Richard Whitaker

African Pastoral

Versions of Virgil's *Eclogues*



with images by William Kentridge

AFRICAN PASTORAL

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Fig. 0. Detail from Hieronymus Bosch, Ship of Fools (1490–1500)

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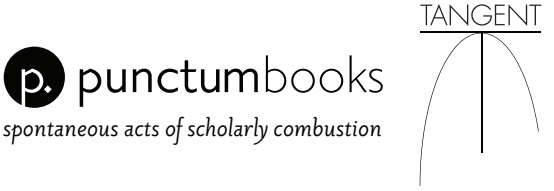




Fig. 1. Blinded by Dapple, 2013. Indian ink and printed texts collage on *Universal Technological Dictionary* pages, 160.5 × 121 cm.

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For Julia, Maya, Chloe, Daniel, and Julien

With my love

Translator's Introduction

> workers in that field of semi-consciousness
>
> — Vladimir Nabokov (2020, 452) on translators

Who are the imagined readers of *African Pastoral*? I pose this question because I believe a translator always has in mind, whether consciously or unconsciously, certain sorts of readers. And it is what the translator imagines to be the wants, needs, desires, and literary pleasures of those individuals that helps determine the form, language, style, and degree of closeness to the original of the translator's version.

First, a negative reply to my question. My translations are not for the student who is studying Virgil's *Eclogues* in Latin and needs a word-for-word crib of the original. Nor are they for the student of Latin poetry in English who needs to account for every mythological, fictional, or real person, and every historical and geographical reference in Virgil's text. In other words, mine is not a close, literal translation.

Nor are my versions for those who might want the sort of poetic refashioning that a Seamus Heaney has made of Virgil's Eclogues Four and Nine in his "Bann Valley Eclogue" and "Glanmore Eclogue" respectively, both collected in *Electric Light* (Heaney 2001). Though his versions have influenced me, there are few poet–translators of Heaney's stature, and I am not one of them. If we think of very literal translation as one pole of a force field, and creative reworking as the other, my versions hover in center field, with a pull in some instances toward the second pole. That is why I have preferred to subtitle this book a "Version" rather than a "Translation."

Among my imagined readers are people in Africa, more particularly South Africa, who love literature, especially poetry, and who — although they may not have encountered Virgil before — are open to authors from other times and places. By using words that form part of South African English, by replacing some of Virgil's Mediterranean flora and fauna with local substitutes or near-equivalents, by reimagin-

ing the landscapes of the *Eclogues* in African terms, and by pointing up parallels between contested issues of land in southern Africa and in the Italy of Virgil's lifetime (reflected in some of his pastorals), I hope to pique the curiosity of such readers, show them that this author — for all that he wrote in Latin millennia ago — has things to say that are worthy of their attention, and perhaps lead them to explore the *Eclogues* in more detail and to move on from there to Virgil's later poetry.

It is sometimes difficult for those steeped in the literature and culture of Greece and Rome to appreciate that a mass of unfamiliar names in a translation can be a stumbling block to first-time readers of a classical author. Where possible (in some places it was neither possible nor desirable) I have eliminated from my versions all ancient names and have used instead generic designations — Exile, Goatherd, Shepherd, Poet, god of poetry, spirits of song, shepherd hero, water spirit, and so on. Where ancient names do occur in my translations, I have explained them in the Glossary & Index at the end of the book.

But I also imagine readers in other parts of the world, outside the African continent, who, perhaps already acquainted with the *Eclogues* — in translation or in Latin — and with the long tradition of pastoral poetry in English and in European languages, might be interested to learn what Virgil's poems about herdsmen and their lives could mean to the Global South. Such readers, too, might appreciate the occasions when I have moved away from Virgil and creatively adapted the original to bring it closer to my own contemporary concerns.

The local vocabulary and references of my translation could, I think, strike my two sorts of envisaged audience in different ways. Southern African readers may find such elements as Karoo koppies and kloofs, jackals and impalas, nastergal berries and mielies, homely, familiar, a point of entry into an unfamiliar, foreign world, distant from them in place and time. Conversely, those same elements could seem exotic and strange, and be defamiliarizing, for readers outside South Africa. I hope, at least, that these features of the translation would help subvert any notion that Virgil's *Eclogues* might "belong" more to one language group or culture than to another. To assist non-South African readers, my Glossary & Index explains all terms for southern African places, persons, animals, and plants, as well as all local vocabulary used in the translations.

In what follows, to orientate the reader, I discuss the local language, outlook, and context of my versions of the *Eclogues*; the ways in which Virgil by doing bold new things with pastoral poetry has moved me as a translator to experiment and innovate in my translations; the poetic form of my renderings; the Latin text; and the artworks by the renowned South African and international artist, William Kentridge, that I have the privilege of using to enrich this book.

South African Translation

The approach to translation that I follow in *African Pastoral* is one that I have developed over the past few decades in my southern African translations of Homer's epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Whitaker 2012 and 2017), with the proviso that my epic translations are more academic, intended both for general readers and for use as student textbooks, whereas my versions of the *Eclogues* are often freer, more creative. (For this distinction between "academic" and "creative" translation, see Whitaker 2020, 241–42.) As in my earlier work, so in translating Virgil's *Eclogues,* I have used a language which comes naturally to me and which is documented in the *Dictionary of South African English* (1996, now open access online).

For those unfamiliar with the language situation in South Africa, some background may be helpful. Hickey (2020, 4) sets out the facts succinctly:

> South Africa is distinguished by its complex ethnic and linguistic composition. The post-apartheid constitution of 1996 gives official recognition to eleven languages [now twelve: in 2023 South African Sign Language (SASL) was added], thus offering coverage for over 90 per cent of the first language speakers in contemporary South Africa. In alphabetical order the languages are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Northern Sotho (Sepedi), Southern Sotho (Sesotho), SiSwati (Swazi), Xitsonga, Setswana (Tswana), Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu. The first two are European languages, present in colonial form for several centuries in southern Africa: Afrikaans has over 7 million native speakers (about 13.5 per cent of the population of South Africa) while English has about 5 million native speakers.

Of the two colonial languages, Afrikaans is the indigenous tongue of Dutch colonists, who first settled in the Cape (southwestern South Africa) in the seventeenth century, and of their enslaved labor brought by force from elsewhere in Africa, and from Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and India. English, introduced in the late eighteenth century, was, and is still today, the mother tongue of only a relatively small number of people in South Africa, although about half the country's current population of 63 million understand English, and speak it as a second language.

Over centuries of contact with other languages in the country, South African English has acquired, and continues to acquire, many loanwords from the languages listed above. Some thirty years ago, the Oxford University Press published the *Dictionary of South African English, on Historical Principles* (DSAE 1996). The DSAE lists 5,000 local

English words, drawn from many sources: most from Afrikaans (40%), as well as earlier Cape Dutch (18%), from isiZulu (6%) and isiXhosa (5%), and to a lesser degree from other indigenous African languages of the country, and from the Bushman (San) and Khoikhoi tongues.[1] It also includes Standard English words that are used in a distinct local sense by South Africans.

Among the loanwords that I use in my translation of Virgil's *Eclogues* are buchu (a type of small aromatic shrub), dekriet (thatching reeds), dorper (a local breed of sheep), imbongi (praise poet), inspan (to yoke), kehla (old man), kraal (corral, pen), leiwater (irrigation water), and mielies (maize). Again, many English speakers in South Africa, when they refer to the countryside and to features of the landscape, prefer loanwords from Afrikaans to the Standard English words which are not equivalents because they do not have the same connotations, tone, or emotional force. Hence, in my versions of Virgil's pastorals, not valley, narrow pass, country district, cliff, or marsh but rather, respectively, kloof, poort, platteland, krantz, and vlei.

The countryside of Virgil's *Eclogues* is mainly an imaginative and literary one, a blend of the Sicily of his Greek pastoral model, Theocritus; the mountainous, rugged, wild region of Arcadia in mainland Greece; and the remembered landscape of his own native northern Italy. In translating, I have added another, South African, element to this imaginative blend. Sometimes the adjustment has been small. Like Virgil's Italy and Sicily, the southwestern coastal area of South Africa has a Mediterranean climate, in which oak trees grow, and grapevines and olives are cultivated, while in the drier inland regions, the herding of sheep and goats is widespread. But where the characteristic trees, flowers, fruits, and vegetation of South Africa are different from those of the Mediterranean world, I have very often substituted local items. Thus, I have — the original Virgilian names are in brackets — coral tree (wayfaring tree or wild guelder rose), cosmos (poppies), nastergal berries (bilberries), macadamia nuts (chestnuts), Boscia or shepherd's tree (beech), knobthorn (tamarisk), acacia (shrub trefoil), and kalanders (holm oaks). So, too, with the different fauna of Europe and Africa: instead of the wolf, wild boar, fox, and European lynx, I have in my translation the leopard, warthog, jackal, and caracal.

1 The latter two are not officially recognized languages as they are, tragically, almost extinct.

Experiment and Innovation

The pastorals (known as Idylls) of the Greek poet Theocritus provided Virgil with the starting point and general inspiration for his *Eclogues*. The Roman poet adopted from his predecessor the idea of a pastoral poetry centered around herdsmen whose lives are filled with song — most often performed by a pair of herdsmen in collaboration or competition — and passionate love, almost always desperate and unrequited. Virgil also took from Theocritus certain themes, such as the lament; the names of many of his herdsmen and the persons they desire; the *locus amoenus* ("beautiful place," usually a shaded spot near a river or spring) as a locale for rest, music, and song; the occasional use of urban settings; the responsive song where topic and number of verses echo each other; the use of refrains; and, in the wording of his *Eclogues,* whole lines, half-lines, and numerous turns of phrase.

Certain eclogues and parts of eclogues are very close to, almost derivative from Theocritus. Examples would be the responsive song contests of Eclogue Seven and of Eclogue Three (the first lines of the latter are virtually a direct translation of the opening of Theocritus's Idyll Two), the lament for the death of the shepherd hero Daphnis in Eclogue Five, and the dramatized magic rituals to get back a lost lover in Eclogue Eight. I have found as a translator that when Virgil is less bold and stays closest to Theocritus, and also when the tight formal constraints of the relevant poems so demand, I have not been prompted to take risks but have stayed closer to the original content and form. But on several occasions where the Roman poet is daring, takes pastoral beyond Theocritus, and innovates in surprising, even startling fashion, I have felt encouraged to experiment and to translate in more creative ways.

One such instance is Eclogue One, where Virgil breaks decisively with the Theocritean pastoral tradition by evoking contemporary political issues. In the years that Virgil was composing his *Eclogues,* the military–political dynasts who gained the upper hand in the civil wars that continually wracked the Roman world appointed commissioners to identify and assign Italian land to their veteran soldiers as a reward for, and to cement, their loyalty. Many small farmers lost their grazing lands and fields, while some were forcibly expelled from their farms. Virgil (whose own family may have been affected by the land confiscations) echoes these events in Eclogue One, contrasting the fortunate situation of a man who has kept his land with the misery of another who, having lost his farm, is departing into exile with other dispossessed people. The opening of Eclogue Nine also deals in pastoral terms with the dashed hopes and despair of those who have had their land taken.

As most who live in the country are painfully aware, South Africa too has a long history of land dispossession. From the beginning of European settlement in the seventeenth century, right through until the last days of the white government policy of apartheid in the 1980s, the indigenous peoples of South Africa have been forcibly deprived of their land by violence and conquest or by unjust laws imposed on them by colonial and apartheid governments. The legislation that, above all, formalized the wholly inequitable distribution of land in the country was the Natives Land Act of 1913. That Act, repealed only in 1991, consolidated minority white control over eighty-seven percent of South Africa's land surface, leaving the remaining thirteen percent of often barren and unproductive territory as the only space within which the Black majority might own or buy and sell land.

In 1916, the remarkable Solomon ("Sol") Plaatje, first secretary-general of the organization that would become the African National Congress, published *Native Life in South Africa* (Plaatje 2007). In 1913, Plaatje had traveled extensively through the provinces of South Africa, observing the immediate, catastrophic effects of the Land Act. Until now, many thousands of Black families had been living, sometimes for generations, on white-owned farms, on land that had formerly been theirs. Now, by a stroke of the pen, they were deprived of their customary entitlement to land. They became illegal squatters in "white" areas and a pool of labor for white farmers and the gold mines. They and their cattle had to go elsewhere. The only terms on which Blacks could legally remain were as servants of the landowner.

In words that seem eerily to echo Virgil, Plaatje writes of one unfortunate dispossessed person:

> Kgobadi's goats had been to kid when he trekked from his farm; but the kids, which in halcyon times represented the interest on his capital, were now one by one dying as fast as they were born and left by the roadside for the jackals and vultures to feast upon (Plaatje 2007, 73).

Compare the words of the farmer driven from his land in Virgil's Eclogue One:

> And I'm heartsore [...] as I drive off my goats,
> this one — her, I can scarcely drag along;
> she gave birth, just now, in the bush
> — twins — then abandoned them, the future of the herd;
> she left them behind there on bare rock (*Ecl.* 1.12–15).

Elsewhere, Plaatje terms these displaced farmers "exiles":

> Look at these exiles swarming towards the Basuto border, some of them with their belongings on their heads, driving their emaciated flocks attenuated by starvation and the cold (Plaatje 2007, 105).[2]

Virgil's *Eclogues* are, for many, such classic and familiar texts that it is easy to lose sight of just how how bold and innovative the poet was to introduce contemporary power politics and land issues into pastoral poetry. The history of land dispossession in southern Africa, as I have very briefly sketched it above, has led me to translate Eclogue One in an experimental way that, I hope, keeps these aspects fresh and to the fore. I eliminate ancient names, using instead, for instance, "Landman" (a fairly common South African surname) and "Exile" to designate Virgil's characters Tityrus and Meliboeus, the former remaining in place, having secured his land, the latter departing, having been deprived of his farm. And I choose local words for elements of the countryside and flora — coral tree, the bush, vlei, and krantz — to suggest a southern African background. To the same end, alluding to the central place of forebears in African society, I have rendered words at *Ecl.* 1.45 (which mean, literally, "pasture your cattle, as in the past, boys, rear your bulls") with: "My people, let your cattle graze, breed your bulls / as your ancestors did," and have translated words from *Ecl.* 1.67–69 (literally, "ever seeing in time to come my native fields") with "will I ever see my ancestors' land again?" In addition, the historically and politically charged term "settler" (see the Glossary & Index), which I use at line 70 of my translation of Eclogue One, evokes continuing South African debates about conquest and the occupation of land.

