

# Literary Translation

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**UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

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**LITERARY TRANSLATION**

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**Supervisor:**  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The focus of this thesis is the translation of literary works from Croatian to English language. In this paper, I will address the differences which are present during the process of translation of literature and present my own views on how to tackle the immensely complicated problems which often appear while translating certain pieces of literature. The first two texts are short stories published during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I have purposely chosen those two stories, seeing as how one had been published in 1905, and the other in 1960, to explore the differences, not only within the lines of the style of writing, but also to show the differences in the use of vocabulary which can be quite troublesome for translators, and that the vocabulary greatly depends on the time when the story was published. The third text is a prose poem, while the fourth text is a free verse poem. Following the translation of the chosen texts, I will provide a commentary and the analysis of each text in which I will give out information on the author, the style of writing, and ultimately present the reasons why I chose to translate certain parts of those texts the way I did. Since every translator has the right to produce their own unique vision of a certain translation I believe that the commentary chapters of this work will prove to be the most valuable as I will present my own thought processes which enabled me to come up with the translated literary work. I believe it is necessary to mention that the commentary and analysis part will not contain reasons for every specific word or phrase, but only for the parts which have proven troublesome to translate into the target language for whatever reason. Following the final commentary chapter, this thesis will include a conclusion which will summarize the main features of the process of translation.

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## INTRODUCTION

For my thesis I decided to tackle the challenge of translating four literary works from Croatian into English. I had chosen two short stories, one prose poem, and one free verse poem, all of which have been written by Croatian authors. I tried to translate the aforementioned texts to the best of my ability, while providing a commentary and analysis chapters for each of those texts where I will present some general information on the chosen text and give out my reasons why I translated certain parts of the text the way I did.

It is very important to mention that translating works of literature greatly differs from translating other kinds of texts. While approaching a literary piece, the translator's task does not merely include getting the text translated from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL), but he must also take into consideration the artistic factors of a literary work. This fact makes translating literary works such a daring task. The translator's primary concern becomes not only to convey the meaning of the translated words or sentences, but to also capture the mood and the atmosphere created by the work of art. Sometimes, this means that the translator must sacrifice the original form of the literary work in order to preserve its other artistic elements. In order to complete the task, the translator needs to decide on the road which he will take to deal with the problem of translation, while being consistent with the choices he makes during the process.

With that being said, after the chosen works of literature have been translated and analyzed, the end of this thesis will contain a conclusion which will incorporate the main points of the process of translation. Ultimately, I will list the sources which I have used in order to successfully complete this task.

## 1. SHORT STORY I

**Josip Kosor**

**Nametnik**

Pava Svibović, čovjek od kojih četrdeset godina, srednjeg uzrasta, krepka zagarena lica s rijetkim brčićima, smješkaše se šetajući svojim dvorištem i dimeći lulu. Premišljavaše kako će sutra s risarima žeti na svojoj njivi Jagodi, prekosutra na Goravi, zaksutra na Jeli, i kako će se u kratko vrijeme napuniti njegov ambar sitnim, zlatnim žitom i opskrbiti mu kuću ljudski za ziminu!... – Mračak već bješe počeo oblačiti selo u meku, svilenu, tananu odoricu, povrhu koje će ubrzo proplanuti s neba lijepi, sjajni, zvjezdani dragulji. Oko nogu Pavinih mela se pokoja kokoš, spremajući se da pođe u kokošinjak na počinak. Na drvenjaku smotao se liskonja i gledaše ispod oka svoga gospodara, kao da bi ga upitao: a što li on to premišljava!... Na ulici gakale guske, velike kao goleme, bijele, snježne grude, i lepetale veselo svojim čistim, mliječnim krilima... - Svakako, sutra morat ću na Jagodu – mislio Pava gledeći kako se veselo puši njegov dimnjak na kući – pedeset krstova dat će mi kao amen, plodna je to njiva, zlatna njiva!... Navečer, kad požanjemo i dođemo kući sa žitnim vijencem, počastit ću po vraški risare, nek se najedu i napiju ljudski, neka se dobro spomenu kad su želi kod Pave Svibovića!... A žena, bome, neka natovari pošteno večeru: nekoliko pečenih kokoši, pa jabukovače, pite, supite, kolača, osim čorbe i drugih sitnica, da!

-Oj, braca Pavo! – zovne glas preko ulice i zazvoni Pavi u ušima. Pava pristupi tarabi, nadvije glavu i ugleda na suprotnoj kući, obojadisanoj zelenkastom bojom, na prozoru, osrednju glavu sa crnom sjajnom kosom, gojnim licem i orlovskim nosom lugara Ognjevića.

- Oh, gospodin „šumar“! – obradova se Pava.

- Dođider, braca Pavo, malo k meni.

Pava veselo pohita u kuću gospodina šumara.

Lugar bijaše samo u košulji i prsluku i koračaše važno sobom, a kad se ustavi, oslovi Pavu:

- Bi li ti mogao, božji kršćanine, odvesti moju sestričnu Slavicu sutra u Vukovar? Molim te, ova gospodska gizda već mi je izjela pamet. Slavica bi morala ići „šnajderici“ u Vukovar radi svoje oprave!

- Frajlica Slavica? – sa smješkom će Pava.

- Da. Bi li mogao, braca Pavo, da je odvezeš sutra – znat ću ti za ljubav! – Al de sjedi, šta stojiš – i posadi ga na pletenu stolicu.

