

EDITH SÖDERGRAN

FINLAND (1892–1923)

LANGUAGE: SWEDISH

STJÄRNORNA

När natten kommer
står jag på trappan och lyssnar,
stjärnorna svärma i trädgården
och jag står i mörkret.
Hör, en stjärna föll med en klang!
Gå icke ut i gräset med bara fötter;
min trädgård är full av skärvor.



Edith Södergran is considered one of the greatest Swedish-language poets of all time. Her parents were from a Swedish-speaking community in southeast Finland. Born in Russia, Södergran grew up speaking a total of seven languages but wrote her poetry in Swedish. As a teenager, she contracted tuberculosis and spent many years in and out of treatment centers. She continued to write despite her illness and revolution that erupted in violence throughout Russia. She published four books of poetry before dying of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-one.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY		
WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
är (v.)	from the verb <i>vara</i> , meaning "to be" or "to exist"	is
av (prep.)	indicates relation or origin	with, of
bara fötter (adj.)	wearing no socks or shoes	barefoot, shoeless, with bare feet
en (art.)	used to distinguish one from many	a, an, one, this
föll (v.)	past tense of the verb <i>falla</i> , meaning "to fall"	fell, dropped, crashed, tumbled, descended
full (adj.)	containing or holding as much as possible	full, jammed, chock-full, packed, bursting, covered
gå (v.)	to move from one place to another	go, move, pass
gräset (n.)	weed that grows in yards	grass, turf, lawn
hör (imperative)	used to get somebody's attention	listen, hark, mark
i (prep.)	describing a location or direction	in, at, on
icke (adv.)	negative	not, no, do not
jag (pron.)	referring to oneself	I
klang (n.)	a loud sound produced by one thing hitting another	bang, clang, boom, thump, thwack, crash
kommer (v.)	from the verb <i>komma</i> , meaning "to move" or "to travel toward"	comes, appears, arrives, approaches, rolls in, materializes, falls
lyssnar (v.)	from the verb <i>lyssna</i> , meaning "to pay attention to sounds"	listen, hear, concentrate, tune in, lend an ear, hearken
med (prep.)	word showing possession or describing how something is done	with, by
min (adj.)	belonging to the speaker	my
mörkret (n.)	partial or total absence of light	the dark, darkness, gloom, obscurity, blackness, dusk, shadow

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
när (conj.)	at or during the time that	when, just as
natten (n.)	the time of day when it's dark	nighttime, night, darkness, nightfall
och (conj.)	used to connect words or actions	and, plus
på (conj.)	physically above and supported by something	on, on top of, atop, upon
skärvor (n.)	fragments from an object	splinters, shards, fragments, pieces, debris
står (v.)	from verb <i>stå</i> , meaning "to be," "to stand," "to go," or "to sit"	am, stand, go, sit
stjärna (n.)	orb of gas that glows in the night sky	star
stjärnorna (n.)	orbs of gas that glow in the night sky	stars
svärma (v.)	from the verb <i>svärma</i> , meaning "to move somewhere in large numbers"	swarm, surge, stream, crowd, herd
trädgård (n.)	land next to a house that usually has grass and plants	garden, backyard, yard
trädgården (art. + n.)	the land next to a house that usually has grass and plants	the garden, the backyard, the yard
trappen (art. + n.)	the parts connecting one floor of a building to another	the steps, the stairs, the staircase, the flight of stairs
ut (adv.)	directed outward or away	out, forth

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

PHRASE BY PHRASE

STJÄRNORNA _____

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står jag på trappan och lyssnar, _____

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och jag står i mörkret. _____

Hör, en stjärna föll med en klang! _____

Gå icke ut i gräset med bara fötter; _____

min trädgård är full av skärvor. _____

REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: _____

Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

What are the best parts of this translation, and why do you think they are good?

What elements of the original poem did you lose in the translation? What did you manage to keep?

Did you achieve something new with your translation, and if so, does it make sense in the poem or not?
