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Dylan Thomas translated into Italian

Roberto Sanesi and
Ariodante Marianni's
translations

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INTRODUCTION

During the first semester of the first academic year of my master's degree, I attended a course called 'Postcolonial theory' taught by professor Marco Fazzini.

The course principal aim was to introduce and discuss with the students the affinities of the processes involved in songwriting and the composition of poetry.

What I really liked about this course was how it made poetry easy and accessible to students and novice readers of poetry.

During my second academic year, I was having a conversation with a university classmate of mine about the presentation we had both delivered for a course on the sentimental novel and the Gothic genre in English literature.

My classmate had to introduce her audience, the students and the professor, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar Of Wakefield,* while I had to give a brief introduction of three graveyard poets, Thomas Parnell, Robert Blair and Thomas Gray.

My other two presentation peers had one to give details on Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* and the other had to find analogies between Young's poem and Burke's treatise on the sublime and beautiful respectively.

What affected me in this conversation with my classmate is that she congratulated my group for having delivered a presentation on poetry, which is difficult to read and understand.

What I have noticed about my literature classmates is that many prefer to read novels and essays, only a few read poetry. Why is reading poetry considered a brave act? Why is it thought to be more difficult to read poetry than novels and essays?

Since then, I have encouraged my classmate to read poems, which are exactly as difficult to read as novels and essays, by sharing a video by the Indian poet Tishani Doshi who shares some useful tips on how to read poetry[1].

In this video, Doshi explains that a poem is different from a piece of prose or a newspaper because, even though it is shorter, the reader needs more time to read it.

Doshi suggests to read the poem multiple times, once a day for a week, before the reader can

1 English Lit. -Poetry- Tishani Doshi (YouTube video): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTdQyTdUl2s

actually grasp the meaning of it.

Poetry, for Doshi, does not tell what the reader already knows, but it takes them to another place.

My poetry readings have begun with T.S. Eliot, Shelley, John Donne, John Keats, the graveyards poets and some postcolonial poets proposed to me by my university professors, and some poems took me months to finally get them, others years, but the same occurred to me with passages from novels and essays.

Some contemporary poets have been introduced to me by professor Fazzini thanks to his effort in spreading poetry by organizing both the Venice series readings called "Incroci di poesia contemporanea" and the international festival called Poetry Vicenza from 2016 to 2019 and 2021, together with other events on poets and poetry organized by his association, TheArtsBox[2]; both have helped me cultivate my interest in poetry. I have read several other poets when found in the poetry magazine *Poesia*.

Yet there is another detail I would like to mention and it is, in particular, a film on Bob Dylan: Martin Scorsese's *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan.* What I really liked about this film is how it portrayed the life of Bob Dylan the musician by showing interviews of Bob Dylan and his friends and fellow artists, how full of musical material it was, and how it was not only about Dylan's biography but also about the difficult times the United States were facing when Dylan was young.

In this film resides the germ of my thesis, and especially in the fourth part of it, 'One of the Mad Ones'. There came Liam Clancy, an Irish folk singer.

While drinking a pint of beer at the White Horse Tavern, New York, he tells the story that the pub is where Welsh poet Dylan Thomas drank a considerable amount of whiskey before dying of *delirium tremens.* Clancy explained how Bob Dylan picked his artistic surname: "Out in Minnesota, there was a young man who was inspired to change his name to Dylan because of the poet Dylan Thomas." Bob Dylan added: "Why it became that particular name I really can't say." Musician Tony Glover thought Bob Dylan changed his name out of a racial thing, because Minneapolis, the city where Bob Dylan resided, was very anti-Semitic. So, who was Dylan Thomas? Did his poetry help Bob Dylan to write beautiful lyrics? I had

2 Details on the events can be checked on TheArtsBox website: http://www.theartsbox.com/ .

to read Dylan Thomas's poems first and find it out.
In the second semester of the second year of my master's degree course, I attended a course by professor Alessandro Scarsella named 'Comparative literature': the course was concerned with poetic translation. Thanks to that course, the topic of my thesis had become clear.
It would be on Dylan Thomas translated into my mother language, Italian, because I am interested in translating poets I like into my own tongue in the future so that I can grasp the full meaning of their poems.
So, this dissertation will offer theoretical definitions of poetry, different theories of translation to be applied to or used for poetic texts, and in particular it will be focused on ten poems by Dylan Thomas translated into Italian, five translations produced by Roberto Sanesi and five translations produced by Ariodante Marianni.
Specifically, the first chapter will delve into the definition of the literary text, above all into the definition of what a poetic text is, it will expound the translation theories which will be applied to the poems in the third chapter and will question the role of the translator; the second chapter will illustrate Dylan Thomas's main biographical events, his bibliography, his thoughts on poetry and some ideas published and produced by Dylan Thomas's major critics, especially concerned with the ten poems taken into consideration; and finally, the third chapter will introduce Sanesi and Marianni's translations into Italian. A special highlight will be Marianni's personal point of view on translation, so as to allow me to draw conclusions on their translation technique.

CHAPTER 1: TWENTIETH CENTURY TRANSLATION THEORY. HOW TO TRANSLATE POETRY EFFICIENTLY.

1.1 Defining a literary text with a focus on the poetic text

What is a text? Hermann Grosser in *Questioni e strumenti* (1992) defines it as a organised group of words, the linguistic components of the text have their own autonomy (note in Grosser 1992, 10).

The word "text" derives from the Latin *textum*, that is: fabric (note in Grosser 1992, 10).

How can a reader discern a literary text from a non-literary text? Grosser in his chapter 1.3 of his book (called: "Letterarietà e competenza letteraria", 'Literariness and literary competence') suggests that literariness is the intrinsic factors that make a text a literary text (Grosser 1992, 13).

Jakobson in his essay called 'Linguistics and Poetics' identifies the elements of literary communication, and he offers this specific list:

1. the ADDRESSER: the encoder of the message;
2. the ADDRESSEE: the decoder of the message;
3. the MESSAGE: the literary text. It requires a CONTEXT to be graspable by the ADDRESSEE, it must be verbal or capable of being verbalized;
4. the CONTEXT: what the MESSAGE refers to;
5. the CONTACT: a physical channel and psychological connection between the ADDRESSER and the ADDRESSEE;
6. the CODE: the literary language of a specific time period (Jakobson 1987, 66).

Furthermore, in that piece of writing Jakobson also defines the six functions of a message in the same essay:

1. the REFERENTIAL (also "denotative" or "cognitive") function: the ADDRESSER has an orientation toward the context;
2. the EMOTIVE (also "expressive") function: focus on the ADDRESSER, it aims at a direct expression of the speaker's attitude toward the MESSAGE. Jakobson states that

the purely emotive stratum in language presents interjections;

3. the CONATIVE function: orientation toward the ADDRESSEE, this function finds its grammatical expression in the vocative and imperative;
4. the PHATIC function: this function serves to establish, to prolong or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works (Jakobson's example is "Hello, do you hear me?"), to attract the attention of the interlocutor or to confirm his continued attention. This function has the purpose of prolonging communication.
5. the METALINGUAL function: the ADDRESSER and the ADDRESSEE need to check up whether they use the same code, the speech is focused on the CODE (e.g. "What do you mean?");
6. the POETIC function: this function focuses on the MESSAGE for its own sake (Jakobson 1987, 66-71).

So, again the same question: what are the characteristics of a poetic text? According to Jakobson, the selection of words in a poem is made on the basis of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymy and antonymy, while the combination of them is made on the basis of contiguity:

The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination. Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence. In poetry one syllable is equalized with any other syllable of the same sequence; word stress is assumed to equal word stress, as unstress equals unstress; prosodic long is matched with long, and short with short; word boundary equals word boundary, no boundary equals no boundary; syntactic pause equals syntactic pause; no pause equals no pause. Syllables are converted into units of measure, and so are morae or stresses (Jakobson 1987, 71).

Do we get any clue to understand what a poetic work is for Jakobson? In his essay called 'The Dominant' he declares that 'a poetic work is defined as a verbal message whose aesthetic function is its dominant' (Jakobson 1987, 43).
Jakobson in his essay 'Linguistics and Poetics' affirms that ambiguity is 'a corollary feature of poetry', and reports Empson's statement in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*: 'The machinations of ambiguity are among the very roots of poetry' (Jakobson 1987, 85).

In poetry, the poetic function prevails on the referential function, the message has got double meanings and it finds correspondence in a split addresser, addressee and reference (Jakobson 1987, 85).

In Dylan Thomas's poetry, as Elder Olson pointed out, there is ambiguity in words:

Thomas is fond of words with multiple meanings and multiple syntactic functions. He uses these for various kinds of puns and similar tricks, for achieving simultaneous meanings, and for parody. (…) Sometimes a name is applied to something because of a *concealed pun*; for instance, the name "Gabriel" in the fifth sonnet is applied to a particular figure because of a concealed pun on a card trump and The Last Trump; and Thomas will sometimes carry the matter further in his diction, developing the consequences of the application of the name. In the present instance, for example, the figure is lated called "angel" because, if it is Gabriel, it is an angel.(…) Thomas will also effect parody through the use of similar words: "minstrel angles" for "ministering angels", "maid and head" for "maiden head," "man through macadam" for "man through Adam," "Sodom To-morrow," "God in bed, good and bad." He uses such parodies for many purposes but chiefly to sharpen an antithesis (Olson 1954, 54-55).

As Olson carries on, also Thomas's metaphors give a hard time to the reader due to their ambiguity:

His metaphors are likely to give a good deal of trouble. In the first place, he dislikes the obvious kinds in which the resemblance is extremely inobvious; (…). Second, Thomas likes to make the metaphor appear self-contradictory. Third, he likes to mix metaphors, to achieve various special effects through the dissonances they beget. The result is that his metaphors (and as we will see shortly, his periphrases), being made as they are out of such materials as the "metaphysical poets" used in their conceits, become enigmas or riddles, since, unlike the metaphysical poets, Thomas does not make explicit the grounds for his fantastic comparisons and analogies. (…) Again, Thomas uses what we may call the metaphor of logical consequence. One of his most famous, and supposedly most simple poems, "In My Craft or Sullen Art", contains some five or six of these. "Sullen art" means "so stubborn, unresponsive, refractory, that if it were human one would call it 'sullen'." "Spindrift pages" means "if Keats was one who wrote in water, my more ephemereal work ought to be called 'spindrift.'" "Ivory stages" means "stages whereon people act falsely, like actors"; it involves an allusion to the Virgilian gates of ivory and of horn through which the false and the true dreams, respectively, come. This sort of metaphor always contains some supposition or allusion from which

the metaphorical term results as a logical consequence; frequently the supposition is a metaphor of Thomas' own (Olson 1954, 55-57).

Jakobson writes of the poetic function as the dominant and determining function of verbal art. The equivalence principle, which is the very core of the poetic sequence, makes repetitiveness possible in the sequence but also in the message itself.

The capacity for reiteration is for Jakobson 'an inherent and effective property of poetry'(Jakobson 1987, 86). Also, Jakobson states that in poetry similarity in sound is evaluated accordingly to the similarity and/or dissimilarity in meaning, citing Pope's 'the sound must seem an echo of the sense' (Jakobson 1987, 87). The relevance of meaning connected to sound is given by the similarity of words that are close to each other, or in Jakobson's terminology: 'superposition of similarity upon contiguity' (Jakobson 1987, 87).

Sound symbolism is the connection between the visual and auditory experience (Jakobson 1987, 87).

Jakobson also points out that the measure of sequences finds no application in language outside of the poetic function. This is the reason why metrics is really important for poetry. Jakobson states that only in poetry the time of speech flow is experienced because of the regular repetition of equivalent units, as it happens with musical time (Jakobson 1987, 72).

So, in this essay Jakobson also gives the definition of verse by citing Hopkins: verse is 'speech wholly or partially repeating the same figure of sound' (Jakobson 1987, 72).

Starting from these key observations, I have decided that sound and a study of the figures of "sounds" in Dylan Thomas's poetry are all-important so that they will be analysed in the second chapter of my dissertation.

In his essay 'What Is Poetry?' Jakobson defines poetry as follows: 'Only when a verbal work acquires poeticity, a poetic function of determinative significance, can we speak of poetry. But how does poeticity manifest itself? Poeticity is present when the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and inner form acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality' (Jakobson 1987, 378). Poets and their poems have words with particular meaning which is not to be found in everyday language. For Thomas's words with special meaning, see the second chapter of my dissertation.

Jakobson asks the following question: How do words acquire particular meanings? According to Jakobson, there is an identity between sign and object (A is A_1), but this identity is also inadequate (A is not A_1), so, thanks to this linguistic principle the mobility of concepts and of signs is possible, and the relationship between concept and sign varies according to the context of the poem (Jakobson 1987, 378).

1.2 Translating poetry with the help of translation theory

Yet, apart from analysing the poetic text, Jakobson develops an interesting translation theory: in the essay 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation' (see Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 144-151), he devises three kinds of translation methods:

1. Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language;
2. Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language;
3. Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign system (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 145).

In his essay, Jakobson focuses on the meaning of words and their translation into other languages. Jakobson contradicts Bertrand Russell's statement: 'No one can understand the word 'cheese' unless he has a nonlinguistic acquaintance with cheese', because Jakobson believes that if a person would like to understand the word 'cheese', he must have an acquaintance with the meaning of the word in the lexical code in English.

Summing up all these ideas, we can say that according to Jakobson, we know and identify things thanks to language.

He also gives another example: he states that nobody has ever consumed 'nectar' or 'ambrosia' so, we readers have only a linguistic acquaintance with these words, yet we understand them and know how to use them in a specific context (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 144.

Jakobson carries on his explanation asserting that the meaning of words is a semiotic fact: there is no *signatum*, no meaning, without *signum* (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 144). The

meaning of a certain word, a certain sign, cannot be inferred from a nonlinguistic acquaintance with the word, but only with the help of verbal code (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 145). Therefore he works out three kinds of translations quoted above.
So, how do the three types of translation work? Always according to Jakobson:

1. Intra-lingual translation translates words with synonymous words, or with circumlocution, yet synonymy is not complete equivalence. Jakobson gives this kind of example: 'Every celibate is a bachelor, but not every bachelor is a celibate'. In other words: someone who abstains from sex is an unmarried man, but not every unmarried man abstains from sex (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 145).
2. In inter-lingual translation there is no full equivalence between code-units, but messages are adequate interpretations of foreign code-units or messages. For example, the English 'cheese', 'food made of pressed curds', does not correspond to the Russian 'сыр', because for the Russians it means 'food made of pressed curds using ferment'. Interlingual translation substitutes messages in one language for entire messages in some other language, hence the translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. This type of translation consists of two equivalent messages in two different codes (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 145-146).

Jakobson does not give examples of the suggested intersemiotic translation maybe because he is not interested in translations that do without verbal codes, but he does talk about it in his 'Linguistics and Poetics' essay, quoted in Eco's *Experiences in Translation*:

In his essay on the linguistic aspects of translation, Jakobson (1959) suggested that there are three types of translation: *intralinguistic*, *interlinguistic*, and *intersemiotic*. (…) Intersemiotic translation (and in this lay the most innovative feature of his proposal) occurs when we have 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems,' and therefore when a novel is 'translated' into a film, for example, or a fairy tale into a ballet. Note that Jakobson also proposed to call this form of translation 'transmutation', and the term should give us food for thought −but we shall come back to this point. (…) Jakobson's distinction did not take into account certain phenomena that require discussion. First of all, just as *rewording* exists within a language itself, so there are also forms of *rewording* (but this would be a metaphor) within other semiotic systems, as, for example,

when we change a key of a musical composition. Secondly, in talking of transmutation, Jakobson was thinking of a version of a verbal text in another semiotic system (in Jakobson 1960, the examples offered are the translation of *Wuthering Heights* into film, of a medieval legend into a fresco, of Mallarmé's *Après Midi d'un faune* into a ballet, and even of the *Odyssey* into a comic strip); but he does not deal with other cases of transmutation between systems other than verbal language, like, for example, the ballet version of Debussy's *Après midi*, the interpretation of 'Pictures in an Exhibition' by means of a musical composition by Mussorgsky, or even the version of a painting in words (*ekphrasis*) (Eco 2001, 67).

When translating from one language to another, the problem of equivalence in difference arises, and sometimes the theory of translation presents the dogma of untranslatabilty: Jakobson suggests that differential bilingual dictionaries give comparative definition of all the corresponding units of the two languages taken into consideration, and also that differential bilingual grammars should define what unifies and what differentiates the two languages in their selection and delimitation of grammatical concepts (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 146).

For Jakobson there is no such thing as untranslatability of signs, because he thinks that any sign is translatable into a sign that is more fully developed and precise to the speaker and reader. He is also convinced that a faculty of speaking a given language implies a faculty of talking about this language, i.e. of employing metalanguage. Using metalanguage allows revision and redefinition of the vocabulary used (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 147).

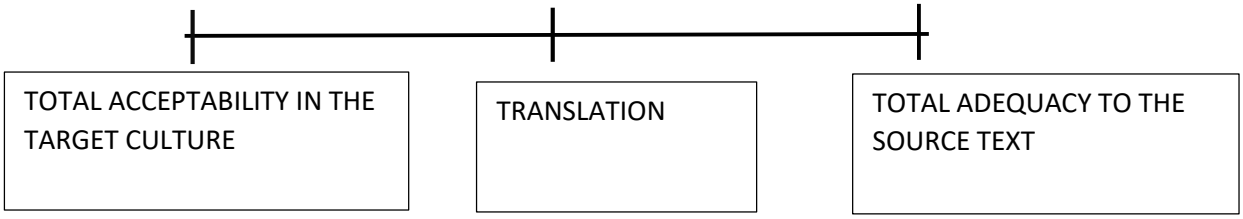
Jakobson maintains that all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language, consequently if there are no words in a language that may bear a similar meaning in another, terminology may be made richer by loan words, loan-translations, neologisms, semantic shifts and circumlocutions (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 147).

Why is there the need of translating from one language into another? Because as Jakobson states, languages differ in what they *must* and not what they *may* convey; in addition, the cognitive level of language requires recoding interpretation, that is translation (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 149).

Coming back to his 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation', Jakobson affirms that verbal equations are a constructive principle of the poetic text: in it, syntactic and morphological categories, roots, affixes, phonemes and their components, the distinctive features, are

confronted, juxtaposed, brought into contiguous relation according to the principle of similarity and contrast and they all have their own autonomous signification. Paronomasia dominates in poetic art and Jakobson declares that poetry is untranslatable by definition. Creative transposition is the only way to decode the poetic text (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 151).

Having read in Jakobson that syntactic and morphological categories in the poetic text are autonomous in the meaning (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 151), the reader might wonder whether the original poetic text and its translation are two separate and autonomous texts or are connected in the semantic sphere. Gideon Toury, a younger colleague of Even-Zohar, the creator of polysystem theory, followed Even-Zohar's footsteps in developing a theory to detect and describe laws that govern translation (Gentzler 2001, 124). His translation model is based on difference, thus for Toury every linguistic system and every textual tradition differs from the others (Gentzler 2001, 126). This is his view on translation:



Toury believes that no translation is entirely 'acceptable' to the target culture because it will always introduce new information and defamiliarizing forms to that system, nor is any translation 'adequate' to the original version, because the cultural norms cause shifts from the structure of the source text (Gentzler 2001, 126), so translation for Toury stands in the middle of the two poles mentioned above.

The translated text for Toury is a cultural artifact; an acceptable version in the receiving culture that replaces the original (Gentzler 2001, 126). For Toury, translations prefer certain properties and meaning and discard others, so the concept of correct translation does not exist (Gentzler 2001, 127). In relation with the translation of Thomas's poems into Italian, now my question is: "Do Marianni and Sanesi translations replace the original texts of Thomas?" Or: "Do they simply want to convey the meaning of the original texts and pay homage to a great poet?". And a much deeper and complicated question here arises: "Who is the translator and who can translate poetic texts?"

1.3 Who can translate poetry?

Buffoni in his essay called 'Leopardi in lingua inglese come paradigma della simbolicità del compito di un poeta traduttore' ('Leopardi translated into English as the paradigm of the symbolic value of the poet-translator's task') quotes Leopardi when the Italian poet affirms: 'Senza essere un poeta non si può tradurre un vero poeta' ('One cannot translate a real poet without being one') (Buffoni 2004, 342). Buffoni believes there are three kinds of translation:

1. Literal translation ('traduzione di servizio'): it is a translation that helps to understand the source text. Buffoni compares literal translations to the lyrics of a song or of a ballade deliberately deprived of that musicality which is an integral part of both of them. Literal translations deprive the source texts of versification and of their textual purpose. He gives as an example the first stanza of Leopardi's *L'infinito* translated into English by George R.Kay[3]: "It was always dear to me, this solitary hill, and this hedge which shuts off the gaze from so large a part of the uttermost horizon" (Buffoni 2004, 344);
2. Poetic translation ('traduzione poetica'): poetic translations are narcissistic exercises made by poets on the source text, but they are captivating, musically speaking. He gives as an example the *imitatio* of Lowell of the poem by Leopardi: "That hill pushed off by itself was always dear/to me and the hedges near/it that cut away so much of the final horizon" (Buffoni 2004, 344).

   Lowell manages to save the rhymes *near-dear* but removes the deictics ("questo" colle, "questa" siepe) which are essential to the time and space relationship of the poem, making his translation not properly fit to the original text (Buffoni 2004, 344);
3. Respectful translation ('traduzione di rispetto', word coined by Buffoni): all the elements of the original text are correctly and tactfully rendered by the poet who wants to carry out the creative meeting between the poet and the text he is translating. Margaret Brose accomplished a respectful translation of Leopardi in 1983: "Always dear to me was this solitary hill,/And this hedge, which from so great a part/Of the farthest horizon excludes the gaze/But sitting and gazing, boundless/Space beyond that, and superhuman/ Silences, and profoundest quiet/I in my mind create" (Buffoni

[3] Kay, G.(curator), *The Penguin Book Of Italian Verse*, Harmondsworth 1958, 272.

2004, 345).

For Buffoni, the translated poetic text is perishable, so, when translating the poetic text, the translator must face a process that does not conclude immediately (Buffoni 2004, 346). The translator must be 'loyal', not 'faithful' to the text. In being 'loyal' to the text, the translator becomes a link between the author and the reader and enriches his writing style (Buffoni 2004, 346). When facing an original text that needs to be interpreted, one must choose to be *ut orator ut interpres*[4]: either a translator oriented on the words of the original text, or a writer who concentrates upon the conveyance of the meaning of the whole source text, but not on the single words (Buffoni 2004, 345). Octavio Paz is not of the same opinion: in his essay 'Translation: Literature and Letters' he thinks poets are not good translators. His statement follows:

> In theory, only poets should translate poetry; in practice, poets are rarely good translators. They almost invariably use the foreign poem as a point of departure toward their own. A good translator moves in the opposite direction: his intended destination is a poem analogous although not identical to the original poem. He moves away from the poem only to follow it more closely. The good translator of poetry is a translator who is also a poet −like Arthur Waley− or a poet who is also a good translator−like Nerval when he translated the first Faust. (…) The reason many poets are unable to translate poetry is not purely psychological, although egoism has a part in it, but functional: poetic translation, as I intend to demonstrate, is a procedure analogous to poetic translation, but it unfolds in the opposite direction (Biguenet and Schulte 1992, 158).

Mark Polizzotti, translator of French writers Patrick Modiano, Gustave Flaubert, Raymond Roussel, Marguerite Duras and Paul Virilio, reports a quote by Paul Valéry where he states that the prose writer, the novelist and the philosopher are often translated and that the translator does not much damage by translating them, but when the translator decides to translate a true poet, the poet in question is untranslatable (Polizzotti 2018, 111-112). Polizzotti goes further by affirming that it is poets who have delivered the most beautiful and enduring translations of verse, and he gives later a list of twentieth- and twenty-first-century poets and Anglophones who believe that only poets can translate poets: David Antin, Mary Jo Bang, Paul Blackburn, Robert Bly, Anne Carson, John Ciardi, James Dickey, Robert

[4] Expression quoted from Cicero's *De optimo genere oratorum*.

Duncan, David Gascoyne, Donald Hall, Seamus Heaney, Richard Howard, Galway Kinnell, Kenneth Koch, Stanley Kunitz, Rika Lesser, Denise Levertov, James Merrill, W. S. Merwin, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Ron Padgett, Robert Pinsky, Adrienne Rich, May Sarton, Charles Simic, May Swenson, Nathaniel Tarn, Allen Tate, Charles Tomlinson, Eliot Weinberger, Richard Wilbur, W. C. and C. K. Williams (Polizzotti 2018, 112).

To see how poets get to work and produce their translations, we are going to consider two poets in particular and their translation work: Seamus Heaney and his translation of the epic poem *Beowulf* together with Yves Bonnefoy and his translations of Shakespeare.

