



in co-operation with  
the World Intellectual Property Organization,  
the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,  
and the United Nations SRC Society of Writers

presents

# **THE STONES OF CIVILIZATION**

**Friday, May 5, 2006, 3-6pm**

**Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium  
United Nations Headquarters**

# THE STONES OF CIVILIZATION:

*“Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone.”*

*~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## **PROGRAM:**

**Welcome:** Bob Holman and Catherine Fletcher

**Opening Remarks:** H.E. Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations

## **Readings and performances:**

Kewulay Kamara with Lasana Kouyate and Saliu Suso (Sierra Leone, Guinea, the Gambia)

Gwyneth Lewis (Wales)

Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer (Tlingit Nation/USA)

Cathal Ó Searcaigh (Ireland)

Matthew Fitt (Scotland)

Chilean Mission—Isabel Seguel reading a poem in Mapudungun

Vanessa Fisher and Jimmy Smith (didjeridu player) (Dungibara and Wiradjuri People /Australia)

Robert Minhinnick (Wales)

New Zealand Mission—HE Ambassador Rosemary Banks, the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations reading a poem in Maori

Australian Mission—‘InDidgDance,’ Australian Indigenous Cultural Performers: Taryn Beatty, Ryka Satrick, Majeda-Mo’ Beatty, and Xing-Yee Beatty (Indinji, Wuthathi and Kukuyalinji)

**Remarks from the World Intellectual Property Organization:** Dr. S. Rama Rao

## **Performances by:**

Basque Bertsolariak: Gratien Alfaro, Jean Curutchet, Jesús Goñi, and Martín Goicoechea with Joxe Mallea-Olaetxe (Basque Country/USA)

Aonghas MacNeacail (Scotland)

Mark Abley (Canada)

Iwan Llwyd (Wales)

Dr. Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O’odham Nation/USA)

Gearóid MacLochlainn and Jarlath Henderson (Northern Ireland)

Cliar: Arthur Cormack, Charles Stewart, Mary-Ann Kennedy, Ingrid Henderson, Hector Henderson, Maggie Macdonald (Scotland)

Dr. S. Rama Rao (India)

**Closing Remarks:** Catherine Fletcher and Bob Holman

**KEWULAY KAMARA** *(translated from the Kuranko by the author)*

**Kaira**

Jamaa nu woe ni wura la  
Jamaa nu woe ni wura la

Ka fo woe yé  
Bi morlu la mana man kumeh kana bi woenu fe  
Kumeh'l diyeh ani tonyeh kumeh ma kelen na

Kaira  
Kaira soron mandi  
Kaira fisa beh di

Kumeh gbelema  
Kumeh ti sa  
Kuma ti norgo  
Kaira!

Ma nala- Kuma  
Ma segila Kuma  
Min bee foh-la  
Woélé ke-la  
Min bee ke-la  
Woélé foh-la  
Kaira

Wali yumeh  
Billa la kuma yumeh le fe  
Ka yumayeh boh yumanyeh-ro  
Ka sembe boh sembe ro  
Al meh woe kere

Ka na kaira  
Ka segi kair  
Al meh woé kera

**Peace**

*Good evening people,  
Good evening people*

*I tell you  
Heed not the foolish talk of today.  
Sweet words and truth are not the same*

*Peace!  
Peace is hard to achieve  
But peace is better than all.*

*Words are serious  
Words do not rot  
Words do not rust  
Peace!*

*We come in words  
We go in words  
What is said  
Is done  
What is done  
Is said  
Peace!*

*Good deeds  
Follow good words;  
Goodness from goodness;  
Strength from strength  
Let it be*

*Come in peace  
Go in peace  
Let it be.*

**GWYNETH LEWIS** (*translated from the Welsh by the author*)

**Dechrau'r Anghofio**

Heddiw trod y sigl-di-gwt  
yn *wagtail*.  
Gwyliais yn ofalus  
wrth l wasg y nant  
symud papurau newyddion y dydd  
i lawr or mynyddoedd  
i'w rhwygo'n rhacs  
ym mheiriant y pentref.

Ni hidiai'r *wagtail*—  
roedd yn hunan-gytûn  
fel o'r blaen  
ac yn moesyngrymu'n ddwfn  
i'r golau a'r cerrig.  
Doedd e ddim i'w weld  
yn aderyn mwy chwim  
er bod ganddo lai  
o gysteiniaid i'w cario.

