

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1  
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**First off, Ezra** has to say "my bad," (but in a foreign language, so it isn't as painful): *mea culpa*. Due to an electronic accident here at school, the files of some submissions to Ezra may have been lost. So if you submitted work between May 8, 2008 and December 20, please send it in again. You'll go to the head of the line.

We want to remind you of our friendly competition. The following are great sites, furthering the cause of literary translation: [calquezine.blogspot.com](http://calquezine.blogspot.com); [literarytranslators.blogspot.com](http://literarytranslators.blogspot.com); [pbtranslations.wordpress.com](http://pbtranslations.wordpress.com); [brave-new-words.blogspot.com](http://brave-new-words.blogspot.com). Ezra has a ¡huzzah! for New Orleans University Press, which will soon bring out translations of the great Spanish poet Antonio Gamoneda, and Nabile Farès's novel *A Passenger from The West* (in their Engaged Writers Series).

This issue of Ezra romps from Roman times to the modern Caribbean and the poetry of Négritude. We're especially happy to have a return visit from George Held, and the work of the young Fulbright Scholar, Adrienne LaFrance. The latter translates Senghor, on this the one-year anniversary of his colleague Césaire's death. Our featured writer, Anny Ballardini, is a force in four worlds: teaching, interpreting, translating, and publishing her own poetry.

Which helps us all to understand what Catherine Porter meant in recent remarks to the MLA. She speaks of being a translator in three realms: in theory, in teaching, and in the world (in practice). Without subjecting her to exegesis, let's assume we all do what she meant: we explore theory, and what translation can do potentially; we impart some of this to our students; we go out in the world and make various cultures available to each other. Hats off to us!

**TRADUTTORI/TRADUTTRICI**

**ANNY BALLARDINI**  
**ADRIANNE LAFRANCE**  
**JENNIFER YOUNGQUIST**  
**DAVID BOLDOC**

**CRAIG SMITH**  
**GEORGE HELD**  
**DEREK UPDEGRAFF**

**FEATURED TRANSLATOR:**

**ANNY BALLARDINI** lives in Bolzano, Italy. A poet, translator and interpreter (simultaneous interpreter for English, French, Italian), she received her MFA in Creative Writing from UNO, University of New Orleans, Chair and Director Bill Lavender. She

teaches high school; edits Poets' Corner - Fieralingue, an online poetry site; and writes a blog: Narcissus Works. Besides various full length publications of translations, Anny has two collections of poems, *Opening and Closing Numbers*, published by Moria Editions, Editor Bill Allegranza, 2005; and *Ghost Dance in 33 Movements* published by Otoliths Press, Editor Mark Young, 2009. For a detailed CV see: <http://ballardinianny.blogspot.com/>

## **WORDS**

*~~translated by Anny Ballardini*

Days, months and years  
do not count any more:  
they are senseless words  
left hanging on newspapers  
or deaf sounds  
you hear articulated  
from the void of sound boxes,  
radio or television.  
There is no more time  
out of the world  
and without a way of counting  
on your acting in space.  
And then who knows  
how many other things  
changed or already  
forever ended  
there outside...  
You are not alive any more,  
yet you are surprised  
you are not dying.

## **DREAM**

I am not weeping  
for myself,  
I never asked for help  
and I know that, once  
you have been infected,  
you will never recover  
even if you stop  
and once recovered  
you keep on being sick.  
I recognize the mistake

and sharply know  
for each gram of pleasure  
the tons of pain  
of vomit and boredom  
it has cost,  
for such paradise  
even more hell  
I've crossed.  
But it was  
my dreaming  
of untying freedom  
from body's bondages  
that has betrayed  
and chained me  
from inside to infinity.

### **TORMENT**

The woman I once  
loved,  
the black-eyed  
girl  
who has forever  
left me.  
The idea that I  
will never see her...  
It is my torment  
here:  
to die without death,  
a time that  
meanwhile goes by slowly  
and does not exist  
and seems not to end,  
a not having  
by now any doors  
from which to get out.

### **CUT LIFE**

It was not curiosity  
or boredom  
that pushed me  
and misled me...  
it was instead the minute  
consciousness

of me in the world  
to move and lead  
my unknown steps  
into my precipitous fall.  
The world and I,  
exact correspondences:  
stone without lip  
and lips without verb,  
however much I pursue  
and look for.  
Rather than escaping  
I looked for  
it,  
but nothing did I  
suffer or abandon.  
I have always chosen,  
and attached to it  
finally myself...  
nor ever given up.  
I have chosen and loved,  
by making mistakes, yes.