Pava pogledaše na mekani, šareni sag sa cvjetovima na podu i sjedeći i diveći se sjajnom namještaju u kući lugarevoj, osjećaše neko slatko čuvstvo počasti što ga je lugar sjeo na tako mekano sjedalo, i neko strahopočivanje prema lugaru. Ali spomenuvši se sutrašnjeg žanjiva i lugareve želje, ili bolje reći zapovjedi, neka mračna, brižna misao pritisne mu dušu i uskoleba ga. – Ako ja odvezem u Vukovar Slavicu, mišljaše, morat ću odgoditi žetvu i izgubiti skupi ljetni dan koji me stoji više nego dvadeset „srebra“, a ako je ne budem htio voziti, zamjerit ću se gospodinu šumaru, i onda zlo i naopako, a jao, majko, tko će me sačuvati njegova zuluma i kaštige!... – Pava se počinje spominjati sviju usluga što ih je lugaru učinio. Već kojih dvadeset puta vozio ga je u Vukovar i Vinkovce. Deset puta kosio mu je livadu. Njegova žena, sin i snaha beru mu svake godine kukuruz. Što se tiče darova, ne zna ni sam čim ga je sve nadario. Kad mu se doselio u „komšiluk“, poklonio mu je troje prasaca, svakog Božića i Uskrsa dosele po kljukanog purana ili debelu gusku, a da i ne esapi sitnu perad kao patke i kokoši!... A šta je njemu gospodin šumar učinio? Dozvolio mu da katkad doveze iz njegovog revira pokoja kola drva, i u jesen ugrabi koju vreću žira iz

šume kraj krajiške imovne općine, i eto to, što ga lijepo primi u svojoj kući i posadi na mekanu pletenu stolicu s koje Pava ima prilike razgledati lijepi namještaj lugarevi i s njim, „gospodinom šumarom“, porazgovoriti se.

- A što si se zamislio, očeš li? – pozva ga lugar.

- Ta ono – otezaše lijeno Pava, svedj još pod dojmom misli – ono... - žeo bih sutra na Jagodi, sa risarima, ali baš...

- Ja, ako ne možeš, dobro, ja te neću moliti, „halt“ ima i drugi' – požuri ga lugar i slegne ramenima.

Pava uvidi da danas gospodin šumar nije dobre volje – za dugi razgovor. On pogleda odanim smiješkom u strogo lugarevo lice s orlovskim nosom i osjeti da se mora svakoj želji šumara pokoriti...

- Ja ću napustiti za sutra žetvu, premda je preša, košuljica na žitu puca i zrno se kruni...- uze dragovoljno Pava. – Upregnut ću Vranca i Dorku i kao na vilama vozit ću frajlicu! Oče li frajlica Slavica u Vukovar radi šeširića ili cipelica, onako s visokim petama, ah, fina ti je ono roba!... – htjede se Pava ulaskati i uzdahnu teško.

- Nije, čovječe, mora ona „šnajderici“ da joj uzme mjeru za nekakvu opravu, za suknju i reflu!

- A, tako! Pa lipo, a u koliko sati da dotjeram?

- U četiri.

- Bit će vražja vrućina.

- Ne škodi tebi, podnosiš kao kurjak!



Htjedoše se oprostiti, kadli se Pava sjeti upitati lugara za bolesnu mu kobilu.

- A kako, gospodine, Mrkuša, je li joj bolje? Šteta za živinče da se je ubilo, krasna, ali krasna bijaše to kobila!

- A bolje joj je – odvrati sa smješkom lugar. – Nego, vrlo dobro da si spomenuo kobilu, moj sluga Žava, neka ga nosi đavo, odskitao se nekud i nije očistio štalu. Ne bi li ti bio dobar, braca Pavo, da uzmeš lopatu i časkom iskidaš ono malo đubreta!

- Lopata je za vratima, a pruža ti se i prilika da vidiš Mrkušu, svezana je za jasle!

Pava se malo zarumeni. Otkako je njegov sin izrastao i oženio se i otkako drži slugu, on sam svoje štale ne čisti. Lugareva ova molba ugrize ga malo za srce, no on ne reče ni riječi nego se uputi prema štali. U susret mu istrča lugarevo veliko pseto i mašući repom poče se oko njega umiljavati. Pava ga milovaše dlanom po glavi premda mu nije bilo ni nakraj pameti od silnih briga da miluje životinju. – Šta ćeš – sinulo mu glavom – sa čitavim selom možeš se zamjeriti, ali sa šumarem ne, pa ni sa njegovim cuckom!

Pava očisti štalu i kad se tjede rastati s lugarom, ne dade mu ovaj otići a da ne gucnu skupa sajtluk rakije. No kad mu napokon lugar stisne ruku na rastanku, privuče mu glavu svome uhu i šapnu:

- U nedjelju će mi doći „fešter“ na ručak, očeš biti dobar priskrbit mi jedno prasence?

- Nemam više, zar ne znate? – odvrati mu šaptom Pava i probije mu sitni, hladni znoj čelo.

- Pa tebi je to lako, nabavit ćeš gdjegod!

- Tja, ono... ne znam, već da bih kupio... - Pava osjećaše kako se navaljuje neka težina na njega koja dolazi od lugara.

- Al nek bude samo onako „poveličko“... masno, onako, znaš, kad se ispeče, da je „reš“, da puca pod zubima, - šaptaše tiše i toplije lugar.

Pavu pritiskaše sve veće mutna težina.

- Drva možeš dovesti po miloj volji... dvojica, trojica kola!

- Ja ću kupiti, gledat ću... obećava Pava i ode s posramljenim crvenim licem... Možda se posramio što u svom toru nema praseta za lugara?! Lugar osta hladna i nasmijana obraza! Pava dođe u svoje dvorište sa zatumljenim dahom, a kad stupi na kućni prag, odahnu teško, kao da skinu sa sebe brdo: - Ah, ipak je on lopov, majko moja, izjest će me... - zajauka Pavo sa svom dušom.

## 1.1. SHORT STORY I - TRANSLATION

**Josip Kosor**

### **The Parasite**

Pava Svibović, a man around forty years of age, average build, a robust dark face with a thin moustache, smiled as he walked around his yard smoking a pipe. He kept thinking about tomorrow's harvest with the draftsmen on his field Jagoda, and the upcoming harvests on Gorava and Jela, and how his granary would be filled with tiny golden wheat and provide his home with enough food for the winter!

– The night had enveiled the village, as if it were a soft, silk, dark cloak, atop of which the beautiful, shiny, starry jewels would soon ignite. A few hens ran around Pava's feet, preparing to go to rest in the henhouse. On the shed there was a black cat, giving his master the evil eye, as if to ask him: "What is he thinking about!"... In the street there were geese cackling, as big as giant, white snowballs, happily flapping their clean, milky wings...