In his Eclogue Four, Virgil again pushes hard against the boundaries of traditional pastoral. This poem detailing the birth and growth to maturity of a divine child and seeming to allude to the politics of the day (the expectation of a longed-for peace accord in the Roman civil wars) comprises a striking fusion of pastoral motifs with eschatological thinking, prophetic poetry, and Greek myths of the succession of Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages. In this instance, too, I have been encouraged by the Roman poet's boldness to innovate in my translation.

As one would expect of a time and place in which all public power was in the hands of men, the gender of the divine child in Virgil's Eclogue Four is unambiguously male (Latin *puer,* "boy," is used of him, and *vir,* "man," of his maturity). But for a contemporary version of this unique pastoral I have chosen not to fix the child's gender and to designate it instead sometimes "she," sometimes "he."[3] I am influenced in this

2 For a more detailed discussion of Roman land issues in the Eclogues, with southern African parallels, see Whitaker (2026).

3 For poetic reasons, gender-neutral "they" cannot always be felicitously employed.

not only by the fact that Latin *puer* originally meant a child of any gender, and that Virgil in Eclogue Four several times designates the child by ungendered terms ("new humanity," "this glory of our time," "sweet divine offspring," "rootstock of the great god"), but also by Seamus Heaney's reworking of this pastoral in "Bann Valley Eclogue" where the child, whose approaching birth the poem celebrates, is a girl.

There are a couple of other places in my version of Eclogue Four where I have gone beyond Virgil's wording and touched on contemporary concerns. Thus, I have given voice to my and many South Africans' indignation at past and recent corruption in our country by fleshing out the ancient poet's bare reference to "residues" (*Ecl.* 4.31) of this scourge, expanding it with "corruption that cheated / workers of their wage, starved widows and orphans / but fattened wealth and power." In the next line, Virgil writes that these same traces of corruption will (I translate literally), "urge us to surround towns with walls," which I render "make us madly [...] build the Wall / along our borders" (one may think of China, the Middle East, West and East Germany, or the United States and Mexico).

One final instance. Virgil takes the startling step of bringing into his Eclogues Six and Ten a character who is a historical person, his friend, the love poet Gaius Cornelius Gallus, whose poetry (almost all lost) Virgil seems to allude to in these pastorals. In my experimental versions of these poems, I have substituted for Gallus a friend of mine, the excellent Afrikaans writer of Nama ancestry Lynthia Julius, author of two volumes of poetry, *Uit die kroes* (an almost untranslatable title: From Frizzy/Tightly-curled Hair—*kroes* being an offensive word for Black hair), published in 2020, and *Kinderlê* (Children Lying, the name of a monument to thirty-two Nama children massacred in the nineteenth century, but perhaps also an allusion to childbirth), published in 2024.

In *Ecl.* 6.65–73, Virgil has a Muse lead his friend Gallus up Mount Helicon, where the legendary poet Linus wreathes him, presents him with the pipes played by Hesiod (the near-contemporary of Homer), and tells him to use them to describe the origin of a famous grove of Apollo (a subject that may have occurred in Gallus's poetry). My rendering of the passage runs as follows:

> the mountain of poetry [...] a song spirit led her [Lynthia]
> higher and [...] the choir of the poetic god rose
> as one for her, and [...] the inspired singer hero,
> his head wreathed with flowers and parsley, spoke:
> "These panpipes are for you, a gift from the spirits of song
> [...]
> Use them to tell of the home of the Nama people,
> so that the poetry god will truly love that place."

As Virgil probably alluded to the poetry of Gallus, so my version alludes to poetry in an African context by Lynthia Julius, specifically her poem "Ontheemding" (Displacement) which begins:

> My ma is in Nababeep gebore
> 'n Namakwalandse kind
> ek toe dit Vrydagaand is in Xhoeroepoort
> blou en koud
> 'n Namakwalandse kind (Julius 2020, 41)
>
> (My mother was born in Nababeep
> a Namaqualand child
> me on a Friday night in Xhoeroepoort
> blue and cold
> a Namaqualand child[4])

The poem ends:

> My ma sê haar ouma was 'n Namavrou
> [...]
> My ma ken baie antwoorde
> sy's 'n goed belese vrou
> maar sy het nie antwoorde
> as ek vra wie die god van die Namas is nie (Julius 2020, 41–42)
>
> (My mother says her grandma was a Nama woman [...]
> My mother knows a lot of answers
> she's a well-read woman
> but she has no answers
> when I ask who the god of the Namas is[5])

Again, in my version of Eclogue Ten, I substitute Lynthia Julius for Gallus. And as with Eclogue Six, I echo her poetry, introducing numerous local references. For instance, when Virgil calls on the Naiads (river spirits), asking them where they were when Gallus was dying of love in Greek Arcadia, he lists places (all in Greece) where they were *not* — Parnassus, Pindus, and Aganippe. I have used instead the names of places in Lynthia Julius's home territory, the Northern Cape, several of which occur in her poetry. A favorite poem of mine, "Die intellektualisme van goed" (Intellectualizing stuff), lists all the authors that the poet is sick of reading at university, among them Michel Foucault, Achille Mbem-

4 Unpublished English translation © 2021 by Douglas Reid Skinner.
5 Ibid.

be, Thomas Nagel, and Noam Chomsky, then contrasts their names with the names of places back home that she longs for:

> I wanted to run
> through the whole of the Northern Cape
> past Griquatown, Groblershoop, Upington, Keimoes,
> Kakamas, Pofadder, Aggenys. (Julius 2020, 54[6])

My version of Virgil's appeal to the Naiads and list of Greek place names in Eclogue Ten runs as follows:

> River spirit girls, where were you,
> in what grassland or forest,
> as Lynthia was dying from a love not worthy of her?
> You were not in Xhoeroepoort, Kakamas, or Keimoes,
> no delay kept you on the heights of Gakarosa
> nor of Rooiberg, nor on the Namakwaland plain. (*Ecl.* 10.9–12)

One last detail of my version of this eclogue. In his pastoral poetry, Virgil turned the mountainous, Greek region of Arcadia into the quintessential pastoral landscape (creating a legacy that has been taken up repeatedly in European literature and art). I have kept the place name "Arcadia" in my translation of Eclogue Ten, because there is an "Arcadia" in South Africa. Where Virgil's Gallus at *Ecl.* 10.55 declares that he will traverse the heights of Maenalus (a mountain in ancient Arcadia), I have Lynthia say, "And I will range Meintjieskop" — Meintjieskop being a low ridge in the southern African Arcadia, a suburb of Pretoria where the governmental Union Buildings are located. Here, I have tried in my own way to recreate the gentle, somewhat tongue-in-cheek humour that pervades much of Virgil's Eclogue Ten.

Form of the Translation

When translating poetry, my preference is for a version that has some regard for the formal aspects of the original. Hence, I have rendered Virgil's *Eclogues* — which he composed using the hexameter, a quantitative meter — in verse rather than prose. Though I have always felt that it is pointless for a translator to go into detail about the workings of the quantitative meters of Greek and Latin poetry for those who will be reading that poetry in English translation, I wish to make just a couple of points about the poetic form of Virgil's *Eclogues*.

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6 Unpublished English translation © 2021 by Douglas Reid Skinner.

The six-beat Latin hexameter line is a relatively long one of 13 to 17 syllables, and so it normally falls into two (unequal) parts, divided by a main caesura or pause. For my taste, an ancient hexameter with its compulsory six stresses reproduced in English has a heavy, rather lumbering feel to it. Thus, I have chosen instead a more flexible line, mostly of 10, 11, or 12 syllables, occasionally more, and with sometimes five, sometimes six stresses.

Here are two examples from my versions. Stresses are marked in bold and underlined, while the main pause is marked with a double forward slash //, and lesser pauses with a single forward slash /. (Obviously, these marks are indicative only: in reading, not all stresses are equally strong, nor are all pauses — whether "main" or "lesser" respectively — of precisely equal length.) At the end of each line the number of syllables it contains is given in square brackets, the number of stresses in round brackets.

1. *Ecl.* 2.1–5:

Shepherd Corydon // was mad / for a handsome boy	[11] (5)
his master's darling // but had no reason to hope	[12] (5)
haunting the bush // he sought out the dense shade	[10] (6)
of a Boscia tree and / all alone / poured out his heart	[14] (6)
to thicket and mountain // moved by hopeless desire	[12] (5)

2. *Ecl.* 6.31–36

For he sang how // right through the mighty void	[10] (5)
the seeds of earth / air / water / and limpid fire	[10] (6)
were forced together // from these primordial roots	[12] (5)
all things arose // even our world's / congealing orb	[12 "e'en" or 13 "even"] (6)
then land / as it hardened / began to exclude	[11] (5)
the sea // and little by little / entities took shape	[13] (6)

By using these kinds of variation, I hope to have created a poetic text that gives at least some impression of the movement and structure of the Latin hexameter but still reads well in English.

Another variation I have used from time to time is a shortened line, particularly on occasions where Virgil puts into the mouth of one of his herdsmen a catalogue of "impossibilities," as in:

> Impalas will grow wings and fly
> fish will walk on land
> Germans will drink from the Tugela
> and Zulus from the Rhine (*Ecl.* 1.59–62).

or:

> Now sheep hunt jackals
> golden apples hang from the coral tree
> narcissus blooms on red alder
> amber beads ooze from leadwoods
> screech owls sing against swans (*Ecl.* 8.52–55).

In one instance, in my version of Eclogue Ten, I make quite extensive use of a different kind of verse. I render the cooler descriptive and narrative parts of this eclogue with the usual 5- or 6-stress measure, but when my character Lynthia, as an imagined Arcadian shepherd, dreams aloud of her love, I use a looser, dithyrambic line to represent her impassioned fugue state. For example:

> But now I'm madly in love,
> at war with myself,
> assegais flying,
> the enemy right in my face —
> and you far from home
> (I can hardly believe it!)
> staring at snow and frozen rivers
> without me.
> Oh, do not let the frost harm you! (*Ecl.* 10.44–48).

Latin Text

Because I like translations of poetry to have an accompanying text in the original language, I have included a Latin text of the *Eclogues* to stand alongside my versions. This will allow readers who know Latin well, or have some Latin, to compare the translation with the original. Also, although my translation leaves out, paraphrases, or changes many of the ancient names of places, flora, fauna, and mythological and historical persons, those who so wish can refer to the adjacent Latin text and easily find out what the original names were.

Because the numbers of lines in my renderings often differ slightly — sometimes substantially — from the numbers of lines in the original, I have tried to space the Latin text so that it aligns as closely as possible with the English.

The Latin text printed here is my own, based on several published editions of Virgil's *Eclogues*. I have made my own choice among the very few significant variant readings in the manuscripts. My punctuation of the Latin more or less corresponds with the punctuation of my English

translation. To assist those who do not know Latin well, I have printed "v" instead of consonantal "u."

William Kentridge Images

From the beginning, I felt that a visual element would greatly enhance this project. However, it was only after I had finished the translations that I asked for and secured permission — most generously granted — from William Kentridge, the renowned South African artist, filmmaker, and theater and opera director, to use images from his archive to accompany my texts.

All the Kentridge images used here — whether drawings, prints, frames drawn from videos or animated films, 3D works, or designs for tapestries and theatre and opera productions — were created in and for contexts very different from the context of Virgil and his *Eclogues*. Yet such is the richness, depth, and power of the visual artist's creations that they work wonderfully well with these southern African versions of Virgil's pastorals. And the positioning of most of Kentridge's art in an imaginative place somewhere between South Africa and other parts of the world, especially Europe, aligns closely with my translations, which occupy a space between Greece, Italy, and South Africa.

The longer I examined the archive and engaged in the pleasure of selecting images for my book, the more strongly I sensed a powerful affinity between the art of Kentridge and the poetry of Virgil. I find in both a largeness and generosity of spirit toward their characters and the world they inhabit; a deep understanding of the pain, longing, and sense of loss that so often accompany passionate love; an intermittent but persistent note of melancholy — partaking of "the still sad music of humanity," in William Wordsworth's memorable phrase — not inconsistent with moments of joy and playfulness (this last stronger, perhaps, in Kentridge than in Virgil); a potent and abiding attachment to the natural world, native place, and landscape — for Virgil, Italy and his home territory in the north around Mantua and Cremona, for Kentridge, South Africa, its largest city Johannesburg, and the Highveld, the high central plateau of the country.

Moreover, intertextuality and intimate engagement with the tradition of their respective arts characterize the work of both. Consider how much the poetry of Virgil echoes, reworks, and is informed by that of his Greek and Roman literary predecessors, and how aware Kentridge is of the arts of the past and how often he creates quite literal, concrete intertexts by using words and phrases drawn from his reading as part of his artworks, or makes images on old documents, maps, or pages from dictionaries and technical manuals. One might term relationships of

this kind with the creations of others *external* intertextuality. But also common to Virgil and Kentridge is an insistent *internal* intertextuality, a practice of setting up complex links, echoes, citations, and repetitions, each within and across his own images or poems. I have deliberately chosen for this book many artworks by Kentridge that contain echoes of this kind, and I invite readers and viewers to find for themselves instances of such internal intertextuality, both across the texts and across the images.

Behind the productions of both artist and poet one senses, too, a strong constructive intellect, though one that expresses itself not abstractly but through the sensuous means appropriate to poetry and the visual arts.

Another intriguing parallel between Kentridge and the poet of the *Eclogues* is that both like to introduce into their creations a figure that stands for the author of the work. I have sometimes in my translations given the name of "the Poet" to a character in the *Eclogues* who in some way stands for Virgil (see my Glossary & Index under "Poet, the"; "Landman"; and "Menalcas"). In words that could apply as much to Virgil's practice as to his own, Kentridge describes the frequent appearance in his art of figures that strongly resemble him: "Not self-portraits, but rather drawings of the self in the third person" (Kentridge 2024, 22'22").

