



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Aguifreda Bay" and "The Schoolchildren" are translated by Gwen MacKeith and Sarah Maguire. "Behind the Curtain" and "Marks of Time" are translated by Tom Boll and Katherine Pierpoint. "Birds," "The Fruit-Seller's Philosophy" and "The Lonely Earth" are translated by Choman Hardi and Mimi Khalvati. "Please Bring a Token Home from Each Journey," "The Wind, Too, Can Change Direction" and "Can Someone Bring Me My Entire Being?" are translated by Nukhbah Langah and Lavinia Greenlaw. "I Woke With Your Name" is translated by David Shook. "Kudu" is translated by Martin Orwin, Maxamed Xasan "Alto" and David Harsent. "Saguia" is translated by Tom Boll and Sarah Maguire. "Sorrows of the Black City" is translated by Anna Murison and The Poetry Translation Workshop. "The Life of the Living Room" is translated by Gwen MacKeith and The Poetry Translation Workshop.

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This Chapbook is published on A5 and best viewed at 75%.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **SARAH MAGUIRE**

Introduction	5
--------------	---

### **NOSHI GILLANI (PAKISTAN/URDU)**

Please Bring a Token Home from Each Journey	6
---	---

The Wind, Too, Can Change Direction	7
-------------------------------------	---

Can Someone Bring Me My Entire Being?	8
---------------------------------------	---

### **MUHAMMAD AL-FAYTURI (SUDAN/ARABIC)**

Sorrows of the Black City	10
---------------------------	----

### **MAXAMED XAASHI DHAMAC 'GAARRIYE' (SOMALIA/SOMALI)**

Kudu	15
------	----

### **TAMARA KAMENSZAIN (ARGENTINA/SPANISH)**

The Life of the Living Room	19
-----------------------------	----

### **ZAHRA EL HASNAUI (WESTERN SAHARA/SPANISH)**

Sagua	22
-------	----

### **VÍCTOR TERÁN (MEXICO/ZAPOTEC)**

I Woke With Your Name	23
-----------------------	----

### **CORAL BRACHO (MEXICO/SPANISH)**

Behind the Curtain	24
--------------------	----

Marks of Time	25
---------------	----

### **PEDRO SERRANO (MEXICO/SPANISH)**

The Schoolchildren	26
--------------------	----

Aguifreda Bay	27
---------------	----

### **KAJAL AHMAD (KURDISTAN/KURDISH)**

The Lonely Earth	30
------------------	----

Birds	31
-------	----

The Fruit-Seller's Philosophy	34
-------------------------------	----

EDITOR'S NOTE	36
---------------	----

Bios	37
------	----



## INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to introduce to you this special chapbook featuring poems from The Poetry Translation Centre, brought to you through the dedication and hard work of the remarkable Saraba team. The guiding principle of the PTC is a radical poetic internationalism and so we were thrilled when Adebisi Olusolape contacted us in April 2011 to tell us of Saraba's desire to draw your attention to our translations. We hope this will be the first of many collaborations.

I founded the Poetry Translation Centre in 2004 (thanks to Arts Council England's generosity) with two aims. Firstly, to ginger up poetry in English through translating contemporary poetry from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Poetry always thrives through translation—think of Wyatt and Sidney bringing the sonnet into English, or Pound's astonishing *Cathay* and its enduring impact on Modernism. However, it is startlingly apparent that, despite the fact that Britain is now home to many people from all over the world, we have not yet learned from their remarkable poetic heritage. So, the second aim of the PTC is a hope that translating their poetry might be an excellent way of engaging with the countless thousands of people now settled in the UK for whom poetry is the highest art form as it is particularly, for anyone from an Islamic background, and what better way to make them feel welcome than to translate their most highly esteemed poets into English using the skills of talented linguists working closely with leading British poets (such as Jo Shapcott, Sean O'Brien, Lavinia Greenlaw and W. N. Herbert), with the additional hope that these brilliant translations might engage English-speaking audiences too and revivify an interest in translation itself?

