Science meets Poetry

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Foreword: ESOF, Poetry and Science

The Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF) is not just about Science. It is about all the sciences, including also the Humanities and the Social Sciences. And it goes further than that. It is an Open Forum, open not only to participants from all countries, but also to the Creative Arts. In fact, one of the major achievements of ESOF2008 has been to build a new bridge between front line scientific research and contemporary Western Poetry. The present volume is a record, not only of what was done and said in Barcelona, at the Science meets Poetry day, but also of the extensive preparations made, involving more poets than the twenty who were finally able to make it to this important cultural occasion.

ESOF, of course, is also the only pan-European Forum devoted to all the sciences, and so it was natural that the poets who came represented many cultures (American, Austrian, British, Bulgarian, Catalan, French, German, Irish, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Swiss) and that contributions to the preparation came also from Belgium and from Mexico. Indeed, one of the poets who came was residing in China at the time the meeting was still being set up, and discussions about our project took place as far afield as a Restaurant in Wuhan.

Another important aspect of ESOF is that Euroscience throws the doors open to other European Associations to come and participate in the event. This is true, not only for the sciences, but also for the Arts. For example, we invited a number of Associations of Poets and sponsors of Poetry from all over Europe to join forces with us in setting up the Science meets Poetry Day. In particular, the Société des Poètes Français, the Gulbenkian Foundation, Linguaggi di Versi and die Kogge were deeply involved in the preparations.
We are grateful to the Andrea von Braun Stiftung, to Poètes sans Frontières and to la Maison de Poésie in Paris for their active support.

ESOF is not restricted to the European Union. It is open to the whole of geographical Europe, and indeed welcomes contributors and participants from other cultures and continents: we were fortunate amongst our poets to host Alla-Valeria Mikhalevich from St Petersburg and the Nobel Laureate Roald Hoffmann from the USA, both of whom have provided us with new and original contributions to the present volume.

This book represents a cross section through contemporary European Poetry written by a group of poets for whom meaning is important: they represent a current of thought in line with the spirit of our times for whom values are important, and the discussion on the place of Science in our culture is not merely one of convention. We have explored such issues from within, paying attention not only to the manner in which science and technology have transformed the human environment, and thereby altered the perspective of poets, but also to what messages come back from poetry to be heeded by researchers.

Poetry has the reputation of being unique amongst literary forms in preserving its purity from commercial and social pressures. As such, it comes closest to the definition of values and the quest for deeper truth. Science has, by tradition, always sought a similar position, but, unfortunately, cannot always sustain such a high level of intellectual independence, because many areas of science require considerable levels of funding to be pursued. The Poets bring to the sciences a freshness and a quality of judgement which scientists should welcome precisely for this reason. Science, on the other hand, brings the poets a common theme, cutting across all languages, which is woven into the fibre of our modern world, a theme which all citizens of our times are at some stage confronted with, namely the dramatic and profound changes scientific advances have brought to our society.

It is therefore obvious that Science and Poetry have a dialogue to establish, which is not merely an occasional encounter. Rather, it is a permanent exchange of ideas and points of view, a common exploration, whose benefits should enrich us all. In bringing together these two apparently diverse pursuits, we are also demonstrating the unity of culture. Nothing could be more dangerous to human progress than to box up all areas of thought into
separate compartments. This, perhaps, is the most constructive aspect of openness: it is the recognition that everything we do is part of a whole, and that understanding the broader picture is indispensable even to the specialist in his pursuit.

In the present volume, the reader will find the work of scientists who are poets, of poets who write about the sciences, of poets who do not write about the sciences as such, but recognize that science is part of the world they write about, and even of poets who worry about science or are hostile to it. Because of the unique, pan-European nature of our gathering, we have also included reflections on the nature and purpose of poetry, seen from a variety of different European regions. Last but not least, we have assembled biographies of Poets, which will, as much as their work, bear witness to the diversity of their cultures and points of view.

The ESOF Science meets Poetry day is not an isolated event. It grew from the seeds planted in Munich at ESOF2006, where already four contemporary poets (French, Swiss and American) had collaborated in presenting their work. It will lead to another event in Turin, at ESOF2010, which is in active preparation at time of writing.

Thus, the present book can be regarded as the second volume of a series published under the aegis of Euroscience (the first was entitled Ludwig, the Visionary King, published for ESOF2006). We intend to continue along this path, to broaden and to deepen the dialogue between front line science and the creative arts, which we regard as an important manifestation of the spirit of our times.

Jean-Patrick Connerade (Chaunes)
Former President of Euroscience, Strasbourg
Société des Poètes Français, Paris
Member of the Programme Committee of ESOF2008
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A list of Poets, with contact addresses.
Background and Motivation

The Science meets Poetry day originated at ESOF2006 in Munich. It was featured as an event to celebrate Ludwig II, the Visionary King of Bavaria, by bringing together scientists, engineers and poets to present the diverse facets of his fascinating and complex personality. The interest aroused by bringing together scientists and poets was such that it seemed a good idea to broaden the scope and to stage an event dedicated entirely to poetry and to science during ESOF2008 in Barcelona.

There is a hidden similarity between Science and Poetry which often passes unnoticed. Poets are generally concise, because they like to say a lot in a short text and to be very precise in their use of words. They also behave in similar ways, and their thoughts have many threads in common. Poets often like to respond to each other, and to gather in small groups with a common vision, and so, likewise, do many scientists.

So, it should be no surprise that a strong connection between science and art exists through poetry. Indeed, the figure of the poet-scientist (or scientist cum poet) is not as rare as one might believe. Examples abound of the mutual influences these different creative activities can have on each other.
The poet Goethe did more than dabble in science. His poetry so inspired the scientist Lockyer, founder of the famous scientific journal "Nature" that most of the first published issue was devoted to citations from Goethe's writings about nature, apparently collected together and translated by Lockyer himself.

Likewise, scientists have often inspired poets by making mysterious or spectacular discoveries, and a growing school of modern poetry brings together bards who have chosen science as their main source of inspiration.

There are also hidden similarities. Experiments with structure and with form play an important part in poetry, just as they do in mathematics, and this occult connection has existed since times immemorial. Omar Khayyam is but one of many poets for whom science as such may not have been the subject of verse, but surely played a determining role in establishing the rigour of its composition. His work on algebra is of course well-known, but it may be surprising to many that Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (the subject of a poem by Roald Hoffmann written especially for the Science meets Poetry day) was not just a passionate love-poet. She was also a scientist. As a French revolutionary, hostile to scientific education, once put it «L’étude des mathématiques, en comprimant la sensibilité, rend l’explosion des passions plus dangereuse.» (‘the study of mathematics, by curbing the spirit, makes the explosion of the passions yet more dangerous.’)

The aim of the Science meets Poetry event is to show by example that there is really no such thing as ‘two cultures’ and to explore all aspects of the overlap between science and poetry. We bring to ESOF2008 Forum well-known poets from all over Europe, to illustrate all the facets of the connections between them, with special emphasis on a rich diversity of approaches and on the complementarities between different forms of creativity.
The dangers of creating ‘two cultures’ by an artificial separation are all too clear. It was commented on at the gathering of scientists and poets that the language in which science is written up is fast becoming impersonal and devoid of content, and that it bears less and less relation to true English through the poverty of its vocabulary. In this respect as well, the practise of true literature by young scientists would have much to commend it.

A gathering of poets on such a wide linguistic front also provides us with a great opportunity to compare trends in contemporary poetry from several different parts of Europe. It turns out that, despite many language divides within our continent, there are plenty of themes which can wind a common thread through our different cultures. Achievements in one tongue are soon transposed into another, and poets are quick to help literary trends cross frontiers almost as fast as they are invented.

So, while the core of the Science meets Poetry day took place within ESOF2008, the session was extended to cover other aspects, and to allow the Poets an opportunity for more free-ranging discussions and presentation of their current interests and concerns. Several important Associations of Poets, from Europe and from further afield, have participated in the Science meets Poetry day, and this is reflected in the presentations collected together here, stating the aims and aspirations of these literary groups.

After the meeting, it was decided to gather together Proceedings for publication in a format similar to the book on science and poetry published for ESOF2006 by Euroscience (Ludwig II – The Visionary king of Bavaria) of which a few copies are still available on request from Euroscience (office@euroscience.org).
Schedule

SCIENCE MEETS POETRY
ESOF2008 19th of July 2008

08:30 to 09:30 - Welcome to Barcelona by The Spanish and Catalan poets (Session chair: David Jou)

09:30 to 10:00 – Poetry as a Universal Language Carla Gavioli and the multilingual poets of Linguaggi Di Versi (Session chair: Alla-Valeria Mikhalevich)

10:00 to 10:30 - Poets join other participants of ESOF2008 for the coffee break

10:30 to 12:00 (ESOF2008 SESSION)
- Roald Hoffmann (Nobel Laureate in Chemistry) Professor of Humane Letters at Cornell University New York The Scientist as a Poet
- Jean-Patrick Connerade (Chaunes) Emeritus Professor Imperial College London, CAS and East China University of Shanghai (China) and Société des Poètes Français (Paris) Reality: is it Poetry or Science? (in English)
- David Jou Professor of Theoretical Physics in the Autonomous University of Barcelona and Catalan Poet Making Poetry from Science (in English) (Session chaired by Maurice Riordan)

12:00 to 13:00 - Plenary Session of ESOF2008 (so nothing else is scheduled in the programme at this time)

13:00 to 14:30 – Lunch

14:30 to 16:00 POETS WRITING ABOUT SCIENCE (ESOF2008 SESSION - Supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in London) British and Irish poets Maurice Riordan, Lavinia Greenlaw and Ruth Padel (chair AnneTalvaz)
16:00 to 16:30 - Poets join the ESOF2008 coffee break

16:30 to 17:10 – Contemporary poetry in the French Language, a joint contributions from la Société des Poètes Français, la Maison de Poésie de Paris and Poètes sans Frontières (co-chairs Chaunes and Vital Heurtebize) in French

17:15 to 17:55 - Contemporary German language poets, introduced by Uli Rothfuss of the die Kogge Association (session chaired by Christoph von Braun) in German

17:55 to 18:00 Close
Poems and contributions

Two poems for ESOF, from Roald Hoffmann

CORRAL

for Carlos Fuentes

1

To grow animal, smart, the membranes
of eucaryotic cells rim, twice, the
coded library of the nucleus, tangle

then fuse to the gaudy network of sacs
of the endoplasmic reticulum. Pinched off
subcellular organelles empower cells

with the know-how to reject transplants,
wrap a myelin sheath around a neuron, see
red, and then, see yellow. Still better

microscopes make out more partitions.
In the emerging inner texture, freedom,
to change, is built from lipid-tailored

confinements, warm prisons where enzyme
brews gel. Ways in and out are ingenious:
shaped pores, embrasures, and this chemical

escalator called active transport. Fluid,
mosaic, the membranes' holed sequestering works.
In 1655 Juana Inés de Asbaje begged her mother to dress her as a boy, so that she could study at the University of Mexico. At the court of the viceroy she astounded forty professors with her mathematics and Latin odes. But it was not a time for learned women in Mexico, so Juana entered the convent of San Jeronimo; within, watched two girls spinning a top, and from what she called her black inclination for wisdom, had flour sprinkled, so that as the top danced out its loss of momentum one might see its spiral trace, and not a circle. Juana mixed earths, and in a library of 4000 volumes wrote theology and love poems. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, shutting herself in the cell where knowing is permitted.
WHERE SHALL I LOOK FOR HER?

I thought she was "Amazing Grace", the way Judy Collins sang, but then I heard her done right by a black mama bustin' out of a white dress and I thought - there's ample gifts in plain melody. Another time I felt her reason with me, orbitals sashay in mirror planes' control. I got drunk on likenesses, reeling in one structure after another; in my calculus of similarity I made iron tetracarbonyl like a proton, like a methyl cation. Exceptions? Oh too many, like stripes on the tiger. So — wherever beauty be, she'll perch precariously at that edge where sym-

metry and asymmetry contend. Then the summer rains came, and washed all words away, what's left is how sweet thy name, and through a screen dappled by the wind's old way with leaves, you, raking grass. If beauty ever age, she'll have your straight gray hair.
КРОАЛЬ    CORRAL       Карлосу Фуэнтесу

1
Чтобы вырастить живое животное, мембраны эукариотной клетки складываются в трубочки, удваиваются - и в этой библиотеке хранится ядерный код. Трубочки сплетаются в причудливые клубочки, сливаются в мешочки эндоплазматической сети, от нее отшнуровываются внутриклеточные органеллы, они дают клетке свое ноу-хау - искусство отторгать все чужое, окутывать нейрон миелином: только что он был красным, и вот уже - в желтом футляре. Микроскопы становятся всё сильнее. И уже видны внутренние структуры, подвижные и изменчивые, липиды сшивают в них теплые камеры похожие на тюремные, в которых варево из ферментов превращается в густое желе. Есть множество разных уловок для входа и выхода из этих камер: поры различной конфигурации, лазы, бойницы. Этот вот эскалатор называют активным транспортом. Текучая переливчатая мозаика разгорожена дырчатыми мембранами: так расставленные кругом повозки образуют загон для скота.

2
В 1659 году семилетняя Хуана Инес де Асбахе попросила мать переодеть ее мальчиком, чтобы учиться в университете. Сорок профессоров при дворе вице-короля были поражены ее математическими и латинскими трактатами. Но в Мексике в те времена
образованным женщинам
не было места,
и она ушла в монастырь Святого Иеронима. Там, наблюдая двух девушек с прялкой,
влекомая тем, что она называла темной страстью к познанию,
она рассыпала тонким слоем муку, и, когда веретено замедлило танец, теряя скорость,
стало видно, что оно оставляет спиральный след, а не круг.
Она готовила разные смеси,
писала теологические и любовные поэмы,
4000 тысяч томов
собрала она в своей библиотеке.
Сестра Хуана Инес де ла Крус
заточила себя в келью,
где знание было разрешено.

WHERE SHELL I LOOK FOR HER
ГДЕ МНЕ ИСКАТЬ ЕЕ?

Я думал, она "Удивительное очарование"
в исполнении Джули Коллинз, но потом
я услышал, как ее правильно спела негритянка, с бюстом,
вываливающимся из белого платья, и подумал:
эта простая мелодия - настоящий подарок. В другой раз
я чувствовал - она со мною, плавно скользит
под контролем зеркала. Пьянея
от сходства, я кружил от одной структуры
к другой, вычисляя

подобие, превращая
tетракарбонил железа
в протон, как катион метила. Исключение? -

- Их как полосок на тигре. Вот так же -
где бы красота ни была, она как птица
садится на хрупкой границе, там, где спорят

симметрия с асимметрией. Вот прошел
летний дождь и смыл все слова,
кроме твоего сладчайшего имени.
и сквозь стекло с налипшими, листьями, как всегда при вете, ты - прочесываешь траву граблями. Если когда-нибудь состарится красота, у нее будут твои прямые седые волосы.

Перевод Аллы Михалевич

From Carla Gavioli, Biologist, France

Le poids de la lune (the Weight of the Moon)

More and more scientists are amazed to discover in their «heart» a poetic inspiration. As I am one of them, it seems to me particularly interesting to look into the relationship between Science and Poetry. I would personally like to understand what happened to me: was it just a passing whim or a deep need?

As a former biologist, about thirty years ago I let my desire to write poems rise to the surface. Even if I do not practice biology any longer, Science is still present in my mind and its function is now to support and balance my poetic fantasy.

In modern life, Science is everywhere: food, cosmetics, medicines, computers, etc., the list is endless. Almost everything in use in the western world has been developed and tested by Science. On the contrary, Poetry that in the past was the highest literary form, it is rather neglected today. Reading a book of poems is considered almost useless, without seeing that it can be quite beneficial for our mental ecology. Of course, I really hope that Poetry will occupy an important place in literature once again.

Poetry is the intellectual birth of humanity. The first literary activity of man consisted in telling myths and moral precepts in a rhythmic form in order to memorize them easily, and therefore to facilitate oral transmission. After the invention of writing - cuneiform characters, hieroglyphs, etc. - Poetry multiplied its themes and started to celebrate heroic actions, and human feelings like courage and cunning, love and suffering, pride and sadness... Poetry was supposed to become the mirror of the man's innermost feelings and also an eventual compensation for his existential troubles.
In parallel, Science is the re-birth of humanity. The scientist investigate nature in order to penetrate its secrets and to apply them on a human scale. The results have been more and more encouraging: human conditions have improved, and most of the deeply rooted superstitions have been broken with. The mountain was hard to climb... Indeed the enterprise is still in progress.

In the past, Catholic countries generally held a definite position against Science. The well known case of Galileo (1564-1642) brings shame on his judges. The scientist was put on a trial, humiliated and sentenced to stop his teaching. His discoveries in astronomy (heliocentric system) were condemned as the «devil's arts» and deemed more harmful to the Roman Church than Luther and Calvin's works.

Talking about Science as a second birth of the intellect is not a coincidence. In fact, during the Renaissance (1350-1550) first in Italy, then throughout European countries, a revival of literature and arts on the model of Greek and Roman culture and learning was set up. In the same period, a special attention was also devoted to the research of authenticity through the closest observation of natural phenomena.

The Renaissance, also called Humanism, is essentially the intellectual, scientific and literary movement opposed to Scholasticism, the medieval philosophical system dealing with Christian doctrine. Humanism is above all a reaction against theological pressures. The ideal man becomes the _Homo faber_, in other words, an individual able to create himself. This new man is a «maker», synonymous with the poet in the ancient times, and consequently an inventor and a producer: the architect of a new world. The experimental scientist could start working.

Everybody knows that the eclectic Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was also a scientist and a writer. One of his literary fragments is under the form of a short poem:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{La luna densa e grave,} & \quad \text{The solid and heavy moon,} \\
[\text{cosi}] \text{ densa e grave,} & \quad [\text{so}] \text{ solid and heavy,} \\
\text{come sta [su] la luna ?} & \quad \text{how can the moon stand?}
\end{align*}
\]

The question that was preying on Leonardo’s mind would find a response a long time afterwards, when Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) discovered the law of universal gravitation.
Do the scientist and the poet exhibit similar intellectual qualities?

Yes they do. Both must have, in particular, devotion to work and pleasure in doing it, imagination and accuracy, and the patience to persist. Science and Poetry use each the same method in its own field. They also get in common progression by a series of experiments. But, in this connection, Science have some dark sides. Let’s remind ourselves, for exemple, of the atomic bomb experiments and of several hundreds of toxic chemical products.

In France, of a poet they say often « il est entré en religion », literally, he has taken Holy Orders, hence he has got a real vocation. The practice of Poetry, and Science as well, depends upon a deep personal belief that may become the only one. A creative work is a positive and reassuring element for our brain that at last feels master of itself.

Just one question about the specimen scientist-poet. How does he or she manage a poetic style? Possibly a scientist-poet goes on with his or her main scientific habits: controlling data and respecting coherence in doing work. He or she is aware that simplifying complex thoughts and setting them out in a harmonic way is also the basis of the poetic art.

In my view, the best poems are created using typical scientific tools: a good cultural background, experimental steps, technical knowledge, research of the truth, plain and essential writing. On the other hand, Science borrows from Poetry quest for new ideas: an original experiment is as well the most fruitful.

In different ways, Science and Poetry benefit mankind. The former, thanks to its positive attitude, its pragmatisme and its useful results, gives us confidence in the future. The latter, with its exalted language, the search for formal beauty and metaphysical elaboration, can console us through a cathartic effect.

In conclusion, let me express a concise point of view about relationship between Science and Poetry: "The scientist is a discoverer of knowledge, and the poet a discoverer of meaning."
The following poem is a tribute to Sir Isaac Newton and a metaphor of the necessity to become emancipated from the generally held beliefs.

La pomme chut sur la tête de Sir Isaac pour se séparer de la position incommode d'un fruit sous accusation

L'obligation tombe enfin d'une patience démesurée qui entravait ma démarche

Absoudre les désirs d'Eve ou les ambitions de Pâris Un fruit libre volera haut hors la loi de gravitation

The apple fell on the head of Sir Isaac to free itself from the uncomfortable situation of being an accused fruit

The obligation finally falls of the measureless patience which restrained my progress

Absolving Eve’s desires or the ambitions of Paris Futur fruits will fly high above the law of gravitation
Reality: is it Science or Poetry?

Poetry has a lot to say about our ‘post-modern’ world, and about modernity in general. Science and technology have covered the planet with novelties of many kinds. Some may seem horrible, others, impressively beautiful. Poets, like all citizens, have their own ideas about beauty, but poetry must do more than reflect opinions: a poem only works if it reveals the inner reasons for what we see.

Science and Technology shape the world around us. More than any other activity, they have defined the difference between the old and the new. Poets are also naturally attracted to this boundary: today, the passage of time is not merely the falling of leaves. It is signalled by innovation and novelty, and by the birth of new ideas, especially those like the existence of the photon or the nature of space, which have the potential to revolutionize our view of the universe.

So, in one way or another –by contemplation of our world today or meditation about its evolution and change, poets are led inescapably to Science, not merely as one of their themes, but as an essential theme, because it is part and parcel of the spirit of our times. Perhaps we are fortunate in this: whether we are for or against it, we know that science will affect us all independently of our respective languages. Poetry has rarely found such a commonality of purpose since the worldwide excitement of the Romantic movement.

I will take as an example the ‘for or against science’ debate, which is all the rage today. In my view, it is a resurgence of the old ‘Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes’, and also revisits the polemic initiated by Wordsworth about the ugliness of power generated from coal and steam. But our century adds another layer, and this is quite new: how will humanity survive its headlong race towards a better future? This anxiety stems from science, in its properly understood humanistic purpose, and enriches the whole issue.
Now, we no longer face an abstract question of aesthetics, which the Romantics could solve merely by planting a curtain of trees to hide the smoky factories from view while continue to rake in the profits of industry. The question of how we became consumers assumes the dimensions of potential tragedy –and is it not tragedy, rather than the lack of it, which is the real stuff of poetry? As Homer put it ‘The Gods willed misfortune upon men in order that the Poets could rise to celebrate the deeds of the heroes.’

So who (to borrow the phrase of Liermontov) would be the heroes of our times? Are they the ones who discover fire or those who teach us that it burns? Do we side with opportunity or with fear? The poets can obviously make something of that. Today, Goethe’s tale of the sorcerer’s apprentice is worth revisiting. Nothing is simple in the post-modern world, and there is even a realisation that Science, after all, may not be as elegant and coherent as was imagined. The secrets of Nature may be better hidden than was thought. Indeed, some might be completely out of our reach.

In fact, in our post-modern outlook, we don’t like to hide constructions away any more, and science is allowed to reveal its own inconsistencies, especially when great heroes of the subject represent them. Who should we side with, Albert Einstein or Niels Bohr? Does God play dice, or does he shunt us along deterministic paths, which only our own ignorance cloaks in mystery? What is at the core of science can also be at the heart of poetry, and the quarrels between our heroes over which way to set the universe spinning are surely as poetic a matter as one could ever hope for.

So here is a poem about the inconsistencies of the deepest theories in science: it is about the legendary disagreement between the creator of Relativity and the Pope of Quantum Mechanics over a matter still unresolved today. The question is so important that it remains both as a blockage to the development of Physics and a general issue bothering those of us dreamers who merely ponder about the meaning of it all.