Finally, both Virgil and Kentridge are acutely aware of contemporary politics and historical processes, and of how the powerless and vulnerable often suffer because of them; and they reflect this repeatedly in their work, though the ultimate commitment of each is to his art and not to any specific public cause or political program.

Although some of the Kentridge images that I have chosen to stand alongside the *Eclogues* are close to elements of my versions, none of them is a mere inert "illustration" of the text. Few works by this artist are simply pictorial. The Kentridge images here bristle with significance and — like refined, condensed radioactive material — radiate meanings that in multiple ways complement, support, contrast with, or challenge the meanings of Virgil's *Eclogues*. (I would urge those who read a printed copy of *African Pastoral* to have to hand also the digital version, so that they can enlarge the images and appreciate the wealth of significant detail they contain.)

As examples of the characteristic ways in which the visual material interacts with my versions, I shall discuss five of the Kentridge images in *African Pastoral*: the frontispiece, the three images that accompany Eclogue One, and the image next to the title of Eclogue Four.

The frontispiece, *Blinded by Dapple,* a large drawing (160.5 × 121 cm.) of a tree, displays many features often found in Kentridge's graphic work. The artist has made marks in Indian ink on dictionary pag-

es, assembled them as a collage — superimposed on other dictionary pages — to form the image of a bushveld tree, and then added further ink marks, as well as snippets of text extracted from his reading. Here, as elsewhere, intentional, but also semiconscious and partly random markings and patternings (note the text on the tree trunk: THE COINCIDENCE DEMANDS ITS HEARING) coexist with the rigid, ordered definitions of the dictionary.

Kentridge's *Blinded by Dapple* with its capitalized texts provides a marvelous, thought-provoking lead-in (WHAT LIES IN WAIT, WHAT LIES IN STORE) to my book of versions of pastoral. Trees and the shade they cast are a defining feature of Virgil's *Eclogues,* most often positive, providing welcome relief from the sun, but occasionally negative, as in the penultimate line of the last Eclogue, "shade harms the coral tree, and shadows, the crops" (*Ecl.* 10.76). This double aspect is present already in two texts of Kentridge's drawing. A quotation of the last line of Schubert's song "The Linden Tree," DU FÄNDEST RUHE DORT (There you would find rest), attached to the lower righthand branch of the tree, contrasts with THE FUTILE SHADE in the bottom right corner. At the same time, multiple texts among the upper branches relate closely to my project. THE SMELL OF OLD BOOKS and READING THE LANDSCAPE evoke texts of ancient pastoral, while thorny issues of translation are suggested by 2ND HAND READING, THE IMAGE OF AN IMAGE, LIES!, and PRODUCTIVE MISTRANSLATION.

The Kentridge charcoal and pastel drawing (fig. 2) opposite the title of Eclogue One shows a South African Highveld landscape with trees, low mountains, a rocky outcrop in the left foreground, and a marsh where reeds and stubbly grass grow. This is very like the landscape of Virgil's Eclogue One, where Landman's meagre land is described in these terms, "most of it's bare stone, and a shallow vlei and muddy reeds eat up your pasture" (*Ecl.* 1.46–48), while trees, a rocky overhang, and mountains form part of the pastoral scene of this poem. But the Kentridge image is by no means simply illustrative. The landscape in his drawing, as so often, has lost its innocence: a power that maps and calculates is seen to intervene; posts, a frame, and surveyors' red marks parcel out the land (compare fig. 20 which introduces Eclogue Seven), while the measuring vessels, indicated in light blue, that march across the landscape suggest the gauging of a water resource for exploitation. (Significantly, this image was one of a series by Kentridge entitled *Colonial Landscapes,* 1995–1996.) A new link between modern image and ancient text emerges. We are forcibly reminded that Landman's property only narrowly escaped the hostile attentions of the Roman land commissioners; the lands of the Exile, and others in Eclogue Nine, did not.

The additional two Kentridge images with Eclogue One also, in part, parallel the subject matter of the translation. The group of three

women traveling across a map of France in *Lampedusa* (fig. 3) — named for the Italian island where so many African migrants and refugees are landing — clearly relates to the situation of the Exile and his companions in the eclogue who are forced to leave the land of their birth for another country. But as with all the Kentridge images, there is more to it than that. In the first place, the artist introduces into this work several African references (and these resonate with the African elements in the translation). If you zoom in on the image you will find, integrated into the map of France, fragments of maps of mining areas in South Africa, as well the names of streets in the original gold-mining capital of the country, Johannesburg. All this gestures toward the century-and-a-half-long history of the use, by South African mining houses, of migrant laborers from within the country, and from neighboring territories. And then, pictured in the top left corner of the image, we see a cheque issued against "Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas)" in "Cape Town" (South Africa), implicating monetary interests in migrancy of different sorts. In these ways the Kentridge image extends and complicates the ideas of migration and exile raised by Virgil's first pastoral and my southern African version.

Just as, in the opening lines of my rendering of Eclogue One, Landman who lies at ease in the shade contrasts with the Exile who is leaving his land, so, in my two chosen Kentridge images respectively, the reclining figure of the *Red Sleeper* (fig. 4) contrasts with the hastening migrants of *Lampedusa* (fig. 3).

At first glance the Sleeper seems to be lying at rest, on a bench, though his pose appears somewhat awkward. For Kentridge, however, this is not a person at ease but a representative of an apartheid-era white South Africa that remained culpably oblivious to the crimes against fellow-countrymen perpetrated on its behalf. At the same time, this is a damaged, tormented figure who, paradoxically, displays on his body marks of the tortures carried out in his name. Zooming in, we see excoriations around the eye and on the hip and left foot. Kentridge describes how the image was disfigured "with footprints, with slaps with a rope, with a bicycle driving over the sheets of paper, making the drawing a record of all the damage done to the sheets" (Kentridge 2024, 22'33").

Returning to Virgil's text, Kentridge's *Red Sleeper* (fig. 4) alerts us to elements of the poem that we might otherwise overlook. One of these is the complacency displayed by Landman, who dwells continually on his own luck and has nothing to say about the Exile's misfortune. (Only at the end of the poem does he offer any comfort to his companion.) Another is something the poem mentions only in passing (at *Ecl.* 1.40), but which is important, that Landman came from slavery, a state in which he would have been liable to violence, and as a result could have borne on his body marks like those that disfigure Kentridge's Sleeper.

Lastly, a word on the Kentridge collage-drawing *Try to Understand this Simple Speech* (fig. 11) that accompanies the title of Eclogue Four. I have discussed earlier the way in which this poem expresses political optimism and hopes for peace through the notion of a divine birth and a predicted return of the Golden Age. I have in this instance chosen an image that runs counter to and subverts the "message" of the poem it introduces. *Try to Understand,* with its agitated figures and pessimistic texts, warns us against the things that Eclogue Four says will disappear, such as corruption and violence, and undermines the messianic expectations and optimism of the poem.

The image reminds us that, in the event, millennial hopes of peace and a political settlement in the Roman world at the time (41–40 BCE) when this eclogue was composed were dashed (as millennial hopes have so often been at other times and in other places) and that conflict continued for another decade. In South Africa, many of the fervent hopes that arose with the coming of democracy in 1994, particularly around land restitution and economic justice, remain unfulfilled. To naively continue hoping in South Africa, amid political decay and rampant corruption, for a return to a time when virtue reigned, is, in the despairing words of one unsuccessful claimant of his forbears' stolen land, Lebogang Seale, "tantamount to self-betrayal and a re-inflicting of [past] pain" (Seale 2024, 170).

ONE
EXILE & LAND



Fig. 2. Hunting the Spurwinged Goose, 1995/1996. Charcoal and pastel on paper, 122 × 160 cm.

I

MELIBOEUS
Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi
silvestrem tenui musam meditaris avena.
nos patriae finis et dulcia linquimus arva;
nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra
formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.

TITYRUS
O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit.
namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram
saepe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.
ille meas errare boves, ut cernis, et ipsum
ludere quae vellem calamo permisit agresti.

MELIBOEUS
Non equidem invideo, miror magis: undique totis
usque adeo turbatur agris. en ipse capellas
protinus aeger ago, hanc etiam vix, Tityre, duco.
hic inter densas corylos modo namque gemellos,
spem gregis, a, silice in nuda conixa reliquit.

saepe malum hoc nobis, si mens non laeva fuisset,
de caelo tactas memini praedicere quercus.
sed tamen iste deus qui sit da, Tityre, nobis.

TITYRUS
Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Meliboee, putavi
stultus ego huic nostrae similem, quo saepe solemus
pastores ovium teneros depellere fetus.
sic canibus catulos similes, sic matribus haedos

ONE

Exile
You lie there, Landman, sheltered by the trees,
and play your shady music on the flute.
For us, it's exile, goodbye the beloved country,
goodbye our native land, but you, Landman,
you relax in the shade and serenade your girlfriend.

Landman
A god did this — he'll always be a god for me —
he made it happen, this ... this easy life,
that's why I'll always praise him to the skies.
He let me play my country music on the flute
and my cattle safely graze.

Exile
It's not that I envy you — I'm just amazed:
such trouble, such chaos, all across the land.
And I'm heartsore, Landman, as I drive off my goats,
this one — her, I can scarcely drag along;
she gave birth, just now, in the bush
— twins — then abandoned them, the future of the herd;
she left them behind there on bare rock.
I must be blind, I should have known, there was an omen:
those oak trees scorched by heaven's lightning bolt.
But that "god" of yours, tell me who he is.

Landman
Well, the capital city — fool that I am,
I always thought the capital was like this town of ours
where we shepherds often take our lambs.
I used to compare little things with big:

noram, sic parvis componere magna solebam.
verum haec tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes,
quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

MELIBOEUS
Et quae tanta fuit Romam tibi causa videndi?

TITYRUS
Libertas, quae sera tamen respexit inertem,
candidior postquam tondenti barba cadebat,
respexit tamen et longo post tempore venit,
postquam nos Amaryllis habet, Galatea reliquit.
namque, fatebor enim, dum me Galatea tenebat,
nec spes libertatis erat nec cura peculi.
quamvis multa meis exiret victima saeptis
pinguis et ingratae premeretur caseus urbi
non umquam gravis aere domum mihi dextra redibat.

MELIBOEUS
Mirabar, quid maesta deos, Amarylli, vocares,
cui pendere sua patereris in arbore poma.
Tityrus hinc aberat. ipsae te, Tityre, pinus,
ipsi te fontes, ipsa haec arbusta vocabant.

TITYRUS
Quid facerem? neque servitio me exire licebat
nec tam praesentis alibi cognoscere divos.
hic illum vidi iuvenem, Meliboee, quotannis
bis senos cui nostra dies altaria fumant.
hic mihi responsum primus dedit ille petenti:
"pascite ut ante boves, pueri, submittite tauros."

MELIBOEUS
Fortunate senex! ergo tua rura manebunt.
et tibi magna satis, quamvis lapis omnia nudus
limosoque palus obducat pascua iunco;
non insueta gravis temptabunt pabula fetas
nec mala vicini pecoris contagia laedent.
fortunate senex! hic inter flumina nota
et fontis sacros frigus captabis opacum.
hinc tibi, quae semper, vicino ab limite saepes
Hyblaeis apibus florem depasta salicti

I knew that puppies looked like dogs
and kids like grownup goats —
but *that* city stands out above all other cities
as high as a coral tree towers above an aloe.

Exile
Yes, but what drove you to the capital?

Landman
Freedom! I never did much to earn it,
but freedom came to me, at last, in middle age,
when my earlier girlfriend left me
and this latest one moved in.
I had no money. I admit it: that first girl cost me plenty —
cash that could have set me free. All those sheep I drove to town!
All that cheese I made and tried to sell — useless!
I always came back home with pockets empty.

Exile
I wondered why your new girl looked so sad,
and why she didn't pick apples from the trees —
Landman was far away! I'm telling you, Landman,
even the pine trees here, the leiwater channels and vineyards
kept calling out your name!

Landman
I had no choice, no other escape from slavery,
nowhere but the capital to see that young god of mine.
That's where I found him, my friend, and on that date,
every month and every year I'll sacrifice to him.
I told him what we longed for, and this was what he said:
"My people, let your cattle graze, breed your bulls
as your ancestors did."

Exile
Lucky man! So you will keep your land!
And it's enough for you — so what
if most of it's bare stone, and a shallow vlei
and muddy reeds eat up your pasture.
At least strange fodder and disease from other flocks
won't kill your pregnant ewes.
Lucky man! You'll take it easy in the shade,
here, beside the springs and sacred streams
you know so well. As always, the buzzing

saepe levi somnum suadebit inire susurro;
hinc alta sub rupe canet frondator ad auras,
nec tamen interea raucae, tua cura, palumbes
nec gemere aëria cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

TITYRUS
Ante leves ergo pascentur in aethere cervi
et freta destituent nudos in litore pisces,
ante pererratis amborum finibus exsul
aut Ararim Parthus bibet aut Germania Tigrim,
quam nostro illius labatur pectore vultus.



Fig. 3. Lampedusa, 2022. Hand-woven mohair tapestry, 450 × 370 cm. Edition of 6 plus 2 AP.

of the bees, loaded with pollen from willow flowers,
will gently lull you to sleep, while workers
sing as they prune the vines, and in the trees your darling
pigeons and rock doves keep cooing from above.

Landman
Impalas will grow wings and fly
fish will walk on land
Germans will drink from the Tugela
and Zulus from the Rhine
before my heart could ever lose
the memory of my savior.



Fig. 4. The Red Sleeper, 1997. Etching, aquatint and drypoint from two plates on Velin Arches Blanc paper, 100 × 192 cm.

MELIBOEUS

At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros,
pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae veniemus Oaxen
et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos.
en umquam patrios longo post tempore finis
pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen
post aliquot mea regna videns mirabor aristas?
impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit,
barbarus has segetes. en quo discordia civis
produxit miseros. his nos consevimus agros?
insere nunc, Meliboee, piros, pone ordine vites.
ite meae, felix quondam pecus, ite capellae.
non ego vos posthac viridi proiectus in antro
dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo.
carmina nulla canam; non me pascente, capellae,
florentem cytisum et salices carpetis amaras.

