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Adaption as Self-Representation: The Anthology of Influences in Eavan Boland's *The War Horse*, *Collected Poems* and *New Collected Poems*

Abstract. In The War Horse, Eavan Boland began to hone the distinctive perspective which would define her place in the history of Irish letters. The book is divided into three sections, the second of which consists entirely of translations. Turning to these, both Boland's choice of poems to translate and practice as a translator are examined. In three cases, Boland so significantly alters the original poems that the term adaptation or transcreation is more precise. At a moment when the poet sought to break with the mainline of Irish poetic tradition, both the adapted and translated works can be viewed as integral to The War Horse, providing a foundation for Boland's subsequent poetic evolution. In a subsequent version of Boland's Collected Poems, the volume is reorganized so as to somewhat de-emphasize these pieces, yet two additional translations inserted in Against Love Poetry continue to highlight key facets of Boland's mature poetic stance.

Keywords: Eavan Boland, *The War Horse,* translations, self-representation, Irish poetry

1. Adaptations in Boland's *(New) Collected Poems*: affinities, positioning and self-presentation

Translations have always been the primary means whereby native literary traditions are enriched by innovations in the wider world, yet it may be argued that the specific historical circumstances of Irish literature render the act of the translation particularly significant. By the time of the Irish Literary Revival, due to a history of English colonization, the Irish language had been reduced to "the vernacular of a minority of the rural poor," meaning that any effective reconnection of Anglo-Irish speakers with the island's past tradition would imply a massive campaign of

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Irish education and/or such acts of translation as help to facilitate a "dual tradition" (Kinsella 4). Internally, translations allowed those seeking to resurrect national consciousness with a means of transmitting the Irish canon to those who no longer spoke it; in terms of transcending the dominant (post)colonial linguistic context of British English, translation also allowed for the forging of connections with literary trends from continental Europe. This might be through an appeal to the classical canon (as in the case of William Butler Yeats' and Seamus Heaney's adaptations of Greek plays); alternatively, it might involve contemporary engagement with more modern European languages.

As did many other 20th century Irish poets, Eavan Boland delved into translations, several of which have been the deserving object of critical attention. The present paper does not aim to treat Boland's activities as a translator exhaustively, but limits its scope to a specific set of translations: namely, those which Boland interspersed among her own works in her *Collected Poems* (1995) and *New Collected Poems* (2005). This comprises eight pieces from four languages (Irish, Latin, German and Russian). Importantly, in the majority of cases these differ significantly enough from the originals that the term adaptation becomes more suitable than that of translation. One question raised is why Boland includes specifically these poems, for, while she may well have viewed these pieces as her best translations, this is by no means certain. The perspective adopted herein is one germane when considering *any* volume of a writer's collected works: namely, that of a poet's purposeful act of self-representation.

If translations from Irish had allowed previous generations of Irish readers and writers in English to nevertheless ground themselves in their native tradition, the tactic remains fundamentally viable in Boland's first two books, *New Territory* (1967) and *The War Horse* (1975). By the time of the latter volume, however, Boland had undergone a formative crisis of conscience as regards poetic tradition — particularly that of Ireland — and was seeking to break with the Irish literary mainstream. In *The War Horse*, first and foremost, an Irish translation is used to position herself and to anticipate this rupture. The adaptions of Latin, German and Russian poems included therein, on the other hand, allow the young poet to establish her wider, cosmopolitan credentials. In light of this, it may also be significant that, years later, a more confident and celebrated Boland de-centers the translated and adapted poems in *The War Horse* in her *New Collected Poems*, yet also includes two additional adaptations (*from Against Love Poetry*).

