

All tracks translated from the original Otrichophon into English by Foster Pop. Special thanks to Pros, Martin Espada, tZara, Breton, Amiri Baraka, Pablo Neruda, Codrescu, Audre Lorde, Plath, Prevert, Cesaire, Loud, Paz, and the lost names who left behind some words. This is an unlicensed production of TFIP. All copyrights and dollar signs are hereby revoked. Come and get us. 9XMAS7.

EVENING

fishermen return with the stars of the waters
they pass out bread to the poor
thread beads for the blind
emperors stroll out into parks at this hour which is as bitter and precise as
some old engraving

servants barthe hunting hounds
the light is putting on gloves
so shut the window
put out the light in your window as you would spit out the pit of an apricot
a priest from his church

good lord: weave soft wood for melancholy lovers
dip little chickadees in ink and clean the face of the moon

--let's catch beetles
and put them in a box
--let's go down by the riverside
to make earthen jugs
--let's hug
beside the fountain
--let's loiter in the public park
until cockcrow
and the town's up in arms

or in the granary
the hay prickles there we hear the cows moo
as they think about their little ones
let's make it

--Tristan Tzara

YOUTH

Acid and sword blade: the fragrance
of plum in the pathways
tooth's sweetmeat of kisses,
power and spilt on the fingers,
the yielding erotic of pulps,
hayricks and threshing floors, clandestine
recesses that tempt through the vastness of houses,
bolsters asleep in the past, the bitter green valley,
seen from above, from the glasses' concealment,
and drenching and flaring by turns, adolescence
like a lamp overturned in the rain.

--Pablo Neruda

CROTON

The rails along the eastern side of the Hudson are flattened from the weight of enormous freight trains that for decades have delivered cargo to factories and mills throughout the region. Passenger trains must travel at slow speeds because the rails are so worn and curve as the river curves. If odometers rise, the risk of derailment increases dramatically.

There are men who spend their lives examining the tracks like kids reaching for flattened pennies. Sometimes they have no choice but to sound the alarm--halt all trains.

"All trains go nowhere today. The passengers already on board and those on the platform must wait for a bus that will take you on your way to your destination. We estimate that you will arrive 30 to 40 minutes after the train would have pulled into your end station.

"You will be reimbursed for this inconvenience with vouchers for future rides.

"All trains go nowhere today. The rail inspector has detected a groove, a beam, a tie, a jutting rock, a penny that didn't flatten and any train that attempts to pass faces a dramatic increase in the risk of derailment. We would be democratic and hold a vote. But it is our liability, our obligation and

"there are few, including myself, who could completely understand the nature of the problem and the extenuating circumstances of braving a crossing. This is a decision made solely by the inspector, whose responsibility it is to ascertain the state of the rails.

He is the ultimate green and the ultimate yellow and the ultimate red. Today he is red. The inspector has done his job without malice and without ulterior motive. He had done his job just

as he has on other days when he has been the ultimate green. He has made a purely rational, objective decision to halt all trains.

“Ladies and gentlemen, all trains go nowhere today. When the bus arrives please remain orderly and check your bags with the driver before boarding. The more orderly you are the faster you will reach your final destination. We do apologize for any inconvenience this

“may cause. We realize that you all have
things to do
places to be
meetings to make

We know your time is valuable. Space is compressed time. Waiting is suffering. We are all wanting to get to the next some

“where though our reasons vary. Life I believe is about reaching those destinations. The middle is better left to card games, newspapers, sleepy time--diversions, things that fill the getting there. Means are accidents of ends. Ladies and gentlemen, we apologize for this momentary focus on the means. We are no longer, right now, getting there by

“train. All trains go nowhere today. Today we ask you to take the bus. The bus will arrive in another moment of two. In another moment or two, we will ask you to orderly de-train and to line up beside the bus. Beside the bus, please check your luggage--due to spatial limitations your luggage will not be allowed in the seating area.

“If you have no luggage please be patient. You will be seated. No one can leave until everyone can leave. That is the law of the bus. The law of the trains is different that the law of the bus. And it is the bus that will take you to your final destination today. This was not planned

“but it happened. Please do not contest the decision of the inspector. Today instead of risking the rail, we ask you to risk the highway. Our drivers are skilled, competent, well-paid drivers who have many incentives to bring you and, might I add, themselves, safely and timely to your final destination.

“Please have faith in your driver. Until the bus arrives you have a choice to ride it or to stay here in Croton. If you decide to ride, you commit your autonomy to the driver. Please have faith in your driver. Everything will work out. We have already avoided a potential tragedy; we have already played the safe hand. Now you will win the deck. You will carry on. You will make this passage, this commute, this connection between two points, two moments, two galleries of here.