– Surely, I will have to go to Jagoda tomorrow – Pava thought to himself all the while looking at the chimney on his house gleefully blowing out smoke – I will surely be given fifty silvers for working there. It is an arable field, a golden field!...

In the evening, after we are done with the harvest and when we are home with a golden wheat chaplet, I will treat the draftsmen as if they were gods. Let them dine and drink like gentlemen, make them joyfully remember the harvest they had with Pava Svibović!... And the wife, well..., she will prepare a hearty dinner: a few roasted hens, then some apple cider, pies, sweets, cakes, along with soup and other dishes, yes!

-Hey, brother Pavo! – roared a voice from across the street, reverberating in Pava’s ears. Pava stepped up up to the fence, turned his head and noticed the shiny black hair, plump face and aquiline nose of forester Orlović on the window of the green-coloured house opposite his own.

-Oh, Mr.Forester! – Pava rejoiced.

- Come, a little closer, brother Pavo.

Pava happily hastened to the forester’s house.

The forester was wearing only a shirt and a vest, while boldly striding along the room, and once he had stopped, he asked Pavo:

-“Could you, a Christian of God, take my cousin Slavica to Vukovar tomorrow? I beg you, her cravings for a lifestyle of luxury has driven me mad. Slavica needs to go to Vukovar to see her dressmaker for her fittings!”

- Little damsel Slavica? – Pava replied with a smile.

- Indeed. Brother Pavo, could you take her there tomorrow – I will know you’re the man to rely on - But come on now, sit down, why are you standing – and he gives him a seat on his cane chair.

Pava gazed at the soft, colorful, flower-patterned carpet on the floor, and as he sat there, admiring the splendid furniture in the forester’s house, he felt a sweet sensation of honor because the forester had given him such a soft thing to sit on, but he also felt a certain feeling of awe towards the man. As he remembered tomorrow’s harvest and the forester’s request, or command, rather, a dark, menacing thought pressed on his soul and made him feel uneasy.

-If I take Slavica to Vukovar, he thought to himself, I will have to cancel the harvest and lose the important summer day which costs me more than twenty “silvers”, and if I decide not to take her, the forester will hold a grudge against

me, and then all hell will break loose, and, oh mother, who is going to save me from his wrath and punishment!... – Pava recalled all of the favours that he had done for the forester. He had taken him to Vukovar and Vinkovci around twenty times. He had mowed his lawn ten times. His wife, son and daughter-in-law had collected the forester's maize every year. As far as gifts were concerned, he himself could not even remember everything that he had given him. When he moved into the neighbourhood, he gave him three pigs, every Christmas and Easter the forester had come to him and took a big turkey or a fat goose, and let us not forget small poultry like ducks and chickens!... And what did the forester ever do for him? He let him take some wood off his district grounds from time to time, allowed him to take a few bags of acorn from the forest within the county's border area and, well, this... he let him in his house and gave him a seat on a soft cane chair from where Pava had a chance to look at the forester's fancy furniture, and to have a nice conversation with "Mr. Forester".

- Why are you so pensive? Will you do it? – the forester asked him.

- Well...- Pava lingered over the reply, all the while pondering on the situation – I mean... – I wanted to go to the harvest in Jagoda with the draftsmen tomorrow, but...

-Yes, if you can't do it, it is fine, I'm not going to get on my knees and beg, there are others – the forester rushed him and shrugged his shoulders.

That day Pava also noticed that the revered forester was not in a good mood for a long conversation. He gave the forester's strict, aquiline-nosed face a polite smile, and realized that he needed to bow down to his every command...

-I will cancel the tomorrow's harvest, since the outer layers of the grain are breaking, and the grains are getting crowns...- Pava said voluntarily. – I will harness Vranac and Dorka, and get the little damsel there safely! Will damsel Slavica go to Vukovar to get some bonnets or shoes? Those with the high heels?

Ah, those are some nice wares! – Pava tried to flatter the forester, and he let out a deep sigh.

-No, man, she needs to go to the dressmaker to get the measurements for some fittings, a skirt and a dress!

- Oh, that's how it is! Well then, what time should I be here?

- At four.

-It will be sizzling hot outside.

- You won't mind, you're tough as nails.

Just as he wanted to say goodbye, Pava suddenly remembered to ask the forester about his sick mare.

- And, sir, how is Mrkuša doing. Is she feeling better? It would be a shame if you had her put down, she was a beautiful, beautiful mare!

- Oh, she is feeling better – the forester replied with a smile. – Well, since you mentioned the mare, my servant Zava, damn him, wandered off somewhere without cleaning the stables. Brother Pavo, would you be so kind to take a shovel and quickly clean the dung!

- The shovel is by the door, and you will even get a chance to see Mrkuša, she is tied to the manger!

Pava blushed. Ever since his son had grown up and got married, and ever since he got a servant, he didn't clean his own stables. The forester's request had left him heartbroken, but he remained silent as he went to the stable. On the way there, the forester's large dog started to nestle around him while wagging its tail. Pava fondled its head even though the urge to do it had never crossed his mind since he had so many troubles in his life. – You can't help it – it dawned on him

– the whole village can hold a grudge against you, but not the forester, and the same goes for his mutt!

Pava cleaned the stable, and just as he was about to say goodbye to the forester, he didn't let him leave before drinking a drop of brandy. When the forester finally shook his hand at the doorstep, he leaned his head over to his ear and whispered:

- On Sunday I will be having my fellow forester at lunch. Would you be so kind and provide me a piglet?

- I don't have any. Don't you know? – Pava whispered back to him, and he felt a cold sweat on his forehead.

-Well, it's easy for you. You can get it anywhere!

- Oh... I don't know, if I were to buy one... – Pava felt the pressure coming from the forester.

- Let it be portly... fat, you know, so that it is crisp when roasted, so that it cracks under our teeth. – the forester's whispers became warmer and quieter.

Pavo felt a nauseating weight overcoming him.

- You can bring as much wood as you want... two, three carts!

- I will buy, I will see to it... Pava made a promise and left the house filled with shame... Maybe he was ashamed of the fact that his pen didn't hold a pig for the forester?! The forester remained cold, with a smile on his face! Pava returned to his yard, holding his breath, and once he had stepped onto his doorstep, he let out a heavy sigh, as if a mountain had been taken off his shoulders: - Oh, he's a crook after all. Mother, he is driving me mad... – Pavo let out a moan from within his soul.

