

# RIBKA SIBHATU

ERITREA (1962–)

LANGUAGE: ITALIAN

## NONNA LUNA

Come una volta,  
nonna Luna arriva  
dalla finestra carica  
di storie e memorie.

Coraggio figliola,  
non aver paura,  
ti farò compagnia  
ovunque tu sia!

Nonna Luna  
racconta e canta  
poesie che fanno sentire  
a casa nella terra straniera.



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Born in Asmara, Eritrea, Ribka Sibhatu has written poetry, essays, translations, and fairy tales in both Tigrinya and Italian. In 1979 Sibhatu was falsely accused of opposing Eritrea's government and unjustly imprisoned. After a year in prison, she fled her native country, traveling first to Ethiopia, then France, and finally settling in Rome, Italy, where she has lived ever since.

TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY		
WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
a casa (phrase)	a sense of belonging in one's environment	at home, at ease, at rest
arriva (v.)	from the verb <i>arrivare</i> —to reach a destination	arrives, here comes, enters, turns up, appears, visits
aver paura (phrase)	literally means “have fear”; from the verb <i>avere</i> —to contain—and the word <i>paura</i> —fear	be afraid, be scared, be frightened, be worried, be upset, worry, fear, fret
canta (v.)	from the verb <i>cantare</i> —to make musical sounds with the voice	sings, croons, serenades, hums, chants, warbles
carica (adj.)	containing or holding as much or as many as possible	full, loaded, carrying, brimming, flooded, overflowing, laden
che (conj.)	used to introduce a new clause	which, that
come (adv.)	having the same characteristics as; similar to	like, as, similar to, just like
coraggio (n.)	strength in the face of pain or grief; the ability to do something that frightens one	courage, bravery, be brave, cheer up
dalla (prep. + art.)	indicating the direction of an object traveling through space	from the, through the
di (prep.)	indicating the material or substance making up something	of, with
e (conj.)	in addition to	and, as well as, plus
fanno (v.)	from the verb <i>fare</i> —to make	makes, causes
farò compagnia (phrase)	from the phrase <i>fare compagnia</i> —to go somewhere with someone as a companion or escort	I will keep company, I will accompany, I will be with, I will follow, I will look after, I will come along with
figliola (n.)	a girl in relation to her parents; young girl	daughter, little one, child
finestra (n.)	an opening in the wall that is fitted with glass and allows people to see out	window, porthole, casement
luna (n.)	the natural satellite of the earth, visible mainly at night due to reflected light from the sun	moon

WORD	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
memorie (n.)	information or events remembered from the past	memories, remembrances, recollections, reflections, reminiscences, thoughts of the past
nella (prep. + art.)	enclosed or surrounded by something else	in the, in a
non (adv.)	used to form the negative	not, do not
nonna (n.)	the mother of one's father or mother	grandmother, grandma, granny, nana, gran
ovunque (adv.)	at, in, or to any place or point	everywhere, anywhere, wherever, no matter where
poesie (n.)	pieces of writing that are nearly always rhythmical, usually metaphorical, and written in verse	poems, rhymes, verses, sonnets
racconta (v.)	from the verb <i>raccontare</i> —to utter something to someone else	says, tells, recounts, relates, narrates, imparts, relates
sentire (v.)	to experience an emotion or sensation	feel, sense
sia (v.)	from the verb <i>essere</i> —to be or exist	are, may be, find yourself, go
storie (n.)	accounts of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment	stories, tales, narratives, accounts
straniera (adj.)	not known or recognized	strange, unfamiliar, unknown, new, foreign, alien, peculiar
terra (n.)	an area or division, especially part of a country or the world	land, country, nation, territory, region, area, domain
ti (dir. pron.)	the person being spoken to	you, to you
tu (pron.)	the person being spoken to	you
una volta (expression)	a phrase that often introduces a story or fairy tale and means "at some time in the past"	once upon a time, in days gone by, in times past, in the old days, long ago

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

## PHRASE BY PHRASE

NONNA LUNA \_\_\_\_\_

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nonna Luna arriva \_\_\_\_\_

dalla finestra carica \_\_\_\_\_

di storie e memorie. \_\_\_\_\_

Coraggio figliola, \_\_\_\_\_

non aver paura, \_\_\_\_\_

ti farò compagnia \_\_\_\_\_

ovunque tu sia! \_\_\_\_\_

Nonna Luna \_\_\_\_\_

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poesie che fanno sentire \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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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