

JD PLUECKER THE RETURNS

1 Today she begins con las traducidas and the untranslated or ultratranslated women. Se van a ir intercalando.

Question emerged. You immediately answered unsuccessfully. Joy of.

2 Which side should she go on today, the men's or the women's. Searching desperately for a place to go at the airport. Waiting for half an hour by the doors to the family restrooms, one down the hall, the other right here by her, but the doors never open, losing hope.

Today she begins with: What is it to lose hope and keep going.

3 Your writing insubstantial then. You were walking through disaster zone.

4 She is staring at the floor. Is a transition another kind of translation. Is a translation another kind of transition. A transmogrification. A monsterring. A paratactical gap.

She wants a language for what was always there inside. A transition is used to move from one paragraph to another in a traditional essay format.

A transition sentence to lead her out of one paragraph and into another.

She is re-reading Lyn Hejinian this morning, her essay "The Rejection of Closure."

She lands: not a transition, but a paratactical gap: a shift necessitates a recovery, a looking behind and a new structure, a stepping forward.

Hejinian: "Sizable gaps between units. [...] the recovery of information (looking behind) and the discovery of newly structured ideas (stepping forward)."

5 She wakes up at 5:34 a.m. and starts again with the thinking, repeats the thinking, she thinks, there'll be a way out this time. The how could she and the how did she and why did she and did she need to, the I accept it and she doesn't accept me, and she fucked it up, and all the she can't believe. All the thoughts swirl, and the she's not enough, louder every minute. She doesn't want a pill to take all this away, this living. But maybe she does. She doesn't know her way out of the weeds, she's in them again, look. Mad desire generates a not knowing, she wrote weeks ago. A mad desire to know and to understand, to embody, to not harm, but also not to just go along, to accept when she should not accept.

Will she know the rivers?

How to know which rivers are hers?

Which rivers are your rivers?

And how does she know when she's crossing them?

Sometimes the rivers are deep and wide, and she knows. Sometimes the rivers are very small, not rivers, more like creeks or tiny rivulets. When did she arrive to that river, she thinks. Is it even a river? An invisible river. An impossible rivulet.

Wait, when did I cross a river, she thinks.

6 Possibility in absence. Hours like decades. Light on. Feathers unseen. You denied translation was too difficult.

7 What you see is most definitely not what you get.

8 She reads Luce Irigaray: "'She' is indefinitely other in herself. That is undoubtedly the reason she is called temperamental, incomprehensible, perturbed, capricious—not to mention her language in which 'she' goes off in all directions."

She spent so many years translating but now she has largely stopped. She has stopped because she is no longer willing to translate as in to replace or substitute or stand in for. Or she just doesn't want to. A question of desire. She does not pass through and neither does her language. Pasar de una lengua a otra, no, imposible, se dice sola en la cama. Her language, her body, her bodies propagate and multiply.

9 A travesty, a travesty is exaggerated, a travesty is ludicrous, satirical, comic, a parody, burlesque.

A travesty is poor, feeble, distorted, absurd, inferior.

Can I tell you it is a travesty that the word travesty has come to mean this in English?

10 Immutability of skin offered as explanation.

12 Body too. Fear unbound. Imagination too expensive for unruly schoolchildren. Performance of action postponed.

13 She turns off the parts of her brain that say, I don't write about myself or I don't write anecdotes. She remembers how she'd joke with her friend in prison, whenever a particularly tough or intense story would come up, they'd laugh and say in the visiting room, Oh you should write about that or Have you written about that? Or Oh, you must write about that. And they would laugh, and why were they laughing?

They were laughing at this idea that in order to be a writer, you just cobble together all the tough shit or all the juicy anecdotes and then make your deepest darkest crevasses visible and legible and boom you have *the* writing. But what was so wrong with an anecdote anyway, what was so important about trying to make something that could pass as literary. Why make the goal be to write something that no one could understand, she thought. She didn't need to be understood, but she didn't need to be not understood either.

13.5 "A feminine textual body is recognized by the fact that it is always endless, without ending," says Hélène Cixous: "There's no closure, it doesn't stop."

14 Dream of deliverance was not bearing fruit. Nipple not exposed for long. Second feather unrelated. You weren't attempting to explain the photos.

14.5 She thinks that despite choosing to translate others, to avoid her own unruly body, today here she is, she still has a body, a body that is not conventionally legible, a body that now refuses to be replaced or to pass from one system to

another seamlessly.

She is in the seams. The weeds.

She wants to be laying on the concrete in the sun, soaking up the riverside heat, listening to the flow river by.

She makes an errant move to replace one word in a text she translated years ago, she makes a slight shift and then reads to herself out loud

"no translating ourselves without bodies we do not translate without bodies no translating ourselves without bodies we do not translate without bodies no translating ourselves without bodies we do not translate without bodies no translating today without bodies no translating you no using you no saying no doing no being no uttering your body without the body without my body without bodies without heat without the breathing bodies gone missing without sound and words without fingertips touching our bodies"

Originally it said writing. She changed it to translating and wondered.

15 She reads more Lyn Hejinian:

"We live in toppled times under a feat of tyranny; let's not fake getting lost, let's do it, let's not do it intermittently, let's be

lost, disoriented and never to be bound so all can hear the hiss of the adverbs we shoot into tyrants' eyes."

16 But sometimes she is bound. And happy.

18 (Insert no transition here. Abrupt. Disappeared.)

20 If she is to return to translation, she thinks, translation has to resist definition.

Resist instruction and correctness.