Seamus Heaney writes about his *Beowulf* translation in the *Introduction:* he explains that the work was commissioned by the editors of the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*, and that he decided to accept because he 'had a strong desire to get back to the first stratum of the language' (Heaney, xxii), the Old English language. He did it as an 'aural antidote' (Heaney 1999, xxii), to make sure that he did not forget his Anglo-Saxon roots.

Heaney also confesses later that his first poem in his first book of poetry had been written following the Anglo-Saxon metre (Heaney 1999, xxiii).

His translation task started in a slow manner, and was abandoned for some time before coming back to it. Heaney wanted *Beowulf* to sound in translation as the way his male relatives spoke, 'big-voiced' as Heaney describes them (Heaney 1999, xxvi), with a solemn way of speaking. He chose to focus his translation on the 'sound of sense' rather than obey to the demands of convention (Heaney 1999, xxviii). As far as the words are concerned, Heaney was not afraid to use Ulster dialect words such as 'graith' for 'harness' and 'hoked' for 'rooted about' (Heaney 1999, xxx). Heaney translated the poem without transcribing the ceasuras of the Old English metre, except for when the minstrel at King Hrothgar's court sings about Sigemund who has slain the dragon (Heaney 1999, 29) or when he sings about the Danish attack at Finn's hall (Heaney 1999, 34-39).

Moving on to Yves Bonnefoy, in *La comunità dei traduttori* translated by Fabio Scotto, in the foreword 'La risonanza dell'altro. Sulla traduzione di Yves Bonnefoy' Scotto explains that Bonnefoy's vocation as a translator is to reveal the poetics of Bonnefoy's translated poets (Bonnefoy 2005, 12). The poetics of translation of Yves Bonnefoy is in close connection with his idea of poetry: Bonnefoy believes that poetry manifests in words as the incarnation of experience in the perceptive immediacy and in the simple things (Bonnefoy 2005, 13).

Bonnefoy poetics of translation centers around the quest for an essential verbal expression (Bonnefoy 2005, 14), the translator of poetry is part of a translation community which role is essential to preserve their personal culture and the culture of others (Bonnefoy 2005, 14).

For Bonnefoy, a poetic translation (Bonnefoy 2005, 14) is poetry itself and the role which rhythm plays in it makes poetry show the immediacy of the perceiving self (Bonnefoy 2005, 15).

The translator must reproduce the singing essence of the original poem, make his own version with his own music which convey the original meaning of the poem (Bonnefoy 2005, 15).

Going straight to the essay which gives the title to Bonnefoy's book about his translation records, 'La comunità dei traduttori' ('The translators' community'), the translator's task for Bonnefoy is that he finds his way in the text, where he will produce a different text in which an aspect of the original source will stand out in respect to its other qualities (Bonnefoy 2005, 34), the translator must pay attention above all to the rhythm of the lines, to their musicality (Bonnefoy 2005, 40), he must not let himself trick by the plurality of meanings of the text, he must let the *I*, the self in contact with the world, prevail over the *me,* the self concerned with his existence only (Bonnefoy 2005, 37) in order to preserve the original poem in its translation (Bonnefoy 2005, 40).

In the essay 'Traduzione poetica' ('Poetic translation'), when asked if a translator needs to be a poet to translate poetry, Bonnefoy replies affirmatively, and as a reassurance, he states that potentially anyone of us can be a poet (Bonnefoy 2005, 63). It is the poetic text that awakens our poetic conscience.

In the essay 'Shakespeare in scena' ('Shakespeare on stage'), Bonnefoy explains that Shakespeare's theatrical texts have in themselves a flow of poetic words, so the translator needs to be faithful to the original and translate in lines (Bonnefoy 2005, 77), and metre has not to be regular, because in French there is no type of line which can represent the regular iambic pentameter of Shakespeare (Bonnefoy 2005, 78). Bonnefoy suggests to translate Shakespeare in a succession of metres between eight and fourteen syllables of a line of around eleven feet. This is the form of translation he opted for when he translated the first scene of *Julius Caesar* for Pierre Leyris (Bonnefoy 2005, 78).

In 'La traduzione dei Sonetti di Shakespeare' ('The translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*'), Bonnefoy claims to have translated the *Sonnets* out of curiosity (Bonnefoy 2005, 95), because

they do not have the same unity that his plays have (Bonnefoy 2005, 95). Secondly, he is not satisfied with the translation decisions taken by the previous French translators of Shakespeare (Bonnefoy 2005, 97). He gives as an example the prose translation made by Pierre Jean Jouve of the *Sonnets* who shaped the poems according to his elaborate way of expression (Bonnefoy 2005, 97), but to translate Shakespeare in prose means to make Shakespeare's poems signify in a mannerist approach, but for Bonnefoy to translate Shakespeare according to mannerism is not enough (Bonnefoy 2005, 97). Also, to translate Shakespeare in regular lines is not an acceptable solution (Bonnefoy 2005, 97), so free verse is the only way to make the reader discover the meaning of the poems (Bonnefoy 2005, 98).

Fabio Scotto, Yves Bonnefoy's Italian translator and critic, in his essay 'Verso una sintassi della presenza: Bonnefoy tradotto' ('Towards a syntax of presence: Bonnefoy translated') elucidates his translation process for Bonnefoy's poems into Italian: he tried to stay faithful to the original poems without being too literal or without paraphrasing, but he preserved their original audibility (Scotto 2013, 102). For Scotto, the translator's task is to translate the sound of poems to disclose their other meanings, as he states in the *Introduction* to his book *Il senso del suono* (Scotto 2013, XI)[5].

Other two Italian translators who stress the importance of musicality and audibility when translating poems from one language to another are Fabio Morábito and Marco Fazzini. Morábito in his essay 'Traduttore truffatore' ('The dishonest translator') writes about the artificiality of the poetic language, and of his freedom when translating poems from the Italian to highlight the rhythm and sound of the translated poem to the detriment of the meaning (Fondebrider 2015, 226).

Fazzini in his essay 'Traducir poesía: qué locura' ('Translating poetry: how crazy') tells his translator's task when he translated the Scottish poet Sorley McLean. He personally met him in 1993 in Skye and listened to him read poems in Gaelic, to later translate his poems recalling that kind of musicality (Fondebrider 2015, 286); he also had CDs and cassettes that helped him to recreate the sounds of Gaelic (Fondebrider 2015, 286). How to make sure that a poem has been properly translated? Fazzini suggests to read it aloud, and the translator's hearing will decided if the translation was done poorly or was well-crafted (Fondebrider 2015, 288).

[5] I report professor Scotto's suggestion to delve into the themes treated in this chapter: to focus on the authors Efim Etkind, Antoine Berman, Henri Meschonnic, Emilio Mattioli and Franco Fortini described in his book *Il senso del suono*.

Other two translators in Fondebrider's book who affirm it is the transtalor's duty to convey the meaning of the original text are Valerio Magrelli and Jordi Doce.

Magrelli in the essay 'La Pascua de las comas' ('Easter of commas') illustrates his first translation attempt at the end of the '70s to translate Mallarmé essays from French to Italian, asserting he had to deal with similar issues the poetic text has (Fondebrider 2015, 179).

He read a previous translation of Mallarmé essays into Italian made by Francesco Piselli, but he could not accept that Piselli had made a paraphrase of Mallarmé (Fondebrider 2015, 180), so he started putting in the right place the commas which were a fundamental element in the original text, and identified his task which was to reproduce into Italian the convolutions of the Big Syntactic Knot of Mallarmé (Fondebrider 2015, 181).

Jordi Doce in the essay 'Traducir: dos asedios' ('Translation: two sieges') questions the role of the translator, who for him has to be a poet in order to translate poetry (Fondebrider 2015, 415), deems there is no ideal translation, because the activity of translation unveils the impossibility of the activity itself (Fondebrider 2015, 416), assures it is no use mastering languages, being accustomed to use dictionaries and manuals, reading biographies of the author to be translated and studies on his work if first the translator has not formed an opinion on the author's style of writing (Fondebrider 2015, 416). Translations have to show the coherence and cohesion of the original text (Fondebrider 2015, 416).

For Doce, the translator's task is to detect a good or bad translation by paying attention to its sounds: a good translation sounds good, a mediocre translation does not sound as it should (Fondebrider 2015, 422).

Let us see theory put to practice, so how Italian translators have translated *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge to see which translation process each translator has lived through. Franco Nasi, author of *Poetiche in transito*, analyses passages translated in prose and verse, but here only translation in verse will be considered.

Luzi's translation (1949) does not aim at a regular metre, although he translates using seven-syllable line, nine-syllable line or hendecasyllables (Nasi 2004, 109). Luzi also tries to convey the original sound of the poem (Nasi 2004, 109). Fenoglio (1955) is concerned with using a fluid language which reproduces the rhythm (Nasi 2004, 109). Later translators, some of them try to rewrite the original text, some of them stay faithful to the original by giving the

translated poem a coherent metrical and rhyme scheme, like Giudici, Cuneo, Quattrone and Giannotta (Nasi 2004, 114).

Going to Dylan Thomas's translators here taken into account, both Marianni and Sanesi are Italian poets who have undertaken Thomas's translation task and have tried to translate keeping the original poems as their reference, although facing sometimes translation losses.
Is it common to experience translation losses when translating from a language into another, so when performing an inter-lingual translation?
Osimo cites Dryden who enunciates one of the principles of communication and translation: the principle of translation loss. Dryden performs an intra-lingual translation when translating Chaucer in the eighteenth century from Middle English to Modern English, and he states: 'I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, all translations' (Osimo 2002, 33).

These can be the viable solutions when carring out an inter-lingual translation:

1. follow the method of Russian symbolist poet Brjusov who recommends to choose the dominant of the poem, the most important element of the work which is going to be translated (Osimo 2002, 86), which can be the figures of speech and sound, metre, rhymes, the style of the poet;
2. follow Peeter Torop's method of translation, known as 'total translation', and decide whether the dominant of the target text resides in the source text, in the translator or in the receiving culture. If it is in the source text, then the source text is what decides its translatability; if it is up to the translator, then the translator decides his own method of translation which results in the degree of translatability of the work; if the dominant is in the reader of the work and in the cultural norms of the receiving culture, then the translator focuses on the perception of the text (Osimo 2002, 252).

As it can be concluded from the analysis of the translators' work in the third chapter of this dissertation, in Marianni's and Sanesi's translations the source text has its prominence in the translation process, and both translators decide that the dominant of the poems is the style of the poet and the meaning of the poems, so they try to convey the meaning of his lines in the most faithful way possible employing the free verse but trying to keep the same lines length for each stanza of the original poems.

CHAPTER 2: TEN POEMS OF DYLAN THOMAS AND WHAT THE CRITICS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEM

2.1 Dylan Thomas biography and bibliography

Before dealing with Dylan Thomas's poetry, every reader should know at least the major biographical events of Thomas the poet.

Dylan Thomas was born on 27th October 1914 from D.J. Thomas, teacher at the Swansea Grammar School, and Florence Hannah Williams.

D.J. Thomas had always been the role model of Dylan Thomas and thanks to him, he would become a man of letters. Paul Ferris, one of Thomas's biographers, writes of him and his father in *Dylan Thomas:*

> He had never ceased to regard his father with understanding and respect, and the pattern of his life was in some measure a response to D.J. Thomas and his wishes. For the early books that Dylan Thomas read, the rhythms he absorbed, and probably for his obsession with the magic of the poet's function, he was indebted to D.J. There was something about his father, the man of letters, to which he aspired (Bold, ed., 1990, 55).

Mrs. Thomas recalled when his husband came home from the grammar school, he would read to his son Shakespeare (Fitzgibbon 1975, 36). He also let him use his brown study when Dylan was a student to write:

> …endless imitations − (…) − I wrote imitations of whatever I happened, moon-and-print struck, to be goggling at and gorging at the time: Sir Thomas Browne, Robert W. Service, de Quincey, Henry Newbolt, Blake, Baroness Orczy, Marlowe, *Chums*, the Imagists, the Bible, the *Magnet*, Poe, Grimm, Keats, Lawrence, Austin Dobson, Dostoevski, Anon. and Shakespeare. I tried my little trotter at every poetical form. How could I know the tricks of this trade unless I tried to do them myself, for the poets wouldn't rise from the dead and show me how their poems were done by mirrors, and I couldn't trust the critical expositors of poetry then – or now. I *had* to imitate and parody, consciously and unconsciously: I *had* to try to learn what made words tick, beat, blaze, because I wanted to write what I wanted to write before I knew how to write or what I wanted to. And as if I knew now (Fitzgibbon 1975, 44-45).

Roberto Sanesi in his book *Dylan Thomas* gives some useful and interesting insights into the life and bibliography of the Welsh poet. He writes that Thomas was born at Cwmdonkin Drive n.5 and it was also the place he lived in Swansea (Sanesi 1994, 12).

During his school years he participated in the local Dramatic Society: in May 1929 he played Edward Stanton in the play *Abraham Lincoln* by J. Drinkwater; in 1930 he played the main role of the play *Oliver Cromwell* (Sanesi 1994, 15); in 1931 he played the main role of Galsworthy's play *Strife* and he played secondary roles with the YMCA Players in *The Man at Six* by Jack de Leon and *Captain X* by Herbert Swears (Sanesi 1994, 16-17). He also played roles with the Stage Society, a theatrical company, in Noel Coward's *Hay Fever*, Farquhar's *The Beaux Stratagem*, Rubinstein's *Peter and Paul*, Ackland's *Strange Orchestra* and was financed by J.D. Williams, the newspaper editor of the South Wales Evening Post (Sanesi 1994, 18).

According to the chronology in Paul Ferris' *Dylan Thomas: The Collected Letters, Vol.1*, in the summer of 1931 Thomas quit school to be a reporter at the local newspaper, *South Wales Daily Post*, but left in December 1932 (Ferris, ed., 2017, IX).

Thomas got tired of acting too, and after reciting *Martin* by Jean-Jacques Bernard he left the company (Sanesi 1994, 18). During the period 1931-1934 Dylan was unemployed and stayed at home, but that did not stop him from writing all the poems in his first volume, *Eighteen Poems*, most poems in the second volume, *Twenty-five Poems*, and drafts of his later poems (Fitzgibbon 1975, 67). In 1931, they were hard times for Dylan's Swansea, as the city was facing a political crisis, depression and unemployment (Fitzgibbon 1975, 68). According to Ferris' chronology, Thomas moved to London in November 1934 (Ferris, ed., 2017, IX), and Sanesi writes the poet was awarded the second prize of the poetry prize set by the newspaper Sunday Referee because of his poem *The force that through the green fuse drives the flower*, so the newspaper director Victor Neuburg decided to publish the first collection of poems by Thomas called *18 Poems*[6] under The Sunday Referee & The Parton Bookshop (Sanesi 1994, 23).

[6] *18 Poems* contains: *I see the boys of summer, When once the twilight locks no longer, A process in the weather of the heart ,Before I knocked, The force that through the green fuse drives the flower, My hero bares his nerves*, *Where once the waters of your face*, *If I were tickled by the rub of love, Our eunuch dreams, Especially when the October wind, When, like a running grave, From love first fever to her plague, In the beginning, Light breaks where no sun shines, I fellowed sleep, I dreamed my genesis, My world is a pyramid, All all and all the dry worlds lever.*

In the period of 1935-1936, Thomas was working on the *Twenty-five Poems*, which he described to his Welsh friend and poet Vernon Watkins that it was 'very like plumbing: getting things in the right position so they function properly' (Fitzgibbon 1965, 200). He was published in English and American magazines, he was reviewing thrillers almost every week for Geoffrey Grigson in the *Morning Post,* and occasionally books in *the Adelphi* (Fitzgibbon 1975, 200).

In 1936 Thomas published his second collection of poems, *25 Poems*[7] (Sanesi 1994, 51-52). Sanesi states these poems have a conceptual unity and their themes are: dark and distressing eroticism, the pain caused by birth and death, the sense of guilt derived by the original sin (Sanesi 1994, 52). The poems also question about the function of the sexual act, the purpose of natural lust, whether it is a negative and painful aspect, a weakness of the human flesh or if it is necessary to achieve mystical love as it is pictured in William Blake's *Jerusalem* (Sanesi 1994, 53).

Sanesi in the second chapter of his book, II. Londra: *18 Poems*, interrogates upon the Celtic spirit of Thomas, and he affirmed that it is manifested in Thomas's poetry by a familiarity with the Divine, that is peculiar of the Welsh.

In a letter written to Stephen Spender on 9th December 1952, Thomas disclosed that he was neither influenced by Welsh bardic poetry nor he was not acquainted with the ancient language of Wales.[8]

How is the world of Thomas in *18 Poems*? It is a nightmarish world, a complicated and nocturnal world, it appears to be no salvation at the beginning.

In this world there is a fundamental unit of the primary elements of nature's perpetual cycle (birth and death, love and suffering, soul and flesh). These poems by Thomas are monologues made to be dialogues and the poems are narrative poems (Sanesi 1994, 38). When asked on the use for narrative poetry on the questionnaire published on New Verse in 1934, Thomas answered:

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[7] *25 Poems* contains: *I, in my intricate image, This bread I break, Incarnate devil, To-day, this insect, Do you not father me, Hold hard, these ancient minutes in the cuckoo's month, Was there a time, Why east wind chills, A grief ago, How soon the servant sun, The hand that signed the paper, Should lanterns shine, I have longed to move away, Find meat on bones, Grief thief of time, Then was my neophite, The seed-at-zero, Shall gods be said to thump the clouds, Here in this spring, Out of the sighs, Ears in the turrets hear, And death shall have no dominion,* the ten sonnets of *Altarwise by owl-light.*

[8] Sanesi 1994, 35. See the full letter Ferris, ed., 2017, 497.

> Narrative is essential. Much of the flat, abstract poetry of the present has no narrative movement, no movement at all, and is consequently dead. There must be a progressive line, or theme, of movement in every poem (Marucci 1976, 40).

At early stages, Fitzgibbon calls attention to Dylan's preoccupation with the sound and meaning of words, the shortness of his early poems and the cautious metre which was usually the five-beat line or some minor variant (Fitzgibbon 1975, 99). Also the early poems were the Freudian synthesis of the death-wish and the urge to procreate with a physiological, biblical and astronomical set of images (Fitzgibbon 1975, 100-101). Thomas, in a letter to the poet and novelist Glyn Jones dated March 1934, wrote about his political affiliations, readings, the obscurity of his verse, his education and his publications on newspapers:

> (..) Are you—I hope you aren't—an admirer of Grigson's 'New Verse', and of the (usually) unutterable bosh that Ross-Williamson prints in his 'Bookman'[9]. You are, I suppose, a good Socialist. As a Socialist myself, though a very unconventional one, I like to read good propaganda, but the most recent poems of Auden and Day-Lewis seem to me to be neither good poetry nor propaganda. A good propagandist needs little intellectual appeal; and the emotional appeal in Auden wouldn't raise a corresponding emotion in a tick. Are you obscure? But, yes, all good modern poetry is bound to be obscure. (...) The fact that a good poem is obscure *does* mean that it is obscure to most people, and its author is therefore—contrary to his own ideas, for every poet thinks that he writes for an universal audience—appealing to a limited public. (...) My own obscurity is quite an unfashionable one, based, as it is, on a preconceived symbolism derived, (I'm afraid all this sounds very woolly and pretentious), from the cosmic significance the human anatomy. (…)
>
> Now to answer a few questions. I am in the very early twenties. I was self-educated at the local Grammar School where I did no work at all and failed all examinations. I did not go to a university. I am not unemployed for the reason that I have never been employed. I have done nothing but write, though it is only recently that I have tried to have some things published. I have had two poems in the Adelphi, several in the Sunday Referee (a paper you should take), some stories and poems (there is one story in this week's issue) in the New English Weekly[10],

[9] Hugh Ross Williamson (1901-78), author and journalist, was trying to modernise the old-fashioned magazine *Bookman*. Note in Ferris, ed., 2017, 121.

[10] 'After The Fair', issue dated 15 March. Note in Ferris, ed., 2017, 123.

> some poems in the Listener, (I have a very obscure one in this week's, too)[11], many things in an atrocious rag called the 'Herald of Wales', a poem in John O'London's, while the Adelphi, the New English Weekly & other papers including, I hope, the Criterion, are going to print some things in the fairly near future (Ferris, ed., 2017, 121-123).

In 1937, Thomas married Caitlin Mcnamara, and wrote a letter in July to his friend and writer Vernon Watkins to inform him of the event. Here is an extract: 'My own news is very big and simple. I was married three days ago; to Caitlin Mcnamara; in Penzance registry office; with no money, no prospect of money, no attendant friends or relatives, and in complete happiness. We've been meaning to from the first day we met, and now we are free and glad. We're moving next week—for how long depends on several things, but mostly on one—to a studio some miles away, in Newlyn, a studio above a fish-market & where gulls fly in to breakfast' (Sanesi 1994, 86; Ferris, ed., 2017, 294).

From Newlyn, Thomas moved with his wife to her parents' home in Ringwood and then they moved to Laugharne in 1938. Thomas would live there until his death (Sanesi 1994, 87). In 1938, Thomas also won the Oscar Blumenthal prize for poetry for the four poems published in *Poetry* (Chicago) in the August 1938 issue[12].

Sanesi added that this would bring fame to Thomas in the United States, and it would give him the opportunity to publish a selection of his work: *The World I Breathe* was published, it contained forty poems from the first two volumes of poetry by Thomas and twelve pieces of prose (Sanesi 1994, 97).

In 1939 Thomas's third poetry collection *The Map of Love*[13] was published (Sanesi 1994, 88).

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[11] 'Light breaks where no sun shines.' It was Thomas's first poem in the *Listener*. Note in Ferris, ed., 2017, 123.

[12] See Ferris, ed., 2017, 389.

[13] *The Map of Love* contains sixteen poems and seven stories. Poems: *Because the pleasure bird whistles*, *I make this in a warring absence, When all my five and country senses see, We lying by seasand, It is the sinners' dust-tongued bell, O make me a mask, The spire cranes, After the funeral, Once it was the colour of saying, Not from this anger, How shall my animal, The tombstone told when she died, On no work of words, A saint about to fall, If my head hurt a hair's foot, Twenty-four years.* Stories: *The Visitor, The Enemies, The Tree, The Map of Love, The Mouse and the Woman, The Dress, The Orchard.*

During the 1940s, *New Poems*[14](1943) were presented in the United States and *Deaths and Entrances*[15](1946), the most important volume of his literary work, was published.
Henry Treece, in his chapter called 'Deaths and Entrances', wrote that the title of the poetry collection comes from 'John Donne's last sermon, *Death's Duell*, in which he expresses pity for mankind because of humanity's inevitable passing and corruption' (Treece 1956, 91).
In 1940, Dylan was hired at Strand Films by Donald Taylor to write film scripts (Fitzgibbon 1975, 279). Apart from the early documentaries, no script by Dylan became a film. (Fitzgibbon 1975, 283).
In 1946 Thomas's *Selected Writings*[16] were published in the United States, and in 1949 *Twenty-Six Poems*[17] were published in London.
Also, during the years of the Second World War, he gave several poems to newspapers for publication: *I, the first named* (*Seven*, n.3, Winter 1938), *Paper and sticks* (*Seven,* n.6, Autumnn 1939), *The Countryman's Return* (*Cambridge Front*, n.1, Summer 1940), *Request to Leda* (*Horizon*, vol.6, n.31, July 1942), *Last night I dived my beggar arm* (*Poetry*, n.9, London, 1944) and *Your breath was shed* (*Poetry*, n.9, London, 1944) and he prepared the

[14] *New Poems* contains: *And death shall have no dominion, Because the pleasure bird whistles, O make me a mask, There was a saviour, Into her lying down head, Dawn raid, To others than you, Love in the asylum, The marriage of a virgin, When I woke, The hunchback in the park, On a wedding anniversary, Unluckily for a death, Ballad of the long-legged bait, Once below a time, Request to Leda, Deaths and Entrances.*
[15] *Deaths and Entrances* contains: all the poems of *New Poems*, *The conversation of a prayer*, *A refusal to mourn the death, by fire, of a child in London*, *Poem in October*, *This side of the truth, Paper and sticks, A Winter's Tale, In my craft or sullen art, Ceremony after a fire raid, Lie still, sleep becalmed, Vision and prayer, Holy spring, Fern Hill.*
[16] *Selected Writings* contains: Poems: *I see the boys of summer, The force that through the green fuse drives the flower, When, like a running grave, When once the twilight locks no longer, Especially When The October Wind, From love's first fever to her plague, A process in the weather of the heart, I dreamed my genesis, I, in my intricate image, A grief ago, Then was my neophyte, From the oracular archives (Sonnet IX), Let the tale's sailor (Sonnet X), I make this in a warring absence, It is the sinner's dust-tongued bell, The spire cranes, After the funeral, How shall my animal, A saint about to fall, If my head hurt a hair's foot, This bread I break, Hold hard, these ancient minutes in the cuckoo's month, Today, this insect, The hand that signed the paper, Do you not father me, Foster the light, Twenty-four years, When all my five and country senses see, There was a saviour, And death shall have no dominion, Dawn raid, Love in the asylum, Ballad of the long-legged bait, Once below a time, Deaths and Entrances, On the marriage of a virgin, Ceremony after a fire raid, Holy spring, Vision and prayer, Poem in October, Fern Hill, The conversation of prayer, A Winter's Tale, This side of the truth, A refusal to mourn, Lie still, sleep becalmed, In my craft or sullen art;* Stories: *The orchards, A prospect of the sea, The burning baby, The mouse and the woman;* From *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*: *The peaches, One warm Sunday.*
[17] *Twenty-Six Poems* contains: *I see the boys of summer, Especially When The October Wind, From love's first fever to her plague, A process in the weather of the heart I, in my intricate image, Then was my neophyte, I make this in a warring absence, It is the sinner's dust-tongued bell, After the funeral, How shall my animal, If my head hurt a hair's foot, This bread I break, Hold hard, these ancient minutes in the cuckoo's month, Today, this insect, The hand that signed the paper, Twenty-four years, When all my five and country senses see, There was a saviour, Ballad of the long-legged bait, Deaths and Entrances, Fern Hill, A Winter's Tale, A refusal to mourn, Lie still, sleep becalmed, In my craft or sullen art, In country sleep.*

material which would be known as *Quite Early One Morning* (1954) and *A Prospect Of the Sea* (1955). He started to put in writing his novel, *Adventures in The Skin Trade*, which remained uncomplished, and his radio adaptation *Under Milk Wood*, which was awarded the Prix Italia in 1954 (Sanesi 1994, 97-99).

