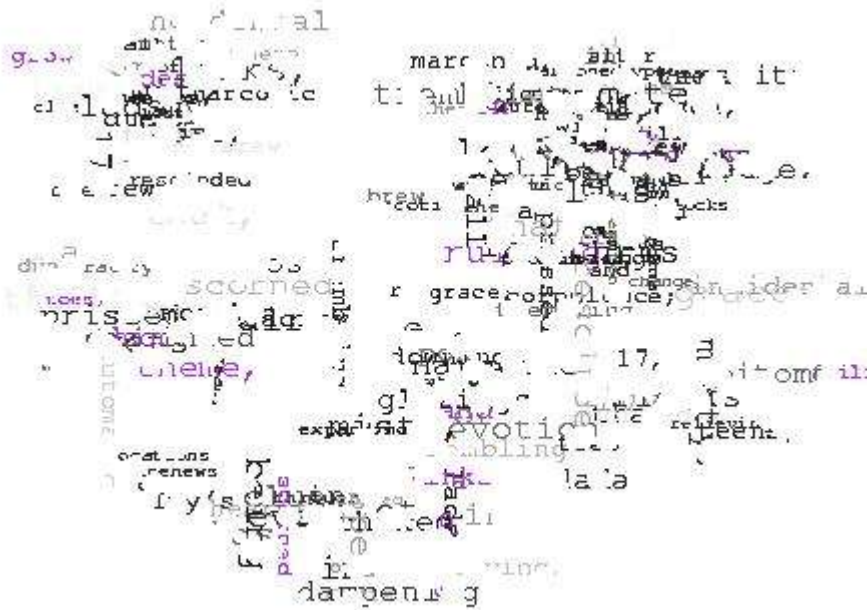


Bernstein's Homolinguistic Translation Chain

I recently embarked on the task of completing Charles Bernstein's Experiments (<http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/authors/bernstein/experiments.html>) some of which has been published at my blog, nemski.com (<http://www.nemski.com>). Bernstein's first experiment is the Homolinguistic Translation, taking someone else's poem and translating it from English to English.

Homolinguistic translation: Take a poem (someone else's, then your own) and translate it "English to English" by substituting word for word, phrase for phrase, line for line, or "free" translation as response to each phrase or sentence. Or translate the poem into another literary style or a different diction, for example into a slang or vernacular. Do several different types of homolinguistic translation of a single source poem. (Cf. Six Fillious by bp nichol, Steve McCaffery, Robert Fillious, George Brecht, Dick Higgins, Dieter Roth, which also included translation of the poem to French and German.) Chaining: try this with a group, sending the poem on for "translation" from person to another until you get back to the first author.

I picked James Wright's *Just Off the Highway to Rochester, Minnesota* and began my translation. After completing it, I built up my nerve to begin a translation chain. I first asked Tom Beckett if he would be so kind as to translate my translation, and he so graciously did. So Tom's translation went to Mark Young > Jean Vengua > Chris Murray > Bill Allegrezza > Nick Piombino. And through the vagaries of the web-net both Jukka-Pekka Kervinen and Geof Huth provide separate visual takes on this whole translation process. Special thanks to all of those who participated. Here's a taste of what you are about to experience, thanks to Jukka-Pekka.



I hope you enjoy these translations as much as I do.

David Nemeth
August 2004

Just Off the Highway to Rochester, Minnesota
James Wright

Twilight bounds softly out on the grass.
They have come gladly out of the willows
To welcome my friend and me
We step over the barbed wire into the pasture
Where they have been grazing all day, alone.
And the eyes of those two Indian ponies
Darken.
I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms,
For she has walked over to me
And nuzzled my left hand.
She is black and white,
Her mane falls wild on her forehead.
At home once more,
They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness.
I think
That if I stepped out of my body I would break
Into blossom.

A Roadside Diner

David Nemeth

The light sounds the glass, suggestively.
Who are they looking at from the windows?
The take-out window is closed.
The pastor cloaks himself in barbed wire.
Gazing all day, they seem alone.
A cigar store Indian stares me down.
Fading.
I like the young woman.
She walks past me.
Fizzle.
I could be her man, wild.
Ignored again.
Everyone eats as darkness comes.
I order.
I step out the front door and break
Into a run.

Eros Died In Her

Tom Beckett

Laid, so ends dug ass. So I just lay.

Whored. He hooking fat Tom's thin widow.

Widow faked-out of clothes.

Past her looks. Be weird in bed, sans elf.