Resist slipping one body seamlessly into another.

Resist the equation of one thing with another.

Resist the assimilation of difference into sameness.

22 I like, How will she know the rivers, he texts her.

She doesn't know she's crossed her sister's rivers. See, the river is a boundary line, but it is also a river. And the boundary lines are there in the middle, she supposes, but impossible to know they are there, no way to know, no marker, digital or otherwise. Except sometimes razor blades. Sometimes buoys, remember. Sometimes, this ain't Texas.

She is left to her own devices.

24 Instrumental Sophie hits different post total testosterone evisceration (TTE).

26 The same friend writes to her from prison, "I've switched to writing down little anecdotes, as if I'm journaling and not writing a letter to you. But these anecdotes are for you."

28 She left everything open. And on purpose. And as an aesthetic. And that openness, oh that openness.

30 Hay que apalabrarlo, you have to enword it all, remember to enword it, he says, or unwind, and she translates. She comes at it sideways, and it is not a covering up, not an effort to make

it difficult for no purpose, no. She comes at it sideways because

32 You will have become your worst nightmare. Will you please explain why your dreams of womanhood were never realized.

33 To think there is no possibility in the crossing and still to cross.

To look back at writing from over a decade ago and realize she was obsessed with the bodies of these men in the river, how the body experienced the crossing. To realize she was always there.

To realize the flipside was always there as well. The other side of the river, the border as metaphor.

He told her that he experiences the border as a metaphor, and now he wants to move her there, like a doll into a ranchito.

La idea de usar el español aquí, la versión original de esto. ¿Cuál es la versión original si lo original fue suprimido desde una temprana edad?

How do you say overlap en español? le preguntó a ella. Cruce, él dijo solo, y ella asentó con la cabeza.

She wanted to begin some initial investigations into this cruce.

Overlap es superposición, él se corrige.

34 Maybe she is mistaken.

But maybe there is a power in being a mistake and embracing it.

But no, surely June Jordan is right when she writes:

"I am not wrong: Wrong is not my name / *My name is my own my own my own.*"

Of course June Jordan is right.

And yet, here we are.

The terms are not our own.

Especially as they shift over time, words redefine and recontextualize endlessly.

Inhabit different languages.

Words that sound the same but do not mean the same are often called false friends or faux amis or falsos amigos or falses amiguis.

These colonial tongues full of proliferating false friends and doubled faces.

The words to never quite fit on bodies, which makes her seem wrong, perpetually, but because June Jordan is right, she will still say then "I am not wrong."

"Wrong is not my name."

35 Rediscover your childhood thrill of language. None translatable.

36 She should be writing about translation, but she can't bring herself to. That was the assignment, she was told, to write about crossing from one side to another. Fuck that metaphor, she thinks.

What was lost and what was gained. Walking under that bridge, she was trying to explain to her new friends why she had no patience for the hyperfocus on what was lost.

She is always walking under a bridge, never on the bridge, whether in her dreams or memories or reality or poems. Under

that damn bridge again. It had been years since she last saw the first writer she translated. Just a memory of driving through slush in Juárez.

She told her new friends—who perhaps were not friends but something else she had no word for—she told them typically when she taught translation, she was trying to get the students to let go of the fear, to let go of the idea that they could do it right, to try to envision other ways, other methods beyond faithfulness and inevitable loss.

She remembers the Charlie Brown glass from her childhood:

Why is having
fun always so
much work.

37 Incapable of imagining better futures. Feather a shadow of your former self.

39 For a series of years, she talked about how she was a promiscuous translator, not a faithful one. How she was promiscuous and even polyamorous, and then the relationship between her and the original was one of love or the relationship between her and the author was one of love. But now she was letting the love go or realizing she was in love but no one else was or the author was not enwrapped in the metaphor of friendship or love, or she was losing her way again.

She was walking under the bridge, dirty ice and snow, some sleek and smooth in the gray-day light and some salty and dark from the sand. She was repeating something she had said many times before: let's move beyond the fixation with loss, let's look at what can be gained in the crossing, and then, just then she could not be moved to believe what she was saying, she wanted to get back that believing, but suddenly she couldn't believe any of the words tumbling out of her mouth and she could see the words as they tumbled, spiky and sugary and false.

40 Sandy Stone writes: "But it is difficult to generate a counterdiscourse if one is programmed to disappear."

For her, translation had become a means to disappear her self.

At first, for her translation was a space of invisibility that felt like freedom. She was switching forms. Because prior to the arrival to translation, she first had to disappear into the other language. She had to move from one language into another and concede her own invisibility and to try to become something else within the loss. An incredible freedom there in that change. And then that invisibility emerged as a form of triumph, a form of defeat of the past. A way to deflect the glance, to escape the obligation to recount the trauma.

So then for her, "to generate a true, effective and representational counterdiscourse is to speak from outside the boundaries of gender, beyond the constructed oppositional nodes which have been predefined as the only positions from which discourse is possible."

Beyond original and translation, beyond "before" and "after." Beyond the glow-up.

It is all happening at the same time. No before and after.

Every before comes after some other story. No origin point. All swirling.

41 Her other sibling had given her a cloth with words embroidered on them, Let be be final, it said. She'd look at it for days and days, let the words ring in her ears.

And then she'd stand at the river's bank, looking out at the group now assembled, some giggling at her and others just confused, some amused and others just lost, and she'd keep up her screaming:

Why is a mouth
who could also
make mistakes.

Why is urgent
what is so
ephemeral.

41 (Because you hardly ever decided.)