Gwichiodd *swallows* Sir Aberteifi  
uwch fy mhen,  
eu hadenydd fel corcsgriw,

yn agor gwin  
rhywiol y noswaith.  
Mae eu cri  
yn rhan annatod  
o'm henaid i,  
sŵn eu hoen  
yn ddyfnach nag ieithwedd,  
neu ddistawrwydd, neu boen.

**What's in a Name?**

*Today the wagtail family finally forgot  
that I once called it sigl-di-gwt.*

*It didn't give a tinker's toss,  
kept right on rooting in river moss,*

*(no longer mwsvgl) relieved, perhaps,  
that someone would be noticing less*

*about its habits. Magpies' fear of men  
lessened, as we'd lost one means*

*(the word pioden) of keeping track  
of terrorist birds out in the back.*

*Lleian wen is not the same as 'smew'  
because it's another point of view,*

*another bird. There's been a cull:  
gwylan's gone and we're left with 'gull'*

*and blunter senses till that day  
when 'swallows,' like gwennol, might stay  
away.*

**NORA MARKS DAUENHAUER AND RICHARD DAUENHAUER:**  
*a poem by David Kadashan, from Hoonah, 1968 (in Tlingit and English)*

You created me, Chookaneidí.

You created me.

This is why I, too, feel for you.

Yes!

This is the way Xwaayeenák is.

(Willie Marks) *Áawé.*

In this world

we're still holding each other's hands.

Neither do we overlook our dead.

Yes!

At this moment

a kát adagánni, gu.aal kwshé a tóodei wuxoogóok

yee yadaax kaawadaayi aa.

(Keet Yaanaayi) *Yéi kgwatée xá.*

Sagóox naxsatee yéi áyá yee jiyís tuxdátan

(Naawéiyaa) *Gunalchéesh.á.*

Yeeysikóo yee kaani yán

yee aat hás.

(Keet Yaanaayi) *Gunalchéesh.*

(Naawéiyaa) *Gunalchéesh.*

Yéi áyá.

Aaa!

Yándei gaxyeenáak.

Yee sani hás, aadéi s kunoogu yé yéeyi

yéi koonaxdayeinín

aaa,

yee tuwú daa ooxlit'aayi átx'.

Yee yáx' yéi hás a daanéi noojéen,

aaa,

yá a eetée kuxdziteeyi aa yeedát.

Yéi áyá.

(Keet Yaanaayi) *Gunalchéesh.*

(Naawéiyaa) *Gunalchéesh.*

CATHAL Ó SEARCAIGH (translated from the Irish by Seamus Heaney)

**Caoineadh**

(I gcúimhne mo mháthar)

Chaoin mé na cuileatacha ar urcht mo mháthara  
An Lá a bhásaigh Mollie - peata de sheanchaora  
Istigh i gcreagacha crochta na Beithí.  
Á cuartú a bhí muid lá marbhánta samhraidh  
Is brú anála orainn beirt ag dreasú na gcaorach  
Siar ó na hailltreacha nuair a tímíd an marfach  
Sbna beanna dodhreaptha. Préacháin dhubha ina scaotha  
Á hithe ina beatha gur imigh an dé deiridh aisti  
De chnead choscrach amháin is gan ionainn iarraidh  
Tharrthála a thabhairt uirthi thíos sna scealpacha.  
Ní thiocfaí mé a shásamh is an tocht ag teacht tríom;  
D'fháisc lena hucht mé is í ag cásamh mo chaill loim  
Go dtí gur chuireas an racht adaí ó íochtar mo chroí.  
D'iompair abhaile mé ansin ar a guailneacha  
Ag gealladh go ndéanfadh sí ceapairí arán préataí.  
Inniu tá mo Theangaidh ag saothrú an bháis.  
Ansacht na bhfilí - teangaidh ár n-aithreacha  
Gafa i gcreagacha crochta na Faillí  
Is gan ionainn í a tharrtháil le dasacht.  
Cluinim na smeachannaí deireanacha  
Is na héanacha creiche ag teacht go tapaidh,  
A ngoba craosacha réidh chun feille.  
Ó dá ligfeadh sí liú amháin gaile - liú catha  
A chuirfeadh na creachadóirí chun reatha,  
Ach seo í ag creathnú, seo í ag géilleadh;  
Níl mo mháthair anseo le mé a shuaimhniú a thuilleadh  
Is ní dhéanfaidh gealladh an phian a mhaolú.

