

L'EMPIRE CONTRE-ÉCRIT

33^{ES} ASSISES DE LA TRADUCTION LITTÉRAIRE À ARLES

11-12-13 NOV 2016

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SAMEDI 12 NOV 2016 | 10H30 > 12H30

ATELIER DE TRADUCTION

Anglais (Népal)

CAMILLE BLOOMFIELD

Poèmes de l'Himalaya de Yuyutsu R. D. Sharma

Mules

(The Lake Fewa and a horse, 2005)

On the great Tibetan
salt route they meet me again

old forsaken friends ...

On their faces
fatigue of a drunken sleep

their lives worn out,
their legs twisted, shaking

from carrying
illustrious flags of bleeding ascents.

Age long bells clinging
to them like festering wounds

beating notes
of a slavery modernism brings:

cartons of Iceberg, mineral water bottles,
solar heaters, Chinese tiles, tin cans, carom
boards

sacks of rice
and iodized salt from the plains of Nepal Terai.

Butterflies of
the terraced fields know their names.

Singing brooks tempests
of their breathless climbs.

Traffic alert
and time-tested, they climb

carrying
dreams of posh peacocks

pamphlets
of a secret religious war

filth

of an ecologist's sterile semen

entire kitchen
for a cocktail party at the base camp

defunct development
agenda of guilty donors

the West's weird visions
lusting for an instant purge.

Stone steps
of the mountains embossed

on their drugged brains,
like lines of aborted love

scratched
on the historic rocks of waterspouts.

Starry skies
of the dozing valleys know

the ache
of their secret sweat.

Sunny days
along the crystal rivers

taste
of their bleeding eyes.

Greatest fiction
of the struggling lives lost,

like real mules
clattering their hooves on the flagstones,

in circling
the cruel grandeur

of blood thirsty
mule paths around the glacial of Annapurnas.

Mules on the Tube

(Space cake Amsterdam and other poems from Europe and America, 2009)

*“And each man fixed his eyes before his feet...”
-T.S. Eliot*

Mules on the tube
brown, black or blonde

with loads
of their sordid lives

on the weary lashes
of their vanquished eyes

swollen from centuries
of intent stare into the growling eyes of the lion kings

living on the margins
of a millionaire London's frugal Chalkfarms,

Cockfosters,
Edgwares and East Ends

chewing Tesco's vegpledges
having forgotten hungers of their homelands

barren querns, hollowed silos of plenty
starving hillsides and famished deltas of their continents

silent and stern
almost tongueless

learning to
shrug and be smug and grim and longfaced

mastering
sharp accents of bare survival

struggling to surf
on the invisible silk roads of city's cyber alleys

moving like living ghosts
in long oblong grave-shaped bogies

of Central, City,
Circle or Picadilly lines

carrying packs of Prêt-A-Manger Sandwiches,
Coca or Beck's cans, Tesco frozen foods,

Marks and Spencer cinamen rolls,
Mars chocobars and Sainsbury's mangoes as home grown deities

wearing wires of ipods
straps of laptops, cyber mobiles and datedotcoms

as sureshot weapons of mass success

stoned from the ariel airs
of free Airtel or Orange 'talktimes'

wrapped up
in the Woolsworth warmth

of long fluffy coats, scented scarves,
monkey caps, rainbow sweaters imported from Asia

Poppies, paperbacks
and perfumes from Boots and Superdrugs

facing free copies of *Metro*
or *London Paper* like profound script of a prayer wheel

or dozing
like Lamas on a nightly vigil

or just awake from work
or weekends and parties on prairies

moving like emperors
of icecream on the power of the underground *Oysters*

from Tottenham Court Road to High Barnet
Waterloo Station to Battersea, Victoria Terminal to Brixton

risking raids from the imported tigers
of terror in the haven of human rights

forgetful of alarms
and scurity announcements

stalking the arched corridors
of an ashen underworld, lining up

dutifully on the floating stairways
like pilgrimages to their favorite shrines

packed like domestic fowls
in the early morning trains

bobbing like Barbie Dolls on weekends,
oblivious of the stare of the mighty Big Ben

stamping steps of the ancient
carriage routes like Supermen

clanging
steely stairways of ecscalators

mules on the tube
self-made slaves on the footsteps of prodigious Pound

men in a hurry
the third eye etenally on the Abbey of *A Hole in the Wall*

women with history

from the land of dogmas and dictators

men with degrees,
portfolios and myspace profiles

women with angles and arts
wide enough to make doors into heart's dark holes

Space Cake, Amsterdam (in *Space cake Amsterdam and other poems from Europe and America, 2009*)

"Don't panic," they said,
remain cool like your Krishna,
meditate maybe like Buddha,
uttering 'Om Mani Padme,' the jewel in the lotus,
or lie down and relax
like Vishnu on the python-bed
to float on the ocean's currents,
buoyant on the invisible thread
of your breath in slow motion...

Millions of cats prowled around me.
Smoke from shared sex
and hashish joints stung my eyes.
Unsettling tongue
of an awkward fire fed my stomach.
I skidded queasily towards
a formidable edge,
unknown ominous frontiers of human life...

They laughed a secret laugh
behind my back – "Isn't it crazy that
this man from Kathmandu should get stoned
from a piece of space cake in Amsterdam?"

"Don't be serious, laugh,
celebrate the flame of life!" a woman's voice said.
"Hold my hand; I can imagine
you are alone on this trail.
I've been there once," she whispered.
Her tongue curled like a dry leaf in my ear
and crackled "How much did you take,
just a piece? I took thirty-eight grams once,
It can be crazy if you don't know it's coming.
Just don't worry too much.
Don't lose your control over things.
You can kiss me if you like,
You can pat my back,
tickle my belly or stroke my breasts
for a while, if it comforts you.
Sometimes it can be heavenly,
this licking the rim of the forbidden frontiers of human life.

"That's what he wants, that's exactly
what he's looking for," a voice leered far off.
"But I have to go ultimately,
I've a man waiting at home for me."

“Maybe read a poem of yours,”
someone said. My heart raced wild
and I heard some-girls gossip in the next room—
What if he gets sick in Europe?
Don't we get sick in Asia?

“Just take it easy,” another voice echoed
“You won't go psychotic. Remember one thing,
whatever happens, you can always make a comeback.”

Faces of my dear ones veered past my face.
I felt delicate thread of my life
slipping through my fingers

“Hey man, it's fine. Don't worry too much.”
My host shouted. “Drink lots of water.”
Drink black tea or coffee,” a guest suggested.
“Or take lots of orange juice.”
“Maybe sing your favorite song,” a woman said.
“Or recite one of your Hindu mantras.”
“Maybe stick your finger into your throat”
another voice came sheepishly, “And throw up.
You probably haven't digested everything yet.”

Questions came like wind slaps.
“Can you tell me what they call boredom
in your mother tongue? Do you remember
your email account and password?
Discuss your children, if you have any.
Shall I bring my little daughter before you?
Maybe you'd feel better then,
seeing her brilliant eyes.”

I imagined a child's face and clung to it,
like a penitent would hold onto
a sacred cow's tail in his afterlife,
and slept on it, all through the river of blood...

Hours passed by
and then I heard someone say—
What if he had freaked out?
What if Death had stalked our house tonight?

Hearing these words, I woke up
knowing I'd come back, stepped on
the familiar shores of life
where Death's feared, a distant distrustful thing.
My drowse burst like a glacier that cracks
from rumble of a seed of fire
that explodes somewhere
in earth's deep sleep.