

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION  
OF THE ATA'S LITERARY DIVISION

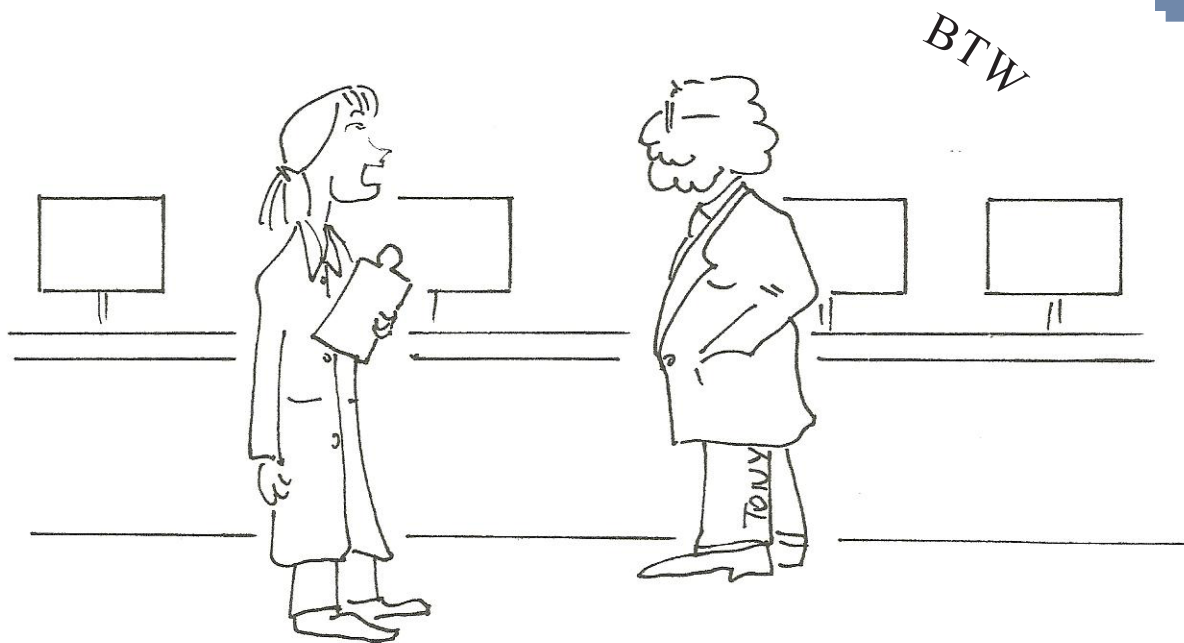
NO. 58

SPRING 2013

INTERVIEWS WITH STEVEN T. MURRAY  
(TRANSLATOR OF THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO)

TIINA NUNNALLY  
AND LILIANA VALENZUELA

IN TRANSLATION: BAUDELAIRE



The translation software worked very well until we got to body language.

# IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE EDITORS.....	3
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES.....	4
LETTER FROM LD's ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.....	5
NEWS AND VIEWS	
Profile of Liliana Valenzuela by Traci Andrighetti.....	6
Two Book Reviews by Julie Winter.....	10
READERS' CORNER	
Manuela Francavilla on works about translators.....	13
Two New Russian Translations by Marian Schwartz.....	14
Malve von Hassell's adaptation/translation of a classic tale.....	15
BY THE WAY.....	16
Two Translators with a Swedish Tattoo by Tony Beckwith	
TRANSLATING BAUDELAIRE.....	22
by Frank Guan	
CREDITS.....	30

BTW Cartoons by Tony Beckwith

# FROM THE EDITORS



**Michele Aynesworth**  
Editor-in-Chief

The Spring issue of *Source* is bursting with news, views, and reviews. Tony Beckwith's *By the Way* column focuses on his recent interview of Swedish translators Steven T. Murray and Tiina Nunnally in Austin, Texas; Traci Andrighetti's Profile highlights Latina translator Liliana Valenzuela; and Julie Winter reviews two recent books on translation, *Translate This Book!* edited by Scott Esposito and Annie Janusch and *The Three Percent Problem: Rants and Responses on Publishing, Translation, and the Future of Reading* by Chad Post—both available on Kindle.



**Tony Beckwith**  
Associate Editor

The READERS' CORNER features Manuela Francavella's look at two works about translators—the novel *Colomba* by the Italian writer Dacia Maraini and the poem "Translations" by American poet Adrienne Rich. Marian Schwartz and Malve von Hassell share news of their latest literary translations.

Frank Guan, a young Stanford graduate who presented his translations of Baudelaire at the last ALTA conference, rounds out the issue with a fresh approach to translating *Les Fleurs du Mal*.

## Summer 2013

We decided to save Michael Goldman's translations of delightful Danish poet Benny Andersen for our Summer issue and invite other translators of Scandinavian literature to send in contributions as well.

## ABOUT THE EDITORS



**Patrick Saari**  
Chief Copy Editor

**Michele Aynesworth** specializes in translating Argentine and French authors. E-mail: [michele@mckayaynesworth.com](mailto:michele@mckayaynesworth.com).

**Tony Beckwith**, a native of South America's Southern Cone, now lives in Austin, where he works as a writer, translator, poet, and cartoonist. E-mail: [tony@tonybeckwith.com](mailto:tony@tonybeckwith.com).

**Patrick Saari** writes, translates, edits and interprets in English, French and Spanish. E-mail: [patricksaari@netlife.ec](mailto:patricksaari@netlife.ec).



**Traci Andrighetti**  
News Editor

**Traci Andrighetti** is a prize-winning literary translator and author, editor, and creator of the Italian language and literature blog **italicissima**. E-mail: [itraci@hotmail.com](mailto:itraci@hotmail.com).

**Special thanks** to Jamie Padula for proofreading and to LD officers Emilia Balke and Clayton Causey for their support.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We're particularly interested in submissions related to Scandinavian literature for our Summer issue.

**Source** is published by ATA's Literary Division.  
American Translators Association  
225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590  
Alexandria, VA 22314

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submit articles up to 1600 words, font size 12,  
Word or text file, single-spaced.  
Indent paragraphs or put a space between them.  
Include a brief bio of two or three sentences and,  
if convenient, a photograph.  
Illustrations and links, etc., are encouraged.  
Submissions may be edited.

We encourage submissions from Asia, Africa,  
and all other cultures less frequently represented  
in these pages.

Send general submissions for future issues to  
[\*\*michele@mckayaynesworth.com\*\*](mailto:michele@mckayaynesworth.com).  
News and Views submissions go to  
[\*\*itraci@hotmail.com\*\*](mailto:itraci@hotmail.com) for Views,  
[\*\*juliemwinter6@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:juliemwinter6@gmail.com) for News.

SUMMER 2013 submissions deadline: July 1  
All previously unpublished material  
copyright © the respective authors.