He also took part in the BBC Third Programme in the autumn of 1946 to: act as 'Second Brother' in Milton's *Comus*; read Blake and Edith Sitwell; talk about Walter De la Mare; play Louis MacNiece's *Aristophanes;* act as Private Dai Evans in a radio version of David Jones's *In Parenthesis* (Ferris 2006, 233).

In 1947 Thomas stayed for a few months in Italy, met Luigi Berti in Florence who introduced him to Mario Luzi, Piero Bigongiari, Eugenio Montale, Alessandro Parronchi and painter Ottone Rosai, but he did not like them very much (Sanesi 1994, 119).

In that year he also traveled to Oxfordshire, but went back to Laugharne in 1948 to live in the Boat House. In 1948, Dylan signed a contract with Gainsborough to write three film scripts: *Rebecca's Daughter*, about nineteenth-century attacks by farmers on tollgates in the Welsh countryside; *The Beach of Falesá*, R.L. Stevenson short story set in the South Seas; *Me and My Bike*, a 'film operetta' from an original idea (Ferris 2006, 245).

In 1949 he was invited at the Poetry Center in New York, therefore in 1950 he went for the first time in the U.S. He would travel to the States again in 1952 and twice in 1953, to die there eventually (see Ferris, ed., 2017, X).

The last collection of poetry of Thomas came out in 1952 with the title *In Country Sleep*[18] (Sanesi 1994, 120). According to Fitzgibbon, this poetry collection was acclaimed by the reading public and established Thomas as a great poet, selling ten thousand copies of the English edition in 1953 and twenty thousand more copies in 1954 (Fitzgibbon 1975, 382). The British edition of *Under Milk Wood* sold twenty-five thousand copies within six months of Thomas's death (Ferris 2006, 366).

In a note to the *Collected Poems 1934-1952* published by James Dent & Sons in 1952 expressing the purpose of his poetry, Thomas wrote:

> I read somewhere of a shepherd who, asked why he made, from within fairy rings, ritual observances to the moon to protect his flocks, replied: 'I'd be a damn fool if I didn't!'. These

[18] *In Country Sleep* contains*: Over Sir John's Hill, Poem on his birthday, Do not go gentle into that good night, Lament, In the white giant's thigh, In Country Sleep.*

> poems, with all their crudities, doubts, and confusions, are written for the love of Man and in praise of God, and I'd be a damn fool if they weren't!' (Sanesi, ed., 2017, XII)

In an interview, Thomas compared his early poems with his late poems style: 'I used to write violent dreadful things. (...) I'm getting old now. Now I write gently, quietly...' (Ferris 2006, 317). Before going to the U.S.A., Dylan spent some months in Iran in early 1951 since the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company commissioned him a script about the benefits that British oilmen were bringing to Iran (Ferris 2006, 296).

How did Thomas die? Thomas claimed to have drunk 'eighteen straight whiskies' at the White Horse, so Dr. Feltenstein, the family physician of Liz Reitell of Poetry Center, injected him with half a grain of morphine at Thomas room in Chelsea Hotel.

Thomas was already suffering from various ailments: asthma, gout, blackouts, anxiety, bouts of *delirium tremens* (Bold, ed., 1990, 7), and the whiskies had been the deathblow. Some people like Gittins think it was Dr. Feltenstein who killed Thomas with the morphine injection which was three times the dose he needed.

Thomas was rushed to St. Vincent's Hospital on 5 November 1953 and died at the presence of a nurse and the American poet John Berryman. Caitlin Thomas had reached her dying husband in New York and made the voyage home with Thomas's coffin (Bold, ed., 1990, 7-13).

2.2 Thomas's personal thoughts on his poetry, his literary influences and comments by fellow poets on his work and personality

How did Thomas consider his poetry? John Ackerman in the essay 'The Welsh Background' reports what Dylan Thomas wrote about the aim of poetry in *New Verse*, October 1934:

> Poetry, recording the stripping of the individual darkness, must inevitably cast light upon what has been hidden for too long, and, by so doing, make clean the naked exposure. Freud cast light on a little darkness he had exposed. Benefiting by the sight of the light and the knowledge of the hidden nakedness, poetry must drag further into the clean nakedness of light more even of the hidden causes than Freud could realise (Cox, ed., 1966, 25).

Thomas explained in his *Poetic Manifesto* of 1951 how he created his poems:

> I am a painstaking, conscientious, involved and devious craftsman in words, however unsuccessful the result so often appears, and to whatever wrong uses I may apply my technical paraphernalia. I use everything & anything to make my poems work and move in the direction I want them to: old tricks, new tricks, puns, portmanteau-words, paradox, allusion, paronomasia, paragram, catachresis, slang, assonantal rhymes, vowel rhymes, sprung rhythm. Every device is in language is there to be used if you will (Murdy 1966, 14).

In the *Poetic Manifesto* he also affirmed that he liked the sound of words better than their meaning and that he treated words as a craftsman does with his material:' What I like to do is to treat words as a craftsman does his wood or stone or what-have-you, to hew, carve, mould, coil, polish, & plane them into patterns, sequences, sculptures, fugues of sound'(Hillis Miller 1966, 195) and expressed another aim of poetry,' to make comprehensible and articulate what might emerge from subconscious sources; one of the great main uses of the intellect is to *select* from the amorphous mass of subconscious images, those that will best further his imaginative purpose, which is to write the best poem he can' (Hillis Miller 1966, 209).

About his theory of poetry, Thomas wrote a letter to Charles Fisher in early 1935:

> You asked me to tell you about my theory of poetry. Really I haven't got one. I like things that are difficult to write and difficult to understand; I like 'redeeming the contraries' with secretive images; I like contradicting my images, saying two things at once in one word, four in two words and one in six. (…) Poetry, heavy in tare though nimble, should be as orgiastic and organic as copulation, dividing and unifying, personal but not private, propagating the individual in the mass and the mass in the individual. I think it should work from words, from the substance of words and the rhythm of substantial words set together, not towards words. Poetry is a medium, not a stigmata on paper (Ferris, ed., 2017, 208).

The origin of poetry for Thomas resides in its negation:

> The origin of poetry is the negation of poetry, 'destructive and constructive at the same time', and it is this negation to which poetry must testify at the same time that it testifies to the inexhaustible fecundity of the source. Poetry, like its origin, must be 'creative destruction, destructive creation' (Bold, ed.,1990, 49. Also in Hillis Miller 1966, 195).

An example of this statement could be the poem *I dreamed my genesis*, which will be later taken into consideration, about a genesis of a body which will die and will be reborn.
Also, when talking about the source of his poetry, Thomas wrote to Henry Treece on March 23rd 1938:

> It consciously is not my method to move concentrically round a central image… A poem by myself *needs* a host of images, because its centre is a host of images. I make one image − though 'make' is not the word; I let, perhaps, an image be 'made' emotionally in me and then apply to it what intellectual and critical force I possess−let it breed another, let the image contradict the first, make, of the third image bred out of the other two together, a fourth contradictory image, and let them all, within my imposed formal limits, conflict. Each image holds within it the seed of its own destruction, and my dialectical method, as I understand it, is a constant building up and breaking down of the images that come out of the central seed, which is itself destructive and constructive at the same time. (…) Out of the inevitable conflict of images−inevitable because of the creative, recreative, destructive, and contradictory nature of the motivating centre, the womb of war−I try to make that momentary peace which is a poem. I do not want a poem of mine to be, nor it can be, a circular piece of experience placed neatly outside the living stream of time from which it came; a poem of mine is, or should be, a watertight section of the stream that is flowing all ways; all warring images within it should be reconciled from that small stop of time (Ferris, ed., 2017, 328).

So, for Thomas the poetic source is compared to an unruly stream and the poem produced from it is a 'watertight section' and also a 'momentary peace'. Let's not forget that his poems are composed of images which contradict one another. For example, in *Where once the waters of your face,* the sea landscape in the third stanza becomes dry('The weed of love's left dry', l.15), but will reflourish with corals in the fourth stanza ('There shall be corals in your bed', l.22).
In a letter to Pamela Hansford Johnson, dated 15th October 1933, Thomas wrote about poetry and his literary influences:

> I am in the path of Blake, but so far behind him that only his wings on his heels are in sight. I have been writing since I was a very little boy, and have always been struggling with the same things, with the idea of poetry as a thing entirely removed from such accomplishments as 'word-painting', and the setting down of delicate but usual emotions in a few, wellchosen words.(…) There is no necessity for the artist to do anything. There is no necessity. He is a

> law unto himself, and his greatness or smallness rises or falls by that. He has only one limitation, and that is the widest of all: the limitation of form. Poetry finds his own form; form should never be superimposed; the structure should rise out of the words and the expression of them. (…) (Ferris, ed., 2017, 43-44)

In another letter to Henry Treece, dated 16th May 1938, Thomas wrote to thank him on his comparison between his own poetry and the poetry of Hopkins, to talk about his early poems and his poetry in general:

> I was much impressed by the Hopkins chapter [Chapter 5 of Treece's book about Thomas was called 'The debt to [Gerard Manley] Hopkins', Ferris note], which means I enjoyed it and thought much of it was true. What a lot of work you've put in. I never realised the influence he must have had on me. As I told you before, I have read him only slightly. I have read far more Francis Thompson. I've never been conscious of Hopkins' influence. (...) The people most to be found in those very early poems were, I think, the Elizabethans and George Peele, Webster and, later, Beddoes, some Clare (his hard, country sonnets), Lawrence (animal poems, and the verse extracts from the Plumed Serpent), a bit of Tennyson, some very bad Flecker and, of course, a lot of bits from whatever fashionable poetry—Imagists, Sitwells—I'd been reading lately.(…) Very much of my poetry is, I know an enquiry and a terror of fearful expectation, a discovery and a facing of fear. I hold a beast, an angel, and a madman in me, and my enquiry is as to their working, and my problem is their subjugation and victory, downthrow & upheaval, and my effort is their self-expression. (…) The poem is, as all poems are, its own question and answer, its own contradiction, its own agreement. I ask only that my poetry should be taken literally. The aim of a poem is the mark that the poem itself makes; it's the bullet and the bullseye; the knife, the growth and the patient. A poem moves only towards its own end, which is the last line. (…) My poems *are* formed, they are not turned on like a tap at all, they are 'watertight compartments'. [Thomas is referring to Stephen Spender criticism of his poetry in the Daily Worker:The truth is that Thomas's poetry is turned on like a tap; it is just poetic stuff with no beginning nor end, shape, or intelligent and intelligible control'. Note mine] Much of the obscurity is due to rigorous compression; the last thing they do is to flow; they are much rather hewn (Ferris, ed., 2017, 343-344).

Thomas spoke in a similar fashion in this letter to Treece about his poetry: in the previous letter of March 23rd his poems are 'watertight sections', in this letter his poems are 'watertight compartments'.

Thomas early poems were thought by critics and editors to be influenced by Surrealism and by automatic writing, but Thomas was quick to dismiss it. In a letter to Pamela Hansford Johnson in November 1933, Dylan wrote:

> Just after writing this, I received a rather disquieting note from Richard Rees of the Adelphi, who, last week, asked me to send him some recent poems. He compliments me upon the high standard & the great originality exhibited, & said my technique was amazing (One Up for Formal Me), but accused me—not in quite so many words—of being in the grip of devils. 'The poems have an unsubstantiality, a dreamlike quality', he writes, 'which non-plusses me'. He then goes on to say that the poems, as a whole, reminded him of automatic or trance-writing. Automatic writing is worthless as literature, however interesting it may be to the psychologist & pathologist. So, perhaps, after all I am nothing but a literary oddity, a little freak of nature whose madness runs into print rather than into ravings and illusions. It may be, too, an illusion that keeps me writing, the illusion of myself as some misunderstood poet of talent. The note has depressed me more than the usual adverse criticism. It shows not dislike, or mere incomprehension, but confession of bewilderment, & almost fear, at the method by which I write my poetry. But he is wrong, I swear it. My facility, as he calls it, is, in reality, tremendously hard work. I write at the speed of two lines a hour. I have written hundreds of poems, & each one has taken me a great many painful, brain-racking and sweaty hours. (Ferris, ed., 2017, 68)

From this letter it can be derived the effort Thomas put in his poems too, and here is the proof that his poems were not written in one go, but were refined with time.

Thomas gave a prompt reply to one of his critics, Richard Church, who thought he had been influenced by surrealism, on 9th December 1935:

> I am not, never have been, never will be, or could be for that matter, a surrealist, and for a number of reasons: I have very little idea what surrealism is; until quite recently I had never heard of it; I have never, to my knowledge, read even a paragraph of surrealist literature; my acquaintance with French is still limited to 'the pen of my aunt'; I have not read any French poetry, either in original or in translation, (…). I hope you won't object, but I took the liberty, soon after receiving your letter, of writing to a very sound friend of mine and asking him what

> surrealism was, explaining, at the same time, that a critic whose work we both knew and admired had said that my own poems were themselves surrealist. In his reply he told me what he thought the principal ideas of surrealism were, and said that surrealist writing need not have any 'meaning at all'. (He quoted some dreadful definition about 'the satanic juxtaposition of irrelevant objects etc'.) I think I do know what some of the main faults of my writing are: immature violence, rhythmic monotony, frequent muddleheadedness, and a very much overweighted imagery that leads too often to incoherence. But every line *is* meant to be understood; the reader *is* meant to understand every poem by thinking and feeling about it, not by sucking it in through his pores, or whatever he is meant to do with surrealist writing (Ferris, ed., 2017, 231-232).

Fitzgibbon sheds some light on this letter, explaining that Thomas had read modern French poetry such as Rimbaud, that he had read English surrealism writers such as Gascoyne and that he had read all modern poetry (Fitzgibbon 1975, 199).

How was and how is Thomas's poetic reputation among his fellow writers and his critics? Italian poet and writer Mario Luzi remembers him as follows:

> Dylan went to Florence for the first time in 1947 and by chance his visit coincided with the presence there of Spender: one sensed at once how fundamentally different the two poets were, Spender displaying a lively intellectual curiosity in personalities and art, Dylan appearing not to be in the least interested, his main preoccupation being to find a place where the wine and beer were good and a comfortable lodging. He chose the well-known Café Giubbe Rosse and a lodging in the country suburb of Mosciano, gravitating between the two.
>
> Entering the Giubbe Rosse late of an evening, he was to be found entrenched behind a small forest of bottles, a full glass in his hand, and one wondered whether those large pale blue eyes were gazing upon something ineffable or merely into vacancy. He would begin to speak, then lapse into silence, perhaps because the listener did not understand English, perhaps because what he had to say was inexpressible in any language. He talked little, preferring gestures of comprehension or dissent, remaining isolated within his own solitude, his friendliness apparent in the offering of drink.
>
> His wife's problem was to push him into a taxi and get him home. One evening, expected to supper with the poet Montale, he was reluctantly dragged from his bed and remained drunk all the evening. Invited on other occasions to their houses by his translator Bigongiari and Rosai, the painter, he seemed at first to enter into conversation, a glow of fiery youth in his eyes, but almost at once fell back in his chair and slept heavily.

> And yet, in spite of his drunkenness, his reluctance or inability to speak, his myth remains. These things merged into an impression of incommunicability which, strange though it may seem, roused sympathetic liking and commanded respect. Those who knew little or nothing of him clearly recognized that destiny or a fatal play of natural forces was at work within him. Moreover, he felt and repaid as best he could the sympathy which surrounded him, as for example when, at a lively gathering in the house of Parronchi, he suddenly became animated, reading aloud from Milton and Shakespeare, giving a melodious, profound and extraordinarily vigorous rendering, which left a deep impression as of a new discovery of the old texts and of the reader.
>
> In the summer he left for Elba and years of silence were broken when he wrote a long poem 'In Country Sleep' (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 48-49).

T.S. Eliot remembers the poet and his poems this way:

> I remember being shown a number of his poems before his work was taken on by Richard Church for Dents and I remember discussing the poems with Sir Herbert Read. I think he agreed with me but I will not swear to this, when I came to the conclusion that I wished all the poems were as good as the best. I regret having been so fussy because Dylan Thomas's work was always hit or miss. It was a peculiarity of his type of genius that he either wrote a great poem or something approaching nonsense and one ought to have accepted the inferior with the first rate. I certainly regarded him always as a poet of considerable importance (Fitzgibbon 1975, 105).

In February 1936 Edith Sitwell praised Thomas's poem *A Grief ago* in the *London Mercury* and in an interview with Wynford Vaughan Thomas for the B.B.C. she declared that Dylan always behaved with her like a son with his mother (Fitzgibbon 1975, 201).

The American poet Theodore Roethke thought back on Dylan's literary knowledge for the *Encounter*:

> He had a wide and active knowledge of the whole range of English literature; and a long memory. I noticed one day a big pile of poems − Edward Thomas, Hardy, Ransom, Housman, W.H. Davies, and others − all copied out in his careful hand. He said he never felt he knew a poem, what was in it, until he had done this (Fitzgibbon 1975, 354).

Louis MacNiece in his recollections about Dylan Thomas wrote that he was ‘a bard, with the three great bardic virtues of faith, joy and craftmanship’, that his poems were ‘concerned with death or the darker forces, yet they all have the joy of life in them’ and were ‘obscure’. MacNiece described Thomas as a ‘born lyric poet but it was a birthright he worked and worked to secure’. He had other gifts, not only that of poetry:

> He had a roaring sense of comedy, as shown in many of his prose works. He had a natural sense of theatre, as was shown not only in his everyday conversation but in those readings of poetry (and his taste, by the way, was catholic) which earned him such applause both here and in the U.S. He was moreover a subtle and versatile actor, as he proved repeatedly in radio performances. (…) He is assured of a place, and a unique one, in the history of English poetry. (…) What we remember is not a literary figure to be classified in the text-book but something quite unclassifiable, a wind that bloweth where it listeth, a wind with a chuckle in its voice and news from the end of the world. It is too easy to call him unconventional − which is either an understatement or a red herring. It is too easy to call him Bohemian − a word which implies affectations which were quite alien to Thomas. It is too easy even to call him anarchist − a better word but too self-conscious an attitude. Thomas was an actor − and would that more poets were − but he was not an attitudiniser. He eschewed politics but he had a sense of justice; that he once visited Prague proves nothing as to his leftness or rightness; it merely is one more proof that he thought men everywhere were human. Both in his life and his work he remained honest to the end. This, combined with his talents, made him a genius (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 86-87).

Seamus Heaney in the essay ‘Dylan The Durable? On Dylan Thomas’ praised Thomas’s poems:

> They promote his melodramatic apprehension of language as a physical sensation, as a receiving station for creaturely intimations, cosmic process and sexual impulses. But they also manage to transform such unremarkable obsessions into a mighty percussive verse. No history of English poetry can afford to pass them over. Others may have written like Thomas, but it was never vice versa. Call his work Neo-Romantic or Expressionist or Surrealist, call it apocalyptic or overrated or an aberration, it still remains *sui generis* (Heaney 1996, 126).

2.3 Ten poems by Dylan Thomas with metrical analysis and critical analysis: *Where once the waters of your face; Especially when the October wind; I dreamed my genesis; And death shall have no dominion; A winter's tale; In my craft or sullen art; Fern Hill; Ballad of the Long-legged Bait; In country sleep*

In this chapter, ten poems by Dyaln Thomas will be analysed from a metrical and critical viewpoint. The poems are:*Where once the waters of your face*, *Especially when the October wind*, *I dreamed my genesis* from *18 Poems*; *And death shall have no dominion* and *Altarwise by owl-light* from *25 Poems*; *A winter's tale, In my craft or sullen art, Fern Hill* from *Deaths and Entrances*; *Ballad of the Long-legged Bait, In country sleep* from *Twenty-Six Poems*.

John Wain, in his review of the *Collected Poems* by Dylan Thomas wrote about his poetry that he had a 'limited subject matter'(Cox,ed., 1966, 10). He had treated three subjects:1) childhood, and the reminiscences of childhood; 2) the viscera; 3) religion (Cox,ed., 1966, 10). It is true for: 1) *Fern Hill*, *In country sleep*; 2) *Where once the waters of your face, I dreamed my genesis*; 3) *And death shall have no dominion, Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait,* being a voyage of purification from sin, *Altarwise by owl-light*. *In my craft or sullen art* and *Especially when the October wind* are meditations upon language and the poetic craft.

2.3.1 Where Once The Waters Of Your Face

Where once the waters of your face
Spun to my screws, your dry ghost blows,
The dead turns up its eye;
Where once the mermen through your ice
Pushed up their hair, the dry wind steers
Through salt and root and roe.

Where once your green knots sank their splice
Into the tided cord, there goes
The green unraveller,
His scissors oiled, his knife hung loose
To cut the channels at their source

And lay the wet fruits low.

Invisible, your clocking tides
Break on the lovebeds of the weeds;
The weed of love's left dry;
There round about your stones the shades
Of children go who, from their voids,
Cry to the dolphined sea.

Dry as a tomb, your coloured lids
Shall not be latched while magic glides
Sage on the earth and sky;
There shall be corals in your beds,
There shall be serpents in your tides,
Till all our sea-faiths die.

Stanza	Number of syllables in each line
I	8 8 6 8 8 6
II	8 8 6 8 8 6
III	8 8 6 8 8 6
IV	8 8 6 8 8 6

Waters follows a regular metrical pattern: there are four stanzas, each made up of six lines. The first, second, fourth and fifth line of each stanza consists of eight syllables, while the third and sixth consist of six syllables. The rhyme scheme is irregular.

According to Marucci (Marucci 1976, 122), in the two poetry collections *18 Poems* and *25 Poems* the following themes appear, in a chronological order:

1. Penetration of the seminal fluid in the womb;
2. Slow development of the embryo;
3. Childbirth;
4. Empty womb after childbirth.

Always in these two poetry collections, Marucci devised the main representational fields which bear the descriptive images of the themes:

a) light (also fire);
b) the sea (also water, water environments, fluids);
c) metal objects (sharp objects, weapons and so on);

d) plant life.

Marucci pointed out the path of signification of the symbols taken out from the representational fields of the poetry collection by Thomas: sexual symbol (*18 Poems* and *25 Poems*), religious symbol or neutral symbol (*Deaths and Entrances*), sexual or religious symbol (*In Country Sleep*).

In the paragraph 4.4 of his book, Marucci compares *When once the twilight locks no longer* to *Where once the waters of your face,* because they share the same theme, the emptiness of the womb after childbirth, and both share the same representational fields, the sea (b) and metal objects (c).

Waters has waters (l.1), dry (ll.2 and 4), mermen (l.4), salt (l.6), root (l.6) and roe (l.6) which belong to the representational field b and spun (l.2) and screws (l.2) which belong to the representational field c in the first stanza.

In the second stanza, green knots (l.7), splice (l.7), tided cord (l.8) belong to field b, while scissors (l.10), knife (l.10), cut (l.11) to field c. The wet fruits (l.12) is the baby, and belong to field d, plant life.