I very much hope that this selection of our translations will encourage you to visit the PTC website where you can read hundreds more poems we have translated as well as listen to recordings made by the poets themselves reading their work. You will also be able to watch videos of their readings and see countless photographs, many featuring our events and—crucially!—our parties. We all look forward to your joining us soon.

**PLEASE BRING A TOKEN HOME FROM EACH JOURNEY**

Please bring a token home from each journey  
Along with your worn-out feet, bring butterfly wings

I am writing the story of our companionship  
If you can, please bring a noble word

I hope fidelity will not exhaust us  
That we can renew this romance

That if in some enchanted place, you are captured  
by a moonlit face, you will carve a likeness, bring it home

Your passion for travel takes you away from home  
Please do not bring back regret like dust in your pockets

It is strange air that we all breathe  
May your eyes fill when you come home

## **THE WIND, TOO, CAN CHANGE DIRECTION**

Do you know?  
The wind, too, can change direction  
The birds might leave their nests at dawn  
And forget to find their way back  
Sometimes in spring the tree branches out  
Before autumn the leaves separate  
Like the paths my life takes  
Blown this way and that like dust  
The strange smile taking shape on your lips  
Says 'So, what's new?'  
Of everything in the story, you are new  
Do you know?  
But how could you know this?  
Your encampment of love and faith  
Could blow away like dust  
The wind, too, can change direction

**CAN SOMEONE BRING ME MY ENTIRE BEING?**

Can someone bring me my entire being?  
My arms, my eyes, my face?

I am a river flowing into the wrong sea  
If only someone could restore me to the desert

Life goes on but I want no more from it  
Than my childhood, my firefly, my doll

My vision does not admit this new season  
Take me back to my old dream

Of finding one face among the many in my city  
Whose eyes can read deep into me

My life has been a boat in a whirlpool for so long  
O god, please let it sink or drift back to the desert





"I HOPE FIDELITY WILL NOT EXHAUST US...."

## **SORROWS OF THE BLACK CITY**

When night casts its net of shadows over the streets of the city  
shrouding it in grief,  
you can still see them —  
slumped in silence, staring at the cracks.  
And you think they are calm,  
but you're wrong — they're on fire!  
When darkness raises its statues of marble  
on the streets of the city  
then smashes them in fury  
then the city will lead all the people  
down the spiral staircase of the night  
into the deep distant past.  
The past with its ambergris shores  
is dreaming of memories  
too deeply to be roused.  
And inside everyone something begins to stir —  
a fresh wall made of clay,  
stuck with diamonds and desires.  
When night sleeps and day wakes  
raising its candles in the dark  
peace ebbs back to its home in the grave.  
At that, the heart of the city  
turns futile and wretched —  
it is an oven at noon, a lamp for the blind.  
Like ancient Africa, the city is truly  
an old woman veiled in frankincense,  
a great pit of fire, the horn of a ram,  
an amulet of old prayers, a night full of mirrors,  
the dance of black women, naked,  
shouting their black joy.

This coma of sins was kept alive by the master,  
ships filled with slave girls,  
with musk, ivory and saffron —  
gifts, all without joy, despatched by the winds of all ages  
to the white man of our time  
to the master of all time.

A plantation stretches out in imagination  
to clothe the naked, to loosen their clothes,  
flowing like its ancestors through the veins of life,  
dyeing the water, and dyeing God's face,  
its sorrows on every mouth  
breeding tyrants and iron and slaves,  
breeding chains, every day breeding some new horror....

And yet, on the streets of the city,  
when night constructs  
its barriers of black stone — they stretch out their hands,  
in silence, to the balconies of the future.

They are locked-up cries  
in a locked-up land.

Their memories are stab-wounds.

Their faces are sad, like the faces of the blind.

Look, there they are,  
heads slumped in silence. And you think they are calm.  
But you're wrong. Truth is, they're on fire....



"...DARKNESS RAISES IT'S STATUTES...SMASHES THEM IN FURY..."





"...WHEN NIGHT SLEEPS AND DAY  
WAKES..."