# FROM LD'S ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

A clever person once said that the love of literature is a textually transmitted disease usually contracted in childhood. The heady euphoria of the first stories we heard as a child are why we are – or aspire to be – literary translators today. Trying to understand ourselves and our world. Aspiring to greater things. Experiencing love, loss, fear, adventure, discovery through words. This is what we do. It's a need we feel like eating or breathing. Like what the medieval Arabic poetic said about romantic love, it's a sickness no one wants to get rid of. Those who catch it never try to get better, and even if they suffer they do not wish to be cured of it.

It's important for us literary people to fill this need. We should read. We should write. In the hectic, distraction-filled world of modern life, it's easy to neglect this love. This is especially true if you aren't fortunate enough to do literary work full-time. All the other things in life can quickly make inroads on our time.

I write for a few minutes first thing in the morning. If nothing comes to mind, I use a couple of websites with writing prompts. I do this because it's fun and because I hope it will improve my writing and thus my translation. Also, even if I'm busy with other work, I try to have a personal literary side project and to set aside some time for it regularly. Right now it's an English translation of a novella by a 19th century Catalan writer, safely within public domain. I'm also an unapologetic bathroom reader. These habits are important if we want to maintain our art.

What are your symptoms? How do you get your literary fix? Let's discuss it on LD's Listserve: <http://tinyurl.com/LD-s-Listserv>.

*Clayton Causey*



*Emilia Balke is a freelance translator, interpreter, and voiceover talent. She translates from Russian, German, and Macedonian into English and Bulgarian, and from Bulgarian into English.*



*Clayton D. Causey, CT, is a freelance translator and musician. He translates fiction, poetry and song lyrics from Spanish, Portuguese and French into English.*

Literary Division  
Administrator:  
**Emilia Balke**

[ebalke@language-web.net](mailto:ebalke@language-web.net)  
Assistant Administrator:  
**P. Clayton D. Causey**  
[literarytranslator@ymail.com](mailto:literarytranslator@ymail.com)

# NEWS AND VIEWS



Traci Andrighetti  
News and Views Editor

## PROFILE: LILIANA VALENZUELA

**B**orn and raised in Mexico City, Liliana Valenzuela is an adopted *tejana*. An award-winning literary translator, poet, essayist, and journalist, her poetry chapbook *Codex of Journeys: Bendito camino* was published by Mouthfeel Press in October 2012. She is also the acclaimed Spanish language translator of works by Sandra Cisneros, Julia Alvarez, Denise Chávez, Dagoberto Gilb, Richard Rodríguez, Cristina García, Gloria Anzaldúa, and other writers. A long-time member of the Macondo Writers Workshop, and an inaugural fellow of CantoMundo, she works for the *jahora sí!* Spanish newspaper in Austin.



**Traci Andrighetti:** You've enjoyed remarkable success as an English-to-Spanish translator of literature and poetry. But you're also an award-winning writer, an editor, a voice artist, and, if I'm not mistaken, a dancer. With so many talents, what is it about literary translation that draws you back time and time again?

**Liliana Valenzuela:** You are kind. It is true that I am versatile, and I love all the arts. What draws me back to literary translation is, amazingly, money, but more than that is the pleasure of inhabiting a literary text so completely, I feel one with the author and the work, at the sentence and the word level. It's a form of extreme reading.

**TA:** Making money is not something that translators often associate with literary translation. How have you managed to find financial success in such a difficult field?

**LV:** Literary translation used to be a genteel occupation, something a professor did on the side, for the love of it. But when you're a freelance literary translator, you have to put food on the table. Literary translation is a highly specialized field, and



should be rewarded accordingly. Personally, I'm fortunate to work in a language combination that is in high demand in the U.S. and also to have an agent.

**TA:** You describe yourself as both "an adopted *tejana*" and as a reclaimant of the heritage of La Malinche, the guide, interpreter and lover of the conqueror of Mexico, Hernán Cortés. How has your identification with Texas and La Malinche influenced your work as a translator?

**LV:** There are certain leitmotifs that find you. La Malinche has followed me as much as I've followed her. She was the subject of my senior paper in college while majoring in anthropology, a feminist revision of her role. Later, I'd come to see her as a model for a trilingual interpreter and translator of cultures at a time of great culture shock and upheaval during the Conquest of Mexico. When I came to live in Texas, to be close to the border with Mexico, I saw myself straddling both cultures and languages, neither here nor there, and at the birth of something new. Other Chicano and Latino authors have explored this new frontier, and I with them, but with a twist, taking their works back home.

**TA:** A few years ago, you made the interesting decision to take a job as a reporter for the Spanish-language newspaper *jahora sí!*. Do you see this position as a break from your work as a translator? Or is it in some way related?

**LV:** I've been at the paper for two years now, and it's been a wild ride. I still get to translate a short article here and there, but we have an outside translator for longer notes. My emphasis is now on writing feature stories in Spanish. And I copyedit the whole paper. I've learned a lot as a rookie reporter, somehow garnering eight state and national awards during my first year. I'm still deeply engaged with language, but now the challenge is to capture and translate the interviewee's life experiences directly onto the page. Occasionally, I translate some of my pieces into English for the *Austin American-Statesman*, our sister paper.

**TA:** I like the metaphor of translating life experiences. Are you saying that there are specific skills you acquired as a literary translator that have made you a better reporter?

**LV:** Working as a reporter for a Spanish weekly in an English-speaking country means I'm sometimes interviewing people in English or Spanish, and then having to translate it myself. Sometimes both in the same conversation. So being a literary translator first, has helped me go into an interview with an open mind and just go with the flow of whatever language or language mix we fall into.

**TA:** Does your work as a reporter still allow you time for literary translation?

**LV:** I don't have much free time for literary translation anymore, but I am still translating the work of Sandra Cisneros. My translation of *Have You Seen Marie?* (*¿Has visto a María?*) came out last fall (Knopf, 2012), an illustrated adult fable. And I'll probably translate her new collection of essays, a longer work, in the near future, and perhaps even her new poems. Her work and her style still resonate with me in a powerful way, and I can't say no.

**TA:** What is it about Sandra Cisneros' work in particular that resonates with you so?

**LV:** Her themes of Mexican-American womanhood in a new era, and most of all, the musicality in her language. She's a poet first, writer second. And everything she writes has that poetry in it. It's very condensed and deceptively simple. When translating her work I sometimes experience moments of sheer aesthetic bliss. And it doesn't get much better than that.

