

*NATIONAL
LANGUAGE*

*SIXTEEN TRANSLATIONS
FROM ENGLISH INTO
ENGLISH*

BY ROSS SUTHERLAND

SYNTHESIS

Each of these poems was created in collaboration with an automated translation program.

Famous poems were fed into the program, then bounced back and forth between the different languages. With each translation, the computer program was forced to collapse the ambiguity of the original, causing the poem to mutate in new unexpected directions.

By the hundredth translation, the accumulation of translation errors was usually so great that the original poem was obscured completely.

I worked as editor throughout this process: I checked the manuscript in-between translations, cut out the words I didn't like, and sent back unsatisfactory verses for another attempt.

I tried to guide the transformation the best I could, selecting what I believed to be the most fruitful path through the different languages. If the text needed to be shaken-up, I sent it through one of the Asian translators, using the third sentence-case to 'explode' ideas inside the text. Alternatively, moving back and forth between the Latin languages created a much more controlled method of semantic change.

An extended essay on this project is published in *Stress Fractures: Essays On Poetry* (ed. Tom Chivers) (Pinned In The Margins, 2010). A documentary based on this essay is due for release online in late 2011.

For more information on this project & the rest of my work, go to www.rosssutherland.co.uk

Thanks for reading!

Ross Sutherland

The original is unfaithful to the translation.

-JORGE LUIS BORGES

I honk, therefore Ian.

-DESCARTES (via T9)

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Emptying the Hundred Internals of Quebec

Translated from "Disembarking at Quebec" by Margaret Atwood

Once enlisted, one obtains a dress. It is functional, as is my method –
The mission of holding four things in a hand
over a reservoir, a stock market of roofing tiles
with insufficient colour-development for even a concave neckerchief.
My field of study is inadequacy.

For me, shortage is belief.
It makes these spectacles of devastation:
long warships, the traps, the sterile white, the sharp interpretation
of helium, the transport of
bones inside omens, all in one
week of winter during January.
The foreigner forms his denials accurately –

The scream of an external personality jump!
Release a situation and put!

The motion of territorial waters cannot contiguously store
my reflection.

It is unaware of the *kieselsteen*

to whom I speak with hollow respect.
And above my words, national language.

All Categories of Participation are Fundamentally Female

Translated from "All the Schoolgirls Together" by Andre Breton

They say that frequently jumping in bushes
can remind a country of past endurance,
of fables in which oceans become skies. These
classifications are as pressurised as road repairs,
Codes that make the surface of a dog go wild
like a Victorian infant at country dance, but
who splits a demon because of one word of wildness?
Who takes a hunting gun to the bridge?
A person must speak peace when in observation, acquire a spiritual spot
in distant woods, where 4,200 new names for ophthalmology can be discovered!
(A good place to spend several hours,
before going to the law courts to argue over the international distribution
of the sky, with each cloud costing the price of a small small girl)
Being oral, perhaps we hang on what you write,

But facts are fine, so wheel around
and introduce yourself to my distant heart.

Of Reduced Principle Scale

Translated from 'Nude Descending a Staircase' by X. J. Kennedy

We conclude with extremes. The meat hands down its eyes.
Bread and carrots become temporary gold, the light of the sun
filtering through the sleeping stairway like an interactive translator
of instructions. And it will swell with insignia as it repairs its spirit.

In the ideographic lowlands, these things are unchangeable—
The thigh indicates to us that we are fixed, one
to one; one alcoholic to one drink,
our fine mouths making the air vibrate.

Cascade of the A-woman, consumed and moved away
in a slow inclination toward a long end.
We stop, briefly, in the final stairs,
to gather our movements into the dimension of a variable.

Inside the Inverted Railroad of the Bilge

Translated from 'In a Station of the Metro' by Ezra Pound

My internal multiplicity breaks
inside this illusion of a face,

in the midst of a hallucination
of wood and maple, it maintains its variety –

I occasionally stop at locations
to lecture from a chapter of hazardous colours,

so fast, serious and accurate
that a heavy seat develops

from which I speak a gross dead centre;
the place that all the colours go to go black.

Something has changed inside me
as I approach one of several exit ramps,

where maple trees are planted with hallucinatory surfaces.
I know I am approaching a gap in the Earth,

here in this capital of dangerous colours.
So many starve, here, it is important

to talk about its dead unripe centre.
Such a heavy place must be converted

.
You have already placed your flowers.
Now, go.