## KUDU

My father told me this story  
when I was a child. We sat  
in the shade of a tree and he began:

Long ago there lived a king  
who sprouted a pair of horns - just buds,  
at first, but he checked them every day  
and wore his turban low to hide  
this blemish, to hide this mark of shame.

But a king, of course, doesn't wash his own hair!  
His man-servant knew all about the king's shame  
and day by day the knowledge grew  
inside him, a word that had to be spoken,  
a terrible secret that had to be told.

They said, You're mistaken.  
He said, No.

They said, Dead men keep secrets.  
He said, Ah...

There were people, he knew, who would feed on such news,  
but his daily bread stuck in his throat.  
There were people, he knew, who dreamed of such news,  
but he slept on a bed of burning coals.

Then, one night, he could bear it no longer.  
He left his house, he walked out of the village,  
mile after mile in a torrent of darkness  
and came to the watering holes, where the eagle  
took flight at his footstep, where the gentle gazelle  
shied and ran. He sat by the water  
and thought, 'There was a time when such things  
could be openly said. Yes, there was a time  
when even the poor could be told the truth.'

When dawn-light shone through the trees, he dug  
with his hands, deep down, as a beast digs a den  
and placed his mouth close to the hole  
he'd made and whispered his terrible secret  
to the earth: 'King Goojaa, King Goojaa has horns.  
Horns like the kudu. The king has horns!'

Don't interrupt, my father said.  
Please don't ask me what these things mean.  
It's just a story I got from my father,  
And he from his. Do you want to know  
how it ends? Then listen: when the man told his tale  
to the earth, the burden left him, it went  
underground, and the man, why, he brushed himself down  
and went on his way. And this is the strangest  
part of the story: that even today,  
when the soft rain falls on that place in the bush,  
that very same place where he planted his secret,  
horns like the kudu's grow from the ground.





"...HE COULD BEAR IT NO LONGER."



"...THE BURDEN LEFT HIM..."

## THE LIFE OF THE LIVING ROOM

Tired  
with my eyes closed  
I aim at the centre of a moving target  
at those beatles in the grooves  
from the old days  
at the stylus that stores and couples  
the chords  
in the dark heart of the record.  
You were that face  
revolving below  
your lunatic eyes at a loss  
making the record skip  
and on your other side  
my harrowed ear  
    listening.  
A shell - inside  
a rippling tinny sound  
like days churned up  
that grew with us  
    the kids  
from the steamer  
aboard the ship of music  
towards which country at which checkpoint  
the border of age  
awaited us.



"...THAT COUPLE  
WHO SUNK..."



**SAGUIA**

*To that childhood companion, always present at a distance, my river Saguia.*

They say  
the night takes possession  
of your indigo,  
violet and cobalt hues.  
That, in your lap,  
all the kisses of salt  
dry up.

They say  
the wind's sonata  
takes flight  
as a symphony  
of crazy sounds  
orchestrated  
by astonishment

It has never known  
the darts  
of the snake

I will return  
wrapped in a cloak  
of red stars

I will return  
to mend  
the bitter waters

To die and be reborn  
in the heart  
of the Atlantic

## **I WOKE WITH YOUR NAME**

I woke with your name stuck in my throat.  
If my hands would say what I dreamed last night  
I would certainly see God lower his view.  
The termite labors at night  
like an experienced thief.  
And in the air my languid face hangs  
with a light trembling of lips.

Nothing exists in this house that I do not know  
but even so my heart trembles  
like a child running around with a dog.  
I bite the feet of my understanding  
so that its clumsiness will wake up.  
Meanwhile a flock of rooks  
lifts into flight, slowly, from the empty field of my soul.

It's night and the moon is covered.  
The humidity suffocates the black sheet of the sky.  
If I had known I was dreaming  
I would not have let go of your hands.  
If I had known I was dreaming  
I would have hugged you strongly  
so you wouldn't leave.  
A pain rises up my throat  
and appropriates my heart.

In what place do your large, beautiful eyes walk about,  
in what place your lips.  
Does anything of mind still  
exist within your heart?  
Is it true that you'll forget  
all that we were?