2. *New Territory* and *The War Horse*: anchoring in tradition

A leitmotif of Boland's interviews and poetic memoirs are her complicated relations with poetic tradition; in her early years, the Irish poetic heritage was often experienced either as an encumbrance or as a lack. As an ambassador's daughter, Boland had largely grown up in London and New York; she had no knowledge of Gaelic Irish (Boland, *Object Lessons* 55). Besides the distance resulting from expatriation, she would also become increasingly disconcerted by patriarchal and nationalist proclivities of Irish bardic heritage. This notwithstanding, in her poetic memoirs she hammers home her pressing desire that her own poems would come to be recognized as

specifically "Irish poems" (*Object Lessons* 193). Boland's attempt to position herself in Irish tradition is salient in *New Territory*, which is peppered with references to Yeats, allusions to Irish myths and dedications to her emerging Irish peers. The poems here are competent, and the budding poet was apparently much celebrated (in reminiscences of these years, her university classmate and fellow-poet Derek Mahon opined that Boland had "only to look at a door and it flew open" (24)). In light of Boland's subsequent career, however, it can be perplexing to revisit a collection in which "the only poem […] written from an obviously feminine point of view is [from the perspective of Athena] […] the role model of choice for a woman-poet absorbed into the patriarchy" (O'Conner).

The commonplace of later Boland criticism that in *New Territory* one encounters a poet who had not yet found her own voice is corroborated by Boland herself, who, both in interviews and her poetic memoirs, characterizes the years leading up to *The War Horse* in terms of self-doubt and aesthetic crisis. *New Territory* only narrowly escapes being juvenilia, yet, as with many a precocious but inchoate debut, it serves as an invaluable benchmark for appreciating the poet's subsequent evolution. For the purposes of this analysis, what one should remember is that Boland's lived connection to Ireland had been that of expatriation, and she cogently observes how the breach occasioned by a childhood and adolescence spent abroad had left her bereft of "[a] sense of ownership [of the Irish lyric], [with] no automatic feeling of access" (*Object Lessons* 104). Predictably, her initial attempt to position herself within that tradition is rather conventional, meaning that the decision to adapt "After the Irish of Egan O'Rahilly" is only surprising in light of Boland's later aesthetic stance. O'Rahily (1670-1726) was a poet intimately associated with the origins of the aisling genre, whereby Ireland came to be depicted as a dispossessed female personification. O'Conner does discern in Boland's translation a sense of "cool control in place of the angry lament of the original, male, poet" (1995) yet, if she has tempered the original, she has not repudiated its essential lament for a defeated Gaelic Ireland. Tellingly, Boland therefore first attempts a tried-and-true ingress into Irish tradition, situating in the straightforwardly nationalist and bardic tradition whereby "[the poet's] heart ails / That every hawk and royal hawk is lost". While the notion of a "birthright […] dispersed" (*Collected Poems* 5) likely reverberated with Boland's own feelings of uprootedness, one here encounters her seeking to connect to Ireland via a poet who had popularized the very image of an objectified female Ireland against which her later work was to sustain an articulate invective.

Against the foil of *New Territory*, Boland's sophomore effort, *The War Horse*, can therefore be viewed under the auspices of a new commencement. Jody Allen-Randolph deems *The War Horse* Boland's "transitional volume" ("Private Worlds" 47); indeed, the polemic Boland who critically subverts the bard/muse relation, the elegiac Boland politically committed to depicting history's outsiders, and the lyric Boland of domesticity and suburbia - in short, the Boland her readers will readily recognize - is first field-tested here. That her new poetic stance is deployed with such surety particularly surprises when one bears in mind Boland's reminiscences of these years elsewhere. During what were "[i]n some ways the most formative years of all" she describes the

feeling of "[s]truggling almost every evening to write someone else's poem" (Allen-Randolph "An Interview" 120, 119) and oscillating between "times when [she] felt like a poet, and times when [she] did not" (Boland, *Object Lessons* 106). What sounds redolent of imposter syndrome can be surmised a result of Boland's having outgrown her previous aesthetic, but not yet having seized upon how to transcend it. She had, however, become certain that her route of ingress into Irish poetry would have to be "oblique" and subversive (*Object Lessons* 127, 150). As a poet undergoing a crisis of confidence, Boland would presumably have anticipated at least a modicum of backlash for a new, iconoclastic direction in which she perceived at least a dearth of *Irish* precedents. The dilemma which presents itself is obvious: how does one ground one's poetic authority within the very line of tradition which one has determined to critique and subvert?