In the third stanza, clocking tides (l.13), (love)beds (l.13),weeds (l.14), weed (l.15), dry (l.15), stones (l.16), dolphined sea (l.18) belong to field b.

The last stanza, Marucci argues, is about the new fecundation of the womb, so theme 1, and dry (l.19), corals (l.22), beds (l.23), tides (l.23) and sea (l.24) belong to field b, while lids (l.19), latched (l.20) belong to field c (Marucci 1976, 125-126).

Binni sees the sea of the poem as the personification of the poet's faith in his vital intuition: the tides disappear once the poet's reason resurfaces, but reapper once the poet's visionary faith comes to him again (Binni 1973, 73).

2.3.2 Especially when the October wind

Especially when the October wind
With frosty fingers punishes my hair,
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,
By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds,
Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,
My busy heart who shudders as she talks
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words.

Shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark
On the horizon walking like the trees
The wordy shapes of women, and the rows
Of the star-gestured children in the park.
Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches,
Some of the oaken voices, from the roots
Of many a thorny shire tell you notes,
Some let me make you of the water's speeches.

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock
Tells me the hour's word, the neural meaning
Flies on the shafted disk, declaims the morning
And tells the windy weather in the cock.
Some let me make you of the meadow's signs;
The signal grass that tells me all I know
Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye.
Some let me tell you of the raven's sins.

Especially when the October wind
(Some let me make you of autumnal spells,
The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales)
With fists of turnips punishes the land,
Some let me make you of the heartless words.
The heart is drained that, spelling in the scurry
Of chemic blood, warned of the coming fury.
By the sea's side hear the dark-vowelled birds.

L.B. Murdy writes that this poem is ‘one of the finest of Thomas’s early achievements’ (Murdy 1966, 29). The poem focuses on ‘the poet’s visual and auditory perceptions on a particular October day in the terminology of poetic language: “syllabic blood”, “wordy shapes of women”, “vowelled beeches”, “water’s speeches”, “meadow’s signs”, “the signal grass”, and “dark-vowelled birds”’ (Murdy 1966, 29).

It is regular in form, with four stanzas of eight lines each (Murdy 1966, 30).

The syllabic pattern is almost regular:

Stanza	Number of Syllables in Each Line	
I	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10	
II	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 *11*	
III	10 10 *11* 10 10 10 10 10	
IV	10 10 10 10 10 *11 11 9*	(Murdy 1966, 30)

Murdy detects the rhymes following the consonance of words (*abbacddc*):

I	wi*nd*, la*nd*	III	clo*ck*, co*ck*
	hair, fi*r*e		meani*ng*, morni*ng*
	bir*ds*, wor*ds*		si*gns*, si*ns*
	stic*ks*, tal*ks*		know, eye
II	ma*rk*, pa*rk*	IV	wind, land
	tree*s*, row*s*		spe*lls*, Wa*les*
	bee*ches*, spee*ches*		wor*ds*, bir*ds*
	root*s*, not*es*		scu*rry*, fu*ry* (Murdy 1966, 30)

This poem denotes the importance of words to Thomas. For Thomas, when he was a child, words were ‘as the notes of bells, the sounds of musical instruments, the noises of wind, sea, and rain, the rattle of milkcarts, the clopping of hooves on cobbles, the fingering of branches on a window pane, might be to someone, deaf from birth, who has miraculously found his hearing’ (Hillis Miller 1966, 195). For Hillis Miller, this poem also ‘asserts the coincidence of thought and the world’(Hillis Miller 1966, 194), so there is an equivalence between the poet’s interior events and what is going on outside. Their coincidence happens in the blood, which is both ‘chemic’ and ‘syllabic’ (Hillis Miller 1966, 194).
Hillis Miller defines language as the place of interpenetration between mind and world, and words as the stuff of poetry (Hillis Miller 1966, 195).

The poet is ‘shut in a tower of words’ (l.9) and Hillis Miller states that ‘if the transformation of world into words is the way the poet interiorizes the world, it is also the way he is invaded and possessed by the world in all its sensuos immediacy’ (Hillis Miller 1966, 196). Binni claims this is a poem about the incapability of the poet in describing ordinary scenes, he being shut in the terminology of his language which is also one with nature, as in ‘vowelled beeches’(l.13) or ‘water’s speeches’(l.16) (Binni 1973, 26).

2.3.3 I dreamed my genesis

I dreamed my genesis in sweat of sleep, breaking
Through the rotating shell, strong
As motor muscle on the drill, driving
Through vision and the girdered nerve.

From limbs that had the measure of the worm, shuffled
Off from the creasing flesh, filed
Through all the irons in the grass, metal
Of suns in the man-melting night.

Heir to the scalding veins that hold love's drop, costly
A creature in my bones I
Rounded my globe of heritage, journey
In bottom gear through night-geared man.

I dreamed my genesis and died again, shrapnel
Rammed in the marching heart, hole
In the stitched wound and clotted wind, muzzled
Death on the mouth that ate the gas.

Sharp in my second death I marked the hills, harvest
Of hemlock and the blades, rust
My blood upon the tempered dead, forcing
My second struggling from the grass.

And power was contagious in my birth, second
Rise of the skeleton and
Rerobing of the naked ghost. Manhood
Spat up from the resuffered pain.

I dreamed my genesis in sweat of death, fallen
Twice in the feeding sea, grown

Stale of Adam's brine until, vision
Of new man strength, I seek the sun.

I dreamed my genesis has seven stanzas of four lines each, and the syllabic pattern is regular.

Stanza	Number of Syllables in Each Line
I	12 7 10 8
II	12 7 10 8
III	12 7 10 8
IV	12 7 10 8
V	12 7 10 8
VI	12 7 10 8
VII	12 7 10 8

Goodby claims this poem could be ‘a disguised sexual dream, followed by a second, more obvious one, ending in emission’ (Goodby 2017, 104). Goodby also quotes the narrative summed up by Hornick in ‘“The intricate image: a study of Dylan Thomas’: ‘I, in an apocalyptic vision, beheld (1) the miracle of genesis through sexual union, (2) the miraculous resurrection of new life from corrupt and dying flesh’ (Goodby 2017, 104).
In the explicatory notes to the poem, Goodby points out that the ‘grass’ (l.7) recalls “the admonitions of Isaiah 40:6 and the Burial Service in The Book Of Common Prayer that ‘all flesh is grass’” which is also found in Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, I:37: ‘*All flesh is grasse*, is not onely metaphorically, but literally true, for all those creatures we behold, are but the hearbs of the field, digested into flesh in them, or more remotely carnified in our selves’(Goodby 2017, 104).
From l.17, Goodby quotes M. Wynn Thomas who affirms the poem is ‘a two stage process, the original “nativity” being followed by a “death” that is eventually conquered by the resurrection of this second Adam into fullness of life itself’(Goodby 2017, 104).
Also, Goodby cites 1920s science connected to ll.6-8, when it was believed that human beings were made of star-stuff, and to astronomer Arthur Eddington’s 1932 interview about human beings being ‘bits of stellar matter that got cold by accident’ (Allen, ed., 2020, 97).
In this poem the typical symbolism of Thomas appears: the ‘limbs’ have ‘the measure of the worm’ (l.5), David Daiches in ‘The Poetry of Dylan Thomas’ states ‘worms for Thomas were not disgusting, but profoundly symbolic: like maggots, they are elements of corruption and thus of reunification, of eternity’ (Cox, ed., 1966, 19).

Tindall in ‘The Poetry of Dylan Thomas’ disclosed ‘Thomas’s central obsession: the identity of birth, love and death; of womb and tomb’ (Tindall 1948, 434).

With birth, for Thomas, the path towards death starts.

The ‘scalding veins’(l.9) which in the poem *The force that through the green fuse drives the flower* hold the individual vital force, the blood, here hold ‘love’s drop’(l.9).

Another two common images in Thomas’s early poems appear: ‘blades’ (l.18) and ‘the feeding sea’ (l.26). For Olson in the essay ‘The Universe of the Early Poems’, ‘the sea’ in Thomas is ‘a symbol of the source of life’, and ‘scissors or knives’ are ‘symbols of birth (on the ground that the birth-caul is cut open, the birth-string cut) or of death (on the ground that the thread of life is cut, the branch lopped) and of sexual connection (on the ground of its relation to life and death) (Cox, ed., 1966, 50-51).

In this case, the ‘blades’ are a symbol of death.

Binni claims this poem is about the unborn creature who sees the act of creation as a brutal aggression as the female and male entity come in contact with one another (Binni 1973, 67).

2.3.4 And death shall have no dominion

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan't crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be mad and dead as nails,
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

Murdy writes about this poem that it 'concerns immortality viewed from spiritual and physical focuses' (Murdy 1966, 35). He reports the critical observations by Thomas E. Connolly who pointed out that the first stanza depicts heaven, the second stanza refers to hell and the third stanza is about the physical indestructibility of man. (Murdy 1966, 35) Ariodante Marianni, whose translation of this poem will be considered later, supposes in the notes to his translated poems of Dylan Thomas that the title comes from Saint Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, 6-9 (Thomas 2016, 314), which is also confirmed by Thomas's scholar John Goodby (Goodby 2017, 57).
Often in the *Epistle* it is remarked that having faith in Christ will overcome death, such as:

> Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
> Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
> For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection:
> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
> For he that is dead is freed from sin.
> Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:
> Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. (King James Bible, Romans 6:3-9)

Marianni suggests the main theme of this poem is resurrection thanks to nature.
Murdy explains the poem has three stanza of nine lines each, but it has an irregular syllabic verse pattern:

Stanza	Number of Syllables in Each Line	
I	8 8 10 11 9 8 11 8 8	
II	8 8 10 9 9 8 10 7 8	
III	8 8 8 11 9 8 11 9 8	(Murdy 1966, 35)

Goodby argues in the essay 'Lamp-posts and high-volted fruits': Scientific Discourse in the Work of Dylan Thomas' that the last three lines of the poem deal with resurrection and the reconnection of human beings with the vegetation cycle, until Earth will be swallowed by a supernova in five billion years' time (Allen, ed., 2020, 96).

2.3.5 Altarwise by owl-light

I

Altarwise by owl-light in the half-way house
The gentleman lay graveward with his furies;
Abaddon in the hangnail cracked from Adam,
And, from his fork, a dog among the fairies,
The atlas-eater with a jaw for news,
Bit out the mandrake with to-morrow's scream.
Then, penny-eyed, that gentleman of wounds,
Old cock from nowheres and the heaven's egg,
With bones unbuttoned to the half-way winds,
Hatched from the windy salvage on one leg,
Scraped at my cradle in a walking word
That night of time under the Christward shelter:
I am the long world's gentleman, he said,
And share my bed with Capricorn and Cancer.

II

Death is all metaphors, shape in one history;
The child that sucketh long is shooting up,
The planet-ducted pelican of circles
Weans on an artery the gender's strip;
Child of the short spark in a shapeless country
Soon sets alight a long stick from the cradle;
The horizontal cross-bones of Abaddon,
You by the cavern over the black stairs,
Rung bone and blade, the verticals of Adam,
And, manned by midnight, Jacob to the stars.
Hairs of your head, then said the hollow agent,
Are but the roots of nettles and feathers
Over the groundworks thrusting through a pavement
And hemlock-headed in the wood of weathers.

III

First there was the lamb on knocking knees
And three dead seasons on a climbing grave
That Adam's wether in the flock of horns,
Butt of the tree-tailed worm that mounted Eve,
Horned down with skullfoot and the skull of toes
On thunderous pavements in the garden of time;
Rip of the vaults, I took my marrow-ladle
Out of the wrinkled undertaker's van,
And, Rip Van Winkle from a timeless cradle,
Dipped me breast-deep in the descending bone;
The black ram, shuffling of the year, old winter,
Alone alive among his mutton fold,
We rung our weathering changes on the ladder,
Said the antipodes, and twice spring chimed.

IV

What is the metre of the dictionary?
The size of genesis? the short spark's gender?
Shade without shape? the shape of the Pharaoh's echo?
(My shape of age nagging the wounded whisper.)
Which sixth of wind blew out the burning gentry?
(Questions are hunchbacks to the poker marrow.)
What of a bamboo man among your acres?
Corset the boneyards for a crooked boy?
Button your bodice on a hump of splinters,
My camel's eyes will needle through the shroud.
Love's reflection of the mushroom features,

Still snapped by night in the bread-sided field,
Once close-up smiling in the wall of pictures,
Arc-lamped thrown back upon the cutting flood.

V

And from the windy West came two-gunned Gabriel,
From Jesu's sleeve trumped up the king of spots,
The sheath-decked jacks, queen with a shuffled heart;
Said the fake gentleman in suit of spades,
Black-tongued and tipsy from salvation's bottle.
Rose my Byzantine Adam in the night.
For loss of blood I fell on Ishmael's plain,
Under the milky mushrooms slew my hunger,
A climbing sea from Asia had me down
And Jonah's Moby snatched me by the hair,
Cross-stroked salt Adam to the frozen angel
Pin-legged on pole-hills with a black medusa
By waste seas where the white bear quoted Virgil
And sirens singing from our lady's sea-straw.

VI

Cartoon of slashes on the tide-traced crater,
He in a book of water tallow-eyed
By lava's light split through the oyster vowels
And burned sea silence on a wick of words.
Pluck, cock, my sea eye, said medusa's scripture,
Lop, love, my fork tongue, said the pin-hilled nettle;
And love plucked out the stinging siren's eye,
Old cock from nowheres lopped the minstrel tongue
Till tallow I blew from the wax's tower
The fats of midnight when the salt was singing;
Adam, time's joker, on a witch of cardboard
Spelt out the seven seas, an evil index,
The bagpipe-breasted ladies in the deadweed
Blew out the blood gauze through the wound of manwax.

VII

Now stamp the Lord's Prayer on a grain of rice,
A Bible-leaved of all the written woods
Strip to this tree: a rocking alphabet,
Genesis in the root, the scarecrow word,
And one light's language in the book of trees.
Doom on deniers at the wind-turned statement.
Time's tune my ladies with the teats of music,

The scaled sea-sawers, fix in a naked sponge
Who sucks the bell-voiced Adam out of magic,
Time, milk, and magic, from the world beginning.
Time is the tune my ladies lend their heartbreak,
From bald pavilions and the house of bread
Time tracks the sound of shape on man and cloud,
On rose and icicle the ringing handprint.

VIII

This was the crucifixion on the mountain,
Time's nerve in vinegar, the gallow grave
As tarred with blood as the bright thorns I wept;
The world's my wound, God's Mary in her grief,
Bent like three trees and bird-papped through her shift,
With pins for teardrops is the long wound's woman.
This was the sky, Jack Christ, each minstrel angle
Drove in the heaven-driven of the nails
Till the three-coloured rainbow from my nipples
From pole to pole leapt round the snail-waked world.
I by the tree of thieves, all glory's sawbones,
Unsex the skeleton this mountain minute,
And by this blowcock witness of the sun
Suffer the heaven's children through my heartbeat.

IX

From the oracular archives and the parchment,
Prophets and fibre kings in oil and letter,
The lamped calligrapher, the queen in splints,
Buckle to lint and cloth their natron footsteps,
Draw on the glove of prints, dead Cairo's henna
Pour like a halo on the caps and serpents.
This was the resurrection in the desert,
Death from a bandage, rants the mask of scholars
Gold on such features, and the linen spirit
Weds my long gentleman to dusts and furies;
With priest and pharaoh bed my gentle wound,
World in the sand, on the triangle landscape,
With stones of odyssey for ash and garland
And rivers of the dead around my neck.

X

Let the tale's sailor from a Christian voyage
Atlaswise hold half-way off the dummy bay
Time's ship-racked gospel on the globe I balance:

So shall winged harbours through the rockbird's eyes
Spot the blown word, and on the seas I image
December's thorn screwed in a brow of holly.
Let the first Peter from a rainbow's quayrail
Ask the tall fish swept from the bible east,
What rhubarb man peeled in her foam-blue channel
Has sown a flying garden round that sea-ghost?
Green as beginning, let the garden diving
Soar, with its two bark towers, to that Day
When the worm builds with the gold straws of venom
My nest of mercies in the rude, red tree.

In the essay 'Dylan Thomas: A Pioneer', Francis Scarfe analysed the ten sonnets in the paragraph III. Biblical Symbolism.

In the *25 Poems* there is a 'pervading presence of the Bible and sexual symbolism' (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 99), which can be found also in the ten sonnets.

The sonnets have fourteen lines, they form a unit and their theme is the life-death antagonism (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 101).

Stanza	Number of Syllables in Each Line
I	11 11 11 11 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 11 10 11
II	12 10 11 10 11 11 11 10 11 11 11 11 11 11
III	9 10 10 10 10 11 11 10 11 10 11 10 12 9
IV	11 11 12 12 11 11 11 10 11 10 10 10 11 10
V	11 10 10 10 11 10 10 11 10 10 11 11 11 11
VI	11 10 11 10 11 11 10 10 11 11 11 11 11 11
VII	10 10 10 10 10 11 10 11 11 11 11 10 10 11
VIII	11 10 10 10 10 11 11 10 11 10 11 11 11 11
IX	12 11 10 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 10
X	11 11 11 11 11 11 11 10 11 11 11 10 11 10

Scarfe recognized 'a double pattern of Biblical and sexual imagery': Satan is identified with death and sin, Adam and Gabriel represent sex and life, Mary is the justification of sex

through childbearing and suffering and Christ is a victim and blood offering (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 102).

For Scarfe, sonnet II is about 'the identification of sex with sin and nature through Biblical reference' (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 102) and about 'growth from childhood to manhood' (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 102), with an ever-present Death; in sonnet III it appears the conflict of life and death principles, with a biblical and sexual background (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 102). The IV sonnet is a passage of sexual mysticism, where love and sex are identified as a prelude to the nativity. Sonnet V deals with the Annunciation, sonnet VI with the horrors of birth. Sonnet VI has the 'siren' and 'cock' which represent lust and sacrifice, Adam, the sinner, and the 'ladies in the deadweed', which can be sirens, Fates or Furies acting as midwives, giving the idea of Christ's unnatural birth (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 103).

Sonnet VII summarises all Biblical legends; sonnet VIII is about the crucifixion, Scarfe gives us his interpretation of some words:

1) 'Times' nerve' (l.2) is Christ;
2) 'gallow' (l.2) is a combination of shallow and gallows;
3) 'I' (l.3) is Christ;
4) 'three trees' (l.5) are the crosses;
5) 'bird-papped' (l.5) is associated with the dove, also undeveloped, virginal;
6) 'pins for teardrops' (l.6), tears wound;
7) 'Jack Christ' (l.7), Christ is Everyman;
8) 'minstrel angle' (l.7), either ministering angel or each corner of the singing sky;
9) 'heaven-driven' (l.8) means the crucifixion is the will of the Father, not of man;
10) 'three-coloured rainbow' (l.9), a new covenant is made by the Trinity;
11) 'snail-waked' (l.10), snail is the symbol of destruction, sloth and lust,
12) 'sawbones' (l.11) is the doctor;
13) 'mountain' (l.12) means gigantic, important;
14) 'blowclock' (l.13), the sense is literal or it is the symbol of Christ's lifeless body (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 104).

Scarfe added this poem symbolizes the birth of love through the death of sex.

The punishment of Mary is similar to that of Eve, in the sense that she sees her offspring die (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 105).

Scarfe also commented on Thomas's sexual interpretation of death, 'Unsex the skeleton this mountain minute' (l.12): the secret of death and what conveys horror in it is that it is sexless (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 105).

Sanesi offered his interpretation of the ten sonnets both in the third chapter of his book *Dylan Thomas* and in the 'Introduction to Dylan Thomas' in his book *Dylan Thomas:Poesie*. Sanesi stated the ten sonnets show the prophetic and apocalyptic tone of Blake (Sanesi 1994, 56). The sonnet I is the sonnet of creation, Abaddon portrays evil, Adam portrays good and Christ, represented by the cock, portrays death and life, all three participate to the creation in a magical context where the Furies, i.e. the conscience' guilt and the mandrake, symbol of lust, take part (Sanesi 1994, 58).

Sanesi indicated the 'half-way house' (l.1) both as a metaphor for the womb and the human condition, which is neither heavenly nor infernal.

Sanesi quoted Olson study on the sonnets: the first sonnet happens after the autumnal equinox, when the constellation of Hercules sets, followed by Scorpius and Serpens Caput, its Furies. The Sun, or Hercules, moves in the direction of the constellation of Ara, from which the first part of the poem's title derives ('Altarwise'). It is night-time ('by owl-light'), Hercules went beyond the meridian. Cerberus, 'a dog among the fairies'(l.4), is the symbol of death. The Canis Major rises, Hercules and Draco set (Sanesi 1994, 59). Olson explained the 'mandrake' (l.6) as Hercules with his bent knee and his foot on the Dragon's head, which is 'man-drake'. The Sun is 'penny-eyed'(l.7), which means it belongs to the dead, it is fixed in time, 'the long world's gentleman' (l.13), and shares his bed with Cancer and Capricorn, the northern and southern limits of the Sun's ecliptic. 'The heaven's egg' (l.8) is the egg of the *Upanishads*, the source of the universe, the 'bones'(l.9) are 'unbuttoned to the half-way winds' (l.9), the equinoctial gales, 'my cradle'(l.11) is Thomas's birthplace, Swansea (Sanesi 1994, 60).

The second sonnet is about the horror caused by the association of sex with sin, the discovery of the mortality of things and human beings, of a child growing up.

Abaddon, the angel of the Abyss appearing in Apocalypse 9, 1-12, makes his entrance with a pirate banner made of a skull with cross-bones, which Sanesi affirms it stresses Abaddon's hellish brutality, but also refers to the male sexual organs.

The 'black stairs' (l.8) are one of Freud's most common symbols in dreams, but also the stairs of Jacob.

'The planet-ducted pelican of circles' (l.3) is about the ostensible passage of the Sun through the Milky Way and the 'pelican' represents the universe which feeds the stars by its blood. The 'short spark' (l.5) is the generating principle, God, and 'soon sets alight a long stick from the cradle' (l.6) indirectly refers to Meleager who measured his life by the burning of a branch. The rungs of the ladder are the vertebrae of the constellation of the Hydra, or Abaddon, which is represented as a snake in the Christian iconography. The main theme of the sonnet is the end of life (Sanesi 1994, 62).

The third sonnet is the prophetic sonnet: the paschal lamb is waited upon (l.1), along with spring, since spring comes under the constellation of the Aries.

The 'three dead seasons'(l.2) are the winter months under the constellations of Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. The 'climbing grave' (l.2) is, again, the constellation of the Hydra, which resembles a serpent, both a memory of Eve's sin and a phallic symbol.

The 'black ram' (l.11) is the winter sky, the antipodes have spring twice since when there is the autumnal equinox in the northern hemisphere, there is the spring equinox in the southern hemisphere (Sanesi 1994, 64).

Olson explained the fourth sonnet begins with the poet wondering about life's principle taking shape, and what is its size before taking shape. The 'short spark' (l.2) is what generates life, which has sexual traits and gender (Sanesi 1994, 64).

The fifth sonnet is an annunciation, Gabriel is a cowboy and a player, a deceiver.

For Olson, Hercules resumes his narrative role: after the autumnal equinox, the constellation Perseus goes west with Pegasus, Perseus holds a weapon in each hand, a sword and Medusa's head, that is why Gabriel holds a gun.

'Trumped up'(l.2) echoes the 'trump card', the winning card of the deck, and the trumpet of Judgement day. 'Jesu's sleeve'(l.2) is the constellation of Cygnus.

Autumn constellations are the suits of the cards: Cepheus, king of Ethiopia, is the 'king of spots'(l.2), or the king of spades; the 'queen with a shuffled heart'(l.3) is Cassiopea; the

‘sheath-decked jacks’(l.3) are the Gemini constellation, Castor and Pollux; ‘the fake gentleman in suit of spades’(l.4) is Hercules, and between Hercules and the Crater there is the Virgo, which hints at salvation, ‘salvation’s bottle’(l.4).

The constellation of Bootes, or ‘Adam’ rises east after midnight, that is why Thomas defines it ‘byzantine’(l.6). ‘Rose my Byzantine Adam in the night’(l.6) is also an erotic allusion. ‘For loss of blood’(l.7) is because Sagitta wounds Hercules, the ‘milky mushrooms’(l.8) are the Milky Way, the ‘climbing sea from Asia’(l.9) is Erydanus, which shines during winter nights, ‘Jonah’s Moby’(l.10) recalls the Cetus constellation and it is the blend of Melville’s white whale and of the Biblical legend of Jonah.

Gabriel is later ‘pin-legged’(l.12) and the ‘black medusa’(l.12) which keeps him company is the constellation of the Camelopardus, which wanders by the ‘waste seas’(l.13) of the northern skies. The ‘white bear’ (l.13) is the Ursa Minor, which crosses the Pleiades, also called Vergiliæ by the ancient Romans; the ‘sirens singing from our lady’s sea-straw’ (l.14) are the stars of the Lyra, and the ‘sea-straw’ is a symbol of death.