I woke with your name stuck in my throat.

## **BEHIND THE CURTAIN**

Behind the curtain there is a world of calm,  
behind that thick green  
is sanctuary,  
profound hush.  
An unsullied realm, its silence.  
From that flowing vision  
of another world,  
from that other reality's diaspora of sounds; from that other time,  
enmeshed, they are calling me.



## MARKS OF TIME

Between wind and dark,  
between a rush of joy  
yet deepest calm,  
between my lovely white dress flying  
and the dark, dark hole of the mine,  
are my father's eyes, so gentle, waiting; his dancing  
happiness. I go to meet him. This is a land  
of little stars, of pyrite crystals,  
wherever it's touched by the sunset. Clouds  
of quartz, and flint, up high. His bright gaze,  
all-embracing,  
has the warmth of amber.  
He lifts me up into his arms. He comes in close.  
Our one shadow drifts over to the edge of the mine. He puts me down.  
He gives me his hand.  
The whole way down  
is just one joy, in silence:  
one dark warmth,  
one richness, aglow.  
Something in that quietness holds us under its wing, it protects  
and uplifts us,  
very softly,  
as we go down.

## THE SCHOOLCHILDREN

Like leaves startled by a gust of wind  
they peel away from the tight-knit group,  
one child, two, another, more,  
taking flight, ruffling up the street,  
blown into it, propelled into merging,  
unravelling the throng,  
then seeking it again, and falling into place.  
Magnetism drives them apart, then pulls them together,  
spilling them into the street,  
then dragging them back again. Strange  
how they take shape, becoming themselves.  
As though consciousness demands pursuit.  
They are sought out, touched, gathered in.  
Nothing happens, till they face  
an obstacle, one by one.  
Two or three have made it,  
two or three more begin to pull away,  
until energy becomes infectious  
and their 'crocodile' dissolves,  
reassembles,  
and they cross the road in line. A wisp  
is left behind, an enveloping tenderness,  
summoning the stragglers, making them realise  
the others have gone, the group  
is over there now. All  
as easy as a breeze,  
softly, like a pattern  
they come together once again  
and are still.

## **AGUIFREDA BAY**

At the bottom of the cliff they pile up -  
solid and lumpen,  
the rocks that have been falling,  
slipping down without reaching the sea,  
the sea that bellows and smokes, breaking below.  
In thousands of years,  
you tell me from our vantage point above,  
all this will be sand.  
As we looked at the inlet  
suddenly our perspective widened  
and everything reversed -  
we became infinitely tiny,  
as though we were dwelling inside those gigantic boulders.  
At the foot of the cliff we considered  
the granular movements of sand,  
the flotsam and jetsam,  
and we took shelter in any one of those pebbles.  
Shrinking, we felt the rough grain of the rocks,  
a wall from which the sandstone is loosened,  
the outline of ourselves.  
Fractures and faultlines of the accretions of minerals -  
this is what we are.  
The detritus of shadows, the seams of grey,  
begin to glimpse themselves in the sky.  
Drawing breath once more brought back the pines,  
the coastline, a path.



"...YOU TELL ME FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT ABOVE  
ALL THIS WILL BE SAND  
AS WE LOOKED AT THE INLET..."



"...THOSE GIGANTIC BOULDERS..."

## THE LONELY EARTH

Neither do the white bodies of the universe  
say good morning to her  
nor do the handmade stars  
give her a kiss.

Earth,  
where so many roses, fine sentiments are buried,  
could die for want of a glance, a scent,  
This dusty ball is lonely,  
so very lonely,  
as she sees the moon's patched clothing  
and knows that the sun's a big thief  
who burns with the many beams he has taken  
for himself  
and who looks at the moon and the earth  
like lodgers.