**Lament**

(In memory of my mother)

*I cried on my mother's breast, cried sore  
the day Mollie died, our old pet ewe  
Trapped on a rockface up at Beithí.  
It was a sultry heat, we'd been looking for her,  
Sweating and panting, driving sheep back  
From the cliff-edge when we saw her attacked  
On a ledge far down. Crows and more crows  
Were eating at her. We heard the cries  
But couldn't get near. She was ripped to death  
As we suffered her terrible, wild, last breath  
and my child's heart broke. I couldn't be calmed  
No matter how much she'd tighten her arms  
And gather me close. I just cried on  
Till she hushed me at last with a piggyback  
And the promise of treats of potatoe-cake.  
Today it is my language that's in its throes,  
The poet's passion, my mothers' fathers'  
Mothers' language, abandoned and trapped  
On a fatal ledge that we won't attempt.  
She's in agony, I can hear her heave  
And gasp and struggle as they arrive,  
The beaked and ravenous scavengers  
Who are never far. Oh if only anger  
Came howling wild out of her grief,  
If only she'd bare the teeth of her love  
And rout the pack. But she's giving in,  
She's quivering badly, my mother's gone  
And promises now won't ease the pain.*

**MATTHEW FITT:** *a poem by Mike Cullen from **The Smoky Smirr o Rain** (in Scots)*

**Acid Burns**

Moose, moose, moose, moose, moose,

Moose, moose, moose, moose, moose,

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

Ha, where ye gaun, ye cowlan ferlie

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

By yon bonnie bonnie gonnie burn the hoose doon

By yon bonnie bonnie gonnie burn the hoose doon

Thy poor earth-born companion

Pump up the bogles

Pump up the bogles

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

Hoose

Hoose

Hoose

Hoose

Thurs a poem in the hoose

in the hoose

in the hoose

Thurs a poem in the hoose

in the poem

in the hoose

Thurs a moose in the poem

in the poem

in the poem

Thurs a moose in the poem in the hoose

By yon bonnie banks go bonnie bonnie bonnie bonnie

yon bonnie banks go bonnie bonnie bonnie bonnie

Welcome

To your

Gory bed wee

Sleekit

Timâ€™rous

Hoose.

Thurs a louse in the house

in the house

in the house

Thurs a louse on the moose

in the hoose

in the poem

Thurs a louse in the house

ana moose on the loose

Thurs a moose on the loose in the hoose.

BBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBY yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose

doon

By yon bonnie banks go burn the hoose doon

Burnin

Burnin

Burnin

Burnin

HOOSE!



ISABEL SEGUEL: *a poem by Elicura Chihuailaf Nahuelpan (translated from the Mapundungun by the author)*

**Nienolu Üy Tañi Newen  
Ta Iñche**

Pewman ta we Küyen mew, pi  
ka küzawkefiñ ta lelfün  
Petu ñi zugu genon  
ka rayen rume genon femün  
(welu zoy alü kamapu )  
Tüfawla ñi pu ñawe zeumalkefiñ lien ruka  
ka kürüf negvmüñ ma meke enew ñi logko  
pürakawellkülen wente relmu  
Witrunko ta iñche  
Umawtulen amuley lafken iñche mew  
ka nepey ta mawizantu  
Nienolu üy tañi newen ta iñche, pi  
tuway mane chi antü: Tami ül.

**Because I Am The Force  
Of The Unnamed**

I have dreamed of the crescent moon, it says  
and I have worked the fields  
Before there were words  
before there were flowers, I existed  
(and farther away)  
For my daughters I build the house of silver  
as I ride my horse above the rainbow  
hair streaming in the wind  
I am the running water  
The ocean goes to sleep inside me  
the mountain awakes  
For I am the power of the nameless, it says  
the light around the sun: your song.

ROBERT MINHINNICK: *a poem by Emyr Lewis (translated from the Welsh by Robert Minihinnick)*

**Taliesin**

yn gudyll ifanc uwch Argoed Llwyfain  
profais ddyfodol y byd,  
hogiau'n marw drwy drais a damwain  
llygaid dall a gwefusau mud,  
ffroenais eu braw ar yr awel filain,  
tafodais eu gwaed ar y gwynt o'r dwyrain  
a gwelais drwy'r oesoedd lawer celain,  
brodyr a brodyr ynghyd.

yn eryr oriog uwch caeau Fflandrys  
cofiais y cyfan i gyd,  
cofiais drannoeth y lladdfa farus,  
gwledda brain ar gelanedd mud,  
arwyr toredig yn hercian yn ofnus  
a'r baw yn ceulo'n eu clwyfau heintus,  
clywais weddïau mamau petrus,  
a hedd yn amdó i y byd.

yn bengwin styfnig ger Porthladd Stanley  
eisteddais drwy'r brwydro i gyd,  
llanciau ifanc lleng Galtieri  
yn disgwyl diwedd eu byd;  
a dyma fy hanes eto eleni  
yn gwylio'r byddinoedd ar diroedd Saudi,  
yn ddodo drewllyd o flaen y teli  
yn heddwch fy nghartref clyd.

