



Chandramohan s



Love across babel tongues.

Section 1

After reading the poem aloud ,
smitten by her aftertaste

The translator approaches
the poem - like a boy approaching
a girl at the dance floor.

They share a pelvic giggle-
a grinding dance
to the sounds of their poems read aloud.

Section 2

Some poems are usurped from
From their natal homes



They adorn their attire and learn the accent,
Of their new homes
Like being inscribed into traditional meter and rhyme
With a vow of not uttering
A word in an alien tongue
Even at the pinnacle of ecstasy.

Section 3

A poem and its translated pair
Like a pair of lopsided breasts,
Not identical but fraternal twins
Their veins coursing parallel streams of blood,
As if the translator trans-created the poem.

Section 4

I write from left to right.
She writes from right to left
(or vice versa).
Our calligraphy meet
at the middle of a tunnel.

Section 5

“Novels, in general, were heterosexual, whereas poetry was completely homosexual; I guess short stories were bisexual, although he didn't say so.” - Roberto Bolano

When loving a translated poem
I run the risk of outraging the modesty
Of some poetic forms.



Attempting to translate some poems
Is like making love to a capricious mistress
In time's crevasse between word bricks
At abandoned construction sites.

Section 6

During translations
Many rivers cross
The rolling spine of logic
Never completing the circuit,
Like birds perching on
Adjacent electric wires.

Section 7

A translated poem is always in-transit
Like a flock of migratory birds
Scripting calligraphy of desire in a cloudless sky.

This cloudless sky breaks into blank pages
For each translator to script his own poem
In the meter of camaraderie
With his fraternity.

Section 8

I see the poem
And its translated pair across the page
As if they are on a double- bed.

I always imagine a third poem



A perfect translation of the first
Like a statue of a woman
Chiselled in unwrinkled time.

There are three poems across the pages.

Section 9

Different versions of a translated text
Translating into dissimilar fonts of a praxis
Each verse claiming to be the trigger-slogan
to be chanted to sway a snowballing crowd
Like different constellations feuding
Over naming a unitary red star.

Section 10

The empire has ebbed-
The not so emaciated waistline of a patriarch
I see the language in a dim twilight
Drawing its strength from its shadow
Like a tall yesteryear monument.

NOTE : Section 7 ; the image draws inspiration from a poem by George R- an acclaimed poet in Malayalam.

Chandramohan S is an Indian English Dalit poet based in Trivandrum, Kerala. His poems were shortlisted for Srinivas Rayaprol Poetry Prize 2016. His second collection of poems titled “*Letters to Namdeo Dhasal*” was a runner up at M.HARISH GOVIND memorial prize instituted by Poetry Chain, Trivandrum. A few of his poems have been used at many protest in addition to being anthologized in 40 poets under 40 (edited by Nabina Das and Semeen Ali). He was instrumental in organizing literary meets of English poets of Kerala for the Ayyappa Panicker Foundation.