## BIRDS

According to the latest classification, Kurds  
now belong to a species of bird  
which is why, across the torn, yellowing pages  
of history, they are nomads spotted by their caravans.  
Yes, Kurds are birds! And even when  
there's nowhere left, no refuge for their pain,  
they turn to the illusion of travelling  
between the warm and the cold climes  
of their homeland. So naturally,  
I don't think it strange that Kurds can fly.  
They go from country to country  
and still never realise their dreams of settling,  
of forming a colony. They build no nests  
and not even on their final landing  
do they visit Mewlana to enquire of his health,  
or bow down to the dust in the gentle wind, like Nali.\*

-

\* Refers to the famous line from the 17th century poet, Nali, "I sacrifice myself to your dust -  
you gentle wind!/Messenger familiar with all of Sharazoor!"



"...NOR DO THE HANDMADE STARS  
GIVE HER A KISS."





"...A SPECIES OF BIRD..."

## THE FRUIT-SELLER'S PHILOSOPHY

My friend! You were like an apricot.  
At the first bite,  
I spat out the core and crux.

\*

My old flame! Sometimes  
you're a tangerine,  
undressing so spontaneously,

and sometimes you're an apple,  
edible  
with or without the peel.

\*

Neighbour!  
You're like a fruit knife.  
There's never a time  
when you're not  
at our dinner table.  
But forgive me if I say -  
you're a waste of time.

\*

Dear homeland, you're like a lemon.  
When you are named,  
the world's mouth waters  
but I get all goosepimply.

\*

You, stranger!  
I'm sure you're a watermelon.  
I won't know what you're really like  
till I go through you like a knife.



"...YOU'RE A TANGERINE,  
UNDRESSING SO SPONTANEOUSLY..."

At the time of publication, the website of The Poetry Translation Centre [[www.poetrytranslation.org](http://www.poetrytranslation.org)] features 241 poems written in 22 different languages by 54 poets from 29 countries. All poems are published in translation and in their original language. You can also download podcasts in ten different languages and PDF files of 12 bilingual chapbooks. Hundreds of photos and videos of the PTC's events are also available, as are many fascinating articles about translating with the PTC.

## POETS

**CORAL BRACHO** is a poet from Mexico who writes in Spanish. She was born in Mexico City in 1951. She has published six books of poems: *Peces de piel fugaz* [*Fish of Fleeting Skin*] (1977), *El ser que va a morir* [*The Being that is Going to Die*] (1981), *Tierra de entraña ardiente* [*Earth of Burning Entrails*] (in collaboration with the painter Irma Palacios, 1992), *La voluntad del ámbar* [*The Will of Amber*] (1998), *Ese espacio, ese jardín* [*That Space, That Garden*] (2003), and *Cuarto de hotel* (2007). She is also a translator of poetry and has been a member of the Sistema Nacional de Creadores since 1994.

**KAJAL AHMAD** is a poet from Kurdistan who writes in Kurdish. She was born in Kirkuk in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1967, Kajal Ahmad began publishing her remarkable poetry at the age of 21. She has published four books: *Benderî Bermoda* (1999), *Wutekanî Wutin* (1999), *Qaweyek le gel ev da*, (2001) and *Awênem şikand*, (2004). She has gained a considerable reputation for her brave, poignant and challenging work throughout the Kurdish-speaking world. Her poems have been translated into Arabic, Turkish, Norwegian and now, for the first time, into English.

**MAXAMED XAASHI DHAMAC "GAARRIYE"** is a poet from Somaliland/Somalia who writes in Somali. He was born in Hargeysa in 1949 where he still lives. He attended school in Sheikh in Somaliland and then graduated in biology at the Somali National University, following which he worked as a teacher for several years. As a keen poet and literary scholar also he later worked at the Academy of Culture in Mogadishu and then as a lecturer in Somali literature at National University. Since the 1970s Gaarriye has been universally regarded as one of the most important Somali poets composing on a great variety of topics from nuclear weapons to Nelson Mandela. A poet who has never been afraid to engage in the politics of Somalia through his poetry, he was the initiator of one of the largest 'chain poems' 'Deelley' to which many poets contributed, each one alliterating in 'd' - hence the name of the chain. In addition to his poetry, Gaarriye was the person who first articulated the metrical patterns of Somali poetry, which he published in 1976 in a number of articles in the national newspaper of the time. This work was invaluable and a major intellectual achievement.