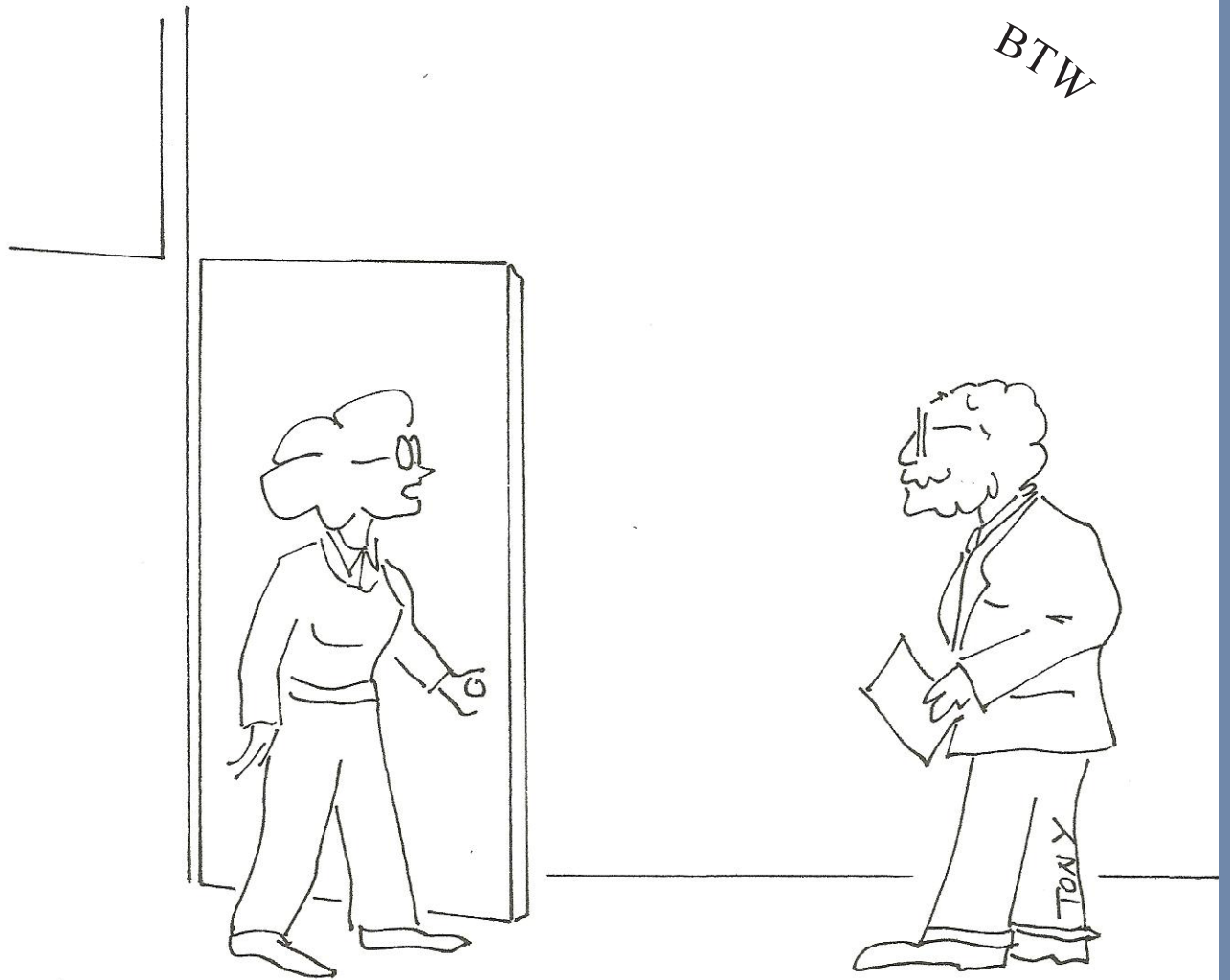


La Malinche  
Painting by Rosario Marquardt, 1992

If you would like more information about Liliana Valenzuela, please visit her website at [www.LilianaValenzuela.com](http://www.LilianaValenzuela.com) where you will find samples of her translation and poetry. Also be sure to read her recent interview with Judge Sonia Sotomayor for *jahora sí!* at [www.ahorasi.com](http://www.ahorasi.com).



BTW



Do we chase a wild goose, or chase a goose wildly?

# TWO REVIEWS

By Julie Winter

*Julie Winter is the translator of Freya von Moltke's Memories of Kreisau (University of Nebraska Press, 2003) and lives in Spokane, Washington.*



*Translate This Book!* (2009)

Edited by Scott Esposito and Annie Janusch

Available on Kindle (\$2.99)

and at *The Quarterly Conversation* (paper \$9.99 or free PDF)

*The Three Percent Problem: Rants and Responses*

*on Publishing, Translation, and the Future of Reading* (2011)

By Chad Post

Available on Kindle or Nook (\$2.99)

*Translate This Book!*, edited by Scott Esposito and Annie Janusch, consists of recommendations, from over 40 highly experienced translators, editors, and publishers, of books that ought to be translated into English or, if they have been, are in need of a retranslation.

Esposito's own words about his reasons for publishing this book are compelling: "So far we've come, yet still so far to go. We have the Tolstoys, yes, we even have the Murakamis, but there is so much classic and contemporary literature still out there that has never been published in English—never ever. So, to acknowledge all that's out there, to inspire readers to thirst for more literature not originally written in English, and to do a service for those publishers in search of the next great translated book, we offer this collection of recommendations." <<http://quarterlyconversation.com/translate-this-book-intro>>

As Esposito states, his book is primarily intended for readers and publishers. The recommendations are offered mostly by translators, most of whom would likely translate the suggested works if a publisher were interested. While it does not appear to be directed at translators who may be looking for that next great project, it is still definitely worth a look. Translators can surely draw inspiration from this book and perhaps go ahead and translate a work they believe should be published in English.

It's also possible that, in some cases, the translators who recommend their favorite works do not actually intend to do the translation themselves.

The general reader also has a great deal to gain from this book. The short, impactful descriptions of favorite authors and books by knowledgeable writers make for fascinating reading. One sees that translators really do love the written word and are genuinely good at expressing themselves in this medium.

For example, Charles Cantalupo writes on the issue of translating books from Africa: "More than any other continent, Africa is not only unread—to speak of the thousands of writers in all genres who write and remain untranslated in indigenous rather than colonial languages like English or French—Africa is also misread: with the most popular and accessible African writers, who are far fewer in number, choosing colonial languages for their work."

And Ellen Elias-Bursac makes a strong case for a Croatian writer: "I would love to see the verse of Tin Ujević, a Croatian poet from the 1920s and 1930s, translated from the Croatian. He wrote jewel-like sonnets and other (mostly) short poems that fuse mysticism, pain, intellectualism, and insight with extraordinary rhymes."

These beautifully written, short descriptions of intriguing works that really should be translated into English make for enjoyable and thought-provoking reading. We become aware of how much fascinating literature has not yet been translated. It would be interesting to know if the book has influenced any publishers to go ahead and take the risk to publish some of these extraordinary recommendations.

