



Ahadada Books

# Chapbook

Tergiversation

*poems by Bruna Mori*





## Acknowledgments

Tergiversation is a short series of homophonic and sensorial translations inspired by the writing of the late Argentinean poet Alejandra Pizarnik. She lamented the separation between life and poetry, yet while her biography is available in English, many of her poems remain untranslated.

Much gratitude goes to Florencia Pita for introducing me to Pizarnik's *Textos selectos*, to Jesse Glass and Daniel Sendekki for their interest in my work, to Launa Bacon, Paolo Javier, Catherine Daly, Jennifer Tseng, Mark Breitenberg, Jen Hofer, Ray Bianchi, Mathew Timmons, Kimiko Hahn, Genya Turovskaya, Erica Kaufman, James Hoff, Khalil Huffman, Sean Finney, Robert Booras, Zohra Saed, and Claire Phillips for offering to be readers, and to Eileen Tabios, John O'Brien, Nicholas Powers, Thaddeus Rutkowski, Ramon Garcia, John Best, Benjamin Bratton, Eileen Cabiling, Heather Libonati, Khanh Tran, Amanda Vernor, Melissa Fawl, and the Darinis for their support.

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## After Affect

There is fire in the sun.

There is not much sun.

The reality boat of sediment  
dances on my infirm sleep.

There is fire in the sun,  
I will visit its citizens.

Salt with the slip of llamas,  
star of stars,  
somber of slumber,

darkness of light  
of the vented alms.

Now in the innocent hour,  
when without sentences,

in the umbilical cord:  
An unremembered poem

has constrained your horse,  
has imploded your birds,

has gulped the time  
with proper concerns.

Has terminated the self  
of which nothing commences.

Rebellion consists in the seeing of  
the rose after pulverizing the eyes.



# Tergiversation

The beloved veterans, enter,

hallucinations with the  
pigmented skin of the parrot,

cocoons of memories  
devouring their speech,

entering the coffers of citizens  
and speaking to old beasts.

In the hour of the creased land  
in the memory of the cowboy,

time pronounces discourse  
in the moment of a Lilith.

As someone enters death with eyes open,  
another appears in your vision.

The color of time in the abandoned wall.  
In my sight, thought parted all.

It's more than in proximity,  
more than near to know what here, was.



## Ahead

Today, we are inclined  
to destroy the reverent peonies

before a million watching mountains.

Wait for the innate molding,

smoldering rays that torte  
the trashing of the villa of its fog.

Return blue sonnets in red-greens,  
defile that hive in tremendous baritones.

Want to be more altruistic for buying barbs  
as Alzar frees bandits.

Trade the hollers of others,  
float my desperation, Aurora.

Imagination of your equality  
in cold aesthetic.

Return the brave in annulled pieces,  
kilometers of nuisances and nieces,

and blows of the relevant tourniquet.



## Roads to Wait

When the house of language returns—  
and the words, no guarantee, speak,

fierce tongues have solitary women  
who sing to traverse.

Listen to the song of the lutes  
selling handouts of silence,

listen to the dulcimer  
playing flowers of free silence—

a variety of iris arcs  
in the despair of the offended.

The night of the two  
dispersed with nibbling,

all guests and voices abandoned  
in umber umbrellas.

Rays entered a pistil  
revealing a heart it didn't have.

That is to say, the Revelations,  
like animal-hole burrowing—

but the quiet is closed—



# Tergiversation

until bottoming into yellow constellations

in a pool of water trembling.

Is always the garden of lilies

on the other side of the river?

Unless the river is without water.

Have we arrived disabling a perfect silence?

If it exists.

A last word was but a reference to another luminosity,

a black quadrant awaiting a circle of music in its center.



## For Nameless

No waiting leagues  
of rare days of green.

In that song is the Odeon moon,  
that light for my spouse's content,

that light that vents brutally  
into flowers opening,  
ardent in their benign circuits,

repulsive disregard of the yellow sun  
that trespasses places  
marked as obscure hulls

rolling over the inferno interpreter  
of beautiful sleep

of the sea's cold arresting ballasts,  
adored desert of your eyes.



## Duplicitous

And the time strangles my sister.

Twelve figures, insidious gains  
configuring gratitude.

Tilling roads under  
the obscure pose.

Record the roughness of  
turning mountains and  
ocular radios,

two yellow cups,  
two rasping gorillas.

Two kisses communicate  
a vision of an existence  
of another existence.

Two promises  
of tremendous locution.

Actually two promises  
of yes sir and no sir.

Two play the rounds of casinos  
of champagne yellow whiteness.



Two mirages/visions

circle the avenue of a sister girl.

Four soldiers revolve/revolt.

Debris, one death, one nothing.

