**Winter 2026**
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Translators would seem to be the last writers on earth to suggest that their only tool - *words*, might be utterly bereft of power. We know this. This is canon in translation theory: words have meaning via endless iterative contexts, from which they wield their power to birth, to build, to dismantle, or discredit ideas, and therefore change human history. Translators across time and space have witnessed and written of this fundamental truth of ours enough to fill libraries worldwide. Yet translators, along with other intellectuals, creatives, seekers, and stewards of human culture now confront a moment in history where words - and by extension their truth - seem to have failed us utterly.

Viewed through the lens of poetry translation, Exhibit A is Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. At the Poetry Festival in Berlin in June 2022, Ukrainian writer and translator Halyna Kruk aired the heartbreaking truth in her opening speech that "metaphors have lost their power in front of what is actually experienced" in the daily atrocities of the war. (see: https://www.versopolis.com/initiative/poetry-expo-24/content/1524/the-war-in-ukraine-through-the-lens-of-women-poets) ("I wish that poetry could really kill", Halyna Kruk's statement in Berlin). Her poignant testimony vastly exceeds any accepted notions of the inherent *faiblesses* of translation (à la Umberto Eco) as the 'art of failure', and slides us into the realm of the unutterable tragic loss: loss of the power to communicate effectively in any language the breadth and depth of wholesale destruction and attempted erasure of human life and culture; loss of the ability to fight back against it with the one tool to which, while deeply flawed, translators and poets and artists have clung to in hope, throughout suffering and triumph, across modern history.

Kruk noted as well the changes the war has wrought in the role of poets in Ukraine: they have now been thrust into the position of witnesses to the war, impromptu journalists/historians who experience the horror personally and must then find the strength - find the *words,* to chronicle it. Herein, writers and translators find themselves at the crossroads between art, documentation of human atrocities, and the impotence of human language

in the face of the gaping maw of evil. Given the weight of that burden now carried by so many courageous writers and poets, Ezra is humbled and honored to offer a sampling of translated works by one such brave witness, Ukrainian poet Lyudmyla Diadchenko, whose translator Padma Thornlyre is this issue's feature.

Exhibit B, the war in Gaza, offers no less damning a case for the powerlessness of words to name, and therefore to capture, to contain, to shame, to subdue, or to conquer inhumanity. In a veritable sea of words, the destruction continues unabated. Anna Yin's translation of Yan Li's poem *Two Statements* calls out, in sparse, journalistic fashion, the chilling mindset that drives the merciless juggernaut: "Forgiveness is God's business / Our job is to send them to God."

The question then becomes, in the face of unrelenting brutality - now both at home and abroad - how do we as poets/translators cope, continue to fulfill the moral imperative to bear witness, and *reclaim the power* of language? We hear and can appreciate a deep yearning for rest from the "bitter universe" in Verhaeren's *At the Quayside.* Diadchenko voices an aching frustration in the image of the writer's clenched fists and teeth, and of newspapers that keep *silent*. Cefola's translation of Sanguinetti's *Today* echoes a similar sense of utter exhaustion: "Note: this desire to rest." Anxiety over what "the human is going to become" plagues the poet: "Will there remain the hole, the lyre, the childish laugh, the childish fear, deep in our eyes, on the face's edge? Or nothing." Yet despite the exhaustion, a single word, repeated and enlarged, as if to underscore its imperative, or perhaps the lack of any other acceptable choice, urges us: "forward, forward, forward" nevertheless.

The above is not offered as a simple formula. On the contrary, it is a proffer of textual evidence for the case that language, though battered, is not beaten. It is likewise a call to resist the fate to which capitulation condemns us. For without words, and without translation in particular, as George Steiner observed, we risk "living in provinces bordering on silence." Silence must not be permitted to prevail. We at Ezra offer our wishes in the new year to all writers, translators, and readers for a moment of respite from struggle. We offer our fervent hopes for peace, and for renewed strength to

continue the work. In the collective call to move forward in hope and in strength, resisting the silence, we begin . . . again.