\*\*\*

We all know about the vast amount of excellent literature still out there that should be translated; Chad Post explains in *The Three Percent Problem: Rants and Responses on Publishing, Translation, and the Future of Reading* why this may not happen any time soon. As the publisher and director of Open Letter Books of the University of Rochester, a press committed to promoting and publishing literature in translation, Post knows a lot about the business, and he is smart, witty and outspoken when writing about the various obstacles to publishing translations. The book consists of a compilation of posts on publishing, translation and the future of reading that appeared previously on Open Letter's weblog *Three Percent*.

Three percent, a now famous statistic, is Post's calculation of the share of translated books published in the United States. The reasons for this low number are complex but generally have to do with the perception that translations will not usually become best sellers, and that the large publishing companies don't want to invest in books that won't become best sellers. Smaller independent publishers and university publishers are more supportive of international literature, but they lack the financial resources to bring out more titles.

Post has an amazing command of the economics of publishing, which he explains in a funny, down-to-earth, colloquial manner. The pieces are grouped thematically with such topics as: why it's so difficult to get translations published, including a detailed analysis of economic factors; the traditional publishing model—how a work is accepted, published and promoted; the problem of finding readership for literary books and translations; the business of large chain bookstores and smaller independent ones; the nature of the translator's work and how to make translators more visible; books, books, and more books, including the rise of the ebook; and what reading will look like in the future.

Clearly this work is a “rant,” but it is engaging and funny, full of statistics about and personal experiences with books, reading and publishing that back up the author's observations and complaints. What saves the book from being a tedious rant is that it is well written and informative and that the author tries to work out the problems and give possible solutions to them. One can turn to any section and immediately become engrossed in the particular problem discussed there. Another thing that makes the book worthwhile is that Post is passionate about reading good books, and this passion infuses and unifies the work.

I checked the most recent post of the *Three Percent* blog and was disappointed to find a very long rant about why Post cannot get back to translators right away about their submissions. Apparently, many translators submit a work for consideration for publication and then do not wait patiently to hear whether or not the piece will be accepted; instead they pester Post with emails asking if he's read their work yet. Obviously, Post was frustrated and wanted to blow off steam, but he also wanted to help readers understand the submissions reading process. Unfortunately, he did not do this in a graceful way—but of course he is entitled to write and rant as he sees fit on his blog.

Fortunately for the book, the rants have boundaries and offer insight into the problems without overly insulting all the parties involved. It's clear that the selections have been carefully chosen and edited. This is an important book for all literary translators to read to fully grasp how difficult the world of publishing literary translation is. It is also refreshing to think that the work of Chad Post, and many others committed to international literature, may well change the situation for the better.

## READERS' CORNER



Manuela Francavilla is an instructor of Italian and Spanish as well as a translator (English, French, and Spanish > Italian) and an editor/proofreader of Italian — her native language. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin, where in 2004 she began teaching language courses at various local schools. She has also given private lessons in conversational Italian, translated many kinds of texts ranging from birth certificates to questionnaires to poetry, and edited academic articles.

Contact: [Manuela.francavilla@gmail.com](mailto:Manuela.francavilla@gmail.com)

When I saw *Source's* call for articles about films or literary works starring translators, two works came to mind: the novel *Colomba* by the Italian writer Dacia Maraini and the poem “Translations” by American poet Adrienne Rich.

Zaira, the protagonist of *Colomba*, is a young grandmother worried by the sudden disappearance of her granddaughter. She is also an Italian translator always rushed by her clients. In this novel the work of the translator isn't the main focus; yet, the author gives us a few glimpses of what being a translator might be like.

Zaira is the kind of translator who doesn't feel at ease when it comes to money. For many years she has been translating scientific papers for a small Italian publishing house, but now she finally gets a different assignment: the translation of *La vida es sueño* (Life Is a Dream) by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, a poet and playwright of Spain's Golden Age. She accepts the job enthusiastically without even discussing payment since she already knows it will be meager and will arrive late because the publisher is always telling her he's broke and that she has to be patient. In just a month, Zaira delivers a high-quality translation which the publisher really likes but, as expected, he “forgets” to pay her for it. Unfortunately, Zaira doesn't have the strength of character to insist on immediate payment.

Later the publisher comes knocking at her door with the director of a small acting company to make an “indecent” request: he wants Zaira to make cuts and changes to Calderón's play tailored to the theater company's needs. As a professional translator, however, she knows that she has to be loyal to the original text and cannot betray the author's message. At first, in a weak voice she tries to explain the ethics of translation, but in the end her need of money and the insistence of her publisher push her to accept the changes.

We shouldn't forget that Maraini had seen most of her works translated into many languages. For this reason, I like to think of the character Zaira as a tribute to translators or at least an acknowledgement of their work. Of course, it's hard to know if this was her intention. Other authors, however, have thanked translators in their works, as in the following poem “Translations” by Adrienne Rich.

You show me the poems of some woman  
my age, or younger  
translated from your language

Certain words occur: *enemy, oven, sorrow*  
enough to let me know  
she's a woman of my time (...)



## READERS' CORNER continued



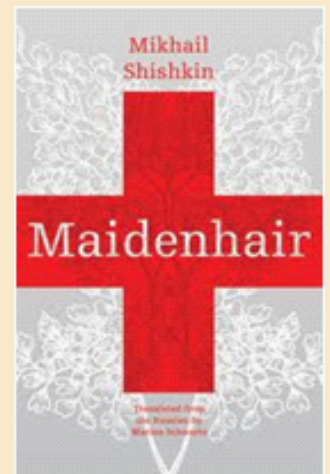
**Marian Schwartz**  
**Recent publications**

At Moscow Conference 2011

### *Maidenhair*

by Mikhail Shishkin  
Open Letter Books, 2013

Day after day the Russian asylum seekers tell of the atrocities they've suffered, or invented, or heard from someone else. These stories of escape, war, and violence intermingle with the interpreter's own reading: a history of an ancient Persian war; letters sent to his son "Nebuchadnezzasaurus," ruler of a distant, imaginary childhood empire; and the diaries of a Russian singer who lived through Russia's wars and revolutions in the early part of the twentieth century, and eventually saw the Soviet Union's dissolution. *Maidenhair* takes on the eternal questions—of truth and fiction, of time and timelessness, of love and war, of Death and the Word.



