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Bertran de Born
translated by Reitha Pattison

Qan vei pels vergiers despleiar
or When old skin verges on display

When old skin verges on display expect
loss of incendiary indian blouses
a douche for the voice box delivers
a sonnet that makes the juggler faint that
entrap legal tender, trombones, cornets
clarions in the days of the grail.
A doxy wants this junta attaché talced
like a rich heart's intended. Ex regis, to Aragon. Eheu?

A pause between courses accordingly.

Maestro on the phono, de-shoed for a can-can in the arms
of one suspicious ostler. Darker on the retake. Euodic
for his fly, weighing a ton, argent in the foliage, still
unapprehended. Friends, theft comes before accusations (exclam.).
Left Spanish guitar in the chalet, in malaise, causing uproar
leaving no forwarding name. On a par with nausea are kind
entreaties to conquer

the poor. May not read so well in the dim light of a cellar
though swell to a ceramic chorus (exclam.) of wards and districts
baying for a new dispensation. With S.O.S nearly, nearly
amendatory lose regalia, or any mention of pageant (om.)
Folk never (quite) avoid the wheels of this carriage to wit
Man totalizes any rolling system he renders unto nearly.
Find misplaced method of observing the lousy formicary:
one ant teaches one juggler his place

in vestiges of a green age neither blouse (a. m.) nor fetters
nullify, flicking charity's coin, 5 deniers
sun in a soap, gentlemen swear by it.
Jesuits, even, buy it. As does the (a. m.) juggler.
This Father Juggler between the thighs spins tuppence
that is Divinatory (5 deniers) & Jovial (Jesuits), no
serious rodent could refute. Economics is all
bad feeling.

Like a facile come-lately he said
no talking during the battle like
your piece wasn't meant to go off
raising the standard in the dale.

You'll pardon me if I'm mauled from afar.

The Catalans have their own Lazarus to knee quipping
their father laid a bet with his affable god
while the marzipan seniority of the poser made them
queasy. Low, ill was the attendant from the auberge
he swapped his fear of the gazunder for another fad.
The king finally took kindly to an old satchel
of the east end marine, sang in D quite sonorous
at the fustian grate of his keep.

Qan la novella flors par el vergan
or When novelty buds on the bough

One

When novelty buds on the bough
of her Ilex, whitish, greenly in a bushel
the softness that wafts in from a rent
in the soul, I sing. Trellised, coming faintly
& carping on about the other birdie, it leaves a
tang & I, resolute, couldn't care less
who stole the watering can, nor why
they'd want to swear on my heart. No butts;
direly my core ages without reason.

This isn't me darkening, nor me faking
a tan. Why, it enrages the ladies who don't know
what to call it. Neither do they thrill to pastiness;
it lozenges, falls on a tedious fragile designation:
"villain", & worse after such a dish.
That said, Nature has her extremes
which cure the gainsayers of this world.
And I have a certain gaiety, a gauche desirability.

Two

It's just like these dames not to sing
but croon of love, but my Sergeant,
he paints frescoes, writes novellas.
We can castigate the low-browed and quick-tempered.
However, our Baron who owns the Bordello
is, perforce, a Frank & courtly with it, even
when throwing steel stars at the ankles of opponents
such that each naïf, if he retorts, hears far off
the tedium of a death knell, jumps out of his skin.

I will have a pert son of a bitch
in Limoges, honour in sedition & caramel,
up against such-&-such a tower,
such-&-such a wall, in fine:
fresh from the fissure & fond of a castellation
such as I elude, I donate popular uprisings
such as I exculpate, I recoup tributes
such as I, in infamy, such as all denizens
arrive entrenched, we train in a true non-agency.

Amid the clamour for your moth-eaten remnants
(again in Limoges) my aural goes badly.
Our appeal for averting the faction was fool's gold.
Sombre, dismal, our adjutants (Monsignor Martel,
Tulliver, Ed. Rostand, the Montgolfiers) impress
upon us in chill voices our error: that locking
antlers, no matter how pat the gesture,
just lords it, too greatly, over our Count Raymond.

Three

Some unchaperoned Queens, a Breton, a Norman
An Angevine, pay to view a celebrated Male
from quite a grand [my inference] lineage
in the roseate entrance of the Mirabel gardens.
Nothing quite like it heard from the Neva to the Arno!
The pussies leave their numismatic wishes in the fountain
which the locals dredge up, demanding a Hades
for the ladies (without Hymen), trowing
their suspicious elfin charisma will poison the well.