## **NIGHT**

Oh my night different  
from all the other  
nights in the world,  
externally luminous  
night  
in its fist  
fulminating absence,  
chant and harmony  
sighing inside  
your silence,  
breath that stretches  
and endlessly sates  
the whole being  
not diminished any more,  
submerged abyss  
filled by its collapse.

three by PAOLO RUFFILLI --contemporary

## **BLACK MASK**

*~~translated by Adrienne LaFrance*

She sleeps, reclines upon the ingenuousness of the sand.  
Koumba Tam sleeps. One green leaf of palm veils the frenzy of hair,  
    cambered copper forehead  
Closed eyelids, a bowl doubled, wellsprings cemented fast.  
That fine crescent, that lip more black and voluminous up to the brink of grief --  
    where goes the smile of that conniving mistress?  
The plates of cheeks, the silhouette of the chin, singing a mute chord.  
The face of a mask, closed from the ever-fleeting, without eyes  
    without matter.  
A head of bronze, absolute, and with its patina of time  
defiled neither by artifices nor rouges,  
    nor wrinkles,  
nor by the footprints of tears  
    or kisses.  
Oh face, such as God made you even before the memory of all time,  
face of the dawn of the world,  
do not open yourself as a tenuous neck,  
    to cause a stir in my flesh.  
I love you, oh beauty of my single-chord eye.

LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR

## **CHESTNUTS FROM EYELASHES**

*~~translated by Jennifer Youngquist*

Chestnuts from eyelashes of the current  
You are the place of meetings  
Of beautiful unsinkable boulders  
Unravel the silk ladder  
Of a night that leads toward the tracks of blood  
The hourglass of a face that I love  
With this arm ends a world  
Where the sun of journeys calls toward the other shore  
Convicts without concern

Gaze to where the thunder refuses to return  
Bottles full of lost time  
The landscape of the final lights  
Of a throat on pilings  
The ancient hair  
Sticks to the branches on the bottom of empty seas  
Where your body is only a memory  
Where the spring does its nails  
The propeller of your smile cast afar  
Over the houses we have no need of.

ETIENNE LERO (1909-1939)

### **SEEN IN ROME**

*~~translated by George Held*

There is at the Sistine, in Rome,  
A scarlet reliquary,  
Covered with Christian emblems,  
In which some ancient noses dry:

Noses of Theban ascetics,  
Noses of Holy Grail canons,  
Where the pallid night congeals,  
And sepulchral plainsong sounds.

Every morning someone pours  
Some foul schismatic gunk  
Into their mystical dryness,  
The dust to which they've sunk.

ARTHUR RIMBAUD

### **IN THE MORNING YOU ALWAYS COME BACK**

*~~translated by Craig Smith*

The glint of dawn  
breathes through your mouth  
at the end of the empty streets.  
Gray light your eyes,  
sweet drops of dawn  
on the dark hills.  
Your step and your breath  
flood the houses  
like the dawn wind.  
The city shudders,  
the stones give off their scent —  
you are life, you are renewal.

Star lost  
in the light of dawn,  
the creaking breeze,  
warmth, breath—  
the night is over.

You are the light and the morning.

### **UNTITLED**

You do not know the hills  
where blood was shed.  
We all fled  
we all abandoned  
weapon and name. A woman  
watched us flee.  
Only one of us  
Stopped with clenched fist,  
saw the empty sky,  
bowed his head and died  
beside the wall, in silence.  
Now he is a bloodied rag  
and his name. A woman  
waits for us in the hills.

### **UNTITLED**

You are earth and death.  
Your season is darkness  
and silence. Nothing lives  
that is more distant from the dawn  
than you.

When you seem to wake  
you are merely pain,  
it is in your eyes, your blood  
yet you don't feel it. You live as  
like a stone lives,  
like the hard earth.  
And you dress in dreams  
gestures sobs  
that you ignore. Sorrow  
like the water of a lake  
trembles and surrounds you.  
There are circles on water.  
You let them disappear.  
You are earth and death.

three by CESARE PAVESE

**Alpheius of Mytilene.**

*--series translated by David Bolduc. Authors precede poems.*

Wretched are those whose ruined life is loveless.  
For without desire, it's not easy to do or say anything.  
I, for example, now rouse much slower.  
But if I see Xenophilus, I'll fly faster than lightning.  
Therefore, I tell all men not to flee,  
But to pursue sweet desire.  
Love is the soul's whetstone.

**Anonymous.**

Though willing friend, I can't make you.



You neither ask, nor give when I ask,  
Nor accept what I give.