Are the ardent wayfarers

disconnecting over my future.

Discontented baked cow.

My only recourse

the somber of the trite sun

hat.

Appendages of my sister.

Promises that coagulated

in front of the sign of the

strangled sisters, and the

time strangles my sister's star,

brilliant ascent of another.



## Another Place

Today, I am visiting the citizens of Alba,  
who wait with mouths of flowers  
to honor the respiration of sleeping animals,

marking roses in roads,  
past extravagant marches,  
accompanied by a fumbling ballet.

The night scribes word for word.

The night writes the night  
more beautifully in the night  
of those that are gone.

In it, a blue dress sings,  
and underneath the dress  
is a green heart

with echoes of the latitudes  
tattooed over a real heart.

Over the heart tattoo,

a cheap amulet is lifted  
like gold, nimbly to lips,

then starts a voice echoing  
into melting eyes.



# Tergiversation

The music emits ingenious colors,  
imploing llamas and armadillos  
(the goats, also).

The song is not an invocation,  
only names forgotten.

It travels distances,  
dissipating just south of here.

The here no one has heard of  
because this Alba doesn't exist.



## I Am

My alias?

Two petals protruding.

My raison d'être?

Coping with the white wine.

My life?

To vacate the good pension.

My familiar?

A dismantled cell.

My motto?

*An infantile gong.*



## Untitled

Sorting eminence of the new center of a poem

for someone dirigible, I speak with a voice distracted.

When I introduce diction, please light my obscurity.

In my furiousness exists oceans extinguishing burning decks of words

meaning the same thing, or those that don't stop in a precise some thing.

Language quiet propagates, is fire.

Saliva on the vented house, on fire.

Within the house, words sacrificed in ceremonies of the living

paginate our childlike peregrinations.



## I Am You Me

The dog began detailing a sunrise.

I stopped short and waited.

A hat full of flowers arrested

a hat full of secrets.

They went through the door.

Vigils in this room where

the somber terrible is you;

there is no silence here

without phrases that invite trouble.

No naming things with names

that have borders, teeth,

and luxurious vegetation.

When speaking of habitation

in your eyes: "Cure the vacancy."

Surfaces always raised

when we introduce diction.



## The Said Word

In qualifying moments,  
the pond fissures,  
  
and disbands of dolls cut out.  
Crying dolls of various depths.  
  
What depths did they speak?  
What speak do waters imagine?  
  
Only talk of the adored,  
waiting for devils/deities,  
  
their spectral texture is melody  
in the bellies' buttons—  
  
suffering bravado in forms  
traded for beautiful waiting.  
  
Pardons that hiccup  
offenses fantastic,  
  
phantasmal prayers  
for possessions they don't have  
  
for Bruna, for no one,  
for expedient hems  
  
are sure the end of another surety,  
their music plain, a little light  
  
immense without destination.



## Veneer Days

After annihilating memoir,  
another chapter was closed for an era,

Alejandra's ashes now official  
in a petrified garden.

Here  
is the fire sometimes,

like the navigator that purifies  
the cadence of a night.

The fugue of the island,  
and the girl returned

to describe the death  
of the parrot prophet.

Princess of higher torrents,  
amazon jaded in absence,

another time juggles my present.

## Bruna Mori

Mori lives in Los Angeles, where she edits at the Getty Research Institute, and teaches at Art Center College of Design and Southern California Institute of Architecture. Her BA and MFA degrees were completed at the University of California, San Diego, and Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College.

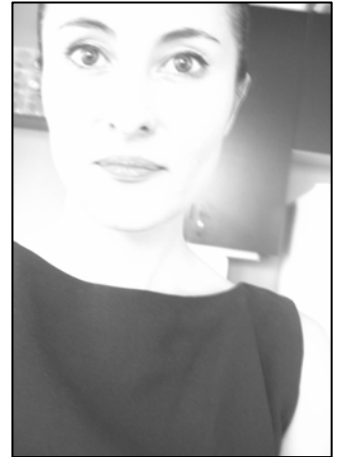
Bruna Mori is the author of *Dérive* (Meritage Press), a book of cityscape poems with sumi-ink paintings by Matthew Kinney, and the chapbooks *Tergiversation* (Ahadada Books) and *The Approximations* (2nd Avenue Poetry), homophonic and sensorial translations of the poetry of Alejandra Pizarnik.

Her writing has been published in journals *Fence*, *Trepan* (California Institute of the Arts), and *ZYZZYVA*, among others, and presented at venues such as Beyond Baroque, City Lights, and The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church.

She writes essays—most recently for a Semiotext[e] anthology on Isamu Noguchi's designs for Poston (the internment camp where he was incarcerated). Her articles on artists and writers, such as John Zorn, le thi diem thuy, and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, appear in *disinfo*, *Random House Bold Type*, and other magazines and anthologies.