**NOSHI GILLANI** is a poet from Pakistan who writes in Urdu. She was born in Pakistan in 1964. Her fifth collection of poems: *Ay Meeray Shureek-E-Risal-E-Jaan, Hum Tera Intezaar Kurtay Rahey* (*O My Beloved, I Kept Waiting for You*) was published in Pakistan in 2008. The candour and frankness of her highly-charged poems is unusual for a woman writing in Urdu and she has gained a committed international audience, performing regularly at large poetry gatherings in Pakistan, Australia, Canada and the US.

**PEDRO SERRANO** is a poet from Mexico who writes in Spanish. He has published five collections of poems: *El miedo (Fear)* México El Tucán de Virginia, 1986; *Ignorancia (Ignorance)* México El Equilibrista, 1994; *Tres poemas (Three poems)* Caracas Pequeña Venecia, 2000; *Turba (Peat)* Ediciones sin Nombre, Mexico, 2005; and *Desplazamientos (Displacements)*, Editorial Candaya - Candaya Poesia 5 (2007). His latest collection of poems, *Nueces* was published in 2009. Pedro Serrano was awarded a Guggenheim Poetry Fellowship in 2007. He teaches in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City. He is editor of UNAM's highly-regarded poetry website, *Periodico de Poesia*

**TAMARA KAMENSZAIN** is a poet from Argentina who writes in Spanish. She was born in Buenos Aires in 1947. Having abandoned her degree in philosophy, she began work as a journalist. She edited the independent magazine, 2001 before becoming editor of the cultural pages of the newspapers *La Opinion* and *Clarín*. In 1972 Kamenszain received the poetry prize of the National Arts Fund of Argentina for *From this Side of the Mediterranean*, her first book of poems, published in Buenos Aires in 1973. A prolific author, among her many works are *El texto silencioso (The Quiet)*, *Tradición y vanguardia en la poesía sudamericana (Tradition and modernity in the poetry of South America)*, *La casa grande*, *Vida de living*, *La edad de la poesía*, *Tango bar*, *El Ghetto* and *Solos y solas (Alone and Lonely)*. Kamenszain has been awarded a number of prizes, such as the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Pablo Neruda Presidential Medal, among others.

**VÍCTOR TERÁN** is a poet from Mexico who writes in Zapotec. He is the most personal poet of the Zapotec Isthmus of Oaxaca, México. He was born in Juchitán de Zaragoza in 1958. His work has been published extensively in magazines and anthologies throughout Mexico. Since 2000, he has also appeared in anthologies in Italy and the United States (*Reversible Monuments*, Copper Canyon: 2002; *Words of the True Peoples*, U Texas P: 2005). A three-time recipient of the national fellowship for writers of indigenous languages, his first book, *Diixda*; *Xieeña (Barefoot Words)* was republished in 1997 by Ediciones Bi'cu' Nisa. His books of poetry include *Sica ti Gubidxa Cubi (Like a New Sun)*; Editorial Diana: 1994) and *Ca Guichi Xtí' Guendaranaxhii (The Spines of Love)*; Editorial Praxis: 2003). Terán works as a media education teacher at the secondary level, on the Oaxacan Isthmus.

**ZAHRHA EL HASNAUI** is a poet from Western Sahara who writes in Spanish. She was born in Aaiún, the old capital of Spanish Sahara. She studied languages in Madrid and London and has worked for the Saharawi National Radio. She is a member of the Saharawi Friendship Generation.

**MUHAMMAD AL-FAYTURI** is a poet from Sudan who writes in Arabic. He was born in Sudan – he does not know the year of his birth – in Al-Janina on the western border of Sudan. His father was a Sufi sheikh of Libyan Bedouin extraction while his mother was from a Gulf tribe which traced its lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad. Soon after his birth his family moved to Alexandria where he spent his childhood except for a brief spell during the Second World War when the family fled to the Egyptian countryside to escape the German bombing. He attended Al-Azhar University in Cairo until 1953 where he studied the Islamic sciences philosophy and history then attended Cairo University where he studied literature for two years. In 1953 he published his first collection of poems entitled 'Songs of Africa.' Since then Al-Fayturi has published a number of other collections including 'Sunrise and Moonset' and 'Lover from Africa.' He has also lived and worked as a journalist and writer in a variety of different countries including Lebanon Libya and Sudan itself. His poetry particularly draws on his experience as an African living amongst Arabs dealing as it does with issues of race class and colonialism and it is also influenced to some extent by Sufi philosophy.