Viewed in light of the above considerations, the inclusion of five translations in the middle section of *The War Horse* is by no means arbitrary filler, but rather may be construed as an act of deliberate cunning, whereby Boland gets her own back. This maneuver remains evident in the 1995 *Collected Poems*, where the tripartite organization of *The War Horse* is retained. Both its first and third sections are composed of original poems (political poems and elegiac rumination upon contemporary and historical victims predominate in the first section, whereas scenes from suburbia and domesticity are grouped together in the third). Sandwiched between these are five translations which, like the piece "After the Irish of Egan O'Rahilly", may be coherently considered as an exercise in positioning. In contrast to *New Territory*, however, in *The War Horse* the works translated and adapted are both more various and also more intriguing.

Given her desire for an Irish pedigree, yet her increased uneasiness about the "Irish nation as an existing construct in Irish poetry" (*Object Lessons* 127), Boland's choice for an Irish translation is instructive. Although the patriarchal, male and bardic tradition is henceforth to be subverted in her poetry, the poet is still seeking to ground herself and her work as seminally Irish. In this case, she deftly evades both the nationalist corpus and the oral bardic tradition by invoking an anterior, yet preeminently canonical, text: namely, "Pangur Bán", the eight verses of which develop an extended conceit between the scholarly research of a 9th-century monk and his pet cat's hunting. Instead of the "male and bardic" O'Rahilly, one finds a rapport with an anonymous scribe penning marginal verses. Such monastic isolation resonates with Boland's own "Ode to Suburbia", wherein her cooped-up poet-housewife persona similarly empathizes with a housecat: "The same lion who tore stripes / Once off zebras" but "may / On a red letter day / Catch a mouse". Boland's own red-letter days were increasingly to yield the breakthrough whereby an ostensibly mundane suburbia is poetically metamorphosed: "changed, schooled / Forever by [her] skill, [her] compromises" (*Collected Poems* 44-45). Deliberate or fortuitous, the coincidence lends coherence to *The War Horse*.

Whereas "Pangur Bán" will be shunted to a place of precedence as the first translation in the *New Collected Poems*, in the earlier *Collected Poems*, Boland opens section two by anchoring in the classical world through her version of Horace's ode "O Fons Bandusiae." In a mode analogous to her Irish choice of O'Rahilly or "From the Irish of Pangur Ban", this is a preeminently canonical

choice regarding the wider ambit of Western literature. The immediate impression upon encountering Horace in *The War Horse* is that of a central "cool classicism", and Mary O'Conner duly discerns Boland's need for "an anchor in a lyrically imagined Pax Romana of the establishment" (1999). This is perceptive, but one also presumes that considerably more is in play. Far from being a doughty, 'tried and true' maneuver, in Boland's case Latin poetry is imbued with deeply personal, autobiographical relevance. As is related in the fourth chapter of *Object Lessons*, as a schoolgirl Boland had initially been compelled to learn Latin, but, at a certain moment, what had formerly been rote translation tasks evolved into an empowering experience of control, as well as a formative intuition of "a language which was also a system" (85):

> [O]ne day in my last year[…] I began to understand something. It was something about the economy of it all: the way the ablative absolute gathered and compressed time. One day, again figuratively, it was a burdensome piece of grammar. The next, with hardly any warning, it was a messenger with quick heels and a bright face. […] I began to respect, however grudgingly, the systems of a language which could make such constructs that, although I had no such words for it, they stood against the disorders of love or history. (*Object Lessons* 74-75)

This epiphany, significantly, is presented as having occurred at a moment when the budding author had only theretofore attempted "halting [original] poems and unfinished sentences". Via translation exercises, the act of linguistic expression, which had theretofore been experienced in terms of the exposure and vulnerability of a teenager lacking a native "idiom" and "place", suddenly becomes re-framable under the auspices of empowerment, possession and authority. Boland had not yet come into her own as a poet, but her memoir clearly conveys an intuition of control resulting from her handling and recomposition of Latin texts. Despite the insecurity of her first poetic forays, via translations from "a dead language, which had never been heard on this island, [and] had never been written for women", Boland had gained an intuition of the "protection" of "tak[ing] the unreason of one language and mak[ing] it safe in the grammar of another" (*Object Lessons* 77, 84-85).

