Following Gerlach's own release in 1950, he blanked out his lost book's existence for a year; even then he failed to remember the contents. Eager to unlock his hidden memories, Gerlach persuaded a German newspaper to fund a three-week course of sessions with a hypnotist. In 1957 this new 'recollected' manuscript appeared as *Die verratene Armee* ('The Forsaken Army'), an immediate critical and commercial success. In 2012, however, Gerlach's lost manuscript – the one that had, like Grossman's *Life and Fate*, been 'arrested' – was rediscovered by two Western scholars in the Russian State Military Archive. It was published in Germany four years later under its original title.

Grossman's *Stalingrad* is therefore unusual in the genre of the Soviet Front novel not for its realistic treatment of the conflict which Russians still call the Great Patriotic War, but for taking the defenders' perspective. It was not the only Soviet novel to do so; an obvious counterpart is Viktor Nekrasov's 1946 *V okopakh Stalingrada* ('In The Trenches of Stalingrad'), a gritty fictionalized account of the author's own experience as a young military engineer in the Battle of Stalingrad. It received a Stalin Prize soon after publication; David Floyd translated it (for Harvill) as *Front-line Stalingrad* in 1962, but his translation has not been reprinted since 1975. Grossman's belated critical and commercial success, realized through the Chandlers' translations of both *Life and Fate* and *Stalingrad*, clearly suggests there is scope not only to re-translate Nekrasov's novel, but to re-evaluate the entire canon of Soviet war literature.

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Alejandra Pizarnik: *The Last Innocence/The Lost Adventures*. Translated by Cecilia Rossi, with an Introduction by Ana Becciú. Pp. 63. Brooklyn, NY: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2019. Pb. $15.

Alejandra Pizarnik: *Diana's Tree – Árbol de Diana*. Translated by Anna Deeny Morales. Pp. 89. Swindon: Shearsman Books, 2020. Pb. £10.95.

Alejandra Pizarnik was born in 1936 in Buenos Aires, where she also died thirty-six years later of an overdose after years of depression. In part because of her early death, and because she compulsively rewrote her texts, Pizarnik published relatively little during her short life: seven poetry collections (*La tierra más ajena*, 1955; *La última inocencia*, 1956; *Las aventuras perdidas*, 1958; *Árbol de Diana*, 1962; *Los trabajos y las noches*,

1965; *Extracción de la piedra de locura*, 1968; *El infierno musical*, 1971), as well as a short poetic essay (*La condesa sangrienta*, 1971). A range of posthumous publications has followed since 1972. Many readers have found that it is hard to resist both the short, emblematic poems of her youth and the irreverent, subversive prose pieces of her later years. Often branded an *enfant terrible* of Argentine poetry, Pizarnik is a legend in Latin American literature, partly because of her premature death. No wonder her poems have been steadily translated for over half a century, especially into French, English, and German.

Despite the number of existing translations of Pizarnik's work, not all her poetry collections are equally available in English, at least not in book form. *Árbol de Diana* (*Diana's Tree*), for instance, is one of the most – if not *the* most – translated collection, while earlier books, like *La última inocencia* (*The Last Innocence*) and *Las aventuras perdidas* (*The Lost Adventures*), are not as easily available to Anglophone readers. The first and probably most well known book-length translation in English, *Alejandra Pizarnik: A Profile*, came out in 1987. Penned by Maria Rosa Fort and Frank Graziano, with additional versions by Suzanne Jill Levine, this anthology published by Logbridge-Rhodes contained a nearly complete translation of *Árbol de Diana*, as well as translated excerpts from *La última inocencia*, *Las aventuras perdidas*, *Los trabajos y las noches* (*Works and Nights*), *El infierno musical* (*The Musical Hell*) and *Textos de sombra* (*Texts of Shadow*). Appreciated by critics and scholars alike, Fort and Graziano's anthology has become a library staple and is to this day a trusted gateway to Pizarnik's work in the English-speaking world, even if it has long been out of print. The first truly complete English translation of *Árbol de Diana* was Cecilia Rossi's. It included Octavio Paz's preface as well as other sections from the 1962 book previously left out by Fort and Graziano. It earned Rossi the prestigious John Dryden Translation Award in 2000. It first appeared in the journal *Comparative Criticism*, then in Rossi's anthology of Pizarnik's *Selected Poems* published in 2010. By that time, Rossi had translated Pizarnik's complete poetry as part of her doctoral thesis at the University of East Anglia. Yvette Siegert produced a complete retranslation of *Árbol de Diana* (2014) for Ugly Duckling Presse, as well as three other books of Pizarnik's between 2013 and 2017 (*A Musical Hell: El Infierno Musical*, 2013; *Extracting the Stone of Madness: Poems 1962–1972*, 2016; and, in collaboration with Cole Heinowitz, *The Most Foreign Country*, 2016).