“Ladies and gentlemen, the bus has arrived. The bus that you will board for the remainder of your travel this morning. Ladies and gentlemen, all trains go nowhere today. Inspector’s orders. The inspector has lit the universal red. The inspector is red. Ladies and gentlemen, please

gather your belongings and carefully de-train. the bus is waiting across the platform, down the stairs, beside the station entrance in the bus only zone.

“The bus will take you to your final destination. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. We will reimburse you with vouchers for future travel on the train. If all goes well, if the railway crew can repair the rail, then tomorrow the train will once again offer you passage across the chasm of heres. We will again flatten the pennies left on the tracks by the children. Ladies and gentlemen, the bus is waiting.”

--Geoffrey Kuffner

This was created and performed for Tzara, Radioactive Grassroots Bingo, for an audience of 500,000. We'd recorded the JMZ train overhead at Pitt Street and slowed it down to 1/12 the speed. At some point the show changed into a train, then stopped and Croton happened. Thanks to all the Tzara folks and to Laurence who's generosity in buying the word "Kafkaesque" kept us fully funded. It was also the basis for a piece performed at the Unity Festival in Plattsburg a year later.

THE URGES

When the urge to strip becomes too much i rub against a tree until it passes back into that core of myself where, beside stripping, urges such as bashing someone's head in, lie still waiting for signs to proceed. Every day i look for incidents. My heart is a bomb with a very fine trigger. Sometimes a hair falls on my nipple and BOOM! the desire to strip or kill is loose and, look out, i've got my eye on you. Rubbing against trees is my only defense against myself. I smell like bark and there is a rustle of leaves when i pass.

--Andrei Codrescu

THEY COME TO DANCE

An aged bondo-spackled Buick
pushes dust around its wheels
as it slithers up Brooklyn Avenue
toward La Tormenta, bar and dance club.

The Buick pulls up to clutter
along a cracked sidewalk
beneath a street lamp's yellow luminance
A man and a woman in their late 30s
pour out of a crushed side door.

They come to dance.

The man wears an unpressed suit and baggy pants:

K-mart specials.

She is overweight

in a tight blue dress

the slits up the side

reveal lace and panty hose

They come with passion-filled bodies,

factory-torn *ropa vieja*

They come to dance the workweek away

as a soft rain begins to buffet

the club's steamed windows.

women in sharp silk dresses and harsh,

painted-on makeup crowd the entrance.

Winos stare at the women's flight across

upturned streets

and up wooden stairs

Men in slacks and cowboy shirts

or cheap polyester threads

walk alone or in pairs.

"?Oye compa, que pues?

Aqui, no mas, de oquis . . ."

Outside La Tormenta's doors

Patrons line up to a van dispensing tacos

while a slightly opened curtain

reveals figures gyrating

to a beat bouncing off strobe lit walls

They come to dance and remember

the way flesh feels flush

against a cheek

and how a hand opens slightly,

shaped like a seashell,

in the small

of a back.

They come to dance

and forget
the pounding humm
of an assembly line
While the boss' grating throat
tells everyone to go back to work
over the moans of a woman
whose finger dangles
in a glove

They come to dance
Former peasants. Village kings.
City squatters. High-headed princesses.

The man and woman lock the car doors
and go through La Tormenta's weather-stained
curtain leading into
curing smoke.

Inside the buick are four children
They rest their faces
against the water-streaked glass
and cry through large eyes,
mirrors of a distant ocean.

--Luis J. Rodriguez

No Grounds for Prosecution

Art of days art of nights
The scale of wounds called Pardon
Red scale that quivers under the weight of a wing
When the snow-necked horsemen with empty hands
Push their vaporous chariots across the meadows
I see this scale jumping madly up and down
I see the graceful ibis
Returning from the pool laced within my heart
The wheels of the charming dream and its splendid ruts
Mounting high upon the shells of their dresses
And surprise bounding wildly over the sea
Depart my darling dawn forget nothing of my life
Take these roses creeping in the mirror-well
Take every beating of every lid

Take everything down to the threads that hold the steps of rope
and waterdrop dancers
Art of days art of nights
I stand before a distant window in a city filled with horror
Outside men with stovepipe hats follow one another at regular intervals
Like the rains I loved
When the weather was fine
"The Wrath of God" was the name of the cabaret I entered last night
It was written on the white facade in even whiter letters
But the mermaids gliding behind the windows
Are too happy to be afraid
Never bodies here always the assassin without proof
Never the sky always the silence
Never freedom but for freedom

