

Two Poems by Arai Takako¹

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4

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⁴ This is a photo of Arai's parents' factory in Kiryū, taken by Arai Takako in 2009.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION はじめに

POEMS 詩

Flared Skirt フレアスカート

Heald ヘルド

TRANSLATORS' NOTES 訳者注

SELECTED BIBLIOPGRAPHY 主要参考文献

はじめに

新井高子は、1966年、群馬県に生まれた。生家は桐生市の伝統産業・織物業を営んでおり、新井は20名ほどの女工をかかえる工場で育った。本ワーキングペーパーで英訳した二篇の詩が収録された詩集『ベットと織機』（2013年）では、生家をおもわせる織物工場が舞台になっている。

桐生市は、1300年もの歴史を誇る織物の産地である。新井の生家も代々続いた織物工場であったが、日本の絹産業の衰えとともに、桐生の絹織物産業も衰退。工場が次々と閉鎖され、街の繁栄が色褪せてゆくのを身をもって体験した新井は、『ベットと織機』で、織物工場に息づくひとびと—数々の女工をはじめ、織機整備工の男たちや工場主の娘といったひとびと—をよみがえらせる。それらの詩世界は、まさしく「幻燈」ともいえる。新井の生み出した仮想方言によって、数々の女工の人生模様が幻燈によみがえるのである。独特の言葉使いには上州弁を思わせる要素もあるが、これは桐生の過去をおもわせる工場での生命と生活を詩世界を創造するために新井がうみだした言語であり、既存する特定の方言を再現したものではない。

新井の詩世界に登場する女工たちは「貧しいがゆえに強制労働を強いられるかわいそうな女工さん」では決してない。そこでは、強くたくましく（そしてときに切なくやるせなく）生き抜く女の姿が、匂い、喧騒、女の業とエロスとともにたちあがる。

新井は小学校時代から詩を書きはじめ、慶応大学文学部を卒業。第1詩集は『詩集 霸王別姫』（1997年）。第2詩集『タマシイ・ダンス』（2007年）で第41回小熊秀雄賞を受賞。1998年から実験性・多文化性に富んだ詩と批評の雑誌『ミテ』の編集人を務めている。新井の詩は英語や仏語などに訳されており、英語詩集にジェフリー・アングルス編訳の『Soul Dance』（2008年）がある。

ここに収めた2篇は、新井の第3詩集『ベットと織機』に収録されたものである。詩集の特徴ともいえる新井独自の方言・言葉使い、独特のカタカナ使いなどは、英語には方言としてあるいはイタリック化するなどの形では移行・移植されていないが、英訳詩でも、これらの独特の手法を使って生み出される詩的効果が生まれるよう、最大限に配慮した。また、新井の詩には、独特の句読点の使用や、言語の順番の入れかえなど、さまざまな日本語への挑戦がみられるため、英語文法上意味が通る範囲で、原詩の語順や行順を変えないよう配慮した。英訳詩の半角15字のスペースは、原詩に一字のスペースがあること、あるいは独特の読点があることを示す。

英訳をする際の翻訳プロセスとしては、日本語を母語とする現代英語詩の専門家と、英語を母語とする日本近現代詩の専門家をいうふたりが共同で訳すことが重要であると判断し、ふたりで詩を選び、音読する作業からはじめ、すべての作業をふたりでの議論を通して一緒におこなっている。ひとりが英語に試訳したものに、他方が手を加えて完成させるという方法ではない。

最後に、翻訳にあたり新井高子氏に多大なご協力をいただいたこと、心より御礼申し上げます。

Introduction

Arai Takako was born in Kiryū city in Gunma Prefecture in 1966. A graduate of Keio University literature department, Arai now lives in Tokyo. Kiryū has a long history as a textile-manufacturing town and Arai's family was engaged in this industry for many generations. Since the Meiji era, carrying the burden of industrial change, Kiryū became the home to great numbers of female factory workers involved in the textile industry. However, economic change has meant that this once strong local industry is now facing an increasingly rapid decline. In what seemed like a blink of the eye, these factories disappeared leaving nothing but empty lots. Few even remember what once stood on these vacant plots. Through her poetry, Arai brings these factories back to life, fighting back against the enormous powers that so easily wipe away the past. Beyond that she hopes to highlight something of the complexities of women and work - holding up the stubborn strength and the fragility of these factory women.