Four

Sergeant, go to Raymond G., aristocrat layman
of the pine grove, inform him of my rational mind
that cannot dispel aught of his platter or his demesne.
The place urges a gripping fondness for cabrioles.
I compose a sibling dirge to his gracious queen,
thankful for the Burgundy & the happy ending
I missed. Though, the mass of my heart torqued
when we split the other day at the head of the bridge.

Five

Gascony durst send its best friar to Raymond,
an errand which wld., if entertained, prop up a siege.

If it comes to it, to my eyes, his despotism
leaves these sots genuflecting to the moon.

Mal o fai domna cant d'amar s'ajarta or Bad Fey Women

Bad, fey women hum of love's attars

Jove always exposes himself in a freshly laundered robe
leaving tetanus long after his own embarkation.

He plants rue in the breast with his comb.

Ensnoced in a foul pelisse, he sleeps standing
in case, alas, his plans permit a bout of jazzing.

He paints a little, in bright oils, in a type of relief
frisks hearts and rubs skinheads raw like a bad facial.

showing through a youthful boule de soufflé complexion.

Shame these tints only endure, painted, as the rest embarks
and chests ruefully plummet to ribs; the pitfalls, like weight-gain,
are many. Shame the ankles plump out only the better
to be seen beneath the petticoats. Once clear eyes go watery
and wrinkles, like corsets, up their frequency, hair sours on the head.
One can't repent of old lardy flesh

He, poised, ripens as he cantilevers over lusciousness
his ruin, his flat fee, his flounce
and those eyes wandering like a vixen's:
his hat cocked and pensive as it falls.

which runs amok and costs tiny flanks.

At a loss to add more foxy scents
they don caps of pansies fit for the tomb.

I'm saying, all is lost in a twosome: prescience; somnambulism.

His prize is his name: Adonis stole it
put it on a high shelf in a masterful effort
to show that a handsome juvenile
asks not so much for certainty as
occasional festivals under an eagle-down quilt.

But lying leads to beauty and youth
masks enquiries not so easy to extinguish
in a tender guise, so sighing: festina lente.

Maiolin, joglars malastruc or Maiolin, Luckless Juggler

for M. K., S. R., & J. V.

I **Luckless Juggler**

Mail in need of oiling, I struck out
badly, buffooning in a pose
accommodating the gentilhomme
of indemnity. My venal, querulous
tune had talent *quietus est* in a veil.
The quarry iced volubly
seemed woody. Sticky forages
forced the camp to vie
in the other groaning corral.
Solitude makes me sick.

The other men in serious ennui
consider it a plus residing in a nest of lies
& chant rightly clearer than the crows.
Parsing in comely reconnaissance manners
done to improve personal auralty

is what I call sissy
is what a stanza can't be.

Frankly it's the grandeur of youth, boys,
made to have the air of moaning complaint
but a little lye on the lips of hares and lions
you're foxed: the indolent flanks
totally indefensible.

II **After the battle was over**

Inside it's more caustic than saucy
sitting in a ventricle majestically
having a nap. But the congealed blood
and lungs grin beneath the cowl.
Is it I, in the morning, still sleeping?
What was said at my back
was much like the men redoubling.

Rifle the mail in your sack to ascertain
arms in the east on the wagon train.

NOTE

These are translations from the poetry of Bertran de Born, twelfth-century troubadour of the Languedoc. Eight others were first printed in *Word is Born* (Cambridge: Arehouse, 2006) alongside Michael Kindellan's translations from the same eight de Born originals. These translations were trials in dual but isolated composition, flexing the authorial reach and procedural decision for rendering each word, phrase, rhetorical intention, and the poetics of a man who, martial and courtly, sang songs, co-owned a castle, and appeared in cameo, decapitated, in Dante's *Inferno*. These four new translations are similar flexes, notwithstanding their missing compliment (or anti-compliment) of another adjacent rendition.

Author Info

Reitha Pattison was born in London in 1977. Her first book of poetry, *Word is Born*, written with Michael Kindellan, was published by Arehouse Press in 2006; she hopes to finish her new book, *Some Fables*, by summer 2010. She is currently finishing her PhD on the writings of the Edward Dorn.

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