### *Black Square: Malevich and the Origin of Suprematism*

by Aleksandra Shatskikh  
Yale University Press, 2013

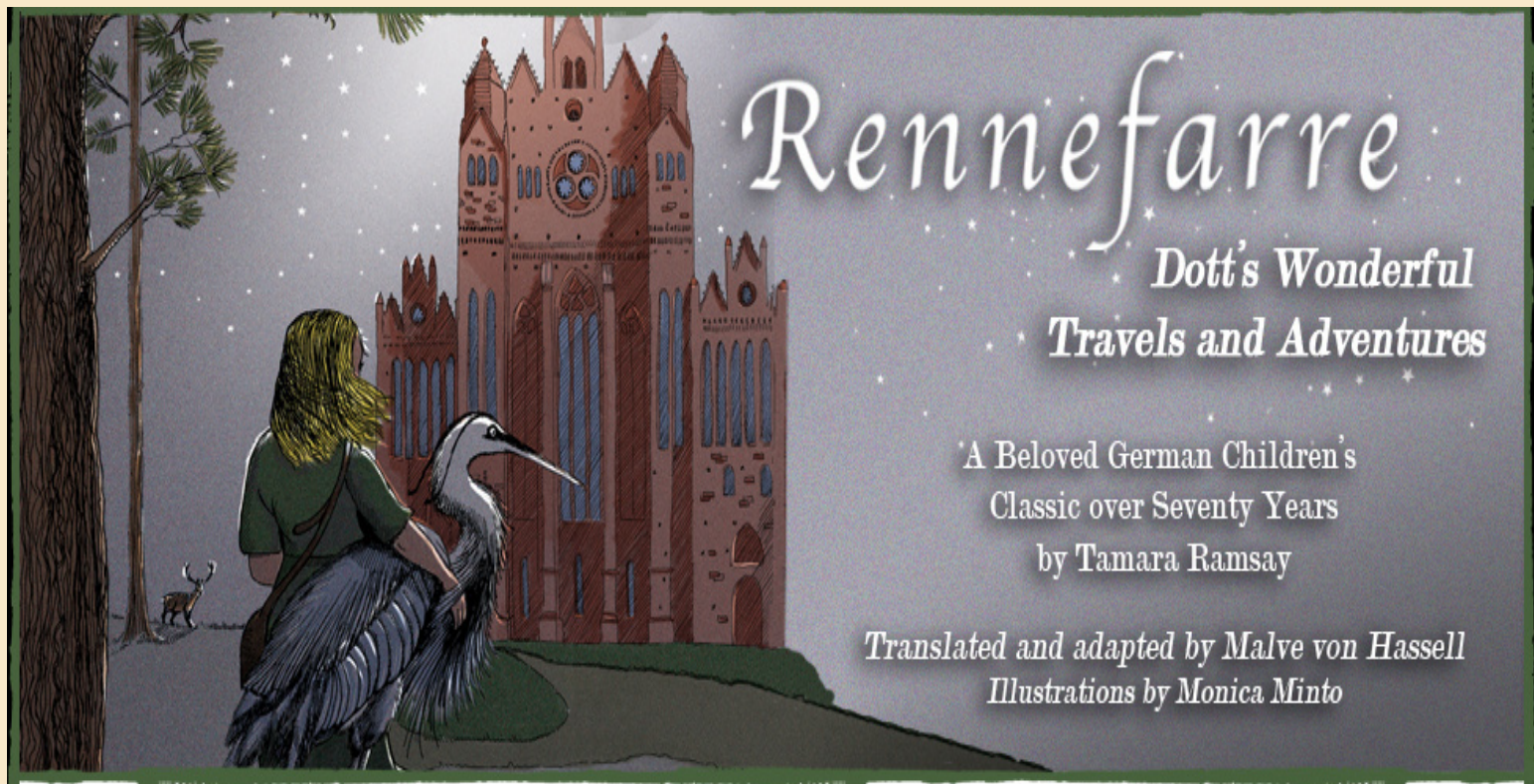
Kazimir Malevich's painting "Black Square" is one of the twentieth century's emblematic paintings, the visual manifestation of a new period in world artistic culture at its inception. Writing about this single painting, Aleksandra Shatskikh sheds new light on Malevich, the Suprematist movement, and the Russian avant-garde.



## READERS' CORNER continued

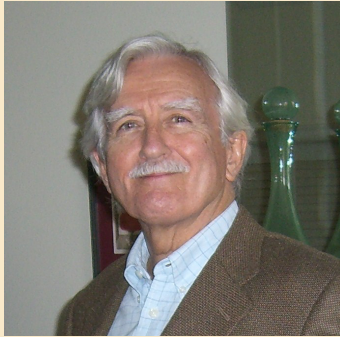


**Malve von Hassell**, freelance translator, researcher, and writer, has recently published her translation and adaptation of *Rennefarre: Dott's Wonderful Travels and Adventures*, Tamara Ramsay's German children's classic (*Wunderbare Fahrten und Abenteuer der kleinen Dott*). Reminiscent of *The Neverending Story* by German author Michael Ende, *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* by Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf (first woman writer awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature) and the *Magic Tree House* series by American author Mary Pope Osborne, *Rennefarre* has been popular since its initial publication in 1941 and is recommended for children ten years of age and older. For more, see [www.malvevonhassell.com](http://www.malvevonhassell.com).



# BY THE WAY

BY TONY BECKWITH



## TWO TRANSLATORS WITH A SWEDISH TATTOO

A CONVERSATION ABOUT LITERARY TRANSLATION AND  
THE BOOM IN SCANDINAVIAN CRIME FICTION

What is it like to translate a blockbuster bestseller? How does it feel when your translation of a bestseller becomes a successful movie but you share in none of its financial rewards? What is it like to work as a husband-&-wife literary translation team? I learned the answer to these questions and many more when I was invited by the Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association (AATIA) to interview Tiina Nunnally and Steven T. Murray at the Harvie Jordan Lecture Series event billed—in a nod to that blockbuster bestseller—as “Two Translators with a Swedish Tattoo.”

The two translators in question (neither of whom sports a tattoo) came to Austin, Texas for the weekend from their home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. My first question—the one that translators always want to ask other translators—was: how and where did they learn Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and German well enough to translate them into English? Nunnally was born in Chicago and grew up in the Midwest. Her mother was Finnish so there was a Nordic connection from the very beginning. Her father also spoke Finnish, but the parents used it as their “secret language” to talk to each other without being understood by the kids. When she was 17, Tiina went to Denmark as an exchange student for a year of total immersion. That’s the way to learn a second language: by not speaking your first one for a year. The experience changed her and made her “realize that language is very important to identity. It makes your mind more flexible about how people see the world, about how people express themselves.” She then taught herself Norwegian and Swedish, and already spoke German and Russian. There were no academic positions open in her field at the time, so she spent ten years with Scandinavian Airlines in Seattle, which she loved and which gave her plenty of opportunity to use her languages.



Steven T. Murray was born in California and grew up in Manila, Mexico City, and San Diego. With that nomadic background it's not hard to understand his early interest in languages. He first went to Europe when he was 20, and over the next few years spent time in Germany, Denmark, and Jutland. He says he "was fated to become a translator" and, like many artists before and since, supported himself doing a number of different things along the way. Until now, of course, when he is fully occupied as a freelance literary translator. And not just any literary translator; he produced the English version of Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Series*, setting the standard for Swedish crime fiction everywhere in the English-speaking world. And yet one looks in vain for his name in these books. Instead, in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* for example, on the fourth page it says "Translated from the Swedish by Reg Keeland." Huh? Murray explains that the publisher's edited version differed enough from his translation to make him use a pseudonym for the British edition. He has also used the nom de plume McKinley Burnett.