TITYRUS

Hic tamen hanc mecum poteras requiescere noctem
fronde super viridi: sunt nobis mitia poma,
castaneae molles et pressi copia lactis,
et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant
maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

Exile
And us? Some will go deep into drought-stricken Africa,
Others will wander far across our borders. Years from now,
will I ever see my ancestors' land again?
See again my simple, grass-roofed hut?
See my little mielie patch, my kingdom?
No: a settler — some foreigner, some ex-soldier —
will grab my grazing lands and work my mielie field.
God! what misery war and fighting bring
on a country's people! Did I sow my lands
for those men? Go on, let me plant
my pear trees and grow my rows of vines!
Go on, my once-happy flock of goats!
Never again will I stretch out on the grass
under a rocky overhang and watch you there on the krantz.
I'll sing no songs. My goats, when you graze
the flowering clover and bitter willow
I will not be there to herd you.

Landman
But tonight, at least, rest here with me
on a simple reed bed, and share my wealth
of fruit and nuts and cheese.
Now smoke is rising above the grass roofs in the distance,
and shadows from the mountain peaks grow longer.

TWO

DESPAIRING LOVE



Fig. 5. The Unstable Landing Point of Desire, 2021. Indian ink, watercolor and collage on Phumani handmade paper, mounted on raw canvas, 373 × 187 cm.

II

Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexim,
delicias domini; nec quid speraret habebat.
tantum inter densas umbrosa cacumina fagos
adsidue veniebat. ibi haec incondita solus
montibus et silvis studio iactabat inani:

CORYDON

O crudelis Alexi, nihil mea carmina curas?
nil nostri miserere? mori me denique coges.
nunc etiam pecudes umbras et frigora captant,
nunc virides etiam occultant spineta lacertos,
Thestylis et rapido fessis messoribus aestu
alia serpyllumque herbas contundit olentis.
at mecum raucis, tua dum vestigia lustro,
sole sub ardenti resonant arbusta cicadis.
nonne fuit satius tristis Amaryllidis iras
atque superba pati fastidia? nonne Menalcan,
quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses?
o formose puer, nimium ne crede colori:
alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur.
    Despectus tibi sum nec qui sim quaeris, Alexi,
quam dives pecoris, nivei quam lactis abundans.
mille meae Siculis errant in montibus agnae;
lac mihi non aestate novum, non frigore defit.
canto quae solitus, si quando armenta vocabat,
Amphion Dircaeus in Actaeo Aracyntho.
nec sum adeo informis: nuper me in litore vidi,
cum placidum ventis staret mare. non ego Daphnim
iudice te metuam, si numquam fallit imago.
    O tantum libeat mecum tibi sordida rura
atque humilis habitare casas et figere cervos

TWO

Shepherd Corydon was mad for a handsome boy,
his master's darling, but had no reason to hope.
Haunting the bush, he sought out the dense shade
of a Boscia tree and, all alone, poured out his heart
to thicket and mountain, moved by hopeless desire:

Corydon
Cruel boy, do my songs not move you at all?
Have you no pity? Must I kill myself for you?
Now, even the sheep make for cool and shady places,
even the plated lizards hide away in the bush,
and a girl pounds herbs and wild greens with garlic
for reapers worn out by the scorching sun.
But I trail after you in the searing heat, alone
except for the cicadas' shrill echoing song.
Should I rather have endured my girlfriend's
fiery temper and picky pride? preferred the Poet,
although he is Black, while your complexion is fair?
Pretty boy, don't trust too much in color:
white daisies wilt, black nastergal berries are chosen.
    You despise me, you don't want to know who I am —
how wealthy in flocks, how rich in snow-white milk.
My sheep in their thousands roam the Karoo koppies;
winter and summer, fresh milk never fails me.
What I sing is no different from the songs
that heroes sang when they called the cattle home.
And I'm not that ugly, just now I saw my reflection
when the sea was unruffled and smooth. If I'm not wrong,
you'd rate my looks above the shepherd hero's.
    If only you and I could live in a simple hut
in the humble platteland, hunt springbok

haedorumque gregem viridi compellere hibisco!
mecum una in silvis imitabere Pana canendo
(Pan primum calamos cera coniungere pluris
instituit, Pan curat ovis oviumque magistros),
nec te paeniteat calamo trivisse labellum.
haec eadem ut sciret, quid non faciebat Amyntas?
est mihi disparibus septem compacta cicutis
fistula, Damoetas dono mihi quam dedit olim
et dixit moriens: "te nunc habet ista secundum."
dixit Damoetas, invidit stultus Amyntas.
praeterea duo nec tuta mihi valle reperti
capreoli, sparsis etiam nunc pellibus albo;
bina die siccant ovis ubera: quos tibi servo.
iam pridem a me illos abducere Thestylis orat;
et faciet, quoniam sordent tibi munera nostra.
    Huc ades, o formose puer! tibi lilia plenis
ecce ferunt nymphae calathis; tibi candida Nais,
pallentis violas et summa papavera carpens,
narcissum et florem iungit bene olentis anethi;
tum casia atque aliis intexens suavibus herbis
mollia luteola pingit vaccinia calta.
ipse ego cana legam tenera lanugine mala
castaneasque nuces, mea quas Amaryllis amabat.
addam cerea pruna (honos erit huic quoque pomo),
et vos, o lauri, carpam et te, proxima myrte,
sic positae quoniam suavis miscetis odores.
    Rusticus es, Corydon: nec munera curat Alexis;
nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas.
heu heu! quid volui misero mihi? floribus Austrum
perditus et liquidis immissi fontibus apros.
    Quem fugis, a, demens? habitarunt di quoque silvas
Dardaniusque Paris. Pallas quas condidit arces
ipsa colat; nobis placeant ante omnia silvae.
torva leaena lupum sequitur, lupus ipse capellam,
florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella,
te Corydon, o Alexi: trahit sua quemque voluptas.
    Aspice, aratra iugo referunt suspensa iuvenci
et sol crescentis decedens duplicat umbras;
me tamen urit amor: quis enim modus adsit amori?
a, Corydon, Corydon, quae te dementia cepit!
semiputata tibi frondosa vitis in ulmo est.
quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus,
viminibus mollique paras detexere iunco?
invenies alium, si te hic fastidit, Alexim.

and drive our herd of goats with a dekriet cane!
I'd teach you to play Nyanga panpipes like the god
— the goat god was first to join reeds together with wax,
the goat god cares for shepherds and their sheep —
and you would not be ashamed to mouth the pipes.
The boy piper would kill for knowledge of such music!
I have a set of seven pipes each of a different length
that a herdsman once gave me as a gift, saying
on his deathbed: "Now you are their second owner."
That's what he said, and the foolish boy piper felt envy.
And in a wild valley I found two baby bushbuck,
with white spots on their coats. Twice a day, they drain
the ewe's udder dry: I am keeping them for you.
The reapers' girl keeps telling me she must have them —
and she *will* since my gifts mean nothing to you.

Beautiful boy, come to me! Look, the water spirits
bring you baskets of lilies, and for you the lovely
river spirit gathers Karoo violets and cosmos
and binds wreaths of fragrant fennel and narcissus,
and, weaving together buchu and scented herbs,
she varies African marigolds with dark berries.
And I'll pick marula fruits, the sheen still on them,
and macadamia nuts that my girlfriend always loved.
I'll add wild plums (this fruit, too, shall be honored)
and I'll pluck branches of bay together with myrtle
so they mingle their subtle aromas side by side.

You're a fool, Corydon — the boy doesn't want your gifts;
when it comes to gifts, the master will always win.
What have I done? — I'm in pain — I've let scorching winds
wilt the flowers, and wild pigs muddy the springs.

You are mad to avoid me — gods lived in the wild,
so did famous heroes. Athena founded a city
— let her live there! The bush is where I thrive.
The lioness goes for the jackal, the jackal for the goat,
the randy goat wants new shoots of acacia,
and Corydon his boy: each to their own pleasure.

Look, the sun is sinking, shadows grow longer
and oxen carry ploughshares hanging from the yoke
but love sets me on fire: what limit is there to love?
Corydon, Corydon, what craziness possessed you!
You have left your vines half-trimmed upon their props.
So why don't you busy yourself with something useful,
like weaving pliant matjiesgoed into baskets?
If this one rejects you, you'll find another boy.



Fig. 6. Drawing for the film Il Ritorno d'Ulisse, 1998. Charcoal on paper, 70 × 100 cm.



Fig. 7. Travelling Across the World with Closed Eyes, 2024. Indian ink and colored pencil on Phumani handmade paper 208 × 177.5 cm.

THREE

CONFLICT & CONTEST

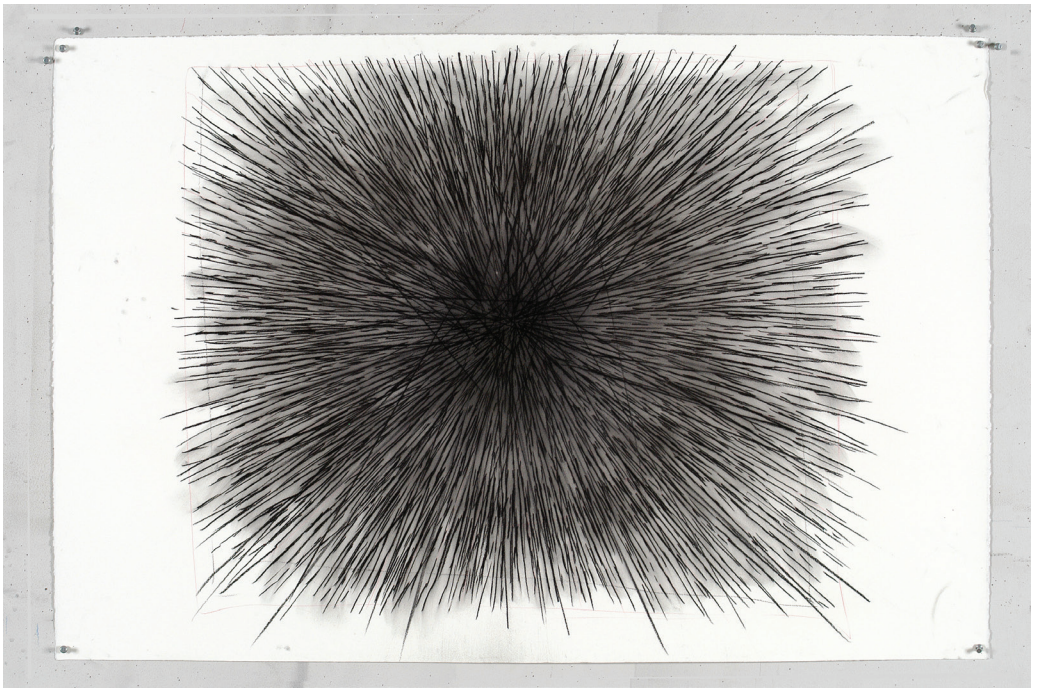


Fig. 8. Drawing for the Magic Flute (Dark Burst), 2004. Charcoal on paper, 180 × 120 cm.

III

MENALCAS
Dic mihi, Damoeta, cuium pecus? an Meliboei?

DAMOETAS
Non, verum Aegonis; nuper mihi tradidit Aegon.

MENALCAS
Infelix o semper, oves, pecus! ipse Neaeram
dum fovet ac ne me sibi praeferat illa veretur,
hic alienus ovis custos bis mulget in hora,
et sucus pecori et lac subducitur agnis.

DAMOETAS
Parcius ista viris tamen obicienda memento.
novimus et qui te transversa tuentibus hircis
et quo — sed faciles nymphae risere — sacello.

MENALCAS
Tum, credo, cum me arbustum videre Miconis
atque mala vitis incidere falce novellas.

DAMOETAS
Aut hic ad veteres fagos cum Daphnidis arcum
fregisti et calamos, quae tu, perverse Menalca,
et cum vidisti puero donata, dolebas,
et, si non aliqua nocuisses, mortuus esses.

MENALCAS
Quid domini faciant, audent cum talia fures?
non ego te vidi Damonis, pessime, caprum
excipere insidiis multum latrante Lycisca?

THREE

Menalcas
Tell me, who do these sheep belong to? Meliboeus?

Damoetas
No, the neighbor — he wanted me to watch them.

Menalcas
Poor old sheep! Poor flock! While the boss fondles
our girl (and is scared that she prefers me),
this hired hand milks the sheep every half hour,
robbing the flock and stealing milk from the lambs.

Damoetas
You should watch yourself — insulting people like that!
We know who did *you* — your goats looked sideways,
but the water spirits just laughed — and in what shrine.

Menalcas
The time, I guess, when they saw *me* damage our friend's
fruit trees and slash his new vines with a panga!

Damoetas
Horrible Menalcas, here, next to these old beech trees,
you broke that young boy's bow and arrows.
You hated them being given to the boy and
would have died if you could not do him harm.

Menalcas
What must the boss do when thieves are so brazen?
You crook, I saw you steal that herdsman's goat
— Jackal, the dog, kept barking her head off —

et cum clamarem "quo nunc se proripit ille?
Tityre, coge pecus!" tu post carecta latebas.

DAMOETAS
An mihi cantando victus non redderet ille,
quem mea carminibus meruisset fistula caprum?
si nescis, meus ille caper fuit; et mihi Damon
ipse fatebatur, sed reddere posse negabat.

MENALCAS
Cantando tu illum? aut umquam tibi fistula cera
iuncta fuit? non tu in triviis, indocte, solebas
stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen?

DAMOETAS
Vis ergo inter nos quid possit uterque vicissim
experiamur? ego hanc vitulam (ne forte recuses,
bis venit ad mulctram, binos alit ubere fetus)
depono; tu dic, mecum quo pignore certes.

MENALCAS
De grege non ausim quicquam deponere tecum:
est mihi namque domi pater, est iniusta noverca;
bisque die numerant ambo pecus, alter et haedos.
verum, id quod multo tute ipse fatebere maius,
insanire libet quoniam tibi, pocula ponam
fagina, caelatum divini opus Alcimedontis,
lenta quibus torno facili superaddita vitis
diffusos hedera vestit pallente corymbos.
in medio duo signa, Conon et — quis fuit alter,
descripsit radio totum qui gentibus orbem,
tempora quae messor, quae curvus arator haberet?
necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo.