Arai Takako's first collection of poetry, *Hao-bekki (The King's Unfortunate Lover)* was published in 1997. Her second collection, *Tamashii dansu (Soul Dance)* was published in 2007 and was awarded the 41st Oguma Hideo Prize. Several of the works from that collection have been translated into English by Jeffrey Angles in *Soul Dance: Poems by Takako Arai* (Mi'Te Press, 2008). Arai is the editor of *Mi'Te*, a magazine featuring poetry and criticism (<http://www.mi-te-press.net/index.html>). Her third collection, *Betto to Shokki (Beds and Looms)* was published in 2013.

The two poems translated here are included in *Betto to Shokki*. In her poetry, Arai creates her own distinctive language, which appears to Japanese readers as a form of colloquial regional dialect. This is not the language of Kiryū or any other actual place, but rather an imagined dialect that helps her create her own poetic world. Although it is impossible to transfer this specific sense of dialect through into the English, we have worked to evoke the effect of her language in our translations.

Arai likes to play with word order and grammar to challenge the accepted language patterns of the Japanese language and as a result her punctuation and word order add a sense of dislocation to her poetry. We have tried to recreate this linguistic deconstruction in our translations. While we have used Arai's line order as far as possible to maintain this sense of dislocation, we have modified the punctuation and included a number of empty spaces within poetic lines to better express her idiosyncratic language usage.

With regard to our translation process, we choose to translate together, as one native speaker of Japanese and one native speaker of English. We find this creates an interesting negotiation around the meaning in both languages. It is not a case of one of us translating from Japanese into English and then the other checking that work, but rather a jointly shared process.

We would like to thank Arai Takako for her support and encouragement.

フレアスカート

ありゃア、

あたしが、

女学校サあがる春休みのことで。飼い猫のブチが、子バ産みまして、一匹だけ。ハァ年増でしたんで、きりきり精バしぼったッとでしょう、げっそりと、刃物みてえに陰バ立て、チィーミャア、チィーミャア、二十日鼠のようなのが甘がる懐ころサ、必死に隠しておりやした。独り身が、不義の子こせえたようでした。

しばらく前、初潮バありました、あたしに。夕暮れの新聞屋に集金わたす縁側で、ひょっと、染まっておったんです、フレアスカートが。翌日、母さんは、ぼうぼう二升も赤飯炊いて、

「お嬢、とうとう仲間入りかい」、

織り子のカッチャんは、物干し竿のスカートめくり、

「いまの流行りだがよお」

ミサちゃん、桃色のパンティーさし出し、

機械なおしのシモやんたら、

あたしの尻バ軍手でこすり、「上玉、上玉！」

新聞記事じゃねえがよ、メンスは、

おっ母ちゃん！

ブチは、そもそも野良猫でした。いえ、その時分は、生ッ粹の家猫なんぞおりゃアせん。軒下の残飯あさり、むっくり炬燵サもぐりッ込むずうずうしさで。背中サ手エのばすと、ギャッとすり抜かる。鼻ふくらしソッポする。抱いたことなぞねえがすよ。

辛かったね、あたしは辛かった。煙草くせえシモやんに、尻撫でらィた瞬間に、ずるっと垂れた経血が。ミサちゃんとお揃いのパンティー穿いて、街場サ行くかと想うのも。三時休みの赤飯に、

Flared Skirt

It was...

I was...

It was the spring holidays just before I started girls' high. Our tabby cat Buchi had kittens, only one though. But then she was very old. She twisted it out using up all her strength, wearing herself out, furious like the edge of a knife, eeeek-mew eeeek-mew, the tiny mouse-like creature snuggled tight against her breast, as she tried desperately to hide the little one from view. Like an unwed mother birthing a bastard child.

