

# GËZIM HAJDARI

ALBANIA (1957 –)

LANGUAGE: ITALIAN

POETIC FORM: FREE VERSE

## UNTITLED

Abbiamo atteso a lungo per parlare,  
ora non sappiamo dire nulla  
sotto i nuovi alberi,  
accanto ai vecchi sassi.  
Ci spingono al confine di un altro esilio,  
uomini e bestie stretti l'uno all'altro.  
Che ne sarà delle nostre ceneri  
lontano dalla prima patria?  
Perderanno le voci  
e i nostri nomi,  
o forse ricorderemo ovunque il canto del merlo  
nei sentieri pieni di spine secche di melograni  
e il lutto del mare  
dall'altra costa.



Gëzim Hajdari writes poetry in Albanian and Italian. He had to flee Albania after he criticized its communist government. He immigrated to Italy. For many years he lived alone in an abandoned building near Rome. He writes about exile, rebellion, and isolation. He explains: "My true homeland is my language and my body. We must be perennial travelers."\*

\*From an interview with Warscapes, 23 May 2013, <http://warscapes.com/conversations/ode-exile>.

| TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY          |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| WORD                           | DEFINITION  | POSSIBLE SYNONYMS                                 |
| a lungo (adv.)                 | describing a lengthy period of time                                   | for a long time, for ages, for years              |
| abbiamo atteso<br>(pron. + v.) | from the verb <i>attendere</i> , meaning to look forward to something | we have waited, we have been waiting              |
| accanto ai (prep.)             | not far away from   | near the, close to the, beside the                |
| al confine di (prep. + n.)     | toward the boundary of a space  | to the edge of, to the limit of, to the border of |
| alberi (n.)                    | plants with leaves and wooden trunks                                  | trees, branches, canopy                           |
| bestie (n.)                    | living beings that are not human                                      | animals, beasts, brutes, creatures                |
| canto (n.)                     | a musical sound   | song, singing, tune, chirp                        |
| ceneri (n.)                    | whatever is left of the body after it dies                            | ashes, remains                                    |
| che ne sarà delle<br>(phrase)  | a phrase asking about the future of something or someone              | what will happen to, what will become of          |
| ci spingono (pron. + v.)       | from the verb <i>spingere</i> , meaning to exert pressure on          | they push us, they force us, we are pushed        |
| costa (n.)                     | the land next to a body of water                                      | coast, shore                                      |
| dall'altra (prep. + adj.)      | referring to a location across from                                   | from the other, from the opposite                 |
| del (prep.)                    | belonging to  | of, of the  |
| di (prep.)                     | belonging to  | of, of the  |
| dire (v.)                      | to pronounce words  | say, utter, speak, express                        |
| e (conj.)                      | in addition to  | and, along with                                   |
| esilio (n.)                    | forced absence from one's native country or home                      | exile, eviction, displacement, migration          |
| forse (adv.)                   | used to express doubt   | maybe, perhaps, possibly                          |

| WORD                      | DEFINITION  | POSSIBLE SYNONYMS   |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| i (art.)                  | denoting things already mentioned or assumed to be common knowledge     | the   |
| il (art.)                 | denoting something already mentioned or assumed to be common knowledge  | the   |
| l'uno all'altro (phrase)  | very close to one another   | next to each other, side by side, one on top of the other |
| le (art.)                 | denoting things already mentioned or assumed to be common knowledge     | the, their  |
| lontano dalla (adv.)      | at a great distance from  | far from, removed from, a long way from                   |
| lutto (n.)                | great sadness   | mourning, grief, sorrow                                   |
| mare (n.)                 | a large body of salt water, or the area near it                         | sea, ocean, seaside, beach                                |
| melograni (n.)            | red fruits or their plants  | pomegranates, pomegranate trees                           |
| merlo (n.)                | an animal with black feathers and wings                                 | blackbird   |
| nei (prep.)               | located upon or within something  | on the, along the   |
| non sappiamo (pron. + v.) | from the negative of the verb <i>sapere</i> , meaning to have knowledge | we don't know how to, we are unable to, we cannot         |
| nomi (n.)                 | words that specify people   | names, identities   |
| nostre (adj.)             | belonging to the speaker and others                                     | our, of ours  |
| nostri (adj.)             | belonging to the speaker and others                                     | our, of ours  |
| nulla (n.)                | nothing   | anything, anything at all, a thing                        |
| nuovi (adj.)              | unlike what someone has seen or known in the past                       | unfamiliar, different, strange, new                       |
| o (conj.)                 | expressing opposition   | or, otherwise, or else                                    |
| ora (adv.)                | at the current moment in time   | now, at this point, at present                            |
| ovunque (adv.)            | in all places   | everywhere, all over, all around                          |
| patria (n.)               | a person's native country   | nation, homeland, fatherland                              |

| WORD                    | DEFINITION   | POSSIBLE SYNONYMS                                   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| per parlare (v.)        | to utter words   | to speak, to talk                                   |
| perderanno (pron. + v.) | from the verb <i>perdere</i> , meaning to be deprived of something | they will lose, they will forget, they will give up |
| pieni di (adj.)         | containing   | full of, filled with, bursting with                 |
| prima (adj.)            | the earliest of a sequence   | first, initial, original, true                      |
| ricorderemo (v.)        | from the verb <i>ricordare</i> , meaning to keep in one's memory   | we will remember, we will recall                    |
| sassi (n.)              | small pieces of hard mineral                                       | rocks, stones, pebbles                              |
| secche (adj.)           | not wet or moist   | dry, barren, thirsty, dusty                         |
| sentieri (n.)           | places to walk   | paths, trails, roads                                |
| sotto (prep.)           | physically below something else                                    | under, underneath, beneath                          |
| spine (n.)              | the prickly parts of a plant                                       | thorns, brambles, thistles                          |
| stretti (adj.)          | forced close together  | packed, crowded, stuffed, cramped                   |
| un altro (adj.)         | referring to an additional thing                                   | another, further, one more                          |
| uomini (n.)             | human beings   | men, people, humans                                 |
| vecchi (adj.)           | having existed for a long time                                     | old, ancient, age-old                               |
| voci (n.)               | sounds produced by throats and mouths to express meaning           | voices, words                                       |

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PHRASE BY PHRASE

UNTITLED \_\_\_\_\_

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sotto i nuovi alberi, \_\_\_\_\_

accanto ai vecchi sassi. \_\_\_\_\_

Ci spingono al confine di un altro esilio, \_\_\_\_\_

uomini e bestie stretti l'uno all'altro. \_\_\_\_\_

Che ne sarà delle nostre ceneri, \_\_\_\_\_

lontano dalla prima patria? \_\_\_\_\_

Perderanno le voci, \_\_\_\_\_

e i nostri nomi, \_\_\_\_\_

o forse ricorderemo ovunque il canto del merlo \_\_\_\_\_

nei sentieri pieni di spine secche di melograni \_\_\_\_\_

e il lutto del mare, \_\_\_\_\_

dall'altra costa. \_\_\_\_\_



## REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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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?

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

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

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