DAMOETAS
Et nobis idem Alcimedon duo pocula fecit
et molli circum est ansas amplexus acantho
Orpheaque in medio posuit silvasque sequentis.
necdum illis labra admovi, sed condita servo.
si ad vitulam spectas, nihil est quod pocula laudes.

MENALCAS
Numquam hodie effugies; veniam quocumque vocaris.
audiat haec tantum — vel qui venit, ecce Palaemon.

and when I shouted, "Where's he off to now?
Landman, guard the flock!" you hid in the reedbeds.

Damoetas
Yes, but he owed me that goat! I beat him
at music — didn't I win it outright with my tunes?
In case you don't know, that goat was mine,
even he said so, but he wouldn't hand it over.

Menalcas
You ... him ... at *music*? What panpipes did you
ever have? Idiot! You'd screech away in the street,
murdering a tune on your cheap penny whistle.

Damoetas
So: what about a music challenge — I sing,
then you? I stake this heifer (you can't refuse,
she gives milk twice a day and has twin young).
Come on, what is *your* stake for the challenge?

Menalcas
Well, I couldn't bet an animal from the herd ...
There's my father and a cruel stepmother
at home: twice a day they count the kids and goats.
But if you insist on this insane contest
I have a stake you must admit is finer —
two wooden cups, made by a godlike artist
whose deft chisel has carved there a pliant vine,
its spreading clusters wreathed with pale ivy,
and two figures in the middle, Conon, and —
who was the other that surveyed the whole sky,
marking seasons for harvester and ploughman?
They're good as new and have never touched my lips.

Damoetas
The same artist also made two cups for me —
he carved handles wreathed with soft acanthus,
and Orpheus in the middle, trees following him.
They're good as new and have never touched my lips.
Next to my heifer, your cups are no big deal.

Menalcas
Right, I'll meet you on your terms — you're done for!
But we need a judge ... Oh look, here's Palaemon.

efficiam posthac ne quemquam voce lacessas.

DAMOETAS
Quin age, si quid habes; in me mora non erit ulla,
nec quemquam fugio: tantum, vicine Palaemon,
sensibus haec imis, res est non parva, reponas.

PALAEMON
Dicite, quandoquidem in molli consedimus herba.
et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
nunc frondent silvae, nunc formosissimus annus.
incipe, Damoeta; tu deinde sequere, Menalca.
alternis dicetis: amant alterna Camenae.

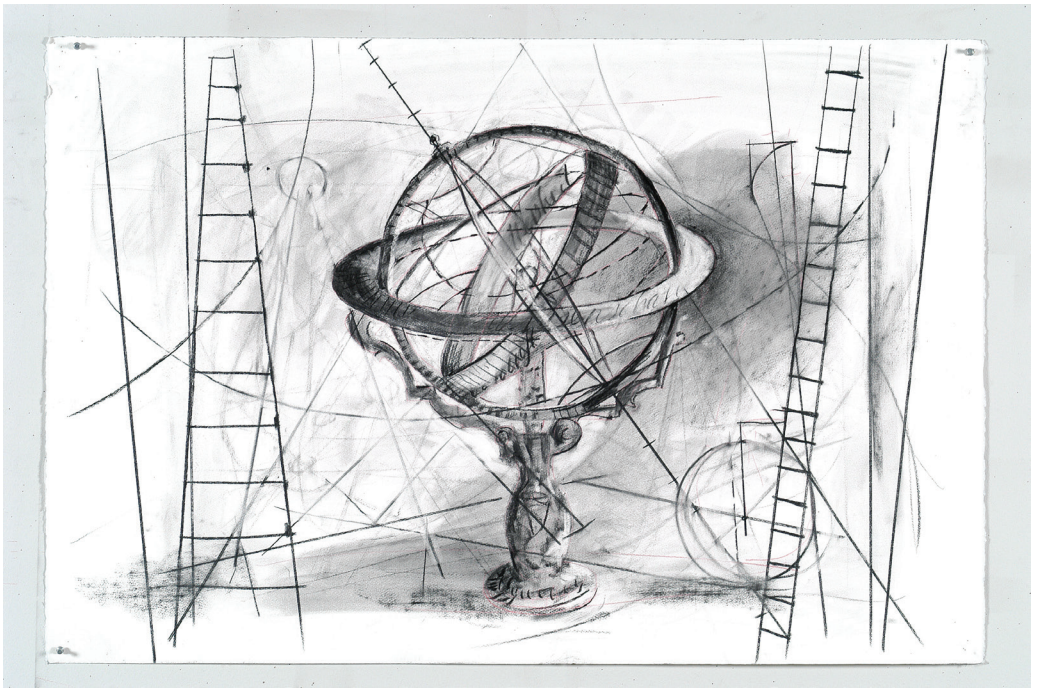


Fig. 9. Drawing for the Magic Flute (Globe), 2004. Charcoal on paper, 80 × 120 cm.

I'll make dead sure that this is your last challenge.

Damoetas
Bring it on, show me what you've got — I won't hold back,
I'm not afraid of anyone. But, friend Palaemon,
be sure to concentrate: this is serious business.

Palaemon
We are seated now on soft grass — so, begin!
And now, every field, every tree, bears fruit,
leaves sprout, it is the best season of the year.
Damoetas, you sing first, Menalcas, you next,
each in turn — the song spirits love to take turns.

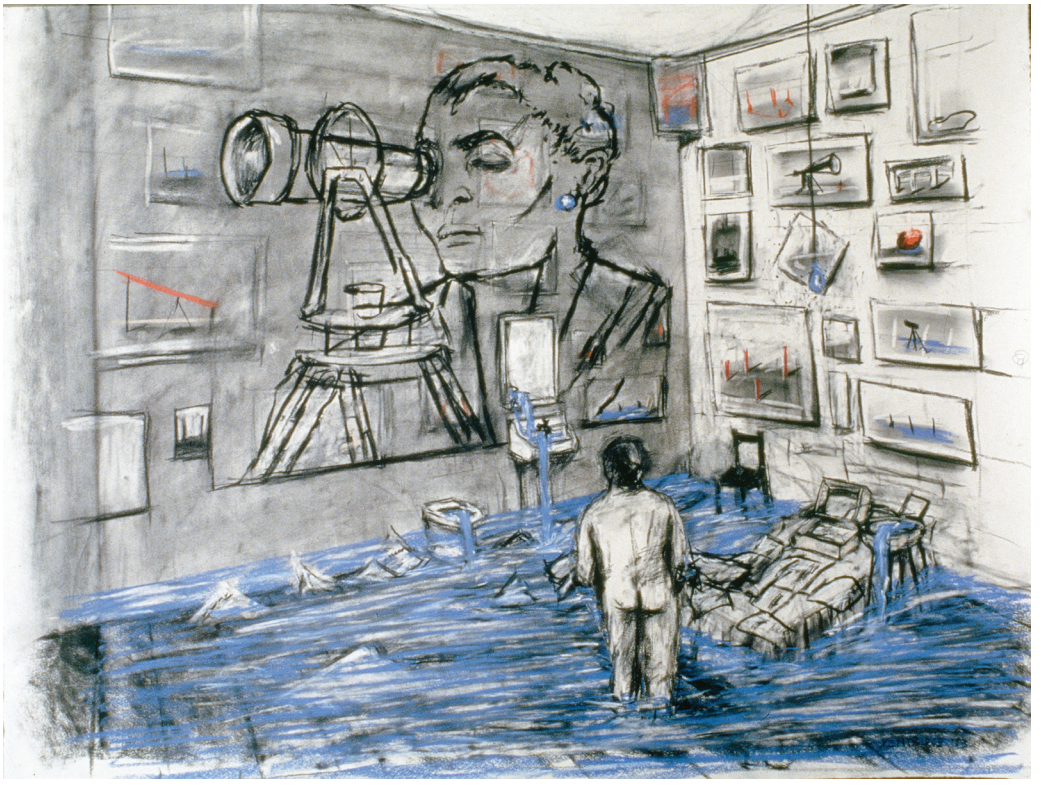


Fig. 10. Drawing for the film Felix in Exile, 1994. Charcoal and pastel on paper, 120 × 150 cm.

DAMOETAS
Ab Iove principium musae, Iovis omnia plena;
ille colit terras, illi mea carmina curae.

MENALCAS
Et me Phoebus amat; Phoebo sua semper apud me
munera sunt, lauri et suave rubens hyacinthus.

DAMOETAS
Malo me Galatea petit, lasciva puella,
et fugit ad salices et se cupit ante videri.

MENALCAS
At mihi sese offert ultro meus ignis, Amyntas,
notior ut iam sit canibus non Delia nostris.

DAMOETAS
Parta meae Veneri sunt munera: namque notavi
ipse locum, aëriae quo congessere palumbes.

MENALCAS
Quod potui, puero silvestri ex arbore lecta
aurea mala decem misi; cras altera mittam.

DAMOETAS
O quotiens et quae nobis Galatea locuta est!
partem aliquam, venti, divum referatis ad auris.

MENALCAS
Quid prodest, quod me ipse animo non spernis, Amynta,
si, dum tu sectaris apros, ego retia servo?

DAMOETAS
Phyllida mitte mihi; meus est natalis, Iolla;
cum faciam vitula pro frugibus, ipse venito.

MENALCAS
Phyllida amo ante alias: nam me discedere flevit
et longum "formose, vale, vale," inquit, Iolla.

DAMOETAS
Triste lupus stabulis, maturis frugibus imbres,
arboribus venti, nobis Amaryllidis irae.

Damoetas
Spirits of song, begin from god, god is everywhere,
he loves the world and he cares about my songs.

Menalcas
The poetic god loves me — at home I have
gifts for him: blushing hyacinth and bay leaves.

Damoetas
My girlfriend pelts me with apples, naughty girl,
and runs to the trees and hides, longing to be found.

Menalcas
But my beloved boy freely gives himself to me —
the dogs know him better than they know my girl.

Damoetas
I have presents for my darling — I noted down
the ring-necked doves' high gathering place.

Menalcas
I sent my boy a modest gift: ten golden
apples from the woods, and ten for him tomorrow.

Damoetas
What wondrous things my girlfriend said to me!
You breezes must share them with the gods.

Menalcas
My boy, I know that your heart favors me,
but why must I watch the nets while you hunt warthog?

Damoetas
Send our girl to me — it's my birthday, boss;
when I sacrifice the heifer, come yourself.

Menalcas
I'm mad for our girl, boss — she cried when I left,
and kept on saying, "Goodbye, goodbye, handsome!"

Damoetas
Jackals destroy sheep, cloudbursts the ripening crops,
stormwinds the trees, and me my girlfriend's anger.

MENALCAS
Dulce satis umor, depulsis arbutus haedis,
lenta salix feto pecori, mihi solus Amyntas.

DAMOETAS
Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica, musam:
Pierides, vitulam lectori pascite vestro.

MENALCAS
Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina: pascite taurum,
iam cornu petat et pedibus qui spargat harenam.

DAMOETAS
Qui te, Pollio, amat veniat quo te quoque gaudet;
mella fluant illi, ferat et rubus asper amomum.

MENALCAS
Qui Bavium non odit, amet tua carmina, Maevi,
atque idem iungat vulpes et mulgeat hircos.

DAMOETAS
Qui legitis flores et humi nascentia fraga,
frigidus, o pueri, fugite hinc, latet anguis in herba.

MENALCAS
Parcite, oves, nimium procedere: non bene ripae
creditur; ipse aries etiam nunc vellera siccat.

DAMOETAS
Tityre, pascentis a flumine reice capellas:
ipse, ubi tempus erit, omnis in fonte lavabo.

MENALCAS
Cogite oves, pueri! si lac praeceperit aestus,
ut nuper, frustra pressabimus ubera palmis.

DAMOETAS
Heu heu! quam pingui macer est mihi taurus in ervo:
idem amor exitium pecori pecorisque magistro.

MENALCAS
His certe — neque amor causa est — vix ossibus haerent;
nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.

Menalcas
New-sown plants love water, goats sweet berries,
kids soft willow shoots, and my boy only me.

Damoetas
My Friend the critic loves our verse although it's rustic:
spirits of song, fatten a calf for your reader.

Menalcas
My Friend the critic himself writes modern poems: fatten
the bull that tosses his horns and kicks up dust.

Damoetas
May all who love my Friend go where he wishes:
let honey flow for him, and thorns bear spice.

Menalcas
Whoever likes bad poetry, loves yours, P— ,
and will plough with jackals and milk he-goats.

Damoetas
Boys, stop picking flowers and nastergal berries —
run, a coldblooded snake is lurking in the grass!

Menalcas
You sheep, don't stray too far, the riverbanks
are crumbling — look, the ram's fleece is soaking wet!

Damoetas
Landman, herd those she-goats away from the stream:
when the time is right, I'll wash them at the spring.

Menalcas
Kraal the sheep, boys! If the heat dries up their milk,
like yesterday, we will squeeze their teats in vain.

Damoetas
Oh no! The grass is lush, but my bull is thin:
desire destroys both herdsman and the herd.

Menalcas
My lambs are skin and bone, bewitched, maybe,
by the evil eye — desire is not to blame.

DAMOETAS
Dic quibus in terris — et eris mihi magnus Apollo —
tris pateat caeli spatium non amplius ulnas.

MENALCAS
Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
nascantur flores — et Phyllida solus habeto.

PALAEMON
Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.
et vitula tu dignus et hic, et quisquis amores
aut metuet dulcis aut experietur amaros.
claudite iam rivos, pueri, sat prata biberunt.

Damoetas
Tell me where on earth — and you'll be an oracle —
the heavens are as little as nine feet wide.

Menalcas
Tell me where on earth flowers grow marked
with a royal name — and our girl will be yours.

Palaemon
What a contest! I cannot judge between you.
You both deserve the heifer — as do all
who will feel love's pain or fear its sweetness.
Shut the leiwater, boys, the grass is watered well.

FOUR

GOLDEN AGE CHILD



Fig. 11. Try to Understand this Simple Speech, 2023. Indian ink, colored pencil and collage on Phumani handmade paper. Main dimensions: 224.5 × 165.5 cm.