**Albert et Niels ou**
**«Dieu ne joue pas aux dés»**

Albert et Niels en devisant
du petit et parfois du grand
ont tout changé de notre monde

**Albert and Niels or**
**‘God does not play dice’**

Albert and Niels confabulating
about things Small and sometimes Large
have changed everything in our world
Le temps n’est plus ce qu’il était
ni le ciron qui sommeillait
dans l’abîme des fins profondes
Il n’y a plus d’immatériel
ni sur terre ni dans le ciel
Même le vide est plein de choses
Le hasard s’est moqué d’Albert
Dans son espace est un cancer
dont nul ne sait cerner la cause
Niels a nié l’oeuvre de Dieu
avec des arguments spécieux
qui n’avaient cours qu’à Copenhague
Albert voulant tout réformer
par ses trous noirs a transformé
notre univers en terrain vague
Ils nous laissent les pots cassés
et le réel à ramasser
dont l’Horloger ne voulait plus
Est-ce raison Est-ce hasard
Disparaîtrons-nous tôt ou tard
sans que ce point soit résolu

Time is no longer what it was
nor the tiny bugs which slept
in the deepest abysses
Nothing can be immaterial
Either on earth or in the sky
Even the vacuum is overflowing
Albert was fooled by Chance
In his space is a cancer
But nobody quite grasps its cause
Niels denied the work of God
by using specious arguments
only received in Copenhagen
Albert wanting to reform all
Through his black holes transformed
Our universe into no-man’s-land
They left us the broken pieces
of reality to pick up
the bits the Watchmaker rejected
Is it Reason Is it Chance
Will we soon be disappearing
Before this question is resolved

I chose this example\(^1\) to stress that science is not closed, and indeed that the poet is also allowed to get to the bottom a scientific issue. Behind the beauty of the equations is another kind of beauty: from all situations, nature somehow contrives to escape and to allow only a part of its secrets to be captured, leaving us with the paradoxes of partial understanding. In our post-modern view, a Grand Design can never be completely achieved.

Reality, in the end, stands somewhere between the dreams it can inspire (not only to poets, but also to scientists) and the mathematical complexity needed to capture only a part of its beauty. If the poets are called in, no longer will scientists be able to hide their own disagreements and disappointments from view: the poets understand enough about such matters to bring them out into the open. And that is precisely why the poets are needed. People have had enough of the spin doctors, and official

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\(^1\) A translation of this poem into Russian by Alla-Valeria Mikhalevich follows this article below.
communicators have earned themselves a bad name. Nowadays, people want to hear from the inside what the limitations are.

So, here is a poem which tries to tell the truth about deep failures in the scientists’ attempts to describe reality. These failures are themselves heroic and beautiful. They describe the human tragedy of trying endlessly to understand and, as such, make research one of the most touching pursuits imaginable. They surely give science a very different aspect from the triumphalism of the ‘we know all’ gang.

**Sonnet sur l’état de la science**
Naïfs on le croyait l’univers explicable
Albert nous l’avait dit et l’état lamentable
du temps n’apparaissait pas si clair au grand jour
Puis le hasard alors n’avait pas encore cours
On suivait des chemins balisés admirables
L’ordre arrivait à point nommé et les discours
rassurants éloignaient un chaos détestable
de nos esprits Les infinités régnaient autour
d’un monde immaculé construit pour la science
qui attendait tranquillement d’être compris
comme une âme endormie privée de connaissance
On y croyait alors au sens de la matière
Le savoir s’étendrait sur la planète entière
On rêvait au Grand Tout On n’avait rien appris

**A sonnet on the state of Science**
Naïvely, we thought the universe interpretable
Albert had said so, and the miserable state
of Time did not appear then in the light of day
Nor had any game of chance yet emerged in nature
We followed admirable and clearly marked paths
In the end, there was always order, and the justifications
were reassuring to keep the hateful chaos at bay
in our minds Infinites ruled only on the edges
of an immaculate world built for Science
which seemed to be waiting peacefully to be understood
like a sleeping soul deprived of consciousness
In those days, we all believed matter had a meaning
Knowledge was spreading all over the planet
We dreamed of a Great Whole In fact we knew nothing

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2 A translations of the poem into English verse by Sydney Leach and into Russian by Alla-Valeria Mikhailovich follow the present article below.
The starting point of a new line of research is a form of inspiration (a dream) about a property of nature very close to what a poet may also hope for. This initial moment is followed by a more or less protracted period of hard work before one can say that the research has led somewhere. And the same is true, again, for the composition of a poem. The difference is that a new piece of science is acclaimed by scientists, whereas a new poem is acclaimed by its readers, who are not necessarily poets. However, this difference is not crucial, because poets, unlike some prose writers, do read each others’ work to the extent that they usually form the first public of new poetry.

A final remark. Astronomy has always inspired the arts. The Chinese character Ming, which combines the sun with the moon, signifies at once brilliance, completeness and perfection. Bringing together Science and Poetry has a very similar ring to it. Were one to succeed, it would similarly result in something complete, luminous and perfect in the sense that science and poetry are different projections of reality onto the flat space of our perception, or complementary images from which one might, in an ideal Platonic world, reconstruct a full description of reality.

One of the most popular images of the scientist (not only for the public, but also amongst scientists themselves) is of a person obsessed by a new and revolutionary theory of everything, who rushes down into his laboratory and bumps into awkward little facts which makes his great dream bite the dust. He is, in a sense, his own worst enemy and the architect of his eventual downfall. The scientist’s lot, it seems, is an unhappy one, to be confronted at every step with the harsh and sobering check of reality, which one may associate with the hard glare of sunlight. At the end of the day, no theory will ever survive. Reality will triumph, because science is essentially incomplete.

Against this, on the other hand, is the happy popular vision of the poet, who is supposed to care so little about reality that he is usually thought to be living in another planet, if not in another world altogether, symbolised mainly by the moon. True, the poet may survive in a garret under a leaky roof, surrounded by half-full buckets of rainwater, with little to eat and few to care about him, but he is supposed to live for a dream, and that in itself compensates all his romantic misfortunes. The poet, we are told, must surely be happy, because he creates, and this very act, which has something almost magical and god-like about it, should suffice to fill him
with joy and satisfaction. Indeed, he deserves to be punished in other ways for enjoying such a scandalous privilege, and life in a garret is but justice. Poetry, seen in this way, is simply a form of sophisticated madness, a disease whose true origin is unknown, although in principle one can cultivate it by reading too many books.

Few people seem to realise that the work of the poet is in fact closely related to that of the scientist. Both are regularly confronted with the cold light of day. In fact, they share a common respect for the waste paper basket which is an essential accessory in their respective occupations. Poems written during the night very rarely survive into the glare of daylight. Verses stand or fall like so many theories. Indeed, it may be said that a theory is an attempt at a poem, and that poetry can be disproved, or shown to be false, trivial and inadequate, sometimes merely by reading it over again at a different hour. It is never clear during the act of creation whether a new poem or a new theory will survive the test of time, whether it will stand up to the withering gaze of uncertainty. Indeed, poetry cannot be tested either in absence of reality. That is one of the hard facts of life.

The successful poem is a brittle object, which must be made of grit to survive erosion. It is necessary to work away all its inessential softness, to leave behind only the hard essentials, and such is the task of the serious poet. Likewise, the successful theory has a solidity of internal structure analogous in some sense to that of a crystal, which makes it robust as well as testable, and building in such rigidity and purpose is the ambition of any respectable mathematical physicist.

Hence, there can be no real difference between Art and Science, between poetry and the core of natural philosophy. This I have come to regard as a theorem, a proposition which, by the argument I have just exposed, is seen to be incontrovertibly established beyond any reasonable shadow of doubt. Vagueness is not the purpose of the Poem, as Ruth Padel so significantly points out.

Indeed, there can be no such shadow of vagueness and uncertainty, and it follows as a lemma from my very general deduction that perfection can only exist in either the Arts or the Sciences if one somehow meets the other as do the Ying and the Yang in the circle of totality. Such is the true nature of the human adventure we humans presume a little pompously to call thought. It is a peculiar combination of audacity and wisdom, of heroic inspiration and rational appraisal. Which of the two involves intuition and which one reason is what Dirac would have called a
meaningless question. Perfection requires the sun and the moon to be combined into a single character, Ming, whose meaning would, however, be completely lost if either became in any way separated from the other.

By tradition, the sun should be, like Apollo, associated with poetry, while the moon is the calendar, and therefore should signify science. You can of course choose which is the sun and which is the moon, but one without the other cannot describe reality in our world today.

A sonnet on the state of Science

Translation into verse by Sydney Leach, with some remodelling, of the poem by Chaunes:
“Sonnet sur l’état de la science”
Paris, 1 June 2008

Naïve to believe the universe has meaning,
Albert said so when the state, demeaning,
Of time did not appear clearly in sight,
For chance had not yet shown its sovereign right.

We followed a well-worn and admirably marked path,
Order arrived on time, and a justifying sermon
Dispatched from thought and from budding wrath
Abhorred chaos. To infinities we said amen

In an immaculate world born for science,
Waiting peacefully for understanding, seeming
A sleeper, of knowledge not conscious.

In those days we thought matter had meaning
And knowledge planet-wise was spreading
We conjured up Unification, but in fact we were dreaming.
A SONNET ON THE STATE OF SCIENCE
СОНЕТ О СОСТОЯНИИ НАУКИ

Наивные, мы полагали, что мир объясним.
Так сказал нам Альберт, и мы были согласны с ним.
Жалкое время больше не проявлялось при свете дня
и случайность тоже не возникала, игрой маня.

Мы шли к своим замечательно намеченным маякам,
где был в конце безупречный порядок, а не хаос, нам ненавистный
все рассуждения были так убедительны и понятны нам,
мы верили, что материя полна какого-то смысла.

На границах совершенного мира, выстроенного в нашем сознании
властовала бесконечность - но лишь по самому краю.
И казалось - душа науки спала и терпеливо ждала понимания.
Знания стремительно по всей планете шагали.
И мы тогда о Великой Целостности мечтали,
ничего на самом деле, не зная.

Перевод А. Михалевич

Chaunes : Requiem pour le chapeau d’Albert

Son feutre fatigué sur la table en faïence
rumine les rumeurs du passé en silence
un trou noir menaçant avalant les couleurs
un météore éteint tombé parmi les fleurs

un morceau de la nuit un œil plein de conscience
stoupa pour ce dandy qui survécut aux pleurs
de celles qui l’ont vu soupeser les malheurs
du monde Abri final des arts et des sciences

cette chapeau savait tout Rêvant au vestibule
son dôme était rempli d’idées et de formules
et même un jour flotta sur un chignon charmant

Il se remémorait ce bonheur sous la lune
La nymphe Astronomie sur les toits ombre brune
arborait ce trophée conquis sur son amant
A requiem for Albert’s hat

His tired felt hat resting on a porcelain table
meditates on the gossip of the past in silence
like a threatening black hole swallowing up colours
or a spent meteorite landed amongst flowers

There it lies, like a fragment of night, an eye of consciousness,
a stoupa for the dandy who survived the tears
of ladies who watched him weigh up the problems
of the world. There is the final shelter of arts and sciences
the hat which knew it all. Dreaming in the cloakroom
its dome is still full of ideas and formulas.
One night, it even rested on a beautiful hairdo

and it remembers that happy moment by moonlight
on the rooftops when the nymph Astronomy
stole it and wore it as a trophy conquered from her lover

A REQUIEM FOR ALBERT'S HAT
РЕКВИЕМ ШЛЯПЕ АЛЬБЕРТА

Его старая фетровая шляпа
отдыхает на хрупком столике,
в тишине созерцает она
tайны прошлого, как поглотившая все цвета
угроза черной дыры,
как ослабевший метеорит, приземлившийся прямо на клумбу.
Там и лежит она, как осколок ночи,
как око разума. Чаша
для денди, пережившего слезы
многих женщин, наблюдавших, как он
уравновешивает проблемы мира.
Это последний кров наук и искусств, о, шляпа знала их все.
Этот купол - он всё еще дремлет в прихожей,
он всё еще полон идей и формул.
Однажды ночью он даже покоялся на божественной шевелюре
Он помнит счастливый миг при луне, на крыше, когда
nimpha Астрономии похитила и носила его как трофей,
отвоеванный у возлюбленного.

Перевод Аллы Михалевич
Chaunes: En souvenir d’Omar Khayyam

Passant celui qui veille ici connut les choses de la vie Il nous laisse un tas de bons conseils la saveur de son vin et le parfum des roses qu’il célébra toujours Avec son art de vivre il resta libre et osa parfois même être ivre mais pourtant son esprit fut toujours en éveil à guetter la venue de la vérité nue au fond d’un verre vide Avec humilité sa vie en homme solitaire il l’a vécue ayant sondé des livres la banalité L’astronomie l’en consolait L’austérité des calculs le charmait par leur sévérité C’est au fond d’une nuit étoilée qu’il l’a vue le premier celle qu’il a nommée l’inconnue

In honour of Omar Khayyam

Passer-by, the one who rests here knew a thing or two about life and left us a lot of good advice about the taste of wine and the smell of roses which he always celebrated. With his art de vivre he kept a free spirit and sometimes even dared be drunk but his mind was always awake and sharp to spot the naked truth at the bottom of an empty glass. With true humility he lived his solitary life having measured the dreariness of books He sought solace from Astronomy. The austere beauty of calculations delighted him and at the bottom of a starry night he was the first to discover and give a name to the unknown.
Прохожий, тот, кто покоится здесь,
знал кое-что о жизни и оставил нам множество добрых советов
о вкусе вина и запахе роз,
которые он всегда прославлял. Благодаря его живому искусству
он сохранял чувство
свободы выбора и даже иногда напивался ужасно,
но ум его всегда был бодрым и оставался ясным
чтобы увидеть голую истину на дне бокала.
И душа его за долгие годы узнала
всю банальность множества книг.
С полным смирением
жил он в уединении,
В астрономии он искал утешения.
Его восхищала строгая точность расчетов,
и он был первым, кто на дне звездной ночи
открыл и назвал по имени неизвестное.
Перевод Аллы Михалевич

Translation into Russian by Alla-Valeria Michelevitch
Of the poem by Chaunes Albert et Niels

АЛЬБЕРТ И НИЛЬС
ИЛИ «БОГ НЕ ИГРАЕТ В КОСТИ»

Альберт и Нильс беседовали о том
как понятия о самом Малом а иногда и самом Большом
в корне переменили наш мир.

Время стало отныне не тем чем было ранее
не клещами-кровососами спящими
в глубине первозданной бездны

30
Нет ничего нематериального
ни на земле ни в небе
в мире реального даже вакуум переполнен

Случайность сводила Альберта с ума
словно внутри его пространства опухоль или чума
причину которой никому не удавалось постичь

Нильс работу Бога начисто отрицал
что он блестяще и доказал
аргументами только что полученными им в Копенгагене.

Альберт хотел все реформировать
и своими черными дырами
превратить нашу Вселенную в безлюдный пустырь.

Нам приходится лишь подбирать пока
частицы не нужные в работе Часовщика
осколки реальности, которые они нам оставили

Причина ли это или это Случайность
и не исчезнем ли сами мы раньше чем эту тайну
хоть кому-нибудь удается раскрыть

Перевод Аллы Михалевич
PHAEDON AND XANTHIPPOS

by Chaunes

(Dialogue on the subject of Science found under a stone during the restoration of a collapsed temple by the Ministry of Culture)

PHAEDON

As I passed the market this morning, I saw Cleanthis, who told me that there was a symposium last night, where Alcibiades got drunk as usual and argued against everybody, until Socrates finally intervened to put him back on the correct path. Why didn’t you tell me about this event? I would surely have come. It is always such a pleasure to hear Socrates discuss with Alcibiades. Somehow, it brings out the best in him, although Alcibiades always behaves so badly when he is around.

XANTHIPPOS

I would have told you if you had asked. But anyway, it was unplanned. It simply happened that Alcibiades was drinking wine with some friends, which included a flute-player from Pyraeus, and that Socrates came by and joined the party. What did Cleanthis tell you about it anyway?

PHAEDON

Of course, I was unhappy about his reply, and asked him to tell me more. But he complained of a headache and claimed he remembered nothing, although it was only the night before. He suggested that you would know, because you had taken part in the debate, and had said many clever things about science and culture, which nobody else had thought about.

XANTHIPPOS

I said nothing particularly clever, but I had heard in the morning from the crew of a boat in Pyreos about some numbers of a new kind. They were discovered, it was said, by disciples of Pythagoras, the one who knows all there is to know about triangles. These numbers are so strange that some would call them irrational, while others find them beautiful and say they are the very essence of numbers, and prefer to describe them as transcendental. But the truth of the matter is that nobody understands them properly, because their properties are unlike anything found before. So, it has been decided to keep even their existence secret. Too much knowledge, they say, might be dangerous, and the priests are worried about letting this out.

PHAEDON

That is surely a good subject for geometers, but I don’t really see why it caused such excitement at a drinking party: I was told that a Poet had also arrived by the same boat, together with the beautiful flute player from Halicarnassus, whom
Alcibiades had invited. Surely that was more interesting than a discussion about numbers.

**XANTHIPPOS**
They would have been. But Alcibiades was already unsteady, and you know how he can behave on such occasions. When he heard about the numbers, he became very angry. He said that these Pythagoreans are nothing but barbarians, who will invent useless and obscure ideas, and are then incapable of explaining them in simple Greek words. He even said that he thought they did it on purpose to make us feel like fools.

**PHAEDON**
Now, why would they do that? Surely, anybody who thinks of something completely new wants others to understand it and to realise its importance.

**XANTHIPPOS**
That is what you or I would have said, but Alcibiades became very agitated and could not be restrained. He said that the beauty of numbers had become corrupted, and that there was no need for new ones anyway. He said that geometry itself was useless if people could not understand it in a simple way, and that the citizens of our city should not support the school of Pythagoras if they could not think of ideas which would bring prosperity in return. He even suggested that no poet could ever write about them, so that they must be worthless.

**PHAEDON**
And what did Socrates say to all of that?

**XANTHIPPOS**
Well, he pretended not to know the reason for this outburst, but he did so in a way which showed that he understood much more about the whole matter than Alcibiades, so people sensed that an amusing debate would follow, and that there would be much to learn. The conversations around us then stopped. The flute player no longer played, because she saw that Alcibiades was not listening to her, and even the poet stopped tuning his lyre. We, of course, all knew that something special was in the air.

**PHAEDON**
I wish I had been there to see their faces, but I imagine Alcibiades just wanted to provoke Socrates. It is his way of learning, and he always claims has no time to study because his life is so full. So, he was probably pleased that Socrates rose to the bait. How did they begin?

**XANTHIPPOS**
Well, Socrates was his usual sarcastic self: – You are right, Alcibiades, he declared, to observe that the new numbers are useless. Unfortunately, they have been
discovered. What should we do? Maybe the answer is to send a proclamation from the people of Athens to the Pythagoreans and ask them to disclaim the whole idea. If they refuse, we should arm some ships, invade their god-forsaken island and force them to renounce. After all, what is the point of allowing numbers into the world which we cannot make use of? I will use the sword which I drew in Platea to defend Athens against all discoveries which are useless. Will you join me in that?

PHAEDON
I can imagine that Alcibiades was all for it.

XANTHIPPOS
He was indeed. While Socrates spoke, he drank another cup of wine, and sent Xenopho to look for his own sword, which was a very expensive one, a gift from the lovely Hypathia. Then, the mood of Socrates changed. He seemed suddenly concerned: – What should we say, Alcibiades, to those people who believe in composing and singing songs? Clearly, we should not allow them to stay within the walls of our city. What is their purpose indeed? It seems to me that the song-writers are also useless people. What do you think?

PHAEDON
Alcibiades must have been hurt. Not later than last week, he wrote a song for Hypathia, and half of Athens knows it already by heart.

XANTHIPPOS
Well, of course, everybody thought of that, and probably he did as well, but he had become quite heated, so he had to agree with Socrates. Against his better judgement, he admitted that only useful people should stay within our walls, and that we should indeed cast out the song-writers together with the abstruse mathematicians.

PHAEDON
How disappointing! But there again, rather typical, I would say.

XANTHIPPOS
This, however, was not enough for Socrates. – If we cast out the song-writers, he said, then this will be of little use if there are still people around who can teach how to play the lyre. So the poets had better go with them. Of what use are poets anyway? Homer says that all they do is wait for the gods to cast misfortunes upon us, so that that they can sing the exploits of heroes and celebrate the fall of Troy. Send them away, and perhaps the gods will leave us alone to live quiet and happy lives. Will you join me in an expedition against Parnassus and turn them all out?

PHAEDON
A good point, and I like it. Anything which can make the gods lose interest in us should be supported. I bet that Alcibiades was pleased.
XANTHIPPOS
Well, by this time, he was getting a bit worried. Only, it was too late to retreat. So, he stood his ground bravely and agreed that the poets should follow the mathematicians into exile in some far-away place. – Now, said Socrates, I am at last persuaded that we will all be happy. And what should we do about the historians? They, after all, keep reminding us about things which no longer happen, and the geographers are always interested in places which are so far away only monsters care to live in them. Admittedly, they are not as bad as the poets, but then I am deeply worried about the philosophers. They keep asking questions to which nobody knows the answers and challenging the wisdom of the oracles. Should we keep them? Should we throw them out? I fear that they may be even more harmful than all the others put together.

PHAEDON
What a question! I am sure Alcibiades was getting hot under the collar…

XANTHIPPOS
Reluctantly, he agreed that they would have to go. At this point, the audience cheered, and we all emptied our cups of wine to celebrate their disappearance. – Well, said Socrates, that is very reassuring. Without all these people, our city will be peaceful indeed. There will be nothing to argue about, and our children will learn only useful words, the ones which are valuable for trade in the market place. So many complicated terms which make Greek difficult to master will just disappear. Indeed, there will be no point in reading or writing except for keeping lists of the things which exist already. But I have heard it said that the Barbarians, who were so roundly defeated by us in the last war, have now withdrawn far away from Greece. Maybe all these people will go and join them. It would be rather amusing if our mathematicians, song-writers, philosophers, geographers, historians and poets were all to end up among the Persians. What do you think? Would they stay together, or would they live apart? Would they continue to speak Greek, or would they all learn Persian? Would they give up mathematics, music, science and poetry, or would they teach the barbarians how to think? In fact, who would the barbarians be if all these people lived among the Persians, and where would our children and the children of our children prefer to live? Alcibiades, please help me. I begin no longer to understand the course we have embarked upon. How did we get from chasing away the new numbers to emptying our city of its culture? Could it be that there is some connection between the two?

PHAEDON
By now, Alcibiades must have been either totally drunk or in complete disarray...
XANTHIPPOS
It was actually a bit of both. – However, he bawled, our city will be rich! All the money we waste on culture will be saved. And we will only have kept what is useful within our walls, so we will be able to afford any of these useless luxuries, should we suddenly decide to buy it back. Just look at my flute player. Isn’t she beautiful? She came from Halicarnassus on a phenecian boat and stayed with me for just fifty gold pieces. Do we really need to teach our own girls to play the flute?

PHAEDON
That was a revolting comment. Alcibiades has no shame. How could he be so rude to the poor girl?

XANTHIPPOS
That was exactly what she thought. She may have been a foreigner, but she was very fiery and obviously had some grit. She picked up her flute, threw the gold coins back at Alcibiades like so many stones and ran away, shouting that she would never play any music for any Athenian again.

PHAEDON
Alcibiades must have had quite a shock. That was an unexpected turn. He always thinks that just being Greek is enough to be the very essence of culture and to have the whole world at his feet

XANTHIPPOS
Socrates, of course, was quite pleased, even if he didn’t show it. He doesn’t like to see Alcibiades surrounded by beautiful women. Hypathia is bad enough. But the most amusing thing was to watch the behaviour of the poet.