In the sixth sonnet Hercules set again with the Sun, it allows to see its candle made by the Sun’s lava, the candle often being a phallic symbol in Thomas, symbolizing for Sanesi the paternal nature of the Sun (Sanesi 1994, 71).

Hercules is a ‘cartoon of slashes on the tide-traced crater’(l.1), the tides being the constellation of the Aquarius, Pisces, Delphinus and Cetus. Hercules reads ‘a book of water’(l.2), Adam reads spelling out ‘the seven seas’(l.12), Thomas reads by a mortal candle, Sanesi reported. Olson argued that every thing in this sonnet reads about Time or sings about Time, and Time equals death, so this means that every thing discovers its transience. The ‘bagpipe-breasted ladies’(l.13) extinguish man’s candle and the ‘blood gauze’(l.14), or the bandage which wraps up the shroud of manwax.

The seventh sonnet is about the relationship among man, God, the universe and language. The Cygnus went north and set north-northwest, it is identified with the Cross.

The Verb must be read instead of the book of Time, all prayers must be the ‘Lord’s prayers’(l.1). The tree which has ‘genesis in the root’(l.4) is the tree of Life. The ‘rocking alphabet’ is a reference to Revelation 1:8: ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending’. The Lyra, formed by the ‘ladies with the teats of music’(l.7), and the Libra, formed by the ‘scaled sea-sawers’(l.8) offer time and the sponge to Christ in the Cross.

Time has followed every living thing from the start and put its handprint on ‘rose’(l.14), symbol of birth, and ‘icicle’(l.14), symbol of death (Sanesi 1994, 73).
The eight sonnet presents Christ as ‘Time’s nerve’(l.2), who has received a mortal wound by all the sinners, the constellation of the Cygnus set with all the other stars, but the constellation of the Virgo, the Virgin Mary, appears, the Milky Way gets through the Cygnus, so Christ can nurture the ‘heaven’s children’(l.14) from his nipples with the ‘three-coloured rainbow’(l.9). The rainbow is also a pact between man and God, as stated in Genesis 9:13: ‘I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth’(Sanesi 1994, 78).
The ninth sonnet is about the Sun resurrection in Egypt before Christianity. Hercules rises east at the beginning of spring. In the sky there are Cepheus, the ‘pharaoh’(l.11), Cassiopea, ‘the queen in splints’(l.3), Ophiocus, and Coma Berenices, ‘dead Cairo’s henna’(l.5).
This sonnet is also linked to writing, the ‘oracular archives’(l.1) and the ‘parchment’(l.1) will survive the death of the body (Sanesi 1994, 80).
The tenth sonnet has the constellation of Puppis which represents the stern of the shipwrecked Argo of Jason. Pyxis, Vela and Carina are the other parts of the ship (Sanesi 1994, 81). The constellation of the Cygnus is about to rise north-northeast, the time is the beginning of May, a period of rebirth. Among the ‘rockbirds’(l.4) there is the constellation of the Aquila, a bird associated with Christ. The sea is calm, the ‘tall fish’(l.8), the Delphinus, or Christ, displays after the Cygnus. The Corona Borealis, ‘December’s thorn’(l.6) appears. The ‘first Peter’(l.7) watches the world’s rebirth at the presence of Christ (Sanesi 1994, 82).
For Binni, the sonnets are Thomas’s interpretation of Christian symbols and of the myth of Christ (Binni 1973, 87) and its constant themes are creation and conception, parts of the human experience which reason must accept as facts (Binni 1973, 88).
Binni focuses on the third, the sixth, the eight, the ninth and tenth sonnet: the third sonnet is about the adolescence of man and the loss of innocence when Cain assassinates Abel (Binni 1973, 89); the sixth sonnet is about the horror of birth, the faith of the baby being doomed from birth because he will eventually die, the personification of death are the ‘bagpipe-breasted ladies in the deadweed’ (Binni 1973, 90); the eight sonnet is about Christ crucifixion, life is a wound (‘the world’s my wound’, l.4, ‘the long wound’s woman’, l.7)

(Binni 1973, 90); the ninth sonnet is about Christ's resurrection, the resurrected Christ is love and life but Christians used him to preach death ('death from a bandage', l.8) (Binni 1973, 90); the tenth sonnet is about life being the starting point of death, the poet-mariner will keep himself away from wrong harbours ('dummy bay', l.2), he will stay faithful to his vision of life which is both creation and destruction ('bark towers', l.12) (Binni 1973, 90).

2.3.6 A winter's tale

It is a winter's tale
That the snow blind twilight ferries over the lakes
And floating fields from the farm in the cup of the vales,
Gliding windless through the hand folded flakes,
The pale breath of cattle at the stealthy sail,

And the stars falling cold,
And the smell of hay in the snow, and the far owl
Warning among the folds, and the frozen hold
Flocked with the sheep white smoke of the farm house cowl
In the river wended vales where the tale was told.

Once when the world turned old
On a star of faith pure as the drifting bread,
As the food and flames of the snow, a man unrolled
The scrolls of fire that burned in his heart and head,
Torn and alone in a farm house in a fold

Of fields. And burning then
In his firelit island ringed by the winged snow
And the dung hills white as wool and the hen
Roosts sleeping chill till the flame of the cock crow
Combs through the mantled yards and the morning men

Stumble out with their spades,
The cattle stirring, the mousing cat stepping shy,
The puffed birds hopping and hunting, the milkmaids
Gentle in their clogs over the fallen sky,
And all the woken farm at its white trades,

He knelt, he wept, he prayed,
By the spit and the black pot in the log bright light

And the cup and the cut bread in the dancing shade,
In the muffled house, in the quick of night,
At the point of love, forsaken and afraid.

He knelt on the cold stones,
He wept form the crest of grief, he prayed to the veiled sky
May his hunger go howling on bare white bones
Past the statues of the stables and the sky roofed sties
And the duck pond glass and the blinding byres alone

Into the home of prayers
And fires where he should prowl down the cloud
Of his snow blind love and rush in the white lairs.
His naked need struck him howling and bowed
Though no sound flowed down the hand folded air

But only the wind strung
Hunger of birds in the fields of the bread of water, tossed
In high corn and the harvest melting on their tongues.
And his nameless need bound him burning and lost
When cold as snow he should run the wended vales among

The rivers mouthed in night,
And drown in the drifts of his need, and lie curled caught
In the always desiring centre of the white
Inhuman cradle and the bride bed forever sought
By the believer lost and the hurled outcast of light.

Deliver him, he cried,
By losing him all in love, and cast his need
Alone and naked in the engulfing bride,
Never to flourish in the fields of the white seed
Or flower under the time dying flesh astride.

Listen. The minstrels sing
In the departed villages. The nightingale,
Dust in the buried wood, flies on the grains of her wings
And spells on the winds of the dead his winter's tale.
The voice of the dust of water from the withered spring

Is telling. The wizened
Stream with bells and baying water bounds. The dew rings
On the gristed leaves and the long gone glistening
Parish of snow. The carved mouths in the rock are wind swept strings.
Time sings through the intricately dead snow drop. Listen.

It was a hand or sound

In the long ago land that glided the dark door wide
And there outside on the bread of the ground
A she bird rose and rayed like a burning bride.
A she bird dawned, and her breast with snow and scarlet downed.

Look. And the dancers move
On the departed, snow bushed green, wanton in moon light
As a dust of pigeons. Exulting, the grave hooved
Horses, centaur dead, turn and tread the drenched white
Paddocks in the farms of birds. The dead oak walks for love.

The carved limbs in the rock
Leap, as to trumpets. Calligraphy of the old
Leaves is dancing. Lines of age on the stones weave in a flock.
And the harp shaped voice of the water's dust plucks in a fold
Of fields. For love, the long ago she bird rises. Look.

And the wild wings were raised
Above her folded head, and the soft feathered voice
Was flying through the house as though the she bird praised
And all the elements of the slow fall rejoiced
That a man knelt alone in the cup of the vales,

In the mantle and calm,
By the spit and the black pot in the log bright light.
And the sky of birds in the plumed voice charmed
Him up and he ran like a wind after the kindling flight
Past the blind barns and byres of the windless farm.

In the poles of the year
When black birds died like priests in the cloaked hedge row
And over the cloth of counties the far hills rode near,
Under the one leaved trees ran a scarecrow of snow
And fast through the drifts of the thickets antlered like deer,

Rags and prayers down the knee-
Deep hillocks and loud on the numbed lakes,
All night lost and long wading in the wake of the she-
Bird through the times and lands and tribes of the slow flakes.
Listen and look where she sails the goose plucked sea,

The sky, the bird, the bride,
The cloud, the need, the planted stars, the joy beyond
The fields of seed and the time dying flesh astride,
The heavens, the heaven, the grave, the burning font.
In the far ago land the door of his death glided wide,

And the bird descended.
On a bread white hill over the cupped farm
And the lakes and floating fields and the river wended
Vales where he prayed to come to the last harm
And the home of prayers and fires, the tale ended.

The dancing perishes
On the white, no longer growing green, and, minstrel dead,
The singing breaks in the snow shoed villages of wishes
That once cut the figures of birds on the deep bread
And over the glazed lakes skated the shapes of fishes

Flying. The rite is shorn
Of nightingale and centaur dead horse. The springs wither
Back. Lines of age sleep on the stones till trumpeting dawn.
Exultation lies down. Time buries the spring weather
That belled and bounded with the fossil and the dew reborn.

For the bird lay bedded
In a choir of wings, as though she slept or died,
And the wings glided wide and he was hymned and wedded,
And through the thighs of the engulfing bride,
The woman breasted and the heaven headed

Bird, he was brought low,
Burning in the bride bed of love, in the whirl-
Pool at the wanting centre, in the folds
Of paradise, in the spun bud of the world.
And she rose with him flowering in her melting snow.

L.B. Murdy defines *A Winter's Tale* 'Thomas's most beautifully sustained and unified long narrative poem'(Murdy 1966, 72) which has a single symbolic interpretation, a winter ceremony of the rebirth of man and nature.

The poem has twenty-six stanzas of five lines each. The syllabic count is six syllables in every first line of each stanza, except for the first line in the last stanza, which is five syllables. The rhyme scheme is ababa (Murdy 1966, 73).

W.S. Merwin in the essay 'The Religious Poet' describes the poem as 'one of the few narrative poems of Dylan Thomas' (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 244) about a she-bird which brings spring with her and about a man living alone in a house in the woods, who reached her during the night, she put her wings around the man and then she rises to vanish. When spring comes, the man is found dead (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 244). Merwin suggests this poem

contains ‘the essential elements of a mid-winter ceremony of the re-birth of the year’ (Tedlock, ed., 1960, 244).

Alan Bold in the essay ‘Young Heaven’s Fold: The Second Childhood of Dylan Thomas’ describes the poem’s narrative line as ‘a man comes to terms with death by ascending to heaven—’the folds/ Of paradise’—in a passionate union’.

The mood for Bold is pastoral and the setting of the poem evokes Fern Hill dairy farm in Carmarthenshire. The ‘white seed’(l.54) prepares the reader for the ritual of rebirth (Bold, ed., 1990, 161).

Bold describes the happenings of the poem’s stanzas:

> In his Welsh farmhouse the man—‘Torn and alone’(l.15)—faces the prospect of dying unloved. Isolated in his home he burns for love and the emotion generates its own warmth; the man is ‘In his firelit island ringed by the winged snow’(l.17). Outside there is the cold of a Welsh winter, above there is ‘a star of faith’(l.12). Kneeling on cold stones, the man prays and laments his ‘naked need’(l.39), the ‘nameless need’(l.44) that consumes him. (…) The man’s salvation comes in the shape of a ‘she bird’ that is simultaneously angel and temptress, dove and Phoenix. The dove is a symbol of spiritual purity for in Matthew 3:16 Christ ‘saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove’. The Phoenix is a universal symbol of resurrection and immortality. It is associated with the rose in all Gardens of Paradise and, since the rose is also synonymous with female sexuality, the bird becomes a ‘bride’ tempting the man over a transhuman threshold: ‘In the far ago land the door of his death glided wide’(l.115) (Bold, ed., 1990, 162).

Binni argues this poem is about the nuptial ceremony between man and nature, the she-bird represents nature’s contraries, light and darkness, fire and snow, hot and cold (Binni 1973, 128). Death is defied by Thomas, who exalts the power of imagination (Binni 1973, 130).

2.3.7 In my craft or sullen art

In my craft or sullen art
Exercised in the still night
When only the moon rages
And the lovers lie abed
With all their griefs in their arms,
I labour by singing light
Not for ambition or bread

Or the strut and trade of charms
On the ivory stages
But for the common wages
Of their most secret heart.

Not for the proud man apart
From the raging moon I write
On these spindrift pages
Nor for the towering dead
With their nightingales and psalms
But for the lovers, their arms
Round the griefs of the ages,
Who pay no praise or wages
Nor heed my craft or art.

L.B.Murdy writes *In My Craft or Sullen Art* is 'a twenty-line lyric with eleven lines in the first stanza and nine lines in the second stanza' (Murdy 1966, 80).

He reports both the syllabic count and the stresses in each stanza:

Stanza	Number of Syllables in Each Line
I	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 6
II	7 7 6 7 7 - - 7 7 7 6

Stanza	Number of Speech Stresses in Each Line
I	4 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 3 3
II	3 3 4 3 3 - - 3 2 3 3

(Murdy 1966, 80)

The rhyme scheme is the following:

Stanza I abcdebdecca

II abcde—ecca (Murdy 1966, 81)

Thomas made a statement about his job, a 'sullen art', an art conquered through hard work. (Murdy 1966, 81) The audience he tried to get to through his poetry were the 'lovers'(l.17) who did not invest money in his poetry.

Stewart Crehan in the essay 'The Lips of Time' wrote the following lines about the poem:

In ‘In my Craft or Sullen Art’ Thomas is surely not being entirely rhetorical (though ‘ambition’ is questionable) in claiming: ‘Not for the proud man apart/ From the raging moon I write’ –that he was not writing, for example, for an élite that knew nothing of ordinary people’s emotions, but that he was writing for those ‘With all their griefs in their arms’, lovers ‘Who pay no praise or wages/ Nor heed my craft or art’, those, in other words, who did not exist as readership; who, in a poignant irony, could not understand the poet’s craft, either for reasons of education or money, or both, or who did not consider that craft worth paying heed (Bold, ed., 1990, 44).

2.3.8 Fern Hill

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
    The night above the dingle starry,
        Time let me hail and climb
    Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
        Trail with daisies and barley
    Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
    About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
        In the sun that is young once only,
            Time let me play and be
        Golden in the mercy of his means,
    And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
    Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
            And the sabbath rang slowly
        In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
    Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
        And playing, lovely and watery
            And fire green as grass.
        And nightly under the simple stars
    As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
    All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
        Flying with the ricks, and the horses
            Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
    With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
        Shining, it was Adam and maiden,

The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

L.B. Murdy claimed this poem is ‘well-patterned in its structure’, because it has ‘six stanzas of nine lines each’, but it is also ‘well-patterned in its syllabic count’, being the ‘first, second, third and fifth stanza perfectly regular’, the fourth, sixth and seventh present an irregularity each, the eight and ninth have two different syllabic counts in identical positions (Murdy 1966, 76).

Here is the syllabic scheme of the poem:

Stanza	Number of Syllables in Each Line
I	14 14 9 6 9 *15* 14 7 9
II	14 14 9 6 9 14 14 7 9
III	14 14 9 5 9 14 14 9 6
IV	14 14 9 6 9 14 14 9 6
V	14 14 9 6 9 14 14 9 6

VI 14 14 9 6 9 14 *15* 9 6 (Murdy 1966, 76)

Murdy found a ‘singing, chanting effect’ in the assonantal arrangements in the pattern abcddabcd (Murdy 1966, 76):

Stanza		Stanza	
I	boughs, town	IV	white, light
	green, leaves		all, warm
	starry, barley		maiden, stable
	climb, eyes, light		again, day, praise
II	barns, calves	V	house, allows
	home, cold		long, songs
	only, slowly		over, golden
	be, means, streams		ways, hay, grace
III	hay, away	VI	me, means
	air, night-jars		hand, land
	watery, horses		rising, dying
	grass, stars, dark		sleep, fields, sea (Murdy 1966, 77)

About the meaning of the poem, in the first stanza ‘Now as I was young and easy’(l.1) is about ‘the loss of youthful bliss’, ‘Time let me hail and climb’(l.4) is about time ruling the child’s life (Murdy 1966, 78). ‘Once below a time’(l.7) has a fairy-tale like introduction but also signals that ‘the child is subject to the laws of time’ (Murdy 1966, 78). Euphony in this stanza is created by alliteration (‘grass was green’, l.2), assonance (‘tree and leaves’, l.7), internal rhyme or near-rhyme (‘apple’,l.1, ‘happy’, l.2, and ‘Time’, l.3, ‘climb’, l.3) which ‘reinforces the emotional meaning of the harmony between the child and nature’(Murdy 1966, 78).

For Murdy, in the second stanza ‘the rhytmical swing of the long lines’ describes ‘the happy, carefree childhood on the farm’ while the short lines emphasize ‘the sombre, inevitable changes’(Murdy 1966, 78).

In the third stanza, Murdy notices a fast tempo with 'lightly stressed rhythms', 'syntactical repetitions' and 'consonance of the smooth continuant *l*', as in 'it was lovely', l.19, 'it was air/And p*l*aying, *l*ov*el*y and watery'(Murdy 1966, 79).

About *Fern Hill*, Henry Treece wrote in the chapter 'Deaths and Entrances' that Thomas's 'truest talent was that of the Innocent Eye, which showed him unerringly the microcosm of the child'(Treece 1956, 112).

He continued:

> *Fern Hill* is a poem of one mood, and that mood is one of lyrical ecstasy in the contemplation of childhood seen from a distance of time. It is a complete evocation of innocence, in pastoral surroundings, without any intellectualised metaphysic, any probing of the inner darkness, any striving to realise the nature and dimensions of the pre-natal world. *Fern Hill* shows the clear, clean Paradise of childhood before life becomes vicious and muddled by the turbulent cross-currents of adolescence and of stale time (Treece 1956, 112).

Treece described the first line as 'Dylan, the golden, sunlit child, happy in the song filled house in the country' (Treece 1956, 112). Dylan is 'the master of this little world', because he is 'honoured among wagons' and 'a prince of the apple-trees' (Treece 1956, 113). The poet was 'happy as the grass was green'(l.2), and the grass is always green. 'Singing as the farm was home'(l.11) denotes happiness, 'happy as the heart was long'(l.38) means that 'to the child it seems that happiness will never cease, as long as life lasts and the heart goes on beating'(Treece 1956, 113).

The first stanza is set in 'once below a time'(l.7) because Treece is sure Thomas is playing with the 'once upon a time' of fairytales because 'he is telling us that all this happened when he was *very* young, but *below* a time, below the measuring mark' (Treece 1956, 113).

Treece affirmed the second stanza is similar to the first stanza: instead of 'young and easy'(l.1) he was 'green and carefree'(l.10), the child poet was 'famous among the barns'(l.10) instead of 'honoured among wagons'(l.6) (Treece 1956, 113).

'In the sun that is young once only'(l.12) means that this 'golden state of happiness' will not be attained because it cannot last (Treece 1956, 114), and 'in the pebbles of the holy stream'(l.18), the child recognizes that the water is 'God's handiwork' (Treece 1956, 114), which would correspond to the theological concepts which inform Anglo-Welsh poetry, Thomas being a Welsh writer, identified by John Ackerman:

> …The celebration by the poet of all natural life, animal and vegetal, a celebration expressed usually in sensuous terms, is derived from specific theological concepts. The basis of this attitude is a sense of the unity of all creation, and this identity of all created forms is religious in character. The poet is aware of a sacramental universe in which the common things of life serve to illustrate profound mysteries. Hence all created things, whether blades of grass or sea-waves breaking on to the shore or "the fishing holy stalking heron," are of themselves holy and are a witness to the Creator (Cox, ed., 1966, 38).

In the third stanza, Treece illustratd the poet flying 'into the mood of almost breathless ecstasy', to the child fire is 'green as grass'(l.22) and describes his 'cottage backed by a hill on which grows the golden hay' as 'the hayfield high as the house'(l.20). (Treece 1956, 115). From 'As I rode to sleep'(l.24) to the end of the stanza, the child dreams.
In the fourth stanza, the child wakes up from his dream and sees 'the miracle of creation repeated', the sun rising again (Treece 1956, 117).
Treece wrote about the fourth stanza: 'We hear for the first time with certainty that this morning ecstasy childhood cannot last. Now we are told that children must inevitably lose their innocence and grow up' (Treece 1956, 117). Treece is probably referring to 'Before the children green and golden/Follow him out of grace'(ll.44-45).
In the last stanza, Treece reported that:

> Time, who had always been so kind, takes the boy's shadow by the hand and leads him up to the swallow thronged at night. I interpret the shadow to mean that this is not the child we knew before; it is a changed boy, a shadow of what he had been. He is growing up, away from his other self. Time shows him the swallows in the loft, and they are birds of passage who gather before flying away. In this case they are the symbols of Dylan's innocence, which is about to fly away, for the summer of childhood has gone. And soon the child will wake, not to a Paradise of hayfields and streams, but an ordinary workaday grey farm, all its magic gone. The land will be childless; that is, childhood will have left the dingle (Treece 1956, 118).

Treece explained the ending of the poem 'Time held me green and dying/Though I sang in my chains like the sea'(ll.53-54) as the 'inevitable binding to the sad situation of the world, by which the child at last must lose his carefree innocence' (Treece 1956, 119).
Fern Hill really existed, it was owned by Dylan's aunt Ann and Dylan spent his country holidays there as a child. It is described by Fitzgibbon as follows:

> … a peasant's holding, yellow-washed, built around three sides of a tiny court, with the farmyard and a few farm buildings off to one side. It has pointed Gothic-revival windows and looks, from the outside at least, as though it had originally been built about 1830 as a gentleman's residence but has gone badly to seed. On one side is the hill where the house-high hay grew forty years ago; on the other, before the ground drops steeply away to a little stream, it is just possible to detect what was once a small flower garden. There are tall trees about the house, which give to the farm a feeling of being enclosed, and there are the remnants of the orchard where Dylan was young and easy under the apple boughs (Fitzgibbon 1975, 31).

2.3.9 Ballad of the Long-legged Bait

The bows glided down, and the coast
Blackened with birds took a last look
At his thrashing hair and whale-blue eye;
The trodden town rang its cobbles for luck.

Then good-bye to the fishermanned
Boat with its anchor free and fast
As a bird hooking over the sea,
High and dry by the top of the mast,

Whispered the affectionate sand
And the bulwarks of the dazzled quay.
For my sake sail, and never look back,
Said the looking land.

Sails drank the wind, and white as milk
He sped into the drinking dark;
The sun shipwrecked west on a pearl
And the moon swam out of its hulk.

Funnels and masts went by in a whirl.
Good-bye to the man on the sea-legged deck
To the gold gut that sings on his reel
To the bait that stalked out of the sack,

For we saw him throw to the swift flood
A girl alive with his hooks through her lips;
All the fishes were rayed in blood,
Said the dwindling ships.

Good-bye to chimneys and funnels,
Old wives that spin in the smoke,

He was blind to the eyes of candles
In the praying windows of waves

But heard his bait buck in the wake
And tussle in a shoal of loves.
Now cast down your rod, for the whole
Of the sea is hilly with whales,

She longs among horses and angels,
The rainbow-fish bend in her joys,
Floated the lost cathedral
Chimes of the rocked buoys.

Where the anchor rode like a gull
Miles over the moonstruck boat
A squall of birds bellowed and fell,
A cloud blew the rain from its throat;

He saw the storm smoke out to kill
With fuming bows and ram of ice,
Fire on starlight, rake Jesu's stream;
And nothing shone on the water's face

But the oil and bubble of the moon,
Plunging and piercing in his course
The lured fish under the foam
Witnessed with a kiss.

Whales in the wake like capes and Alps
Quaked the sick sea and snouted deep,
Deep the great bushed bait with raining lips
Slipped the fins of those humpbacked tons

And fled their love in a weaving dip.
Oh, Jericho was falling in their lungs!
She nipped and dived in the nick of love,
Spun on a spout like a long-legged ball

Till every beast blared down in a swerve
Till every turtle crushed from his shell
Till every bone in the rushing grave
Rose and crowed and fell!