Steven T. Murray



Tiina Nunnally

That makes five names between them, because some of Tiina Nunnally's books are translated by Felicity David, a pseudonym she sometimes uses for works published in Britain. Make that five names and over 80 books. They have been translating literature for many years. When asked to discuss the use of aliases in greater detail, Nunnally explained that she and Murray do not like to use pseudonyms because they are both firmly committed to the idea that translators

should receive credit for their work, “something that literary translators have to fight for every inch of the way.” And, obviously, a pseudonym hides the translator’s true identity and prevents credit from being given where it is due. As happened, for example, when an article in *The New York Times* listed Reg Keeland as the translator of the *Millennium Series*, and Steven T. Murray wasn’t mentioned at all. “On the other hand,” continued Nunnally, “if the translation has been so altered from what you originally presented—by the publisher, the editor or the author—that it no longer represents your work, and you can no longer stand by it entirely, then you have to decide whether you want your name on that book. Is it going to hurt your reputation as a translator? Is it going to hurt your reputation as a writer?” That’s how she felt about the British edition of *Smilla’s Sense of Snow* and told the publisher to remove her name from the translation. The publisher did so, but instead included “Translated by F. David” in *Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow*, as the book was called in England. Nunnally said that, if they had asked her, she would have come up with a much better name, but since the die was already cast she decided to use it too, once she had fleshed it out to Felicity David, which she thought sounded much better.

Nunnally is well known for her translation of Sigrid Undset’s *Kristin Lavransdatter*, the Norwegian trilogy, and *Pippi Longstocking*, the children’s book by the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren, among many other works. But *Smilla’s Sense of Snow* by the Danish writer Peter Høeg was her highest-profile project. It became an international bestseller and was awarded the American Translators Association’s Lewis Galantière Translation Award in 1994. Literary translators will sometimes contrast the pros and cons of translating works by living authors with those of translating authors who are no longer with us. Murray, for example, notes that “dead authors are much less trouble.” In *Smilla’s* case, unfortunately, friction marred the experience of working with a living author. Not every writer trusts a translation of their work into a language where unfamiliarity breeds doubt. Translation is, after all, an intimate affair between the translator and the text, and sometimes three’s a crowd. In this case Nunnally was paid by the word and received no royalties from a book that sold millions of copies. She saw people on the bus reading it and knew she “wasn’t getting a dime for all those books.” Then the movie was made and there was no stream of royalties from there either. She says “I don’t sign those kinds of contracts anymore.”

Murray doesn’t either. Contracts are a complex process in any context. Literary translators who negotiate their own are sometimes at a disadvantage and may leave too much on the table. Nunnally’s publisher was reluctant to demand payment from the production company for using her translation of *Smilla’s Sense of Snow* as the basis for the movie. They said they’d sell a lot of books on

the coattails of the movie, which is true, but beside the point. They said there was no precedent for translators getting paid when their work was made into a movie script. This is obviously where an agent can be of enormous help, and at a certain point becomes essential. As a beginner, of course, one has no leverage, no track record, but later on, when one has a few books under one's belt, there are contracts one can walk away from if the terms are unacceptable.

The experience with *Smilla* prepared Murray to negotiate when the books in the *Millennium Series* were going to be made into movies. "I called the production company and asked how much they planned to pay me for my *copyrighted* (his emphasis) translation that they were going to use as the basis of the movie script." The company made an offer and this time there was a happy ending.

A well-deserved one too, because translating the *Millennium Series* was a challenge at several levels. Murray said the publisher originally asked if he could do all three books in six months. "I told them I may need six months for each one, or maybe I can do all three in nine months. It wound up taking eleven months." Unsurprisingly, he doesn't remember much about that year! I asked how hard it had been to capture the nuances of Swedish subculture in the books, and he said: "Stieg Larsson had a very American writing style. It flowed like butter into American English."

Not every translator is married to a translator, and as one who is not I was interested to hear what they had to say about working as a husband-&-wife team. Harvie Jordan, for whom this Lecture Series is named, was one of the founding fathers of the AATIA. He mentored many and encouraged even more, and when I was seriously considering stepping away from my day job and becoming a full-time freelance translator I asked Harvie what one needed most to be successful in the field. He said, "a wife with a real job." "That's me!" said Nunnally gleefully. She and Murray met at a conference on Scandinavian literature. "He was a publisher at the time so I went up and asked him for a job. And that's how we met."

In an interview published in *The Seattle Times* in 2001, book editor Mary Ann Gwinn wrote, "Like most literary folk, the couple dream of hitting the bestseller list. Nunnally works part time as an office manager for an architectural firm, employment that gives them both medical coverage." That was twelve years ago. Now they are both full-time—bestselling—literary translators, which raises questions about competition and collaboration. Since they work in the same languages, I asked if they ever had to decide who would translate a book.

Murray said it all depends on the scheduling since, thanks to the boom in Swedish crime fiction, they both stay busy with many projects, current and in the pipeline. Nunnally added, "But you're better with certain kinds of books. You're better with lots of slang and dialogue. I'm better at the more literary kind." Murray turned to me and said, "She does the ones that win the prizes." Nunnally replied, "But you're the one who does the bestsellers." It all evens out.

Their offices are at opposite ends of the house, and they work together on some projects, alone on others. They have different work schedules, as one would expect, and different styles. He listens to music while he translates, she doesn't. They meet for lunch, exchange lots of emails, edit each other's work, and read their translations out loud to each other, which sounds like the ultimate in quality control. "When you're working on a novel for several months you get really close to it and can start missing things. Reading the work out loud helps to hear how far it has come on the journey from the source to the target language. It's good to have someone read your work because you want the book to sound as though it was written in English."

