

Poetry by Lachlan Brown in Translation

As a result of Lachlan Brown's visit to the Centre d'Estudis Australians – Australian Studies Centre - at the Universitat de Barcelona Bill Phillips translated some of his work into Catalan, Laura López into Spanish and Victoria Dimitrova into Bulgarian. As always the poetry is presented in bi-lingual format. The translators, guest editor Carles Serra and the Centre would like to thank Lachlan for his generosity to us all.

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Disbelief

Listen, you sceptics! Take heed before you
crush the world with the cruel hammer of reason!
There is a young child in Paris who has
remembered the city streets by heart.
Every evening he recites them in his father's sushi-bar,
holding only a small directory that is seldom opened.
Like a warlord he sends waves of delivery boys
onto narrow laneways, taking routes that
many have since declared to be impossible.
I have seen this child, kneeling upon a chair,
his small hands arranging a table, his lips
murmuring directions that must be followed.
He sits amidst steaming bowls of white rice, and
his father's quick knife slices through night and air.

Lachlan Brown

Incredulitat

Escolteu-me, escèptics! Vigileu abans
d'aixafar el món amb el martell cruel de la raó!
Hi ha un nen petit de París que sap
els carrers de la ciutat de memòria.
Cada tarda els recita al bar de sushi del seu pare,
a les mans només una guia petita que gairebé no obre mai.
Com un senyor de la guerra envia onades de nens repartidors
als carrerons, fent servir rutes que
molts han declarat, després, impossibles.
He vist aquest nen, agenollat en una cadira,
les seves manetes parant taula, els llavis
xiuxiuejant instruccions que cal seguir.
S'asseu entre tasses vaporoses d'arròs blanc mentre
el ganivet ràpid del seu pare retalla la nit i l'aire.

Catalan version Translated by Bill Phillips

Incredulidad

¡Escuchad, escépticos! ¡Prestad atención antes de
que aplastéis el mundo con el cruel martillo de la razón!
Hay un niño en París que
conoce de memoria las calles de la ciudad.
Cada noche las recita en el sushi-bar de su padre,
mientras sostiene un diminuto directorio que raramente abre.
Como un general, el chico envía a mareas de repartidores
por estrechas callejuelas tomando rutas que

muchos creen intransitables.

Yo he visto a este niño, arrodillado sobre una silla,
sus pequeñas manos preparando una mesa, sus labios
murmurando direcciones que deben seguirse.

Él se sienta en medio de humeantes platos de arroz blanco, y
el veloz cuchillo de su padre corta la noche y el aire.

Spanish version Translated by Laura López Peña

Five stories

i. a woman was irritated on a crowded metro.
but she did not fully express her emotions.

ii. workmen placed a scaffold over a laneway,
so that metal rested alongside brown stone.
I walked beneath and imagined the world collapsing.

iii. there was a child who had grown too large
for his pram. he wept into his father's chest.
perhaps he was spoilt. perhaps he had lost something
he could not ever recover.

iv. a famous man visited a hospital. a group of
journalists and photographers followed him,
claiming his steps with their black cameras.
he walked and smiled and joked. His wisp of
white hair shone in the afternoon sun.
this man was not famous to me.

v. we climbed a hill on the edge of the city.
rooves tumbled into one another. the ocean
made the distance seem very calm. turning,
we discovered that we were not on the edge
of the city.

Cinco historias

i. una mujer viajaba irritada en un metro lleno de gente.
pero no expresaba plenamente cómo se sentía.

ii. ciertos trabajadores colocaron un andamio en un callejón,
de manera que el metal quedaba apoyado sobre la piedra marrón.
yo caminaba por debajo e imaginaba que el mundo se derrumbaba.

iii. había una vez un niño que había crecido demasiado
para su cochecito. él lloraba en el pecho de su padre.
quizás era un niño mimado. quizás había perdido algo
que ya no podría recuperar nunca más.

iv: un hombre famoso visitaba un hospital. un grupo de
periodistas y de fotógrafos le seguían,
capturando cada paso con sus cámaras negras.
él caminaba y sonreía y bromeaba. el sol de la
tarde iluminaba su mechón de pelo blanco.
este hombre para mí no era famoso.

v: subimos a una colina situada en las afueras de la ciudad.
los tejados tropezaban los unos con los otros. el océano
conseguía que la distancia pareciese muy tranquila. al girarnos,
descubrimos que no estábamos en las afueras
de la ciudad.

Translated by Laura López Peña

Response

Take care, or you will discover
That you live for nothing at all,
or else for small victories alone.
So often we collect these and
hold them against the world,
until they become a seawall and
all things must break upon their
concrete edges. I urge you, yet again,
as the light skims this quiet ocean,
to let go of all these tiny towers, even
now they are crumbling in your hands.
I am answering a difficult question,
What must I do within this darkness?
An empty cart passes, rattling the night

Отговор

Внимавай, или ще откриеш,
че живееш напразно,
или за малки победи само.
Толкова често ние ги събираме
и ги държим срещу света,
докато не се превърнат в морска стена
и всичко което се случва се чути пред нея.
Умолявам Ви още веднъж,
както светлината проблясва в този океан,
да забравите тези малки кули,
дори сега да се рушат във вашите ръце.
Отговарям на сложен въпрос,
Какво трябва да правя в тази тъмнина?
Празна каляска минава, озвучаваща ношта.

Translated by Victoria Vladimirova Dimitrova