PHAEDON
What do you mean by that? Did he also run away?

XANTHIPPOS
I guess he would have liked to. But poets, you know, have a difficult time as they are always so short of money. So, he pretended he hadn’t seen what was going on, and just waited around a bit in case Alcibiades was drunken enough to throw some more of those gold coins in his direction. Of course, he can’t have been much good. A proper poet wouldn’t have done that, I think.
From Sylvoisal in Lausanne (Switzerland)

**Contre la science**

Grand arbre du Savoir,
   Je veux t'abattre
Pour me chauffer ce soir
   Près de mon âtre.
De quel bois noir es-tu issu, arbre de Science?
Je rejoins mon enfance et sa fière innocence;
   Amis de là-bas, buvez de ma vigne,
La science est un point au bout de la ligne.
Dieu des savants, fiche le camp;
Dieu des amants, reste présent!
Couché sous le jupon des belles,
   Je vis à l'ombre de tes ailes.

**Against Science**

Great tree of Knowledge
   I want to fell you
To heat myself tonight
   Near my own hearth
What kind of wood are you made of anyway, tree of Science?
I will return to childishness and its proud innocence;
Good friends out there, come and drink my wine
Science is just a point at the end of the line.
God of the scientists, be away with you;
God of lovers, please stay with me!
Stay hidden under the skirts of the beauties
   I will just live under your wings.
From Alla Mikhalevich in St Petersburg (Russia)

EUROSCIENCE

Михаилу Наумовичу Либенсону
Когда мякоть листа сгнивает и проваливается,
остается правильно-неправильная ячеистая сеть
с магистралями более толстых развилок,
так что, если и не вооруженным глазом смотреть,
увидишь нити сбегающихся и разбегающихся жилок,
ажурное кружево – застывший жизненный путь
всех питавших его до этого соков –
словно на валентные отростки молекул взглянуть –
предельно тонкие, отходящие сбоку,
невидимые связи всего со всем, переменно-контактные –
«полнота бытия» – как сказал бы какой-нибудь рационалист,
подразумевая при этом нечто абстрактное,
а бытие и есть – этот лист.

EUROSCIENCE

To Mikhail Naumovich Libenson

When the tissue of the leaf gets rotten and falls through, all that is left is the regular-irregular cancellate net with its mainstreams of thick bifurcations, so that looking at it with a naked eye – you can see the threads running to and from the veins, the delicate lace – the hardened ways of previous life of all the saps that earlier fed it – as if they were molecular outgrowths – extremely thin, branching out sideways, invisible overall connections, alternating contact – “a fullness of being” – as a rationalist would say, by that implying something abstract, while the being is – the leaf itself.

Translated from Russian by Alla Mikhalevich
To Mike Kaminski

The poplar tree flows into the sky
behind my window.
The river turns its waters back,
but where do the branches go
forking their way,
constantly striving upwards?

The tree of evolution grows
far back from the Pre-Cambrian.
On every branch a special fruit:
Reptilia, Mammalia, Protista.
All marked specifically
where the branches bifurcate:
To the right go barnacles,
to the left - crawfish and crayfish.

My eye runs up the tree trunk
and follows every detail on a branch -
here time's arrow made its way,
or more precisely, time itself was branching.

Translated from Russian by Barbara Lonnqvist
По тихо струящейся речке
То там я увижу, то тут:
Обрывками ангельской речи
Боярышниц крылья плывут,
И целые бабочки тоже -
Как будто живой ледостав,
Прилипнув к текущему ложу
И крылья свои распластав.
Да что им, летуньям свободы,
Какой-нибудь слабенький бриз!
Но именно тихой погодой
Те бабочки падают вниз,
Навстречу своим отраженьям, -
А вместо желаемых встреч
С холодным и темным теченьем
Приходится сливаться и течь.
Как если бы нечаянно кто-то,
Минуя любовь или тлен,
Влетел бы однажды с налета
В зеркальный заманчивый плен.
И, может быть, очень похоже,
Случайно влетев впопыхах,
Свои отражения множа,
Слова застывают в стихах.

English Rendering:

By a river quietly flowing
Here and there I catch
Glimpses of wings flying
Like scraps of angels’ speech.

And whole thorn butterflies hover
Above the surface; cling
To the water freezing over,
Spreading their wings.
What is a light breeze
To creatures born to fly!
But in calm weather, these
Drift downwards and die.

Instead of union
And desire’s dream,
They meet cold fusion
With the dark stream.

As if a soul born free
Of decay and love
Should, in a mirror, see
Itself and be enslaved.

Perhaps, drawn by perfection
In poems, words fly in haste
To join their reflection –
And find themselves held fast.

Translated from Russian by Sally Wheeler

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Ж.-П. Коннераду
Простая решетка кристалла,
простая решетка стиха –
и все как алмаз заиграло,
как перья в хвосте петуха.

А сколько в пространстве решетки
вмещается атомов-слов!
Все грани прозрачны и четки
от правильных жестких углов.

Все правила, в общем, не новы,
и новых, наверное, нет.
Как будет поставлено слово,
так ляжет отброшенный свет.

Но в каждой такой разработке
есть самый ответственный миг:
и в правильной жесткой решетке
возможен неправильный сдвиг.
В кристаллах живых карбонатов
немного неправильный скол,
на этой границе когда-то
и весь фотосинтез пошел.

Зато в образцах кремнезема
совсем идеальный кристалл, –
и жизнь потекла по-другому –
процесс развиваться не стал.

***

To Jean-Patrick Connerade

The simple lattice of the crystal,
the simple lattice of the verse –
and everything sparkles like a brilliant,
like feathers in the tail of the cock.

And how many of the words and the atoms
fit into the space of a lattice!
All planes are transparent and distinct
between their right and strict angles.

All the rules are not new on the whole,
and perhaps new ones do not exist.
How the words would be arranged in line –
thus would be their light be cast off.

But in each of such elaborations
one instant is the most important:
even in the right and strict lattice
there could be an irregular shift.

Thus in the carbonate crystals
there is a somewhat irregular chip,
and just on this chip’s broader surface
the first photosynthesis began.

While in the silica samples
the crystal has ideal form,
and the life process was not developed –
as life went its another way.

Translated from Russian by Marcus Wheeler
Within classical Russian culture, the unusually high position of literature and the cult of the writer’s profession are important characteristics, owing to some peculiarities of the Russian historical state and public organization. In pre-revolutionary Russia as well as in the Soviet Russia, literature replaced philosophy, politics and (not rarely) even journalism. Literature was taken as a social service and a writer – as a prophet, a teacher of life.

At the same time there were also ambiguities. From one side, the people took science and culture and those who make it their profession to create intellectual and spiritual values in the arts or the sciences as hostile and too closely bound to the power structure. Really, culture and science in Russia were implanted from above. But from the other side, and at the same time, it is possible to observe in the Russian mass consciousness of the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th centuries a particular respect for literature, and especially for poetry, and a tendency of people of lower classes to be actively engaged in literature and to take their own position in it. This very interesting phenomenon is characteristic of Russia in that period – the significant number of so called ‘folk writers’. On the top of this iceberg was Esenin. In particular, this kind of literature became the inspiration for a new mass culture which originated at the beginning of the 20th century.

The emergence of this mass culture and the penetration of imported models of “high” Europeanized Russian culture went on in parallel. In Soviet times those belonging to the workers and peasant classes had notable privileges up to the beginning of Perestrojka, and it was easier for them to go into literature than into the technical sciences. Of course, it should also be emphasized that literature played in Soviet times a special role in enabling self-expression and a minimal degree of spiritual freedom.
All these effects during 50-80 years of the 20th century resulted in an unusually strong influence of literature on mass consciousness and an extraordinarily high moral authority of Russian writers in society. This authority did not suffer even from the wide popularity of cinema actors and singers. In post-Soviet times, literature was liberated from playing many uncharacteristic roles.

However, on the other hand, we see in today’s Russia a decline in the authority of science and culture, accompanied by a new social humility of intellectual activity. The continuity with Russian classical literature is now reaching the end of its tradition. Nevertheless, the well-known literary trend of Russian culture is not lost. Even Russian rock music distinguishes itself in particular by its close bond to the text, and many of the texts of rock music undoubtedly represent very strong poetry. The number of young authors is very high and their craving to be noticed push them to use nonliterary methods according to the rules of mass culture (D. Prigov is a bright example of this trend). This approach is more characteristic of the contemporary Moscow poetry school. Under stricter criteria, this school could be characterized as postmodern, being more ironic and sometimes a mock opposite to the St. Petersburg classical school, which is more deeply rooted in a poetry line leading from Pushkin to Mandelstam and Brodsky.

Belonging to one of these schools is not only defined by the place of the birth. Thus, part of the Petersburgian youth is strongly attracted by the Moscow school of T. Kibirov, I. Irteniev, S. Gandlevskij, D. Bykov, while the muscovite Olesja Nikolaeva stands closer to the St. Petersburg tradition, with A. Kushner, S. Stratanovskiy, D. Raskin, I. Duda, A. Tankov and A. Frolov. E. Schwarts, though standing somewhat apart from the classical tradition nevertheless does not fully break away from it.
Noces pures

Me voici parvenu sur la dernière marche,
devant ta porte !...Est-ce pour moi que l'on a mis
ces feuilles et ces fleurs pour en décorer l'arche?
Est-ce pour moi qu'on a déroulé ce tapis?

Tes parvis sont déserts, je suis seul! Dois-je croire
que c'est moi l'invité? que j'étais attendu?
Vais-je connaître ici la fin de mon histoire?
quelle sera ma place et quel sera mon dû ?

Par ton souffle de vie écarte ce mystère:
rappelle-moi le sens de mes gestes premiers,
réapprends-moi le chant d'amour de notre terre !...
Afin que mes moissons emplissent tes greniers,
je veux lancer au monde une semence pure
et recouvrir mes champs de l'orge et du blé
dont tu feras le pain d'alliance future
pour unir ta maison à mon peuple assemblé.

Je veux sur mes coteaux planter la bonne vigne
et vendangerai pour toi le meilleur vin
pour refaire avec toi, par le verbe et le signe,
aussi qu'au dernier soir, le partage divin...

Je veux... mais redis-moi ta parole perdue:
sans toi je ne suis rien qu'une ombre! si ma voix
ne se perd pas dans le vacarme et. la cohue,
c'est à ta volonté seule que je le dois!

Unis ton être au mien! que ton sang, que ta force
me pénètrent! Que brûle en moi ton feu divin!
Sois sève de mon arbre et j'en serai l'écorce!
Sois ma source, sois mon souffle et sois mon levain!

Et nous aurons ainsi, hors des œuvres charnelles,
retrouvé ta parole et mon geste essentiel
pour célébrer à deux les noces éternelles
de la terre et du ciel.

Extrait de « Le temps des Noces pures » 2007
L'HEURE DU MAÎTRE

Au calme de ma nuit, ton jardin se repose...
Toute ta vie est là, qui palpite et qui dort :
lissant secrètement sa chrysalide d'or,
ta beauté se dépouille et se métamorphose.

Tes fleurs et tes buissons, ivres de tous mes chants,
tant et tant que ton nom n'était qu'une musique,
ce soir, goûtent ma paix... L'écho du temps tragique
s'est tu... Tout semble vivre à de nouveaux accents.

Sur tes massifs, j'étends mes reflets de mystère:
ta douceur les accueille en gerbes et depuis,
l'eau pure redevient breuvage au fond du puits
et je berce ton rêve au ventre de la terre.

Vois! J'apporte mon souffle à tes commencements !...
Je détiens le secret de la plante de vie
et mon signe sacré que l'ombre nous envie
redonne à ton sommeil la ferveur des amants.

Mon silence de nuit tisse tes chants de l'aube:
vienne le jour !... Sois prête, ou tu ne sauras pas,
 lorsque refleurira le sable sous tes pas,
quels sont ces cris d'oiseaux qui nichent dans ta robe...

A tes jeux d'eau, laisse sourire le vieux roi!
De ton jardin secret je demeure le maître
et suis seul à savoir l'instant où va renaître
la parcelle de Dieu qui sommeillait en toi.

Extrait de « Le temps sublime » 2001
From Charles-Henri Julia, France

La Manere

Terres rouges
Vasques d’eau fraîche
Moires du clair remous de cascades cachées
Bois et sous-bois de buis, d’écureuils, de morilles.

Tours de guet, de feu
Les orages d’été grondent seuls la menace
Au bas de tours où plus ne tintent de sonnailles
- Chèvre agile cherchant champignons et châtaignes –
Où plus ne s’allument de feux
Que les feux du solstice de juin.

Les Sarrazins
ont fui avec nos peurs
Les touristes usent nos rêves
Minces enclos de framboisiers
Mas qu’on restaure auprès de la source effondrée
Chapelles et corrals de simples ermitages
Dans le retour à soi
D’un pays de silence, d’absence, de vacances

La Menera

Terres vermelles
piques d’aigua fresca,
moarés dels remolins de cascades ocultes,
boscos y sotaboscs, d’esquirols, de murgoles.

Torres d’aiguait, de foc.
Els temporals d’estiu ronquen llur amenaça
al peu de terres mudes d’esquetflots
-àgils cabres buscant castanyes i bolets –
que no ostentten ja focs
sinó els que es fan al solstici de juny.

Els sarraïns
Han fugit amb la nostra por.
Els turistes gasten els nostres somnis.
Petits tancats de gerdoneres,
mas que hom restaura prop de la font nafrada
capelles i corsals dels simples ermitages,
quan torna en si un país
de silenci, d’absència, de vacança.

(Catalan version by Pere Verdaguer)
CUENTAME UN CUENTO

I

Cuéntame que cuentas cuentos desde las historias que sueñas.
Cuéntame lo que no vives pero si lo ves. Un puñado de piedras inventas.
Desnudo habló en sueños.
Cuéntame del color de tus muros,
de tus jardines,
de tus veredas,
de las vetas en tu piel.
Cuéntame y habla profanamente de lo que crees,
de lo que dices y no piensas,
lo que vives y no dices.

II

Cuéntame del último vuelco del mar de revés.
Háblame de las ajadas parcelas y de sus dueños,
tan llenos de surcos y sol,
como el arado que las trabaja.
Háblame de cuencos de matinal agua fresca
y de quien fatigosamente los acarrea sobre la cabeza
o sobre los hombros.
Cuéntame del volátil tañer de iglesia temprana y tardía.
De las reverberantes voces: anónimas y piadosas oraciones que escurren como los cirios que las iluminan.
Bajo el muro de adobe, se rompen las sombras y crecen los sueños inmortales.

III

Cuéntame de las miradas que invento y no digo, de las miradas que dices y no inventas pero que sueñas.
Cuéntame de los pliegues que cuelgan en tus ventanas, los que atrapan las harpías de la noche y de las ausencias.
Cuéntame del último hoyo que lánguidamente descubriste en el raso de tu recamara, ya tan domesticado y tan familiar y tan necesario de pura presencia.
Los nudos que nos atan a la tierra son las amarguras que rumiamos letárgicamente tirados a la nada.

IV

Cuéntame más cuentos.
No los grites, solo susurra.
Habla como quien trae las manos atadas por rosarios y escapularios.
¡No, no! No son oraciones, ni aun menos son elegías. Sólo son las historias tempranas o tardías. Son relaciones anecdóticas de quien vas a conocer y de lo que estas por ver.
De lo que no viste y ya se ha ido, pero que lo sabes por que no puede ser de otro modo. No pienses y cree, y cuando creas, piensa.
Evita que un día tus palabras estén rodeadas de barrotes y verdugos.
Los amalgamados por silencio y los nacidos de la autocensura.
La ignorancia es de los necios:
de los que censuran a la palabra, y de los que abusan de la palabra.

V

Cuéntame de un diciembre frió, en el que tus muros calan en tu alma y el cielo se cierra. Sin salvación no queda más que continuar el sueño e inventar la salvación de las historias. Por eso Sartre creo el infierno de los humanos. Espejos redentores y críticos de lo que piensas y no dices, de lo que sueñas y niegas como vida. Por que tus estancias se congelen. Por que tus parcelas se cuarteán. Cuéntame los cuentos que aun quedan en la libreta de las palabras que se inventan y que viajan: en el viento, en el tiempo, en los jazmines y en los amores, en los fingidos y en los honestos. ¡Átame! Y con la ganzúa de tu alma rompe el nudo, y desamoradaza mi voz. Ya los palmos de madero extienden su sombra y sus misterios. Ya las palabras se revuelcan de puro pecado y avaricia, de pura honestidad y de beatitud. ¿Quién las escucha? Se te han metido bajo la enagua y estrujan y queman tu piel. Las palabras se calcinan, y el cuerpo intacto rompe al relámpago y mata a la malsana tempestad.

VI

Cuéntame mas historias, y deja que sobre mi pecho se derrame la luz y que las pavesas caigan como granos de maíz. Que resuenen como lágrimas tardías, vorágine de aguas que arden y se sacuden. Cuéntame del corazón de piedra verde que en mi frente ha nacido y que late presuroso cuando el alba nace y cuando la noche se cierra. Cuéntame de las palabras que al abismo y al infinito no caen. Las otras palabras, las que manufacturan las cuentas las que cuelgan de tus manos, las que se extienden al suelo, y que dices al cielo: son vanas. Los oídos se han cansado de escuchar: ruegos, suplicas, y moralejas. ¿A quien le importan tus plegarias?. Mejor aprende a olvidar y a no ignorar, No olvides lo que no debes ignorar. Tu convicción es la única fe. Caracol, corazón, trozo de piedra, palpitante anémona del cielo y de la tierra. Me he detenido y dejo que inventes más palabras. Pero, por favor... Cuéntame un cuento...
MADELEINE

Elle se frottait les pieds l'un contre l'autre (pour se faire des stigmates).
Elle donnait son avoir aux pauvres (ce qui est très louable).
Elle a fait l'objet d'un livre de plus de mille pages (imprimées serré).
Elle a passé trente ans dans un hôpital psychiatrique (heureuse que le grand patron s'intéresse à elle).
Elle était charitable avec ses voisines (peut-être, je ne m'en souviens plus).
Elle voulait croire que Dieu lui parlait (il fallait bien que quelqu'un lui parle).


MADELEINE

She would rub her feet against each other (to give herself stigmata).
She gave her possessions to the poor (a very laudable act).
She was the subject of a thousand-page book (with small print).
She spent thirty years in an asylum (pleased that the chief found her interesting).
She was charitable to her neighbours (maybe, I don't remember).
She wanted to believe that God spoke to her (it had to be someone).

The "Madeleine" case study forms the first part of "From Anguish to Ecstasy" by Pierre Janet, Editions Felix Alcan, Paris, 1926-1928
L'UNIVERS POUR LES NULS

"Poète, tu n'es qu'un abruti..."
Pour MNC, JPC, Stefka et tous les autres

J'ai appris qu'on peut décrire avec précision l'univers jusqu'à une distance de 4,73 x 10^{26} m qu'après, il devient primordial, c'est-à-dire sujet aux théories et aux éclats (faire preuve de courtoisie afin d'éviter les big bangs superfétatoires)

J'ai appris qu'une astrophysicienne peut envoyer la vérité au diable lorsqu'elle écrit une ode au soleil tandis que la poète ignore et dans sa grande stupeur ne peut que contre-vérifier les faits

Je n'ai pas appris ce qu'un homme de science va chercher lorsque tard dans la nuit il entend vrombrir en lui le poème comme un trou noir qui lui serait propre

Je ne sais toujours pas pourquoi au nom du ciel je pourrais ressentir l'obligation de commettre (encore) un poème sur les étoiles.

THE UNIVERSE FOR DUMMIES

"Poète, tu n'es qu'un abruti..."
For MNC, JPC, Stefka and all the others

I learned the universe can be described with precision up to a distance of 4.73 x 10^{26} m and thereafter becomes primordial, that is, subject to theories and clashes (courtesy a must if one is to avoid superfetatory big bangs)

I learned an astrophysicist can send the truth to hell when she writes an ode to the sun yet the poet in her crassness and fear and trembling can only counter-check her facts

I did not learn what a scientist is looking for when late at night he hears a poem buzzing within like his very own black hole

I do not know why in Heaven's name I might feel a duty to perpetrate (yet another) poem on the stars.
From Lavinia Greenlaw in London

Night Photograph

Crossing the Channel at midnight in winter, coastline develops as distance grows, then simplifies to shadow, under-exposed.

Points of light – quayside, harbour wall, the edge of the city – sink as the surface of the night fills in.

Beyond the boat, the only interruption is the choppy grey-white we leave behind us, gone almost before it is gone from sight.

What cannot be pictured is the depth with which the water moves against itself, in such abstraction the eye can find no break, direction or point of focus. Clearer, and more possible than this, is the circular horizon.

Sea and sky meet in suspension, gradual familiar textures of black: eel-skin, marble, smoke, oil –

made separate and apparent by the light that pours from the sun onto the moon, the constant white on which these unfixable layers of darkness thicken and fade.

We are close to land, filtering through shipping lanes and marker buoys towards port and its addition of colour. There is a slight realignment of the planets. Day breaks at no particular moment.

from Night Photograph (Faber & Faber 1993)
НОЧНАЯ ФОТОГРАФИЯ

Пересекаем пролив в полночь, зимою
чем дальше – тем больше
проявляется береговая линия,
затем она выравнивается
и превращается в тень,
так до конца и не проявившись.

Пятна света – пристань и дамба,
Городская окраина –
Переполняются ночью и тонут.

Серо-белая зыбь, позади нас и рядом –
Единственное, что нарушает плавность,
Но она исчезает раньше, чем успеваешь настичь ее взглядом.

Не поддается изображению лишь глубина,
вода движется навстречу самой себе, и даже,
погружая, взгляд его не навести на резкость,
не заметить ни начала движения, ни его направления.
Более четко виден полукруг горизонта.
Море и небо встретились и зависли,
видишь постепенные знакомые переходы черного:
цвета угля и мрамора, дымчатые, маслянистые –
свет, который солнце льет на луну,
позволяет видеть их ясно и по отдельности,
свет ровный и белый, на котором эти
неуловимые слои темноты стущаются и постепенно тают,
не поддаваясь фиксации.
Земля всё ближе, проходим
узким фарватером между бакенами

К порту, где свет прибывает.
Планеты слегка перестроились.
И невозможно точно засечь момент наступления дня.

Перевод Аллы Михалевич

из «Ночная фотография» (Фабер & Фабер, 1993)
From *notes on poetry and science* by Lavinia Greenlaw

The interaction of these two very different disciplines can help to overcome a few preconceptions: that the poet is only instinctive, subjective and romantic; that the scientist is only objective, logical and precise. If either are to be any good at their job, they have to be something of both. The poet must be rigorous and exact, and the scientist imaginative and instinctive. Great scientific discoveries have been made in dreams and, apparently, in the bath. Great poems are those in which the most nebulous aspects of experience are rendered clear through a process of activation and orchestration of language at the deepest level.

Of course each goes by different laws and has a different aim in mind. The poet wants to articulate sensation, while the scientist wants to make sense. Yet we have a particular affinity at the moment in that this is an age in which both the arts and the sciences are more than ever bound up with the variables and limitations of perception.

The twenty-first-century view aspires to limitlessness. This mobility, which is there in the satellite that can read a number plate from space or the scanning electron microscope that can survey a fly’s eye as if it were a mountain, is in direct tension with our awareness of our perceptual limitations. The Czech poet and immunologist Miroslav Holub quotes Heisenberg: "Even in science the object of research is no longer nature itself, but man's investigation of nature". So the emphasis is more than ever on process and fundamentally on the problem of a point of view.

