Each category hopes to find something different in a translation. For readers in the first category, the freest of translations is acceptable, even desirable — the idiom should be that of the language into which the work is translated. This is the most numerous category of readers.

The student needs the most literal rendering that is possible, and he is helped to grasp the implications of the different syntax and the correct use of unfamiliar words.

The third, a small category of reader, looks for some souvenir of the past, a translation which sounds like a translation. Bad translators like this sort of work — it gives them the warm reassuring feeling that they are not the worst in the world.

The fourth category of reader, who knows well the style and manner of the original, may be either embittered and hypercritical, or really enjoy both the original and the contribution made to it by the translator. Unfortunately, writers and translators cannot choose their readers. Perhaps this is just as well.

But it would be ungrateful of me not to admit that the years I have devoted to literary translation have given me great pleasure. If I have not had much satisfaction from my readers, I have certainly had a great deal from meeting the writers whose work I have translated. Writers do not usually like each other; any more than young girls seek the company of other young girls. Being a translator in the countries where the authors of the originals live is rather like being a nun in a night club. Nobody fears competition from a foreign translator — the reverse is true. A translator, like a nun, may well be useful in other ambiances.

Anyway, translation becomes a sort of disease, for which translators have not yet found a cure. We say of the art, with Catullus:

Odi et amo, quare id faciam fortasse requiris, nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.

Let somebody else translate that!

- Editor's Note: May we suggest Geoffrey Cooke's Love & Hate (Outrigger Special No. 3).
pleasure of lying in bed. Then he would put on his dressing gown, go to
the toilet, and slowly eat his food. There was no need to hurry; he had all
the time in the world. After the meal he went to the lounge, and sat there
till eleven o'clock, looking at the view. It did not change much.

At eleven, his wife had a cup of tea ready. She read the newspaper while
they were drinking tea. After this, it was time for a nap before lunch. At
noon, his wife would wake him, to get ready for it. He enjoyed the
wash, and getting dressed. After all, the postman might see him, or the
gardener. Mostly, though, it was possible to watch them without being
seen.

After lunch, he would have another nap, this time somewhat longer
than in the morning. At four, his wife would wake him up with a cup of
tea. He would have another wash, and get dressed again. Then he went to
the lounge, and sat there till six o'clock, looking at the view if it remained
light. The view did not change much. If it got dark before six o'clock,
he had another nap, without changing his clothes.

After tea, he would retire to the lounge. Simply to sit down, and
enjoy his rest. Occasionally he would go to the toilet. And the evening
did not last very long, for at nine o'clock he drank another cup of tea,
and after that he went to bed.

After a few months, George began to complain to his wife that he did not
feel well. He had become increasingly taciturn, but his interest in his health
gave his conversation a new lease of life. 'I do not feel well, dear,' he
said one day, quite suddenly, while he was looking at the view after his
nap. The next day, he repeated his words in the afternoon, under the same circumstances. His wife advised him to see a doctor, but George would not hear of it. He felt no pain, he said.

But on the third day, George said at several odd moments that he did not feel well. Before his wife could reply, he added that he felt no pain, and that there was no need to see a doctor.

A fortnight after he had first said it, George kept saying that he did
not feel well. His naps would not come so easily to him now, though his
wife suggested that he needed rest. He would sometimes omit his
morning nap, saying all the time that he did not feel well, and then go to bed, quite

exhausted, in the afternoon. His wife then got time to get on with the
housework, but after a week or so George stayed up all day, following her
round the house while she tried to do her chores, saying all the time that he
did not feel well.

After putting up with this for a month or so, his wife called the
doctor. The doctor examined George, and sent him to hospital. After a
fortnight or so we saw him again, and I asked him what had been the
matter. 'Did you have any pain?' I asked. George shook his head. 'Just
not feeling too good,' I said. George nodded.

From then on, George spent almost all his time in bed. His wife came out
of the house occasionally, to get the messages. I always asked her how
George was. 'Not too well,' she would say. It wasn't that he was feeling
any pain, but he said he could not get out of bed, and needed a rest.

Then one morning, while the birds sang because it was spring,
George suddenly died. He had been staring at the wall facing him, while
he was enjoying his rest before breakfast. His newspaper lay
unopened beside him. His wife found him there when he didn't turn up for
breakfast, for which he always got up, even at the end, except on that day.
After the funeral, I asked her if George had had any pain. She said that he
hadn't, but that he had been saying for a long time that he didn't feel too
well, and that he needed a rest.

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