

Fundamentals of Poetry



Teacher Text Samples

Web Edition 2011
Renée Gadsden, Editor



schule für dichtung
vienna poetry school



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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Editor's Note

At the first session of “Fundamentals of Poetry”, held in Madrid at the Escuela de Escritores from February 18-20, 2011, students, teachers and the organizers of the project were able to meet, the majority for the first time. The students participated in the “Sound & Rhythm” workshop, led by Jörg Piringer (schule für dichtung – Vienna Poetry School), and the teachers and the organizers spent time discussing the possibilities of the project. On the last day of the meeting the Internet campus, designed and maintained by the Escuela de Escritores, was presented.

The teachers in the “Fundamentals of Poetry” project agreed at this first meeting to exchange texts among each other, in order to familiarize themselves with the work of their peers. A preliminary teacher text exchange took place in March 2011. Here is the next step: sharing examples of the instructors' work with the students participating in the program.

This compilation contains one work from each of the writers leading a class in the project: first in the original language, then in English. Although some of the teachers have had works translated into other languages, only English translations are given here, as the language of discussion in the collective Internet forum is English. Unlike in a traditional anthology, the pages of each of the authors have a different style of presentation. Some of the writers sent me their texts with a specific format, which has been reproduced in this web edition.

It is clear that the part does not necessarily represent the whole, and that one example per writer is not enough to give an overview of each writer's oeuvre. Still, one gains worthwhile insight into each teacher's approach to language, emotion and expression. Hopefully, this brief taste will arouse the reader's curiosity and mark the beginning of a journey of discovery of further writings of these authors.

The goal of this effort is to encourage dialogue among the teachers and students in order to maximize the potential for intercultural, trans-European language and literature exchange. As the “Fundamentals of Poetry” project continues to progress and evolve, one of the next foreseeable developments indicated would be to share writings of the students to all participants in the project in this way as well. A publication in book form is also under consideration.

My wish is that this paper will enhance the positive and enriching aspects of the “Fundamentals of Poetry” project and increase intra-project communication.

Renée Gadsden
schule für dichtung – Vienna Poetry School
April 2011



*Escuela de Escritores
Madrid*

Luis Luna

Translated into English by Xavier Frías

Tribu constructora de ruinas, ni siquiera organizas la nada. En vertical practicas la arquitectura falsa del escombro. Pero todo derrumbe es necesario, la destrucción así lo exige. Mientras llega el momento, tribu, te condenas. Dejas de lado tus ancestros fomentando el olvido y la usura. Qué diremos de ti, qué civilización perdida alabaremos cuando tú ya no existas. Tan sólo nombraremos la edad. La edad de la barbarie. Y luego callaremos. Tal vez así nuestro silencio te redima.

(De Territorio en penumbra, Gens ediciones, 2009)

Tribe, builder of ruins, you don't even organize naught. Vertically you practice the false architecture of rubble. But all your falling-down is needed; it is so demanded by destruction. As the moment comes, tribe, you get condemned. Leave your ancestors aside promoting oblivion and usury. What shall we say about you, what lost civilization shall we praise when you exist no longer. We shall just mention age. Age of brutality. Then we shall be silent. Perhaps will our silence redeem you like that.

(From Territory in Semidarkness)



*Escuela de Escritores
Madrid and Barcelona*

Xènia Dyakonova

Translated into English by Keren Klimovsky and the author

*Я прячусь в погребе глубоком и сыром,
за неимением нормального жилища.
И так, как в сумрачной Европе - хоть шаром,
чужие сны - моя единственная пища.*

*Я их ворую то у булочника - ведь
ему, счастливому, известна тайна хлеба,
то у цыганок: им не страшно умереть,
перебираясь целым табором на небо.*

I'm hiding in a cellar – deep and damp,

because I have no home.

And in this dark and scanty Europe

my only food is dreams of others:

I steal them from the baker, for

he knows the mystery of bread,

or from the Gypsy women: they are not afraid of death,

of moving with their band to heavens.

(From *Florianopolis*, Helicon-Plus, Saint-Petersburg, Russia, 2010)



*Scuola Holden
Turin*

Mattia Garofalo

Translated into English by the author

Illustrazione

Senti lo scorticare del respiro
e nel sfiorarsi della lingua
troverete le mani.

Gli occhi cercano un rifugio
dove l'anima si nasconde;
due corpi non si trovano.