From Ruth Padel in London

"Poetry or science, what matters is saying it how you see it. Saying precisely what and how you saw, and no more. Accuracy is all you can do."


**TWO POEMS ON THE LIFE-CYCLE OF AN URBAN FOX**

*April: Hare Moon, Period of Curiosity*

She doesn't get out. Two weeks holed up in here, curled round fur sausages, three of them – black, deaf and blind - under the duvet
of her brush. Handlebar swirl of dark lines
down her pin-muzzle - up to listen, down to lick,

to stimulate circulation. She's a curled C
holding her top hindleg in the air for hours
not to squash the far cub. Forearm crooked like a sick
hound over the strongest, the first. One thin foxglove
tenderpaw over the lot. And he,
in silverdark frost and blue mists of King's Cross,
forages Timber Yard, Randell's Road,
Long Cedar Way, where night's tide has pasted
the ruck of rimmed gravel and mud
with condoms, beer cans, Lord

Cappuccino's wing-handle empties.
With his vomero-nasal organ (smellcells
behind front teeth in the mouth's ribbed vault),
and two hundred million scent-receptors
(humans have five) packed in his nose –

so granulated, wet, and mad for pungency –
he digs detritus in a smellscape brightening
all neural pathways to olfactory
arenas of his brain. He brings what he can.
Voluted Kentucky Fried Chicken bones,
maggoty pigeon's left wing. Fat brown slug,
a wet-glisten Havana cigar. Prawn Pot Noodle.
With a low whine, a whimper, he bows
his black mouth, leaves this spice trade for her
at the lip of their ludo-cup earth.

May: Dyad Moon, Period of Behavioural Refinement

One cub has died on the road. Magpies
have eaten her. The last two play-learn, eat solid food
and follow their parents through dusk. Twins
of the Greek night sky, Castor and Pollux, shine
through damp London nights as earthworms
leave burrows. Parents spoon crane-flies off lawns
with their tongues, teach young to deadhead the bins
on Bemerton and Havelock, lift black plates
for frankincense, rot-lustre gems
of sunk baconfat. To strip flaking bark
for silverheave woodlice, listen
for worm-bristles rasping through grass.
If worm-tails are gripping the burrow –
even a worm can be frantic – the grey-black lips

pull gently taut – and pause – and pull again.
A technique used by bait-collecting fishermen.

THE ALLIGATOR'S GREAT NEED AND GREAT DESIRE

To be thermally, forever, stable. (That surprised you.) Harder than it seems,
   But thermo-regulation is their thing. When the air
   Is colder than the water, October to late March,
   They keep to dens below the water table.
   Away from them, caught by a cold snap, they become
   Completely numb, incapable of moving. All they do is breathe
   Surface-oxygen through air-holes. Temperature is their goal,
   Their god and good. During winter, they take no food.

They pick an under-hang of lake or stream which will
   Stay filled with water when the spring freshet recedes.
   Listen to Mr Ned. "See him," he says, "back out of that hole
   He's making burdened with dollops of soft mud
   In his mouth and on his tail, pushing a mass of mud
With webbed hind feet. He's one busy alligator, sweeping his tail
   From side to side. And trees round gator holes grow
   Darker green, their roots enriched by droppings."

For water's everything. The darkest alligators come, thought Ned,
   From Tupelo Gum Swamp where the flow is black,
   Dyed by its maker's hand - the bark, roots, fallen leaves
   Of Tupelo Gum. Gator holes, especially of older beasts
   Who, weary, cannot want to move,
Run a long way underground. That's how they manage. They survive,
   When they can't bear what's outside. They know, whatever knowing is
For them, they’ll have to face the winter. So, they dig.
Хотят они быть в тепле, всегда и везде. (Не удивляйтесь). Сильней, чем можно

подержать.
Терморегуляция - это их всё. Когда воздух становится холоднее воды,
с октября по март, крокодил живет в норах ниже уровня грунтовых вод.
Он лежит оцепенев, не двигается. Пропуская лишь кислород с поверхности сквозь свои дыхальца. Только тепло - их цель.
Их бог, их жилище. Всю зиму они лежат без пищи.
И выбирают такие места, откуда вода не уйдет никогда даже после того, как спадет весенний паводок.
Послушайте мистера Неда. "Взгляните" - говорит он, "как он пьется из норы, нагруженный комьями грязи.
Грязь везде, во рту, на хвосте. Он проталкивает грязную массу перепончатыми задними лапами. Двигает хвостом из стороны в сторону.
Такой вот занятый аллигатор. Вокруг его нор деревья сочнее, он удобряет корни своим пометом".
Вода для них - всё. Самые темные, полагает Нед, пришли из Тупело Гум, из тех болот, где поток насыщенно темных вод,
помеченные его рукой - корнями, корой, палой листвой.
Из Тупело Гум. Их норы, особенно у самых старых потерявшее даже желание двигаться,
тянутся под землей на гектары.
Вот так они выживают, прячась от стужи,
когда им невыносимо то, что снаружи. Что бы там ни было, они знают,
придёт зима. И потому - копают.

Перевод Аллы Михалевич
Trois SONNETS

Pax, Pacis…

*Il se décline depuis d’antiques soleils ce simple mot qui fait se courber les humbles et rugir le diable.*

Partant sur les chemins qui ne mènent à rien
Notre raison humaine accourt vers la prière
Guettant, dans le silence, un mot que l’on fait sien,
Qui parle enfin à ceux ne trouvant plus matière.

Occulant chaque instant à préserver un lien,
Elle marche haïssant toute main meurtrière,
Arrosant chaque soir de l'espoir d’être bien :
Ce rêve d'un matin en robe printanière.

Mais peut-on marier victimes et bourreaux
En sortant mécanique aux heures de bureaux,
Et gratter l'allumette, incendier la paille?

Mais peut-on proclamer la parole d’un Dieu
Sous les bombes et les cris, le feu de la mitraille
Et les turbans de haine aux portes du Saint Lieu ?

Feux d'artifices…

*Dans la nuit parlent les étoiles artificielles*

Du gouffre de l'enfer jaillissent des couleurs
Qui éclosent dans l’herbe, en cascades fébriles
Et se mêlent au feu de nos yeux immobiles
Captivés et perdus dans l’ombre et les clameurs.

Puis en éclats sur l'eau, les astres voltigeurs
Etourdissent nos rêves et nos âmes dociles
Dans un ballet sans fin de figures agiles.
La lune se profile impassible aux ardeurs

Des terriens déchaînés osant rivaliser
Avec la stratosphère. Ils voudraient tout dompter !
Mais cet insaisissable infini les intrigue.

Ainsi l'inconscient de l'inhumaine ronde,
Par son esprit errant dans l'espace navigue,
Perdant l’éternité consumée en seconde.
L’amour est une fugue au-delà des regards…

En monde féminin

Mon jardin est ce ventre au parfum d’océan
Qui berce dans sa fuite un homme merveilleux,
Animé par un chant au fluide radieux,
Enveloppant, si tendre, au sourire d’enfant.

Et le destin aride, et la coupe du temps,
Et l’insensé des cris, ni même l’orgueilleux,
Ne troublent cet amour dans un silence heureux
Qui chavire discret, pour toujours, lentement.

Mais, il faut se cacher, encercler la rumeur
D’un cerceau de ce feu au regard du flâneur,
Et des gerbes de nacre arrosent les regards.

Ô toi! Monde infini, hymne de l’avenir
Expiant son mystère en des rires fuyards,
Accepte mon sursit dans un fougueux désir.

( poèmes extraits de « Ton infini murmure » à paraître )
Fontaine Stravinsky
Un ballet fouillant entre une église gothique, un atelier d’acoustique, un musée éclectique...

Sculptures anachroniques au temps présent qui coule
En horloge et en tic en flaques et en boule
Vous offrez une bouche à croquer sur la place
Une parade louche à la couleur de glace
Un beau rossignol torse attisant son ennui
De trouver une force—"Ah, s’échapper d’ici!"
L’oiseau de feu en pâte à mâcher des couleurs
S’élance dans la hâte vers une bulle d’heure
Dame musique hèle et Sol marche sur l’eau
Au cri de Manivelle—"J’ai perdu mon boulot!"
La houle tourne, saoule en carré de quartier
La spirale des jours découpe du papier
Il n’y a qu’un enfant qui puisse crier—"On part!"
—"Dit Adieu l’éléphant, à demain le renard...
Revient belle sirène, bonjour petite grenouille
Vous devenez des reines où la pluie tombe et mouille!"

Ces corps polyester ne riment pas sur terre
Mais plutôt avec fer comme un coup de tonnerre
Le serpent se tourmente à l’amour de la mort
La vie est indolente au regard du remord
Et c’est un as de cœur qui ravage la place
L’ingénieux sculpteur par amour pour l’espace
Pose un chapeau de clown dans un décor sérieux
Tempêtes immenses dans le désert des jeux
Où se mêlent les arts dans des gestes bizarres.
La Seine coule en rose, Notre Dame en brocart
Le Panthéon verdi, le Sacré Cœur bleu,
Et le Louvre rougi de tant d’effronterie!
Le pinceau du futur dévisage les pierres
« Aux doux coups de minuit, rien n’est plus comme hier ! »
Les étoiles s’emballent et dansent au clair de lune
Voyagent autour du globe et recherchent fortune!
Nos rêves s’enfuient en bateau sous les tropiques
Et plantent des châteaux sur les plages de l’Arctique
La terre s’étonne des saisons qui enchantent
Aux perles du hasard qui si souvent nous hantent
Ainsi les gouttes d’eau dispersées par le vent
En brume se confondent et surprennent souvent
Amantes et déments, elles séduisent la gravité
Pour, en final, éclabousser celui qui passe très pressé.

Bérangère Thomas
From C. Goarant – Corrêa-de-Sá in Chartres (France)

Vrille toupie aux mille éclats,
Traîne copeaux en son sillage,
Sème peinture puis s’en va,
Dénude bois et prend le large.

De pièce en pièce à travers sol,
Mon vieux joujou tourne sillonner,
Crisse fébrile fier et fol,
Raille parquet puis polyphone.

Tout semble naître à son sillon :
Amas, poussière, galaxie…
Le centre monde tourbillon,
C’est l’axe fou de ma toupie.

London Victoria…

La jambe découverte, elle s’évertuait
A masquer de pudeur cette chair indécente.
Mais l’habit restait court, et ferme refusait
D’amorcer plus avant quelque infime descente.

Alentour, impossible – aux hommes qui, présents,
N’avaient rien d’autre à faire en la salle d’attente –
De ne pas succomber aux légers mouvements
Que voulait bien risquer cette pauvre innocente.

La scène était tragique et belle infiniment :
De voir cette candeur, comme prise en otage
Des replis trop étroits de son court vêtement…
Le calme qui s’habille au manteau de l’orage !

D’un œil qui ne voit pas, galant homme et poli,
J’admirais la vertu que montrait tel courage ;
Car sa jupe en faisait, courte et longue à l’envi,
Quelque grande héroïne, inconsciente et sage.
O poète, jette ta plume
Et déchire ta feuille blanche,
Car jamais tu n’égaleras
La palette envoûtée du peintre.
Du jaune-pêche au rouge abricot,
La barre sombre de la ceinture du mage
Eclate ton rire sanglant,
Et le cœur qui te monte aux lèvres
N’est plus qu’une grenade ivre
Qui vide ton esprit meurtri.
Sur le velours bleu de nuit qui tangue,
Tu t’effondres en tas de chiffon,
Et la vierge à l’arc qui penche
Vers l’ange son corps ensoupli
Emporte ton âme vide
Vers des mondes aux jets infinis.

Sur sa conque l’Eve aux cheveux d’or
Qui surgit dans un nu d’amour
A le regard perdu de l’ombre
Que la beauté jette à la mort.

Alors, ferme à jamais ton livre.
L’ange malin de Filipo
Sait mieux que toi où gît la source
Et où rêver la vérité.

Si le printemps te fait si mal
C’est qu’il renaît après l’effort,
Vibrant mirage de sommeil
Au souffle bleu-gris envoûtant.
Il cueillera les pommes d’or
Et dansera la triple alliance
De l’aurore et la floraison.
Vêtu en masque de guirlandes,
Il te décochera la flèche
Qui tombera en pâmoison
Sur ton cœur vibrant d’étoiles.

Alors tu giras pantelant et blême
Sur ton velours au bleu de nuit,
Et tu jetteras-là ton verbe.
Poète, tu n’es qu’un abruti.

Florence, le 19 août 2004

APOCALYPSE

Voici venu le temps du temps des derniers jours.
Homme vieilli, usé, grimpe sur la montagne
D’où tu verras sombrer ton morceau d’infini,
Ton univers pourpré jetant l’ultime flamme
De ton trop vieux soleil gonflé par le dépit.
Dépit de n’avoir su protéger de lumière
La vie qui, au hasard, avait ensemencé
La planète aux eaux bleues et aux profonds mystères
Qu’en son troisième anneau le chaos a jeté.
Quelques milliards d’années, à peine, et de son règne
Il ne restera rien qu’une étoile avortée,
Naine nue et blanchie par le froid de sa neige,
Astre mort et transi, morne outrage glacé.
Homme, toi qui rêvais de chevaucher les mondes
Qui parsemaient tes nuits de chemins éclatés,
De délires noircis par le feu de tes fièvres,
De tes désirs meurtris par le poids des années.
Ouvre un dernier regard sur ton sol endeuillé.
Le désert emprisonne à jamais tes collines.
Tes forêts sont charbon, où tu aimais poursuivre,
Au son cuivré des loups que tu apprivoisais,
Ton double à la ramure de fier vaisseau sauvage.
Vide est ton océan, berceau de ta naissance,
Et vides les caveaux où dormaient tes aïeux.
Tout périt sous la braise, étouffé sous la cendre.
Sens le souffle brûlant qui envahit les cieux.
La tempête de nacre obscurcit tes paupières.
Le long baiser du vent au goût d’orange amère
T’est un dernier supplice, en ce jour de colère
Où tu ardes sans joie, sans remord et sans frères.
Car tous se sont déjà couchés en leurs linceuls,
Prisonniers de la pierre fondu en mains de lave,
Coulés dans l’ambre rousse et pétrifiés de peur,
Bouche béant d’effroi et blancs cheveux dressés,
Mains crispées en un dernier espoir de pitié.
Mais la pitié n’est plus quand sombre l’espérance.

Alors, homme vieilli, ne te retourne pas,
Ne recherche ton contra et tes trop anciens pas.
Il est tard. Tout est mort. Que sert de résister?
Sens tes yeux fatigués et de larmes taris,
Sens tes pieds alourdis et ton esprit lassé,
Lassé de ces combats sans vainqueurs et sans gloire.
Ta jeunesse, jadis, faisait semblant d’y croire,
Croire à l’arbre au serpent et aux plaisirs secrets
Que l’on cueille au hasard des chemins défendus,
Laissant un goût amer de sanglante défaite,
Mais que tu poursuivais, souvent par habitude,
Et plus souvent encor, pour tenter de calmer
Le tumulte importun de tes sens agacés,
Qu’aucun rite, pourtant, ne savait apaiser.
Homme vieilli, entends, à présent homme sage,
La sombre mélodie du silence qui vient.
Ton monde doit mourir pour que naissent les mondes
Où d’autres trembleront en se tenant la main,
Où d’autres auront des joies, des amours et des songes,
Dont tu ne sauras rien. Mais qu’importe à ceux-là?
A l’univers entier ton morceau d’univers
N’est que poussière obscure en un coin sans racines.
Il a vécu sans bruit, qu’il meurt sans amertume.
Homme, ferme les yeux et sombre dans ta nuit.

Paris, 12 janvier 2003

SUR LES CHEMINS DE LA RELATIVITÉ

Galilée, notre père, Albert, notre grand frère,
Etes vous fiers de vos enfants?
D’un mouvement de rien, d’une brise légère,
D’un simple souffle du néant,
Vous avez fait surgir l’espace, l’espace triple
Et la dynamique du temps.
La Relativité, immortel principe,
Fut la lave de ce volcan.
Puis, l’espace-temps se mit à devenir quadruple.
Vous tourniez dans vos variétés.
L’invariant de Lorentz, vous le rendiez caduque.
Riemann triomphait, magnifié.
Les règles et les horloges vont et viennent sans cesse,
S’allongent, soudain, sous nos yeux.
Encore un petit tour et elles disparaissent.
Pourtant meurent les demi-dieux,
Sans avoir achevé l’œuvre qui les taraude.
Votre feu, un soir s’est éteint.
Mais d’autres sont venus, à la pointe de l’aube
Qui baignait vos derniers matins.

Un enfant pur, sacré, votre nouveau complice,
A ranimé l’âtre en déclin.
Il met de côté la relativité lisse,
Et, d’un grand geste de la main,
Fait s’incarner la relativité rugueuse,
L’indérivable vérité,
Le diamant de soleil, révélation fougueuse,
L’espace-temps mûr éclaté.
Le quantique jaillit en transition de phase.
Schrödinger est apprivoisé.
Klein-Gordon fléchit, succombe et enfin s’embrase.
Seul Dirac semble résister.

Un autre enfant meurtri surgit alors de l’ombre,
Ebloui par cette clarté.
Il n’est pas un héros, ne compte pas au nombre
Des caciques, des sommités.
Ce n’est qu’un mal-aimé, un poète de lune,
Un marginal, un va-nu-pieds.
Mais il sait des contrées qui fâchent et importunent,
Où les esprits sont purifiés,
Où les mathématiques dansent en farandole,
Où point n’est besoin d’expliquer
Ce que l’on peine à apprendre dans les écoles,
Au lieu, simplement, de montrer
Qu’avec une caresse, une douce parole,
Un geste tendre et ingénue,
Toute l’opacité, tout le brouillard s’envole
Et le problème est résolu.

Alors, le petit frère prend la main de son double
Et le conduit tout simplement
Devant l’équation de KG qu’il dédouble,
Oui, mais… quaternioniquement.
C’est si parfaitement simple, si beau, si bête!
En cadeau naissent les spineurs,
Que l’on espérait bien prenant part à la fête,
Mais si tôt et en précurseurs?

Les deux enfants, tremblant de bonheur et de crainte,
Tombent à genoux, joignent les mains,
Frappent leur front à terre, car leur âme est empreinte
De la terreur sacrée de leur larcin.
Ils ont volé aux savants, aux grands maîtres,
Le fruit divin, à eux promis.
Ils seront bafoués, hors la loi, diables, traîtres,
De la communauté bannis.

Mais désormais lancés sur de brillantes routes
Qui se déroulent sous leurs pas,
Ils poursuivront, joyeux, insensibles au doute,
Le jeu qui mène à l’oméga.
Et vous, Albert et Galilée, nos anciens pères,
Vous regarderez, souriants,
Vos enfants enhardis en luttes éphémères,
Et serez fiers et indulgents.

Ile Maurice, août 2002
From Sydney Leach FRS in Paris

The philosophy of Mr Oppenheimer (*)

The philosophy of Mr Oppenheimer
Is based on matter being a two-timer:
The complementarity of wave and particle
Is subject for a controversial article;
I suggest he reads the latest work of Bohm
In the quiet seclusion of his Princeton home,
Or, if a foreign language tempts the boy,
The recent articles of Louis de Broglie,
And Jean-Paul Vigier, so-called Marxist critic,
May give Professor O. a better physic.

He may have read them and still stick to his ideas,
He’s in his right, for that deserves three cheers,
For in the present state of scientific lore,
(The era that began with Einstein, Planck and Bohr,)
No certainty can be expressed as yet,
For physics is the field of the best bet.
Do not forget that in the atom’s core,
Where matter really may be in the raw,
The scientist works not with reality
But only what he thinks it ought to be.

These are but minor matters; the real schism
Lies hidden in atomic humanism.
Behaviour on the atom’s level
Gives no excuse to exorcise the Devil.
The laws which in the microcosm reign
Are rationally evolved by scientists who are sane,
But evidently not all understand
That if applied to man they’re built on sand.

To Oppy, modern physics is a basic cosmic grist
For the unhistoric mill of a liberal humanist.

(*) On reading the text of a talk given by J.R.Oppenheimer in the BBC Third Programme. This was a 1954 Reith Lecture, in which Oppenheimer claimed that free-will in man followed from the fact that electrons are subject to the Uncertainty Principle.
From Emmanuel Mahieu in Belgium

THE GRAND CULMINATION

THE WONDERFUL EPIC OF HUMANITY

From Nothingness... to our Time...
(flashes of light and history)

FROM THE BASIC SPARK
TO THE BIRTH OF THE EARTH

A Darkness... still and cold... rules the Infinite...

Suddenly,
an atom of energy,
reservoir of lights,
bursts in all directions and floods the night
with torrents of brightness, which silently light
the eternal sidereal of borderless space...

The basic spark continues in its progress,
populates the nothingness of oceans of brilliance,
of dust clouds, of seas of galaxies,
of swarms of suns, of tangled worlds
fifteen billion years before our epoch.

Unlimited spiral with sweeping wings,
the Milky Way, fifteen billion years old,
carries within its margins hundreds of millions of stars
with Sun and Earth at the borders of its sails...

Concentrate of swarms, core of gravity,
sphere of liquid fire where rocks swim,
our earth perfects, in millions of years,
its cooled crust, its basic oceans.
From Stephanie Mahieu in Belgium

PAGE OF SAND

Strand of minuscule stars
woven into a smooth golden rug
crib of my childhood
and soft reminiscence
of so much shared happiness;

Trail of fragile beads
piercing glittering waters
that endlessly shimmer
the mysterious blue
of a starry sky;

Ephemeral page
-- laid bare to wind and water --
where a soul in quest
has written a message
addressed to her star

... Look at me ...
Two Poems from Nick Norwood in the USA

Jarring Honey

Decanting from bucket to pot, jug to jar, air bubbles suspend themselves in galaxies:

sucrose solar systems, each glinting orb a perfect pearl reflecting nearest light.

The little giants are first to rise, stately as moons toward the surface, where they catch and form a necklace at the throat, or continue upward, quickening in that last few millimeters to bob in super slo-mo, gather in planetary clusters, molecular models. Supernovas erupting in their own sweet time. Later, a day or more, even the tiniest have risen. The finest remain. Like distant nebulas, faint milky pockets of deep space, abuzz with stars, humming with some new kind of being.

Stem

Picking my way through a pasture with a fistful of flowers—phlox, purslane, wood sorrel, and firewheel— I clutch my bouquet like a tow sack.