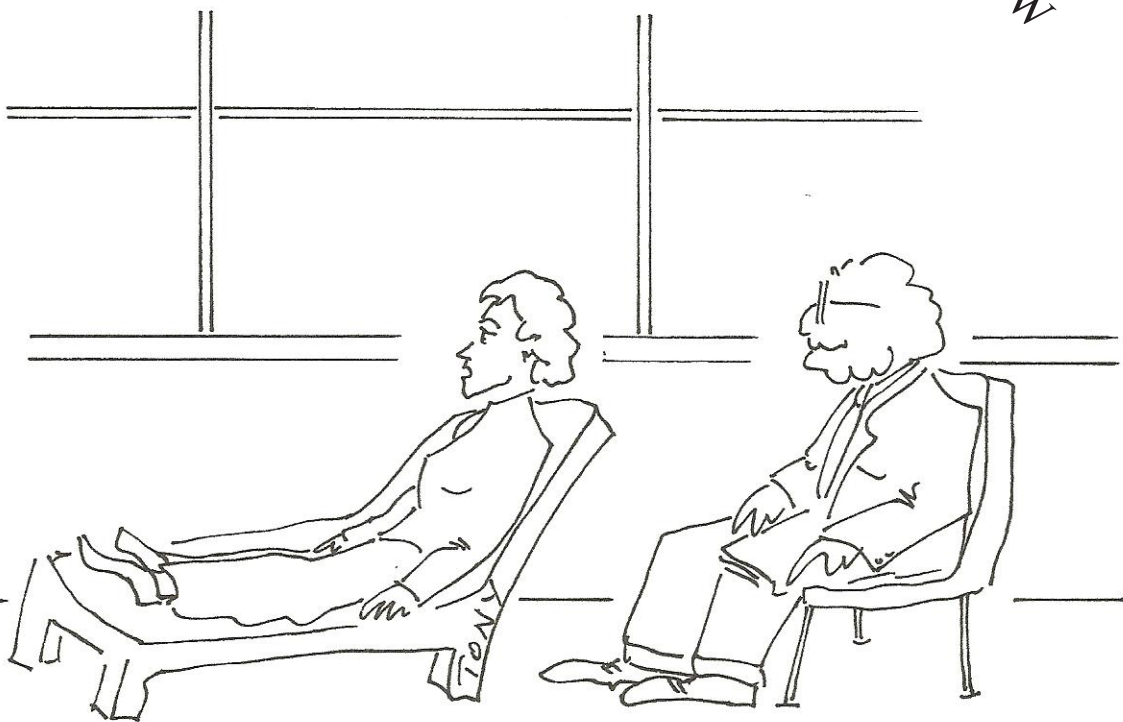
During the Q&A period at the end of our conversation, a member of the audience asked the visitors about their formal education in translation and whether they had had mentors. Murray replied that he had had two mentors in technical translation in the Bay Area, but none in literary translation. Nunnally said she had a master's degree in Scandinavian studies and was working on a PhD in Scandinavian literature. "But when I was in college there were no courses on translation. Our generation had to learn it for ourselves." They both started out as technical translators—Murray spent years translating documents for Swedish nuclear power plants—but they were always translating literature on the side, and longed to do it fulltime.

Asked about their current projects, Murray said he was working on a German book, *Snow White Must Die* by Nele Neuhaus, which was enjoying great success in Germany. Nunnally had just finished *The Land of Dreams* by Vidar Sundstol, a Norwegian detective story set among Norwegian immigrants settled on the shores of Lake Superior.

In closing, of course, I asked what advice they had for aspiring literary translators. Murray recommends translating books for fun, to get the practice of working with literature. Nunnally thinks that "when you start out you should do books you are in love with. Later on, you'll have to do books that you don't necessarily like, but you'll get paid for it." They both insist that, as with any art, practice is the key. Harvie would certainly agree with that.



BTW



Some days I can't decide whether I'm Joan of Arc,  
Helen of Troy, or Joy of Cooking.

# TRANSLATING BAUDELAIRE

BY FRANK GUAN



*Frank Guan graduated from Stanford University in 2009 with a degree in English and German literature. Currently residing in Queens, New York, he recently completed his translation of Charles Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal.*

By now, it would perhaps be scandalous to point out that Charles Baudelaire, the alleged godfather of modern poetry, wrote poems that all rhymed. He counted his syllables with a fanatic precision and fenced his lines off from within with caesuras. He spiced his diction with a choice selection of archaic words and unabashedly based his rhetorical machinery on Roman antecedents. The truth about the poet who invented novelty as the first criterion of art is that nothing was new to him. When, late in life, he read poems written by his young admirers (Verlaine and Mallarmé among them), he found them rich in verbal talent but deficient in poetic essence. The kindest compliment he proffered to his friend Manet, the first modern painter, was that he was the “first in the decrepitude of his art.” In spite of ample evidence to the contrary, we still tend to believe that human society is in a state of progress, and that our art is in some part a reflection of that development. But Baudelaire knew better. How?

His century was flooded with delusions. Chief among them were Rousseau's cult of innocence and nature and the blind faith that the advance of science and reason would perfect society and morals. Both were underwritten by a smug, lustful, and uneasy middle class; meanwhile, the poor they mercilessly brutalized were left to brood, hopelessly, on the black mirage of revolutionary vengeance as they drank themselves to death. But where other critics were content to fulminate against the situation's sheer hypocrisy, Baudelaire delved deeper and unearthed a truth, a correspondence: natural evil. The bourgeoisie were keeping faith with the natural world by mimicking its obliviousness to their crimes, and legitimating that obliviousness under the name of innocence. Their reductive science, likewise fixed upon the natural world, could only, following its cue, discover further instances and opportunities for evil, and their effect on society would “perfect” it only insofar as it hastened its self-destruction, whose prophecy and symbol were the poor.

This dark insight, more valid now than ever, is the unspoken background of Baudelaire's poetry, which is never purely lyric. Something heavy, black, and social surrounds these poems and forces itself to be named at times: the "others, rich, corrupt, assured to win", the "vanished souls whose gaze implies a kindred form". There is always a hard core of sobriety in the poems of *Les Fleurs du Mal* which throws the lyric impulse in relief by evoking intuitions of a moral

underworld. As the last line of this selection suggests, our only chance of surviving that evil, what Baudelaire referred to elsewhere as "the natural obscurity of things," is to recognize that it exists and that, as natural beings, we, not just the poems, have always been within it.

I have kept the rhymes and the syllable count in every case, and all the twelve-syllable lines retain the central caesura. These poems are bleak and uniform, but they are not quite uniformly bleak. What makes them bearable and even glorious, at least for those who are willing to forgo their innocence, is above all the play of sounds against a rigid formal apparatus. The aural wealth of Baudelaire, his surplus of melody and rhythm, of alliteration and assonance, is little noted, but it is crucial:

without their lightness as a counterbalance the arduous material of the poems would collapse into a mute and inextricable mass. The music's also there. Enjoy.



#### IV CORRESPONDANCES

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers  
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles ;  
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent  
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,  
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,  
— Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,

Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,  
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,  
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.

#### IV CORRESPONDENCES

Nature is a temple where columns, pulsing, warm,  
Release at times a swarm of words confused as mists;  
There man's soul proceeds through massive symbol forests  
Whose gazes on him bend as on a kindred form.

Like echoes, throbbing, strained, that from afar combine  
Into a shadowy, deep, and soulful union,  
As vast as the night and clarity's dominion,  
Sounds, colors, and perfumes correspond and entwine.

Perfumes exist as fresh and soft as children's skin,  
Smooth and sweet like oboes, as green as prairie earth,  
— And also others, rich, corrupt, assured to win,

That bear the growth of forms that live in ceaseless birth,  
Like benjamins, ambers, musks and frankincenses,  
Singing raptures of the spirit and the senses.