Additionally, she has worked as a writer and editor for a variety of institutional clients for over ten years, increasingly collaborating with individual designers. With Joseph Santarromana, she co-edited *suture*, a DVD that features segments by such artists as Catherine Lord, Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky), Linda Montano, and Sheree Rose.

Bruna Mori was born in Japan, and has lived mostly in the United States—in New York, Louisiana, and California. Her BA and MFA degrees were completed at the University of California, San Diego, and Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College, where she studied poetics with Ann Lauterbach and Lynne Tillman. Mori presently lives in Los Angeles, where she teaches at Art Center College of Design and the Southern California Institute of Architecture.





## What Others Say

### *About Tergiversation*

Bruna Mori's spare couplets are both Augustan and surreal, aimed where utterance and text meet; when "lotion" starts to trans, simu, or re; because versification gives back and also co-opts meaning. Smartly matched: reading's duel is figured in the poetic and the text."

—Catherine Daly

"Bruna Mori has put her ear to the door of the past, listened intently and brought bits of that world to this one . . . Pizarnik sings her questions to the void, never expecting to be heard. As if in answer, Mori listens, and like Pizarnik cleanly 'record(s) the roughness' of an interior life."

—Jennifer Tseng

### *About Dérive*

"Mori is not only a cogent observer of life and its environs but a magnanimous participant who shines a light on the profound beauty of no-name pizza parlors and sweaty flesh that bears green tattoos of the heart."

—Martine Bellen

"Dérive is an animated guidebook to the boroughs of my city and should be required reading for travelers and residents alike."

—Brenda Coultas

"Much to admire. In the range of experiences detailed and the ever-shifting vantage point, the city and its inhabitants emerge as vastly various and yet inextricably bound to one another."

—lê thi diem thúy

"A deft poetic journey through the fissures and ironies of city life."

—Norman M. Klein



***China Notes & The Treasures of Dunhuang (Jerome Rothenberg)***

**0-9732233-9-1**

"The China Notes come from a trip in 2002 that brought us out as far as the Gobi Desert & allowed me to see some of the changes & continuities throughout the country. I was traveling with poet & scholar Wai-lim Yip & had a chance to read poetry in five or six cities & to observe things as part of an ongoing discourse with Wai-lim & others. The ancient beauty of some of what we saw played out against the theme park quality of other simulacra of the past....A sense of beckoning wilderness/wildness in a landscape already cut into to serve the human need for power & control." So Jerome Rothenberg describes the events behind the poems in this small volume—a continuation of his lifelong exploration of poetry and the search for a language to invoke the newness and strangeness both of what we observe and what we can imagine.

***Now Showing (Jim Daniels)***

**0-9781414-1-5**

Of Jim Daniels, the Harvard Review writes, "Although Daniels' verse is thematically dark, the energy and beauty of his language and his often brilliant use of irony affirm that a lighter side exists. This young poet has already found his voice. And he speaks with that rare urgency that demands we listen." This is affirmed by Carol Muske, who identifies the "melancholy sweetness" running through these poems that identifies him as "a poet born to praise".

***The Passion of Phineas Gage & Selected Poems (Jesse Glass)***

**0-9732233-8-3**

*The Passion of Phineas Gage & Selected Poems* presents the best of Glass' experimental writing in a single volume. Glass' ground-breaking work has been hailed by poets as diverse as Jerome Rothenberg, William Bronk and Jim Daniels for its insight into human nature and its exploration of forms. Glass uses the tools of postmodernism: collaging, fragmentation, and Oulipo-like processes along with a keen understanding of poetic forms and traditions that stretches back to Beowulf and beyond. Moreover, Glass finds his subject matter in larger than life figures like Phineas Gage—the man whose life was changed in an instant when an iron bar was sent rocketing through his brain in a freak accident—as well as in ants processing up a wall in time to harpsichord music in order to steal salt crystals from the inner lip of a cowrie shell. The range and ambition of his work sets it apart. The product of over 30 years of engagement with the avant-garde, *Passion of Phineas Gage & Selected Poems* is the work of a mature poet who continues to reinvent himself with every text he produces.

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Online publishing is an integral component of the Ahadada Books project: to get important voices heard. The World Wide Web facilitates this endeavour, allowing a potential audience of millions to access our site and read authors that they might never find in their local bookstores.

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**Editorial Addresses**

**Toronto**

Daniel Sendeki  
3158 Bentworth Drive  
Burlington, Ontario  
Canada  
L7M 1M2

**Tokyo**

Jesse Glass  
Meikai University  
8 Akemi  
Urayasu  
Chiba 279-8550  
Japan