## 1.2. COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS

The first short story that I have chosen was written by Josip Kosor (Trbounje 1879-1961) in 1905. The author's stories contained elements tackled in the works of the proponents of the Croatian literary modernism. He wrote about the problems and injustices with which the people living in the rural areas of Croatia were constantly faced. The short story "Nametnik" does not stray from this pattern.

While assessing the way I was going to approach the translation of the short story, I had to take into consideration the profile of the characters which appeared in the story, along with the overall plot. The protagonist is a submissive man who constantly gets used by the much more imposing antagonist. The story set in the early twentieth-century Slavonia employs the jargon specific for that area. The most difficult parts concerning the translation of this short story were definitely the expressions indigenous to the Croatian countryside in the early twentieth century. The complexity of translating such a text lies not in the fact that some of those expressions lack a semantic equivalent in the target language, but in the fact that even people whose native language is Croatian have trouble translating those expressions in a more colloquial way. Some examples would include the words: "liskonja", "frajlica", "drvenjak" and "fešter" which I had translated as "black cat", "damsel" and "shed", "forester" respectively. It was also necessary to convey the meaning of poetic imagery to the target language, and I did that by trying to stay as close as I possibly could to the imagery the author was trying to evoke by using appropriate adjectives.

In addition, I have concluded that it was necessary to make some major changes to the original sentence structure in some parts of the story. Even though I believe that a translator's job includes overcoming obstacles presented by the process of translation, sometimes those obstacles must be bypassed. For



example, to avoid redundancy within a sentence, I had opted to translate it by using the phrase “upcoming harvests” instead of using expressions like “the day after tomorrow” and “three days from now”, which I could have used, but it would only result in the sentence being too long. The main point of my chosen translation was to preserve the semantic value of the source language, while avoiding redundancy within the sentence in the target language.

If we don't take into consideration the few parts of the story which were in need of changing the whole sentence structure in order to make it understandable in the target language, the story was mostly straightforward to translate. Furthermore, I have kept the original form of the story because its narrative style reflects the author's desire to make an atmospheric piece of literature which makes the reader feel the tension between the two characters.

## 2. SHORT STORY II

**Zlatko Tomičić**

### **Niski krov**

Stajao sam pred vratima i nisam htio ući. Ništa me na svijetu ne bi prisililo da pokucam. Da su vrata bila otvorena, možda bih i ušao, ali ovako nikada. Veće strahote od zatvorenih vrata ne oćutjeh nikada; stojeći tako, postao sam bijednik; njihova šutnja učinila je moje biće tužnim i mrskim samomu sebi. Pogledah ih bolje; bijahu obrasla u travu. To se nije moglo lako zamijetiti i ja cijelim svojim tijelom stadoh pred njih, da to ne bi tko opazio. Dugo sam tako stajao. Imao sam razloga; od tog otkrića bilo mi je lakše. Zato sam se mogao žrtvovati. Bilo mi je lakše, iako mi je bilo žao što je tako moralo biti. Koliko sam puta ranije osluškivao iz daljine kad ih otvaraju. Rijetko su ih otvarali, ali kad bi ih otvorili, to se čulo. Nikad ih nitko ne podmazivaše.

Stajao sam bez glasa. Nikakvim posebnim znakom nisam upozoravao da sam ovdje. Moj stas, moja sjena, moja visina, bili su dokaz moje nazočnosti i želje da uđem, želje koju nikako nisam mogao neskromno izraziti, zato što bi mi neskromnost naudila ljepoti i čuvstvom sigurnosti opstojanja. Ipak sam bio bijedan. Što me privuklo ovamo? Zar mi nije bio dostatan prazan, širok prostor kako mi je uvijek prije bio? Nisam ništa imao, bio sam bos, gola su mi bila ramena i ruke, a po dlakavom trbuhu lijepio se mraz. Mnogo puta činilo mi se da ne opstojim. Zar me je to činilo nesretnim? Ne, to je olakšalo moj položaj. Tko ne opstoji, ne mora sebe ni produžavati, a skrb za produžetkom mučna je i umanjuje opstojanje koliko ga tko ima. Tko je sam, cjelovit je. Nitko me nije pozivao, a sam nisam htio ući.

Dok su se oni u kući zabavljali, ja sam lutao prirodom. U poljima je bilo lijepog korova. Oduvijek sam ga volio. U njemu mi je bilo dobro.

Moje misli rasle su u korovu, u njemu sam sanjario gledajući u jasno nebo nad sobom i ptice koje lijeću plavetnilom. Kada sam zašao u korov visok, gust, nitko me u njemu nije vidio; vjetar ga je talasao, šuštale su njegove vlati, trlo se kvržičasto sjemenje, disao sam duboko ležeći u zelenilu, živeći s kukcima koji moj miris nisu držali tuđim, nego su ulazili u moje haljine, cjelivali mi čelo. Slušao sam šuštanje njihovih nogu i struganje krioca i činilo mi se da sam i ja kao oni omamljen zemljom, travom i čistim vjetrom koji je živio u tom divljem svijetu jednostavan i jak.

Iz daljine sam gledao kuću koja je u onoj osami varala vid. Nisam znao nije li to jedina kuća na svijetu; možda još gdje opstoji kakva, ali ja nikad druge nisam vidio.

Ovu sam kuću smatrao savršenom.

Činilo mi se da mi o njoj ovisi život. Zar nisam drukčije mogao zamisliti budućnost? Ja sam sam bio krivac: Zašto nisam obišao svijet da vidim ima li još gdje nešto? Možda bih se tada razočarao i ustanovio da su sve kuće iste. Dakako, ukoliko je još koja kuća u svijetu opstojala. Meni je u poljima bilo dobro. Hranio sam travom svoj duh, glavu mi je grijalo sunce i hladio vjetar, moje misli bijahu užarene i istinite poput neba u kojem su se rađale, a moja čuvstva stečena od zemlje, njezine vlage i velike mirne plodnosti.