LXXIX OBSESSION

Grands bois, vous m'effrayez comme des cathédrales ;  
Vous hurlez comme l'orgue ; et dans nos cœurs maudits,  
Chambres d'éternel deuil où vibrent de vieux râles,  
Répondent les échos de vos *De profundis*.

Je te hais, Océan ! tes bonds et tes tumultes,  
Mon esprit les retrouve en lui ; ce rire amer  
De l'homme vaincu, plein de sanglots et d'insultes,  
Je l'entends dans le rire énorme de la mer.

Comme tu me plairais, ô nuit ! sans ces étoiles  
Dont la lumière parle un langage connu !  
Car je cherche le vide, et le noir, et le nu !

Mais les ténèbres sont elles-mêmes des toiles  
Où vivent, jaillissant de mon œil par milliers,  
Des êtres disparus aux regards familiers.

LXXIX OBSESSION

Forests, you summon fear like tall cathedral spires;  
You cry out like organs; in our hearts cursed by fate,  
Ever-grieving chambers strung with ancient pain's wires,  
The echoes of your *De profundis* resonate.

Ocean, I despise you! Your collapses and leaps  
Are doubled in my mind; the sick, bitter laughter  
Of crushed mankind, the tongue that damns, the face that weeps,  
Find corresponding sounds in your massive mirror.

What joy you would provide, deep night! without the stain  
Of stars whose light intones a speech all comprehend!  
Because I seek the bare, black void which knows no end!

But darkness is itself a world, a foaming plain  
Where flourish, streaming forth from my pupils, a swarm  
Of vanished souls whose gaze implies a kindred form.



## LXXXI ALCHEMIE DE LA DOULEUR

L'un t'éclaire avec son ardeur,  
L'autre en toi met son deuil, Nature !  
Ce qui dit à l'un : Sépulture !  
Dit à l'autre : Vie et splendeur !

Hermès inconnu qui m'assistes  
Et qui toujours m'intimidas,  
Tu me rends l'égal de Midas,  
Le plus triste des alchimistes ;

Par toi je change l'or en fer  
Et le paradis en enfer ;  
Dans le suaire des nuages

Je découvre un cadavre cher,  
Et sur les célestes rivages  
Je bâtis de grands sarcophages.

## LXXXI ALCHEMY OF SORROW

One clarifies you with his love,  
One in you, Nature, can but grieve!  
What breathes to this one: Die and leave!  
Tells that one: Splendor, life above!

Most kindly Hermes, wreathed in mists,  
Inspiring ever-present fear,  
You render me King Midas' peer,  
The sorriest of alchemists;

Through you I transform gold to rust,  
And heaven's gems to hellish dust;  
In shrouds of air as thin as lace

I find a corpse I love and trust;  
Near where celestial rivers race  
I raise vast tombs devouring space.



## LXXXIV L'IRRÉMÉDIABLE

### I

Une Idée, une Forme, un Être  
Parti de l'azur et tombé  
Dans un Styx bourbeux et plombé  
Où nul œil du Ciel ne pénètre ;

Un Ange, imprudent voyageur  
Qu'a tenté l'amour du difforme,  
Au fond d'un cauchemar énorme  
Se débattant comme un nageur,

Et luttant, angoisses funèbres !  
Contre un gigantesque remous  
Qui va chantant comme les fous  
Et pirouettant dans les ténèbres ;

Un malheureux ensorcelé  
Dans ses tâtonnements futiles,  
Pour fuir d'un lieu plein de reptiles,  
Cherchant la lumière et la clé ;

Un damné descendant sans lampe,  
Au bord d'un gouffre dont l'odeur  
Trahit l'humide profondeur,  
D'éternels escaliers sans rampe,

Où veillent des monstres visqueux  
Dont les larges yeux de phosphore  
Font une nuit plus noire encore  
Et ne rendent visibles qu'eux ;

Un navire pris dans le pôle,  
Comme en un piège de cristal,  
Cherchant par quel détroit fatal  
Il est tombé dans cette geôle ;

— Emblèmes nets, tableau parfait  
D'une fortune irrémédiable,  
Qui donne à penser que le Diable  
Fait toujours bien tout ce qu'il fait !

## II

Tête-à-tête sombre et limpide  
Qu'un cœur devenu son miroir !  
Puits de Vérité, clair et noir,  
Où tremble une étoile livide,

Un phare ironique, infernal,  
Flambeau des grâces sataniques,  
Soulagement et gloire uniques,  
— La conscience dans le Mal !

### LXXXIV THE IRREMEDIALABLE

#### I

An Idea, a Being, a Form  
Dissevered from the blue, a star  
Plunged in a Styx of mud and tar  
No rays of Heaven ever warm;

An Angel, imprudent traveler  
Whom love of the deformed attracts,  
Oppressed by nightmare's cataracts,  
Thrashing in its heavy water,

And straining, anguish grave and stark!  
Against a titanic maelstrom  
That sings like jagged choirs from  
Asylums, reels within the dark;

An ill-starred man, condemned to be  
Bewitched by trials his blind hand makes:  
To flee a cell that writhes with snakes,  
He seeks the sunbeam and the key;

A dead, damned soul descending  
Without lamps, by a pit whose stench  
Betrays how deep the humid trench  
Sinks, down railless stairs unending...

And viscous creatures guard those shelves,  
Whose vast and phosphorescent sight  
Describes a still more somber night,  
Illuminating but themselves;

A frigate sealed in polar ice,  
Encased as in a crystal web,  
That seeks the strait whose fatal ebb  
Had cast it down into that vise;

—Neat symbols, scene precise that shows  
A destiny beyond all cure,  
Suggesting that the Devil's sure  
To do well anywhere he goes!

## II

Face-to-face, lucid, somber gaze:  
A heart becomes its mirror, peer!  
The well of truth, so dark and clear,  
Where wavers one star's ashen blaze,

Beacon ironic, infernal,  
Great torch Satanic grace conceives,  
Sole glory that alone relieves,  
—Consciousness in depths of Evil!

# CREDITS

P. 6 Photo of Liliana Valenzuela by Nell Carroll

P. 8 Painting of La Malinche

For Internet sources see <http://www.tihof.org/honors/malinche.htm>  
and <http://www.rr-studios.com/projects.html>

P. 20 Photos:

Steven T. Murray

<http://freshfiction.com/author.php?id=19871>

Tiina Nunnally:

<http://tinyurl.com/Nunnally-photo>

P. 23 Painting by Carlos Schwabe

Illustration of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*

Paris: Charles Meunier, 1900.

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fleurs-du-mal\\_titel.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fleurs-du-mal_titel.jpg)

P. 29 Image of Mirror Mask

<http://www.etsy.com/listing/65976092/mirror-mask-full-face>