--Andre Breton

Das Kapital

Strangling women in the suburban bush
their bodies laid around rotting while martinis are drunk
the commuters looking for their new yorkers feel a draft
& can get even drunker watching the teevee later on the Ford
replay. There will be streams of them coming, getting off
near where the girls got killed. Two of them strangled by
the maniac
There are maniacs hidden everywhere can't you see? By the
dozens
and double dozens, maniacs by the carload (tho they are
a minority). But they terrorize us uniformly, all over the place
we look at the walls of our houses, the garbage cans parked full
strewn around our defaulting cities, and we cd get scared. A rat
eases past us on his way to a banquet, can you hear the cheers
raised
through the walls, full of rat humor. Blasts of fire, some woman's
son will stumble
and dies with a pool of blood around his head. But it won't be the
maniac. These old houses
crumble, the unemployed stumble by us straining, ashy fingered,
harassed. The air is cold
winter heaps above us consolidating itself in degrees. We need an aspirin or
something, and

pull our jackets close. The baldhead man on the television set goes on in a
wooden way
his unappetizing ignorance cannot be stood, or understood. The people
turn the channel.
looking for Good Times and get a negro with a pulldown hat. Flashes of
maniac shadows before
bed, before you pull down the shade you can see the leaves being blown
down the street
too dark now to see the writing on them, the dates, and amounts we owe
The streets too
will soon be empty, after the church goes on home having been saved
again from the
Maniac. . . except a closeup of the chief mystic's face rolling down to his
hands will send
shivers through you, looking for traces of the maniacs life. Even there among
the mythophrenics.

What can you do? It's time finally to go to bed. the shadows close around
and the room is till.
Most of us know there's a maniac loose. Our lives a jumble of frustrations
and unfilled
capacities. The dead girls, the rats noise, the flashing somber lights, the dead
voice on
television, was that blood and hair beneath the preacher's fingernails? A few
other clues

we mull them over as we go to sleep, the skeletons of dollarbills, traces of
dead used up
labor, lead away from the death scene until we remember a quiet fit that
everywhere
is the death scene. Tomorrow you got to hit it sighs through us like the
wind, we got to
hit it, like an old song at radio city, working for the yanqui dollarr, when
we were
children, and then we used to think it was not the wind, but the maniac
scratching against
our windows. Who is the maniac, and why everywhere at the same time.

--Amiri Baraka

On the Butterfly's

On the butterfly's wings--engraved,
the equilibrium of dust
blooms--

the alphabet
and the flowers
 for you, announce
a new time of sorrow--

(while the poppy seed stitches
his scarlet wound)

--Philippe Denis

Naming the Stories

Otter and quaking aspens
the set of a full cleansing moon
castle walls crumble
in silence
visions trapped by the wild stone
lace up the sky pale electric fire
no sound
but a soft expectation of birds
calling the night home.

Half asleep bells
mark a butterfly's birth
over the rubble
I crawl into dawn
corn woman bird girl sister
calls from the edge of a desert
where it is still night
to tell me her story
survival.

Rock speaks a rooster language
and the light is broken
clear.

-Audre Lorde

Child

Your clear eye is the one absolutely beautiful thing
I want to fill it with color and ducks.
The zoo of the new

Whose names you meditate--
April snowdrop, Indian pipe,
Little

Stalk without wrinkle
Pool in which images
Should be grand and classical

Not this troublous
Wringing of hands, this dark
Ceiling without a star.

Work

at night the day is constantly woken up
by exploding dream objects
until our days are tired
and collapse on our hearts like loud
zippers breaking in the middle.
i sleep in the daytime with my head on the piano.
i sleep at night too standing on the roof.
i sleep all the sleep that is given me plus
the sleep of those who can't sleep and the sleep
of great animals who lie wounded
and unable to sleep.
i'm dead tired from the work everyone does
ceaselessly around me, from the work the morning
crowds are going to do after they are thrown up
by the thousand mouths of toast and cologne
into the buses and subways,
from the work the plants do to get water
from the labors of beasts looking for meat
from the labors of speaking replying writing
from the work going on inside me with a million
greedy cells beating the shit out of each other
from the work of the sun turning around
and the earth turning around it.
i'm tired in general and sleepy in particular.

i have a great desire to move elsewhere.