This idea of "mak[ing] it safe" in connection with translation may be apprehended in several ways. On the one hand, there is the straightforward act of curation: the translator carries the sense or gist of the original across the counterintuitive syntax of another language. As will be seen, however, Boland's versions often in more significant ways temper the unreason of the original works. O'Conner suggests Boland had moderated O'Rahily's "angry lament" in *New Territory* (1999), and similar impulses can be seen in Boland's treatment of works by Nelly Sachs and Vladimir Mayakovsky. As regards her translation practice by the time of *The War Horse*, Boland unfailingly adopts the approach of a tight form, adapting the source texts into her own poetic idiom. Depending on the poem she adapts, said transposition may be salient or subtle. In the case of "From the Irish of Pan Ban", the term translation remains credible: the eight stanzas of the Irish text are retained, as is the use of a rhyme scheme. In Horace's case, the four unrhymed quatrains

of the original are recomposed into four stanzas of two rhyming tercets, where Boland's meter is shorted to an (approximate) tetrameter, as can be seen on the example of Boland's final stanza:

> With every fountain, every spring
> Of legend, I will set you down
> In praise and immortal spate:
> These waters which drop gossiping
> To ground, this wet surrounding stone
> And this green oak I celebrate. (*Collected Poems* 37)

The choice of "spate" both allows for the final rhyme (and slant rhyme with the first and fourth lines of the preceding stanza) and also slightly subverts the poet's ability to immortalize the spring, yet by and large, both in terms of register and content, Boland's translation does not greatly depart from the spirit of Horace's original.

In the remaining three translations from *The War Horse*, however, the impulse to couch "unreason […] in the grammar of another" is conspicuous, to the point that adaption is a far more apt term than translation. In the case of twentieth century poems by Sachs and Mayakovsky, Boland without fail renders abrupt free verse into her own regular stanzas of the period, complete with at least slant rhyme. Terrence Brown observed of the book's middle section that one sees Boland "discovering possible identities in translations and versions of other poets' work" (37), yet his claim is only anachronistically tenable (that is, presuming one knows Boland will subsequently adopt a curt, aggressive line for 1980's *In Her Own Image*). Here, however, Boland suffuses the adaptions with her style, rather than trying on that of the originals. The foreign language poems are normalized, making her versions more rightly transcreations than translations. As an illustration, one need only compare one stanza from Sachs' "Chor der Schatten" with Boland's version:

> Wir schatten, o wir Schatten!
> Schatten von Henkern
> Geheftet am Staube eurer Untaten-
> Schatten von Opfern
> Zeichnend das Drama eures Blutes an eine Wand. (Sachs 99)

The rhyme between "Henkern" and "Opfern" is an exception rather than the rule, for end rhyme does not reoccur elsewhere in Sachs' original. Boland's version not only makes consistent use of end rhyme, but tends to favor perfect rhyme:

> Puppets we are, strung by a puppet master.
> He knows the theatre of the absurd. He understands

> Murder too well. Outrage. Grief. Disaster.
> He puts the show on in hell. By his permission
> We are moths fired and turned on his obsession.
> And his hands […] (*Collected Poems* 38)

In terms of sense and lexicon, Boland has given herself a free hand here. Such new (if conceptually cognate) elements as "theatre of the absurd", "outrage", "grief" and "disaster" have been introduced—a poetic license which also allows for the extension of Sachs' squat lines so as to approximate Boland's longer verses. Broadly considered, what ensues in a reconstitution of the traumatized, fragile syntax of Sachs' Holocaust survivor: thereby "protect[ed]", one ventures to say, in Boland's own "grammar".

