



Gökçenur Ç. is an Istanbul based poet, translator, editor, and poetry activist. He has authored seven books of Turkish poetry and a recipient of prestigious prizes such as the Arkadaş Z. Özger Best Debut Poetry Book Prize for his first publication, the Sabahattin Kudret Aksal Literature Prize and Metin Altıok Poetry Prize for his latest work. His Selected Poetry has been published in English, German, Italian, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian.

Gökçenur Ç served as co-editor of the Turkish domain in Poetry International portal and is on the editorial board of Macedonian-based international literary magazine *Blesok*. He is the editor of renowned literature Magazine Offline Istanbul.

A prolific and arduous bidirectional translator, Gökçenur has translated and published selected poetry books of Katerina Illiopolou, Wallace Stevens, Paul Auster, Ursula Le Guin, Ocean Vuong, Anne Carson, Igor Isakovski and many other world poets into Turkish and some of the best Turkish poets into English.

He has simultaneously led as an poetry activist participating and/or organizing poetry translation workshops and festivals in many countries. He is the curator and co-director of Word Express; co-director of international poetry festivals Offline Istanbul, Poesium Istanbul, Mosaic of Metaphors Gaziantep, and Turkish American Poetry Days and has been a board member of Nilüfer International Poetry Festival, Crete International Poetry Festival and Kriya International Poetry Movement.

Ghazal with Bread

how many summers apart from you, in search of bread
home: bread, school: bread, wine: bread

I labored under the sun hot
not as July, as much as you, as much as bread

I was young, thought it wouldn't pass, it passed
as though time, as though we've eaten, as though bread

we sopped our pain in each other's sauce
but pain was like stone, is like bread

school is over, the house is over, hush now, love is over
now life, now stale, like bread

(translated by Gökçenur Ç.)

Is This How We Were to Be?

If we fall from high enough, we might believe we are flying.

Is this how we were meant to be? Let the birds fall silent, you tell me.

I was the forgotten pen name of November Rain.

Is this how we were meant to be? Let the thirds fall silent, you tell me.

You're beautiful, sunny, as if a wind might blow at any moment

Is this how we were meant to be? Let the words fall silent, you tell me.

Who could clutch at the wind, who could carry the rain?

A fearful pair of leaves, holding not to the branch but to each other.

Now I ask myself: will we too, crash onto the ground?

Let the birds fall silent, let everything hush, hush and hug me.

(Translated by Gökçenur Ç.)

Is This Our Last Summer with You?

Trouble in the air, sky's overclouded.

Is this our noise numbing the birds?

Is this our last autumn with you?

An ambulance in front of our door.

Is this our glance accelerating the rain?

Is this our last winter with you?

An empty snail shell rolls on the ground.

Is this our suicide coming out of our shells?

Is this our last spring with you?

Things we couldn't let go of, now packed in the boxes:

Museum tickets, maps, letters: is this our handwriting?

Is this our last summer with you?

(Translated by Gökçenur Ç.)

Me Before You

It seemed The World was created so we could meet,
me broken, me foolish, me before you...

The first page of a diary, you said, staring at the rain,
me exhausted, me soaked, not knowing what sleep was.

The longest was your neck, and
nights, never long enough to kiss it,
me auburn, me drudge, me before you...

I was dragging my shadow here and there
me loser, me wasted, not knowing what my burden was.

We weren't like each other; the time passed liken us,
me lazy, me resentful, me before you...

I still remember how you'd leave the table when you were bored,
me confused, me in love, unable to follow you.

We had such good days with you
my love, words are not enough to tell them all,

and now we quarrel, so what?
see, the life that we spent together
is nearly been twenty-five years.

We both forget those graces
but don't think that I've forgotten
me loser, me wasted, me before you...

(Translated by Gökçenur Ç.)

Can We Be Happy as the Wind Blows Behind?

Times we smiled not a question in our mind

The rain's door is always open, no need for any keys

We keep searching whichever words cure whichever wounds

Can we be happy as the wind blows behind?

Can we be happy as the wind blows behind?

Like a dog jumping heavenward through the dandelions

Perhaps Black, perhaps Cloud, it had a name once

We understand it has seen the soul of our son

We understand it has seen the soul of our son

Autumn waits for the night, we too wait as we're done?

We wait for the pain to subside, taking on the shapes of clouds

We keep searching whichever words cure whichever wounds

We keep searching whichever words cure whichever wounds

Yet the rain's door is always open, no need for any keys

Times we smiled not a question in our mind

Can we be happy as the wind blows behind?

(Translated by Gökçenur Ç. & Neil P. Doherty)