IV

Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus!
non omnis arbusta iuvant humilesque myricae;
si canimus silvas, silvae sint consule dignae.
Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.
iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
casta fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo.
Teque adeo decus hoc aevi, te consule, inibit,
Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses;
te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,
inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.
ille deum vitam accipiet divisque videbit
permixtos heroas et ipse videbitur illis
pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.
At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu
errantis hederas passim cum baccare tellus
mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.
ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae
ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones;
ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores.
occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
occidet — Assyrium vulgo nascetur amomum.
At simul heroum laudes et facta parentis
iam legere et quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus,
molli paulatim flavescet campus arista
incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva
et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella.
pauca tamen suberunt priscae vestigia fraudis,

FOUR

Spirits of pastoral, we must sing a larger theme!
Simple acacia and knobthorn do not satisfy all;
if we sing of trees, they must dignify a leader.
    The final era of prophetic song has dawned:
the great cycle of the ages starts afresh.
Now Justice returns, the Golden Age returns
and a new humanity comes down from the sky.
Child, at your birth the Age of Iron will end
and an Age of Gold will spread across the world.
Bless her, chaste Moon — your brother, the Sun god, now rules.
    While you are leader, Friend, this glory of our time
will come, and the great months will start to roll by.
Under you, lingering traces of our corruption,
made harmless, will free the world at last from fear.
And the child will lead a god's life, seeing ancestors
mingle with gods and himself being seen by them,
and will rule a world made peaceful by his parent.
    And first, the unsown earth will bloom for you
little girl, with cosmos and wandering ivy,
and smile with Karoo violets and flame lilies.
Unherded, she-goats will come home, udders swollen
with milk, and the bull will lie down with the lion,
and your cradle will overflow with scented blossom.
All snakes will die and deceptive poisonous plants
will wither away — sweet nard will cover the earth.
    Then, once you can tell right from wrong, and can read
of your parent's deeds and the ancestors' praises,
little by little, the land will turn golden with maize,
grapes will hang from untended buffalo thorn
and leadwoods will ooze drops of liquid honey.
But residues of the old corruption that cheated

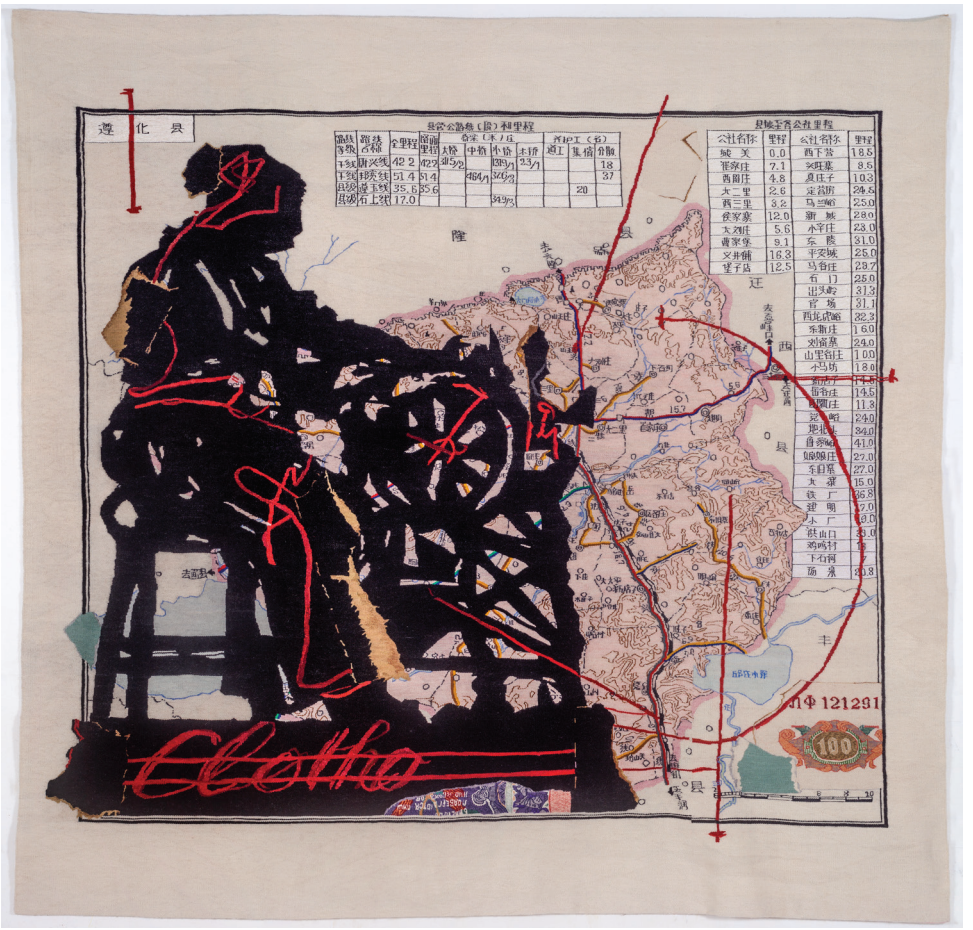


Fig. 12. Spinner, 2021. Hand-woven mohair tapestry, 254 × 258 cm. Edition of 6 plus 2 AP.

quae temptare Thetim ratibus, quae cingere muris
oppida, quae iubeant telluri infindere sulcos.
alter erit tum Tiphys et altera quae vehat Argo
delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella
atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles.
    Hinc, ubi iam firmata virum te fecerit aetas,
cedet et ipse mari vector, nec nautica pinus
mutabit merces: omnis feret omnia tellus.
non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem;
robustus quoque iam tauris iuga solvet arator;
nec varios discet mentiri lana colores,
ipse sed in pratis aries iam suave rubenti
murice, iam croceo mutabit vellera luto,
sponte sua sandyx pascentis vestiet agnos.



Fig. 13. Untitled (Drawing for Waiting for the Sibyl), 2019. Charcoal and pastel on *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* pages, 84 × 141 cm.

workers of their wage, starved widows and orphans
but fattened wealth and power — residues will remain
and make us madly sail the seas and build the Wall
along our borders and rip up mother earth.
A new voyage will sail for the Golden Fleece
with great heroes — new wars will break out, and
mighty Achilles will be sent again to Troy.

Later, when time has matured and strengthened you,
merchants will quit the sea, and trade between
nations will end — each land will make all that it needs.
No spade will wound the soil, no pruning hook, the vine;
strong ploughmen will free oxen from the yoke;
and no fake dyes will turn wool multiple colors —
rams will roam the fields, their fleeces changing
from saffron to blushing purple spontaneously,
and vermilion will cloak the grazing lambs.

"Talia saecla" suis dixerunt "currite" fusis
concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.
adgredere o magnos — aderit iam tempus — honores,
cara deum suboles, magnum Iovis incrementum!
aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum
terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum,
aspice, venturo laetantur ut omnia saeclo!
O mihi tum longae maneat pars ultima vitae,
spiritus et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta:
non me carminibus vincat nec Thracius Orpheus
nec Linus, huic mater quamvis atque huic pater adsit,
Orphei Calliopea, Lino formosus Apollo.
Pan etiam, Arcadia mecum si iudice certet,
Pan etiam Arcadia dicat se iudice victum.
Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem:
matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses.
incipe, parve puer: qui non risere parenti,
nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.

The Fates have said to their spindles: "Let the new age roll!"
— the Fates, concordant by destiny's firm decree.
Sweet divine offspring, rootstock of the great god,
the time is now, take on your mighty birthright!
Look how the earth, the vast ocean, the depths of the sky
and the vaulted mass of the universe tremble!
Look how the world delights in the age to come!
May I live long enough and have sufficient
breath to sing your praises and your triumphs:
my songs would rival those of Orpheus, helped
by his song-spirit mother, or those of the singer
hero, helped by the god of poetry, his father.
And if the goat god should compete, with Arcadia
as judge, even so the goat god would be beaten.
Begin, little child, to smile at your mother —
she has carried you for nine long weary months.
For those who have not smiled, the god will not share
his table with her, nor the goddess her bed with him.

FIVE

DEATH & APOTHEOSIS OF DAPHNIS

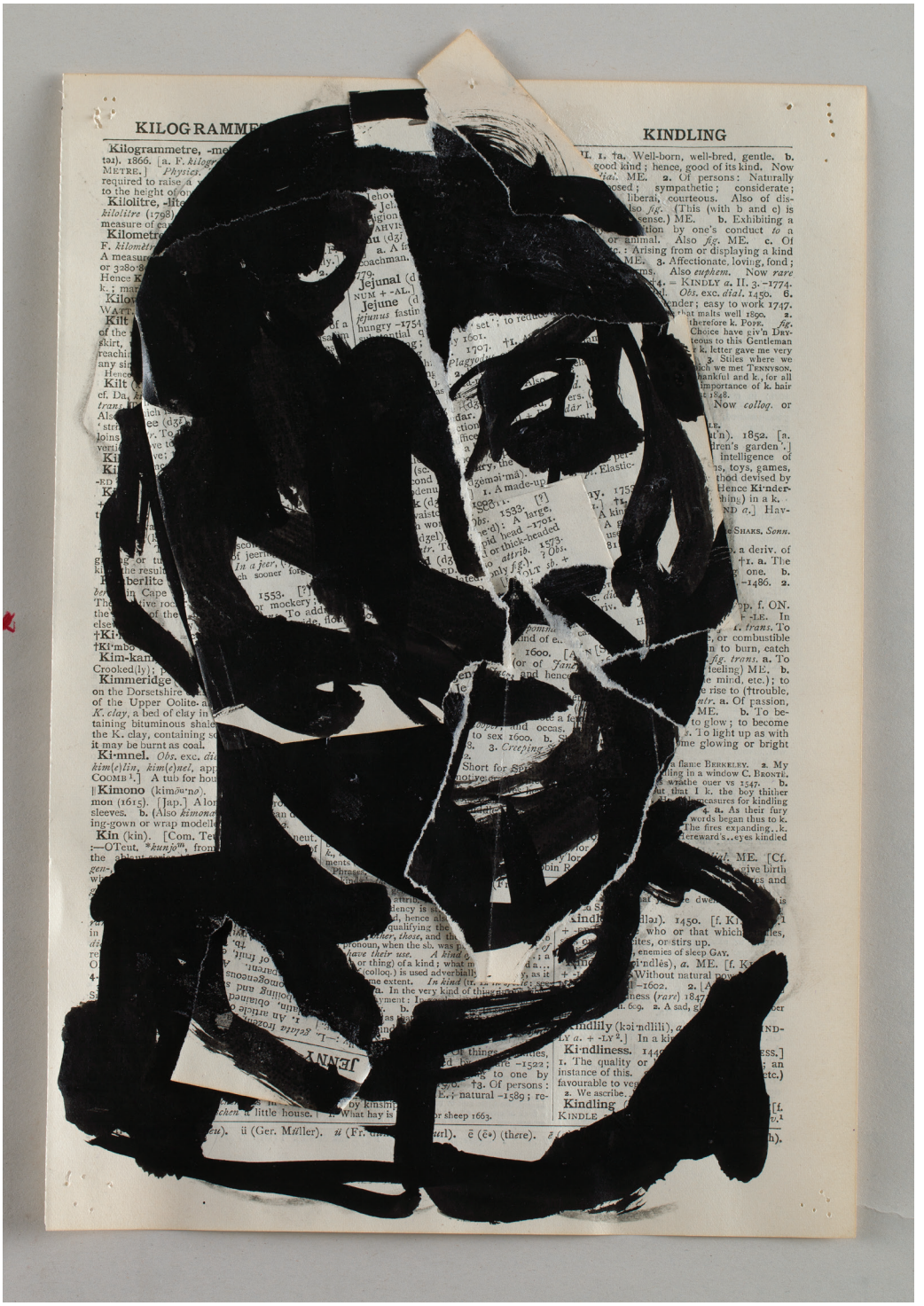


Fig. 14. Drawing for More Sweetly Play the Dance (Portrait of Man), 2014. Indian ink and collage on found paper from *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 28 × 19 cm.

V

MENALCAS
Cur non, Mopse, boni quoniam convenimus ambo,
tu calamos inflare levis, ego dicere versus,
hic corylis mixtas inter consedimus ulmos?

MOPSUS
Tu maior; tibi me est aequum parere, Menalca,
sive sub incertas zephyris motantibus umbras
sive antro potius succedimus. aspice, ut antrum
silvestris raris sparsit labrusca racemis.

MENALCAS
Montibus in nostris solus tibi certat Amyntas.

MOPSUS
Quid, si idem certet Phoebum superare canendo?

MENALCAS
Incipe, Mopse, prior, si quos aut Phyllidis ignes
aut Alconis habes laudes aut iurgia Codri.
incipe; pascentis servabit Tityrus haedos.

MOPSUS
Immo haec, in viridi nuper quae cortice fagi
carmina descripsi et modulans alterna notavi,
experiar: tu deinde iubeto ut certet Amyntas.

MENALCAS
Lenta salix quantum pallenti cedit olivae,
puniceis humilis quantum saliunca rosetis,
iudicio nostro tantum tibi cedit Amyntas.

FIVE

The Poet
Mopsus, good to meet you. Since we're both skilled,
you on the panpipes, I at reciting verse,
let's settle down here among rhus and acacia.

Mopsus
You are my elder, Poet, I must obey —
here, where gentle breezes dapple the shade,
or under this rock shelter: look how the clusters
on the wild vine sprawl across the rockface.

The Poet
In these hills, only the boy piper rivals you.

Mopsus
But this boy rivals even the god of poetry.

The Poet
Begin, Mopsus — sing of that girl, your flame,
sing a praise song or sing a song of blame.
Begin: Landman will watch your goats at grass.

Mopsus
I would rather try these verses I carved on the bark
of a tree, scoring in turn for panpipes and for voice:
you tell me if the boy piper can compete.

The Poet
I judge you to be far better than that boy —
as far as the pale olive excels the willow
or the blood-red rose the humble restio.

sed tu desine plura, puer: successimus antro.