FEATURED WRITER : **Padma Thornlyre**

Padma Thornlyre was born in Fort Collins, Colorado in 1959. His eleven books of poetry and translation include *Mavka: a poem in 50 parts* (Turkey Buzzard Press 2011), inspired by the Ukrainian play, *Forest Song*, by Lesya Ukrainka, and the four volumes of his *Anxiety Quartet* (Turkey Buzzard 2020-21). Thornlyre began translating Lyudmyla Diadchenko in 2021, having discovered her work on the Internet. He works closely with Diadchenko on each poem. Padma's poetry and translations have appeared in over 400 journals, including Poetry, Yellow Silk, Gargoyle, Rattle and Exacting Clam. Now living in the small mountain town of Raton, New Mexico, Padma's current projects include a new book of poems, *WagJaw*, his first novel, *Baubo's Beach: an Autobiography of the Unconscious*, his collected poems, and a more substantial collection of his Diadchenko translations, *The Obedient Street*.

**Untitled***

*Translated by:* Padma Thornlyre

Side by side with my djinn. There
They are—just rub the electric kettle!
Here is my number. Ring me, if you wish,
Or spend the night—it doesn't matter.
My hostess has stockpots and saucepans
And I have herring and water, but the djinn
Packing my dowry into a suitcase runs
Out of time. Could he really not manage alone
Without littering my socks all about?

But then, all will happen as Fate wills it.
“Open, Sesame!” you will say, leaving me,
And my djinn will see you off.

**Untitled***

I lock the door against five below,
Scratch a conjured warmth by making tea.
Winter, I divine, will dwell with me longer
Than you will,
My bed’s heat a coiled horn of sheepskin —
Deep. hollow. inside-out. familiar. obliging.
Late fall rests heavily. Time to fill out forms
Halfway. Time for books (novels) and the blues.
My cottage steeped in you, its last embers
Twinkling to ash, scarcely holding a glow.
My love for you all but spent, and now,
I have nothing left for myself.

*(selected poems originally published in *Magnetic Storms,* No Reply Press, Portland Oregon, 2023. Reprinted here with permission.)

**Untitled**

I dream of an eagle in hand, and not a sparrow or tomtit.

No mere duck to measure height

From a dream’s perspective; though they themselves

Dream, perhaps hunting for a golden fish.

Dozing off on yet another cold road,

You ask, “Where are your…?” Anchovies everywhere.

Meaning nothing. Time for your feet to freeze.

Don socks made from sheep’s wool or camel

And nothing else. A beak can be seen in the future

And an empty room where a candle flickers.

And an eagle alights in the dream,

And it, too, is meaningless.

**Untitled**

The art of calligraphy is dated. Psalm-charts

Are out of fashion. We now live hand-to-mouth,

But so well-wrought was the word, “we,” that

Inside it like amber, both world and script have thickened.

Such unholy writing so recited,

I sunk in slumber while a tangible reality somewhere

Wrote “we” like we were already no longer—like a scar.

I endeavored to write. I loved what was beautiful.

To empty the swollen clouds of every idea, you

Clench your fist, clench your teeth, and aim for *Samsara*.

You claimed the words didn't fit, neither "these" nor "those."

Perhaps I know… every dictation—what writing is.

**Untitled**

Upon the Pacific Ocean, the soul unpicks its stitches,

Soaks in tears like detergent foam—resentment and rage.

Upon the Pacific Ocean, at the shoreline hinge

Of sand and sea, life bends you into a seashell.

You step into the water, feeling the pebbles underfoot,

To wash away what remains of faith and illusion.

A butterfly brushes the waves, and finally

Stitches them to the sky. All your friends—

Sardine and frigatebird, mollusk and jaguar—

Tenaciously coil time around their tails and eyes.

Upon the Pacific Ocean—a canvas of delusion and despair—

Unpicking by yourself the fabric of space.

**Untitled**

Like Degas' dancers—white and flexible—

Winter spins in tutus

Poking the map with her toes.

Like glaze on a windowpane

Shields those dreading such cold, hot dances,

Discard your own sins,

stack them like folded woolens in your wardrobe

Disappointed that you didn't wear them out.

The temple roofs crackle like old gramophones

With completely impure, false motives.

He who studies your season artlessly rips

The black and white from you, tears them in half.

There is, in Degas, the still, naked body…

A great many naked bodies….

