

from gaps are eaten up by the reader

Christian Vistan & Elisa Ferrari

This text was written following five walks taken and recorded in July 2020 in our respective neighbourhoods of Ladner and Mount Pleasant on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Tsawwassen First Nations. On these walks, we read texts by and to each other alongside writing by Etel Adnan, Dylan Robinson, Édouard Glissant, Amelia Rosselli, Rhoda Rosenfeld, Craig Dworkin, and Harryette Mullen. The sonic environment is interpreted, translated, and foregrounded into text in the writing from these walks. Our process of writing and listening together began as an extension of our collaboration in Elisa's project *lilithlithlithlithlith: may tunog* for the 3rd Kamias Triennial in February 2020 in Quezon City, Philippines. *gaps are eaten up by the reader* is an excerpt from the forthcoming SMALL CAPS digital chapbook to be published by *The Capilano Review* in Fall 2020. — *Christian Vistan & Elisa Ferrari*

hear
let's try and find
a surface?
a street

this way

yeah I think it is better if we go this way

how we

do you have all the papers?
no

okay
okay

we can also stop

if we feel like
if we find a nice
seating spot

your envelope back?

it is useful

[c murmurs]
[c clears voice]

it was about temporality
how do we wanna
how do we wanna

or that way?
this way

[mumbles]

do you have all of them?
no
I only printed yours
I only printed yours



let's go there under the

it's shaky
I like this surface

[leafing through sheets of paper]

the person who asks the question is in a position of power

she was asking the questions
and she was asking the questions someone else asked her

[getting closer and louder:
what do you do? I get that

she's gone

through a lot but at some point
you are saying that]

I'll start from here
[muffler, laughs, city tones]
she writes

“

listening
was like entering secret worlds.

I knew, in American, things I could not tell in any of the languages I knew, because my experiences in those languages were limited, or seemed limited, or were too familiar to keep for me a sense of discovery.”¹

[car drives by with low techno beats]

¹ Etel Adnan, “To Write in a Foreign Language,” in *Unheard Words*, ed. Mineke Schipper, trans. Barbara Potter Fasting (London: Allison & Busby, 1985).

she writes differently about different times in her life

the language she has at that moment

overheard

enters

to communicate

to someone

but then I think

translation

is also not useful

talking to my mom and

translating

accountability
responsabilità
rendicontabilità
trasparenza

it's part of the vocabulary

in my brain

a word that needs work around it

how to make word a word that has meaning

Oops

aphids
[humming
walking bird
paper]



if

we are stuck

go somewhere else

go somewhere else whenever we feel

[pedestrian on the phone:

I'm more technically how/I am only now

but I didn't

heard/but it didn't hurt

but I remember it was

like weedy/but I remember it was bleeding]

I think they're contiguous I think they're contiguous

something

something that connects

next to each other

they share

an edge

[car]

languages are contiguous

[long thinking pause]

in English English?

why two English?

no no

just English?

[loud bass beats from a car driving by]

this is where my thoughts were going

that she chose not to learn the other language because she is not studious

[mumbling]

“ I did not take time out of everyday life to consecrate all my efforts to acquire Arabic as a full language. When the sun is strong and the sea is blue I can't close my window and go in and study anything. I am a person of the perpetual present so I stayed outside. Arabic remained a forbidden paradise. I am both a stranger and a native to the same land, [sounds of a mother walking by with her kid(s)] to the same mother tongue.

”²

[voices in the background]

I don't know when this text was written

if we were to write what are the things that
the previous century
told us
to

[a song is playing in the background—too noisy to
identify/a popular 70s core progression]

[shhhhhhh someone washing a car]

what she means when she says the moon

[deep muffler tone]

but it is also contradictory she spent ten fucking pages writing about

² Adnan, “To Write in a Foreign Language.”



this is her looking back
this is her looking back

[indistinct voices in the background]

I'm gonna take my shoes off

do you think one thinks better without shoes

no shoes you are in private

[papers]

maybe I'll read from here

there is furniture

rhythm a unit

in the water of the sea of the river

Riverine tongue

a wave a wake

a wave awake

a slice

a speech

more than I could understand

could I see the notes?



the furniture

I respect furniture

it's missing a leg

the d's and b's

daybed

In a

In a

you rest for

for more rest

[paper rustling]

“language assembles
in passing in walking in sitting
on tile on common tables on upholstered daybeds
under rectangular light”³

[crow cawing keeps cawing cawing cawing]

furniture allows language to happen

[still cawing, louder struggle, muffled shorter cawing then]

furniture relates
bodies reconfigure around furniture

furniture asks a body to reconfigure

³ Christian Vistan, *Pa-pag-page* (self-published, 2018).

arranging furniture

a profession

a text

and then you sit on that

[pages leaf]

[e bakit mo ko nakilala/e bakit mo ba ko inaya/e bikat mo na-ilage
why did you recognize me/why did you invite me/why did you return and return]

are we inside?

I found

[whisper]

erba di san giovanni

you can peel it off

fig sap

unripe fig
milk

eucalyptus

fungus fungus

the corn goes up the squash is horizontal the bean climbs the corn
sunflower
peas?

corn
corn corn corn corn
potato

[grass hum motor rev]

*"The narrator has no existence outside the text
yet brings the text into existence.*

glean words. shift syntactic blocks.
make space between ideas.

*The authority of a given voice is produced from a conjunction
of social and rhetorical
questions."*⁴

the touch implied

between two things touching?

[sound of a different park]

a derivative space
[kids' voices, an airplane gets closer and closer]

just go for a walk then write

contiguity

this and this out of two things this sentence is

⁴ Elisa Ferrari, unpublished text (2018).

“the sonorous voice instead
an index of a relational kind of uniqueness

I’ll meet you at 10 am on August 21st”⁵

“riding in a car

writing poetry with one’s body”⁶

riding as writing
riding and writing

it requires saying to become text

“Surrealism is (si sa) rebellion to the Gods”⁷

because so much of it I can’t understand

the hinge of the text

the fold

[ang alaga ko/the child I am taking care of]

relation is a practice, then she says “language is a practice,
practices of relations”⁸

⁵ Ferrari, unpublished text.

⁶ Adnan, “To Write in a Foreign Language.”

⁷ Amelia Rosselli, “Diario in tre lingue / Diary in three tongues (1955-56),” in *Locomotrix. Selected Poetry and Prose by Amelia Rosselli*, ed. and trans. Jennifer Scappettone (University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁸ Ferrari’s notes from Lisa Robertson and Yaniya Lee’s lecture “Rock Garden,” *Beginning with the Seventies* symposium, Belkin Art Gallery, UBC, March 7, 2020.

you took concise notes
we have a document

[airplane, a caw]

a bridge

I think about the history of smokers' candies
mint
nicotine

the recipe sealed

"I taste the history of imperialism"⁹

things that go in your mouth are words

lingua the tongue
lingua the language

the mouth is the place where languages exist

a lingua is
la mia lingua è l'italiano
la mia lingua è l'inglese

my tongue is my language

⁹ Ferrari, unpublished text.

“The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes how I obtain this language”¹⁰

The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes
The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes
The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes

how I obtain this language
(chorus)

a tongue

modulates

[bells bells bells bells]

and the lozenge

can your mouth still listen

?

¹⁰ Christian Vistan, unpublished text (2018).