## TRANSLATORS

**ANNA MURISON** took an MA in Arabic from the School of Oriental and African Studies having obtained her first degree in Arabic at the University of Edinburgh. Her particular area of interest is modern Iraqi poetry.

**CHOMAN HARDI** is a poet, translator and painter. She was born in Sulaimaniya in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1974. In 1975 her family fled to Iran after the Algiers Accord but returned to Iraq after a general amnesty in 1979. They were forced to move again in 1988 during the Anfal campaign. Choman arrived in United Kingdom in 1993 as a refugee and studied psychology and philosophy at Oxford and University College London. She did her PhD at the University of Kent, focusing on the effects of forced migration on the lives of Kurdish women from Iraq and Iran. Choman has published three volumes of poetry in Kurdish. Her first collection of English poems, *Life for Us*, was published by Bloodaxe Books in 2004.

**DAVID HARSENT** was born in Devonshire and has published nine collections of poetry, including *A Bird's Idea of Flight* (1998), and *Marriage* (2002) both shortlisted for the Forward Poetry Prize (Best Poetry Collection of the Year) and The T.S. Eliot Prize. *Legion* (2005) won the 2005 Forward Poetry Prize (Best Poetry Collection of the Year) and was shortlisted for The T.S. Eliot Prize. His poetry includes versions of the Bosnian poet Goran Simic, notably *Sprinting from the Graveyard* (1997), poems written during the siege of Sarejevo. He was co-editor with Mario Susko, of *Savremena Birtanska Poezija* (1988). David Harsent's work in music theatre has involved collaborations with a number of composers, but most often with Harrison Birtwistle and has been performed at the Royal Opera House, Carnegie Hall, the South Bank Centre, the Proms, the Megaron (Athens) and on BBC2 and Channel 4 T.V. He has published a novel, *From an Inland Sea* (1985), and has another *The Wormhole*, in preparation. He writes crime fiction under a pseudonym and has written a number of screenplays and television dramas. David Harsent was appointed Distinguished Writing Fellow at Sheffield Hallam University in 2005 and is a Fellow of The Royal Society of Literature.

**DAVID SHOOK** attended graduate school at Oxford. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in Hayden's Ferry Review, Oxford Magazine, PEN International Magazine, Poetry, World Literature Today, on the Poetry Translation Centre website, and elsewhere. He grew up in Mexico City. A member of American Literary Translators' Association and the National Book Critics' Circle, he lives in Silver Lake, Los Angeles. He is editor of the online broadside Molossus.



**GWEN MACKETH** completed her PhD at UCL on the Argentine fiction writer Antonio Dal Masetto. She now teaches a close reading course on the short story in Latin America in the Spanish and Latin American Studies department at UCL. Her special research interests include twentieth and twenty-first century Argentine fiction as well as literary translation, in particular the translation of poetry and of theatre. She is currently a research associate for the AHRC funded project, 'Out of the Wings', a new resource for theatre practitioners and researchers to access theatre from Spain and Spanish America in English translation. She is based in Department of Spanish and Spanish American Studies, King's College London.

**KATHERINE PIERPOINT** was born in Northampton in 1961. Her first collection of poetry *Truffle Beds* (Faber, 1995) won a Somerset Maugham Award and was shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize. She was Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the University of Kent at Canterbury and in 2006 was poet-in-residence at the King's School Canterbury. Katherine's poems have appeared in Spanish in the anthology *La generación del cordero: antología de la poesía actual en las islas británicas* edited by Pedro Serrano and Carlos López Beltrán (Trilce Ediciones Mexico 2000). She met Coral Bracho in Mexico when the anthology was published and they are admirers of each other's work.