Held lower and their necks would break, the bundle droop and loll like the tongue of a gnu I saw on TV. I think of him, the wildebeest, with his muddy narrows to cross after fording the plain, the lion eyeing his one sweet spot, conduit of the carotids and the wind pipe. And now, the crocodile lurks in the shallows. The scraps he leaves will feed the earth, form the muck that plumes the flower, lotus of the Nile, cousin, I know, of lilies that grow not far south, in swamps, rivers, and bayous home to the alligator—whom I think of, as I kick off my boots, go in and rinse a slim vase, arrange these blooms so that they seem to erupt from its delicate throat.
zeitmaschine
& irgendwann
eines willkürlichen tages
siehst du dich umgeben
von gegenständen
allesamt
unversehens
gealtert –
das buch
hat zehn jahre auf seinem leinen-
rücken
& seit zwanzig jahren
nützt du
so manche platte ab
& die ungeborenen sind
großjährig
die kinder längst
eltern geworden
& die säuglinge
lehren dich
endlich
die welt begreife

Time machine
somewhere
on an arbitrary day
you meet yourself surrounded
by counterparts
all of these topics
accidentally
aged –
the book
has ten more years on its linen jacket
and since twenty years
you have used up
one or another record
and the unborn
got mature
children turned by now
into parents
finally
the sucklings
teach you
how to grab the world

Translated by the author
für meinen sohn
mit dir möchte ich
die welt neu bauen
steine umschichten
die realität erneuern
weiß nicht ob dir
lieber die wirklichkeit
als spielball anbieten
oder die phantasie

to my son

together with you I’d like
to reconstruct the world
remove the rocks
and renew reality
but I don’t know
whether to offer what’s real
as a global toy
or point out
the fantasy

Translated by the author

para mi hijo
contigo quisiera
construir de nuevo el mundo
cambiär el orden de las piedras
renovar lo existente
no sé si prefiero
ofrecerte la realidad
o la fantasía
como juguete

Traducción: Ricardo Corchado
mannigfach

ein hochhaus stürzt ein
irgendwo brennen häuser
eine bombe explodiert und
der krieg findet kein ende
andere sterben eines natürlichen todes
man hat sie gut gekannt
neben mir schläft eine frau
und ich schreibe tausend mal
mein bekenntnis sprühe es an
wände beklebe bäume
dienen haustore mir als tafel
schreie mir die seele aus dem leib
vergesse was um mich geschieht
übersehe das elend der welt
dein bild vor augen
ein ziehen im bauch
kreiselst du in meinem kopf
bloß weil ich dir zugetan
einfach so
ganz einfach vielfach

multiple

se desploma un rascacielos
y arden casas en algún lugar
una bomba explota y
la guerra es de no acabar
otros mueren por causa natural
eran buenos conocidos
junto a mí duerme una mujer
y escribo miles de veces mis credos
con atomizador en los muros
con pegante en los árboles
me sirven de pizarra las puertas de la calle
grito con toda el alma
olvido cuanto pasa a mi alrededor
disimulo la miseria del mundo
es tu figura ante mis ojos
un tire y afloje en mi vientre
un rondar por mi cabeza
sólo por mis afectos hacia ti
sólo por eso
así de sencillo y múltiple

Traducción: Carlos Bueno de Guzmán

múltiple

a skyscraper collapses
somewhere houses burn
a bomb explodes and
the war does not end
other people die a natural death
they were well known
next to me a woman sleeps
and i write my credo
a thousand times i spray it on
walls stick it on trees
the gates of houses serve as blackboards
i scream my soul out of my body
forget what is going on around me
ignore the misery of the world
your picture in front of my eyes
a dull pain in my belly
you spin in my head
just because i am devoted to you
just like that
quite simply in many ways

Translated by Karoline Ruhdorfer
nur fliegen ist schöner
  zum beispiel
von der golden gate bridge
der anziehung nachgeben
einmal frei zu fliegen
dir zu liebe
sich das kreuz brechen
rückwärts läuft
der film unserer gemeinsamkeit

stürze dich nicht in neue beziehungen
weinst du
daran wirst du zugrunde gehen
mir kommen die tränen

only flying is more joyful
  for instance
from the golden gate bridge
taking the risk a jump
to face the challenge
  at least trying one time
the experience tempts
  whether legs will
crash on concrete
  the spirit will land safely
with a scenic view of the city
  giving way to attraction
enticed one time flying free
  for your benefit
breaking the spinal cord
  backwards runs the movie
of our mutual existence

don’t throw yourself into a new affair
  you cry severe
you will be crippled
  a single tear drops down from my eye

Translated by the author

sólo volar es más hermoso

a título de ejemplo
atreverse a saltar del
golden gate bridge
  habría que intentarlo
el experimento excita
si acaso las piernas
se impactan contra el concreto
y el alma aterriza suavemente
con la mirada hacia la ciudad
dejarse llevar por la atracción
y volar libre una vez
por amor a ti
romperse la columna
mientras el filme de nuestras afinidades
corre en retroceso

no te precipites sobre las nuevas relaciones
si lloras
irás a dar al fondo por ello
las lágrimas se me saltan

Traducción: Ricardo Corchado

modell

bin ich fellini der dich filmt
und wilder gibt dir regieanweisungen
mal fotografiert dich mapplethorpe
dann wieder helmut newton
wenn picasso dich malt
komponiert john lennon ein lied
für jeff koons bist du cicciolina
und die monroe spielt dich
weil sie nicht anders kann
während miller dich einfach fickt
bist du die hauptdarstellerin meines lebens
und ich trage dich als sichtbares zeichen
tätowiert in meinen organen

model

being fellini who takes you into a movie
and wilder gives you instructions for acting den sprung wagen
man müßte es auf einen versuch
ankommen lassen
das experiment reizt
ob die beine
auf beton prallen
der geist landet sanft
mit dem blick auf die stadt

while mapplethorpe takes pictures of you
another time helmut newton
if picasso paints you
John Lennon will compose a song about you
you are Cicciolina to Jeff Koons
and Marilyn Monroe acts your role
because she can’t do it another way
while Miller prefers just fucking you
you are the main character of my life
and I carry you as a visible sign
tattooed onto my inner organs

Translated by the author

modelo

soy el Fellini que te filma
el Wilder que en escena te dirige
una vez te fotografía Mapplethorpe
luego Helmut Newton
cuando Picasso te pinta
John Lennon compone una canción
para Jeff Koons tú eres Cicciolina
la Monroe actúa en tu rol
pues de otro modo no podría
mientras Miller te hecha un polvo
eres la protagonista de mi vida
te llevo como señal visible
tatuada en mis órganos

Traducción: Enrique Moya / Iguaraya Saavedra

das zauberwort
heißt längst
nicht mehr
simsalabim
hokuspokus
abracadabra
oder so ähnlich
sondern einfach:
PR

the magic word
is
no longer
simsalabim
hocuspocus
abracadabra
or anything like that
but simply:
PR

Translated by
Karoline Ruhrdorfer
From Charlotte Ueckert
in Hamburg

WIE SPRACHE FUNKTIONIERT

Abends kommen die Bienenfresser
Mit spitzen Schreien
Segeln sie scharf unter Wolkengeball
Bis in die Gassen fast
In die Fenster und mir um die Ohren
So klein flattrig
In liebenswürdigem Schnitt
Spielende Kinder die ein Lächeln wollen
Und mich aus dem Verstummen
In Worte zwingen

WINTERBLICK

Eingenistet im Tal die Sonne
Grauköpfige Erlen
Wollen die Jahreszeit vergessen
In den Gärten vor leerem Gemüsebeet
Eine vereinzelte Rose frohlockt zum
Vertrockneten Wiesenkraut
Dann greifen uns Schatten
Und beim Zurücksteigen folgt uns
Das Licht spaziert um jede Kurve des Wegs
Lässt unsere Jacken am Arm baumeln
Rollt entlang am Hang treibt uns in die Höhe
Gegen die Mauern der Stadt
Wo es noch brennt und an den roten Strahlen
Wir uns verjüngen
Aufblühen Lippen und Wangen
Im Sonnenuntergang unter uns
Dunkelnd das Tal. Gehn wir noch mal fragst du

IN HIMMERODS GARTEN

Eine fremde Elster
In der Obstwiese
Auf Suche nach unbekanntem
Glanz im Klee ein brummendes
Tier am Himmel
Ein Wolkenstreif ohne Heimat
Bin Elster Hummel Würmchen
Oder nur Blüte
Nur Grashalm
Nur Hauch

EIN REH AUF DER CHAUSSEE
NOTATE AUS FRANKREICH

I
Das Volk kommt nach Lourdes
weltfern gereist
Es belegt jedes Haus
Es kauft die kleinen Madonnen aus
Glas
Gips oder Plastik
Es schiebt die Kranken zu den Feiern
in speziell
Rollenden Stühlen auch gegen Regen
gewappnet
Es isst und trinkt nicht
Nur Manna und heiliges Wasser
Auffallend
Entsteht eine Ordnung aus Stille schon
Geräusch von Kerzen
Erstickt den Spötter

2
Der Fluss nimmt alles
Ins abwärts Fließende
Er hüllt sich ein in aufsteigende
Feuchtigkeit fornt
Weiße Schleier warum nicht
Auch eine weiße Dame für ein Kind
An der Schwelle sie ist vierzehn
Sie hat Kraft sie glaubt an das
Fließende
Einer Quelle Erlösung ihr folgt
Die halbe Welt über den Fluß
Steigt Hoffnung
Versiegt nie
Bleibt süß trotz der Tränen
Mit denen jeder seinen
Schmerz ins Wasser taucht

3
Der mit dem Wind kreist und kreist
Über mir mit gefächertem Flügel
Und Steuerungssystem ganz ruhig
Auch im Schatten der Wälder mich
sieht
Sich gegen mich als Beute entscheidet
Der schärfer und weiter blickt als ich
Mir vorstellen kann ich bin
Ein Mensch am Boden weshalb denn
Dieser Neid auf den der sich im Kreis
dreht
Höher schraubt mit gefächertem Flügel
Und Steuerungssystem

4
Elektrische Worte und mir fehlt
Das was ein Mensch nicht von sich
geben
Kann er gibt seine Stimme
Gibt seine Gedanken
Gibt sogar von Liebe ein Kuchenstück
Aber bleibt wo er ist und ich kann ihn
Auf keinem Foto der Welt anfassen
Er bleibt wie die weiße Dame von
Lourdes
Mit keinem Gebet herbei zu wünschen
so
Dass er Gestalt annimmt

5
Zwei Kinder die sich gegenseitig
Was weglachen
Die Hexe ist tot

77
Da gibt’s nichts zu fürchten
Sie kaufen eine Spielwiese
Im fremden Land weit
Weg von der Welt
Aber träumen wie ihr Spiel
Die Welt begeistert
Wer tief im Wald lebt
Bei den sieben Zwergen
Sehnt sich wie der Prinz
Wo Schönheit verglast
Fühlt sich wie Rumpelstil
Glaubt fest wie Hans im Glück

Während die Sonne sich zeigt
Regnet der Wald leise
Neben der Straße dort
Dampfen weiße Gestalten
Auf die sanft mich umarmen
Die Wölfe liegen an ihren Ketten
Im Hof und schweigen mißmutig
Keine Spur vom Jäger
Aber wie gestern ein Reh
Im Fliegenmantel
Am Wegrand erinnert so viel
Zerschnittenes Holz

Was ist ein Dreißigjähriger gegen
Einen Hundertjährigen
Krieg
Niemand gibt freiwillig was
Einmal sein war
Wir kolonialisieren uns touristisch
Oder suchen Heimat wo sie
Vielleicht einmal war für
Die Vorfahren
Wir spielen auf der Flöte
Des Fremden
Ich bin ein wir
Du bist ein ihr
Von Ferne die und sie

Meine Burg ist feste
Und zu deiner hin
Habe ich einen Fluß gelegt
Du hast die Brücken gebaut
Und auf meinem Fluss fahren
Deine Boote
Meine Uhr im Herztum schlägt
Bis ins Innere deiner Burg
Jede Mauer läßt sich niederreißen
Und ein paar Meter weiter hochbauen
Auch ein über die Ufer schwappenden
Fluss wird so gehalten

Europa vereinigt sich
Durch Regen
Ich bin ein Rotkäppchen
Aus dem Norden
Laufe im südlichen Wald
Von einem Schauer zum nächsten

Weiß streift ein schweigsames Pferd
Über die Wiese und übersieht die
Maske
Des Esels
Ich bin für das Pferd eine scharf
Zu beobachtende Königin
Habe meine Boten gesandt
In das Lindengesumm

Ein Salamander dem die Katze
Den Schwanz abbiß kann
Kein Glücksbringer sein
Und doch dem Vogelsang folgen
Der das Schöne absichtslos
Verteilt über Land
Auf der Höhe tänzeln zwei Braune
Der langegezogene Wiesenweg
Schneidet den Wald biegt sich
In ein Gehöft
Endet vor einem
Verschlossenen Stall
Man sieht nichts
Aber Geruch und Geschrei
Natürlich ist das so auf dem Land
Vor dem Fuchs muss man schützen

Ich bin ein bedrohliches Wesen
Raubvögel flüchten vor mir
Rehe zittern
Füchse lassen sich gar
Nicht sehen selbst fremde Katzen
Ducken sich
Und ich kann kaum galuben
Als der mir entgegen laufende Hund
Furchtsam abdreht
Wer soll mich lieben
Wer kann das
Wie das hüftschaukelnde Pferd
Das mich beobachtet
Oder der Mitmensch im Auto
Der eine Spur zu langsam
An mir vorbeifährt
« Vous êtes perdu, Madame ? »

15
Eines Tages schlägt der Sommer
Ein mit dem Hutchen bewehrt
Die Wege ins Land
Den sumpfigen Wald noch vermeidend
Warte tönt er insektenbewohnt
Ich umarme dich bald
Und glaub doch nach dem Regen nicht
An jede Katastrophe
Die dicken Holländer nutzen
Endlich ihr Schwimmband
Das junge Paar noch bemüht
Um Nachkommen

16
Die Laterne der Toten steht
Seit zwölfhundert im Garten der Büßer
Einzig in Frankreichs Städtchen Sarlat
Tierhöhlen aus der Zeit
Vor Zigtausenden kennen wir
Seit knapp hundert Jahren
Wer weiß wie Altes wir
Entdecken auch außerhalb
Frankreichs Weite
Schlumm’r’s in unseren Seelen
Unter einer dünnen Haut
Eine Burg die im Volk Arche
Des Satans heißt schleift sie
Zur Wiege der Dichter !

17
Solange Sonne scheint
Zu essen hat und trinken
Aufwacht am Morgen
Ist Zeit für Gedichte oder
Wenígstens kleine Notate
Metaphernlos ob sinnvoll
Sei dahingestellt und nicht
Hinterfragen wie das Bellen
Von Füchsen endlich
Bin ich einem lebenden Reh begegnet
Wie mir ist ihm bequemer als im Wald
Auf der Chaussee zu gehen
MYTHEN

1.
Mit der Maske der Medusa
Leben und warten
Bis Perseus der Raffinierte
Im Geschlechterkampf siegt
Ihn aber plagt danach
Die Sehnsucht nach einer nie
Mehr erfüllbaren Liebe aus
Der Zeit vor den Schlangenhaaren

2.
Die sicheren Grenzen alter Bräuche
Nicht verletzen in mageren Zeiten was
Den Hunger stillt auf einem Altar
Opfern: welche Angst
Wenn zur Tag- und Nachtgleiche
Das Licht in die Höhle fällt mittags
Wünsche an den Mond
Der Sonne anvertraut

3.
Durch diesen Boden wächst
Mir etwas in die Füße
Das vergossene Blut
Dampft in meine Adern Rachelust
Die Liebe schwere Last
Die stattdessen Kraft geben soll
Meine Füße ein Filter
Schritt für Schritt vom Boden gezogen

Charlotte Ueckert  (6 Poems written in English during a stay in England 1991)

POETRY

All the time spent in writing this poem
Is time spent in a different language
Sometimes we understand each other
Better than ourselves

And the sun is moving up and down
And the leaves are changing green to brown

And the egyptian sphinx is smiling each time more
About your visit
Her lips are cut so carefully for kisses
That hopefully the stranger stays

Neglecting claws and breasts

ENGLISH COUNTRY GARDEN

Roses are blowing
On their thin high stems
Over earth well heaped
In some corners
Everybody has to smell them
With no escape
But some people try
To hear what
Grows under
A well-cut English lawn

THE LAST TRIAL

Sitting between the grave-stones
Leaning your back against
Anybody’s forefather’s ghost
While having a lunch
Or a smoke or a sleep
It’s worthwhile taking photos
For some strangers to life
To whom the jury said
„You are not guilty“
But the judge refused to pay
A fee for your lawer

RIGHT OF WAY

Public footpaths all over the country
Overgrown a few steps further
With all sorts of plants the soil is able
To throw Centuries ago
Somebody must have walked here
Merry old England
That’s the way
You deal with foreigners
Who survived the Spanish Armada

Or Waterloo and came over
The channel without any sword
Any knife we look
At each other with arms held high
To avoid touching the nettles
Fortunately we
Soon trespassed on private land

**BISHAM SAINT**

In a church you’ll usually meet
Some of the most respectable people
For instance a Lady
Who buried two husbands
But probably murdered one child
She outlived legend in writing
Beautiful epitaphs about her family
Their funerals and all
The trappings of their death
Her passion lasted more
Than eighty years her ultimatum
A monument inside the church admired
By descendants
An artist built her as a kneeling sculpture
Just in the middle of her life condemned
To pray until Last Judgement comes

**TO SYLVIA PLATH**

(after reading a poem of Ted Hughes and in a newspaper of a bombing catastrophe)

Now in somebody’s mind
You’re a feather
Hurling in all kinds of wind
Which gives us headache
What a death it would be
Exploding with gas and burning
To hell on a fine summer’s evening
While eating an ice-cream
Chattering with friends and
With your lover
I saw it only in nightmares
This newspaper-reality
You lived it
Now a feather
In one breeze with your rivals
United spirits
In one of the lover’s poems

**From Assumpció Forcada**
Poet and teacher of Biology in Barcelona

VIRUS

Virus d’amor que has passat
tots els filtres,
que t’integres al missatge
de les cèl·lules més intimes.

Has canviat totalment
el calendari dels dies;
ara, tot gira entorn del teu cicle.

Quan ets lluny,
en fase d’eclipsi,
somnis i realitat et multipliquen
donant-me joia i angoixa,
vida i mort, al mateix temps.

VIRUS

Virus of love, you who have passed
through all the filters,
now part of the message
of my dearest cells.

You have completely changed
the calendar of my days;
now, all revolves around you.

When you are far away,
in a phase of eclipse,
dreams and reality multiply you
to give me joy and anguish,
life and death, all at once.

(Janet DeCesaris, English translation)

(Del llibre IMMUNITAT)
DERIVA CONTINENTAL

Ones d’enyor surten de l’hipocentre d’aquest cor solitari.
Hi ha una subducció de sentiments que es fonen en magma sota l’escorça d’aquesta mar.

Els dies es vinclen com un pla inclinat posant una llarga falla, a les hores del dia, i volcans per on fan erupció els somnis a la nit.

L’amor, que era un sol continent, en fragmentar-se, va deixar-nos com continents a la deriva que tenen, en els records, la mateixa flora, els mateixos estrats, testimonis fidels d’un temps feliç.

CONTINENTAL DRIFT

Waves of emptiness flow from the hypocenter of this lonely heart.
There is a subduction of feelings that melt in magma under the crust of this sea.

The days are linked like an inclined plane with a long fault at the hours and volcanoes where dreams erupt at night.

Love, a single continent upon splitting up, left us like drifting continents in their memories, the same flora, the same strata loyal testimonies of happy times.

(Janet DeCesaris, English translation)

(Del llibre EVOLUTIO)
FOTOSINTESI

Els teus electrons giraven tranquils per òrbites del teu món interior, mentre els dies anaven configurant en tu la clorofil·la, en una mutació de la qual desconeixes l’origen. Ara ets un arbre en el bosc de la vida, amb el dia va arribar la llum dels seus ulls i vas adonar-te que els electrons s’excitaven amb aquell bes de llum. Seguïen una cadena de transport amb una alegria que donava energia i treia oxigen de l’aigua. I vas endinsar-te en l’altre fotosistema, que tenia una clorofil·la diferent, completant la seva òrbita. Ja sense llum, a la nit, un conjunt de reaccions màgiques d’enllaços i atraccions entre tots els àtoms anaven purificant l’aire mentre el gust dolç del sucre es repartia per totes les branques, troncs i arrels i feia més lluents, més verdes les fulles.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS

Your electrons quietly revolved in your inner world while the days made in you chlorophyll, in a mutation the origin of which you do not understand. Now you are a tree in the forest of life at dawn came the light of life’s eyes and you realized that electrons moved about with those rays of light. They followed a chain of transport with joy that gave energy and took oxygen from water. And you jumped into the other photosystem, one with different chlorophyll, and completed its orbit. Now without light, at night a set of magical reactions of links and attractions among all atoms were cleansing the air while the sweet taste of sugar was spread over all the branches, stems and roots, the leaves now shining and bright green.

(Janet DeCesaris, English translation)

(Del llibre FOTOSINTESI)
From Uli Rothfuss
in Berlin and Tblisi

schatten, maske
und der rote stern
auf deiner stirn

wer –
wer bist du, fremde?

welches lied du singst!

hitze

überall diese musik
der bass dröhnt
auch joe cocker soll
jetzt im juni
ein konzert im kaukasus geben

draußen gehupe
der vorbeifahrenden autos

sie kommt nicht
zur tür herein
fällt die hitze
wie eine wehende fahne

einer geht vorbei
in der hand weiße rosen

Tiflis, 23.5.2007
kein wort dazu

ein gewirr von stimmen
musik
kinder schreien, und jeden tag
das lächeln
dieser jungen frau

mit ihren locken
wie ein blätterwald im herbst
durch den der wind fährt
dieses lächeln
und kein wort dazu

bloß das pfeifen
einer kaffeemaschine
und draußen stolzieren tauben
kein anruf kommt; und
es wird schon dunkel

Minden, 20.10.2007

eingesetzt wieder

der alte professor
doziert
brille auf die stirn geschoben
im kaffeehaus
jetzt
hebt die hand
und seufzt
der siegelring blitzt
spricht er ein korrektes russisch
kaffee vor sich
und einen hörer
das rauschen des kaffeautomats
draußen passanten

Karlsruhe, 1.12.2007
POETRY AND BRAIN: DARWIN, DICKINSON, RAMON Y CAJAL AND DALI

The brain is one of the most fascinating objects in the universe. So, it is not surprising that poets find it such a source of reflection and inspiration given its central role in our personality, our creativity, our loves and falling outs, our character and our way of envisioning the world. Exploring the brain means entering in a new and terribly complex area, an intricate jungle inhabited by an incessant flickering. It means finding the subtle locations of the diverse functions and capacities of the brain, the rich interaction between electrical pulses and chemical signals, the diverse engagements between the legacy of the genes and the contribution of culture.

Since the 2008 European Science Open Forum is being held in Barcelona, I thought it fitting to pick a topic that permits me to talk about science and art in our city. In particular, I thought you would be interested to hear about Santiago Ramón y Cajal and Salvador Dalí, two international figures in neurobiology and painting, who not only had ties to Barcelona at some specific time in their lives, but who also had a great interest for the interaction between art and science. What allows me to relate the two figures is precisely the brain. Another scientist and another artist will accompany us in the development of this topic: Charles Darwin and the North-American poetess Emily Dickinson, who in two brief texts invite us to reflect on science and poetry.

Charles Darwin

In his autobiography, Darwin wrote an especially moving paragraph about poetry. Nearing eighty, he regretted having progressively lost interest in poetry and in music which as a youngster he had found so gratifying. Though the text is fairly unknown, it’s worth repeating what he said:

“I have said that in one respect my mind has changed during the last twenty or thirty years. Up to the age of thirty, and beyond it, poetry of
many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley, gave me great pleasure, and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry; I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also lost my taste for pictures or music. Music generally sets me thinking too energetically on what I have been at work on, instead of giving me pleasure … This curious and lamentable loss of the higher aesthetic tastes is all the odder, as books on history, biographies and travels (independently of any scientific fact which they may contain), and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organised or better constituted than mine would not, I suppose, have thus suffered, and if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week: for perhaps the parts of my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature “

This paragraph reflects the view that poetry is not only a source of pleasure in itself, but that it is also a necessary exercise for the balanced and creative functioning of the brain and for the full development of our love for life. He even attributes his loss of interest for poetry more to a physical atrophy of some part of the brain, than to a temporary fatigue or spiritual detachment. When I read this text I am surprised to see this material, physical force given to poetry. It makes me feel that poetry is almost an integral body part. It is the same feeling I have when I read poetry out loud and it becomes rhyme, music, a sigh, an emotion that accelerates the body and of course lights up the brain.