Good luck to the hand on the rod,
There is thunder under its thumbs;
Gold gut is a lightning thread,
His fiery reel sings off its flames,

The whirled boat in the burn of his blood
Is crying from nets to knives,

Oh the shearwater birds and their boatsized brood
Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves

Are making under the green, laid veil
The long-legged beautiful bait their wives.
Break the black news and paint on a sail
Huge weddings in the waves,

Over the wakeward-flashing spray
Over the gardens of the floor
Clash out the mounting dolphin's day,
My mast is a bell-spire,

Strike and smoothe, for my decks are drums,
Sing through the water-spoken prow
The octopus walking into her limbs
The polar eagle with his tread of snow.

From salt-lipped beak to the kick of the stern
Sing how the seal has kissed her dead!
The long, laid minute's bride drifts on
Old in her cruel bed.

Over the graveyard in the water
Mountains and galleries beneath
Nightingale and hyena
Rejoicing for that drifting death

Sing and howl through sand and anemone
Valley and sahara in a shell,
Oh all the wanting flesh his enemy
Thrown to the sea in the shell of a girl

Is old as water and plain as an eel;
Always good-bye to the long-legged bread
Scattered in the paths of his heels
For the salty birds fluttered and fed

And the tall grains foamed in their bills;
Always good-bye to the fires of the face,
For the crab-backed dead on the sea-bed rose
And scuttled over her eyes,

The blind, clawed stare is cold as sleet.
The tempter under the eyelid
Who shows to the selves asleep
Mast-high moon-white women naked

Walking in wishes and lovely for shame
Is dumb and gone with his flame of brides.

Susannah's drowned in the bearded stream
And no-one stirs at Sheba's side

But the hungry kings of the tides;
Sin who had a woman's shape
Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud
And all the lifted waters walk and leap.

Lucifer that bird's dropping
Out of the sides of the north
Has melted away and is lost
Is always lost in her vaulted breath,

Venus lies star-struck in her wound
And the sensual ruins make
Seasons over the liquid world,
White springs in the dark.

Always good-bye, cried the voices through the shell,
Good-bye always, for the flesh is cast
And the fisherman winds his reel
With no more desire than a ghost.

Always good luck, praised the finned in the feather
Bird after dark and the laughing fish
As the sails drank up the hail of thunder
And the long-tailed lightning lit his catch.

The boat swims into the six-year weather,
A wind throws a shadow and it freezes fast.
See what the gold gut drags from under
Mountains and galleries to the crest!

See what clings to hair and skull
As the boat skims on with drinking wings!
The statues of great rain stand still,
And the flakes fall like hills.

Sing and strike his heavy haul
Toppling up the boatside in a snow of light!
His decks are drenched with miracles.
Oh miracle of fishes! The long dead bite!

Out of the urn a size of a man
Out of the room the weight of his trouble
Out of the house that holds a town
In the continent of a fossil

One by one in dust and shawl,
Dry as echoes and insect-faced,

His fathers cling to the hand of the girl
And the dead hand leads the past,

Leads them as children and as air
On to the blindly tossing tops;
The centuries throw back their hair
And the old men sing from newborn lips:

Time is bearing another son.
Kill Time! She turns in her pain!
The oak is felled in the acorn
And the hawk in the egg kills the wren.

He who blew the great fire in
And died on a hiss of flames
Or walked the earth in the evening
Counting the denials of the grains

Clings to her drifting hair, and climbs;
And he who taught their lips to sing
Weeps like the risen sun among
The liquid choirs of his tribes.

The rod bends low, divining land,
And through the sundered water crawls
A garden holding to her hand
With birds and animals

With men and women and waterfalls
Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool of ships
And stunned and still on the green, laid veil
Sand with legends in its virgin laps

And prophets loud on the burned dunes;
Insects and valleys hold her thighs hard,
Times and places grip her breast bone,
She is breaking with seasons and clouds;

Round her trailed wrist fresh water weaves,
With moving fish and rounded stones
Up and down the greater waves
A separate river breathes and runs;

Strike and sing his catch of fields
For the surge is sown with barley,
The cattle graze on the covered foam,
The hills have footed the waves away,

With wild sea fillies and soaking bridles
With salty colts and gales in their limbs

All the horses of his haul of miracles
Gallop through the arched, green farms,

Trot and gallop with gulls upon them
And thunderbolts in their manes.
O Rome and Sodom To-morrow and London
The country tide is cobbled with towns

And steeples pierce the cloud on her shoulder
And the streets that the fisherman combed
When his long-legged flesh was a wind on fire
And his loin was a hunting flame

Coil from the thoroughfares of her hair
And terribly lead him home alive
Lead her prodigal home to his terror,
The furious ox-killing house of love.

Down, down, down, under the ground,
Under the floating villages,
Turns the moon-chained and water-wound
Metropolis of fishes,

There is nothing left of the sea but its sound,
Under the earth the loud sea walks,
In deathbeds of orchards the boat dies down
And the bait is drowned among hayricks,

Land, land, land, nothing remains
Of the pacing, famous sea but its speech,
And into its talkative seven tombs
The anchor dives through the floors of a church.

Good-bye, good luck, struck the sun and the moon,
To the fisherman lost on the land.
He stands alone in the door of his home,
With his long-legged heart in his hand.

The poem has ‘fifty-four stanzas of four lines each’ (Murdy 1966, 55), and its structure is a ‘loose ballad stanza’. About its content, Murdy claims it is a voyage of a fisherman who sails away from the land with a hooked bride as a bait (Murdy 1966, 56). Once the bait dies, the fisherman is freed from the sins of the flesh, but not from the cycle of birth and death, because he discovers a child:‘Time is bearing another son’, l.153 (Murdy 1966, 57). The fisherman goes home, redeemed by the bride’s sacrifice (Murdy 1966, 58).
Stewart Crehan in the essay ‘The Lips of Time’ wrote about the poem in Freudian terms:

> In ‘Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait’, the poet as seafaring hero rides the boat of ambition and questing desire, his phallic anchor flying high before him like an arrow (‘..with its anchor free and fast/As a bird hooking over the sea/High and dry by the top of the mast’, ll.7-9), his sexual ‘bait’ (a long-legged girl) bucking in the waves of coition at the end of a phallic rod, luring and hooking all manner of creatures and things from the deep, until ‘His decks are drenched with miracles.’ Once the voyage is properly under way, the narrative leaves the past perfect tense and enters the eternal present of a demonstrative present tense, the tense of myth, ritual and the id, which as Freud discovered is unconscious of the passage of time and is not subject to the laws of time. Thomas’s imagination weaves a complex web of images, whose strands interconnect through sound, cultural meanings, experience and observation, yet each nodal point is determined in the first instance by an unconscious impulse rather than by some haphazard association (Bold,ed., 1990, 57).

The poem’s images are, according to Binni, part of a Freudian vision of the mind: at the conscious level there are familiar scenes, at an unconscious level there is a watery world of lost desires which is self-regulated by mysterious forces (Binni 1973, 62).

2.3.10 In country sleep

I

Never and never, my girl riding far and near
In the land of the hearthstone tales, and spelled asleep,
Fear or believe that the wolf in a sheepwhite hood
Loping and bleating roughly and blithely shall leap,
My dear, my dear,
Out of a lair in the flocked leaves in the dew dipped year
To eat your heart in the house in the rosy wood.

Sleep, good, for ever, slow and deep, spelled rare and wise,
My girl ranging the night in the rose and shire
Of the hobnail tales: no gooseherd or swine will turn
Into a homestall king or hamlet of fire
And prince of ice
To court the honeyed heart from your side before sunrise
In a spinney of ringed boys and ganders, spike and burn,

Nor the innocent lie in the rooting dingle wooed
And staved, and riven among plumes my rider weep.
From the broomed witch's spume you are shielded by fern

And flower of country sleep and the greenwood keep.
Lie fast and soothed,
Safe be and smooth from the bellows of the rushy brood.
Never, my girl, until tolled to sleep by the stern

Bell believe or fear that the rustic shade or spell
Shall harrow and snow the blood while you ride wide and near,
For who unmanningly haunts the mountain ravened eaves
Or skulks in the dell moon but moonshine echoing clear
From the starred well?
A hill touches an angel. Out of a saint's cell
The nightbird lauds through nunneries and domes of leaves

Her robin breasted tree, three Marys in the rays.
Sanctum sanctorum the animal eye of the wood
In the rain telling its beads, and the gravest ghost
The owl at its knelling. Fox and holt kneel before blood.
Now the tales praise
The star rise at pasture and nightlong the fables graze
On the lord's-table of the bowing grass. Fear most

For ever of all not the wolf in his baaing hood
Nor the tusked prince, in the ruttish farm, at the rind
And mire of love, but the Thief as meek as the dew.
The country is holy: O bide in that country kind,
Know the green good,
Under the prayer wheeling moon in the rosy wood
Be shielded by chant and flower and gay may you

Lie in grace. Sleep spelled at rest in the lowly house
In the squirrel nimble grove, under linen and thatch
And star: held and blessed, though you scour the high four
Winds, from the dousing shade and the roarer at the latch,
Cool in your vows.
Yet out of the beaked, web dark and the pouncing boughs
Be you sure the Thief will seek a way sly and sure

And sly as snow and meek as dew blown to the thorn,
This night and each vast night until the stern bell talks
In the tower and tolls to sleep over the stalls
Of the hearthstone tales my own, lost love; and the soul walks
The waters shorn.
This night and each night since the falling star you were born,
Ever and ever he finds a way, as the snow falls,

As the rain falls, hail on the fleece, as the vale mist rides
Through the haygold stalls, as the dew falls on the wind-

Milled dust of the apple tree and the pounded islands
Of the morning leaves, as the star falls, as the winged
Apple seed glides,
And falls, and flowers in the yawning wound at our sides,
As the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence.

II

Night and the reindeer on the clouds above the haycocks
And the wings of the great roc ribboned for the fair!
The leaping saga of prayer! And high, there, on the hare-
Heeled winds the rooks
Cawing from their black bethels soaring, the holy books
Of birds! Among the cocks like fire the red fox

Burning! Night and the vein of birds in the winged, sloe wrist
Of the wood! Pastoral beat of blood through the laced leaves!
The stream from the priest black wristed spinney and sleeves
Of thistling frost
Of the nightingale's din and tale! The upgiven ghost
Of the dingle torn to singing and the surpliced

Hill of cypresses! The din and tale in the skimmed
Yard of the buttermilk rain on the pail! The sermon
Of blood! The bird loud vein! The saga from mermen
To seraphim
Leaping! The gospel rooks! All tell, this night, of him
Who comes as red as the fox and sly as the heeled wind.

Illumination of music! the lulled black-backed
Gull, on the wave with sand in its eyes! And the foal moves
Through the shaken greensward lake, silent, on moonshod hooves,
In the winds' wakes.
Music of elements, that a miracle makes!
Earth, air, water, fire, singing into the white act,

The haygold haired, my love asleep, and the rift blue
Eyed, in the haloed house, in her rareness and hilly
High riding, held and blessed and true, and so stilly
Lying the sky
Might cross its planets, the bell weep, night gather her eyes,
The Thief fall on the dead like the willy nilly dew,

Only for the turning of the earth in her holy
Heart! Slyly, slowly, hearing the wound in her side go
Round the sun, he comes to my love like the designed snow,

And truly he
Flows to the strand of flowers like the dew's ruly sea,
And surely he sails like the ship shape clouds. Oh he

Comes designed to my love to steal not her tide raking
Wound, nor her riding high, nor her eyes, nor kindled hair,
But her faith that each vast night and the saga of prayer
He comes to take
Her faith that this last night for his unsacred sake
He comes to leave her in the lawless sun awaking

Naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come.
Ever and ever by all your vows believe and fear
My dear this night he comes and night without end my dear
Since you were born:
And you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn and each first dawn,
Your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun.

In Country Sleep is divided in two sections: the first section contains 'nine stanzas of seven lines each' and follows the rhyme scheme abcbaac (Murdy 1966, 86); the second section has 'eight stanzas of six lines each' and the rhyme scheme is abbcca.

Murdy asserted the main theme of the poem to be 'the father's fear that his daughter may be protected in life as she is in sleep' (Murdy 1966, 87).

The poem abounds in internal rhymes:

Part 1		Part 2	
Stanza		Stanza	
I	near, Fear, dear dear, year	I	fair, prayer, there
	asleep, sheepwhite, leap		harecocks, fox
II	Sleep, deep	II	
	hobnail, tales	III	tale, pail
III	sleep, keep	IV	black-backed
IV	Bell, spell		
	fear, near, clear		
	ride, wide		
	dell, well, cell		
V	tree, three	V	blue, true, dew

	telling, knelling		
	fables, lord's table		
VI	gay may	VI	
VII	spelled at rest, held and blessed	VII	tide, riding
VII – VIII	seek, meek		vast night, last night
IX	falls, stalls, falls, falls, falls	VIII	grieve, believe
	hail, vale		fear, dear, dear (Murdy 1966, 87)

Murdy found repetitions and echoes of phrases, such as:

1. 'Never and never, my girl'(part 1, stanza I) and 'Never, my girl' (part 1, stanza III);
2. 'You are shielded by fern/ and flower'(part 1, stanza III) and 'Be shielded by chant and flower'(part 1, stanza VI);
3. 'This night and each vast night'(part 1, stanza VIII), 'This night and each night'(part 1, stanza VIII) (Murdy 1966, 87).

Marucci described the narrative of the poem: a father put his daughter to sleep; when the daughter woke up, she had a bitter awakening (Marucci 1976, 177).

In the first part, the daughter falls asleep while her father reads her fairytales(ll.1-2), she has Nature to protect her (ll.17-18). The Thief will visit her in the night(ll.48-49; ll.55-56) (Marucci 1976, 178).

Dylan Thomas scholar John Goodby wrote about the Thief that ''he clearly derives from 'the day of the Lord' that 'will come as a thief in the night' (2 Peter 3:10), and as Balakiev(1996) noted he resembles the shape-shifting Satan of *Paradise Lost*' (Goodby 2017, 221). Translator Marianni wrote in his translation notes of the poem that the Thief could also be life in all its implications which wakes up the girl from the puerile land of fairytales and from her innocence (Thomas 2016, 339).

Marucci speculated that the Thief in the poem could be the devil and death, Christ and time, sin and consciousness all in one (Marucci 1976, 184).

The Thief will violate the body of the girl (ll.15-16, ll.22-23) and will steal her heart (l.7, l.13) (Marucci 1976, 185). In the second part, the Thief is identified with Christ who will take away her faith to give the girl a new 'deathless faith (l.111) (Marucci 1976, 186). *In*

Country Sleep, along with *Over Sir John's Hill* and *The White Giant's Thigh* belongs to a wider poem called *In Country Heaven,* which was never completed because Thomas died before writing the fourth poem which would have concluded the poetic sequence, *In Country Heaven* (Fitzgibbon 1975, 326).

CHAPTER 3: SANESI AND MARIANNI'S TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR DYLAN THOMAS'S POEMS

In this chapter, five of Thomas's poems translated by Roberto Sanesi into Italian will be commented according to the above-mentioned translation strategies applied, followed by five of Thomas's poems translated by Ariodante Marianni which will be also commented on.

The five Thomas's poems translated by Roberto Sanesi are: *Dove un tempo le acque del tuo viso (Where once the waters of your face)*, *Specialmente se il vento d'ottobre (Especially When The October Wind)*, *Come un altare in luce di civetta (Altarwise by owl-light)*, *Ballata dell'esca dalle gambe lunghe (Ballad of the Long legged Bait)*, *Il colle delle felci* (*Fern Hill)*. These poems were translated for the first time in 1976 for the publishing house Ugo Guanda editore.

The five Thomas's poems translated by Ariodante Marianni are: *Sognai la mia genesi (I dreamed my genesis)*, *E la morte non avrà più dominio (And death shall have no dominion), Nella mia arte scontrosa o mestiere* (*In my craft or sullen art), Racconto d'inverno (A winter's tale)*, *Nel sonno campestre* (*In country sleep*). These poems originally appeared in the 2002 Italian edition of Thomas's poems of the publishing house Giulio Einaudi editore.

3.1 Sanesi's Translations

Sanesi chose to translate Thomas's poems in verse, not in prose, keeping the literal meaning of the poems where possible, and translated in free verse rather than preserving the original metrical pattern. So it can be argued that Sanesi carried out an interlingual translation, or translation proper, a translation from one language into another. According to Buffoni's definition, it can also be said that Sanesi's translations of Thomas's poems are "respectful" translations, meaning that Sanesi conveyed the meaning of the original poems or, at least, tried to do so.

The poems which present translation losses are: *Come un altare in luce di civetta; Ballata dell'esca dale gambe lunghe.*

3.1.1 *Dove un tempo le acque del tuo viso*

Dove un tempo le acque del tuo viso
Vorticavano alle mie eliche, il tuo arido spettro
Sibila e il morto rovescia i suoi occhi;
Dove un tempo i tritoni attraverso il tuo ghiaccio
Spingevano fuori i capelli, l'arido vento fa rotta
Fra il sale le radici e uova di pesce.

Dove i tuoi nodi verdi affondavano un tempo la loro piombatura
Nel cordame sommerso da maree, laggiù procede
Colui che verde dìstrica
Con le sue forbici oliate, e il coltello che pende
Libero per tagliare i canali alla sorgente,
Per deporre più in basso umidi frutti.

Le tue regolari maree irrompono invisibili
Sui letti amorosi dell'alghe,
L'erba d'amore è lasciata a seccarsi;
Là attorno alle tue pietre
Corrono ombre di fanciulli che dai loro vuoti
Si lamentano al mare delfinoso.

Aride come tomba, le tue ciglia colorate
Non saranno richiuse quando saggia
Una magìa scivolerà su terra e cielo;
Vi saranno coralli nei tuoi letti,
Vi saranno serpenti nelle tue maree,
Finché tutte le nostre fedi marine morranno.

Sanesi employs the enjambement three times in this poem, whereas in the original poem there is no syntactic separation. The enjambement occurs in: 'il tuo arido spettro/Sibila'(ll.2-3); 'e il coltello che pende/Libero'(ll.10-11); 'quando saggia/una magia' (ll.20-21). Perhaps, with the enjambements, Sanesi is trying to imitate aurally the 'regolari maree' ('clocking tides') (l.13) in the third stanza.

The alliteration in -*s*- in the first stanza, 'spun to my screws'(l.2) is transformed into Italian into an alliteration in -*v*-, 'viso/Vorticavano'(ll.1-2).

The noun phrase 'the green unraveller' (l.9) in the second stanza is substituted by a verbal phrase in Italian, 'Colui che verde dìstrica' (l.9), and this verbal phrase is linked to 'Con le sue forbici oliate'(l.10), rather than separated by a comma as it happens in the original.

Sanesi emphasizes the presence of the 'clocking tides'(l.13) in the third stanza by making them the subject of the line, 'Le tue regolari maree irrompono invisibili'(l.13), rather than their absence, as Thomas does, by putting the adjective 'invisible' at the beginning of the line, 'Invisible, your clocking tides'(l.13).

Sanesi groups together images of absence, 'ombre'(l.17) and 'vuoti'(l.17), while Thomas leaves them at the end of each line, 'shades'(l.12) and 'voids'(l.13), maybe to mark their correspondence. The 'cry'(l.18) of children in the third stanza, the primigenial cry of children who want to come out of their voids to see the sea of creation, 'the dolphined sea'(l.18), is rendered with 'lamentarsi' (to complain), which does not quite convey the meaning of the original poem. In fact, it presupposes these children have reached a verbal stage while the children in the womb or newborn children cannot speak.

The alliteration in -*s*- in 'There shall be serpents in your tides'(l.23) is rendered into another similar alliteration in Italian, 'Vi saranno serpenti'(l.23), and, again, the alliteration in -*s*- of the final line, 'sea-faiths'(l.24), is transformed into an alliteration in -*f*-, -*m*- and -*n*-, 'Finché tutte le nostre fedi marine morranno'(l.24).

3.1.2 *Specialmente se il vento d'ottobre*

Specialmente se il vento d'ottobre
Con dita di gelo punisce i miei capelli,
Afferrato dal sole che aggranchia cammino sul fuoco
E getto un granchio d'ombra sulla terra,
Sulla riva del mare uno strepito udendo d'uccelli,
Udendo il corvo tossire su stecchi invernali,
Il mio cuore affannato mentre lei parla palpita,
Sparge il sillabico sangue, le sue parole assorbe. (ll. 1-8)

Sanesi invents a neologism in Italian,'aggranchia' in 'il sole che aggranchia'(l.3), to translate 'the crabbing sun'(l.3), because originally 'aggranchiare' means 'to become numb', but Sanesi might mean 'to seize like a crab does'. One meaning of 'to crab' in English is 'to move sideways', what the sun does when a person walks at the seaside and sees it moving in the horizon, and as the poet is doing, 'I walk on fire/And cast a shadow crab upon the land,/By the sea's side'(ll.3-5). 'Hearing the noise of bird'(l.5) is translated using the anastrophe, 'uno strepito udendo d'uccelli'(l.5).

3.1.3 *Come un altare in luce di civetta*

IV

…Quale sesto di vento estinse la media borghesia in fiamme? (l.5)

V

…Fu nella notte che sorse il mio Adamo bizantino. Io caddi
Perdendo sangue sulla piana d'Ismaele, e uccisi la mia fame
Sotto i funghi di latte, un mare che montava
Dall'Asia mi abbatté, e per i capelli
M'afferrò il Moby di Giona, Adamo incrostato di sale
Percosso dalla croce a un angelo di gelo
Con gambe a spillo su colline artiche con una medusa
Nera… (ll.6-13)

VI

…E il silenzio marino bruciò sopra un lucignolo di parole. (l.4)

VII

…Un fascicolo di Bibbia di tutti i legni scritti
Strappa a quest'albero: un alfabeto che oscilla, …
Squamate segatrici del mare, fissate in una spugna
Nuda evocante Adamo di voce argentina fuori dalla magìa,
Tempo, latte, e magìa, dal mondo primigenio. È il tempo
La melodia alla quale le mie signore prestano
Il loro crepacuore, … (ll.2-3, 8-12)

VIII

…e i seni di colomba palpitanti
Attraverso la veste, con spilli per gocce di lacrime,
Questa è la donna dalla lunga piaga.
Ed era questo il cielo, Cristognuno, che gli angoli menestrelli
Cacciarono nel celeste condotto…
…Presso l'albero dei ladri,
Io segaossi di tutta la gloria privo di sesso lo scheletro
In questo minuto montagna, e presso l'orologio a soffio testimone
Del sole sostengo i fanciulli del cielo col battito del cuore. (ll.5-9, 11-14)

IX

…Passi di natron affibbiano a stoffa e lanugine, …
…La morte da una benda, la maschera dei dotti
Che grida rauca oro su simili fattezze, … (ll.4, 8-9)

X

…E il vangelo del tempo stivato io lo possa tenere in equilibrio
Sul globo: …
…Da un parapetto del molo dell'arcobaleno il primo Pietro…
…Verde come il principio, lasciate che il giardino si lanci
A tuffo, … (ll.3-4, 7, 11-12)

Up to the third sonnet, Sanesi has done a faithful translation, but in the fourth sonnet he translates the fifth line as follows: ‘Quale sesto di vento estinse la media borghesia in fiamme?’ Now, ‘media borghesia’ in Italian is ‘middle class’, while ‘gentry’ means ‘upper class’. Does Sanesi think that Thomas despised both upper and middle class because of his humble origins? In fact, if the reader goes to the Introduction to the first volume of Thomas’s collected letters edited by Paul Ferris, the author writes: ‘Both his parents were from working-class families, with close connection to rural west Wales, where siblings and

cousins remained. His father, Jack Thomas, who was educated at the just-created University of Wales, developed a 'cut-glass' accent to veil his Welsh-speaking origins and ended up teaching English at Swansea Grammar School; he revered the classic authors, and provided the background for English literature against which his son grew up.' (Ferris ed., 2017, XII) Ferris later added that the students of Swansea Grammar School belonged to the petit bourgeoisie (Ferris ed., 2017, 4).

In the fifth sonnet five enjambements appear and they are not in the original sonnet: 'Io caddi/Perdendo sangue'(ll.6-7); 'Uccisi la mia fame/Sotto i funghi di latte'(ll.7-8); 'per i capelli/M'afferrò il Moby di Giona'(ll.9-10); 'Adamo incrostato di sale/Percosso dalla croce'(ll.10-11); 'Medusa/nera'(ll.12-13).

In the sixth sonnet, the alliteration in- *s*- and -*w*- of the fourth line, 'sea silence' and 'wick of words', is preserved though changed with an alliteration in -*l*- in Italian: 'E i*l* si*l*enzio marino bruciò sopra un *l*ucigno*l*o di paro*l*e'.