**Untitled**

In case you forgot this after all, it's okay. It's probably time

To throw away the toothbrush and slippers and anything else I left with you.

Winter spins snow like a popcorn machine.

In fact, I don't care—but you can't hide

A needle in a burlap bag, and I won't hide my soul.

In this woman, according to church canon, Lyudmyla serves God.

The movie bombed, the genre stifled its content.

We have never felt strong in this genre.

I read the closing credits for the first time: double gold

For costumes and masks made not by some Chanel.

I merely want to sleep until winter sweeps it all away.

Popcorn tastes like forgetting, and snow—it tastes like caramel.

**Untitled**

To focus the pupil, assess from a significant distance

The world's return to white — the spectrum's ubiquity.

I want to store the pain in case

I will have no sentiment causing my tears to run.

Increase the scope of the examination by the numbers lost:

Cute picture of winter. Cute you in your polka-dot cap.

A year-long odyssey is my newest homeland:

I ran away with you. It can happen — I'll listen, for a while,

But it can also happen with others: seasons, events, and campfires.

I will not count contributions and compare — such business is unladylike.

We have no heat. But no one else is quite so warm. Yah …

Because the heat remains after everything is burned.

**Untitled**

Digital microphones

don’t broadcast my prayers.

Love dims and becomes a vile impediment.

Still, I fly to you

out of habit alone:

You flit like flames

and I, a butterfly, flit into your glow.

Still, in bed, you toss restlessly this night or two;

Morning’s crumpled blanket reminds you it’s a battlefield.

The world would forgive you and the newspapers keep silent, but

You doubled your winnings so prematurely

That soon, our calls coincided and

our sleepless messages dwindled,

until love crept in

beneath your victorious robes.

The Chinese sewed us up with their own threads, yin and yang,

but the newspapers won't report this.

**Untitled**

And all who knock three times on your dreams,
And all who would enter the manor—no,

There are too many of them. Close the door.

Don't let them enter. Yes, I know they are all God's children.

Just as the sea drives your soul into the deep,

Into the submerged capitals of Atlantis…

Just where, exactly, are you? I must ask a golden

Fish, though surely such a fish does not exist.

The stoup splashes night with a single golden foot, granting

Communion, absolving you for your affair-crippled walks.

You, who emerged from the salt-fragrant sea, smell as I do—

I will seek you by this scent.

LYUDMYLA DIADCHENKO

**traduttori/traduttrici**

Ann Cefola ( Hélène Sanguinetti )

Roberta Newman ( Leyzer Wolf )

Ronald Barnicot ( Émile Verhaeren )

Diana Manole ( Emil-Iulian Sude )

Anna Yin ( Yan Li )

Domaine of the sticky followed by Six Responses to Jean-Baptiste Para (La Lettre Volée, 2017) by Hélène Sanguinetti, trans. Ann Cefola

**Today**

*Translated by:* Ann Cefola

back at the lake (fortunately no one there), the water is so green that it glides in my eyes and leaves a big vibrant darkness. It's evening, the wind has abruptly dropped, just a few ripples, and the crown of black fish reforms,

then explodes and it is a scarf that trails farther out, another crown will be born, a latecomer wants its place.

Many days have passed. Without rain, wind, wind, wind; the trees can't take it anymore: foliage vacated, bodies dull, gray. It seems evident that the desert will be here shortly. Will the works be covered by sand? will they live another life? highly unlikely. So what's important for us, for others, the world? take the moment, from illuminated little pieces, and that's it? Nothing new really, but the present generation, generations to come seem to be built differently. The human is going to become what? what feelings and what thoughts are being born? what is human? Will there remain the hole, the lyre, the childish laugh, the childish fear, deep in our eyes, on the face's edge? Or nothing. Other. I know what you're thinking as you read this, that I am completely naive, my questions incredibly simplistic.

The star rises.

Garden neglected. Nature must renew it, if possible. Growing
old, he said, is measured by that, and it's not over! For him, it's
over.

The big, earth-colored crickets massacre the leaves of the youngest mandarin and lemon trees. Earth drier than a dry heart.

The sky before night, belongs to me. Where I look, grows round, rises, a very sweet song. It does not blush. Sky greens intensely, a deep light, and its secret.