**Taliesin**

A sparrowhawk soaring, I saw  
Argoed's English auguries  
and so predicted an army of days,  
suns' pale faces above shields' black rims,  
an empire built of empty eyes and mouths,  
and I felt a wind cold as the corpse-skin  
of our brotherhood.

Then I was an eagle, going somewhere else,  
when I flew over Flanders and remembered then  
how the future would look,  
the next day's gridlock in the trenches,  
the wound-psalms, the filth prayers,  
the mothers like nervous serving-girls  
at the grave's banquet.

**Not long ago**

I was an albatross, patient above Port Stanley,  
seeing Galtieri's boys  
discover what the end of time feels like.  
And now here comes another crowd,  
their boots melting on the Baghdad road,  
and the whole world watching  
through a dodo's eye.

**A PERFORMANCE BY 'INDIDGDANCE,' AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PERFORMERS:** *Taryn Beatty, Ryka Satrick, Majeda-Mo' Beatty, And Xing-Yee Beatty (In Indinji, Wuthathi, And Kukuyalinji)*

**Jalama - 'Welcome Dance':** This traditional Aboriginal dance of Australia describes the welcoming process. As we are invited to a different land it is important to give honor to the traditional landowners. The 'welcome dance' will generally start the ceremony and welcome all tribes present. This song is performed as a chant repetitively. Jalama is repeated whilst the actions represent 'welcome/coming together/gathering' actions.

**Ugadanji - Kangaroo:** This traditional Aboriginal dance of Australia depicts our most famous native animal - the kangaroo. This dance depicts the animals movements, lifestyle and dreaming. The *ugadanji* (kangaroo) is considered to many tribes as their totem (their dreaming). This song is also performed as a chant along with calls. The song words below are repeated whilst the dancers mimic the ugdanji's (kangaroo) actions:

Ugadanji Mudginba  
Ugadanji Mudginba  
Ngyangli  
Ngyangli

**HE SECRETARY NICOLA HILL: a Maori Poem**

**E Noho E Ata**

E noho e Ata, te hiri o Waikato  
E huri to kanohi ki te Hau-a-uru  
Nga tai e ngunguru i waho te akau  
Aue - hei - aue

Takihia atu ra te moana i Aotea  
Kia whatiwhati koe i te hua o te miro  
Te tihia o Moerangi te puke okiokinga  
Aue - hei - aue

To pikitanga ko te Aho-o-te-rangi  
To heketanga ko Karioi maunga  
To hoe nga ki Whaingaroa  
Aue - hei - aue

Whiua o mata ki Kawhia moana  
Ki Kawhia tai, ki Kawhia tangata  
Ko te kupu tena a ou tupuna  
Aue - hei - aue

E hoe to waka ki Ngaruawahi  
Turangawaewae o te kingitanga  
Ko te kupu whakamutunga a Matutaera  
Aue - hei - aue

**Be seated Te Ata**

Be seated Te Ata, the Queen from Waikato  
Turn your face to the Western shores  
And the waves that surge beyond the reef  
(no translation)

Stroll along the shores of Aotea Bay  
Plucking the fruit of the miro tree  
With the top of Moerangi as your hill on which to rest

You will ascend because of Te Aho-o-te-rangi  
And descend by Karioi Mountain  
To paddle the canoes into Raglan Harbour

Cast your eyes upon Kawhia Bay  
Upon Kawhia shore, and Kawhia the chief  
For those were the words of your ancestor

So paddle your canoe to Ngaruawahi  
The standing place of the Kingdom  
For those were the final words of King Tawhiao

The song is an action song which celebrates the elevation of Te Atairangikaahu as Māori Queen in 1966. It is a song that invites her to travel along the Western boundaries of her tribal zone, and names each place to identify her rule there. It returns to Ngaruawahia which is the seat of the Māori Kingdom and the ancestral home of the people of Waikato of which she is also Paramount Chief. Te Aho-o-te-rangi was an ancestor of hers who lived in the regions she visits in the song.