Sonnet 116

Translated from Sonnet 116 by William Shakespeare

It is not possible to repair a point of view, join relationships with truth,
or approve once at the barrier; the ground's edge has discovered Love—
Slow removal of highland plateau, slow removal of me,
and the other nine that have maintained it in work so far.
It acts to attack anyone who gives a backwards glance in the state of Ohio,
assuredly shaking a legitimate ticket,
It is each star of value, indistinct skin,
It is to peel and receive different meaning,
And it does not know the multi-public road where wild Yuss gains altitude,
Where the rose light mouth alcoholic beverage and the cheek hang,
It comes in lingering hours of disfavour, the serious chisel of the graver
The fate planned by the falling platform,
It coils around the hour of emergency, rolls in surplus tonnes,
And if this disturbance is examined after me as a sacred place,
Then no order exists in the whereabouts of my love.

Child

Translated from "Child" by Sylvia Plath

You let out an eye, left it outside somewhere.
I think about that. Sometimes I remember to duck.
I think of my dog, the absolute eye-catcher, beautiful and complete,
and fill this small comfort animal unit with your colour,

with names in which you fall about.
A conduit of meditation
during this April of small Indians.

The immense comparisons within our wrinkles
still lack the grip of a cruciform belt.
This swimming pool must be in Goa,

where the organised crime of cumbersome hands
stretch endless cover
over our improvised drowning.

New Editions of Windows

Translated from "Morning at the Window" by T.S. Eliot

With discontinuance cooking in our tunnels,
probability rapidly stabs at tomorrow.
Therefore, the lowest knives are at work in me.
The provisional government is an egg! The moisture of a car's soul!
Buds sucker around regions of excessiveness.

They torch inferior wood flooring, then
market the brown mist to people: the surfaces twist.
And on the muddy roof, a sick Daewoo laughs into air conduits
sneering at the ill behaviour they have commissioned,
As pedestrians invade, level by level.

Vorgefuehl

Translated from 'Premonition' by Rainer Maria Rilke

Hurt, the pilot edits his recordings at regular intervals.
I doubt that a crane could churn a screw, yet
down below, the matter of life is changing:
the hatches narrow, the dense brood, and Thomas is one with the furnaces
and vibrating windows. Until now, substance has been weighed and sombre,

but in the silver storm, the great German cancer shifts right,
spreads and falls into me, matching
this entry with immeasurable agreement,
attacking the morning air.

It was Burnt from Displacement

Translated from "The Expulsion From Eden" by John Milton

The angel of mild research came to investigate the degree of acceleration in our continuous family. It oriented them with a stroboscope (they conducted immediately). Next they swallowed a vein of ore (it went down the usual) and a complete set of themes descended. Time disappeared. The eastern piece of the sky looked a lucky place, so it watched, observing with an extremity of cables. It fluttered over the themes, burning trademarks into their dreadful thronging sides and terrible faces. The tears of systematic enemies quickly became a constant temperature – The world was switched on before them: it selected the one place that would remain and began to program its leader. Those who worked in communication took steps to delay these final stages. Hermits took oaths and were approved.

Methods of a Young Conductor

Translated from "The Railway Children" by Seamus Heaney

If we were to put up a pardon for the interruption
of writing, we must look upon heights in the volatile polar regions of
transformation,
bind with bells in the witness of white women.

We must demonstrate how beautiful the hand is to the hoof,
That the Occidental exceeds us, that the burden of those outer miles
doubles in the lower part of our beverages.

Being after-thoughts, we are small. Knowledge does not know its
value. It can lead the rain and direct nations, but
incense candles cannot emit futures.

The fields of danger will swell, the sky inflamed,
Lorries will be exchanged to pay for debits,
and we will scramble up there, undetected:

We will entrust function to the eye, and possibility to the map!

The 1,802 Londons

Translated from "London 1802" by William Wordsworth

Immense Great Britain, you have germinated grain for dangerous living! In dead housing, water whistles from inoperative exhaust pipes. Stylographs, bridges, knives, furnaces – all unsuccessful! There are no questions of courage in the auditorium fire, and the spermatozoon are lost in ancient times, lucky British widows in the mountainside. We are individuals of the facility. We are eased. The small flag and the pearls are returned at 10:00 with the method, the service, the freedom and the energy of mathematics.