Boland includes two Mayakovsky poems, "The Atlantic Ocean" and "Conversation with an Inspector of Taxes", wherein the potential for deformation implicit in the act of translation is even more pronounced. Whereas her adaptations of Sachs involve expansion, her adaptations of Mayakovsky use compression; in both cases, form is conscientiously imposed upon chaos. When repackaging "Атлантический океан" and "Разговор с фининспектором о поэзии", Mayakovsky's sprawling, Futurist free verse is shunted into regular metrical and strophic units. In the case of the latter poem, "Conversation with an Inspector of Taxes [about Poetry]", Mayakovsky's original consists of over two hundred short, unrhymed lines. Boland's version, a very loose translation yet a *tour-de-force* transcreation, summarily compresses these into thirteen regularly rhymed sestets of a pentameter. What is more, Boland does not merely alter the form but also the substantial content of Mayakovsky, causing his revolutionary rhetoric to morph into a far more humble poetic credo which appears to be her own.

The autobiographical premise of the Mayakovsky's original is maintained: a poet faces a (tacit) Soviet bureaucrat who has demanded he account for five hundred rubles owed in back taxes. Mayakovsky's riposte commences with thinly veiled scorn, before segueing into a protracted, defiant peroration upon the role of the poet in the new communist paradigm. In terms of fidelity, salient features of the original (such as a protracted conceit between rhyming words and promissory notes and a regular recourse to fiscal lexicon) are studiously retained by Boland. On the other hand, as the original is edited down, such details as a quip about the Seine needing a hat, or expansive references to a Broadway and a Bagdad still in need of lyric expression, are dropped. A blink-and-you-miss-it radium metaphor, a scornful remark about rival unoriginal poetic eunuchs, etc., are similarly elided. That being said, the suppression of these ornamental flourishes pales in comparison to the tonal change introduced to Mayakovsky's conclusion, which is so great as to nearly render this not a translation but a rewrite.

If the rhyme of "spate" with "celebrate" ever-so-mildly deflates Horace, Boland's versions of Mayakovsky categorically puncture his bombast. His grandiloquent proclamation that "Слово поэта — / ваше воскресение, / ваше бессмертие, / гражданин канцелярист" (*Stikhotvoreniya* 86) ("The word of the poet / is your resurrection / and your immortality / dear inspector") has

become Boland's muted assertion that the poet's lines will "jerk [the inspector] back" years later to "[ink] [his] signature / on final demands". Any note of triumph is muted by Boland's (original) stipulation the effects of the poet's words will, for the present, be "nil": the poet now voices stoic, longsuffering resignation rather than fury, with Mayakovsky's indignation having become Boland's wry "irritat[ion]" (*Collected Poems* 42).

The translator's (self-)insertion becomes particularly clear from the poem's conclusion, at which point Boland's alterations to the original are so blatant as to be subversive. In Mayakovsky's conclusion, the poet openly defies the tax collector: "А если / вам кажется,/ что всего делов —/ это пользоваться / чужими /словесами, / то вот вам, / товарищи, / мое стило, / и можете / писать / сами!" (*Stikhotvoreniya* 87) ("And if / it seems to you, / that all there is to it—/ is to use / others' / words, / then here it is, / comrades, / my pen, / and you can / write / it yourself!" (Mayakovsky, "A Talk" 108)). In place of bravado, however, Boland accentuates a note of modesty before the weight of one's responsibility to the unexpressed:

> Finally I know myself indebted,
> Beyond anything I can return,
> To the fastness of my winter cradle.
> Because somehow I never celebrated
> Its bleak skies. To this day they remain
> Unsung and my tongue is idle. (*Collected Poems* 42-43)

Mayakovsky's poem ends in a peremptory demand; Boland's ends in an epiphany and self-recrimination. In addition to allowing herself a free hand in terms of style and tone, Boland has essentially penned a new conclusion to the poem, thereby adapting Mayakovsky's manifesto into her own.