**A PERFORMANCE BY BASQUE BERTSOLARIAK: GRATIEN ALFARO, JEAN KURUTXET, JESÚS GOÑI, AND MARTÍN GOICOECHEA WITH TRANSLATION BY JOXE MALLEA-OLAETXE**

*Berstolari* poetry is a traditional, oral, improvised popular poetry form with a structured rhythm and meter, recited/sung in Euskara (Basque), the only non-Indo-European language in western Europe (in Eastern Europe Estonian, Finnish, and Hungarian are also non-Indo-European) and one of the oldest linguistic communities in Europe. It is one of the four minority languages in Spain along with Catalan, Galician, and Valencian. The Basque Country (Euskadi), straddles the Pyrenees Mountains on both sides and consists of seven provinces: four on the Spanish side—Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Araba, and Nafarroa, and three on the French side—Lapido, Benafarroa, and Zuberoa. The *bertsolaritza* tradition is practiced by *bertsolariak* (versifiers) in Basque Country, as well as out west in places where there are communities of Basque-speakers, such as Nevada, Wyoming, and San Francisco, and the *People's Poetry Gathering* welcomes *bertsolariak* Martin Goicoechea, Jesús Goñi, Jean Kurutxet, and Gratién Alfaro from the west coast for their first performances in New York City.

It is fitting to present Basque poetry at this *Poetry Gathering* dedicated to the world's endangered and contested languages because language is integral to Basque identity. There is not a word in the Basque language for a "Basque." Basques refer to themselves as Euskaldunak, "speakers of Euskara" (some prefer the spelling "Euskera"), and they refer to their homeland as Euskal Herria, "Land of Basque Speakers" so "it is language that defines a Basque."

**VANESSA FISHER AND JIMMY SMITH: *A Dungibara Story (Translated From the Duungidjawan by Vanessa Fisher)***

Yanjaran-bam ya:ye-nji njinngangurra  
Badja-ru guwe ya:yi minja-nga wane-yu yo:we-ri  
Mana ban wane-ø  
Waga mana galang  
Dadu wane-ø  
Waga  
Minja-nga guwe wane-yu  
Damba mana wane-yu nga:m-bu  
E'e' galang mana  
Damba mana galang  
Mana wura wane-o njunam-gari  
Wanja yo:we yan-gu wa:rre-yu damba mana waga  
yayumba-me  
Nja-o yo:we-ru wanja yo:we di:re-yu yo:ran  
Djan guwe ba-yi ya:-yi guwe mandji yin-ji  
Gari'nji guwe wane-ø  
Waga guwe badja-na ya:ø  
Wane-ø guwe  
Ya-nji guwe mana  
Nginngangurra

Two old women were talking to each other in the creation  
One of them said, "What should (we) leave for our children?"  
"(How about) leaving grass?"  
"That is not good," (one answered).  
"(How about) leaving some trees?"  
"No," came the answer  
"What should (we) leave then?"  
"We will leave a road (for them) (the other woman suggested).  
"Good, that is good!"  
"That road is good."  
That's all right, leave that for the children.  
When they will go and will hunt there is no road there now  
They will see the road when they grow up to be people.  
Then a man came and said that he was a friend.  
Leave it here then.  
Don't say something else.  
Leave it then.  
Then he (the man) went.  
The creation time.

IWAN LLWYD (*translated from the Welsh by the author*)

### Carreg Cennen

(Un o gadarnleoedd yr Arglwydd Rhys ar hyd ddyffryn Tywi. Syrthiodd i ddwylo'r Saeson ym 1282.)

Roedd yn arfer gwarchod y briffordd,  
yn un o gadwyn o gestyll  
ar hyd lannau Tywi:

Y Dryslwyn, Dinefwr ac yma ym  
mhen y dyffryn  
yr uchaf ohonyn nhw i gyd,  
yn cadw llygaid barcud ar y byd:

erbyn heddiw rhaid gadael y briffordd,  
dilyn y lonydd troellog, diarffordd,  
y cefnffyrdd sydd wedi hen adael y map,

sy'n cuddio'n y pantiau tu hwnt i Trap,  
lle mae'n rhaid oedi  
i adael i dractor neu fws fynd heibio:

ac yna gadael y cerbyd a dringo  
heibio'r hwyiaid a'r defaid corniog,  
cyn cyrraedd â dynau'n llawn gwynt:

dim ond bref y gwartheg a chwiban  
sigl-i-gwt,  
ac ymhell, bell uwchben  
awyren a'i chynffon wen

ar y briffordd i'r byd newydd:  
yna un arall, ac un arall ar eich chwt,  
yn hedfan drwy'r machlud ar Dywi:

roedd yr Arglwydd Rhys wedi ei gweld hi -  
mae ei gastell yn dal ar y briffordd o hyd,  
y briffordd aruchel i ben pella'r byd.