Forse in questo c'è un segreto,
due corpi, uno dentro l'altro,
la vita che si rifiuta di ritrovarsi.

Illustration

Feel a breath graze
and in the tongue's brush
you will find hands.

Eyes search for refuge
where the soul hides itself;
two bodies cannot find each other.

In this, perhaps, there is a secret,
two bodies, one in another,
life, unfound, in itself.



Orivesi College of Arts

Risto Ahti

Translated into English by Herbert Lomas

Finnish Transcription by Johannes Keltto

Häpeä energianlähteenä

Myönnän, että rakastan monia, kaikkia, silloin kun rakastan vain sinua.
Kun yö ja päivä kohtaavat, luonto on kokonaan vaiti, tuulikin mykistyy tällä rajalla.

Miten huumaavasti ja hurjasti sinuun osuu aamun valo!

Oli aina hyvin hiljaista kun kohtasimme. Eniten rakastin sitä, kun sisäinen paino veti suun mykäksi. Äkkiä olimme olemattomia, luonto kohahti ympärillämme, kivikot muuttuivat vuoristoiksi, kukat ulottuivat pilviin, ruoho kattojen tasalle.

SHAME AS A SOURCE OF ENERGY

I admit it: I love many, love everyone,
when I love no one but you.

When night meets day, nature's absolutely quiet:
at this frontier even the wind goes dumb.

It was always very quiet when we met. I loved it most
when inner pressure twisted the mouth dumb.

All at once we were non-existent, nature was roaring,
stone mounds turned into mountains,

flowers reached for the clouds,
the grass touched the rooftops.

Petr Borkovec

Translated into English by Justin Quinn



*Literary Academy
Prague*

RAJČATA

Říkala, že se propadl hrob.
To musela prasknout ta rakev, řekla.
Řekla, že pět koleček písku bylo málo.
Ale vlastně řekla--ty nevidíš, že klesl hrob,
nejsi tady, abys řekl, to ta rakev.
Nezasypal jsi to.

Přivezla jsem ti naše rajský, řekla,
chutnají úplně jinak.
Ale vlastně řekla to své--nevíš, kudy domů.
Chutnáš jinak, řekla.

Rovnal jsem těch šestnáct výčitek, znamení, svědků
na meziokní nad sklepními schody,
s jednou nohou ve vzduchu
bral splasklé a vypoulené skvrny.

Pokládal je, zelenobílá rajčata
s bledě červenými klíny, plná kazů,
v závanech tělové teploty
a dbal, pomalý, lehký a pečlivý,
aby se nedotýkala a abych každé
zvedl a pustil alespoň dvakrát.

TOMATOES

She was saying the grave caved in.
The coffin must have collapsed, she said.
She said five barrows of sand weren't enough.
But in fact she said, you haven't seen the sunken grave.
You're not here. You can't say, this grave, this here.
You didn't fill it in.

I brought you some of our tomatoes, she said,
they taste completely different.
But in fact she said, you don't know where's your home.
You taste different, she said.

I lined those sixteen reproaches, those witnesses,
along the sill half way down the cellar stairs.
With one leg in the air
I held the flaccid, bulging stains.

I placed those pale green tomatoes,
gradually reddening at the stem, full of rot,
in drafts of body temperature,
taking pains – slowly, gently, carefully –
that no one touched another and lifting each
to drop it on the ground, at least twice.

Isabelle Rossignol

Translated into English by Gena Lombroso



*Aleph Écriture
Paris*

Mes larmes / My Tears (Excerpt)

Est-ce que tu l'as pas toujours su dans ta caboche de fêlée
dis ça fait pas des années oui des années qu'tu te l'répètes ?
tu finiras toute seule,
comme ta mère t'entends ?
mais non t'entends pas,
si t'entendais tu s'rais pas sur c'banc dégueulasse de métro à t'répéter
qu'tu l'avais toujours su et qu'maint'nant ça y est,
t'es toute seule,
t'as quarante ans,
pas d'enfants,
et t'es,
cé-li-ba-tai-re.
[...]

Haven't you always known in that cracked noggin of yours?
has it not been years, yes years that you've been telling yourself?
you're gonna end up alone,
like your mother, you hear?
but no, you don't hear
cuz if you had, you wouldn't be on thiz disgusting subway seat telling y'rslef o'er and o'er
that you always knew that now, 'ere you are,
all alone
forty
no kids,
and s-i-n-g-l-e.
[...]

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Renée Gadsden, Editor

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