

Editorial: Creative Writing and Arts

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Is it an accident that there is so much water and sea in the visual art and creative writing in this issue on translation? Perhaps not; perhaps it is most acutely the sea coast and the rivers that make us aware of the presence of people at the other side, people who may speak different tongues. Water is also associated with fluidity, flexibility, and transformations. Françoise Lucas' wonderfully evocative photographs convey the materiality of transformation and exchange in a poetic way. The cover photograph is called "Residue under Division," and while the picture represents decaying paint textures on a ship, its title allows us to interpret it as a narrative of exchange, lost and lingering meanings. It gives a sense of the alienation and the beauty produced by translations. Photographer Françoise Lucas explicitly encourages a narrative reading, as she explains about these photographs, that were all taken from a larger series entitled *Sea Abstractions*. As she explains: "The photographs presented here were all taken in Brittany, France, where I come from. They are all framed to tell stories: the story of sea and sand, of sea and human beings, of sea and light, of sea and boats. In focussing on details, on texture, and on the work of nature and of human beings living by the sea, I try to express a poetic vision of the environment as I experience it. The titles that accompany the photographs also add a narrative signification to my visual work." Françoise Lucas (PhD University of Amsterdam, 1998) is Lecturer of French Literature and Culture and Teacher Trainer at the HAN University of Applied Sciences, Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and a photographer. <http://francoiselucas.blogspot.nl/>

A very different mood is expressed by the four intense water colors by M^a Luz González Rodríguez, that capture the sheer richness of the colours of water and sea. Her paintings explore the exuberant movement and danger, or the serene stillness of sea and waterscapes. M^a Luz González Rodríguez is associate professor in Literatures in English at the Universidad de la Laguna (Tenerife, Canary Islands).

In her last poem out of the four she allowed us to publish here, Izabel Brandão (poet and literary theorist at the Federal University of Alagoas) plays a subversive game with the traditional understanding of the sea as a site of loss, and as a beautiful and dangerous elsewhere. The poem refuses the division between sea and city, by claiming both: "This sea is mine/The city too." The other poems also play with the notion of fluidity and translation (the exchange between twins, the translation of the work of writing into the practice of cooking), but never collapse two worlds or meanings; it celebrates the plurality and interchange of views, as the source of creativity. These poems were translated by poet and critic Terry Gifford.

The story “El mar de todos los mares”/”The Sea of All Seas” (José Manuel Marrero Henríquez, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) makes us witness the polyphonic variety of the widely differing experiences of the Gran Canaria seaside (the nature-loving tourist, the loud English football fan, the many young and old local inhabitants). But while the story highlights the deep gaps between conflicting worlds, the fact that it is presented in two languages invites its readers to adopt different lenses to savour these linguistic and cultural differences, and perhaps even bridge the gaps. The translation is by Ellen Skowronski.

An even more radical experiment with translation follows in the poetry by Julia Barella (Universidad de Alcalá). Her “Mujer Azul” is presented in four different languages. In four languages, the blue woman shares her celebration of life, and the rich sounds of her four different articulations add to the sense of vitality, multiplicity, and creativity. The final words are for Juan Ignacio Oliva (Universidad de La Laguna). His poem shows that transcendence and transformation can be most exquisitely expressed in poetry.

Variations, transformations, translations: the stuff of poetry, nature, life.