In the seventh sonnet, Sanesi interpreted 'strip' in 'Strip to this tree'(l.3) as a verb, 'strappare', but what if the 'Bible-leaved of the written woods'(l.2) was part of the tree? Then it would be advisable to translate with 'striscia a questo albero' or 'listello a quest'albero'. Even in this sonnet, Sanesi decides to put enjanbements where originally there are not: 'una spugna/Nuda'(ll.8-9); 'È il tempo/La melodia'(ll.10-11); 'Le mie signore prestano/Il loro crepacuore'(ll.11-12).

In the eight sonnet, Sanesi decides to translate the adjective 'bird-papped' - 'pap' being a dialectal form to identify the nipple or teat[19] - as the noun 'seni di colomba', when the adjective could be translated with a generic 'seni d'uccello', because in his notes he wrote that the dove is a symbol of purity (Sanesi, ed., 2017, 163) and adds 'palpitanti' ('throbbing'), as an adjective to Mary's breast which is not in the original, probably to stress Mary's grief and agony for her dying son. In this way, Sanesi added further meaning to the line and managed to translate a difficult term with an effective equivalence. Sanesi was also successful in translating another interesting word, 'Jack Christ'(l.7), with 'Cristognuno', 'every man is Christ' literally, because it means that mankind shares the sacrifice of Christ. Francis Scarfe in the above-mentioned essay pointed out that 'minstrel angle'(l.7) had a double meaning, either 'ministering angel' or 'each corner of the singing sky', so Sanesi

[19] See Merriam-Webster entry for 'pap': https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pap.

opted for the second meaning, ‘angoli menestrelli’(l.7). Sanesi changed the syntactic order of ll.9-10 in translation because he respected the Italian syntactic order.
Also in this sonnet, Sanesi broke the lines with enjambements that are not present in the original: ‘palpitanti/Attraverso la veste’(ll.5-6); ‘Presso l’albero dei ladri/Io segaossi’(ll.11-12); ‘lo scheletro/in questo minuto montagna’(ll.12-13); ‘testimone/Del sole’(ll.13-14). The ninth sonnet stays faithful to the original, the syntactic inversions in the original where the verb is at the first place in l.4:‘Buckle to lint and cloth their natron footsteps’ and ll.8-9:‘rants the mask of scholars/Gold on such features’ is translated into Italian following the SVO order: ‘Passi di natron affibbiano a stoffa e lanugine’(l.4) and ‘la maschera dei dotti/che grida rauca oro su simili fattezze’(ll.8-9).
In the tenth and last sonnet, Sanesi puts an enjambement where there is not in the original: ‘E il vangelo del tempo stivato io lo possa tenere in equilibrio/Sul globo’(ll.3-4), then he inverts the syntactic order of the original: ‘Da un parapetto del molo dell’arcobaleno il primo Pietro’ (l.7) instead of starting with ‘il primo Pietro’ and leaves a line’s translation incomplete in l.11-12: ‘Let the garden diving/Soar’, which is a good example of Thomas’s images, since he stated that in his poetry one image contradicts another.
Sanesi translated with: ‘Lasciate che il giardino si lanci/A tuffo’(ll.11-12) forgetting to translate the verb ‘Soar’(l.12). A better translation would be: ‘Lasciate che il giardino che si immerge/Si levi in volo’ since in l.10 the garden is described as a ‘flying garden’.

3.1.4 *Ballata dell'esca dalle gambe lunghe*

…Ai suoi capelli sferzanti e all'occhio blu-balena;
La città calpestata acciottolò un augurio di fortuna… (ll.3-4)

…Le vele bevvero il vento e bianco come latte
Egli veloce si gettò nel buio avido;... (ll.13-14)

…Addio all'uomo che barcolla sul cassero,... (l.18)

…Fuoco su luce stellare, erpice della ràpida di Cristo,... (l.43)

…Balene nella scia simili a promontori e ad Alpi
Squassavano il mare ammalato e sbuffavano profondo;… (ll.49-50)

…E l'aquila polare con il suo accoppiamento di neve. (l.80)

…Oh miracolo dei pesci! L'esca da tempo morta! (l.140)

The first expression which is changed in Sanesi's translation is 'The trodden town rang its cobbles for luck'(l.4), which he rendered as: 'La città calpestata acciottolò un augurio di fortuna'. So, literally, the city made rattling sounds to wish good luck to the boat and the person with 'thrashing hair and whale-blue eye'(l.3), but in so doing, the original meaning is lost. A translation of this line closer to the literal meaning would be: 'La città calpestata fece risuonare i ciottoli come augurio di buona fortuna'.
Another change is 'drinking dark'(l.14), which is 'buio avido' for Sanesi ('greedy dark'), instead of 'il buio che beve'.
Now let's consider l.18: 'Good-bye to the man on the sea-legged deck'.
According to the online dictionary Merriam-Webster, the word 'sea legs' means 'bodily adjustment to the motion of a ship indicated especially by ability to walk steadily and by freedom from seasickness'[20]. This word appears as an adjective, 'sea-legged'(l.18), connected to 'deck', but Sanesi in his translation appears to have connected it to the 'man', therefore making an imprecise translation. Another oversight of Sanesi is when he

[20] Check 'sea legs' entry: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sea%20legs.

translates in the same line ‘deck’ with ‘cassero’, when deck is ‘ponte’ or ‘coperta’, while ‘cassero’ is ‘bridgehouse’. So a more accurate translation into Italian would be: ‘Addio all’uomo sul ponte stabile’ or ‘Addio all’uomo sul ponte che contrasta il mare’. There is another interesting expression which is strange to hear in translation, ‘rake Jesu’s stream’(l.43), which Sanesi translated as ‘erpice della ràpida di Cristo’, which is not quite the original meaning, as ‘erpice’ is a ‘harrow’.

An aspect of the storm that is taking place is seen as a ‘stream’ of ‘rake Jesu’, probably because the rake makes the reader think of the vertical board of the cross on which Christ will be crucified, or simply to make the reader visualise a suffering Christ, so a possible translation into Italian of the expression would be ‘torrente del Cristo-rastrello’.

A difficult line to render into Italian is: ‘Quaked the sick sea and snouted deep’(l.50), but Sanesi did a convincing translation: ‘Squassavano il mare ammalato e sbuffavano profondo’, so he converted the original alliterations in *-k-* and *-s-* into alliterations in *-s-, -m-* and *-f-* into Italian. Upon checking online dictionaries[21], there seems not to be a verb as ‘to snout’, but just the noun, which is a synonym for ‘muzzle’ when used for animals. Sanesi considered ‘to snout’ as ‘to snort’, that is why he translated the word as ‘sbuffare’.

After the marriage of the bait to animal species, Sanesi might have wanted to underline the fact of the bait’s union with these species by slightly changing the meaning of l.80: ‘The polar eagle with his tread of snow’, which is literally the eagle having a snow-like step, but Sanesi put it as ‘accoppiamento di neve’, so ‘mating of snow’.

After the death of the long-legged bait, the fisherman and his boat go through a storm, but he manages to fish the long-legged bait and his fathers, so Thomas wrote: ‘The long dead bite!’(l.140), ‘I lunghi morti abboccano’, not just the bait, ‘L’esca da tempo morta!’.

[21] The entry for ‘snout’ has been checked on the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the Cambridge online dictionary and lexico.com.

3.1.5 Il colle delle felci

Ora quand'ero giovane e semplice sotto i rami del melo
Nella casa sonora e felice essendo l'erba verde,
La notte radiosa di stelle sulla vallata ,
Il tempo mi lasciava urlare a festa
E arrampicarmi dorato nella gioia dei suoi occhi,
E onorato fra i carri ero il principe delle città di mele
E tanto tempo fa una volta signorilmente gli alberi e le foglie
Feci discendere con orzo e margherite
Giù per i fiumi della luce abbattuta dal vento.

E come ero verde e senz'ansia, famoso nei granai,
Per il gaio cortile e cantando poiché la fattoria era la casa,
Nel sole che è giovane solo una volta,
Il tempo mi lasciava giocare
Ed essere dorato nella grazia dei suoi mezzi,
E io verde e dorato cacciatore e pastore ero inoltre, i vitelli
Cantavano al mio corno, le volpi sui colli chiare e fredde latravano,
E il sabbath risuonava
Lentamente sui sassi dei sacri torrenti.

Per tutto il sole era un correre, una dolcezza, e i campi
Di fieno alti come una casa, le melodie dai camini, era aria
E un gioco piacevole e acqueo
E il fuoco verde come l'erba.
E a notte, sotto le semplici stelle,
Come nel sonno cavalcavo, le civette portavano la fattoria lontano,
Per tutta la notte di luna ascoltavo, felice fra le stalle, i caprimulghi
Che con le biche di fieno volavano, e i cavalli
Nel buio sfolgoranti.

E poi svegliarsi, e la fattoria, simile a un pellegrino bianco
Di rugiada, tornava col galletto sulla spalla: tutto era
Splendente, era Adamo e era vergine,
Il cielo si raccoglieva di nuovo
E il sole cresceva rotondo anche quel giorno.
Così dev'essere stato dopo la nascita della semplice luce
Nel primo spazio rotante, gli affascinati cavalli caldi al passo
Fuori dalla verde stalla nitrente verso
Le praterie della benedizione.

E onorato fra le volpi e i fagiani presso la casa felice
Sotto le nuvole appena create e gioioso quanto durava il cuore,
Nel sole nato ripetutamente corsi
Per le mie strade noncuranti,
I miei desideri galoppando per il fieno alto

Come una casa e nulla m’importava, nei miei giochi azzurro-cielo, che il tempo permettesse
In tutto il suo svolgersi musicale solo poche canzoni del mattino
Prima che i bimbi verdi e dorati
Fuori dalla sua grazia lo seguissero.

Non mi importava nulla, nei giorni bianco-agnello, che il tempo m’avrebbe condotto,
Su nel granaio fitto di rondini con l’ombra della mia mano,
Nella luna che sempre sta sorgendo,
Né che cavalcando nel sonno
L’avrei udito volare insieme ai campi alti
E mi sarei svegliato nella fattoria fuggita ormai dalla terra senza bimbi.
Oh, quand'ero giovane e semplice nella grazia dei suoi mezzi,
Verde e morente mi trattenne il tempo
Benché come il mare cantassi nelle mie catene.

In this translation, Sanesi has perfectly conveyed the original meaning designed by Thomas.

3.2 Marianni's Translations

Marianni illustrated his point of view on translation in an essay called 'Tradurre poesia: appunti per una breve relazione al premio Monselice, 11 giugno 2005'. He wrote that when translating poetry, it is impossible to produce a translated text which results in being equivalent to the original one. He also wrote about the inclinations a translator has when dealing with a poetic translation:

1) the translator enters into a competition with the author instead of being at the author's and reader's service;

2) the translator wants to re-enact the musicality of the original poem by reproducing its metrics and its rhythm;

3) when translating an author from the past, the translator is inclined to recreate the historic atmosphere of the original poem (Bellini, ed., 2017, 46).

The rules Marianni follows when translating a poem are:

1) read the original text multiple times;

2) produce a word-to-word translation and write down all the possible meanings and synonyms;

3) elaborate the material without adding or removing something from it and avoid paraphrase;

4) respect lines and stanzas because they are the structural elements of the poem;

5) give the poem a rhythmical progression in order to give the reader an immediate sensation that what they are reading is a poetry composition (Bellini, ed., 2017, 46).

Marianni argues that the outcome of the translated poem does never reward the work done on the poem. When the translator freely chooses a poem to translate, it is for Marianni due to habits, but he does not mention what type of habits are involved, elective affinities or just

a sudden liking of the poem and the wish to possess a poetic text which presents unknown worlds that might attract the reader in similar or different ways (Bellini, ed., 2017, 47) .
He excludes imitation as a type of translation, because he thinks it is plagiarism to take a work by an author and appropriate his/her feelings and his/her thoughts (Bellini, ed., 2017, 47).

Marianni is also convinced that the translator of poetry is a poet himself (Bellini, ed., 2017, 47). Bellini in her essay 'Musica d'immagini significanti: Ariodante Marianni traduttore di Dylan Thomas' wrote that when Marianni decided to translate Thomas's poem, there have already appeared in Italy Thomas's translations on magazines by Bigongiari, Giuliani, Montale, Rodocanachi and Sanesi's for Guanda (Bellini, ed., 2017, 123).
Marianni decided to translate Thomas when he had decided to take a break from writing to invest time in painting (Bellini, ed., 2017, 124).
Marianni stated that when translating Dylan Thomas, he dedicated time to read the poems carefully and paid attention to their words, symbols, images and sounds (Bellini, ed., 2017, 125). In the following translations, Marianni tried to be as faithful as possible to the original poems, so he decided to translate them into verse, without following the original metrics, yet in the last poem, *Nel sonno campestre*, the meaning of the poem is not perfectly conveyed; that is why Marianni generates translation losses, or 'residuo traduttivo' in Italian, which is a part of the message which does not reach the addressee.

3.2.1 *Sognai la mia genesi*

Sognai la mia genesi nel sudore del sonno, rompendo
Il guscio rotante, potente come il muscolo
D'un motore sul trapano, inoltrandomi
Nella visione e nel nervo travato.

Da membra fatte a misura del verme, sbarazzato
Dalla carne grinzosa, limato
Da tutti i ferri dell'erba, metallo
Di soli nella notte che gli uomini fonde.

Erede delle vene in cui bolle la goccia d'amore,
Preziosa nelle mie ossa una creatura, io
Feci il giro del globo della mia eredità, viaggio
In prima nell'uomo che ingranò nottetempo.

Sognai la mia genesi e di nuovo morii, shrapnel
Conficcato nel cuore in marcia, strappo
Nella ferita ricucita e vento coagulato, morte
Con museruola sulla bocca che ingoiò il gas.

Scaltrito nella mia seconda morte contrassegnai le alture,
Mèsse di lame e di cicuta, ruggine
Il mio sangue sui morti temprati, forzando
La mia seconda lotta per strapparmi dall'erba.

E nella mia nascita fu contagioso il potere, seconda
Resurrezione dello scheletro e
Nuova vestizione dello spirito nudo. Virilità
Schizzò dal risofferto dolore.

Sognai la mia genesi nel sudore di morte, caduto
Due volte nel mare che nutre, diventato stantio
Nell'acqua salata di Adamo finché, visione
Di nuova forza umana, io cerchi il sole.

There are only two things to point out; first, that Marianni chose to balance the Italian translation in l.2 and l.17 by shifting 'as motor muscle'(l.3) on l.2: 'potente come il muscolo' and 'harvest'(l.17) appears in l.18 into Italian, 'messe'.

3.2.2 *E la morte non avrà più dominio*

E la morte non avrà più dominio.
I morti nudi saranno una cosa
Con l'uomo nel vento e la luna d'occidente;
Quando le loro ossa saranno spolpate e le ossa pulite scomparse,
Ai gomiti e ai piedi avranno stelle;
Benché impazziscano saranno sani di mente,
Benché sprofondino in mare risaliranno a galla,
Benché gli amanti si perdano l'amore sarà salvo;
E la morte non avrà più dominio.

E la morte non avrà più dominio.
Sotto i meandri del mare
Giacendo a lungo non moriranno nel vento;
Sui cavalletti contorcendosi mentre i tendini cedono,
Cinghiati ad una ruota, non si spezzeranno;
Si spaccherà la fede in quelle mani
E l'unicorno del peccato li passerà da parte a parte;
Scheggiati da ogni lato non si schianteranno;
E la morte non avrà più dominio.

E la morte non avrà più dominio.
Più non potranno i gabbiani gridare ai loro orecchi,
Le onde rompersi urlanti sulle rive del mare;
Dove un fiore spuntò non potrà un fiore
Mai più sfidare i colpi della pioggia;
Ma benché pazzi e morti stecchiti;
Le teste di quei tali martelleranno dalle margherite;
Irromperanno al sole fino a che il sole precipiterà,
E la morte non avrà più dominio.

The only line that could be improved in this translation is l.17: 'Scheggiati da ogni lato non si schianteranno' could be 'Gli arti rotti non si incrineranno', the other lines are masterfully rendered by Marianni.

3.2.3 *Racconto d'inverno*

…Gireranno leggere con gli zoccoli sopra il cielo caduto, e tutta
La fattoria si sveglierà alle sue bianche faccende, … (ll.24-25)

…E dei fuochi, dov'egli prederebbe la nuvola… (l.37)

…Il tempo canta dal morto intrico del bucaneve. (l.65)

E tutti gli elementi della lenta caduta gioirono che un uomo
S'inginocchiasse solitario nella conca delle valli, … (ll.84-85)

Ed egli corse come vento dietro il volo di fiamma, oltre i ciechi granai,
E le stalle delle mucche della fattoria senza vento. (ll.89-90)

Nei poli dell'anno, mentre i merli
Simili a preti morivano sulle siepi ammantate, e sulla tunica… (ll.91-92)

La danza smuore sul bianco… (l.119)

In l.24 Marianni added the verb ‘girare’, in this context meaning ‘to walk’, when in the original that verb does not appear, and also in l.25 he changed the verb tense from the past participle ‘woken’ to future tense in ‘si sveglierà’. Unfortunately, the assonance in l.37 is lost in the Italian translation: ‘prederebbe la nuvola’, but could be converted into an assonance in -*e*- and a alliteration in -*b*- if ‘nuvola’ changed to ‘nube’, so: ‘prederebbe la nube’. In l.65, Marianni kept managed to keep the alliteration in -*t*- and the original alliteration in -*s*- and -*d*- is changed to a consonance in -*nt*- that is also present in the original line: ‘Il *t*empo ca*nt*a dal mor*t*o i*nt*rico del bucaneve’.

Marianni changes the balance of the lines of the original poem: in ‘That a man knelt alone’ (l.85) becomes two lines, ‘che un uomo/S’inghinocchiasse’ (ll.84-85), ‘oltre i ciechi granai’ (l.89) is divided from ‘le stalle delle mucche’ (l.90), ‘Nei poli dell’anno, mentre i merli’ (l.90) is put together, ‘mucchio di stracci’ (l.95) stays at the end of the nineteenth stanza instead of being part of the first line of the following stanza, ‘la danza smuore sul bianco’ (l.111) is part of the same line instead of being divided by an enjambement.

3.2.4 *Nella mia arte scontrosa o mestiere*

Nella mia arte scontrosa o mestiere
Praticata nel silenzio notturno
Quando soltanto la luna infuria
E gli amanti giacciono nel letto
Con tutti i loro affanni tra le braccia,
Io mi affatico a una luce che canta
Non per pane o ambizione
O per pavoneggiarmi e vender fascino
Sui palcoscenici d'avorio,
Ma per il comune salario
Del loro più intimo cuore.

Non per il superbo che s'apparta
Dalla luna che infuria io scrivo
Su queste pagine di spuma
Né per i morti che torreggiano
Con i loro usignoli e i loro salmi,
Ma per gli amanti, per le loro braccia
Attorno alle angosce dei secoli,
Che non pagano lodi né salario
E non si curano del mio mestiere o arte.

Reading this poem in translation is like reading the original one. The only doubt raised is that 'sullen art' could also mean 'arte pigra' or 'arte lenta' into Italian, if the poetic connotation of the word 'sullen' is considered, so the initial line could be translated into 'Nella mia arte pigra o mestiere'(l.1) and it would make perfect sense still, because Thomas used to take time to write poems.

3.2.5 *Nel sonno campestre*

I.
Mai e poi mai, figlia mia che cavalchi in lungo e in largo
Nella terra delle fiabe del focolare, e per incanto addormentata,
Devi temere o credere che il lupo con un cappuccio bianco-agnello,
Saltelloni e belando rozzo e allegro balzerà, o cara o cara,
Da una tana nel mucchio di foglie nell'anno zuppo di rugiada,
Per mangiare il tuo cuore nella casa nel bosco di rose.

Dormi, buona, ora e sempre, lenta e profonda, rara e savia
Nell'incanto, mia bimba errante la notte nella rosea contea
Delle favole agresti: nessun guardiano d'oche o di maiali
Si muterà in un re da cortile o villaggio di fuoco
O in principe di ghiaccio per adescare dal tuo fianco
Il cuore di miele prima dell'alba in un boschetto
Di ragazzi e di paperi in cerchio, lancia e ustione, (ll.1-13)

Devi temere o credere che rustica ombra o incantesimo
Possa erpicare e nevicare il sangue mentre cavalchi qui
E là, perché chi può infestare le grondaie del monte
Piene di corvi o agguattarsi nel borro lunare se non il lume
Della luna che limpido echeggia dal pozzo stellato?
Sfiora un angelo il colle. Dalla cella d'un santo
L'uccello notturno, attraverso conventi e cupole di foglie, (ll.21-27)

II.

Notte e vena d'uccelli nel polso alato del bosco!
Battito pastorale del sangue attraverso le foglie
Merlettate! Ruscello sgorgante dai neri polsi di prete
Del boschetto e dalle maniche di brina
Del racconto e del chiasso dell'usignolo! Anima esalata
Della valletta lacerata al canto e colle di cipressi (ll.7-12)

Marianni translated the adverbs ‘roughly’ and ‘blithely’ in l.3 in the adjectives ‘rozzo’ e ‘allegro’, maybe to avoid that the line acquired a verbal heaviness with the adverbs ‘rozzamente’ and ‘allegramente’. In the second stanza, there is a curious expression which Marianni translates according to the mood of the poem: the girl of the poem is told ‘hobnail tales’ (l.10), and ‘hobnail’ is translated into Italian as ‘bulletta’, ‘chiodo da scarpe’ or

‘brocca’, but Marianni decides to simply leave it as ‘favole agresti’, ‘country tales’. In this way, Marianni excludes that the tales, le ‘favole chiodate’ could be a way of translating the expression, can hurt the girl.
In the following line, Marianni chose to translate ‘homestall king’(l.11) with ‘re da cortile’, but in Italian ‘cortile’ in this context could be translated as ‘farmyard’ or simply yard, while ‘homestall’ is ‘fattoria’. Doing so, Marianni put in the Italian translation a hyponym instead of a hypernym.

Marianni forgot to translate the word ‘unmanningly’(l.24), perhaps because if added to the line, it would sound odd: ‘…,perché chi può infestare senza forze le grondaie del monte/ Piene di corvi o agguattarsi nel borro lunare se non il lume/Della luna che limpido echeggia dal pozzo stellato?’ How can moonshine be deprived of its energy?
In the second part of the poem, Marianni omits in his translation of l.7 the word ‘sloe’, which if added, would become: ‘nel polso alato del prugnolo del bosco’, and he also forgets to translate ‘thistling frost’ (l.10), supposedly Thomas way to indicate the biting cold weather, so a manner of translating the line would be: ‘maniche/di brina pungente’. The remaining stanzas convey the original message of the poem.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I wanted to analyse the work of two great Italian translators, Roberto Sanesi and Ariodante Marianni, and I also wanted to get familiar with the poetry of Dylan Thomas. I thought that translation theory was a useful instrument to provide me with guidelines on how to translate poetry and how to analyse translated poems by professional translators. I centred my analysis on faithfulness in translation and on translation loss, because I wanted to have an idea on how much the translator should sacrifice the meaning of the original poems to produce translated poems in his language. I added critical viewpoints to Thomas's poems because it helped me understand the poems, and I was curious to see how the translators conveyed Thomas's symbolism.

Marianni and Sanesi's translations show little loss of meaning, that is why they can be called faithful translations. I noticed Marianni and Sanesi showed respect to the form of every poem, keeping the exact number of lines in each stanza, but could not be faithful to the original number of syllables in each stanza.

I could not find an exactness in translating the musicality of Dylan Thomas into Italian, that is the reason why I have not considered musicality in translation in the analysis of the translated poems. I was lucky to find Marianni's personal opinions on translation and a review on his translations of Dylan Thomas in the book curated by Eleonora Bellini, but I could not find any essay on Sanesi about his methods of translation when translating the poetry of Dylan Thomas. Unfortunately, I realised that there are only a few contemporary critics of Thomas's poetry, the most active being John Goodby, researcher at Sheffield Hallam University. Dylan Thomas should be more taken into account in poetry courses at university, because he had an innate ability to build musical verses with meaningful content, his main textual sources being Joyce, Freud and the Bible[22], and I hope that many international critics will find more to say on his poems, and that more updated translations of Thomas's poetry into Italian will come out in the next few years.

[22] See Fitzgibbon 1975, 370.

APPENDIX A: Full texts of 'Come un altare in luce di civetta' and 'Ballata dell'esca dalle gambe lunghe' translated by Roberto Sanesi, and 'Nel sonno campestre' translated by Ariodante Marianni

Come un altare in luce di civetta

I

Come un altare in luce di civetta nella casa a mezza via
Il signore mentiva rivolto alla sua tomba con le furie;
Abaddon nella pelle dell'unghie strappata da Adamo,
E dalla propria forca, cane fra le fate,
Il divoratore d'atlanti goloso di notizie
Mordicchiò la mandragora con urlo di domani.
Allora, occhidisoldo, quel signore di ferite,
Vecchio gallo venuto dal nulla e dall'uovo del cielo,
Con le ossa slacciate nei venti a mezza via,
Sgusciato fuori su una gamba sola dal relitto di vento,
Raspò alla mia culla con una parola in cammino
Quella notte del tempo nel rifugio orientato su Cristo:
Sono il signore del lungo mondo, egli disse,
E divido il mio letto col Capricorno e il Cancro.