On the other hand, just as Darwin does, I ask myself: To what extent does the fact that for many years we focus our attention on a determined aspect of the world -the General laws of life in Darwin’s case- weaken our perception of other aspects of reality? Do scientists only aspire to know one part of reality or do they want the knowledge of this part to drive them to live life more profoundly? Are they willing to sacrifice a part of the appreciation of the world to arrive a bit further in their research? In
any case it is worth listening to Darwin’s advice and resolve to read with some regularity a bit of poetry from authors for whom we may feel a special affinity.

Emily Dickinson

A completely different interpretation of the brain was expressed at the same time as Darwin by the celebrated North-American poetess Emily Dickinson. Instead of seeing the brain as a fundamentally material space, vulnerable to fatigue and atrophy, Dickinson sees it as ethereal, capable of complicity with the sky and sea, the great spaces of fluidity and transformation. Her poem is as follows:

```
THE BRAIN is wider than the sky,
For, put them side by side,
The one the other will include
With ease, and you beside.

The brain is deeper than the sea,
For, hold them, blue to blue,
The one the other will absorb,
As sponges, buckets do.

The brain is just the weight of God,
For, lift them, pound for pound.
And they will differ, if they do,
As syllable from sound.
```

Here the emphasis is put on the opening of the brain toward the world: toward the wideness of the sky, the depth of the sea and the mystery of God. Curiously it is when making reference to God that the poetess alludes to such a physical property of the brain as weight, while in the previous two verses she spoke of more indefinite aspects, of more metaphysical qualities.

In her poem, Emily Dickinson says the brain is wider than the sky. Today, information and complexity theories point toward this position. The complexity of the brain is indeed comparable or is even superior to the known exterior cosmos. The billions of galaxies interact by means of gravity and the dragging effect of expanding space. On the other hand the billions of neurons interact in diverse ways through synapses: and there are at least a hundred neurotransmitters. Synapses can have different intensities which can modify learning or forgetting processes. New
synapses can be found or they can disappear in the neuronal elasticity. So to say that the brain is wider than the sky isn’t in this aspect a hyperbolically exaggerated metaphor: the network of interactions between the brain’s neurons is much more complex than the network of interactions between galaxies. In purely spatial terms, our cosmic presence is unimportant, but in terms of complexity, we can look eye to eye at the sky and the universe as Dickinson proposes in her verse “The brain is wider than the sky”.

Two Important Figures with Barcelona in the Background

We have seen a scientist, Darwin, who speaks about the material aspect of the brain and poetry’s role in the balanced functioning of the brain and a poetess, Dickenson, who speaks about the brain as a place of transformation in contact with the world. Dickinson didn’t have much interest in the scientific aspects of the brain and Darwin had lost his interest in poetry. Now I will speak about a scientist, Santiago Ramon y Cajal, who studied the brain and a painter, Salvador Dali, who reveled in the world of dreams and the subconscious. In contrast to the two previously mentioned individuals these two are interested in the border between science and the arts. Ramon y Cajal published a considerable number of brief narrations in addition to an extensive autobiography and several volumes of essays and as for Dali, he always showed an interest in science.

Santiago Ramon y Cajal

Santiago Ramon y Cajal was born in Aragon and died in Madrid. He spent from 1888 to 1892 in Barcelona, four decisive years in his scientific career. One evening in 1888 he made his preeminent discovery in the Notariat Street apartment located on the corner of Pintor Fortuny Street near the Rambles where he lived with his wife and children. That evening he was caring for his daughter Enrique who was seriously ill and who would shortly thereafter die. During the intervals that his daughter slept he studied at his microscope. That evening he pinpointed the dying method - a modification of the Golgi method and the tissue - a fragment of embryonic chicken brain. Instead of seeing a large black spot where all the neurons superimposed and became a confused mess, with great joy he was able to see the fine and complex arboreal intricacies of dendrite peripheries and axon ramifications. That week was one of the most intense in his life: the path to glory and the death of his daughter. Ramon y Cajal published his first results in a Catalan histology magazine. Out of his own pocket, he also paid another magazine, where only he published,
to make sure the results were in print as rapidly as possible. His results were presented the following year in a Histology congress in Berlin. For this work Ramon y Cajal along with Camillo Golgi received the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1906.

Ramon y Cajal was an excellent draftsman. His sketches from that period are still being reproduced in contemporary neurobiology books. The exquisite and surprising ramifications of dendrites and axons, the roundness of some cellular bodies are depicted in his sketches with a mixture of rigor, subtlety, sensitivity and excitement. I have always been taken with the thought that while Ramon y Cajal was making these discoveries about the architecture of the brain, Gaudi was constructing his first buildings in Barcelona. Gaudi was captivated by the architecture of nature, not only for its ornamental shapes, but also for its structural inspiration which he employed in his daring buildings. In those years, the architecture of nature –of the bones, tree trunks, branches and seashells in Gaudi and of the neural complexes in different areas of the brain in Ramon y Cajal – came to light and this had a lasting impression on the architecture of our city and the beginnings of the architecture of the brain.

We now know the architecture of the brain is not static, but fully dynamic. At the present time, the method of image production by nuclear magnetic resonance is offering surprising insights into the processing of comprehension and the production of speech and music. And who knows what we may learn about the interaction between music and speech, the rhythmical quality of poetry and the emotional aspects of language and the interaction between the left and right side of the brain. Some studies have explicitly explored the brain’s activity in relation to poetry. A couple of years ago, Scottish psychologists studied the eye movement in a prose and poetry reading and saw that reading poetry proportionally generates more eye movement, more backing up and rereading than prose. This shows in occasions a higher difficulty in the texts or in other occasions a more intense degree of expressed feeling. It will be interesting to observe these results with RMN and to explore how rhyme and rhythm combine to increase intensity and how this affects the ability to memorize the poetic text.

Salvador Dalí

Salvador Dalí is one of the most universal Catalan artists. He was born in Figueres where there is the Dalí Museum, one of the most visited in Spain. His paintings are surprising in many aspects and they are contemplated with curiosity by many people around the world. The
combination of an intense realism in the details with a completely surprising construction captivates ones attention, due perhaps to the special shock between the whole work and its parts. Besides being a painter, Dalí wrote many texts in Catalan, Castilian, French and English that were compiled in four thick volumes the year of his centenary. These texts are also very surprising and evince an immense expressive freshness, a marked degree of brash provocation and a permanent taste for surprise and paradox: The Passions According to Dalí and The Diary of a Genius are two of the more emblematic titles.

In most of his essays and in many of his paintings, Dalí’s curiosity for science is manifest. The references to Einstein’s spatial and general relativity are constant as are the frequent references to quantum physics, mathematics, in particular geometry, molecular biology (he was the first artist to represent DNA in paintings) and nuclear explosions. The background for the representation of these themes is frequently his birthplace Empordà or the pebbled and magical eroded cliffs of Cap de Creus located very near Port Lligat and Cadaqués.

If Ramón y Cajal represents the physical exploration of the brain, Dalí represents the fascination for the functioning of the brain not with the simplicity and beauty of approach Dickenson manifested in the mentioned poem, but with a flair for complications, secrets and functional perversions. Dalí was impressed by Freud’s work which helped him convert his lewd and tortured dreams into the motives of his paintings during his surrealist period. After the Second World War, having already explored subconscious inspiration, he began his more classic period where he combined religious and scientific topics. As always, Dalí exhibited his distinct personality and never abandoned the accrued experiences of his exploratory stages. He was also fond of the mass media that was quick to seize upon his eccentric and surprising stances and innate ability to attract attention.

**Conclusion**

Darwin, Dickinson, Ramón y Cajal and Dalí: Four views on the brain and art, on the physical or functional brain as a font of inspiration. Science is currently opening new insights in six large areas of reality: the cosmos, elementary particles, the nano-systems of the physical universe, the genome, the brain and the planet in the biological universe. Our position in these areas is molded not only by knowledge and action, but also by sensitivity. Planetary and genomic topics today have a public presence with implications in politics, economics and cultural events that have
rocked our century-old-held beliefs. The world of the brain is another invitation to the new humanistic formulations that incorporate science’s discoveries and challenges. Poetry has an important role in this new cultural frontier: it has to meet the challenge be able to express the restlessness and hopes of our times with the power of emotion and the strength of knowledge.

I would like to finish my opening address with a poem written in homage to Santiago Ramon y Cajal. A poem about that magical and tragic night in Barcelona that opened the contemplation of neurons and that propelled Ramon y Cajal to the exploration of the brain.

**Homenatge a Ramón y Cajal**

*A Mercè Durfort*

*Carrer del Notariat, 1888*

*Santiago Ramon y Cajal observa per primer cop les neurones*

Ni fils ni vasos: cèl·lules,
una rere l’altra, una al costat de l’altra,
cèl·lules com arbres, com piràmides,
com columnes, com papallones, com xarxes,
a contrallum en el microscopi,
cèl·lules properes però separades
per espais minúsculs que jo veig per primer cop,
ara,
després de tant buscar-los
en tants teixits, amb tants colorants:
cèl·lules -neurones-, espais -sinapsis-
(els noms vindran després),
cèl·lules com astres
en un univers de laberints i de memòria.
Aqui la matèria fa els salts més prodigiosos:
els sentits,
els instints,
la memòria,
la intel·ligència.
Aqui la matèria es torna
desig, angoixa, voluntat.

Entraré en aquest bosc màgic
que sé tenyir d’incendi, de tardor o de primavera,
habitaré en aquest paisatge de llamps invisibles,
de canals que s’obren i que es tanquen,
i serè l’astrònom d’aquest cel interior
i el llenyataire d’aquesta espessor d’electricitat i de música.

Homage to Ramon y Cajal

To Mercè Dufort

Santiago Ramon y Cajal observes neurons
for the first time, in Barcelona, 1888

Neither threads nor vessels: cells
one after the other, one beside the other,
cells like trees, like pyramids,
like columns, like butterflies, like networks,
against the light of the microscope,
cells close to each other, but separated
by minute spaces that I see for the first time,
now,
after looking for them for so long
in so many tissues, with so many dyes:
cells – neurons–, spaces – synapses–
(the names will come later),
cells like stars,
a universe of mazes and memory.
Here matter makes incredible leaps:
the senses,
instinct,
memory,
intelligence.
Here matter becomes
desire, anxiety, will.

I will enter into this magic forest
that I know how to tinge with fire, with Fall or with Spring,
I will live in this landscape of invisible lightning bolts,
of channels that open and close,
and I will be the astronomer of this interior sky
and the logger of this electrical and musical denseness.

I hope your stay in our city is fruitful and pleasant both in the Sciences
and in the Arts.
HOMAGE TO RAMON Y CAJAL
В ЧЕСТЬ РАМОНА И КАХАЛ

Мерсе Дюфорт

Сантьяго Рамон- и- Кахал в Барселоне,
в 1988 году
впервые увидел нейроны:

не прожилки, и не сосуды: клетки,
идущие друг за другом, клетки бегущие рядом друг с другом,
клетки как деревья, как пирамиды,
как колонны, бабочки, сети, -
в круге света под микроскопом
они лежат так близко друг к другу, но разделены
короткими промежутками, я вижу это впервые,
сейчас!, -
а ведь я так долго искал их,
окрашивая по разному разные ткани:
клетки - нейроны, промежутки - синапсы -
(хотя названия придут позднее),
клетки как звезды,
вселенная фантазий и памяти.
Здесь материя совершила невероятный скачок:
чувства,
инстинкты,
память,
рассудок.
Здесь материя стала
желанием, волнением, волей.

Я вторгнусь в эти волшебные джунгли,
которые я умею окрашивать
в огненные цвета Весны и Осени,
я буду жить в этом ландшафте,
там летят невидимые молниеносные стрелы,
разные тропы то открываются, то закрываются,
я буду астрономом этого внутреннего неба,
и лесорубом этой электрически-музыкальной чащи.

Translation into Russian by Alla-Valeria Mikhalevich
Давид Жоу   David Jou
From Peter Schuster, Vienna

What Drove Me towards Physics and Poetry?

Born as a poet—not ‘manufactured’—in the year of the beginning of World War II, I grew first up with Heym, Heine and Hölderlin, I went on with Rimbaud, Pound and Chlebnikow. At the age of sixteen, I chose the street, walking away, as far as Africa, coming back with Hilbert, Heisenberg and Hasenöhrl. I had to learn that physics was changing our lives. Since my early days, my interest has turned to both “Physics and Poetry“ and their complementary aspects of creative and methodical thinking.

I started writing essays on physicists. Austria may take pride in having a number of candidates: Doppler, Stefan, Loschmidt, Boltzmann, Mach, Hasenöhrl, Ehrenfest, Hess, Pauli, Schrödinger and more. I also wrote monographs and became successful in doing so. Yet, still my question remained unanswered: In what way can one succeed in approaching a genius? How does a genius in physics come into being? A biography is easier to be understood than the analysis would be, but it still does not teach us much about what we are so keenly interested in. The sole biography of a scientist will not explain his discoveries, since a definition of what constitutes a physicist’s life as such is never to be found. So I searched for an answer not just as a historian and as a physicist, I searched also as a poet. There is no way other than assuming deliberately the role of the person we are considering. The poets will have to continue the job of the physicists. Somehow, they must accomplish the discoverer’s achievements afresh and they have a duty to impart results to the public. That is why I started to compose a series of epic poems on six physicists, which I entitled Schöpfungswoche, Tag eins bis Tag sechs (The Creation Week, Day One until Day Six).

In his last notices Arno Schmidt has vehemently called for an alliance between the poets and natural scientists. Here, the poets are acting on behalf of all other artists, because their work, that is working with words, asks for more active consciousness than does the work of their brother artists; because only from poets, from artists working with words, the immediate link to exact natural science and technology is possible. Arno Schmidt affirmed that among all alliances that are proffered, this would constitute the historically most important one. And I think the same.
Sponsors and Associations of Poets

La Société des Poètes Français, Paris
(Brief notes on Science and Poetry)
Synthèse Science et Poésie

Introduction :

Nous avons comme référence, dans notre civilisation européenne, le Grand Siècle des lumières. En même temps que la révolution industrielle commencée en Angleterre, il a enclenché le processus d’évolution de l’esprit, des moeurs et coutumes, de la science et conduit aux temps modernes. Aurait-il pu prévoir leur destin ?

En effet, la question que l’on se posait quand les sciences expérimentales n’étaient qu’à un état de balbutiement témoignait d’un doute : la science pouvait-elle faire le bonheur de l’homme ?

Théories, philosophies, doctrines, écoles et science fiction se sont confrontées durant trois siècles dans la dynamique des sciences et des technologies qui amélioraient la condition humaine et se plaçaient au service de l’Homme mais, parallèlement, des voix alertaient du risque d’aliénation et d’un péril : celui de détruire la nature et déshumaniser la société.

Notre monde contemporain semble avoir abouti au point culminant où la notion de société civilisée du XXI° siècle ne peut plus se dissocier de la haute technologie ni de concepts scientifiques, ceci, dans tous les domaines, et, dans l’Art.

Quant à la société moderne ? Elle est décriée dans son individualisme et…son manque d’humanité de laisser de côté les exclus du système.

Comment se définit l’acte de création, la poésie, particulièrement dans le genre qui nous intéresse : l’écriture. Comment nous situer, nous, poètes au XXI° siècle ?

Généralités

Tout d’abord, « Nous sommes plus les enfants d’un siècle que d’un père » comme le disait Alfred de Musset dans « Confession d’un enfant du
siècle ». Ainsi, les valeurs d’une époque ont pu devenir les révolutions d’une autre.

De même, les grands courants de pensée étaient des pensées d’opposition à leur début, puis, des valeurs en lutte entre d’anciennes et de nouvelles. En bref, les courants d’avenir se sont toujours heurtés à des mouvements de résistance.

**Qu’est-ce que la Société des Poètes français ?**

Nous sommes membres d’une Société poétique, la plus ancienne et la plus illustre de France de loi type 1901 qui peut être considérée comme l’expression d’un mouvement de défense d’un groupement de poètes tous issus du mouvement parnassien parmi eux les plus actifs survivants des trois *Parnasse Contemporain* (revues publiée en 1866, 1871 et 1876 qui comptera une centaine de poètes) Sully Prudhomme, José Maria de Heredia, Léon Dierx… Les fondateurs et poètes principaux en furent : Théophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire, Théodore de Banville, Leconte de Lisle, François Coppée, Stéphane Mallarmé, Catulle Mendés, Paul Verlaine, Henry Cazalis.

La profession de foi de ce groupe « l’Art pour l’Art » défendait une haute valeur d’inspiration dans l’écriture poétique, et, la maîtrise parfaite de la forme comme un objet d’art. Le principe que « tout ce qui est utile et laid » les animait.

Ils s’opposaient ainsi à la matérialité et à l’intéressement dans un contexte d’évolution de société où l’on craignait la disparition de certaines valeurs comme des repères. Les sciences imposent de nouvelles théories et des découvertes qui vont modifier la perception sensible de l’univers : entre 1895-1900, on découvre le rayon X, la radioactivité, les mutations, les gènes, en 1900, Freud affirme les principes de la psychanalyse avec son ouvrage *Les rêves*, en 1902, H. Poincaré publie *Sciences et hypothèses*, en 1905, Einstein élabore la théorie de la relativité, des quanta, dont est née la théorie atomique…

Du point de vu des arts, L’art nouveau de 1900 inspiré de la nature va laissé la place au cubisme et au fauvisme dès 1905. Un nouveau regard préfigure l’artiste moderne dans un monde qui change radicalement et s’exprime dans des œuvres révolutionnaires tel que, en 1907, *Les demoiselles d’Avignon* de Picasso.
Nous sommes au seuil du modernisme quand la Société des Poètes français est fondée au mois de juillet 1902. Sa fondation fut motivée également par une commémoration des plus importantes : le centenaire de la naissance de Victor Hugo. Ainsi, ce groupe voulu marquer à la fois son attachement au Poète, Grand génie et penseur universel du 19\° siècle et défendre pour la postérité l’art poétique dans sa tradition parnassienne issue du grand mouvement romantique français.


\[ Les \textit{mots heurtent le front comme l’eau le récif ;} \\
\textit{Ils fourmillent, ouvrant dans notre esprit pensif} \\
\textit{Des griffes ou des mains, et quelques-uns des ailes…} \\
\textit{…Sombre peuple, les mots vont et viennent en nous;} \\
\textit{Les mots sont les passants mystérieux de l’âme…} \]

V.H

Si la figure emblématique de Victor Hugo grand romantique lyrique de l’avenir est unique, beaucoup de poètes s’identifièrent à lui comme disciples, admirateurs et défenseurs de l’Art poétique (où la notion de prosodie, d’écriture régulière ou libre sont pratiquées).

De ce fait, la Société des Poètes français dont le siège est à Paris au cœur du Quartier latin peut s’enorgueillir de défendre une tradition d’écriture poétique car depuis sa création, elle a compté dans ces rangs des noms illustres et d’exercer un devoir de mémoire. Chaque année, elle consacre un Hommage à Victor Hugo au Panthéon, et, un Hommage à Paul Verlaine au jardin du Luxembourg. Elle réalise un pont entre les fondateurs de la grande culture littéraire française qui rayonne dans le monde et les contemporains attachés à une identité et à un idéal universel. Son action s’étend à toute la francophonie par le travail bénévole de ses délégués en France dans les Doms et dans les Toms et à l’étranger.

Ses activités sont nombreuses : Le Grand prix annuel de Poésie qui consiste en l’édition d’un recueil, les Prix de poésie organisés par les
délégations, des conférences au Sénat, des lectures et des spectacles poétiques, des échanges dans le cadre de la francophonie avec la Roumanie, le Maroc et la revue l’AGORA… Un grand nombre de ses membres mènent un engagement et une activité poétique véritable.

Car, en devenir membre, est un honneur et les talents s’épanouissent dans le respect de l’expression individuelle.

C’est son président actuelle, Vital Heurtebize, qui lui donna une impulsion nouvelle au seuil du deuxième millénaire, et, amorça une ouverture afin que cette Société s’agrandisse et ne soit plus réservée à une élite parisienne. Ce travail a été récompensé par la reconnaissance d’Utilité publique obtenu par décret le 23 octobre 2003 confirmant ainsi le rôle culturel de la Société des Poètes français et sa notoriété.

**Quel est le paysage contemporain de la poésie ? (en France)**

Le statut d’Homme de lettres et de Poète a décliné à partir du moment où l’éducation et la culture sont devenues un objectif en soi à donner au plus grand nombre avec le concept de culture de masse. La culture littéraire classique, la référence aux auteurs, l’apprentissage des langues anciennes, les sections littéraires n’ont plus reçu la même considération d’études dites nobles. La poésie est devenue un propos collectif fruit d’une mode, d’un moment d’un milieu (Slam.) Chacun est devenu artiste poète… libre de sa syntaxe, de son langage, de sa mise en forme, de son inspiration.

On peut dire que les courants d’art moderne ont une tendance à uniformiser (principalement ceux issue du dadaïsme, du surréalisme, de Oulipo ou de certains pédagogues.) Ils ont banni la notion d’esthétique, de forme, d’écriture, de narration, de lyrisme, d’intimité, et, de mémoire en ne vantant que les auteurs actuels et puis, ils ont permis la dégradation, la facilité, le mélange des genres, l’immédiateté des formes courtes et exotiques, l’oralité et l’éphémère…

Or, la vision exacte de la poésie contemporaine révèle que cette tendance n’est pas unanimement partagée.

On constate une pratique abondante des formes fixes dont le sonnet, de l’écriture mesurée, de la narration, de la description, de l’autobiographie. L’acte littéraire est rempli de sens car pratiquer l’écriture poétique témoigne d’un certain art de vivre, d’un espace intime de sensibilité préservée et de l’amour d’une langue. Le respect aux auteurs impose le
vrai. Nous sommes dans une démarche de recherche d’authentique et ressentons le besoin d’exprimer des valeurs de « développement durable » et la sécurité dans la pérennité. Autant le passé a été une aventure vers le futur autant le présent à besoin de repères et de retrouver son passé. C’est tout le paradoxe du monde actuel.

Or, donner du temps d’expression aux poètes dans notre univers médiatique et technique serait une réconciliation avec l’Humain dans le simple fait d’écouter et recevoir une parole!

A nous de nous interroger et de repenser la fonction du poète !

Des démarches antagonistes appelées à ne jamais se rencontrer peuvent-elles se croiser un jour ?

Pour cela, il nous faut des voix qui s’imposent ou s’opposent.

Il nous faut une force fédératrice qui relie par la même affinité les poètes.

Il nous faut tisser une toile et converger vers un même idéal.

Il nous faut notre conviction pour apporter sa pierre à l’édifice.

Il nous faut créer des moments d’échanges et de rencontres.

Il nous faut de l’amitié en art et une parole chantante qui dépasse toute les ignorances.

La Société des Poètes français veut répondre présent à cet appel et être fédératrice des poètes.

Bérangère Thomas
Secrétaire générale

La Société des Poètes Français (Paris) – abridged translation

Introduction :

A major reference in our Western civilisation is the Siècle des Lumières, which helped, together with the Industrial Revolution in the UK, to trigger a process of evolution of thought, of behaviour, of customs and of science leading to modern times. Could it ever have been predicted?
In fact, the question which arose when experimental science was in its
inginfancy was rather one of doubt: could science ever make man happy?