Paying attention offers immense freedom. Sweetness lets a gate open somewhere, simply: water flows, pure or impure, it flows. But after, Walls return. Each does as he can, with his strength and his weakness. Those who grouse, who smile, etc.

Autumn sky infinite blue with a kind of dampness, a lukewarm base that says it's no longer summer. Enjoy the sky, but the day runs away and will not return. Another, we tell ourselves. Possibly no however. We cannot live with the idea of such a cleaver, certainly.

Think about it sometimes though. Believe and don't believe you're immortal.

The powdery caterpillar was huge and I burst it with my index nail: orangey juice with no scent.

This desire to rest: Note, this desire to rest. Lay the cart flat on the grassy path. To no longer advance, rage, thrust, lance, pique, the red entrails of everything and everyone, disbursed, no longer get ahead of oneself. Disappear a little, finally, glide in the dust, close the eyes, become its butterfly.

Remembering lake water and fresh water fish, so different from sea fish. Remembering how water quivers in the breeze and the noise of reeds, how to sound the silky friction of canes and how to show the scrolling pleats of water? with words! Those at least. I hope, however, that you can honestly hear this and it's not boring you. Writing like this. They came back to see

me, posed funny questions, like: do you love war? do you know how to plant a geranium? do you like dancing or singing?

As if I did not have enough of my own questions!

On the Thames, like yesterday, twenty years ago! discovering Turner's setting sun of Turner on Big Ben and the houses of Parliament. The south shore: again: the Motionless, skaters dancing before graffiti, others spray painting and, during this time on the river, passage of beloved barges: convoys of sand behind the pilot boat, white and black as always, muddy water squeaking a little around bridge piers, Suspending them farther, a true Joy in life.

In the windows, lots of junk, sometimes beautiful: a small 40-pound statuette, 6 inches high (the real one would double it), imitation of a Minoan goddess, snake like a torch standing on each raised arm, cat or lion planted on her head, and breasts forward, 2 balloons exiting her dress, stretched to burst. Yes, the goddess of snakes, which Sir Evans discovered in Knossos, at sunset, and who, it seems, made him tremble until morning. And even made him decide to buy the entire excavation site!

I forgot the noise, or am I getting old? But on the bridges, the water's silence returns, the sound of time passing.

November 2. This morning, what does this morning mean? she died there. She just left us Meaning what?

Thames. Sand convoy again, yellow, behind the pilot boat, black and white. Engine sounds in water. We expected it Did not expect it Did not want it, the day slips and falls like yesterday.

Joy and pain have the Same Bag, there are those that creak and those that dance, it is splendid here, musical, collapsed here at the edge living on the edge, how much I loved her how much I love her there it's, and death's little tip turns around in us waits for us, we want to swallow it for a long time, as long as possible, each death that precedes ours, announces it? Fuck!

Forward!

forward !

forward !

Lots of mail sent. Tedious. But the exterior must exist for the interior to survive. Without the outside, what is inside?

So I accepted the tea at 4 and the candied orange peels (delicious) and the more or less interesting and discreet questions that people asked me, I am getting accustomed to a form of patience, it is none other than me moreover who encumbers me, the days flea-ridden.

HELENE SANGUINETTI

**What Matters**

*Translated by:* Roberta Newman

What matters is your life
the springtime and the sun
the mindless drunken drifting
not thinking anything.

What matters is your love
the skin, the kiss, the child
the night, the blood, the blunder
the sunniness of sin.

What matters is your dying
in laughter's in-between
when all life's colors
blaze brilliant and bright.

LEYZER WOLF

**Evening**

*Translated by*: Roberta Newman

Of blue veins and bright milk –

evening.
Hands armed with love.
Angels walking, barefoot,
and stirring stars.
God strolls on a blue bedsheet
in silver high heels.

The moon lies, naked, on a hill
and the youth roam around in a rainbow.
Jealousy weeps blindly in a cradle.
The dream is deep and the earth is dark.

On a glowing wire rides the devil.
He has big eyes and fat lips.
He assembles the stars in a sieve
and sifts them.

He takes money from a wallet
and pays the gods and the champions.
They thank him and kiss his hand.
Dark lies the land in the valley.