A while ago, that first bleeding happened, to me. On the narrow back deck where we handed over the money to the newspaper boy in the evenings, suddenly, stained, my flared skirt. The next day, mother cooked up twenty cups of celebratory red bean rice:

'Miss, you're finally one of us women'

says, Kat-chan, one of the weaving girls, pulling up the skirt on the clothesline to expose the inside,

'They're the latest fashion'

says, Misa-chan giving me some pink panties,

and Shimo-yan, who fixes the looms, strokes my bottom with his cotton work-gloved hands,

'so round so plump'

It's not a newspaper story! My period!

Mummm!

Buchi was originally a stray. But then, at that time there were no pure house cats. Scrounging for food scraps under the eaves. Slyly crawling in under the heated kotatsu-table, she's absolutely shameless. When I try to stroke her back she slips past me with a hiss. She snorts and turns away. I never manage to get my arms round her.

It was hard wasn't it? It was for me. When Shimo-yan, with his tobacco stink, stroked my bottom, my blood dripped out in a slimy slurp. An' then thinking about having to go out into town wearing

工場の前歯が、ズラッとオッ立ち、きゅうッと鳴ったよ、あたしのがらんどうは。カッチャンの下ッ腹ィは、二十日鼠が埋まってるッて。六ヶ月だッてがァ。

松飾りがとれた晩だった。

捨てッ子かィ、

また、女工が

あんまし切ない大泣きサしたもんで、中庭から。半纏ひっかけ、生け垣の根もとバ見りゃァ、おったんよ、あのブチが。霜サ蕩かす声あげて、擦すりッ付けてた、地べたに腹を。

オギャうあアアーン、

横ゾッポーがオッ被さると、ぎりぎり尾っぽバ持ち上げて、ケツつき出す姥桜。果てると、ギャアッと勝ち気がもどり、

追っ払ったよ、隣りんチのオス猫バ。

跡とり娘です、一人ッ子です、あたしも。

女学校でて婿さんもらって機屋サ継いで、カッチャン、ミサちゃんの給金つづかし、その子まで、その姑まで。あたしの婚交が、喰わすンですよ、

月のしづくが

喰わすがですよ、

工場の鼠を

みなの人衆、おめでとさんでござります

昇ってきよったぞ

あたくし奴に、

どす赤い新月が

心臓みてえにぶるぶる震え、

輝いて

したたったよ

the same panties as Misa-chan. And then in the afternoon break, when the front teeth of the workers lined up for the red bean rice, my inner void clenched in emptiness. They're saying somebody's buried a house mouse in Kat-chan's lower belly. Six months already.

It was the night when we took down the New Year pine decorations.

Huh? Abandoned child?

'spect it's a factory girl again.

The crying was so heart wrenching, coming from the factory yard. I pulled on my hanten jacket to look around near the base of the fence, and there she was. That Buchi. Yowling with a cry that would melt frost, rubbing her belly along the ground.

Waaah - meioooowww

As the Tomcat starts to ride her, the cougar forces up her tail and sticks out her arse. After the deed is done, her unyielding self-will returns - raaww - and she sees him off, that male cat from next door.

The daughter and heir, the only child, I'm the same.

I'll finish girl's high, get a husband, inherit the factory, continue to pay Kat-chan and Misa-chan, their children, and even their mothers-in-law. My marital intercourse will feed them.

It's my monthlies - my moon drops

That feed them!

The factory house mice

All of you – congratulations!