Theories, philosophies, schools and even science fiction have confronted
each other during three centuries in a development of Science and
Technology whose prime purpose was to improve the human condition
and to be in the service of man but, in parallel, some voices already raised
disquiet that they might destroy nature and dis-humanize society.

Our contemporary world seems to have reached a climax in which the
notion of a civilised society of the XXIst century has become inseparable
from high technology and scientific concepts in every field and even in
Art.

And what about our modern society itself? Often, it is criticized for
excessive individualism and for its inhumanity in excluding some from
the ‘system’.

In this context, how do we define creativity and poetry, especially of the
written kind? And how do we position ourselves as poets of the XXIst
century?

**Generalities**

First, we are children of our times, rather than of a father, to paraphrase
Alfred de Musset in his Confessions d’un Enfant du Siècle. But the
values of one generation can easily lead to the revolutions of another.
Important intellectual movements often appear at first as opposition
movements, and as conflicts between the old and the new. In short,
innovative thought always finds itself opposed by a resistance to change.

**What is the Société des Poètes Français?**

We are members of a Society, the oldest and most prestigious in France,
created under a law passed in 1901, which originated in defence of poets
all belonging to the Parnassiens movement. The original credo of this
group (Art for Art’s sake) intended to express the high importance of
inspiration in poetic writing and the need for complete mastery of form in
the creation of a work of art. They were united in believing that what is
useful is ugly. This, they were opposed to materialism and profit making
in the evolution of a society which, at that time, was concerned about the
erosion of its values.
The foundation of the SPF in the month of July 1902 was motivated by the desire to celebrate a most important commemoration: the centenary of the birth of Victor Hugo. Thus, this group of Parnassian poets wished also to proclaim their attachment to the great Poet, genius and universal mind of the XIXth century, and thereby to define poetic ideals for posterity.

The founders included as the most active members Sully Prudhomme, José-Maria de Heredia and Léon Dierx.

Victor Hugo, nicknamed “L’homme ocean”, was a playwright, a novelist, a poet, a politician and a philosopher and defended progressive social ideals for the freedom of people and minorities, and had a vision of the future for the sacred role of the poet as a worthy successor to the Siècle des Lumières, fighting against obscurantism.

If his emblematic figure is unique as a great Romantic poet, he nevertheless inspired many poets who identified with his defence of great causes and of a certain style of writing.

Thus, the SPF located in the heart of the Quartier Latin in Paris is proud of representing a certain tradition of poetry, and has counted many famous poets as members. Every year, the Society honours Victor Hugo in the Panthéon and Paul Verlaine in the Jardin du Luxembourg. It builds a bridge between the founders of a great French literary movement with worldwide following and also perpetuates a universal ideal by its charitable activities in French speaking countries.

Its activities are many: there is an annual Grand Prize of Poetry which consists in the publication of a book of verse, there are prizes organised by the delegations, conferences at the Sénat, lectures and poetic events, cultural exchanges with other countries (Romania, Morocco, etc) the publication of the journal “L’Agora”, etc… Vital Heurtebize, its current president, has given it a new impulse, stressing in particular that it should no longer be confined to a mainly Parisian elite but should broaden its horizons. As a result, it was awarded the status of “Utilité Publique” by a decree of the French Government dated October 23rd 2003, which confirms it as a leading French cultural society.

The contemporary landscape of French Poetry

The status of a person of letters and a poet has declined somewhat since the massification of education and culture. Thus, the classical literary education, with its references to past authors, the teaching of Latin and
ancient Greek, no longer is considered as the noblest branch of learning. Poetry has become a collective activity, the fruit of a fashion, of an environment (‘Slam’). Each and everyone is an artist or a poet... freed from the constraints of syntax, of language, of form and even of inspiration.

The currents of modern globalising art movements (mainly those born from dadaïsme, from surrealism, from Oulipo or from certain teachers) have outlawed notions of aesthetics, of form, of narrative writing, of lyricism, of introspection and even of memory, allowing only the contemporary to exist. They have encouraged degradation through facility, through mixing of styles, through the immediacy of short exotic forms, through the promotion of oral and ephemeral composition.

However, if we examine what is actually happening in contemporary poetry, these trends are not universally followed.

There is a considerable body of work still being composed according to fixed forms, such as sonnets, measured verse, narrative writing, descriptions and autobiographies. Literature today is full of meaning, because writing and practising literature imply a certain ‘art de vivre’ with an inner preserve of sensibility and the love of a language. Respect for authors imposes authentic creation. There is a desire to restore such values of ‘durable development’ and security through longevity. Just as the past was an adventure leading to the future, so does the present yearn for fixed values in order to regain its roots.

Therein lies the paradox of the spirit of our times.

To restore the voice of poetry in our media- and technology-dominated culture would be a way to restore humanity in the mere act of listening and sharing the spoken word.

It is up to us to reconsider the role of the poet.

Can mutually antagonistic paths which never seem to meet ever come together?

For that to happen, we need to hear the voices which express the thoughts and oppose themselves. We need a federative spirit bringing together poets of like mind. We need to weave our way towards a common ideal. We need conviction to each contribute a part to the whole
We must create opportunities to meet and exchange our thoughts
We must be friends in Art and sing a tune which overcomes all ignorance.

The Société des Poètes Français wishes to respond to this challenge and be a Federation of Poets.

Bérangère Thomas
Secretary General

(English version by Chaunes, Sociétaire des Poètes Français)

The Society produces a magazine (*L’Agora*), publishes the work of poets (*Editions Les Poètes Français*) has established its own website (www.societedespoetesfrancais.asso.fr) and runs a cultural centre in Paris (*L’Espace Mompezat*), as well as a series of literary conferences at the French Senate.

**The International Working Group Linguaggi Di-Versi**

It all began in September 1998 at the *Culture of Wine* festival in Bulgaria, during which foreign and Bulgarian participants took part in poetry readings, plays and wine tastings. Amid this multitude Temenuga Zaharieva, Stefka Hrusanova, Michele Obit, Luciano Paronetto and Paolo Tomasella decided to continue this initiative by organising further meetings. This nucleus of five people gave the actual birth of the working group, which later became known as Linguaggi di-versi. The intention was to bring the cultures of Eastern and Western Europe closer to each other, intensify the exchange of ideas and stimulate reciprocal interest in the literature and arts of the various member states of the new Europe.

The group met again in Varna, Bulgaria, in 1999. A conference was held and a plan was worked out for joint activities in the future. The group also visited some of the most beautiful places on the Black Sea coast. The harmony of ideas and favourable working environment was very important. Later on more people were involved, with different interests and talents.

In 2000, the meeting place was in Hungary, at the Hungarian Translators' House in Balatonsfűred, and the project was to translate the poems of four Hungarian poets – András Imre, Gábor Gyukics, István Kemény, István Vörös, into Italian and Bulgarian. The translators were Michele Obit, Luciano Paronetto, Temenuga Zaharieva, and Stefka Hrusanova. A conference about the problems of translation and translators was also held.
with the participation of András Imreh and Gábor Gyukics. The kind hospitality of Peter Rácz, Director of the Hungarian Translators’ House, was much appreciated. Further to this workshop, the original poems and the translations were published in the Italian literary journal *Koan* (Udine), edited by Michele Obit and Roberto Russo.

In 2001, Michele Obit prepared a fabulous week in the beautiful village of Topolò, Italy. This time, the poems of four Slovenian authors, Taja Kramberger, Primož Čučnik, Peter Semolič and Aleš Šteger, were translated into different languages with the participation of Luciano Paronetto, Paolo Tomasella, Temenuga Zaharieva, Štefka Hrusanova, Ludwig Hartinger and András Imreh. It was then that the workshop acquired the name Linguaggi di-versi. A book of poems was published as a result.

Taja Kramberger was inspired by this event and organised a representative multilingual workshop, readings and concerts at the Slovenian resort of Koper in 2002. There were over 20 participants. French poet Anne Talvaz proved a talented moderator of professional discussions of poetry in the light of comparisons and interpretations of different languages and cultures. The group was joined also by the gifted painter Alenka Koderman and the musicians Jasna Nadles and Milan Vrsajkov. The participants discussed also different aspects of translation – cultural, social and scientific, at a round-table meeting about the problems and challenges of translation. The results of this event were presented before public and published twice: in Slovenian literary journal *2000* and in a separate volume, *Različni jeziki* (2004).

In 2003, Taja Kramberger organised another meeting at Collegium Budapest, Hungary, where the fruits of the 2002 workshop were performed. After that, also in Budapest, thanks to the kind cooperation of András Imreh, the translations of Hungarian poems from the Balatonfüred workshop published in *Koan* were presented by Stefka Hrusanova to a Hungarian audience, together with the four authors.

In 2005, Linguaggi di-versi met once more near Linz, Austria, in the beautiful manor-house of Waxenberg, at the invitation of Ludwig Hartinger and Kristian Thanhauser. The occasion was the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the famous Austrian writer Adalbert Stifter. Some of his short stories were discussed and translated by the participants, who visited his birthplace, and the translations were presented at a literary reading in the town of Ottensheim.
All of us believe that this series of cultural events has brought the people of Western, Central and Eastern Europe closer. We hope that the working group Linguaggi di-versi will successfully continue its activities.

(Notes by Stefka Hrusanova)

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (London Branch)

The participation of British and Irish Poets in the Science meets Poetry day is made possible by the generous support of London branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. This foundation is a generous patron of the arts and of sciences, and in particular has, for many years, supported the work of English language poets writing about science. Indeed, the Gulbenkian Foundation has enabled the publication of a number of volumes of poetry based on this inter-cultural theme.

La Maison de Poésie (Paris)

La Maison de Poésie in Paris was founded by Emile Blémont in the nineteenth century. Its purpose is to support poets writing in the French Language. It organises poetry readings, and also published a journal of poetry entitled *Le Coin de Table*, named after a famous painting (by Fantin Latour), also commissioned by Emile Blémont, showing a number of his friends (who included such famous persons as Rimbaud and Verlaine) seated at table during one of their meetings. With its long tradition, La Maison de Poésie remains a powerful force in French poetry, and *Le Coin de Table* continues to play an important part in publishing the work of contemporary poets in the French language.


This association exists to celebrate the memory of Paul Verlaine, and is based in the Lorraine region of France, around the city of Metz, which was Verlaine’s home town. It promotes lectures on the life and work of the great poet, as well as scholarly works about him. Over the years, it has become the Lorraine branch of the Société des Poètes Français.

Poètes Sans Frontières

The Association Poètes sans Frontières is an international movement based in France which aims to promote the understanding between the peoples of the world through a shared love of poetry. The Association
has also a charitable dimension. For example, monies collected in France by staging a Festival of Poetry were used to build a school in Burkina Faso, which was then donated to the people of that country. The Association publishes a magazine in French (*L’Etrave*) which features the work of poets from many countries.

Europäische Autorenvereinigung die KOGGE

The European Authors’ Union die KOGGE is an international union of poets, essayists and writers and has about 160 members coming from 17 European countries. Die KOGGE was founded in the 1920s by some well-known authors in northern Germany. During the Nazi period in Germany, the KOGGE union had to close down its activities. It was re-founded in the early 1950s and has now set up its home in the former Hanseatic city of Minden in Westphalia.

Most of the members of DIE KOGGE come from German-speaking countries, but at its annual meetings in the autumn in Minden (Westphalia, Germany), the international component is invariably represented by international readings of authors from outside the German-speaking countries. During the period of the cold-war, die KOGGE engaged mainly in integrating authors from Eastern Europe; now, authors from all over Europe are welcome, the only criteria for membership are literary quality and the ability to communicate in the German language as the meetings in Minden are held in German.

The current president of die KOGGE is the German author and Professor of cultural sciences and the art of poetry Uli Rothfuss.

For more information please see: [www.diekogge.eu](http://www.diekogge.eu) (in the German language).

The Andrea von Braun Foundation

For many years, the Andrea von Braun Foundation of Munich has generously supported young writers who are interested in science. At ESOF2004, which took place in Munich, the Foundation provided support for a Poetry Prize, open to non-professional poets participating in ESOF, and has agreed to repeat this very popular event for ESOF2008 in Barcelona. We are very grateful for this action in favour of poetry.
Biographies and pictures of poets.

Marie-Noëlle Célérier

Marie-Noëlle Célérier was born in Paris in the middle of the last century. From her earliest childhood it was obvious that something was wrong with her. At first sight, she looked like an average well brought up little girl, but when you noticed the way she fidgeted on her chair and shouted at teachers across the classroom to make her schoolmates laugh you would have known she was not what she appeared to be.

Things went worse when her mother discovered that she spent part of her nights under her sheets with a pocket torch instead of sleeping. And what was most horrifying was that she was doing ... mathematics! She was also enthusiast for other naughty entertainments such as banging on a piano, scratching a guitar or shouting with a band of other youths what she called that music, daubing a canvas with colours, which she called painting, riding awful horses, hurtling down snowy slopes, and kicking or punching any poor thing that was afflicted by spherical symmetry under the pretext of sport. However, this was nothing as compared to the genetically-transmitted disease which is her fate and which bursts out each time she faces an excess of emotions. Then, she is overwhelmed by a flow of verbose diarrhoea impossible to control. Known or unknown words jump out from her pen and smudge any poor sheet of paper which happens to lie within reach (when she is in an optimistic mood she calls this poetry, theatre or even novels). Happily, she was never so foolish as to attempt to publish them since actually her creations are unpublishable. Her childhood dream was to become an astronaut. She learned to pilot aeroplanes and graduated as an engineer.

Then, she married a future businessman which saw to the end of the astronaut dream. With three children and working as a finance manager, Mrs Jeckill looked like what she was not for almost twenty years. Then, her husband took early retirement, the children ceased being babies and she felt free to resume what she called her studies. She chose theoretical physics, which is mathematics with a drop of physics. She got her PhD in 1998 at Paris Observatory and is still working there as a researcher in cosmology (in place of the astronaut dream) and in relativity theories.
(instead of the mathematics). As regards her genetically-transmitted disease, she experiences from time to time more or less serious relapses. Note, however, that some members of her family were more affected than her since one of her late uncles suffered the same pathology and was eventually recognized as a rather celebrated poet (Jean-Claude Renard).

Chaunes

The main business of Chaunes is poetry, but in his spare time (under the name Jean-Patrick Connerade) he is also a scientist (Emeritus Professor at Imperial College London, Honorary Professor of Physics in the East China University of Shanghai and – as the Chinese like to put it – ‘Lifetime Visiting Professor’ in the Hubei branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences). As a French poet, he has published a correspondence of some 800 sonnets together with the poet Sylvioisal (La Furie Française – Editions L’Age d’Homme) for which they jointly received the José-Maria de Heredia prize of the Académie Française and the Paul Verlaine prize of the Maison de Poésie. He has published Le Paradis des Filles (Editions l’Age d’Homme), a long poem dedicated to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the Mexican poet-scientist, and Variations sur don Pedro d’Alfaroubeira (Editions des Poètes Français) an imaginary tale based on the life of the legendary Portuguese traveller. For his published poetry, he was awarded the Grand Prix Victor Hugo of the Société des Poètes Français in 2007. A new book of poems Aux Portes du Tartare is due to appear (Editions l’Age d’Homme) within the next few months. He is also the author of a monographe entitled Highly Excited Atoms, published by the Cambridge University Press, which has been translated into Chinese.

Manfred Chobot

Manfred Chobot was born 1947 in Vienna. Initially, he studied engineering on water, called cultural engineering which deals with irrigation, cleaning water, torrent, and so on, all with water in any form but now lives as a freelance writer. He is a member
of the Austrian writers league IG AutorInnen (member of the board), member of the Austrian authors association Grazer Autorenversammlung (member of the board), member of the international authors’ association Kogge. He is Editor of the series of books Lyrik aus Österreich (Poetry from Austria). He has written approximately fifty radio plays for various broadcasting stations. He was a Participant of: the 18th World Congress of Poets in Bratislava (Slovakia) 1998; of Poetry Spring in Vilnius (Lithuania) 1999; of the First World Congress on Literature in Valencia (Spain) 1999; in the Gerard Manley Hopkins Summer School, Monasterevin (Ireland) 1999, 2000 und 2002; in the Congress of International Friends of Literature and Culture, Haifa (Israel) 1999; in Poetry Fall, Druskininkai (Lithuania) 2000; in the 3rd World Congress of Poets for Poetry Research and Recitation, Iasi (Romania) 2001; in the Jan Smrek-Festival, Bratislava (Slovakia) 2002; in the XIIth International Poetry Festival of Medellin, Colombia 2002; in the XXIIrd World Congress of Poets Taipei/Taiwan 2003; in the XIIIrd Festival Internacional de Poesía”, Rosario/Argentina 2005 and in the 3rd Festival Internacional de Poesía de Granada, Nicaragua 2007. His books include ten volumes of Poetry in German; fourteen volumes of Prose; two volumes of photo books, and one book for children. Books of Poetry in English, French, Spanish, Slovak, Czech, Polish, Bulgarian, and Bangla (with Aminur Rahman). Books of Prose in Ukrainian, and in Polish.

Assumpció Forcada

Assumpció Forcada was born in Sudanell, in the province of Lleida. Since 1990, she has published a number of books of poetry (14), first in the Catalan language, and then in bilingual editions (Catalan alongside Castillian Spanish). The best known are Immunitat and Flora Sapiens (Columna 1990,1993) Ecosistema and EVOLUTIO (Seuba ediciones 1998, 2000) Germinació and Cosmos (Pagès editors 2000,2002) Fotosintesi, Prisma, Semillas,
Rails/Railes, Univers/Universo (La Busca edicions, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008). Several of her books of verse are available in translation in French, German, Icelandic and Russian. She presents her own poems either solo or accompanied by Fina R. Palau on the guitar. (Those who attended ESOF will have a vivid memory of Assumpció accompanying herself on this instrument, playing a Tango and a Habanera). She has given lectures and organised poetry recitals in Universities, on radio programmes and in concert halls. A special feature of her writing is that she integrates biology and the scientific language into her poems. In fact, her poetry achieves a synthesis of all the forms and events of life, including erosion, magnetism, acid rain, coastal pollution, viral infections, the genome, common household accessories... all turn into symbols of our modern lifestyle.

Crescencio Garcia-Segundo

Crescencio García-Segundo is a Mexican poet and scientist who has enjoyed the pleasure of poetry-writing since over twenty years. His themes deal with the human actions in the world about us and with his great love and gratitude for life. Through the art and wonders of his own life, though coming from a humble family, he managed to graduate in Physics from the Instituto Politecnico Nacional (1988, Mexico) then obtained his M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Sciences from the Instituto Nacional de Astrofísica, Óptica y Electrónica (1991 and 1996, respectively; both in Mexico). After working in Physics in the UK for seven years, and two more years spent in China, with his wife, he is back in Mexico for good. Currently he enjoys Physics research on thermal and optical phenomena with applications in atom traps, bio-sensors and analytic devices.
Carla Gavioli

Carla Gavioli was born in Bologna (Italy), where she obtained a doctorate in biology: her thesis was in biochemistry and human nutrition. At first as Senior Editor of a diet therapy journal, then of a journal of general medicine, she worked during several years in Milan as a medical copywriter for various pharmaceutical companies. In 1978 she started writing poetry. In a decade, four books of collected Italian poems were published. In the late eighties, she decided to move to France, and some years later she published a book of Italian and French short texts. Thereafter, she wrote all her poems in both languages. She has now published five bilingual books. In 2000 and in 2007 she has won prizes for her poetic work. At present she is living in Paris and is a member of the Société des Poètes Français.

Christophe Goarant

Christophe Goarant Correa de Sà teaches English in Chartres and is Vice-President of the Société des Poètes Français. As a young poet, he has already published several books of verse, and has received a number of prizes (the Prix Arthur Rimbaud of the Maison de Poésie and the Prix Rollinat). He has been a prizewinner of the poetic Floralies in Toulouse. His works include Cette ombre qui te suit, published by Nouvelle Pléiade and Fenêtre Originaire (Editions Les Poètes Français), as well as sixteen poems in Le nouveau printemps des jeunes poètes – an anthology published by Les Editions de la Maison de Poésie. His most recent book Enfant Sillages has just been published by the Editions Séguiers (Biarritz) in 2007.
Lavinia Greenlaw

Lavinia Greenlaw was born in London, where she still lives. She is Professor of Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia. She has published three collections of poetry with Faber & Faber, most recently *Minsk* (2003), as well as two novels and a memoir, *The Importance of Music to Girls* (2007). In 2006, she edited the anthology *Signs and Humours: poetry and medicine* for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Her awards include a fellowship from the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA), and she has held residencies with, among others, the Science Museum and the Royal Society of Medicine. She has written libretti and radio dramas, and has made BBC radio documentaries on the Arctic, the Baltic, the idea of mountains, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Bishop, the darkest place in England, and the solstices and equinoxes. She has also written essays on poetry and science, *Bob Dylan and delay*, and *seventeenth-century wonder*.

Vital Heurtebize

Vital Heurtebize published his first book of poetry in 1957; in subsequent years, it was to be followed by 29 others, of which the last, published in 2001 (*Le Temps Sublime*) has been reprinted three times. He has been four times the recipient of prizes from the Académie Française, has received the Grand Prix of the Maison de Poésie in Paris, of the Société des Poètes et Artistes de France, and the Alice Zussman prize from the Authors of Burgundy.
Léopold Cédar-Senghor said of him: “he is one of the great poets of the French language” and Maurice Druon: “in the architecture which is his own, I doubt that he could have many rivals”.

Apart from his role as a writer, Vital Heurtebize, with typical dynamism and tenacity, has been conducting for many years many fine actions on behalf of poetry and of poets. He is the creator of *Poètes sans Frontières*, which has steered several humanitarian projects in Burkina Faso (in recognition of which, the Government has made him Consul) and, more recently, in India and in Ukraine. He has founded a publishing house for poetry (*La Nouvelle Pléiade*) which, over the past thirty years, has helped over one thousand poets publish their own work. He created the Journal *l’Etrave*, which has just produced its 185th issue. As President of the Société des Poètes Français, Vital Heurtebize has sorted out its finances, has provided it with a modern constitution, has given it a journal (*L’Agora*) and has thrown open its offices in Paris (16 rue Monsieur le Prince) as a public space for poets.

Vital Heurtebize is the recipient of many honours, and in particular of a medal of the City of Paris.

**Roald Hoffmann**
**(Nobel Laureate)**

Roald Hoffmann was born in 1937 in Złoczów, Poland. Having survived the war, he came to the U. S. in 1949, where he now teaches and does research at Cornell University. In chemistry he has taught his colleagues how to think about electrons influencing structure and reactivity, and won most of the honors of his profession, including the 1981 Nobel Prize in Chemistry (with Kenichi Fukui). Hoffmann is also a writer – of poetry, essays, non-fiction, and plays –carving out his own land between poetry, philosophy, and science. He has published five books of poetry.
Stefka Hrusanova

Stefka Hrusanova was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. After finishing the English Language Secondary School in Sofia, she graduated from *St. Kliment Ohridski* (Sofia University) with a master’s degree in Hungarian, English and Bulgarian philologies. She then specialised in Hungarian studies at *Kossuth Lajos* University of Debrecen (Hungary). In 1992 she won a postgraduate grant of the Soros Foundation in Budapest and took part in the Comparative Literature Research Programme of the Central European University with a study in English about Dezső Kosztolányi (a Hungarian classic) and Yordan Yovkov (a Bulgarian classic). In 1993 she was awarded a grant by the Soros Foundation in Budapest for interpreting Hungarian fiction in Bulgarian and, in 1999, a grant of the Füst Milán Translators’ Foundation, Budapest. In 1998, 2000 and 2005 she was supported from grants by the Hungarian Translators’ House Foundation in Budapest, and she continues to receive support from grants awarded by the Hungarian Translation Foundation.