### Carreg Cennen

(*One of a string of Welsh castles built by the Lord Rhys along the Tywi valley in Carmarthernshire. It fell to the English during the conquest of 1282.*)

*It was a guardian of the highway,  
one of a fetter of fortresses  
along the banks of the Tywi:*

*The Dryslwyn, Dinefwr and here at  
the head of the valley  
the highest of them all,  
keeping a kite's eye on the land:*

*today you must leave the highway,  
follow the lost, twisted lanes,  
the back-roads that discarded the map,*

*hiding in the hollows beyond Trap,  
where you have to give-way  
to tractors and the occasional bus:*

*and abandon the car and climb  
past the drakes and the long-horned sheep  
before creeping breathless to the summit;*

*no sound but the cattle's low and a  
wagtail's cry,  
and high, high overhead  
an aircraft's white autograph*

*crossing blue to the new world,  
then another, and another on its tail,  
dissecting sunset on the Tywi:*

*the Lord Rhys had a sentinel's eye -  
his fortress still surveys the highway,  
the super-highway to the ends of the earth.*

DR. OFELIA ZEPEDA (translated from the Tohono O'odham by the author)

**Ju:ki**

'Im 'at hu 'i-e-ju: g ta<sup>s</sup>  
kia, <sup>s</sup>a'i si s-toni  
we:s ha'icu 'an 'a<sup>s</sup> 'i pi hoiñag  
mumuwal s-ba:big 'an da'a  
we:s ha'icu 'at 'i-e-ba:bigi.

N-o:g 'o 'ab dahã  
si ta'i mo'ok c ko:<sup>s</sup>  
ñ-we:nag 'o gnhu wo'o kc ko:<sup>s</sup>  
gogs 'at 'am bic ki: we:big  
'e:heg 'o an ga:k  
we:s ha'icu 'at 'i-ba:bigi.

Tk 'e a pi <sup>s</sup>a:muñhim an 'i-dadhiwa g cewagi  
ju: 'at! ju: 'at!  
da'iwu<sup>s</sup> 'at g ñ-o:g  
"me k am ma'i<sup>s</sup>p g ñ-pilkan"  
"me k 'u:i g 'e-hehliga"  
We:s ha'icu 'at hahawa 'i-hoi  
ju: 'at! ju: 'at!  
da'iwu<sup>s</sup> 'at g ñ-we:nag  
da'iwu<sup>s</sup> 'at g gogs  
we:s ha'icu 'at hahawa 'i-hoi.

**Rain**

The sun has moved down that way a bit,  
And yet it is so hot.  
All movement has almost stopped.  
A fly goes by so slowly,  
everything has slowed down.  
My father is sitting there,  
His head is tilted back and he's asleep.  
My sister is laying over there asleep.  
The dog passed by, he is looking  
for shade,  
everything has slowed down.  
And yet the clouds have slowly settled in.  
It's raining, it's raining!  
My father jumps up  
"Run and cover my grain!"  
"Run and get the clothes on the  
line!"  
Everything is now moving and alive.  
My sister is up.  
The dog is up.  
everything is now moving and  
alive.

MARK ABLEY

Glasburyon

1

Shakespeare was an upstart, Dante a dabbler  
compared to Shamil Bakhtasheni -  
he of the snowpeak sagas, the quince-blossom lovesongs  
and a leopard's argument with God. Not a word  
of his work was dipped in printer's ink  
and most of it is long forgotten;  
little wonder, for the master lived  
and died in the Artchi tongue,  
spoken only in a windburnt village  
where Dagestan falls towards the sea. The language  
pleasured Shamil like a lover, giving him  
poetry without an alphabet, listeners  
without a page. His grave is rumored to lie  
among the roots of an apricot tree  
on the scarp of a Caucasian mountain  
where, if you believe the villagers, once  
a month the wind recites his lyrics.

2

She flew from Boston to Port Moresby  
for this: an outboard ferry-ride

past a dripping wall of trees  
to a yet unstudied village where

the Mombum language survives;  
the wall splits open; she clammers out

and strides from the dock, escorted  
by a flock of blue-winged parrots

to find the gathered islanders  
seated on the red soil beside

a reed-thatched bar, watching *Fatal  
Attraction* on satellite TV.

3

Reason tells me it doesn't matter  
if the final speaker of Huron  
goes grey in a suburb of Detroit  
where nobody grasps a syllable  
of his grandmother's tongue.