II

La morte è ogni metafora, forma in un'unica storia;
Il bimbo che a lungo succhiò ora di colpo cresce,
Il pellicano dei circoli a condotti planetari
Svezza sopra un'arteria la striscia della specie;
Figlio di breve scintilla in un paese informe
Rapido accende dalla culla un lungo ramoscello;
Le orizzontali ossa a croce di Abaddon,
Tu presso la caverna sulle scale nere,
Osso e lama facesti squillare, i verticali di Adamo,
E dalla mezzanotte armato avventare Giacobbe alle stelle.
I capelli del tuo capo, disse allora il vuoto agente,
Non sono che radici di ortiche e di piume che premono
Su queste fondamenta attraverso un selciato,
E con capo di cicuta nel bosco dei tempi.

III

Prima vi fu l'agnello sulle tremanti ginocchia

E tre stagioni morte su una tomba ascendente
Che il caprone di Adamo nel branco delle corna,
Estremità del verme a coda d'albero che montò Eva, prese
A cornate con piede di teschio e col teschio
Delle dita dei piedi su selciati tonanti nel tempo del giardino;
Rip delle arcate, trassi il mio mestolo di midollo
Dal carro del rugoso imprenditore funebre,
E Rip Van Winkle da una culla atemporale
Mi tuffai fino al petto nell'osso discendente;
Il capro nero, strascichìo dell'anno, antico inverno,
Unico essere vivo nel suo ovile di montoni, facemmo
Risuonare sulla scala i nostri mutamenti del tempo,
Dissero gli antipodi, e due volte intonammo primavera.

IV

Qual è il metro del dizionario?
La misura della genesi? il genere della breve scintilla?
L'ombra senza forma? la forma dell'eco del Faraone?
(La mia forma d'età che tormenta il bisbiglio ferito).
Quale sesto di vento estinse la media borghesia in fiamme?
(Le domande sono gobbe al midollo dell'attizzatoio).
Che dire di un uomo di bambù fra i vostri campi?
Dei campi d'ossa un busto per un ragazzo rattorto?
Allacciatevi il corpetto su una gobba di schegge,
I miei occhi di cammello trapasseranno il sudario come aghi.
Riflesso amoroso delle fattezze di fungo,
Foto scattate di notte nel campo dai lati di pane,
Primo piano una volta sorridente nel muro dei ritratti,
Illuminati da lampade ad arco e gettati sul flutto tagliente.

V

E dal ventoso West con due pistole Gabriele venne,
Il re di macchie fece scivolare dalla manica di Gesù,
E i fanti ornati di guaine, e la regina col cuore a soqquadro;
Così disse il falso signore in abito di picche,
Di nera lingua ubriaco dalla bottiglia della salvazione.
Fu nella notte che sorse il mio Adamo bizantino. Io caddi
Perdendo sangue sulla piana d'Ismaele, e uccisi la mia fame
Sotto i funghi di latte, un mare che montava
Dall'Asia mi abbatté, e per i capelli
M'afferrò il Moby di Giona, Adamo incrostato di sale
Percosso dalla croce a un angelo di gelo
Con gambe a spillo su colline artiche con una medusa
Nera per mari desolati dove l'orso bianco citava Virgilio
E sirene cantavano dalla paglia marina di nostro signora.

VI

Vignetta di squarci sul cratere solcato dalle maree,
Egli in un libro d'acqua dagli occhi di sego
Separò a luce di lava le vocali ostriche
E il silenzio marino bruciò sopra un lucignolo di parole.
Becca, gallo, il mio occhio di mare, disse la scrittura della medusa,
Taglia, amore, la mia lingua forcuta, disse l'ortica spillo-collinosa;
E l'amore divelse l'occhio della pungente sirena,
Vecchio gallo venuto dal nulla recise la lingua
Menestrella finché non soffiai sego dalla torre di cera,
I grassi della mezzanotte, mentre cantava il sale;
Adamo, buffone del tempo, su una strega di cartone
Sillabò i sette mari, un indice maligno,
E le signore con le mammelle a cornamusa in lutto
Spensero la garza di sangue nella ferita della cera umana.

VII

Ora stampiglia la preghiera del Signore su un grano di riso,
Un fascicolo di Bibbia di tutti i legni scritti
Strappa a quest'albero: un alfabeto che oscilla,
Genesi nella radice, parola spaventapasseri,
E un linguaggio di luce nel libro degli alberi.
Condanna coloro che negano alla dichiarazione travolta dal vento.
Il tempo è melodia mie signore con tette di musica,
Squamate segatrici del mare, fissate in una spugna
Nuda evocante Adamo di voce argentina fuori dalla magìa,
Tempo, latte, e magìa, dal mondo primigenio. È il tempo
La melodia alla quale le mie signore prestano
Il loro crepacuore, dai padiglioni calvi e dalla cassa di pane,
Tempo che traccia il suono della forma sull'uomo e sulla nuvola,
Sulla rosa e sul ghiacciolo la risonante impronta della mano.

VIII

Questa fu la crocefissione sulla montagna,
Nervo del tempo in aceto, tomba patibolare incatramata
Di sangue quanto le splendide spine che piansi;
Il mondo è la mia ferita, Dio Maria nel suo dolore,
Curva come tre alberi e i seni di colomba palpitanti
Attraverso la veste, con spilli per gocce di lacrime,
Questa è la donna dalla lunga piaga.
Ed era questo il cielo, Cristognuno, che gli angoli menestrelli
Cacciarono nel celeste condotto dei chiodi finché
L'arcobaleno tricolore da polo a polo balzò dai miei capezzoli

Attorno al mondo vegliato da lumache. Presso l'albero dei ladri,
Io segaossi di tutta la gloria privo di sesso lo scheletro
In questo minuto montagna, e presso l'orologio a soffio testimone
Del sole sostengo i fanciulli del cielo col battito del cuore.

IX

Dagli archivi oracolari e dalla pergamena,
Profeti e re di fibra in olio e lettera,
Il lampeggiato calligrafo e la regina a schegge,
Passi di natron affibbiano a stoffa e lanugine,
Indossano il guanto delle impronte, l'henna del morto Cairo,
Versano come aureola su cappucci e serpi.
Questa fu la resurrezione nel deserto,
La morte da una benda, la maschera dei dotti
Che grida rauca oro su simili fattezze, e lo spirito di lino
Che sposa il mio lungo signore a furie e polveri;
La mia gentile ferita si corica con prete e faraone,
Il mondo nella sabbia, sul paesaggio triangolare,
Con pietre d'odissea per cenere e ghirlanda,
Ed i fiumi dei morti attorno al collo.

X

Che il marinaio della favola da un viaggio cristiano
Come Atlante si tenga a mezza via dal finto golfo
E il vangelo del tempo stivato io lo possa tenere in equilibrio
Sul globo: e così porti alati per gli occhi d'uccelli rupestri
Scorgeranno la parola soffiata, e sopra i mari io immagini
La spina di Dicembre avvitata in una fronte d'agrifoglio.
Da un parapetto del molo dell'arcobaleno il primo Pietro
Chieda pure all'alto pesce spazzato dal biblico oriente
Che uomo di rabarbaro sbucciato nel suo canale di schiuma azzurra
Ha seminato un giardino volante attorno a quello spettro di mare.
Verde come il principio, lasciate che il giardino si lanci
A tuffo, con le due torri di corteccia, verso quel Giorno
In cui il verme costruirà con le pagliuzze d'oro del veleno
Nel rude albero rosso il nido delle mie misericordie.

Ballata dell'esca dalle gambe lunghe

La prua scivolava in avanti, e la costa,
Diede un'ultimo sguardo, oscurata da uccelli
Ai suoi capelli sferzanti e all'occhio blu-balena;
La città calpestata acciottolò un augurio di fortuna.

Allora addio al battello con il suo equipaggio
Di pescatori, con l'ancora libera e ferma
Come un uccello uncinato sul mare,
Accanto alla cima dell'albero secca e svettante,

Mormorarono allora la sabbia affettuosa
E le murate di molo abbagliate di sole.
Salpa per me, più non guardare indietro
Disse la terra che guardava.

Le vele bevvero il vento e bianco come latte
Egli veloce si gettò nel buio avido;
Il sole naufragò a occidente su una perla
E la luna uscì a nuoto dalla sua carcassa.

Alberi e ciminiere fluirono in un vortice.
Addio all'uomo che barcolla sul cassero,
Alla lenza dorata che canta sul suo molinello,
All'esca che zampando uscì fuori dal sacco,

Poiché lo vedemmo lanciare sul veloce flutto
Una fanciulla viva con i suoi ami piantati nelle labbra;
E tutti i pesci nel sangue irradiarono,
Dissero allora i vascelli allontanandosi.

Addio alle ciminiere ed ai camini,
Vecchie comari che filano nel fumo,
Egli era cieco ad occhi di candele
Nelle preganti finestre dell'onde

Ma udiva la sua esca sgroppare nella scia
E azzuffarsi in un branco d'amanti.
E getta la tua canna, ora, poiché il mare
È tutto collinoso di balene,

E lei smania fra cavalli ed angeli
Il pesce-arcobaleno alle sue gioie inclina,
Disse lo scampanio da cattedrale
Sommersa dalle boe che si cullavano.

Dove come un gabbiano cavalcava l'ancora,
Per miglia sulla barca stregata dalla luna,
Un folata d'uccelli si gettò con strepiti,
Pioggia soffiò una nube dalla propria gola;

Vide il fumo omicida della bufera avventarsi
Con archi incolleriti e sperone di ghiaccio,
Fuoco su luce stellare, erpice della ràpida di Cristo,
E nulla risplendeva sul viso dell'acqua

Se non l'olio e la bolla della luna,
Nella sua rotta tuffandosi e immergendosi
Sotto la schiuma l'adescato pesce
Che con un bacio testimoniava .

Balene nella scia simili a promontori e ad Alpi
Squassavano il mare ammalato e sbuffavano profondo;
Folta nel fondo con labbra di pioggia l'esca grande
Schivava le pinne di quelle tonnellate gibbose

E nel meandro di un tuffo sfuggiva il loro amore.
Oh, Gerico stava cadendo nei loro polmoni!
Ella abboccò e s'immerse nel lampo dell'amore,
E vorticò su un soffio come una palla dalle gambe lunghe

Finché ogni animale stridette in uno scarto
Finché ogni tartaruga ruppe la sua corazza
Finché ogni osso nella precipitosa tomba
Non si levò, non esultò e ricadde!

Buona fortuna alla mano sulla canna,
Sotto i suoi pollici è il tuono;
La lenza d'oro è un filo lampeggiante,
Il suo infuocato rocchetto sprigiona fiamme cantando,

Il turbinante battello nell'ardore del sangue
Dalle reti ai coltelli ora grida,
Oh gli uccelli che fendono l'acqua e la loro covata naviforme
Oh i tori di Biscaglia coi loro Torelli,

Sotto il disteso e verde velo s'ammogliano
Con l'esca bella dalle lunghe gambe.
Rivela la nera notizia e dipingi su una vela
Gli immensi sposalizi nelle onde,

Sopra lo spruzzo che splende
Verso la scia sui giardini del fondo

Strepita il risalente giorno del delfino,
Il mio albero maestro è un campanile,

Colpisci e livella, perché i miei ponti sono tamburi,
Canta attraverso la prua chiacchiera d'acqua
Il polpo che s'addentra alle sue membra
E l'aquila polare con il suo accoppiamento di neve.

Dal suo rostro di labbra salmastre alla poppa che sbalza
Canta come la foca ha baciato una morta!
La lunga, distesa sposa dell'attimo va alla deriva
Antica nel suo letto crudele.

Sul cimitero nell'acqua
Montagne e gallerie giù nel profondo
La iena e l'usignolo si rallegrano
Per quella morte che va alla deriva,

Attraverso la sabbia e l'anemone urlano e cantano
Valle e sahara dentro una conchiglia,
Oh tutta la carne che brama il suo nemico
Gettata in mare nella conchiglia d'una fanciulla

È antica come l'acqua, liscia come un'anguilla;
Addio per sempre al pane dalle lunghe gambe
Disperso nei sentieri delle sue calcagna
Poiché i salmastri uccelli svolarono e si nutrirono

E i grandi chicchi schiumarono nei loro becchi;
E sempre addio alle fiamme del suo volto
Perché i morti schienadigranchio sul letto del mare
Risorsero e s'avventarono ai suoi occhi,

Il cieco unghiato sguardo è freddo come nevischio
Il tentatore che sotto le palpebre
Mostra ai sé addormentati donne nude
Bianche come la luna e alte come l'albero

Muoversi piene di desiderio, più belle di vergogna,
È muto e dipartito con la sua fiamma di spose.
Susanna è annegata nella barbuta corrente
E nessuno si muove accanto a Saba

Se non gli affamati regnanti delle maree;
Il peccato che aveva forma di donna
Dorme finché il Silenzio soffi su una nuvola
E tutte l'acque sommosse procedano e balzino.

Lucifero, quell'escremento d'uccello
Colato dai fianchi del nord,
S'è disfatto e scomparso,
per sempre s'è perduto nella volta del suo respiro,

Venere giace stregata di stelle nella sua ferita
E le rovine sensuali creano
Stagioni sul liquido mondo,
Il bianco sorge nel buio.

Addio per sempre, gridarono le voci attraverso la conchiglia,
Addio per sempre poiché la carne è gettata
E il pescatore avvolge il suo rocchetto
Con non più desiderio di uno spettro.

Buona fortuna per sempre, inneggiò l'uccello dalle pinne
Di piuma dopo l'imbrunire ed il pesce ridente
Quando le vele bevvero la grandine del tuono
E il fulmine lungocodato illuminò la sua preda.
Nella bufera che dura sei anni il battello procede,
Un vento scaglia un'ombra e gela rapido.
Vedi la lenza d'oro che cosa estrae dal fondo
Di monti e gallerie fino alla cresta!

Vedi cosa s'aggrappa ai capelli ed al cranio
Mentre il battello scivola con ali che bevono!
Le statue della grande pioggia stanno immote,
Come colline fiocchi di neve precipitano.

Canta ed arpeggia la sua retata pesante che trabocca
Sulla fiancata del battello in una neve di luce!
I suoi ponti sono imbevuti di miracoli.
Oh miracolo dei pesci! L'esca da tempo morta!

Da un'urna a misura d'uomo
Da una stanza greve come il suo cruccio
Da una casa che contiene una città
Nel continente di un fossile

Uno per uno in polvere e sudano
Aridi come echi e con faccia d'insetto,
I suoi padri s'aggrappano alla mano della fanciulla
E la morta mano conduce il passato.

Come fanciulli li conduce e come aria
Sulle vette che ciecamente si scuotono;

I secoli arrovesciano i capelli
E i vecchi cantano con labbra neonate:

Il tempo partorisce un altro figlio.
Morte al tempo! Si torce nel suo dolore!
La quercia è abbattuta nella ghianda
E il falco uccide lo scricciolo nell'uovo.

Colui che attizzò il grande fuoco
E morì sopra un sibilo di fiamme
O camminò sulla terra nella sera
Addizionando il rifiuto dei semi,

S'inerpica e si aggrappa alla chioma che fluttua;
E colui che insegnò le sue labbra a cantare
Ora piange col sole che s'è appena levato
Fra i liquidi cori delle sue tribù.

La canna si piega, divinando la terra,
Ed attraverso l'acqua spartita in due si trascina
Un giardino che si regge alla sua mano
Pieno d'uccelli e animali

E uomini e donne e cascate
Alberi freschi e asciutti nel gorgo delle navi,
Ed attonita e immobile sul verde velo deposto
La sabbia con leggende nel suo grembo vergine

E profeti che gridano sulle dune bruciate;
Insetti e valli serrano le sue cosce,
Il tempo e i luoghi stringono il suo sterno,
Di stagioni e di nubi ella prorompe; l'acqua

Dolce vortica attorno al polso trascinato
Con dinamici pesci e pietre tondeggianti,
Su e giù nei flutti immensi,
Un fiume separato ànsima e corre;

Arpeggia e canta la sua retata di campi
Poiché i marosi sono seminati d'orzo,
La mandria pascola sulla schiuma coperta,
Le colline hanno spostato coi piedi le onde,

Con selvagge puledre marine e con briglie inzuppate,
Con puledri salmastri e con bufere nelle loro membra,
Tutti i cavalli della sua pesca miracolosa
Galoppano per verdi fattorie arcuate,

E trottano e galoppano con sopra i gabbiani
E con i fulmini nelle criniere.
Oh Roma e Sodoma Domani e Londra
La marea della terra è selciata di città,

E i campanili penetrano la nuvola sulla spalla di lei
E le strade che il pescatore sarchiava
Quando la carne dalle lunghe gambe era un vento di fiamme
E i suoi lombi una vampa cacciatrice

Si svolgono dai viali dei suoi capelli
E tremende lo portano vivo alla casa,
Portano a casa il prodigo al suo terrore,
Al furioso macello dell'amore.

In fondo, in fondo, in fondo, sotto la terra,
Sotto i villaggi galleggianti,
Incatenata dalla luna e fasciata dall'acqua
Vortica la metropoli dei pesci,

Più nulla rimane del mare se non il suono,
Sotto la terra il clamoroso mare cammina,
Sui catafalchi dei frutteti decede il battello
E l'esca annega fra i covoni,

Terra, terra, terra, nulla rimane
Dello scorrente, famoso mare, se non la sua favella,
E nelle sue sette tombe ciarliere
Fra i pavimenti d'una chiesa l'àncora si tuffa.

Addio, buona fortuna, squillarono il sole e la luna
Al pescatore smarrito in terra ferma.
Egli sta solo alla porta della sua dimora,
E tiene in mano il suo cuore dalle lunghe membra.

Nel sonno campestre

I.
Mai e poi mai, figlia mia che cavalchi in lungo e in largo
Nella terra delle fiabe del focolare, e per incanto addormentata,
Devi temere o credere che il lupo con un cappuccio bianco-agnello,
Saltelloni e belando rozzo e allegro balzerà, o cara o cara,
Da una tana nel mucchio di foglie nell'anno zuppo di rugiada,
Per mangiare il tuo cuore nella casa nel bosco di rose.

Dormi, buona, ora e sempre, lenta e profonda, rara e savia
Nell'incanto, mia bimba errante la notte nella rosea contea
Delle favole agresti: nessun guardiano d'oche o di maiali
Si muterà in un re da cortile o villaggio di fuoco
O in principe di ghiaccio per adescare dal tuo fianco
Il cuore di miele prima dell'alba in un boschetto
Di ragazzi e di paperi in cerchio, lancia e ustione,

Né l'innocente giacerà nella valletta grufolante
Sedotta e bucata, e straziata fra le piume piangerà
La mia cavallerizza. Dalla schiuma della strega sulla scopa
Ti protegge la felce e il fiore del sonno campestre
E il baluardo della verde foresta. Riposa calma e profonda,
Tranquilla e immune dai mantici della nidiata fra i giunchi.
Mai, bimba mia, finché la severa campana a sonno rintocchi,

Devi temere o credere che rustica ombra o incantesimo
Possa erpicare e nevicare il sangue mentre cavalchi qui
E là, perché chi può infestare le grondaie del monte
Piene di corvi o agguattarsi nel borro lunare se non il lume
Della luna che limpido echeggia dal pozzo stellato?
Sfiora un angelo il colle. Dalla cella d'un santo
L'uccello notturno, attraverso conventi e cupole di foglie,

Canta laudi al suo albero dal petto di pettirosso, tre Marie
Nei raggi. *Sanctum sanctorum* l'occhio animale del bosco,
Nella pioggia che sgrana il suo rosario, e il più austero fantasma,
Il gufo ai suoi rintocchi. Volpe e boscaglia
S'inginocchiano al sangue. Ora i racconti lodano
La stella sorta al pascolo e per tutta la notte le favole brucano
Sopra la sacra mensa dell'erba prosternata.

Temi su tutto e sempre non il lupo nel suo belante cappuccio
Né il principe zannuto nell'infoiata fattoria, nel brago
E in cotenna d'amore, ma il Ladro mite come la rugiada.
Santa è la campagna. Oh dimora in quel luogo gentile,

Conosci il verde bene, sotto la luna della rotante preghiera
Nel bosco di rose, la salmodia e il fiore ti proteggano,
E lieta nella grazia possa tu riposare. Dormi incantata in pace

Nell'umile casa nel boschetto dell'agile scoiattolo,
Sotto mussola e paglia e stella: custodita e benedetta,
Anche se insegui gli alti quattro venti, contro l'ombra
Che bagna e il ruggente al saliscendi, serena
Nei tuoi voti. Pure, sii certa, dal ragnateluto, beccuto buio
E dai rami artiglianti, verrà il Ladro e una via cercherà
Furtiva e sicura; e furtivo come neve, mite come rugiada

Fiorita sul rovo, questa notte ed ogni vasta notte,
Finché l'austera campana non parlerà nella torre
E suoni a sonno sulle stalle delle fiabe del focolare
Il mio amore perduto; e l'anima camminerà
Sulle acque tosate. Questa notte e ogni notte
Dalla stella cadente che nascesti, sempre e sempre
Una via troverà, come la neve cade, come cade la pioggia,

E grandina sul vello, come la nebbia della valle
Cavalca per le stalle d'orofieno, come cade la rugiada
Sulla polvere dei meli mulinata dal vento e sulle isole
Pestate delle foglie mattutine, come cade la stella,
E il seme alato della mela scivola e cade, E fiorisce
Nella ferita spalancata al nostro fianco, come il mondo
Precipita, muto come il ciclone del silenzio.

II.

Notte e la renna sulle nubi sorvolanti i pagliai
E le ali del gran Rokh infiocchettate per la fiera!
Saga rimbalzante della preghiera! E alte, lassù,
Sopra i venti dal tallone di lepre, le gracchianti
Cornacchie volate dai loro neri bethel, i sacri libri
D'uccelli! Fra galli di fiamma la rossa volpe ardente!

Notte e vena d'uccelli nel polso alato del bosco!
Battito pastorale del sangue attraverso le foglie
Merlettate! Ruscello sgorgante dai neri polsi di prete
Del boschetto e dalle maniche di brina
Del racconto e del chiasso dell'usignolo! Anima esalata
Della valletta lacerata al canto e colle di cipressi

Vestito di cotta! Racconto e chiasso nel cortile scremato
Della pioggia burrolattea nel secchio! Sermone
Del sangue! Vena sonora d'uccello! Saga rimbalzante dal tritone
Al serafino! Cornacchie evangeliche!
Narrate tutti, stanotte, di lui che viene
Rosso come la volpe e furtivo come il vento calcagnuto.

Luminaria di musica! Gabbiano dal nero dorso cullato dall' onda
Con la sabbia negli occhi! E il puledro caracolla
Per l'erboso lago agitato, silenzioso, con zoccoli di luna,
Nelle veglie del vento. Musica degli elementi,
Quale miracolo crei! Terra, aria, acqua, fuoco,
nel bianco atto entrano cantando la mia amata dormiente

Dai capelli orofieno e dall'azzurro squarcio degli occhi,
Nella casa aureolata, nella sua rarità e alto collinoso cavalcare,
Custodita e benedetta e vera e così quietamente riposante
Che il cielo potrebbe incrociare i suoi pianeti,
E la campana piangere, la notte raccogliere i suoi occhi,
Il Ladro cadere sui morti come volente o nolente rugiada

Se non fosse il girare della terra nel suo santo cuore!
Lento, furtivo, ascoltando la ferita nel suo fianco
Girare intorno al sole, egli verrà al mio amore
Come la neve destinata, e in verità egli scorre
Verso il lido dei fiori come il mare obbediente della rugiada,
E di sicuro veleggia come le nuvole dalla forma di nave.

Oh destinato egli viene non a rubarle la ferita della
Marea dissoluta, né l'alto cavalcare, né gli occhi
O i capelli incendiati, ma la sua fede che ogni vasta notte
E la saga della preghiera verrà a rubare la sua fede
Che in quest' ultima notte per il suo empio amore
La lascerà a vegliare nel sole senza legge

Nuda e abbandonata a rattristarsi che egli non verrà.
Sempre e sempre con tutti i tuoi voti credi e temi
Mia diletta stanotte egli viene e notte senza fine, mia diletta,
Fin da quando nascesti: E tu dovrai svegliare dal sonno
campestre, in questa aurora e ad ogni prima aurora,
La tua fede immortale come il grido del regolato sole.

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