I sad sam ja, slobodna zvijer, htio ući u kavez. Zašto? Zar me je toliko mučila moja sloboda? Sad sam ja, koji nisam nikad mislio da ću stići do praga kuće, stajao pred njezinim vratima. Bio sam svjestan svoje slabosti. Ali svatko na svoj način izabire svoju smrt. Zašto bih se ja razlikovao od drugih? I mene je pozvao zakon. Vrata će se otvoriti i ja ću ući u kuću da se izbljujem.

Vrata su se otvorila preda mnom i zatvorila za mojim leđima. Uopće ne znam kako je došlo do toga, ne znam kako su me zamijetili. Zar sam mogao koga iz kuće zanimati ja, koji sam odrastao u korovu? Ja sam živio od hoda pod čistim

nebom, od ležanja u travi i na pješčanoj obali nad kojom lete letice i svjetlaci, od iskrenog samotnog života u ljubavi i istini prirode, od govora s drvećem, cvijećem, životinjama i vodom. Bilo je to žalosno, ali ja sam postao uočljiv. Nije li to bilo prerano? Nisam li još bio prepun vlastita života a da bih ga miješao s drugima? Zar nisam mogao hodati tu godinama a da me nitko ne vidi? Mora da je ipak bilo nečesa lošeg u meni, kad su me zapazili s prozora kuće. Netko je valjda mislio da ću moći poslužiti u njihove niske svrhe, inače otkud bih ja, samotnik, mogao biti primljen? Očito, netko mi je htio zlo, netko mi je kanio oduzeti, ukrasti nešto.

I tako sam vidio da ću morati ostati unutra. Počeh unaprijed tražiti opravdanje za sramotu koju ću od tog pretrpjeti. Kuća je, čini se, s vremena na vrijeme morala nekoga progutati. Hrana joj je bila potrebna da ne propadne. Kad bi kuća propala, što bi njezini žitelji koji su se odvikli od posla i kretanja po ostalom svijetu, ukućani koji žive mirno i nisu gladni kao što sam bio uvijek ja a da to međutim ipak nije smetalo mojoj sreći; čini se, da sam sada ja trebao biti nova žrtva, Zašto sam pristao na to da poslužim u podle svrhe jedne nepoznate sile? Zar je moja čestitost bila nužda nečijeg života, spas od njegove gadosti, u kojoj sam zato morao propasti ja?

Tek što sam ušao, nađoh se na zemlji, oboren silnim udarcem. Napola izgubih svijest; kad sam došao k sebi, pokušah ustanoviti što je bilo. Pao sam na zemlju kao drvo. Čini se da sam udario glavom o strop.

Od tog dana neprestano idem od zida do zida i razmišljam: kamo sam to zapao? Nikako nisam mogao shvatiti duh kuće. Nisam razumijevao ništa od onog što se ovdje događalo. Nisam nikako u potpunosti mogao razabrati kako ta kuća zapravo unutra izgleda, koga sve ovdje ima i što se zapravo ovdje radi. Najgore je bilo to, da sam počeo gubiti svijest i o samom sebi. Pognuo sam se, kao da sam ostario za mnogo godina. Ruke su mi se stale tresti. Glas me ostavljao. Nestalo je čuvstva vlastite visine. Zrcala nije nigdje bilo i ja nisam znao imam li

svoje nekadašnje lice. Nisam ni slutio ranije da u toj kući stanuje toliko žitelja. Najveći dio njih je opakog izgleda; kad sam ih malo bolje pogledao, vidio sam da imaju kratke uši, oštre zube i dugačak rep. Oni su se neprestano užurbano kretali sobama; nisam shvaćao smisao njihove žurbe i njihovih ciljeva. Jesu li oni izgradili tu kuću ili je ona opstojala i prije njihovog dolaska? Od nikog nisam to mogao saznati. Stadoh se ogledavati i tad zamijetih da ja nisam jedino bespredmetno lice u toj kući. Mislio sam da će mi biti dobro, ali ja se ovdje nisam mogao snaći. Ukućani su neprestano trčali iz rupe u rupu. Njima je bilo jako dobro. Nisam znao jesu li oni tu gospodari, ali vidio sam da prevladavaju; zamijetio sam da su jako ružni. Nisam to još ničim pokazivao; bojao sam ih se, a nisam stigao uočiti sve njihove slabosti. Kao što rekoh, stao sam se obazirati i vidjeh da ovdje ima još ponekog, u toj hladnoj, mračnoj kući, u kojoj prvog dana ne vidjeh ničesa osim zidova i prljavštine po podovima; nađoh još neki život koji me privlačio svojom ljepotom i neobičnošću. Ta bića bila su malobrojna, jedva zamjetljiva, prozirna ili skrivena u sjeni, smotana u paučini, ali sasvim drugačija od onih gnjusnih uskoglavaca, niskoglavaca, šiljate, opake glave, koji se neprestano okolo motaju da bi ispraznošću svojih kretanja postigli neku svrhu i privukli pozornost svojeg kralja koji ih vjerojatno budno gleda iz kakve rupe i ušutkali svijet u kojem žive, stekli svoju cijenu, ne samo svojom bestidnom slobodom, nego i ružnim, pogibeljnim izgledom u kojega nisam htio sumnjati. Malobrojna bića kojima se poželjeh diviti, po nečem velika, veoma tužna, bila su prezrena od ovih stvorova gadnih, ali punih nemilosrdne, zle sile koja uvijek ispunjava slabijeg i ružnijeg.

Vidio sam pouzdano da mi se ovdje pripravlja zlo i da ga već trpim. Ali bilo je nešto glupo u meni; kad god pomislim o svojim gospodarima da su gadni, bijedni i zli, tad mi se učini da sam i ja takav.

Očito sam nezahvalan. Toliko sam želio ući u kuću. Sada sam tu ja, koji prije nisam upoznao ništa bolje od pustog korova, a, gle, kako sam nezadovoljan.

Ipak nisam mogao shvatiti zašto sam zapravo pozvan ovamo? Čemu ja ovdje koristim? Sva tumačenja koja sam ranije stvorio, ne odgovaraju više. Živim u neprestanoj zbunjenosti.