Two new Pizarnik translations have now been published, one in the US, the other in the UK. The first is translated by Rossi, the second by Anna Deeny Morales. Both are respected poetry translators. Rossi is an established Pizarnik translator, but she has also translated other

Argentine poets such as Tamara Kamenszain and Mónica Sifrim. Deeny Morales, on the other hand, is mostly known for her translations of Chilean poet Raúl Zurita and the Argentinian Mercedes Roffé – this is apparently (though see also below) her sole departure into Pizarnik's poetry.

But these productions not only contrast: they conflict. The brief back-cover biographies have only two things in common: Pizarnik's place of birth, Avellaneda, and the claim that she is one of the most important Latin American poets of the twentieth century. Other details given about her life fail to match. In Rossi's book, Pizarnik's parents are described as 'Russian-Jewish immigrants'; in Deeny Morales', as 'Jewish immigrant parents from Poland'. In Rossi's book, Pizarnik 'studied literature and painting at the University of Buenos Aires'; in Deeny Morale's, she 'dropped out of university in order to study painting' and 'studied at the Sorbonne' when living in Paris. Pizarnik 'died of an apparent overdose' (Rossi), or alternatively she 'took her own life in 1972', by deliberate overdose. Pizarnik's life – or death – is somewhat elusive, and she herself liked to blur the lines between her own history and her poetic persona, so Pizarnik scholars, biographers, or translators are not necessarily to blame for such inconsistencies.

Some can be rectified. The ambiguity regarding the poet's ethnic origins is easy to explain. Pizarnik's parents were born in Rivne, a Ukrainian city alternately under Russian and Polish regimes. In 1936, however, the year Pizarnik was born, the town was under Polish rule (and stayed so until World War II). As far as Pizarnik's academic background is concerned, Rossi and Deeny Morales are both cutting corners. According to Pizarnik's authorized biographer Cristina Piña, Pizarnik enrolled in Philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires, then switched to Literature, then to Journalism, then took painting workshops with artist Juan Batlle Planas, and then gave it all up to become a writer. As for her studies at the Sorbonne, according to her friend Ivonne Bordelois, Pizarnik never set foot in the famous institution, and the mere idea that she might have audited or taken courses at the time is 'ridiculous'. Finally, was Pizarnik's fatal overdose in 1972 accidental or intentional? Pizarnik's family and estate have encouraged the accident theory, but the suicide theory still prevails in academia, mainly because death and suicide were recurrent topics in the poet's work, as well as in her conversation.

Further contrasts are involved in the way each book introduces the poet, revealing what readership they aim to reach, and how readers are expected to approach her work. Rossi's book bears a seal of approval from the Pizarnik estate, manifested in Ana Becciú's Introduction.

It is mentioned on the cover, back cover, and title page, so that Becciú seems to approve the book as a whole. While the Deeny Morales translations are also 'published with the kind permission of Ana Becciu [sic]', this acknowledgement appears in small print on the copyright page, and so may seem not to apply to the non-poetic content. The back covers also show how each volume focuses on a different period in Pizarnik's work. Rossi's book presents 'new English-language translations' of 'early poems'. As such, it fills an important void in the circulation of Pizarnik's poetry in English. In contrast, Deeny Morales' is said to contain an 'incisive translation' of Pizarnik's 'first really mature book'. This statement is true, but it leaves out an important detail: as already noted above, *Árbol de Diana* has been translated profusely into English for over fifty years. Any translator taking on the work of an iconic writer like Pizarnik should be straightforward about previous translations, especially – but not only – their own. As it is, neither Rossi nor Deeny Morales name earlier translators. This may be disappointing for Pizarnik aficionados who know otherwise.