Reason tells me it's not important  
if Basque and Abenaki join  
the dozens of unproductive  
languages lately disposed of; what's

the big deal, where's the beef?

Reason is scavenging the earth.  
"More, more," it cries. You can't tell it  
to use imagination. You can't  
ask it to stop and listen  
to the absence of Norn.

4

*Tega du meun or glasburyon,*  
*kere friende min -*  
"If you take the girl from the glass castle,  
dear kinsman of mine,"

so a voice claims in a Norn ballad,  
plucked by a rambling scholar  
off the lips of a toothless crofter

he found on a Shetland island  
in 1774; soon the language  
was a mouthful of placenames -

*yamna-men eso vrildan stiende*  
*gede min vara to din.*  
"As long as this world is standing  
you'll be spoken of."

5

That music? It's only  
a wind bruising the chimes  
in a crystal fortress  
high on Mount Echo.

Each time we lose a language.  
the ghosts who made use of it  
cast a new bell.

The voices magnify. Soon,  
listen, they'll outpeal

the tongues of earth.

AONGHAS MACNEACAIL (translated from the Scots Gaelic by the author)

**bial beag**

a bheòil bhig  
an inns thu dhomh nad chànan ùr  
mar a lion  
do mhàthair leat,  
eil cuimhn agad

a bheòil bhig  
an seinn thu dhomh  
nad chànan ùr  
na h-òrain òg  
a thòisich tìm

a bheòil bhig  
an dèan thu cruth  
do bhiathadh dhomh

a bheòil bhig  
dé'n cleas,  
an toir thu tuar  
do latha dhomh

seas, seas  
a bheòil bhig,  
cha tuig mi thu,  
tha eas do lidean  
taomadh orm  
mar dhealain geal  
a sàthadh feòil chruaidh m'fhoghaidinn

a bheòil bhig  
a bheòil bhig,  
an ith thu mi

a bheòil bhig,  
cha tus an aon  
tha gairm do bhith

a bheòil bhig,  
sporain nan fuaim  
nad ròs réidh  
's tu cala 'n t-suain

a bheòil bhig  
nuair a thilleas tu  
a gleann nam balbh  
an inns thu dhaibh  
nach cual thu fòs  
nad chànan ùr  
nach toil leat cràdh

**little mouth**

little mouth,  
tell me  
in your new language how your mother  
filled with you,  
remember that?

little mouth,  
sing to me  
in your new language  
the young songs  
that started time

little mouth  
make for me  
the shape of your feeding

little mouth  
what's the sport,  
give me the colour  
of your day

hold, hold  
little mouth  
too fast for me,  
your syllables  
flood over me  
in torrents of  
white lightning,  
stabbing the hard flesh  
of my patience

little mouth,  
little mouth  
would you eat me?

little mouth,  
you're not the first  
to say *i am*

little mouth  
purse of noises  
still as a rose,  
now harbour of sleep

little mouth  
when you return from  
the dumb glen  
tell those  
who haven't heard  
your new language  
that you don't like pain



**GEARÓID MACLOCHLAINN AND JARLATH HENDERSON:** *a poem by Gearóid MacLochlainn (translated from the Irish by Seamas MacAnnaidh and Gearóid MacLochlainn)*

### Teanga Eile

Mise an teanga  
i mála an fhuadaitheora,  
liopaí fuaite le snáthaid,  
cosa ag ciceáil.

Mise an teanga  
sínte ar bhord an bhúistéara  
in oifigí rialtais, géaga ceangailte,  
corp briste brúite  
curtha faoi chlocha ar chúl claí  
roimh bhreacadh an lae.

Mise an teanga  
a fhilleán san oíche, ceolta sí, Micí Mí-ádh.  
Snámhaim trí na cáblí aibhléise,  
ceolaim os íseal  
i bhfiliméad an bholgáin ar do thábla.  
Eitlím trí na pasáistí dúdhorcha rúnda  
faoin chathair bhriste.

Mise an teanga a sheachnaíonn tú  
ar na bóithre dorcha,  
i dtábhaitní. Croí dubh.

Fanaim ort faoi lampa sráide buí  
ag an choirnéal.  
Leanaim do lorg mar leannán diúltaithe.

Mise an teanga a thostaigh tú.  
Ortha mé,  
i bpóca dubh an fhile choir  
i muinín déirce.