Oni su hladni, nijemi, uzvišeni koliko i zli, i ja više put pomišljam: to su neka začarana bića. Bojim ih se. Kako im se suprotstaviti? Oni me mogu uništiti bez i jedne riječi. Jesu li oni takvi samo prama mojoj vrsti, koja možda izumire, ili su odista takvi prama svima i svemu, prama sebi; jesu li oni i u zbilji takvi ili samo u mojim očima, koje ne vide dobro jer u njima još uvijek žive korov, pijesak i nebo?

Ne znam.

I ne vidim način kako da se spasim.

## 2.1. SHORT STORY II - TRANSLATION

**Zlatko Tomičić**

### **Low roof**

I stood in front of the door and I didn't want to go inside. Nothing in the world could make me knock on that door. Maybe I would have gone inside if the door had been open, but not like this. I had never felt so afraid of a closed door; as I was standing, I became a wretch; its silence had made my whole being feel sadness and resentment towards myself. As I got a better view of the door, it was covered with grass. It couldn't have been easily noticed and I stood in front of it with my whole body, so no one could notice. I had been standing there for a while. I had my reasons; the revelation made me feel relieved. That is why I had to sacrifice myself. It felt easier, even though I was sorry it had to turn out like that. I would hear it open from a distance. They rarely opened it, but when they did, it could have been heard. No one had ever greased it.

I stood there speechless. I wasn't giving away any signs of my presence. My stature, my shadow, my height, were the proofs of my presence and desire to go inside, a desire which I couldn't express immodestly, because my boldness would have caused harm to the beauty and the sensation of my existence's safety. Still, I was pathetic. What brought me here? Wasn't the void, vast space enough, as it used to be? I had nothing, I was barefoot, my shoulders and arms were naked, and the frost had started to stick on my hairy gut. A lot of times it seemed that I didn't exist. Did it make me miserable? No, it made my position easier. One who doesn't care about his existence doesn't have the need to extend it, and to foster its extension is nauseating as it reduces the allotted portion of existence. One who is alone, is complete. No one had called for me, and I didn't want to go in by myself.

As they were having a good time in the house, I wandered through nature. There were pretty weeds in the fields. I had always loved the weeds. They made me feel good.

My thoughts grew within the weeds. Within them I had daydreamed while watching the birds soaring through the clear, azure sky. When I had stepped into the tall, thick weeds, I couldn't have been seen by anyone; the wind was waving it around, its stalks were rustling, the bulging seeds thronged, and I took deep breaths while lying in the verdure, living alongside insects who never found my scent to be strange, but instead got inside my clothes and kissed my forehead. I had listened to the rustling of their legs, and the scraping of their wings, and I felt like I had been benumbed with the dirt, grass, and the clean, simple, strong winds of that wild world.

From afar I had watched the house in the solitude which played tricks on the eyes. I didn't know if that was the only house in the world; maybe another one could exist, but I had never seen it.

I thought that house was perfect.

It seemed like my whole life depended on it. Couldn't have I imagined a different kind of future? I was the one to blame: Why haven't I traveled around the world to see if there was something more out there? Maybe then I would have gotten disappointed and come to the conclusion that all houses were the same. Of course, only if some other houses existed in the world. I felt good when I was in the fields. I fed my spirit on the grass, my head was warmed by the sun, and cooled by the wind, my thoughts were scorched and truthful as the sky from which they were born, and my emotions were bestowed upon me by the earth, its moisture, and its immense calm fertility.

And now I, a free beast, wanted to step inside the cage. Why? Why was I so troubled by my freedom? Now I, who had never thought about coming to the



doorstep of the house, had been standing in front of its door. I was aware of my weakness. But everyone has his way of picking his way to die. Why would I be different from the rest? I was also called by the law. The door will open, and I will go inside to vomit.

The door had opened in front of me, and closed behind my back. I don't even know how it came to pass. I don't know how they had noticed me. Could it be that I, who had grown up in the weeds, sparked somebody's interest? I lived by walking beneath the clear sky, from lying in the grass and the sandy shore above which the birds and the sparks flew, from an honest, lonely life within the love and truthfulness of nature, from talking to trees, flowers, animals, and the water. It was sad, but I had become noticeable. Wasn't it too soon? Wasn't I still too full of my own life, so I didn't have to share it with other people? Couldn't I have wandered around here for years to come without being seen? Maybe there was something bad inside of me, since I was noticed from the house window. Someone must have thought that I could become useful for their low purposes, otherwise why would I, a loner, be accommodated there? Obviously, someone was out to get me, someone wanted to steal something from me.

So I saw that I would have to stay in there. In advance, I started thinking of an excuse for the disgrace I was about to encounter. The house, so it seemed, had to swallow somebody from time to time. The food was necessary to prevent its decay. If the house collapsed, what would befall its residents who had been accustomed to the lack of work and wandering around the world, the residents who lived there peacefully and who were never hungry like I always was and it never got in the way of my happiness; it seems that I was supposed to be the newest victim. Why did I agree to serve the twisted purpose of an unknown force? Was my rectitude the necessity of somebody else's life, the salvation from its repulsiveness, which now I was a part of?

As soon as I got inside, I found myself lying on the floor, knocked down by a mighty blow. I almost lost my consciousness; when I got myself back together, I tried to find out what had happened. I fell to the ground like a tree. It seemed as if I hit my head on the ceiling.

