THALIA PANDIRI
IN THIS ISSUE

After the 2016 double special issue, a critical anthology of contemporary Brazilian fiction guest-edited by Marguerite Itamar Harrison, once again a general issue with contributions from many languages, periods, cultures, and regions of the globe. This issue opens with a selection of powerful poems from *Live Concert*, the most recent collection by contemporary Portuguese poet Rosa Alice Branco, translated by Alexis Levitin. Alexis has also contributed poems from *O mapa da tribo*, the 2014 poetry collection by award-winning Afro-Brazilian poet and songwriter Salgado Maranhão that won the Brazilian PEN Club prize. Maranhão is acknowledged in Brazil as the leading poet of his generation; his poems have appeared in past issues of this journal, thanks to Alexis Levitin’s translations. Also from Brazil, a daring, sensitive, and understated short story by Marceline Freire, translated by Marguerite Itamar Harrison.

Other contemporary poets include Sun Lei (translated from the Chinese by Dong Li); Chiangming Yuan, who grew up in rural China and now lives in Vancouver, who recreates his own Chinese poetry in English; Viktor Shirali, translated from the Russian by poet and translator J. Kates; from Morocco, writing in French (translated here by Allan and Guillemette Johnston), the internationally acclaimed poet Abdellatif Laâbi. Poetry by Muro Saisei is translated here from the Japanese by Jason Morgan; Shuji Terayama, an icon of the avant-garde and counterculture in Japan, dramatist, director, photographer and poet, comes to us translated by Anna Tso Wing Bo and Irene Horiuchi.

No translation of a work is ever final, for all time. From German, we have new translations of Heine (by Terese Coe), of Rilke (by Donald Mace Williams), as well as a masterful essay by Christiane Marks, on “The Significance of Meter in Five Sonnets to Orpheus,” with powerful translations. Alexander Dickow has taken on the challenge of translating Apollinaire’s famous long poem, “La chanson du mal-aimé” (“Song of the Unrequited Lover”) from the French. From Michael Taylor we have conversational translations of two odes by the Roman poet Horace; poet, translator, scholar Kimberly Johnson, whose translations from Virgil’s *Georgics* have appeared in an earlier issue of this journal, gives us an excerpt from her forthcoming book, with new translations of Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, the two major works of this 8th-century BC Greek poet. Finally, among fresh new translations of classics, we are
very happy to have ghazals by Ghalib, the famous 19th-century romantic and mystical poet of the Mughal Empire in India, transported into English poetry by poet-translator Tony Barnstone and Kashmiri poet and computer scientist Bilal Shaw. The translators have chosen to follow the original form loosely enough to allow for “more verbal elegance, dexterity and precision,” using rhyme only when the opportunity presents itself, to create a translation that sounds like English poetry.

Fiction in this issue ranges from the very contemporary, like the vignettes by Wladimir Kaminer (translated from the German by Robert Painter) to the anti-slavery writing of Félix Tanco y Bosmaniel from 19th-century Cuba (translated by Thomas Genova). Kaminer was born and educated in Moscow, before emigrating to Berlin. He writes in German, with impeccable mastery of the colloquial speech of his characters; his vignettes of immigrant life are vivid, quick sketches that combine humor, irony, and depth with a light touch. Tanco’s story, “Petrona and Rosalia,” mother and daughter who are slaves of thoughtlessly cruel masters, is a major indictment of the slave-holding class in Cuba. Other fiction comes from a range of languages. In addition to Freire’s “Civil Union” from Brazil (mentioned earlier), we have, from Denmark, a heart-wrenching short story “Trainride to Ribe,” by Peter Seeberg, translated by Ingrid Lansford. Also from Denmark, and also translated by Ingrid Lansford, Jan Sonnergaard’s “Eva & Strudelsen.” Seeberg’s story is set in a brutally real, mundane lower-class ambience in 1957; Sonnergaard has opted for an indefinite future, and science fiction fantasy—quite different from his earlier, sometimes gritty realism. Antonio Tabucchi’s “Flames,” a reconstruction of and reflection on the death of Empedocles, is translated from the Italian by Stiliana Milkova. Quan Manh Ha, a frequent contributor to Metamorphoses, continues his mission to bring Vietnamese fiction to an Anglophone audience, with his translation of a disturbing story by Thach Lam (1909-1942), whose work, focusing on common, working-class characters and the reality of their daily lives, promotes individualism and condemns feudal values.

David Ball, winner of many awards for his translations from French, has generously given us an essay based on a talk he gave at the Second International Shakespeare Conference, University of Massachusetts Amherst, on September 8, 2015: “Untranslatable Poetry? Shakespeare and a Few Others.” David’s pithy style and the clarity of his thinking about translation, his practical wisdom and the complete freedom from jargon and obfuscation delight me, and I hope they will delight you too.
Three reviews round out the issue: writer and translator Yardenne Greenspan reviews *You Who Cross My Path*, poetry by Erez Bitton, translated from the Hebrew by Tsipi Keller. Robert Kaplan writes about *Woman in Battle Dress*, Jessica Powell’s translation of Antonio Benitez Rojo’s novel, *Mujer en traje de batalla*. Bilingual (Cajun) poet Beverly Matherne’s *Bayou des Acadiens/Blind River* is reviewed by Nathan Rabalais. (Reviews are linked on line at: www.smith.edu/metamorphoses)

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