### Second Tongue

*I am the tongue  
in the kidnapper's sack.  
Lips stitched, feet flailing.  
I am the tongue  
bound on the butcher's block  
in government offices,  
a battered, broken corpse  
ditched at dawn.  
I am the tongue  
who comes in the night.  
I am jinx  
swimming through flex  
and electricity cables.  
I sing softly in the element of the bulb  
on your table.  
I am Johnny Dark, Creole.  
I wing through secret pitch-black passageways  
beneath the broken city.  
I am the tongue  
you shun on dark roads, in pubs.  
I am hoodoo  
waiting for you on the corner  
under the yellow street lamp,  
stalking you like a jilted John.  
I am the tongue  
you silenced. I am patois.  
I am mumbo-jumbo, juju,  
a mojo of words  
in the back pocket  
of the weirdo poet  
busking for bursaries.*

CLAR: a song by William Ross, 'S Truagh Nach D' Rugadh Dall Mi (in Scots Gaelic)

### 'S Truagh Nach D' Rugadh Dall Mi

Is truagh nach d' rugadh dall mi  
Gun chainnt is gun lèirsinn  
Mas fhac' mi t'aghaidh bhaindidh  
Rinn aimhleas nan ceudan  
Bho'n chunnaic mi bho thùs thu  
Bu chliùteach do bheusan  
Gum b' fhasa leam am bàs  
Na bhith làthair as t'eugmhais

*Oh that I were born blind  
Without speech and sight  
Before I saw your feminine face  
Which has been the ruin of hundreds  
From when I first saw you  
Your conduct was renowned  
It would be easier for me to die  
Than to live without you*

#### *chorus*

Filoro, filoro, filoro hug eile  
Filoro, filoro, filoro hug eile  
Air fail ili o agus ho ro hug eile  
Chan fhaigh mi cadal sàmhach  
A ghràidh, 's gun thu rèidh rium

*Filoro, filoro, filoro hug eile  
Filoro, filoro, filoro hug eile  
Air fail ili o agus ho ro hug eile  
I will not sleep soundly  
My love, if we are not reconciled*

Gur binne leam do chòmhradh  
Na smeòrach nan geugan  
Na cuach 's a mhadainn Mhàighe  
Neo clàrsach nan teudan  
No'n t-easbaig air Latha Dòmhnach  
'S am mòr-shluagh ga èisteachd  
Neo ged a chunntadh stòras  
Na h-Eòrpa gu lèir dhomh

*Sweeter is your conversation to me  
Than the thrush of the branches  
Or the cuckoo on a May morning  
Or the stringed harp  
Or the bishop on Sunday  
And the assembled crowd listening to him  
Or if I counted all the riches  
Of Europe as my own*

Is truagh nach robh mi fàgail  
An t-saoghail seo ro chianail  
Bha dòchas faoin gam thàladh  
'S e'n gaol rinn mo dhìobhail  
Ge fada bhuam a shiubhlas tu  
Ri m' bheò bhithinn riut dileas  
'S nuair thigeadh Latha na Cruinne  
'S i Mòr Ros a dh'iarrainn

*Oh that I were able to leave  
This awful world  
Foolish hope beguiled me  
It was love which destroyed me  
Though you may travel far from me  
All my life I would be faithful to you  
And when the Day of Reckoning would come  
It would be Marion Ross I would want*

A song of unrequited love from the Skye-born poet William Ross, who was reputed to have died of a broken heart when the object of his affection - Marion Ross - headed for Liverpool to marry another. Ross actually died of tuberculosis, a far less romantic fate.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सन्गोस्तु+अकर्मणि

ॐ पूरणमदः पूरणमदिम्  
पूरणात् पूरणमुदच्यते  
पूरणस्य पूरणमादाय  
पूरणमेव+अवशषियते

ॐ असतोमा सत्+गमय  
तमसोमा ज्योतिर्+गमय  
मृत्योर्मा अमृतम्+गमय

ॐ भूर्+भुवत्+सुवः  
ॐ तत्+सवतिः वरेण्यम्  
भर्गोः देवस्य धीमहि  
धियो योनः प्रचोदयात्

That is Full; This is full  
The full comes out of the full  
When the full is taken from the full,  
What remains is full.

Lead me:  
From untruth to truth  
From darkness to light  
From mortality to eternity

To work alone art thou entitled but not to its fruit  
Do not aspire the results, nor desist from doing your duty.

Remove pain, sorrow; Conquer destruction  
Bestow on us creation, life and happiness  
Give us that supreme light and divinity  
Illuminate our intellect and creativity to lead us along the righteous path.  
Peace, Peace, Peace

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