The first paper heart has been arrested in the centre. Now it lives in the villages, kept in a cap, a ballot from the acting General of the ocean. Clean as the luminous skies, full of splendour and release, the route through the centre is in accordance with the General's way of life. And the heart, with merry piety, is the centre in spite of oneself; the last daytime duty of the manager of a low-end family business.

Inside

Translated from 'If' by Rudyard Kipling

You are the preserved head of revenge — a service taken as far as possible.
A loss of relationship has wronged inside you, and
at a time of suspicion for the entire population
you will be here, sitting in His place,
entrusting yourself the dangerous use of His objects.
Tired of the lies that will not be said by the inside foot or the fraudulent flag,
your conversation refuses to retire, it hates and hates and
collapses hatred: a medium of report/ratio dissatisfaction.

You don't become a gentleman in dreams.
Today, dreams can think for themselves,
their thoughts aimed at the summer solstice.
Improvements made to our water will meet the same destruction
(as if the idiot could be trapped inside the body of the robber
like two persons in a folded drawing).
You gave your life to us in story, and now you inquire about a truth,
spreading out your spoiled equipment just to bend your body over.

Your victory is a stack of dry-cell batteries. Under construction,
your interior walls are dangerous; inhalation produces negative effect.
You are frozen in one rotation, assuredly under-pitching,
"A loss of respiration is never lost!", you said, as if you were the foundation of
hearts and neurons and the principles of a new generation of warfare.
You were a slave of the wheel plantation long after they left,
thus no handholds above you, inside you, anything,
except for a desire that cries "Capture higher!"

You spoke with big numbers and maintained a service,
for even when the king's road lost all normal contact
it did not become the equator and our loving friends knew why
(like all men and anyone).

You will get fat and you cannot yield small, so evaluate
with sixty seconds of controlled distance.

It - this weight - turns everything internal,
And when it is distributed, my child will incorporate!

Two Seconds of the Future

Translated from 'The Second Coming' by W.B. Yeats

Our older brother moves with the bulldozers,
Inside him: electric cables, gravel, duck eggs –
Obstructing with a landslide of disorder, he bleaches the grass
and darkens perfumes: such a restless distributor of fluctuation!
He knows the secure beliefs of villains, the ceramics of frankness
will snap-off once dipped in his crooked waters.

The desire to personally regulate the deportation of his relations
has divided the energies of the executive sector:
without the existence of words, our two seconds of future
would be no more than an immense opinion-less alcoholic hillock!
Fine people are trapped inside these sands, flanked by lions
without pity. Their views determine the surface-area of the sun,
yet hazards are packed into their slow femoral bones, wrapped
in the abandoned nuances of birds that have offended them.

Black autumn's timely other, we know that
twenty centuries of sleep on a bed of river stones
will displease the incubi of oscillating angles,
and that rough crossbow, as our last hours are circled,
is loaded with the value of Bethlehem.

The Illusion of Function Angers Our Treatment

Translated from "Ghosts of a Lunatic Asylum" by Stephen Vincent Benét

Before the window, the brick: an eye of clay connects us.
We summon the barge by lifting the dawn – Nightfall
reinforces such a fog that breath-marks appear on dikes;
Air from the hills leaves lines for us to follow.

Our buckets are full of things that do not know their numbers,
See their shading and entangled inclinations –
Their forms are drawn out of lattice, a wall of arrest,
The baffle of India when we jointly discover pains in our abdomens,

Yet this diagonal line gives us fulfilment – Ten stones,
Meticulously processed. Men with barrettes
Silently post travel documents on the walls of Khan's dreams;
France demonstrates with yellow flows.

At our feminine gates, a rabbit vibrates – Scent flows
From an ice sepulchre across a field of gravel
To a place where ice-skates are wrapped in blankets
And the curtain is lifted on a new automobile
That will transform ten individuals into eight.

Pater Noster

Translated from Matthew 6:9-13

The new establishment,
who conceives parents like new compilations.
The artistic grudge your name.

Deep inside a null value
it continues to liken.
Yet with resistance, our
futures will follow an original design.

Because of us, on this dangerous date, our lives
have been converted into bathtubs,
where some permeations are permitted
and others are held to be illegal.

In opposing these intrusions
we create additional input.
For us, it holds danger, force and reputation.

In this order, always.
Amen.