In the period 1999-2005 Stefka Hrusanova was one of the founders, organisers and participants in the international seminar *Linguaggi Diversi* (World Languages) in Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia and Austria.

Since 1989 she has been publishing translations of books, short stories and poems, mainly from English and Hungarian. She has translated several books from English (by Scott O’Dell, Lucy M. Montgomery) and was a contributor to the Bulgarian *Lettre Internationale* literary journal with a number of publications in the period between 1993 and 2001. She has participated with translations of poems and prose from Hungarian in different anthologies. Several books of Stefka Hrusanova’s translations of Hungarian authors were published: Ferenc Molnár, Endre Kukorelly, Péter Zilahy, Dezső Kosztolányi, Antal Szerb, Laszló Márton and Imre Kertész. She has published translations into Bulgarian of poems from
Slovenian and Italian in literary periodicals and also the book of selected poems *Kashmir* by the Slovenian poet Aleš Šteger.

Stefka Hrusanova is not only a translator of poetry; she has published her own poems in Italian on international websites during the last few years. At present her interests in the field of the connection between science and poetry are influenced by her own activities at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and by her practice as a translator.

Currently, Stefka Hrusanova is working at the Reference Department of the Central Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. She has published a number of analytical surveys and reference books in English and Bulgarian and is an author and editor of several databases, reference books, bibliographies and scientific documentation in English and in Bulgarian.

**David Jou**

David Jou i Mirabent, who was born in Sitges in 1953, is both a poet and physicist, being Professor of Theoretical Physics in the Autonomous University of Barcelona. In his poetry he has emphasizes above scientific, religious and Mediterranean themes and has explored many new poetic forms especially those with a strong visual component (similar to Apollinaire’s famous Calligrammes), inspired by the forms of nature. He has published sixteen books of poetry in the Catalan language, amongst which *Shadow Play* in 1999, *Drifting Blue* in 1996, *Black Velvet Mirror* in 1981, *the Tapestry* – a trilogy – in 1982), *Theory* in 1987, *Claws of Smoke* in 1992, and the anthology *Between Mirror and Shadows* in 1995. He has also written a number of essays such as *Matter and Materialism* (1998), *Some Questions about Science and Faith* (1992), *The Sculptor Pere Jou* (1991) and is of course noted for an extensive body of research findings on the thermodynamics of irreversible processes, published in scientific books and journals which have a wide international readership.
Charles-Henri Julia

Charles-Henri Julia was born on the 14\textsuperscript{th} of February 1941 at Pointe-Noire in what was at the time French Equatorial Africa – a territory which was not occupied and was fighting for freedom alongside the Allied nations. He spent his childhood at Arles-sur-Tech, in Vallespir, a small village of the Mediterranean French Pyrénées in North Catalonia.

He was a pupil of the Augustinian school of the Assumption at Saint-Louis de Gonzague in the town of Perpignan, before he entered the Sorbonne, where he was admitted both as a special student (élève titulaire) in the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études and as auditeur au Collège de France.

He qualified as a teacher of Classics for schools belonging to the French system, and pursued his career in the Lycées of Provins and of Meaux, before taking up positions at the Lycée Charles de Gaulle in London and at the Lycée Français de Tunis. Currently, he is retired, and lives in the ancestral home of his family, where he occupies his time in various historical societies, in archaeological and charitable activities in the valley where it is located, gives conferences and is writing a novel of which the action takes place in a Lycée – an environment which of course he knows well from his own experience.

He has also published volumes of descriptive poetry, notably: \textit{Ferveurs Premières}, a book of Tunisian Landscapes and \textit{Fraîcheur des Sources}, a book of Catalan Landscapes – the landscape being for him a form of poetic expression – published as bilingual French and Catalan texts, with a translation into Catalan by Pere Verdaguer. He is the author of an essay entitled \textit{Catalogne – Voyage en terre mythique}, which contains many poetic insights into the classical and archaeological roots of Catalan culture.

Currently, he plans to write a work of science-fiction which he describes as a \textit{Space Opera}, designed to establish once and for all the dignity of Robots.
Sydney Leach FRS

There is no need to supply a biography for Sydney, as he did the job himself in the form of a poem…

My *Times* obit

My *Times* obit,
Does not quite fit
Saying that I’m a fine Fellow
Of the Royal Society,
Famous for piety
To Scienza e Cielo.

But Ida knows better,
Long used to my fetter,
She judges with knowledge and vision
I’m Selfish and Vain
Is her constant refrain,
A statement she makes with decision.

But where lies the truth
Of this fellow uncouth,
In laboratory exploration?
Or is it at home
Cleaning his comb,
With little exhilaration?

In Physics today
Quantum theory holds sway,
The answer is they are Entangled
Where both things exist
Simultaneously amidst
Thoughts prone to be strangled.

Thus modern Reality
Reveals my frailty,
It governs my every reaction.
In order to choose,
Which persona to lose,
The will must enter in action.

Coming back to *obit*,
My furrowed brow knit,
I think it is best to abandon
The attempted description
In literary prescription
Of a fellow whose passage was random.

(Sauzé d’Oulx, 9 August 2007)
Emmanuel MAHIEU

Born in 1947 in Mouscron (Belgium), member of many literary associations, Emmanuel MAHIEU has French roots from his grandfather, Henri DUCHÂTEL, naturalized Belgian citizen, who became a Member of Parliament and then a Senator in Belgium. A teacher as was his father, after living two years in Central Africa, Emmanuel MAHIEU returned to his birthplace to become a professor of French. An avid explorer of new places and a lover of nature, he has traveled on five continents.

Stéphanie MAHIEU

Born in 1977 in Mouscron, Belgium, the niece of Emmanuel MAHIEU, Stéphanie MAHIEU holds a degree in Law (Catholic University of Louvain-La-Neuve (UCL), Belgium), a Master's degree in European Studies (UCL, Belgium, and University of Exeter, UK) and a Master's degree in Law (University of Cambridge, UK). She enjoys reading and takes great pleasure in writing. From time to time, she translates various writings, particularly legal texts, but also prose and poetry.

I.S.B.N. 2.841.85.414.8  Prix : 7 € · 9 USD · 5 G.B.P
Alla-Valeria MIkhelovich

Alla (Valeria) MIkhalevich, from St. Petersburg, Russia, is a Doctor of biological sciences, protozoologist and micropaleontologist, (though botanist in heart), studying tiny sea animals with a beautiful shells – Foraminifera; she is the author of three monographs and about 200 articles in the fundamental Russian and International scientific journals and is known both as a poet and translator of poetry, Member of the Union of Writers of St Petersburg, author of five poetry books and three books of translations of American poets (J. Kommunyakaa, H. Hartley, C. Davis, and others) and Irish poets (S. Heaney, S. Abercorn, F. Galligan, poets of the Word of mouth group), she is a teacher of in two literary circles; her poems are translated into English, Italian, French and Kirghiz. She has participated in many international scientific and literary conferences including ESOF2006 (organizer of the seminar Regularities of evolution at the unicellular level through time), the Literary festival in Gallway, Ireland (1999), Littera Baltica in Turku (2000, 2002, 2004); she has received awards both in science (from the Presidium of the Russian Academy of sciences (2002), from the International Scientific Society Grzybowski Foundation (2006)) and in poetry (from Peter Meinke judging the ‘Best’ poem and translation in the Russian-American Anthology 1994, 1996, for the best translation of American Corner in St Petersburg (2006), from the St Petersburg literary Festival Nevsky Prospect (prize in honor of N. A. Zabolocky) (2007) for the poetry book entitled Photosynthesis).
Nick Norwood

A poet from Texas, Nick Norwood now lives in Georgia, where he is an associate professor of English at Columbus State University. Having published poems in a wide range of magazines including *The Paris Review*, *Western Humanities Review*, *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Pleiades*, *Ekphrasis*, and many others, he is also the author of three volumes: *The Soft Blare* (2003), *A Palace for the Heart: Laments for Ludwig II* (2004), and *Wrestle* (2007), the last a limited edition fine press book he produced in collaboration with the artist Erika Adams and which features ten of his poems and ten of her images. A participant in the session on Ludwig II at ESOF2006 in Munich, in 2008 Nick Norwood has been a visiting fellow at Oxford University, where he has completed the manuscript for his next book, *Gravel and Hawk*, from which the poems appearing here have been taken.

Ruth Padel

Ruth Padel is a prize-winning British poet of "poise, delicacy, technical venture-someness, shining imagination and flights of exuberant imagery" (Sunday Times). She has published six collections of poetry, most recently *The Soho Leopard*, and two books on reading poetry. Her non-fiction includes a conservation-travel book, *Tigers in Red Weather*, describing her search for the tigers vanishing from Asian forests. She is a great-great-grand-daughter of Charles Darwin, is Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and Zoological Society of London, and a Member of the Bombay Natural History Society.
Maurice Riordan

Maurice Riordan was born in Ireland and lives in London. His latest collection, *The Holy Land* (Faber 2007), received the Michael Hartnett Award for best collection by an Irish poet. Previous collections, *A Word from the Loki* and *Floods*, were nominated respectively for the T.S. Eliot and Whitbread poetry awards. Other books include *A Quark for Mister Mark: 101 Poems about Science*, the ecological anthology *Wild Reckoning*, and *Hart Crane*, which has recently appeared in Faber’s ‘Poet to Poet’ series. He is currently working with astronomer Jocelyn Bell Burnell on an anthology entitled *Dark Matter: Poems of Space*. He edits *Poetry London* and teaches at Imperial College and at Sheffield Hallam University.

Uli Rothfuss

Professor Uli Rothfuss is Rector of the International Bund-University of Berlin. He describes himself both as a social and cultural Scientist and as a writer, and holds an extremely varied collection of academic degrees, ranging from Dr.Phil.h.c. (of the State University for Culture and Arts, Tbilisi in Georgia.) through an M.Sc. in Social Sciences of Leicester University, UK) the Dipl.-Verw.-Wirt (Criminal and Police Sciences) of FH Villingen-Schwenningen in Germany) and a Diploma in German Language and Literature from Zurich in Switzerland.
He was born on October 20th, 1961, in Ebershardt (Germany), and his professional career is as diverse as the wide range of degrees suggests. Between 1978 and 1994, he served as an officer in the Police and Criminal Investigation Services, before becoming Cultural administrator of the town of Bad Liebenzell in Germany. He then became a scientific expert of the Council of Europe for the democratization of public administrations in former Soviet Countries (mainly in the Caucasus).

He is a member of the international PEN and delegate of the Writers-for-Peace-Committee of the International PEN, with a focus on East-European and former Soviet Countries. He is Honorary Professor, holding the UNESCO Chair for Translation and Intercultural Studies, at the Azerbaijan State University for Languages in Baku. His long and varied career in Germany includes many academic posts (always with a strong international flavour), which he has combined with artistic and literary activities. He has been Director and Artistic Director of the Klosterspiele Hirsau, a yearly Theatre-Festival, Lecturer for Creative Writing and Cultural Sciences at the University of Karlsruhe, and is currently voluntarily Rector of the Euro-Caucasian University of Interdisciplinary Studies and President of the International Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Tbilisi in Georgia.

He is the current President of die KOGGE – a European Writers’ Union. In Germany, he is Full Professor for Cultural Sciences and Rector of the International-Bund-University Berlin – a University of Social Sciences and Communication Arts. He is also the Professor for Text Production and German Literature at Matej-Bel-University Banská Bystrica in the Slovakian Republic, guest Professor for Cultural Management at the Merkur-International University in Karlsruhe (Germany) and Consultant for academic and cultural co-operation of OSCE (the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe).

And just in case you thought that was all, he is a member of the Scientific Initiative for Culture and Foreign Policy (Wissenschaftlicher Initiativkreis für Kultur und Außenpolitik WIKA) at the Institute for Foreign Relations of Germany (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), Stuttgart. Not surprisingly, he speaks many languages: German, English and French, with a basic knowledge of Georgian and Azeri Turkish which we can only envy. Furthermore, he has written literature about the results of sociological research – mainly prose, but also theatre plays.
Dr. Peter M. Schuster

Peter Schuster was born in Vienna, Austria, on October 26, 1939. He studied, at first, history, oriental languages and Japanese, and only later physics and mathematics, because he wanted to know what ‘real science’ is about.

He obtained his PhD in nuclear physics from the renowned Institut für Radiumforschung in Vienna. As a young physicist and father of three children he began his professional life as a Research Assistant. However, this lasted only a short time: soon, he was awarded a one-year scholarship in literature (having already won a prize for one of his short stories at the age of seventeen). During that year, he wrote a novel Unter dem Kreuz (Under The Cross), but, for financial reasons, could not continue further along that path. He joined the Carl Zeiss company at that time in Western Germany, and began a career as an industrial manager and physicist. Thus, he became director of the entire marketing section of the company. In 1975, during the early days of the laser, he left Zeiss to found and direct his own industrial plant for optical components, lasers and analytical instruments. This enterprise developed its YAG-Laser systems and became the first representative in Eastern Europe of the well-known Japanese company Shimadzu.

However, the stresses and strains of such a busy life took their toll. In 1988, he was diagnosed with cancer of the larynx. Wisely, he gave up all his business activities and made a new start in life as a freelance science writer, poet and novelist.

He began by writing essays about physicists. Soon, his work led to scripts for movies, scientific papers and books. In 2006, he was awarded the Golden Decoration of Merit of the Salzburg Land for his book Moving the Stars—Christian Doppler: His Life, His Works and Principle, and the World After. In the same year he published the anthology Und was
And Then, What Will Happen to Such Lights? About Physicists, Poets and More Travelers—Collected Essays. From 2003 onwards, he has been writing an epic lyrics series under the unifying title The Creation Week, subtitled Day One until Day Six: each volume is composed as an epic poem in homage to an outstanding physicist and thus reports on the essentials of the achievements by each of the scientists. By 2007, three of these books had been published; Day One has been translated into Czech.

He is a member of the P.E.N.-Club and of the scientific board of the Christian Doppler Foundation in Salzburg. In 2006/07, he was awarded the Austrian National Scholarship for literature. In 2007, I was elected president of the History of Physics (HoP) Group of the European Physical Society (EPS) and president of the international Victor Franz Hess Society.

He is resident at Vienna and Poellauberg/Styria, Austria, and in County Donegal, Ireland.


Sylvoisal

Sylvoisal lives in Switzerland, but little is known about his biography. He claims to have been born on the 12th of September sometime in the last century, and to have died on the 14th of July 1789. After some vague and ill-defined studies, he began to suffer from a mysterious disease which led him to retire from the world. He crossed the Channel briefly, in pursuit of lost times to enjoy the city of Dorian Gray, Mr Hyde, Jack the Ripper and Cardinal Newman. After this brief sojourn in paradise, he settled in the Switzerland of Shelley and Byron,
near the lake which mirrored their spleen, on which Saint-Preux had liked to row. Working against time, he wrote a series of sonnets as long as the Thousand and One Nights, and his shade can still be spotted at autumn time, usually in the company of Sissi, the murdered Empress. Since he objects to being photographed, the picture alongside is of an oil painting, which purports to show him in the company of Chaunes.

**Anne Talvaz**

Anne Talvaz was born in Brussels in 1963 of a French father and British mother, she studied French literature and languages and currently works as a commercial translator. She has lived in China for three years and will probably be living in Brazil as of the autumn of 2008. She is the author of 2 poetry collections, *Imagines* (Farrago, 2002) and *Panaches, lithophytes et coquilles de mer* (Comp'Act, 2006). She has also translated many poets from Spanish and English into French and French into English.

**Bérangère Thomas**

Bérangère Thomas, born in 1962, lives in Metz, which was the birthplace of Paul Verlaine, hence her lifelong interest in the great French poet. In addition to literature and philosophy, she studied choral music and composition, which remains one of her keen interests (with photography) alongside poetry. She is the Secretary-General of the *Société des poètes Français*, as well as being its...
delegate for the Lorraine region. She is also responsible for the society *Les Amis de Paul Verlaine*, and, as such, organises an international competition of poetry in his name. She is also responsible for the monthly poetry readings of the Société des Poètes français. She is involved in conferences, in radio broadcasting, in on-site poetry presentations, in cultural events in schools, in prisons, in arranging collective and individual publications, in the training of teachers in the poetic heritage and in the works of Paul Verlaine, and she organizes the annual homage to Verlaine in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris. She is soon to publish a book of poems under the title *Ton infini murmure* (Editions Poètes français, Paris) and another: *Les animaux que l’on aîme animent les mots dans de petits poèmes* (Editions Chapitre Douze Paris et Bruxelles) and has given conferences on poetry at the Sénat as well as recitals in the Quartier latin in Paris. She has won a number of medals and prizes for poetry and has appeared on French national television (Tf1 and FR3) in connection with her literary activities.

Charlotte Ueckert

Charlotte Ueckert, was born in 1944 and has studied literature and psychology. She has worked at the university for some years about exile-literature and literature after the IIrd World War and then as a freelance writer. She has published several books of poetry (*Kein Horizont zu weit, Schwerelos, Ortsgespräch*), one book of travel-essays (*Orte des Glücks*) and three books of biographies about Margarete Susman and Else Lasker-Schüler, Niki de Saint Phalle and Paula Modersohn-Becker. She is also teaching creative writing and lives in Hamburg, Germany and in Italy.
List of Participating Poets.

FROM LINGUAGGI DI VERSI

- Stefka Hrusanova Bulgarian poet and translator of poetry  
  stefkahrusanova@yahoo.com
- Luciano Paronetto Italian poet and translator of poetry  
  sa_kokoro@libero.it
- Anne Talvaz Bilingual Anglo-French poet, living in China  
  admin@anneortitztalvaz.com
- Paolo Tomasella Italian poet and translator of poetry  
  paolotomasella@hotmail.com
- Temenuga Zaharieva poet and translator of poetry  
  temenugaz@web.de

INDEPENDENT PARTICIPANTS

- Marie-Noëlle Célérier poet and physicist from Paris  
  marie-noelle.celerier@obspm.fr
- Carla Gavioli Italo-French poet and biologist living in Paris  
  cgavioli@tele2.fr
- Alla-Valeria Mikhailovich Russian poet, biologist and paleontologist  
  from St Petersburg  
  mikha@JS1238.spb.edu
- Gérard Joulié (alias Sylvoisal) French poet living in Switzerland  
  noemail@anywhere.com
- Charles-Henri Julia Catalan and French poet living in France  
  julia.charles-henri@orange.fr
- Carla Romanelli from Rome  
  carla.romanelli@selex-comms.com

FROM ESOF 2008 SESSION

- Roald Hoffmann (English Language Poet and Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, living in the USA)  
  rh34@cornell.edu
- David Jou (Catalan poet and Professor of Theoretical Physics in the Autonomous University of Barcelona)  
  david.jou@uab.es
- Jean-Patrick Connerade (French Language poet, Professor of Physics at Imperial College London, the ECU of Shanghai and the CAS in Wuhan)  
  Jean-patrick@connerade.com

FROM IRELAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

- Maurice Riordan (English language poet from Ireland, writes about science)  
  MauriceRiordan@aol.com
- Ruth Padel (English Language poet, writes about science)
- Lavinia Greenlaw (English Language poet, writes about science) [ruthpadel@btinternet.com]

- Nicholas de Lange, Professor in the Oriental Languages Dept at Cambridge University, has won the 2007 Risa Domb/Porjes Prize for Translation from Hebrew, and in 1990 and 2004 the George Webber Prize for translation.

FRENCH LANGUAGE POETS

- Vital Heurtebize Président de la Société des Poètes Français (SPF) [letrave@wanadoo.fr]
- Jean-Noël Cordier Vice-président de la SPF
- Emmanuel Mahieu-Duchâtel, Vice-président de la SPF
- Stephanie Mahieu-Duchâtel [mahieu.emmanuel@belgacom.net]
- Bérangère Thomas Secrétaire Générale de la SPF [57-verlaine@wanadoo.fr]

- Christophe Goarant, secrétaire adjoint de la SPF
- Chaunes, sociétaire de la SPF (alias of J.-P. Connerade) [chaunes@gmail.com]

GERMAN PARTICIPANTS, MAINLY FROM DIE KOGGE

- Uli Rothfuss (German poet, living in Calw, president of Die KOGGE) [www.ib-hochschule.de URothfuss@gmx.de]
- Charlotte Ueckert (German poet, living in Hamburg) [ch_ueckert@web.de]
- Rumjana Zacharjeva (German poet of Bulgarian origin, living in Bonn)
- Manfred Chobot (Austrian poet, living in Vienna) [www.chobot.at manfred.chobot@utanet.at]
- Peter M. Schuster (Austrian physicist and poet, living in Vienna)
- Christoph von Braun (Andrea von Braun Foundation, Munich) [vorstand@avbstiftung.de]

SPANISH AND CATALAN POETS

- Angel Terron,
- Assumpció Forcada,
- Josep Perelló
- Clara Janés
- Francisco García Olmedo
- Crescencio García-Segundo (from Mexico) [cg.segundo@gmail.com]
- David Jou (reading poems of Lucile Velasquez from Venezuela and Ernesto Cardenal from Nicaragua) [david.jou@uab.es]
- Rosa Fabregat
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Science meets Poetry

The *Science meets Poetry* Session of ESOF2008 provided a unique opportunity to bring together contemporary poets from all over Europe, some of whom write about science, some of whom are themselves scientists (including even a Nobel Laureate), and some who are simply poets, but fascinated by science as we all are.

The purpose of the session was to demonstrate that literature and science are not poles apart, as people sometimes imagine, but actually come together in our modern world. It was argued that poets are in fact closer to scientists in their way of thinking, in their sociology and in many of their preoccupations than previously thought. Poet-scientists have always existed, but, today, there is a growing band of poets – many of whom are not scientists – for whom science provides inspiration.

Poets, rather like scientists, tend to form small groups around a common aim or idea. Like scientists, they develop a language of their own and modes of expression they feel appropriate for a particular task. More than other writers, they seek a compact and sleek elegance of language, and they believe, just like physicists or mathematicians, that unnecessary words and secondary developments must be hacked away, leaving the structure of their creation standing in its purest form. Indeed, scientists and poets are so similar in many respects that stepping from one to the other is quite natural.

The session gathered together poets who write in English, in French, in German, in Italian, in Russian, in Spanish and in Catalan, and whose subjects range from mathematics, through physics, chemistry, biology, zoology and palaeontology to sociology. It even attracted poets who look on science from the outside, as a subject for them so far unexplored. It raised the question why some scientists must have access to poetry in order to sustain innovative research, and why many contemporary poets find unprecedented insights and inspiration in sometimes esoteric branches of science.

The session gave food for thought to all those who recognize that scientific communication does not stop with the business of writing and publishing scientific papers, or indeed that the only other option beyond that is some kind of vulgarisation. It was shown that there are many kinds of scientific writing, including the most challenging intellectually, which take place outside the sphere of scientific journals.

Thus, *Science meets Poetry* was not merely a session about bringing together apparently disparate fields. It was in fact a session of profound significance to all those who are concerned about the future of Culture itself, about qualities of thought and imagination in the Sciences, and about rigour and precision in the Arts.