It's rising up

In me

The blood red new moon

Quivering like a trembling heart

Shining

Dripping

つつつーーッと、

ホンモンの 赤けえゴハンぞ

ほれ、

シモやん、すべって溺れるなィ

ようカッチャン、うんめえかい

新聞屋さん、ご遠慮のう お撮りなさんし

フレアスカートの中の 破顔と厚顔は、

無礼講にござりますとも！

翌朝、おっ母ちゃんが雨戸サ開けると染まってる、仏間の畳が。ブチがおる。うら暗れえ眼でこ
っちバ見上げ、口サぬったり汚しッつかし。

喰らってしまったがですよ、可愛いかわいい二十日鼠バ、自分の八重歯でブツ刺して。

なりとうなかよお

女に、

けえりたがよお

母ちゃんサお腹の

鼠に、あたしも

のう、ブチや、

搾れんかったか

おめえの瘦したその乳にやア

白れえゴハンさ 出されんかったか

泣くるあたしを横目に猫は、ほどなく工場サ出てゆきました。

A sticky trail of drops

This is it real red rice!

Look at it!

Shimo-yan! Don't slip and drown.

Hey, Kat-chan. Tasty isn't it.

Newspaper man! Come on, go ahead take as many photos as you like

My smiling my shamelessness inside my flared skirt

Don't stand on ceremony! Go for it!

The next morning, when mum opened the shutters - it was stained. The tatami, where we had the altar to the family dead. There was Buchi. She looked up at us with dark shadowed eyes, her mouth thick with a filthy wetness.

She'd eaten it. Her own lovely sweet little house mouse. Impaled on her canines.

I don't want to be

 A woman,

I want to go back

As the mouse

 In mum's belly, me too

Hey, Buchi,

Couldn't you squeeze anything out

Out of those bony breasts

No one fed you any did they? Any white rice?

With only a sidelong glance, ignoring me crying, the cat soon left the factory.

* "Flared Skirt" was first published in *Mi'Te* Issue 117 (Dec. 2011).

ヘルド

機械と女の喧噪が、夕ぐれへ吸い込まれても、
糸置き場におりました、あたしは
束に寄っかかると、首の痞えがおりました
鉦泉のにおいがします、絹が吐き出す夜気というのは、
幻燈です
ひとつだけ、電球が灯ってて
板戸の穴から覗く、工場のありようは、
幻燈です

冷たい指が
織り機のヘルドに触れようとしています
機の止まった夜にこそ、現れるのです、男は
縦糸の繋ぎ屋です
乾いたすきま風と、
フィラメントに、晃々としていくヘルドの、
ちいさな、ちいさな目の中へ
挿し込もうとしています、糸を
瞬きのゆるされない
空ろの目、
織機とは
手というまえに
無数の、無名の、瞳の変身ですから、
糸の交差を、すみずみまで見届けるのは
そんな眼球たちですから、
ぶら下がるヘルドは、義眼と言ってもいいんです、女工さんの、
夜の男は
一本、一本
しらっと舐めあげ
突き通さねばなりません、
痛がるでしょう

Heald

The clatter and chatter of the looms and the women had faded into the dusk,
There I was, still in the thread storeroom
Leaning on the spools of thread, the stiffness in my neck has disappeared
A tang of sulphur, the silk spits out the night air, forming
A magic lantern
Alone, a single bulb glows
Peering through the hole in the wooden door, the factory transforms into
A magic lantern

His cold fingers
About to touch the healds of the loom
Only at night, when the looms are at rest, he comes
The man to attach the warp threads
About to push through, the thread
Into the healds, glittering in a draft of dry wind
Under the filament of the bulb
Into their tiny, tiny eyes
Forbidden to blink
Vacant eyes,
Numberless, nameless, eyes - not hands - metamorphose
Into the looms
These eyes checking every single threaded intersection
Because they're that sort of eyeball
The hanging healds could be called the artificial eyes of the factory girls
The night man
Lightly moistening each with his tongue
First one, then the next
Must force the threads through
It will hurt

男の背中も、あんなに震えていて、
眉をひそめたヘルドは
ほうり投げるでしょう、視線を、
格子窓の新月へ

機械とは、
操つり人形かもしれませんね、織物工場では
通さなければ、はたらけないのです
通されれば、うごく瞳が持てるんです、ヘルドは
男へ
カタッと、
首の関節を折り
蒼い息を吹きかけます、その針に
滲む、
ルビーの血色こそ、視力です