Translators' introductions, prefaces, or afterwords are not always instructive, but here they are worth commenting on. For one thing, Rossi's seems more reliable than Deeny Morales'. Rossi is at least transparent about her *own* previous translations of Pizarnik's work. She openly acknowledges that the versions appearing in the 2019 book were first included in her Ph.D dissertation in 2007, then 'thoroughly revised' after visiting the Pizarnik archive in 2013. She also lists the titles of all versions previously published in the 2010 *Selected Poems* anthology. In contrast, Deeny Morales does not make plain that she translated and published 31 out of the 38 poems from *Árbol de Diana* in an anthology of 2014, along with her short essay at the end of the book, which has in fact been published twice before. In the present 2020 publication, when she refers to translating the poems from *Árbol de Diana* 'this past year', she seems to mean in 2019, but this is mostly not new work; most of its contents came out several years before.

Rossi's *The Last Innocence/The Lost Adventures* translates *La última inocencia* and *Las aventuras perdidas*, Pizarnik's second and third poetry books. Some poems from these collections sporadically appeared in English translation in journals or anthologies from the 1960s on, including those Rossi published in her 2010 *Selected Poems*. Until now, however, they had not yet been fully translated into English. These early works may not be Pizarnik's best, but given that they have been available in German translation since 2002 and in French since 2005, it was high time that anglophone readers had access to their complete contents. Rossi's new book rectifies this omission, which is in itself laudable. It also

includes several pieces which show the translator as a master of her craft. Some are great new translations, like 'Always' and 'Much further beyond'. Others are reprints of versions from 2010 that were already good, like 'Something', 'Song', 'Ballad of the Weeping Stone', and 'Blue', or new improved editions, like 'Poem for Emily Dickinson', 'Ashes', and 'Want'. These translated poems read like originals while reflecting possible interpretations of the original Spanish.

That said, not all translated poems read fluidly in English. The most conspicuous example is probably the famous line 'la jaula se ha vuelto pájaro' from 'The Awakening', which Rossi translated as 'The cage has turned bird' (pp. 51 and 53). This line is both semantically and grammatically awkward. Here, the Spanish clearly means that the cage *became* a bird, which would call for a phrasal verb like 'turn *into*'. The phrasing also sounds odd because an article would need to come before the noun 'bird' for the line to be idiomatic in English. In Spanish, the image is strange, but strong. In English, it is just weird. Another poem where sentence structure is off is 'Woman in Love'. The last lines of the text are 'desesperada, ¿adónde vas? | desesperada ¡nada más!' Now, even readers who do not understand Spanish can tell that the lines mirror each other, based on the repetition of the word 'desesperada' and on the rhyme. Loosely translated, one voice asks the desperate interlocutor where she is going, and she answers that she is simply desperate, which implies that she is going nowhere. Rossi translates this passage 'in your despair, where are you headed? | despair, just nothing else.' The lines share no structural link any more, as there is no trace of the original parallelism. More importantly, the answer has become rather obscure. While the Spanish text shifted from where ('adónde') to how ('desesperada', 'despair'), the English question leads nowhere: a preposition (for example, 'into') would need to come before 'despair' for the following line to be clearly read as an answer. In addition, the juxtaposition of 'just' and 'nothing else' sounds tautological, as both expressions mean 'no more than'. It is disappointing to find such faux pas in poems Rossi had not previously published and that are supposedly the result of what she calls 'years of work, of craftsmanship, of hovering over one word, and another, and wondering which would fit the edifice of the Pizarnik poetic corpus better'.

Also hard to grasp is why Rossi has modified her translation of 'Sólo un nombre'. In Spanish, the poem reads

alejandra alejandra
debajo estoy yo
alejandra

In 2010, Rossi produced a translation that was both inspired and interesting:

> alejandra alejandra
> it's me underneath
> alejandra

In 2019, she changes the second line to 'beneath I am me'. In Spanish, the verb 'estar' is coupled with 'debajo' ('underneath') to indicate the location of the poetic persona. The 2010 version still conveyed this meaning, along with a new insistence on the fact that this 'I' (and no one else) was 'underneath'. In contrast, the second line of the 2019 translation reads as if the Spanish said 'debajo *soy* yo' (which would not sound as idiomatic, and gives rather different connotations). Rossi no doubt put a lot of work into her new versions, but this seems to be a case of over-editing. Another would be the poem 'Salvation'. At the end of her translator's note, Rossi recalls that she first rendered the final line quite literally as 'and breaks the wall of poetry'. However, she eventually changed her mind and 'opted for "cracks the wall of poetry," because [she] felt that the poet had finally "cracked the code," as it were: she was now writing the poetry that she had always aspired to write'. Judging from the existential and literary doubts that plagued Pizarnik for over fifteen years after publishing *La última inocencia*, such an interpretation may be overly optimistic. Besides, the English might not have the intended effect. In Spanish, the verb ('romper') indicates that the 'I'-figure destroys the wall. In English, 'cracks the wall' may be read as 'makes a crack' in the wall of poetry, whereas the sense needed is 'breaks it down'. The first line of the same poem is also, to my mind, unhelpfully toned down.