LEYZER WOLF

**At the quayside**

*Translated by:* Ronald Barnicot

Arriving from Who Cares, now they depart,
But not before they hear a deep cry start
Out there at crossroads seething with doubt!
My body weighs me down, it wears me out,
I want to rest here, I just can't;
This bitter universe, this web of routes…
Woven of light and wind, it floats;
Better just leave, no end in view,
Than sit the evening out and chew
On triumph, confronting custom's debt,
My œuvre, in its dull heart, once fast and lithe,
A life that's ceased to leap beyond its life.

EMILE VERHAEREN

**With my hands behind my back**

*Translated by:* Diane Manole

i'm patrolling this hallway. in fact
i've several faces.
i can even move my hands to the sides. Is it just us

i let them follow me throughout my chest

’cause it snowed at night.

and i’m in the flower of the night

some call it merkabah that’s un-folding

through the in-folding. those morons

don’t believe that the night of

each night is a flower that continues

in its own flowering toward the inside roots

the de-flowered in-flowering

gathered from the outside something like

falling into your own fall

no chance the inside

would grow into the outside

when exiting

an immersion toward immersion

thickening toward thickening

an elongation

duh that’s why i can be anything and anyone

have lots of

faces which i sometimes meet

for a beer when i am.

incredibly.

lonely. in the light.

in this gigantic hallway with frosted windows

at its ends.

EMIL-IULIAN SUDE

**No one beats him on our security guard shift**

*Translated by:* Diane Manole

only fate

sometimes beats us all down.

'cause of so many screws

from the orphanage and we also

feel like screwing him up. like

screwing the cap back on a beer

bottle from which we took a sip.

we see him as naive

in big clothes believing in people and wonder

if maybe all our naivete

is with him.

in his madness he cultivates generosity

for fear of drought. he tempts us with all

that's his so that some of ours'd also be his someday

and hunger wouldn't dance in his belly.

my boy calls him the cleaning lady
luck loves this fella we say virgin like he is
it's gotten into him from the nickels and dimes
from the security service
look how the rubber jaws fell
and we thought that if we stuck them back together
with scotch tape and polished our work boots for sure
they'd just softly bark at us they wouldn't be too loud.
the dogs
we sic our grudge on the stranger to bite him.
between our teeth to have left at least crumbs.
of kindness. to have at least pieces of him
we pick nits once again.
to beat him and take his cookies.

EMIL-IULIAN SUDE

**Is it just us**

*Translated by:* Diane Manole

or does the site supervisor leave us a clue. to avoid losing
us in the company's id cards. even or odd.
we wondered how there was so much upward growth
among the water chives we were all just numbers

at times we glanced inside a lady.
who crossed the street.
each of us had a piece that kept us moving.
we said that's her
the security guard who has to relieve us.
through transmutation to make us remember how
we were in our youth before we multiplied
short-lived victors. so many onions

we never knew who the real guard was
she acted like she didn't see us. on the other
side of the street every imaginary guard
went on his way. how would we have looked
changed from head to toe
into other vegetables into other clues. so
the site manager wouldn't forget about us and
plant on top of us a souped-up guard.

EMIL-IULIAN SUDE

**Two Statements**

*Translated by:* Anna Yin

There are two statements lately

Reflecting the current international situation

1.

Forgiveness is God's business

Our job is to send them to God

2.

Be stronger than those who hate you

And be strong enough lest they destroy you

And then it's your option to forgive them

But if both parties

Arm themselves with these sentences

Does that mean the war fire

Will burn for another millennium?

YAN LI

**Door**

*Translated by:* Anna Yin

For the simple image

I've always felt a kinship

For example, the bench and the shoe horn

But doors I dare not trust

Mainly because there is so much complexity behind doors

I also heard

For this reason, when someone makes a door

one purposely adds knocking sounds inside

What is the use of that?

Decades have passed

I've come to realize it really works

The door should knock on its own heart from time to time.

YAN LI

**REVIEWS:**

INHABIT THE BRIEF HALT by Béatrice Douvre. Translated by John Taylor. Normal, Illinois: Bitter Oleander Press, 2019, pp 534

Béatrice Douvre (1967-1994) was a poet and artist who softly brushed the poetry sky of French literature. She became anorexic at the age of thirteen and, after numerous hospital admissions, she passed at the age of twenty-seven, leaving behind over three hundred unpublished poems and drawings.