MOPSUS

Exstinctum nymphae crudeli funere Daphnim
flebant — vos coryli testes et flumina nymphis —
cum complexa sui corpus miserabile nati
atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater.
non ulli pastos illis egere diebus
frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina; nulla neque amnem
libavit quadrupes nec graminis attigit herbam.
Daphni, tuum Poenos etiam ingemuisse leones
interitum montesque feri silvaeque loquuntur.
Daphnis et Armenias curru subiungere tigris
instituit, Daphnis thiasos inducere Bacchi
et foliis lentas intexere mollibus hastas.
vitis ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus uvae,
ut gregibus tauri, segetes ut pinguibus arvis,
tu decus omne tuis. postquam te fata tulerunt,
ipsa Pales agros atque ipse reliquit Apollo.
grandia saepe quibus mandavimus hordea sulcis,
infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur avenae;
pro molli viola, pro purpurea narcisso
carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis.
spargite humum foliis, inducite fontibus umbras,
pastores (mandat fieri sibi talia Daphnis)
et tumulum facite, et tumulo superaddite carmen:
"Daphnis ego in silvis, hinc usque ad sidera notus,
formosi pecoris custos, formosior ipse."

MENALCAS

Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,
quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per aestum
dulcis aquae saliente sitim restinguere rivo.
nec calamis solum aequiperas, sed voce magistrum:
fortunate puer, tu nunc eris alter ab illo.
nos tamen haec quocumque modo tibi nostra vicissim
dicemus, Daphnimque tuum tollemus ad astra;
Daphnim ad astra feremus: amavit nos quoque Daphnis.

MOPSUS

An quicquam nobis tali sit munere maius?
et puer ipse fuit cantari dignus, et ista
iam pridem Stimichon laudavit carmina nobis.

But enough, young man: the rocks now shelter us.

Mopsus
When Daphnis, shepherd hero, died a cruel death
acacia and stream saw the water spirits weep;
his mother embraced the body of her son,
and cried out to the heartless gods and stars.
Shepherd hero, in those days no one drove cattle
to the cool streams or to pasture, no beast
drank from the rivers or touched the green grass.
Shepherd hero, they say even African lions,
and woods, and wild mountains lamented your death.
(Daphnis was first to inspan Caucasian
tigers, to bring in the frenzy of Bacchus,
and to wreathe tough fennel spears with ivy leaves.)
As vines adorn trees, bunches of grapes the vine,
strong bulls the herds, and crops the fertile fields,
so you adorn your people. When fate took you,
the herd god, even the god of poetry, left the land.
Foul blackjacks and khakibos invaded fields
where we once sowed the furrows with great grains;
where Karoo violets and bright narcissus grew,
spiky candle thorn and thistle now sprang up.
Spread the ground with foliage, shade the springs,
you herdsmen (Daphnis demands this tribute) —
build his tomb, and inscribe on the tomb these lines:
I WAS DAPHNIS IN THESE WOODS, MY FAME STRUCK THE STARS,
HERDER OF LOVELY FLOCKS, I WAS LOVELIER STILL.

The Poet
To me, divine poet, your song is like
sleep in soft grass to the weary or a draught
of sweet spring water in the summer's heat.
Your singing and your panpipes match the Master's:
lucky young man, now you will wear his mantle.
Still, I shall give you a song, for what it's worth,
and extol your shepherd hero to the stars,
yes, to the stars, for Daphnis loved me too.

Mopsus
Could any gift be greater than your singing?
The youth deserves it and, just recently,
Stimichon spoke highly of your praise songs.



Fig. 15. Drawing for Wozzeck (78), 2016. Charcoal and red pencil on Hahnemühle paper, 56.5 × 78 cm.

MENALCAS

Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi
sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.
ergo alacris silvas et cetera rura voluptas
Panaque pastoresque tenet Dryadasque puellas.
nec lupus insidias pecori, nec retia cervis
ulla dolum meditantur: amat bonus otia Daphnis.
ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera iactant
intonsi montes; ipsae iam carmina rupes,
ipsa sonant arbusta: "deus, deus ille, Menalca!"
sis bonus o felixque tuis! en quattuor aras:
ecce duas tibi, Daphni, duas altaria Phoebo.
pocula bina novo spumantia lacte quotannis
craterasque duo statuam tibi pinguis olivi,
et multo in primis hilarans convivia Baccho
ante focum, si frigus erit, si messis, in umbra
vina novum fundam calathis Ariusia nectar.
cantabunt mihi Damoetas et Lyctius Aegon;
saltantis Satyros imitabitur Alphesiboeus.
haec tibi semper erunt, et cum sollemnia vota



Fig. 16. The Refusal of Time, 2012. Still from 5-channel IID projection with megaphones and breathing machine. Edition of 6.

The Poet
Radiant Daphnis gazed in wonder at Olympus's gates
and at the stars and clouds beneath his feet:
so, living joy seized woods and countryside,
goat god, shepherds and forest-spirit girls.
No jackal hunted sheep, no snares were laid
for buck: peace delights the shepherd hero.
In joy, the very mountains raised their voices
to the stars, trees sang and krantzes echoed:
"A god, Poet, he truly is a god!"
Daphnis, bless your people! Look, four altars—
two for you and two for the god of poetry.
Each year, I shall place on both two cups of fresh
foaming milk, two bowls of rich olive oil.
At the wine god's feast, I'll party with the best,
filling cups with the nectar of new wine
in summer's shade or beside a winter fire.
Two herdsmen will sing for me, and a third
will leap and cavort like a dancing satyr.
Forever, when we pray to the water spirits

reddemus nymphis, et cum lustrabimus agros.
dum iuga montis aper, fluvios dum piscis amabit,
dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadae,
semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt.
ut Baccho Cererique, tibi sic vota quotannis
agricolae facient: damnabis tu quoque votis.

MOPSUS
Quae tibi, quae tali reddam pro carmine dona?
nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus Austri
nec percussa iuvant fluctu tam litora, nec quae
saxosas inter decurrunt flumina vallis.

MENALCAS
Hac te nos fragili donabimus ante cicuta:
haec nos "formosum Corydon ardebat Alexim",
haec eadem docuit "cuium pecus? an Meliboei?"

MOPSUS
At tu sume pedum, quod, me cum saepe rogaret,
non tulit Antigenes, et erat tum dignus amari,
formosum paribus nodis atque aere, Menalca.

or purify the fields, these will be your rites.
While fish love rivers, and warthogs the bush,
while bees browse thyme, and cicadas drink dew—
your name and praises and glory will remain.
Farmers will worship you yearly like the gods
of wheat and wine, and will swear by your holy power.

Mopsus
How could I ever repay you for this song?
I loved it more than the southeaster's sigh,
more than the sound of breakers on the shore,
more than a river that pours down a rocky kloof.

The Poet
But first let me give you this fragile flute
that inspired "Shepherd Corydon was mad for ..."
and "Who do these sheep belong to? Meliboeus?"

Mopsus
And, Poet, you take this shepherd's crook,
a fine, knotty thing, with ferule of bronze.
A boy kept begging me, but I did not give
it to him, though he was worthy of my love.

SIX

LOVE & METAMORPHOSIS



Fig. 17. Self Portrait as a Coffee Pot, 2011. Lithograph, collage, and colored pencil on various papers attached to Arches White 400 gsm, 98.5 × 80 cm. Edition of 35.

VI

Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere versu
nostra neque erubuit silvas habitare Thalia.
cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem
vellit et admonuit: "pastorem, Tityre, pinguis
pascere oportet ovis, deductum dicere carmen."
nunc ego — namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes,
Vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella —
agrestem tenui meditabor harundine musam.
non iniussa cano. si quis tamen haec quoque, si quis
captus amore leget, te nostrae, Vare, myricae,
te nemus omne canet; nec Phoebo gratior ulla est
quam sibi quae Vari praescripsit pagina nomen.
Pergite, Pierides. Chromis et Mnasyllus in antro
Silenum pueri somno videre iacentem,
inflatum hesterno venas, ut semper, Iaccho;
serta procul tantum capiti delapsa iacebant
et gravis attrita pendebat cantharus ansa.
adgressi — nam saepe senex spe carminis ambo
luserat — iniciunt ipsis ex vincula sertis.
addit se sociam timidisque supervenit Aegle,
Aegle, Naiadum pulcherrima, iamque videnti
sanguineis frontem moris et tempora pingit.
ille dolum ridens: "quo vincula nectitis?" inquit.
"solvite me, pueri; satis est potuisse videri.
carmina quae vultis cognoscite — carmina vobis,
huic aliud mercedis erit." simul incipit ipse.
tum vero in numerum Faunosque ferasque videres
ludere, tum rigidas motare cacumina quercus;
nec tantum Phoebo gaudet Parnasia rupes,
nec tantum Rhodope miratur et Ismarus Orphea.

SIX

At first my spirit of song inhabited the woods
unashamed, proud to play with pastoral verse.
When I tried to sing of chiefs and the battles they fought
the god of poetry flicked my ear and chided me:
"Landman, a shepherd should fatten up his flock
but keep his songlines slim."
Now, while others may wish to sing the land
commissioner's praises and grim campaigns,
I shall play rustic tunes on my slender flute.
I am under orders. Yet, if anyone moved by love
should read these lines, my impepho and acacia
will echo the commissioner's name — a name
that lettered on the page delights the god of poetry.
    Spirits of song, begin. Two shepherd boys spied
the wine god's podgy friend lying asleep in a cave
veins bulging — as always — from yesterday's binge.
The wreath hung skew on his head, and his winecup
dangled by its worn-out handle from his finger.
They tiptoed near — the kehla had cheated them
over and over with the promise of a song —
and tied him up in his own daisy chains.
A girl, a lovely river spirit, bolder than those two
joined in, reddening the cheeks and forehead of the god
with num-num fruit, as his eyes began to open.
Smiling at their trick, he said: "Why these daisy chains?
Boys, let me go: you were lucky just to see me.
You shall have the songs you want — songs for you,
for her, a different prize." So saying, he began.
And then you would have seen the beasts and goat gods
dance and kalanders stiffly wave their tree tops
with as much joy as the holy mountains take
in the god of poetry or in poetic Orpheus.



Fig. 18. Her Shadow, 2015. Linocut, 63 × 49 cm. Edition of 40.



Fig. 19. Bird Catching (3. Man with Bird on Head), 2006. Drypoint and aquatint on Hahnemühle Warm White 300, 47 × 47 cm. Edition of 18.

namque canebat uti magnum per inane coacta
semina terrarumque animaeque marisque fuissent
et liquidi simul ignis; ut his exordia primis
omnia et ipse tener mundi concreverit orbis;
tum durare solum et discludere Nerea ponto
coeperit et rerum paulatim sumere formas;
iamque novum terrae stupeant lucescere solem,
altius atque cadant summotis nubibus imbres;
incipiant silvae cum primum surgere, cumque
rara per ignaros errent animalia montis.
    Hinc lapides Pyrrhae iactos, Saturnia regna,
Caucasiasque refert volucres furtumque Promethei.
his adiungit, Hylan nautae quo fonte relictum
clamassent, ut litus "Hyla, Hyla" omne sonaret;
et fortunatam, si numquam armenta fuissent,
Pasiphaen nivei solatur amore iuvenci.
a, virgo infelix, quae te dementia cepit!
Proetides implerunt falsis mugitibus agros,
at non tam turpis pecudum tamen ulla secuta
concubitus, quamvis collo timuisset aratrum,
et saepe in levi quaesisset cornua fronte.
a, virgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras:
ille latus niveum molli fultus hyacintho
ilice sub nigra pallentis ruminat herbas
aut aliquam in magno sequitur grege. "claudite Nymphae,
Dictaeae Nymphae, nemorum iam claudite saltus,
si qua forte ferant oculis sese obvia nostris
errabunda bovis vestigia; forsitan illum
aut herba captum viridi aut armenta secutum
perducant aliquae stabula ad Gortynia vaccae."
tum canit Hesperidum miratam mala puellam;
tum Phaethontiadas musco circumdat amarae
corticis atque solo proceras erigit alnos.
    Tum canit errantem Permessi ad flumina Gallum
Aonas in montis ut duxerit una sororum,
utque viro Phoebi chorus adsurrexerit omnis;
ut Linus haec illi divino carmine pastor
floribus atque apio crinis ornatus amaro
dixerit: "hos tibi dant calamos, en accipe, Musae,
Ascraeo quos ante seni, quibus ille solebat
cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.
his tibi Grynei nemoris dicatur origo,
ne quis sit lucus, quo se plus iactet Apollo."

The song
For he sang how right through the mighty void
the seeds of earth, air, water, and limpid fire
were forced together; from these primordial roots
all things arose, even our world's congealing orb;
then land, as it hardened, began to exclude
the sea, and little by little entities took shape;
the earth marveled at the brand-new radiance
of the sun; clouds massed and heavy rain came down;
now saplings first began to shoot, then wide-
scattered animals ranged over unfamiliar hills.

Next, he told of the stones flung by Pyrrha, Saturn's reign,
the vultures, and Prometheus's theft of fire,
adding how Hylas was left at the spring and the sailors
called him, till the whole shore echoed, "Hylas, Hylas";
and he consoles the queen of Crete
— it was her ill fate that cattle existed! —
with the love of a snow-white bullock.
Unhappy woman, what madness possessed you!
(Proetus's daughters filled the land with demented mooing:
but though they feared their necks might bear the plough,
and hands kept feeling for horns upon their foreheads,
they never sought depraved sex with a bull.)
Unhappy woman, now you range the mountains
while *he,* white flank softly propped on hyacinth,
chews the cud in the deep shade of an oak
or chases after another herd cow. "Water spirits
of Crete, close off every poort and valley!
Maybe my eyes will track the straying hoofprints
of my bull — maybe other cows are escorting him
home to their stalls, seduced by fresh green grass
or just following the herd." Then he sang
how the girl was amazed at the golden apples,
then he swathed Phaethon's sisters in bitter, mossy
bark and made rooiels trees soar above the ground.

Then he sang of Lynthia, as she wandered the foothills
of the mountain of poetry, how a song spirit led her
higher and how the choir of the poetic god rose
as one for her, and how the inspired singer hero,
his head wreathed with flowers and parsley, spoke:
"These panpipes are for you, a gift from the spirits of song
that they once gave old Hesiod — with their music
he led stiff ash trees down from the mountains.
Use them to tell of the home of the Nama people,
so that the poetry god will truly love that place."

Quid loquar, aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est
candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris
Dulichias vexasse rates et gurgite in alto,
a, timidos nautas canibus lacerasse marinis;
aut ut mutatos Terei narraverit artus,
quas illi Philomela dapes, quae dona pararit,
quo cursu deserta petiverit et quibus ante
infelix sua tecta super volitaverit alis?
Omnia, quae Phoebo quondam meditante beatus
audiit Eurotas iussitque ediscere lauros,
ille canit — pulsae referunt ad sidera valles —
cogere donec ovis stabulis numerumque referre
iussit et invito processit Vesper Olympo.