一体、一体、吊るされて
天井から、
しのびこむ鎌いたちに
糸と、
糸が、
絡まると
ばんざいする、蹴り足する、
乗りだして組みあう肩、腹をかかえて開ける下顎
男は、
駆けよって、解そうとヤッキになりますが、
かまわれないのさ
もっともっと、突ッ込んでよ
いかしてよ、
胸もとがはだけていくのは
手管です、マリオネットの女工たちの、
眼ざしが
月へもどれば

The man's back trembles violently
Grimacing, the healds
Will look away
Through the window grating towards the new moon

Are the looms
Perhaps marionettes? At this textile factory
If she doesn't let it through she can never work
Once through, her eyes start moving, then the heald
Leans towards the man
With a clack
Her neck joints folding
Releasing a pale breath, along the needle
A spreading blur
This ruby red blood gives her vision

Hung up, one beside the other
From the ceiling,
Sneaking in, the whirlwind catches
This thread
Then that
All entangled
Arms lift in banzai, legs kicking
Leaning forwards, arms around shoulders, hands on bellies, jaws falling open
The man
Races over, desperate to untangle them
Each demanding more attention
More more, penetrate me
Make me come!
Slyly exposing their breasts
The feminine wiles of the marionette factory girls
When their coaxing gaze
Returns to the moon

頬に、ツツツとつたいます、
男のこめかみから滴ってくる汗が

今ごろ、
生身の女工さんらは
家や寄宿や銭湯で、
湯浴みをしている、娘の寝顔を見てる、電話の受話器をおこうとしている
いいえ、
いいえ、
梳しけずる
ゆたかな髪が、風にもつれる、
十一時かっきり
挿し入れようとするはずです、櫛を
鏡にうつして、

乗り出して組みあう肩、腹をかかえて笑う下顎
糸まみれの人形です、
ヘルドは
いいえ、あたしたちは
操つられて、操つらして、操つって、
男がビームを回せば、
攣りあがります、
生えぎわが、毛穴ごと、
なんと気持ちの佳いことでしょう
丹念に
一条、一条、束ねては、
巻き上げます、男は
色とりどりのすじ糸を、あたしたちの毛髪を、
なんと艶めくことでしょう

夜の工場に、夜の女工と、夜の髪結いさん
幻燈です
たったひとつの白熱球が、

Running down both cheeks
Sweat drips from the man's temples

Just about now

The real flesh and blood bodies of the factory girls
Taking their baths at home, boarding houses or public bathhouses
or watching the sleeping faces of their daughters, or just about to hang up their phones

No,

No,

Combing their locks

Their rich hair, tangles in the wind

At precisely eleven o'clock

They try to force the comb through their hair, the reflection

Is caught in the mirror

Leaning forwards, arms around shoulders, hands on bellies, jaws falling open

The marionettes are tangled in threads

The healds are

No, we are

Being manipulated, allowing ourselves to be manipulated, manipulating him to manipulate us

As the man rolls up the warp beam

All pulled up

The roots of our hair, the pores of our skin

How good does that feel!

Delicately

One strand, then the next, woven together

Hoisted up by the man

The multicoloured thread, our hair,

How alluring it looks!

The night factory, the night factory girls, the night coiffeur

All a magic lantern

The single light bulb

振り子のように
揺すられて
サッと、
消える
繋ぎ屋といっしょに、
牛乳瓶を配達する、バイクの音がひびく前に

朝の光は、
人形を
機械に見してしまうでしょうが、
知ってるよ
男が置いてくつげ櫛を、

女工なら、

Like a pendulum

Swinging

Suddenly

Vanishes

With the warp threader

Before the sound of the motor bike delivering the bottled milk

The morning light

Makes the marionettes

Look like looms

But you know

About that wooden comb the man leaves behind

If you're a factory girl, that is.

*"Heald" was first published in *Mi'Te* Issue 105 (Dec. 2008).