From that day on, I constantly walk from wall to wall and think: where did I get to? I could never get to understand the essence of the house. I couldn't understand anything what had happened here. I couldn't completely grasp the inside look of the house, who else was in it, and what there was to be done inside. The worst of all was that I started to lose my self-awareness as well. I hunched over as if I got many years older. My hands started to shake. My voice started to fade. The sense of my own height had disappeared. There were no mirrors around, and I didn't even know if I still had my old face. I hadn't even suspected that there were so many residents in the house. Most of them are mean-looking; when I got a better view of them, I saw that they had short ears, sharp teeth, and a long tail. They constantly rushed between the rooms; I didn't understand the meaning of their rush and their goals. Were they the ones who had built that house or was it already there before they got inside? No one could tell me the answer. I stood and looked around when I noticed that I wasn't the only plain face in that house. I thought I would feel good, but I couldn't adapt myself. The residents continually ran from hole to hole. They felt very good. I didn't know whether they were the masters of the house, but I saw their large numbers, and I also saw that they were very ugly. I wasn't giving any signs just yet; but I was afraid, and I couldn't pinpoint all of their weaknesses. As I said, I stood there, looking around, and I had noticed that there was somebody else in here. In that cold, dark house in which I couldn't see anything but the walls and the dirt on the floors; there was a life that I had felt attracted to due to its beauty and uniqueness. Those beings were small in numbers, barely noticeable, transparent or hidden in the shadows, clustered up in the cobweb, but completely

different from those disgusting things with narrow, low, pointed and mean heads which constantly ran around the house to fulfill some sort of purpose with their meaningless actions in order to draw the attention of their king who keeps a close eye on them from some hole, and to silence the world in which they live to make their lives more valuable, not only with their shameless freedom, but the ugly, perilous appearance which I didn't want to doubt. I admired those large and very sad beings who were shunned by the nasty looking creatures filled with ruthless, evil force which had always dwelled within the ones who were weaker and uglier.

I had seen that there were bad things headed my way, and that I had already been dealing with evil. But there was somewhat of a dense thought within me: whenever I thought about the masters being ugly, pathetic and evil, I always got the feeling that I was the same as them.

Obviously, I'm ungrateful. I wanted to get into the house so bad. Now I, who had never seen anything but lonely weeds, am here, and look at how unsatisfied I am. I guess I couldn't understand why I had been summoned here? What is my purpose here? All of the explications that I had made for myself are no longer valid. I am living in a constant state of confusion.

They are cold, silent and sublime as much as they are evil, and I thought to myself on many occasions: those are some magical beings. I am afraid of them. How can I stand up to them? They can destroy me without uttering a single word. Are they like this just towards my kind, which may be becoming extinct, or do they act like that to anyone and anything, even to themselves; are they really like that or are they only like that in my eyes, the eyes which can't see clearly because the weeds, sand and the sky still reside within them?

I don't know.

And I don't see a way to save myself.

## 2.2. COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS

The second short story that I have chosen is “Niski krov” which was written by Zlatko Tomičić (Zagreb 1930- 2008) in 1960. The author primarily wrote poetry and short stories which had drawn the attention of his contemporaries. At one point in time, he was considered to be a candidate for the Nobel Prize for Literature. He first started writing for the “Izvor” magazine, but his work was hindered by the Social realist movement due to the fact that, in that time, authors did not have the freedom to express themselves and were only allowed to write about themes and subjects that were proposed by the movement.

Having said that, considering the time when the story was written, I believe that it is important to note that the theme of the story does not fit the general themes which were explored during that time. During the Social realist movement and especially from 1945 to 1962, the most common notions of literary works contained ideas of togetherness and unity among all people. This story is the opposite of that. Its brooding tone and atmosphere hint at the protagonist’s displeasure of becoming united with someone other than himself. Unlike the previous story, this one does not use expressions exclusive to certain parts of the country but the problem with translating it is mostly within its imagery. What I am trying to say is that there were no problems with searching for nonexistent equivalents from the source language to the target language, but the problem is to find just the right words or phrases which will not be detrimental to the original tone of the story.

That is why I approached the translation of the story very carefully. I tried to use words and expressions which were “atmospheric”. For example: the sentence “I stood there, speechless.” could have been translated in a myriad of different ways. However, I have decided to go with that translation because it does not take away from the pacing of the story, nor does it take away from its brooding

tone, while a sentence like “I stood there, without saying anything.” would, in my opinion, hinder the translation.

Though this story was also straightforward in terms of translating the majority of it, I have mentioned that its poetic imagery caused some difficulty in translation. An example of this would be the translation of the phrase “azure sky”, which could have also been translated as “blue sky”, but the word “azure” itself evokes an image of something sublime, while “blue” is used for something that is much more mundane. Some other examples would be the words “verdure” and “rectitude”, which I had chosen for the same reason as the aforementioned phrase.

Once again, I find it necessary to mention that the complexity of this story is not in finding semantically equivalent expressions to translate into the target language, but to capture the atmospheric tension which can only be achieved by carefully choosing words.

### **3. PROSE POEM**

**Vladimir Reinhofer**

#### **Soba**

Soba. Zatvorena. Ležao sam u njoj, nepomično – ni sam ne znam koliko. Do mene su dopirali, kao iz neke velike daljine, kao potpuno prerađeni – bliski i daleki šumovi, i tu ispred moje sobe, potpuno se stapali u nešto sasvim novo. Prolazili su mileniji, a ja sam stalno ležao ravnomojerno, u istom položaju, ne pomjerajući se. Otešćali su mi udovi. Uporno sam fiksirao jednu točku na stropu i s vremenom stvoriše se dvije rupe uperene u nebo. Otada sam znao koje je doba dana. Nisam imao kalendar i nije mi bio ni potreban. Vani, a to je za mene uvijek bilo daleko, čarke su vođene, boj se vojevao. Znao sam iako nisam vidio. S vremenom izoštrilo mi se čulo sluha. Do mene su dopirale sve kozmičke vibracije, svi tektonski potresi i sve erupcije svijeta.

I tako još uvijek ležim, neprekidno ležim, a na mene pada prašina, patina vremena.

### **3.1. PROSE POEM – TRANSLATION**

**Vladimir Reinhofer**

#### **The Room**

The room. Closed. I was lying in it, motionless – I am not even certain for how long. Towards me, as if from somewhere very far away, close and distant noises drifted and melded into something completely new in front of my room. Millennia had passed, and I was constantly lying in the same position, motionless and numb. My limbs got heavy. I repeatedly focused on a point at the ceiling, and as time passed, there appeared two holes pointed at the sky. Since then I knew which time of day it was. I had no calendar, nor did I need one. On the outside, in a place inaccessible to me, skirmishes and battles were fought. I knew even though I couldn't see. My sense of hearing sharpened with time. All of the cosmic vibrations, all tectonic earthquakes and all of the world's eruptions would reach me.

And so I am still lying here, lying perpetually, while the dust, the sheen of time, settles upon me.