Other debatable word choices have subtle consequences for the overall meaning of a poem or on the relationship between poems. Rossi uses the expression 'numbed blood' twice, first for 'aterida sangre' (p. 15), then for 'sangre anonadada' (p. 25). On a semantic level, this fuses two related but different images. In Spanish, the blood is described as 'sola y aterida' ('alone and shivering' or 'freezing') at the beginning of the collection; then, toward the end, comes a refusal to let it be 'anonadada' ('reduced to nothing'). There is a progression from 'aterida' to 'anonadada', which plays a part in the expression of exasperation and rebellion. In English, the blood remains 'numbed' throughout, which renders only its first state, and only does so indirectly.

Rossi's translations of Pizarnik's simple, straightforward conjunction 'pero' (commonly meaning 'but') are sometimes too stretched and unintentionally ambiguous. In 'Woman with Eyes Open', she uses 'still'.

Theoretically, 'still' can be used as an adverb at the beginning of an utterance to mean 'despite what has just been said'. In such a case, however, a comma would usually follow it. However, because of Pizarnik's scarce punctuation, and because poetry in general allows for inversions, it could be read in the sense of 'until this moment and continuing at this moment'. Examples are 'still I want to know myself alive | still I do not wish to speak | of death' (p. 15), 'Still you feed fear' and 'Still you hold yourself' (p. 37), and 'Still I hear night crying inside my bones' (p. 44). The confusion stems from the fact that Rossi also uses 'still' to translate 'aún': 'Still drifting my dreams linger.' In one of the previous cases (the second from p. 37), 'still' could even be an adjective meaning 'quiet' or 'silent.' As Rossi rightly observes in her translator's note, Pizarnik 'attempted to create a poetic language distinct from the everyday, spoken Spanish of Argentina'. As a result, Rossi explains, she 'often opted for a more formal register in order to recreate Pizarnik's attempt to distance herself from a straightforwardly colloquial, confessional mode'. This is so, but 'still' is just as informal as 'but' at the start of an utterance, and it may not be the best choice if it blurs the meaning of a plain, explicit word like 'pero'.

Overall, Rossi's book is an honest take on Pizarnik's second and third poetry collections, which deserved to be fully transposed into English. That said, it may not be the translator's best work. This could be the result of over-correction: too much tweaking is sometimes as bad as too little. Of course, the reader familiar with Pizarnik's work in Spanish will have a fuller awareness of the subtle shifts introduced by some of the 2019 edits: the book only contains the translated poems, not the originals. Be that as it may, several versions in this new collection are great successes, and Rossi's 2010 anthology also includes quite a few gems, including her rendering of *Árbol de Diana*, which, along with Siegert's, remains one of the best to date.

Deeny Morales' *Diana's Tree* is based, the reader is told, on the 2000 edition of Pizarnik's *Poesía completa*, 'which includes the complete text'. It does, but Deeny Morales' book does not. Indeed, the first thing a reader may notice is the absence of Octavio Paz's preface, which has come to be viewed as an integral part of it. The end section titled 'Otros poemas (1959)' is also nowhere to be found. Yet both the Paz text and that end section were originally part of *Árbol de Diana* in 1962, and included in *Poesía completa*, the official comprehensive anthology of Pizarnik's poetry edited by Ana Becciú for Lumen in 2000. Fort and Graziano, as well as Rossi, included Paz's text. Rossi also added the 'Otros poemas' section in her 2010 anthology. There is no mention of either omission in Deeny Morales' book: not on the credit page, on the back cover, or in the

translator's essay. In this version of *Árbol de Diana*, the 38-poem cycle is present, but that is all.