--Andrei Codrescu

Pater Noster

Our Father who art in heaven
Stay there
And we'll stay here on earth
Which is sometimes so pretty
With its mysteries of New York
And its mysteries of Paris
At least as good as that of the Trinity
With its little canal at Ourcq
Its great wall of China
Its river at Morlaix
Its candy canes
With its Pacific Ocean
And its two basins in the Tuileries
With its good children and bad people
With all the wonders of the world
Which are here
Simply on the earth
Offered to everyone
Strewn about
Wondering at the wonder of themselves
And daring not avow it
As a naked pretty girl dares not show herself
With the world's outrageous misfortunes
Which are legion
With legionaries
With torturers
With the masters of this world
The masters with their priests their traitors and their troops
With the seasons
With the years
With the pretty girls and with the old bastards
With the straw of misery rotting in the steel
of cannons.

--Jacques Prevert

The Lover of a Subversive is also a Subversive

The lover of a subversive
Is also a subversive
The painter's companero was a conspirator,
Revolutionary convicted
To haunt the catacombs of federal prison
For the next half century
When she painted her canvas
On the beach, the FBI man
Squatted behind her
On the sand, muddying his dark gray suit
And kissing his walkie-talkie,
A pallbearer who missed
The funeral train.

The painter who paints a subversive
Is also a subversive
In her portrait of him, she imagines
His long black twist of hair. In her portraits
Of herself, she wears a mask
Or has no mouth. She must sell the canvases,
For the FBI man ministered solemnly
To the principal at the school
Where she once taught.

The woman who grieves for a subversive
Is also a subversive
The FBI man is a pale-skinned apparition
Staring in the market
She could reach for him
And only touch a pillar of ash
Where the dark gray suit had been.

If she hungers to touch her lover,
She must brush her fingers
On moist canvas.

The lover of a subversive
Is also a subversive
When the beach chilled cold,
And the bright stumble of tourists
Deserted, she and the FBI man
Were left alone with their spying glances,
As he waited calmly
For the sobbing to begin,
And she refused to sob.

--Martin Espada

waist

– Loud Josh

Son of Thunder

And without her even trying to seduce the jailers
at her bosom a bouquet of hummingbirds exfoliated
at her ears buds of atolls sprouted
she speaks to me a language so soft that at first I do not understand but eventually I
guess she is assuring me
that spring has come counter-current
that all thirst is quenched that autumn is kindly disposed
that the stars in the street have blossomed at high noon and dangle their fruits
very low

--Aime CeSaire

Into the hat
she placed her cargo
from the night before

Into the hat
she placed the amorphous
faces she'd been witness to

(she'd choose every single one
if it came to that)

Into the hat
she placed ballerinas, her
consciousness of age, time & place

and the taste of lemon
still on her tongue
She placed these things

into the hat
beside her clothes and skin

And plunged deep
into the blue mattresses
discarded on the street
waterlogged from the rains
The bluing surface with cigarette holes
she swam through. Found her way
to the drain
red, green, under sky

sun-
rise

--Geoffrey Kuffner

Procession in Lima: 1947

There were many to shoulder
the idol: multitudes
packed into queues and
debouching like sea water
phosphorescent with purple.

Dancing and leaping and grinding
their teeth on a ritual mumble
in a merging of voices: fish-fry and chicken-gut
and dour tambourines.

Lavender waistcoats and lavender
shoes, hats smutty
with violet,
avenues brimming like rivers
with the sick and the pustulant
that emptied their filth
on the impotent glass of cathedrals.
A thing inexhaustibly
sad, like the incense, an extravagant
rabble of ulcers
wounding the onlooker, that merged
with the aphrodisiacal fire
and fused in a sea of the living.

I looked long: at the swag-bellied
landholders, sweaty with surplises,
scratching the droplets
of hallowing sperm from their neckbands.
Saw the slovenly worm
in the mountain's sterility,
the Indian faces supine among platters
and cannikins; mild llamas
and llama-boys, the gaunt
virgins that languish in sacristies,
parochial school masters
blue-faced and hunger-marked.
Narcotic with dancing,
stamping their feet on invisible
drums, the negroes moved on
in their amethyst nightgowns.
A country was beating its breastbone--
the whole of Peru, with its gaze
on an idol, sky-blue and roseate,
our lady of niceties
parting their heads like a sea
in her shallop of sugar-stick
and swelling a sweltering air.

--Pablo Neruda

Two Bodies

Two bodies face to face
are at times two waves
and night is an ocean.

Two bodies face to face
are at times two stones
and night is a desert.

Two bodies face to face
are at times two roots
laced into night.

Two bodies face to face
are at times two knives
and night strikes sparks.

Two bodies face to face
are two stars falling
in an empty sky.

--Octavio Paz