contributors and subscribers, rights holders who have granted permissions, and the Five-College consortium, along with the Translation Center at the University of Massachusetts, for their support. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to those on the editorial board and in the cohort of contributing editors who support the journal with their expertise in a number of ways, and to the unsung and unpaid readers around the world whom we tap for double-blind peer review, and without whose linguistic and critical skills we could not maintain the standards to which we are committed. Closer to home and in the trenches, student assistants have been indispensable. These include Leah Jacobson, who worked on this issue in its earlier stages, interns Marichuy Gomez and Vanessa Shuang Wu who joined the team as this issue was reaching completion and we began gathering material for the spring 2013 issue, and above all my right-hand assistant editor, who is also the editor in charge of production, Erica Zhang, without whose intelligence, diligence, meticulousness and rare ability to solve problems efficiently, quietly, calmly, I would not have survived.