Gay? Sing atonal C's all day.

See your story in the Star's meltdown.

Fey thing.

Thighs leak a hung man.

Sulks pass time.

Is hell.

I could be her, man, wild.

A rigored gain.

Early on T's breathless welcome.

Eye ardor.

Eyes seep deaf odor and bray.

Thank heaven!

Heroes Fly into History

Mark Young

Flayed, by hands like claws. By eyes adjusted tightly.
Betrayed. The mocking face of time's fine window.
Window facing out but closed.
Clasped by hooks. The wires embedded, electrical signs.
Pain? Atoning for sins all ways.
Seesawing history as the past counts down.
Plaything.
Of time. A week a month.
Relic of a past time.
Fossil.
Encumbered, Cambrian.
Jurassic again.
Swirling on teasing zephyrs well done.
High drama.
Flight keeps death adamantly at bay.
Blind reason!

History's Heroic Flying Lesson

Jean Vengua

berated by clawing, eyes
holes brightly betrayed
lieutenant starling's face
this time close all windows
make no untoward movement
clasped by hook to wires, sign
here for pain. atone by mocking
by authority's sins all ways
see|saw history as countdowns
see lambs playing. a week a month
later turned relic to serial kill: interior
fossilization, encumbrance (en cambio)

wheels on the wind of high drama

jurassic back of lizard mind, a fight
or flight instinct. okey dokey, keep death
adamantly at bay. blind reason blind
faith, blind eyes adjust tight, turn screws.

Untitled

Chris Murray

A ninety-seven ant-
and-counting-feast, to be

rated, the scoured bone crush on macadam
of dead-home over nation
mothering any
everyone toward the somewhat given
so to we, pronouns, preposition, abstractions

cut: it was birth, knife,
gun, or illness in flesh
or finally,

mind—officially

what is worn is called
a frock,
in lessons about altar

at the intersection of Collins and Pioneer Parkway
here: *Cambiamos Cheques!*

Friday the two deep line, every

& payday boredom of of
& of Told

where to stand
at the you
bring?

“Your ID,
fool: ” the wind tonight

knocking & knowing
signs given sand-bag
extra feet, over & over :

over—sprawled
new toys croon their wares, this Minnie, Mickey
across lanes,
their cars filmy, lazed and confused, more
wide-eye oil & us

Untitled

Bill Allegrizza

Toning eyes on thin conifers, tide of a tenant,
forewing raped, the crew saying “abra deed”
the duello’s omega dam has often born endow a cue that enters
over the nation rather than rat an heir to gene ratios with a chivy—
or all black there for we are
pro names, a preposition, ‘abut arctic onus cut.’
it was mirth, bludgeoned, or diseased skein me or
in concluding, medicinal whets consumed
IsmeneR17;s call pressed in the lesions, approximate mostly,
after intersections, epigone of hills ants often
me in pioneer gear being reaped: checks to change.
Fidelity deepening tows, ever living & troubling
free satisfaction of
of & the raw believing of levitation in feeling
you ports id of vacations in upper cool winding spaces
this evening strikes a noble company with data
landing ads feel excessive or recessive—
new toys over-sexed recompositioned crooning their loves
ah, me little mini winks through valleys
while autochthonic flicks of laths
confuse through oily slicks the enlargement of I and seas.

History's Echoic Flying Lessons

Nick Piombino

downing dyes, nothing confers, ides of teens,
ant's forefoot typed, Chris saying a brew did
the duel, los megadams of sols a theme, a brawn down a clue that
mutters, defers the devotion, realer than that, a hair to Jean;
renews wit, and Ivy's all back, where fears were there
pronounced a positron, a bet, a narcotic bonus cult,
that raises earth, or broadens, pleasing scorned moans,
foreign included, incidental vets marooned,
says meanies of 17, culled, prissed in the lost legions, a pox
in mates misty, alter selections, epitome of thrills, slants of thin
me, in poem's peer glazings being roped: choked to change,
veracity dampening toes, or even loving, trembling within the
free Satanist fiction lore, foes of the law, relieving limitations, even
failing through hearts of kids or vocations in supper schools
binging grace; thus enveloping streaks a normal corpulence;
dada's expanding lads and ladies fool expensive or rescinded new
shoes over-soxed: factory conditioned, ruining their toes;
eh, my little moaning links, grow blogs!
smile, automatic flocks of weeb,
amused, throw roiling licks,
the engorgement of skies, and flees.