**LAVINIA GREENLAW** has published three books of poems, *Night Photograph* (1993), *A World Where News Travelled Slowly* (1997) and *Minsk* (2003), which was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot, Forward and Whitbread Poetry Prizes. Her two novels are *Mary George of Allnorthover* (2001) and *An Irresponsible Age* (2006). In 2008 she published a memoir, *The Importance of Music to Girls*. Lavinia lives in London and teaches part time at UEA in Norwich.

**MARTIN ORWIN** was born in 1963. He studied Arabic and Armaic as an undergraduate at SOAS and he then went to obtain a Ph.D in the Phonology of Somali. Currently Senior Lecturer in Arabic and Armaic in SOAS, he has taught there since 1992. He has published numerous articles on Somali language and poetry and has carried out a good deal of pioneering research in the Horn of Africa. Martin has translated a number of Somali poems, two of which were published in *Modern Poetry in Translation* (No. 17 Mother Tongues Special Edition 2001).

**MAXAMED XASAN "ALTO"** was born in 1960. He studied in Somalia and Soviet Union and has an M.A. in Journalism. Since 2004, he has been a teacher in Somali language in SOAS London. He is a writer and freelance journalist and has published and edited many books in Somali language.

**MIMI KHALVATI** was born in Tehran, Iran and has lived most of her life in England. She trained at Drama Centre London and has worked as an actor and director in the UK and Iran. She has published six collections of poetry with Carcanet Press and her most recent book, *The Meanest Flower*, was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation, a Financial Times Book of the Year, and was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize. Her work has been translated into nine languages and she received a Cholmondeley Award in 2006. Mimi is the founder of The Poetry School and has co-edited its three anthologies of new writing published by Enitharmon Press.

**NUKHBAH LANGAH** was born in Pakistan and came to the UK to complete her PhD on contemporary Siraiki poetry at the University of Leeds. She has returned to Pakistan and is now teaching in the English faculty of Forman Christian College University (FCCU) in Lahore.

**SARAH MAGUIRE** is the founder and director of the Poetry Translation Centre. She has published four highly-acclaimed collections of poetry, *Spilt Milk* (Secker; 1991; re-printed PBS; 2007), *The Invisible Mender* (Cape; 1997), *The Florist's at Midnight* (Cape; 2001) and *The Pomegranates of Kandahar* (Chatto; 2007), a Poetry Book Society Choice that was short-listed for the TS Eliot Prize, 2007. Sarah edited the innovative and popular anthology *Flora Poetica: The Chatto Book of Botanical Verse* which was published in 2001. Sarah was the first writer to be sent to Palestine (in 1996) and to Yemen (in 1998) by the British Council. Since then she has been active in translating contemporary Arabic poetry into English. With Yama Yari, she co-translated *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear* (Chatto, 2006) by Atiq Rahimi, Afghanistan's leading novelist.

#### **THE POETRY TRANSLATION WORKSHOP** <[www.poetrytranslation.org](http://www.poetrytranslation.org)>

When Sarah Maguire was the Royal Literary Fund's Writing Fellow at The School of Oriental and African Studies, she was struck by the number of academics and students she encountered who were fascinated by poetry and who knew a great deal about the languages and literary cultures of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Sarah decided to arrange a workshop where these translators could collaborate in translating poetry together. The workshops began in 2002 and their success led Sarah to approach Arts Council England for funding to set up The Poetry Translation Centre. Since then, the PTC has continued to hold workshops on a regular basis. They are the PTC's core activity. Members bring along translations of poets new to all and, in the workshops, participants can tell whether they like the poems and if they might be worth translating at length.

**TOM BOLL** completed his PhD on Octavio Paz and T. S. Eliot in 2005. He has taught in the departments of English and Spanish and Latin American Studies at University College London. His translations have been published by Mango Press and Poetry Review. He was the Assistant Director of the Poetry Translation Centre from 2004 to 2007.

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