*Inhabit The Brief Halt* is the first comprehensive English translation of her poetry—by John Taylor, a household name in the realm of French, Modern Greek, and Italian translations. The bilingual collection offers the reader the opportunity to engage with Béatrice Douvre's original poetry and appreciate the unusual rhythms of her verse and her soft and unique voice, deftly rendered into English in John Taylor's apt translation.

From the very first poem, the reader grows familiar with Douvre's unpunctuated, brief lines and visual associations. At times, the lack of punctuation confers the poem a sense of natural flow, such as the opening poem, "The Weight of Hope":

Spark-like presence
Soon fled

Tremulous
And passing on

Soon
Sensed while waiting

On other occasions, the translator, as carefully explained in his introduction to the collection, has to interpret the poet's choice of grammar and syntax and make decisions. In the second poem, last line, the translator uses a comma after "death" to indicate a slight separation within the line, impacting the rhythm and flow of the verse:

Hearth of silent intimacy
Lissome log
Housing each flame
In its feeble birth
And death, warmth for you

All of the poems in the collection are a major aesthetic achievement and the English translation captures Douvre's mélange of "abstractions, symbols, and down-to-earth images" as John Taylor describes them:

On this earth made to climb
Drunk
Unlikely

Where you were laughing
At the uncertain whims of the sands

"Uncertain" is one of the recurring adjectives in the English translation, a translation of the French "incertaine." As explained in the preface, it posed a dilemmatic issue for the translator given its use by the poet, in the feminine form. This is an example of the perhaps deliberate ambiguity of Douvre's diction that fuels her poetic language.

The poet favors certain words such as "night" which, across the collection, morphs and shifts from "narrower" to "foreign" to "lingering" to "wholly" to "endless." In many of these circumstances, the translator uses alliteration or assonance to capture the rich Douvre line:

To tread night's stairs
To take measure of another earth

Not always, the poet's intended alliteration can be carried across into English, yet the translator always finds a new, seductive manner of rendering the beauty, and the rich French verse, such as with the help of the consonance in "The Dance (by Matisse)":

La chaleur Ô tournante

L’air levé par l’oiseau
Font les chemins foulés plus rouges
Et nos chairs chavirées

The heat O whirling
And the air lifted by the bird
Redden the trodden paths
And our capsized flesh

Here, the “whirling” heat and the air “lifted” by the wings of the bird intimately stir the flesh of both speaker and reader. Within the perimeter of one stanza, there is this touch of both familiarity and anticipation, virtue, and transcendence. The personification helps create richer imagery and humanize both the heat and the air, and their ability to move both inanimate objects and mortal flesh.

“Rouge/red” is one of the poet’s favorite hues, though the entire collection is sprinkled with color references; there is “red bread,” “red paths,” “red orchards,” “red home,” “red birds,” “red knees,” “red limbs,” etc. Love is green in her poems – “ les movements d’amour verts” – yet everything else, unrelated to passion or feelings, is occasionally clad in red. Similar to Sylvia Plath who uses colors in her poems to render landscapes, feelings, states of mind, Douvre’s “rouge/red” stands as powerful and versatile, inviting of vivid and gripping associations.

In her long prose poem, “Graal,” Douvre offers a beautiful self-portrait that cumulates her poetic endeavors and her unique voice: “She is the little girl who dreams and plays in the vineyard. As lightweight as fire, mocking silence, dancing in our voices. It is her, in the secret of her native language.” In John Taylor’s translation, her poetry offers seductive angles of observation and tenuous moments; the translator’s keen eye and fine ear

bring the English readers into the realm of Béatrice Douvre's sensuous work, illuminating her poetic skill and versatile imagery.

*~~Clara Burghelea*

QUIET DAWN A NOVEL OF HAITI by Jean-Claude Fignolé. Translated by Kaiama L. Glover and Laurent Dubois. Duke University Press, Durham and London 2025, pp 208

A reputable Haitian author, poet, and co-founder of Haiti's Spiralist literary movement, Jean-Claude Fignolé passed in 2017. Alongside writers like Frankétienne and René Philoctète, Fignolé founded the Spiralist movement in opposition to the Duvalier regime, using in their work an innovative aesthetic that broke from the linear, traditional style.