As already noted, Deeny Morales previously published her translations of 31 of the cycle's poems in 2014. She has now edited 23 of these texts before including them in the present Shearsman compilation. Most of the edits seem cosmetic, so that the resulting texts are not strikingly different from the 2014 versions. Some, such as poems 7, 15, 29, or 34, may have been better in 2014, and some, such as poems 17 and 30, arguably needed more work. Nonetheless, most of the edited translations are just as good as her earlier versions. Some are even better than in 2014, like poems 19, 31, 32, and 35. The most inspired of all is probably the new and improved translation of poem 19:

cuando vea los ojos	when she sees the eyes
que tengo en los míos tatuados	I have on mine tatooed

For what could be the first time in English, 'she' appears as the subject of the first line (ungendered in Spanish). In their respective translations of the same poem, Graziano and Fort and Rossi chose 'I', whereas Siegert opted for 'you' (also Deeny Morales' pick in 2014). While all three solutions are valid, 'she' is both innovative and consonant with the mainly feminine subject-voices of *Árbol de Diana*. It also re-establishes the link – otherwise less obvious in English – between poems 19 and 11, where 'yo y la que fui nos sentamos | en el umbral de mi mirada' ('I and the one I was sit | at the threshold of my gaze' in Deeny Morales' translation).

One edit has a more important impact, since it corrects a previous mistranslation in poem 18. In Spanish, the first two lines say, 'como un poema enterado | del silencio de las cosas'. In the 2014 anthology, the English version was 'like a poem buried | in the silence of things', suggesting Deeny Morales mistakenly read 'ente**rr**ado' instead of 'enterado'. The 2020 version rectifies this: 'like a poem made aware | of the silence of things'. Here it is interesting to note that the translator added 'made' before 'aware', introducing a passive voice, and along with it a new, implied agent of the action 'to make aware'. In fact, the Spanish wording indicates a state (the poem *is* aware) rather than a process, so that the poem itself could also be the agent of the action 'to *become* aware'.

As for the eight versions that are exact reprints from 2014 (poems 2, 4, 9, 13, 14, 22, 23, 28), Deeny Morales must have been satisfied with them. One she seems particularly proud of is poem 13. Deeny Morales found it 'particularly challenging because of its sliding rhythmic weft' and analyses it strictly from a metrical point of view. There is nothing

wrong with wanting to know how free verse relates to traditional rhythms, and it may indeed help to find a new translation angle. However, there are other important elements to pay attention to, like the disarming simplicity of Pizarnik's lines, which contrast with the uncanny image they convey: 'explicar con palabras de este mundo | que partió de mí un barco llevándome'. Here, a boat sailed away from the speaker *while* carrying her away with it. Deeny Morales' translation is strange, unfaithful to the original content, and downright cryptic: 'explain with words of this world | that bore of me a boat elsewhere'. The English-speaking reader will surely find it impossible to guess what exactly this means, partly because it blindly follows Spanish word order: is the subject 'this world' or 'a boat'? Also hard to grasp is the introduction of 'elsewhere', which changes the meaning of the line.

As for the seven new translations Deeny Morales introduces in 2020, most are good (1, 3, 12, 21, 24, and 25), but poem 5 less so. Indeed, it appears more convoluted in English than in Spanish. The opening line reads 'por un minuto de vida breve | única de ojos abiertos'. Here, 'breve' and 'única' are juxtaposed, and both refer to 'vida'. In English, Deeny Morales writes 'for a minute of brief life | one and only of open eyes'. This gives the impression that 'one and only' refers to 'minute', when it is clearly not the case. It's true that other English translators of the same poem stumble over the second line. Rossi went for an awkward word-for-word approach with 'unique of eyes open' in her *Selected Poems*. In contrast, Siegert renders it more freely as 'the only one with eyes open', which, like Deeny Morales' solution, makes 'the only one' look as though it refers to 'minuto'.

Ultimately, Deeny Morales' translation of *Árbol de Diana* is not necessarily better than previous ones, or as new as might appear. But at least, given how easy it is for readers to get their hands on Rossi's *Selected Poems* and Siegert's *Diana's Tree*, those wishing to compare different versions of the cycle (and gain access to Paz's preface!) will be able to do so, and decide for themselves which they prefer. Alejandra Pizarnik's poems may be short and may seem simple, but she crafted them carefully, using features specific to the Spanish language. This naturally makes them hard to translate into other languages. Both Rossi and Deeny Morales have produced a mixture of more and less successful versions, and both have contributed to making Pizarnik's work more widely known in English.

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