**Julius Leonidas.**

Zeus rejoices again in the Ethiopian banquet.  
Or, golden, steals into Danae's bed-room.  
It's a marvel seeing Periander,  
He didn't carry off from Earth the beautiful youth.  
Is the god no longer a boy-lover?

**Strato.**

How long will we steal kisses and nod secretly  
To each other with wary eyes?  
How long will we talk without end,  
Joining back delay to idle delay?  
We'll spend the beauty delaying.  
Before the envious come, Phidon  
—Add deeds to words!

**Scythinus.**

There has come to me a great woe, a great war,  
a great fire, Elissus, full of love's ripe years,  
Himself, at that timely sixteen,  
And with every charm, great and small,  
And who reads with a honey voice,  
And lips honey to kiss,  
And a thing within perfect for gripping.  
What am I to do? He says—just look!  
So I often lie awake fighting this empty love by hand.

**Meleager.**

I'm caught. I who before often laughed  
At the serenades of love-sick young men.  
Winged Love, Mysicus, nailed me to your gates,  
Inscribing, "The Spoils from Chastity."

**Tullius Laureas.**

If my Polemo comes back safely unharmed  
As he was, Lord of Delos, when parting,  
I do not refuse to sacrifice the bird by the altar,  
Herald of the Dawn, that I promised you in prayers.  
But if he truly comes having either more or less  
Than he had, I've been freed from my promise.  
But, Polemo came with a beard. If he himself prayed for this  
As dear to him—exact the sacrifice from the praying.

**Stayllius Flaccus.**

Parting from Polemo, if he came back safe and sound,  
Being well, Apollo, I promised the sacrifice of a bird.  
But Polemo came to me hairy-chinned. No, I swear by you,  
Phoebus, he doesn't come to me, but shuns me  
With quick cruelty.  
I'll no longer sacrifice the rooster to you.  
Don't cheat me, returning me chaff in place of full ears.

**TO RICHARD WILBUR, ON HIS COLLECTED WORKS**  
(Horace III.30)

Modeled after the Latin of Horace  
~~translated by Derek Updegraff

You've built a monument that will outlast  
The stiffest bronze and which already stands  
As one that has undoubtedly surpassed  
The pyramids dispersed through regal sands,

A monument that violent rains and winds  
Cannot tear down, nor countless passing years  
As one age ends and as one more begins.  
You will remain a man who perseveres

In life despite the brevity of days  
Allotted to us all. As long as lines  
Of verse are read, you will receive fresh praise  
From every generation's sharpest minds.

Beyond the halls of Amherst and each hill  
And field of North Caldwell, where children climb  
The grounds that shaped your early years, you will  
Be deemed the leading poet of your time,

Who mastered and maintained the meters slim  
To English cadences. Melpomene,  
Accept his merits and present to him  
The Delphic laurel for his skilled display

**TO A MAN OF LETTERS, ON A TRAGIC  
OCCASION (Catullus 96)**

for Alfred Dorn  
*~~translated by Derek Updegraff*

If any sweet or beneficial thing  
Can go where silent graves remain,  
Alfred, from our grievous pain,  
The longing that enables us to bring  
Old loves to life and makes us weep  
For friendships we no longer keep,  
Surely Anita's thoughts are not of grief  
For her too early death, but of  
The joy she feels from your great love.

**A WARM WELCOME TO THE CITY (Catullus 43)**

*~~translated by Derek Updegraff*

Hello. Good afternoon, young girl, whose nose  
Is hardly small, whose foot is great in length,  
Whose eyes are brightly dull, whose fingers, those  
Cherry-topped stumps, are poorly masked, whose strength

Is certainly not seen or heard when she  
Discusses anything, whose lips are damp  
With spittle spots, mistress of that carefree  
Yet bankrupt rake from your resort-side camp.

Your town says you are something to behold?  
They think your “beauty” matches that of my  
Elizabeth? Oh foolish times that mold  
Dumb men whose tastes can’t help but stupefy.

### **OSTENTATIOUS LIQUEURS** (Horace I.38)

Modeled after the Latin of Horace  
*~~translated by Derek Updegraff*

I hate ornate and showy drinks, Stephen—  
The cocktails mixed with vivid colors cause  
Me grief. Don’t search the fridge for fruit, even  
For that final bottle of grenadine,  
    And please put down those stupid straws  
    Of purple, orange, and green.

I’m worried that your fussy self has no  
Desire to drink a simple beer from time  
To time. A beer is not unfit—you know—  
For such as you, whether or not it’s made  
    Abroad, nor me, apt to recline  
    And drink beneath the shade