Translators Notes – Flared Skirt

Buchi: Buchi is a common name for a tabby cat because in Japanese it also refers to the brown splotches on a tabby cat.

eeeeek-mew eeeek-mew: This phrase is Arai's original onomatopoeia, which is a combination of the squeaking noise of a mouse combined with the mewling of a kitten. We chose to combine the English onomatopoeia for a mouse's squeak with a kitten's mew, rather than romanising the Japanese sounds (chiimyaa, chiimyaa: チィーミャア、チィーミャア) as we felt that our English readers would better understand the imaginative link between a mouse and a cat using English animal sounds.

celebratory red bean rice: While a number of Japanese dishes are now commonly used within English, such as sushi or soba, "sekihan" is not sufficiently familiar. In this rice dish, small red azuki beans are cooked together with white rice to celebrate special occasions, as the colour red is associated with happy occasions in Japan. This dish was commonly made by households to share with their neighbours on the birth of a child or a marriage or as in this case the start of womanhood, allowing them to share the happiness symbolically as they shared the red bean rice.

Kat-chan, Misa-chan, Shimo-yan: These are three names of workers in the factory. Both -chan and -yan are suffixes used in Japanese for addressing or referring to people or animals to indicate familiarity and affection, and are therefore commonly used by 'in-group' family members or very close friends. While -chan is most commonly used for females or young boys, -yan tends to be used to refer to men.

'so round so plump': As Shimo-yan strokes the narrator's buttocks, he exclaims in Japanese "jōdama, jōdama" (上玉、上玉). Translating literally as 'beautiful jewel', this expression is a rather vulgar way of referring to a women's sexual attractiveness.

heated kotatsu-table: A kotatsu is a low table made of a frame with a small heater attached to the underside and a quilt thrown over the top to retain the heat.

hanten jacket: A hanten is a short padded jacket that was worn over kimono, pyjamas or other relaxed home clothes.

waaah – meioooowww: Like "eeeeek-mew eeeek-mew", this phrase "ogyaua-aan" (オギャウあアーン) was also invented by Arai, combining the cry of a wailing baby and the yowl of a cat on heat. This example also demonstrates one of the characteristics of Arai's 'imagined' language, her distinctive use of katakana within a single word or phrase.

The tatami, where we had the altar to the family dead: We chose to use this somewhat explanatory phrase to express "Butsuma no tatami" (仏間の畳). In a traditional Japanese style house, this is the room for the family Buddhist altar, where the memorial tablets for deceased relatives are placed.

Translators Notes – Heald

heald: A heald frame is a part of a weaving loom. Technically, the frame works to separate and lift some of the warp yarns above others, thus allowing the shuttle to pass through holding the weft threads. Heald frames are rectangular and are supported by a set of thin wires called ‘healds’ or ‘hettles’. The healds are attached to the frame vertically and the threads move through their eyeholes to weave the fabric.

magic Lantern: The term “gentō” (幻燈) used by Arai is the Japanese translation of the Western term ‘magic lantern’ referring to the early slide projectors, first developed in the 17th Century, that directed light through small rectangular photographic image slides onto a wall or screen.

the man to attach the warp threads: The Japanese term used for this profession is “tsumugiya” (繋ぎ屋) which literally translates as the ‘vertical thread or warp connecting professional’.

filament: This refers to the wire filament in an old fashioned electric incandescent light bulb.

whirlwind: The Japanese word used here is “kamaitachi” (鎌いたち), which is a term used to describe the cutting turbulent winds common in Japan’s northern snow country. Traditional folk tales tell of weasel-like creatures that fly on the whirlwinds slashing at human skin. In this poem the focus is on the wind rather than this mythological creature.

banzai: Roughly translating as ‘hurrah’ and literally as ‘long life’. In contemporary Japan, banzai is used to express congratulations, although the term was most commonly used during WWII to express respect for the emperor.

warp beam: a part of a loom. The ends of the warp threads are wound onto this warp beam roller at the back of the loom.

coiffeur: The Japanese term “kamiyui” (髪結い) refers to the traditional profession of a Japanese hair dresser or barber.

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