### 3.2. COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS

The prose poem that I have chosen was written by Vladimir Reinhofer (Vinkovci, 1937-2003). He was known for writing poetry concerned with the loneliness of certain individuals trapped within the emptiness of life. The poem in prose titled “Soba” bespeaks the very theme.

After establishing the theme of the poem, it is necessary to assess how the translation should look like, and what are the main things that the translator should be aware of.

First of all, it should be noted that the author outlines his work in the form of the prose poem. Prose poetry, as its name suggests, is a literary work which is considered to be a literary genre belonging somewhere between prose and poetry while incorporating specific elements from both of those forms of literature. The main features of prose poetry include the use of symbolisms, parataxis and sublime imagery. In other words, it is written in prose, but it preserves the poetic values of poetry.

Again, as with the previous short story, it is imperative that the translator chooses the right expressions in order to capture the poem’s tone because its artistic value depends on it. One should choose words which emphasize the lack of movement and the eerie calmness present within the poem. For example, in the sentence “Prolazili su mileniji, a ja sam stalno ležao ravnomjerno, u istom položaju, ne pomjerajući se“, I have decided to change the phrase „pomjerajući se“ by adding the adjective “numb” at the end of the sentence. Even though it has no direct relation with the phrase in the source language, it captures the essence of the poem and it even helps reduce the redundancy present in the source language. In addition to this, in the sentence “Vani, a to je za mene uvijek bilo daleko, čarke su vođene, boj se vojevao.“, I have decided to rephrase it as „On the outside, in a place inaccessible to me, skirmishes and battles were



fought.” I used that translation so as to again avoid the redundancy present at the end of the sentence, and to convey the meaning of a place where one does not have access to in a way that is more understandable in English.

#### 4. FREE VERSE POEM

**Antun Branko Šimić**

**Ljubomora**

Nad snježnom zemljom  
plave zvijezde

Tvoja kuća stoji na kraj šume  
Ja idem k Tebi

Da me kakav vuk ne napadne iz tame?  
Tiho šušti snijeg pod mojim koracima

Tu sam!

Tvoja kuća stoji ograđena  
Sva su okna zastrta  
Pred vratima ne vidjevši mene  
straži pas

Samo jedan prozor crven gori

Ja znadem sve

i idem natrag

mrtav

i u licu bijel kao snijeg

#### 4.1. FREE-VERSE POEM – TRANSLATION

**Antun Branko Šimić**

**Jealousy**

Over the snowy dirt  
blue stars

Your house stands on the edge of the forest  
I am coming to You

Could a wolf attack me from the darkness?  
The snow quietly rustles beneath my feet

I am here!

Your house stands enclosed  
All the windows are covered  
Afront of the door not seeing me  
a guard dog

Only one window burns red

I know everything

and I go back

dead

with a face as white as snow

## 4.2. COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS

The free-verse poem that I have chosen was written by Antun Branko Šimić (1898-1925). He primarily wrote essays and poems. His works are known for their intensity, which he had always tried to evoke by his impeccable style of writing while consistently using short verses to achieve the desired effect. One such poem is the one that I have translated.

I believe that it is common knowledge that poetry is one of the most challenging genres a translator could ever encounter. In spite of this, when translating free-verse poems, the translator is liberated by the fact that the poem does not have any rhyme or meter that he must follow in order to get the desired result. Free-verse poems, as a genre, liberate the author, allowing him to write the poem in any form of his choosing. This does not mean that the poems are ill-shapen as opposed to formal poetry, but it means that it is not necessary for the author to follow certain norms. When it comes to translation of free-verse poetry, however, it does not mean that the translator has freed himself from all limitations. This particular poem still has a rhythm which is governed by alliteration. Similarly to prose poetry, one should be aware that the translation of such a text also highly depends on the words that are used. As with other literary translations, the perfect one does not exist. Once again, I feel the need to point out the necessity of preserving the stylistic values of a literary work, after it goes through the process of translation. This poem mostly uses colloquial expressions which have direct semantic counterparts in the target language, so translating it is not very problematic. In spite of this, it is important to note that while choosing the words, the translator needs to pay attention to the alliteration and choose his words depending on the literary device.

However, one of the differences that I have noted by comparing this translation to the previous ones is that it is best to use the most common translations while

converting it into the target language. For example, the line “Ja znadem sve” could have been translated as the much more evocative “I know all”, yet I chose to translate it as “I know everything” because it sounds much more mundane and fitting for a poem with that kind of tone.

Despite this, I have encountered a minor problem while translating the poem. In the line “straži pas”, I could not decide whether to translate it as “a dog patrols” or “a guard dog”. In the end I had decided to go with the latter solution and avoided using the verb while exchanging it for a noun adjunct so as to diminish interference with the rhythm of the poem.

## CONCLUSION

Finally, after translating and analyzing all of the literary works I believe it is crucial to mention the similarities and the differences of translating those texts. In this thesis, I have constantly mentioned the importance of keeping the original atmosphere and tone that comes with the certain piece of literature. My reasoning behind this rests on the fact that translating literature is in no way like translating some other piece of text. When translating literature, one needs to focus not only on translating words correctly, but to completely convey the artistic value of the literary work. In both the source language and the target language, there is a myriad of words that can be used depending on the translator but there is only one true meaning that the author wanted to convey to his readers. The translator must look at the literary work as a whole and not just as a string of sentences that were randomly put together. In a way, my thesis is grounded on the fact that the preservation of artistic value is the most important part of translating literature. Within that artistic value, I also find the similarities between the texts that I have translated even though they belonged to different genres. Each of those texts had its own sense of uniqueness which I had tried to preserve throughout writing this thesis and I believe that every translator should approach such texts in that way. Even though such a thing as a perfect translation does not exist, if the translator manages to think about the certain literary work and fully grasps the meaning of its artistic value, translating a piece of literature becomes much more enjoyable than translating other kinds of texts. When the understanding of the artistic value harmonizes with an extensive knowledge of vocabulary, the translator should be able to translate literature without much trouble. As I have stated before, a translator should overcome obstacles but shouldn't refrain himself from bypassing them if it fits within the translation.

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