That all being said, what is important in the context of this "transition volume" (Allen Randolph, "Private Worlds" 47) is not merely what Boland changes, but also that which she retains. Boland is deeply and transparently attracted to the original's conviction in a poet's mission. "Conversation with an Inspector of Taxes" therefore remains a poem about the power of poetry, albeit one considerably qualified in its scope and tempered by a humility foreign to Mayakovsky's Russian text. When the Russian author proclaims his eternal indebtedness to the yet-to-be-expressed, the effect is that of self-importance; in Boland's adaptation, the poet is instead staggered and weighed down by a sense of beholdenness. Her particular indebtedness would not be to an unexpressed Broadway or Bagdad, but to outsiders and victims, those sidelined "Outside History"; as such, it need not surprise that in Boland's case the deferred victory is pyrrhic, incomplete and maudlin. The poem will indeed survive the bureaucrat, but this will become apparent only "Years after [the poet has] died and lie[s] a pauper - / Crushed not by you bureaucrat / […] but by the vast claims on a poet / I could not meet" (*Collected Poems* 42).

3. New Collected Poems: rearrangement and representation

Recapitulating, a few conclusions might be drawn about Boland's employment of translations early in her career. Firstly, whether through a conventional Irish choice in *New Territory* or an equally canonical but more circumspect choice in *The War Horse*, a translation may be used to establish her Irish pedigree. In the case of Horace, the discipline of Latin translation has deep autobiographical significance and had influenced her development as a poet; at the same time, invoking Horace also grounds the poet's evolving poetics in the venerable context of classical tradition. The themes of the five translations range from (tempered) poetic immortalization (that of the spring in "O Fons Bandusaie" and that of the recalcitrant apparatchik in "Разговор с фининспектором о поэзии") to the bookish pursuit of seeking knowledge/verses ("From the Irish of Pangur Ban"). Other choices signal Boland's future signature themes ("Разговор с фининспектором о поэзии" and "Chor der Schatten"). Finally, notably, "Атлантический океан" introduces the notion of difficult traversals or passages; it is therefore potentially suggestive not only of Boland's poetic development, but also of the initial structure of *The War Horse* itself, whereby the translations might be conceived as a central 'bridge' from the political poems of part I to the suburban poems of part II.

A caveat which might be stressed is that the above analysis rests upon the thesis of Boland's need to anchor and represent herself at an early moment of personal and poetic crisis; in light of this, it bears mention that *The War Horse* is significantly restructured as reprinted in her *New Collected Poems*. While all the above translations are retained, the tripartite structure has been suppressed and, although the pieces remain situated roughly in the middle of the book, two of Boland's originals have been interspersed. "From the Irish of Pangur Ban" is now encountered first, followed by an original poem referencing Irish myth (which has been shunted from its prior location as one of "Three Songs for a Legend" in *New Territory*). Sachs' mournful "Chorus of Shadows", in turn, is now encountered last. The ultimate effect is to dampen the impression of a personal anthology of influences. Possibly Boland, with her poetic stance having long been vindicated, no longer needed to signpost her pedigree so overtly.

This seems credible. In the preface to the earlier *Collected Poems*, the poet explicitly referenced the "growing confusion and anxiety I felt", her "inability to be sure [she] would continue to be a poet" and her inability "[to connect her] womanhood […] with [her] life as a poet" (xi). Such biographical context was apparently thought useful for a correct reading of her works. Further corroborating this is the fact that her memoir *Object Lessons*, wherein Boland's struggle towards her own mature poetics is the primary leitmotif, appeared the same year. In contrast, the "Author's Note" to *New Collected Poems* is strikingly laconic, only giving a modest assurance that her entire body of work is now included, with "Nothing […] left out" (2009). In the later volume, Boland appears more content to let the poems stand on their own merits.