*Aube Tranquille,* originally published in 1990, was translated this year by Kaiama L. Glover and Laurent Dubois. The novel addresses the trauma of slavery and its echoing on the Haitian political turmoil and its roots. 1990 marked a moment of change for Haiti when the existing transitional government ended and the nation-state was reborn. Against the background of Haiti's revolution, *Quiet Dawn* grapples with different issues such as race, power, trauma, or the lingering tensions between past and present.

The symbol of the spiral take gives the name to the literary movement is not only a metaphor for growth and evolution and the

interconnection of things, but its movements suggest a narrative sprouting from the dissolution of time and space. This meandering and apparently chaotic movement reflects Fignolé's message that time does not heal the past. The past is imbued in the fabric of the present and haunts characters and their stories. Fignolé's present is thus broken, and traumatic. The past constantly seeps into the present and unsettles not only the characters' perception of reality but the reader's, as well.

Time is another important theme in the novel. To Fignolé, neither time nor space can be confined. Its elasticity is expressed by the use of flashbacks and the present tense to recount past traumatic experiences. The mournful existence of the eighteenth-century planter Baron Wolf von Schpeerbach, his wife, and slaves is juxtaposed to the postcolonial story of the twentieth-century French nun Sister Theresa, a von Schpeerbach descendant who is still paying for the sins of the fathers and mothers. Time and space cannot contain ghosts, remorse or trauma which resurface, puncturing the temporality of the novel.

The narrative spirals back to the seventeenth century, to the Breton family —the main characters' ancestors— and slave-trafficking practices in the context of French commercial trade with Africa and the Americas. History proves to be a reliable companion for both the past and time and offers Fignolé an opportunity to switch further among narrators, places, and moments in time. As the two translators explain in the Introduction,

“Fignolé writes always with Haiti’s revolutionary past present in his mind, a perspective that is strikingly apparent in *Quiet Dawn*” (XI).

Love is an impossible pursuit in the novel, particularly for the female characters who seek it desperately to no avail. Love or its lack takes the form of verbal combats, accusations, lies, desire, rejection. The search for love is a search of connection and tenderness against violence and trauma. Depriving his characters of it is Fignolé’s way of reminding the reader that the brutal past takes precedence and never heals: “Histories contract and come back to life” (38).

In the Introduction, the two translators provide a close reading of not just the novel and its themes, but also of Fignolé’s literary, social, and political concerns as reflected in his work. Its shifting narratives, the dynamic past haunting the unhealed present, the use of fragmentation in the portrayal of characters, narrative and perspectives are some of the challenges the translators had to consider. Most of the novel is built on dialogue with tenses shifting “midparagraph, which also means midsentence, given the absence of periods,” which requires more attention to the differences between the English and French languages and grammar.

Another intriguing aspect was the translation of racial terminology —Negre, Négresse, Noir, mulâtre—which had different connotations and designations. The two translators “chose to preserve the disconcerting experience of navigating these powerful and shifting terms” to stay true to

the original text and Fignolé's intention. It is interesting to notice that the author himself was intent on unsettling the readers not only with the honesty of the narrative but also with, for instance, his portrayal of the white eighteen-century characters whose language proved to be triggering and offensive in English. The translators again opted for keeping this original language since they considered their role as transmitting as best they could "the atmosphere and experience Fignolé proposed in the original" (XXIII).

These are important, yet no easy choices for a translator, and it helped, given the fact that the author was no longer available for consultations on such matters, to have a fellow translator on board on the project with whom to share opinions and concerns. This collaboration and the careful attention paid to grammatical, linguistic, and cultural aspects make the reading of *Quiet Dawn* a smooth experience despite its challenging subject. In their muscular translation, Kaiama L. Glover and Laurent Dubois introduced an important work and author to the English audience, whose voice and literary aesthetic deserve further recognition. Their introduction places a significant important on Jean-Claude Fignolé's work as well as their translation work, a result of shared sensibilities, aesthetics and love for translation and its profound potential to connect readers across worlds.

*~~Clara Burghelea*