

## TEXTS

Nigel BUTTERLEY (b. 1935)

### **Carmina: Four Latin Poems of Spring**

(1968, rev. 1990)

**1. The Passing of Winter** - Pentadius c.290 CE  
I feel the passing of winter. The western breezes  
make the world live again, and already over the  
waters Eurus spreads his warmth; I feel the  
passing of winter.

All the countryside is budding as the soil takes in  
the heat. All the countryside is budding with fresh  
sprouts.

The turf thickens in its joy, and the trees put on  
their leaves. In the valleys lying open to the sun  
the turf thickens in its joy.

The East Winds's breath embroiders the ground  
with countless flowers. The Tempean valleys are  
fragrant with countless flowers.

Clusters of wine-grapes swell among the  
surrounding elms. Among the entwined leaves  
the clusters of wine-grapes swell.

**2. The Little Dog** - Luxorius (c 500 CE)

My puppy dog is tiny, but lovable for that, and I  
can hold her in my cupped hand - all of her.

She will run up obediently at her master's voice,  
chattering away, and jumping about with almost  
human movements.

She is a perfect specimen all over; when people  
see her they all like her little frame.

She needs rather fine food and sleeps on soft  
straw.

She is hostile to mice and more cruel to them  
than a cat.

She wards off strong animals with her quite  
remarkably piercing bark. If nature allowed it,  
she'd be able to speak eloquently.

**3. The Salmon** - Ausonius (310-395 CE)

You too, salmon, swim in the Moselle, your  
reddish flesh glistening. The rambling strokes of  
your broad tail in the deeper parts of the stream  
are reflected in the upper water, and thus your  
secret movements are revealed at the smooth  
surface. You are clothed in mail, with your scaly  
breast and slippery front - one of these days you  
will be a dish at dinner. You can be kept for a  
long time without spoiling. You are distinguished  
by the spots on your head. Your fertile womb  
sways this way and that, and with a full belly,  
your paunch relaxes.

**4. By the River in Spring** - Tiberianus (c.355 CE)

The broad river, winding through the cool valley,  
flowed through the fields, laughing with the gleam  
of its pebbles, and bordered by flowers and  
grass. The caressing murmur of a breeze  
overhead kept gently moving the dark green  
laurels and flourishing myrtles. Underneath them  
flowers in bloom had sprung up through the pliant  
turf. The ground was ruddy with saffron and white  
with lilies, and the whole grove was fragrant with  
violets, and thick with dew and damp grass. Here  
and there gurgled little streams running from an  
abundant spring. There was moss inside the  
caves and fresh myrtles wound about; here, as  
the running water went by, it left transparent  
drops. In these shadowy places all the birds were  
singing springtime songs and softly warbling,  
more melodiously than you can imagine. The  
voice of the chattering stream sang in concert  
with the leaves, and the muse of the zephyr  
added to them the tune of the breeze. Thus birds,  
stream, breeze, grove, flowers and shade  
delighted whoever strolled among the green  
beauty; the scents and the music.

Translations by Terence Goodall

## Esa-Pekka SALONEN **Floof** [AP]

Ah ih oh  
Ah – ah- ah  
Phlophlophlophlo  
Rhorhorho  
Momomomomo  
Phlogisticosh Phlogisticosh Phlogisticosh  
Ah  
Rhomothriglyph  
Ah  
Phlogisticoshrhomothriglyph  
Ah Ah Ah  
Floof!

Pec't o'tay  
Merlong gumin got s'  
Untle yun furly pääzzen ye.  
Confre an'ayzor ots,  
Bither de furloss bochre blee!  
Blee!

A-e-a-e-a-e-a-e-a-ha  
A-ha-he-hu-ha-he-hu-he-hi  
Ha-he-ho-hi-ha-hu-ha-hi-ho-he-hu-ha-ha  
Mockeles  
Fent on silpen tree  
Blockards three a feening  
Mockles  
What silps come to thee  
In thy pantry dreaming

Seduced shaggy Samson snored  
She scissored short Sorchy shorn  
Soon shackled slave  
Samson sighed  
Silently scheming  
Sightlessly seeking  
Some savage spectacular suicide

Ah  
Come, let us hasten to a higher plane  
Where dyads tread the fairy fields of Venn  
Their indices bedecked from one to  $n$ ,

Commingled in an endless Markov chain!  
Come, every frustrum longs to be a cone,  
And every vector dreams of matrices.  
Hark to the gentle gradient of the breeze:  
It whispers of a more ergodig zone.  
In Riemann, Hilbert or in Banach space  
Let super scripts and subscripts  
Go their ways.

Our asymptotes no longer out of phase,  
We shall encounter, counting,  
Face to face.  
I'll grant thee random access to my heart,  
Thou'lt tell me all the constants of my love;  
And so we two shall all love's lemmas prove,  
And in our bound partition never part.  
For what did Cauchy know,  
Or Christoffel,  
Or Fourier,  
Or any Boole or Erler,  
Wielding their compasses,  
Their pens and rulers,  
Of thy supernal sinusoidal spell?  
Cancel me not  
For what then shall remain?  
Abscissas, some mantissas, modules, modes,  
A root or two,  
A torus and a mode:  
The inverse of my verse,  
A null domain.

Ellipse of bliss, converge,  
O lips divine!  
The proctuct of your scalars is defined!  
Cyberiad draws nigh,  
And the skew mind  
Cuts capers like a happy haversine.  
I see the eigenvalue in thine eye  
I hear the tender tensor in thy sigh  
Beroulli would have been content to die  
Had he but know such  
Floof!

*Stanislaw Lem*

From THE CYBERIAD: THE FIRST SALLY or TRURL'S ELECTRONIC  
BARD Translated from the Polish by Michael Kandel  
Copyright by the Continuum Publishing Corporation