That being granted, translations still play a role in the *New Collected Poems*, although one might argue their presence is somewhat diluted. Via the most recent poetry book anthologized therein, *Against Love Poetry*, Boland includes two additional translations: one is again from

Horace, and the second from Russian literature. Encountering these near the volume's end, one may hazard the thought that Boland has come full circle. Notably, neither translation figures in the 2001 version of *Against Love Poetry*. What is interesting in the present context is to note is how these two translations reiterate and mirror the five pieces in the *War Horse*, but serve as less a covert manifesto and more a calm reiteration of Boland's poetic stance.

As with "Pangur Bán" and Mayakovsky, both of the two translations reference the figure of the poet. As a more pastoral and lyric poet, Horace seems to have resonated with Boland's own parti-pris for domesticity and suburbia; his *Odes* continue to represent her favored point of contact with antiquity. As regards form, Boland's translation of "II:XI" again does not divert greatly from the original, retaining Horace's four line stanzas; indeed, Boland arguably now holds even more closely to the Latin text, as she no longer imposes a rhyme scheme. As with "O Fons Bandusiae" decades earlier, the tone remains traditionally solemn and bucolic. Horace's passing reference to martial threats in the first stanza is toned down to Boland's mere injunction not to "fret" about the Cantabrians and Sychtians across the Adriatic Sea, as "life is short". Yet most telling here is the act of ventriloquism whereby Horace, in the concluding stanza, practically invites Boland (or at least her female poetic avatar) to join the pantheon:

> […] Tell her to hurry.
> Tell her to come, dressed Laconian-style, with
> Her ivory lyre and her hair neatly tied. (*New Collected Poems* 300)

While not quite an overt act of self-inscription, Boland, whose translation once sought refuge in Horace's venerated precedent, now appears to enjoy camaraderie with her favored Latin poet. Presuming the reader identifies Boland with Lyde, the lyre-carrying woman invited to drink with Quinctius and Horace, Boland has come to view the poet she translates as a peer.

The deliberateness of this choice of ode is further underscored by the immediately following piece, a translation of Pushkin's "Эхо" ("Echo"). As with Latin, Russian is hereby revisited, but the mature Boland now turns from the *avant garde* Mayakovsky to the preeminently canonical choice of Pushkin. In contrast to Mayakovsky, Boland declines to stray far from the original—perhaps not perceiving the same surfeit of "unreason" here. The poem is short, and although Boland recomposes six lines into five, the two stanzas are retained:

> Ревёт ли зверь в лесу глухом,Трубит ли рог, гремит ли гром,
> Поёт ли дева за холмом —
> На всякий звук
> Свой отклик в воздухе пустом
> Родишь ты вдруг. ("Эхо")

While some rhymes used, as with ‘air’ and ‘there’, in Boland’s case this element of the form is less stringent :

> After the sound of an animal howling.
> After the thunder. After the horn.
> After the song of a mountain woman
> There is silence and empty air.
> Then you are there.

Other of Boland’s choices also depart from the original text, such as her anaphoric repetition of “You listen. […] / You listen. […] / You answer. […]” in the second stanza. Yet in a Boland-centered reading of the “Echo”, what is particularly striking are the resonances with the prior translations which have preceded it. To see “The waves speaking” in line seven as a callback to “Atlantic Ocean” may be a tad willful, but what cannot be denied is that, as with Mayakovsky’s “Interview with a Tax Inspector” and the ode preceding it, the chief concern here is with the office of being a poet. The “song of a mountain woman” is redolent of the invitee with her lyre. As in the conversation with the bureaucrat, a note of resignation hangs in the “silence and empty air”, and in the speaker’s admission that “no one will ever answer you”. Yet perhaps most notably, whereas every exclamation point in Mayakovsky’s piece was studiously suppressed into a sober translation, in this Russian translation there is an emphatic accent of acquired confidence and surety. Pushkin’s note of exclamatory (self-)affirmation is retained at the end: for “you know […] / […] the same is true for you / - poet!” (*Object Lessons* 301).

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