

**Chemin de Fer**

Poplars. Church Spires. Cemeteries. A willow bent to a pond.  
An apple orchard in which a wooden ladder  
Still stands – a capital A with rungs. Our train  
Slows to trace a curve that honours  
Engineer and mountain. The rhythm, the repetition,  
Now lulls the eager eye and the  
Gift of dozing is taken. Tunnels are dream  
Entrances and exits and the names of announced stations are  
Remedies for the heart far from or near its destination.

*Peter Bakowski*

**Eisenbahn**

Pappeln. Kirchtürme. Friedhöfe. Eine Weide zum Teich gebeugt.  
Apfel-Obstgarten in dem noch eine Holzleiter  
Steht - ein großes A mit Sprossen. Unser Zug  
Stockt langsam um einer Kurve zu folgen, in  
Anerkennung an Ingenieur und Berg. Der Rhythmus, die Wiederholung be-  
Gütigt jetzt das neugierige Auge und  
Irgendwie kommt der Schlummer. Tunnel sind  
Eingänge und Ausgänge der Träume und die Namen der angekündigten Bahnhöfe sind  
Rastplätze für das Herz, noch weit entfernt oder schon nah am Ziel.

*Peter Bakowski*

Translated into German by

**Ulrike Krenz-Fisher and Claudia Schneider**

## **The courage season**

The days. You try to settle them in diaries, but they can't be  
Herded, tamed. They're here to counter, perhaps best  
Each chess move, your ability to push out from dead corners.

Curiosity, action and laughter are contagious as are their  
Opposites. At crucial times you'll need to go out on a limb to  
Understand the landscape, to see the outlines of false paths.  
Risk being a tightrope walker rather than a pedestrian. It's  
A case of attitude over altitude.  
Go beyond data, dithering, staring at photographs of dead  
Explorers. Today awaits your focus, imprint and bold steps.

Some self-examination is what the moral doctor ordered.  
Excuses are crutches. Let them clatter to the ground.  
A balance is sought but there are tremors, shifts, seizures.  
Solutions come to the alert, the open-minded, excited by  
Obstacles rather than dismayed. Perhaps right now there's  
No-one more in need of surprising than yourself.

***Peter Bakowski***

## **La saison du courage**

Les jours. Tu cherches à les ranger dans l'agenda, mais ils refusent d'être assemblés, apprivoisés. Ils sont faits pour contrer, voire surpasser tous les coups sur l'échiquier, ta capacité à échapper aux angles morts.

La curiosité, l'action et le rire sont contagieux à l'instar de leurs contraires. À certains moments cruciaux, il te faudra tenter le diable pour comprendre le paysage, voir les contours des mauvaises pistes. Risque le funambulisme plutôt que la balade. Favorise une attitude aux dépens de l'altitude. Dépasse les données, les hésitations, les photos d'explorateurs morts. Le présent exige concentration, empreinte et pas décisifs.

Un peu d'introspection, a prescrit le docteur de la morale.  
Les excuses sont des béquilles. Fracasse-les.  
On cherche un équilibre, mais quid des séismes, glissements et attaques.  
Les solutions apparaissent aux esprits ouverts et alertes, stimulés plutôt que consternés par les obstacles. Il n'existe peut-être à cette heure personne qui n'ait plus besoin de surprise que toi-même.

***Peter Bakowski***

*Translated into French by Mireille Vignol*

## **A note on the translation process**

My translators translate my poems as a labour of love. I either choose a poem that I consider 'important' to translate or a poem that extends the variety of poems that have been translated over the course our collaboration or I encourage my translators to translate a poem that they esteem or anticipate having fun translating.

I'm thrilled to have my poetry translated into French by Mireille Vignol. Having lived and worked in Australia, married to a Greek-Australian, now primarily living back in a tiny French village, Mireille has a firm knowledge of how Australians and the French express themselves.

As a poet, I continue to be guided by the following quote: 'Use ordinary words to say extraordinary things' – Arthur Schopenhauer. I want the French and German translation of my poems to be how living people speak, reveal themselves, their experiences and perceptions. I try not to have any ungainly words or phrases in my poems and I don't want anything unwieldy or clunky to be there in the sound of the poem either in French or German.

I'm thrilled to have my poetry translated into German by Ulrike Krenz-Fisher and Claudia Schneider. I appreciate their care with my poems, being both flexible and meticulous. We have recently initiated, after meeting at the 2017 Monash translation conference, once a month translation 'sessions'. It's early days and hopefully regular German translations will flower in the global literary scene, in print and online, over the next months and years.

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