

# L'EMPIRE CONTRE-ÉCRIT

33<sup>ES</sup> ASSISES DE LA TRADUCTION LITTÉRAIRE À ARLES

11-12-13 NOV 2016

© Lea Lund & Erik K

**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.