Need I mention lovely Scylla who, so the story goes,
with a skirt of yelping monsters round her waist
harried Odysseus's ships and on the deep ocean
dismembered, alas, his terrified sailors;
or how he told of Tereus's transformed limbs,
the gift of a feast that Philomela gave him,
how she flew to the wild places and, poor woman,
hovered on bird's wings above her former home?

There in his song — that the krantzes echoed to the sky —
were all things that the god of poetry once sang,
and that his river heard and made its bay trees learn.
But now the evening star rose up to reluctant heaven
and made them tally their sheep and drive them home.

SEVEN

SONGS OF HERDSMEN



Fig. 20. Drawing for The Head and the Load (Pool with Reeds), 2018. Charcoal and red pencil on paper, 128 × 152 cm.

VII

MELIBOEUS

Forte sub arguta consederat ilice Daphnis,
compulerantque greges Corydon et Thyrsis in unum,
Thyrsis ovis, Corydon distentas lacte capellas,
ambo florentes aetatibus, Arcades ambo,
et cantare pares et respondere parati.
huc mihi, dum teneras defendo a frigore myrtos,
vir gregis ipse caper deerraverat; atque ego Daphnim
aspicio. ille ubi me contra videt, "ocius" inquit
"huc ades, o Meliboee; caper tibi salvus et haedi;
et, si quid cessare potes, requiesce sub umbra.
huc ipsi potum venient per prata iuvenci,
hic viridis tenera praetexit harundine ripas
Mincius, eque sacra resonant examina quercu."
quid facerem? neque ego Alcippen, nec Phyllida habebam
depulsos a lacte domi quae clauderet agnos,
et certamen erat Corydon cum Thyrside magnum.
posthabui tamen illorum mea seria ludo.
alternis igitur contendere versibus ambo
coepere, alternos Musae meminisse volebant.
hos Corydon, illos referebat in ordine Thyrsis.

CORYDON

Nymphae, noster amor, Libethrides, aut mihi carmen
quale meo Codro concedite — proxima Phoebi
versibus ille facit — aut, si non possumus omnes,
hic arguta sacra pendebit fistula pinu.

THYRSIS

Pastores, hedera nascentem ornate poetam
Arcades, invidia rumpantur ut ilia Codro;

SEVEN

Meliboeus
Daphnis the shepherd sat under a whispering oak
as Corydon and Thyrsis rounded up their flocks —
Thyrsis the sheep, Corydon the she-goats, heavy with milk —
both Arcadians, both in the prime of their youth
and ready to sing verses each in turn.
While I shrouded my young shrubs against the frost,
my leading he-goat wandered off. Then I caught sight
of Daphnis, and he of me. "Meliboeus," he said,
"quick, over here, your he-goat and your kids are safe.
If you have time, lie down here in the shade —
your bullocks will come from the grass to drink,
here, where pliant reeds fringe the green riverbank
and swarms of bees buzz in the sacred oak."
What was I to do? I had no women at home
to kraal my lambs away from their mothers' milk,
and it was game on, Corydon against Thyrsis:
I preferred their entertainment to my work.
They made ready to compete in verse, one after
the other, as the spirits of song inspired them.
Corydon sang these lines and was followed by Thyrsis.

Corydon
Beloved water spirits of the holy mountain,
make me sing like Codrus, whose verses rival poems
by the god of poetry — or, if I do not have the power,
I shall hang up my shrill flute on the sacred pine.

Thyrsis
Shepherds of Arcadia, crown your incipient poet
with ivy, and let Codrus burst a gut with envy —



Fig. 21. Palmyra II, 2016. Indian ink, red pencil and paper collage on found pages, 163 × 72 cm.



Fig. 22. Paper Procession V, 2023. Steel, aluminum sheets and oil paint. Main dimensions: 141 × 70 × 39 cm (H × W × D). Edition of 6 plus 1 AP.

aut, si ultra placitum laudarit, baccare frontem
cingite, ne vati noceat mala lingua futuro.

CORYDON
Saetosi caput hoc apri tibi, Delia, parvus
et ramosa Micon vivacis cornua cervi.
si proprium hoc fuerit, levi de marmore tota
puniceo stabis suras evincta coturno.

THYRSIS
Sinum lactis et haec te liba, Priape, quotannis
exspectare sat est: custos es pauperis horti.
nunc te marmoreum pro tempore fecimus; at tu,
si fetura gregem suppleverit, aureus esto.

CORYDON
Nerine Galatea, thymo mihi dulcior Hyblae,
candidior cycnis, hedera formosior alba,
cum primum pasti repetent praesepia tauri,
si qua tui Corydonis habet te cura, venito.

THYRSIS
Immo ego Sardoniis videar tibi amarior herbis,
horridior rusco, proiecta vilior alga,
si mihi non haec lux toto iam longior anno est.
ite domum pasti, si quis pudor, ite iuvenci.

CORYDON
Muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba,
et quae vos rara viridis tegit arbutus umbra,
solstitium pecori defendite: iam venit aestas
torrida, iam lento turgent in palmite gemmae.

THYRSIS
Hic focus et taedae pingues, hic plurimus ignis
semper, et adsidua postes fuligine nigri;
hic tantum Boreae curamus frigora quantum
aut numerum lupus aut torrentia flumina ripas.

CORYDON
Stant et iuniperi et castaneae hirsutae,
strata iacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma,
omnia nunc rident: at, si formosus Alexis
montibus his abeat, videas et flumina sicca.

or, if I go too far, wreathe me in wisteria
so no evil tongue may curse your future imbongi.

Corydon
Goddess of the hunt, this little boy offers you
a kudu's spiraling horns and a shaggy warthog's head.
If you accept, you'll be sculpted in smooth marble,
with purple straps on the boots around your calves.

Thyrsis
Obscene Priapus, expect each year no more than cakes
and a bowl of milk: the orchard you guard is tiny.
For now, I have sculpted you in marble, but if
you increase my flock, I'll make you all of gold.

Corydon
Sea mermaid, sweeter to me than honey of the south,
lovelier than pale ivy, whiter than a swan,
if you feel the least love for your Corydon then come
at once, when the kraal receives the bulls from pasture.

Thyrsis
Think me more bitter than the bitterest herb,
spikier than prickly pear, viler than stinking seaweed
if a day without you is not longer than a year.
My young bulls, obey me and when you have fed, come home.

Corydon
You mossy springs and grass that is softer than sleep
and dappled green shade of the rhus overhead,
ward off the sun from my flock: blazing summer
draws near and swelling buds stipple the vine.

Thyrsis
My fireplace, a banked fire and resinous torches
are here, always, and doorposts black with soot.
Here we care no more for the freezing north wind
than jackals for the flock or rivers in spate for their banks.

Corydon
The junipers and macadamia trees stand tall,
apples, fallen from the tree, lie all around,
the season smiles: but if my lovely boy should
leave these hills, the very rivers would run dry.

THYRSIS
Aret ager, vitio moriens sitit aëris herba;
Liber pampineas invidit collibus umbras:
Phyllidis adventu nostrae nemus omne virebit,
Iuppiter et laeto descendet plurimus imbri.

CORYDON
Populus Alcidae gratissima, vitis Iaccho,
formosae myrtus Veneri, sua laurea Phoebo;
Phyllis amat corylos: illas dum Phyllis amabit,
nec myrtus vincet corylos, nec laurea Phoebi.

THYRSIS
Fraxinus in silvis pulcherrima, pinus in hortis,
populus in fluviis, abies in montibus altis:
saepius at si me, Lycida formose, revisas,
fraxinus in silvis cedat tibi, pinus in hortis.

MELIBOEUS
Haec memini, et victum frustra contendere Thyrsim.
ex illo Corydon Corydon est tempore nobis.

Thyrsis
The fields are parched, an airborne plague kills the dry grass;
the wine god denies new vine leaves to the hills:
but if my girl comes, the trees will turn green
and god will send down joyful showers of rain.

Corydon
Hercules loves the poplar, the wine god his vines,
lovely Venus the myrtle, the poetic god his laurels;
our girl loves the hazel and so long as she does,
myrtle and laurel must give way to hazel.

Thyrsis
The Cape ash adorns forests and pine trees a garden,
the poplar riverbanks, the fir tree high mountains;
but if, lovely boy, you should visit more often,
forest ash and garden pine would give way to you.

Meliboeus
I remember all this, and that Thyrsis was beaten.
Since then, it's been Corydon, Corydon only.

EIGHT

LOST LOVES & MAGIC

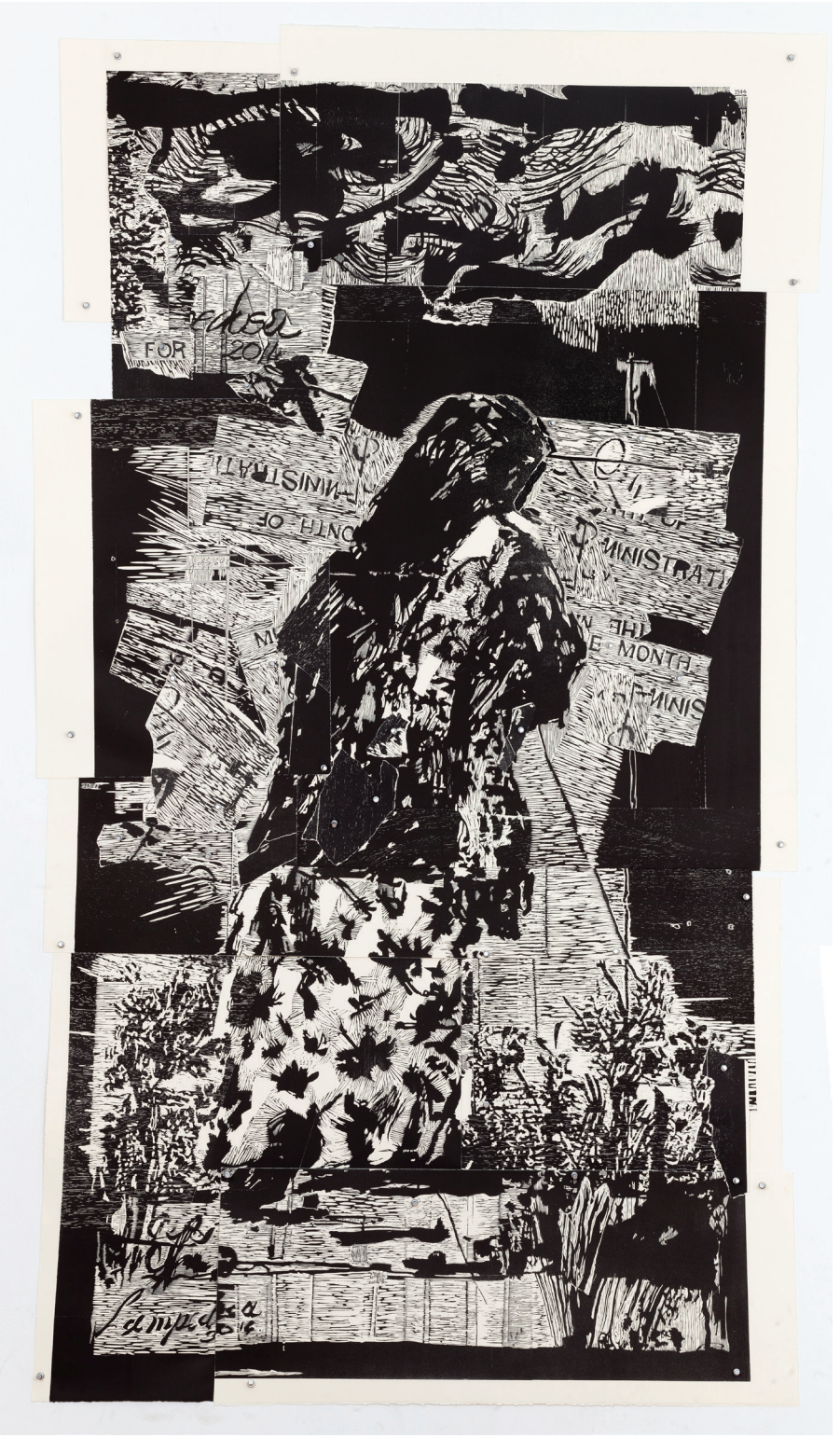


Fig. 23. Widow of Lampedusa, 2017. Woodcut printed from several woodblocks onto sheets of various sizes of Somerset Soft White 300 gsm, 207 × 117 cm. Edition of 12.

VIII

Pastorum musam Damonis et Alphesiboei,
immemor herbarum quos est mirata iuvenca
certantis, quorum stupefactae carmine lynces,
et mutata suos requierunt flumina cursus,
Damonis musam dicemus et Alphesiboei.
    Tu mihi, seu magni superas iam saxa Timavi
sive oram Illyrici legis aequoris — en erit umquam
ille dies, mihi cum liceat tua dicere facta?
en erit ut liceat totum mihi ferre per orbem
sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno?
a te principium, tibi desinam: accipe iussis
carmina coepta tuis, atque hanc sine tempora circum
inter victrices hederam tibi serpere lauros.
    Frigida vix caelo noctis decesserat umbra,
cum ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba:
incumbens tereti Damon sic coepit olivae.

DAMON

Nascere, praeque diem veniens age, Lucifer, almum,
coniugis indigno Nysae deceptus amore
dum queror et divos, quamquam nil testibus illis
profeci, extrema moriens tamen adloquor hora.
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.
Maenalus argutumque nemus pinosque loquentis
semper habet, semper pastorum ille audit amores
Panaque, qui primus calamos non passus inertis.
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.
Mopso Nysa datur: quid non speremus amantes?
iungentur iam grypes equis, aevoque sequenti
cum canibus timidi venient ad pocula dammae.
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.

EIGHT

Once, when herders Damon and Alphesiboeus competed,
Ngunis forgot to graze and listened in wonder,
caracals were astounded by their singing,
rivers stopped flowing and stood still …
We celebrate the songs of Alphesiboeus and Damon.
    My Friend, where are you? Skirting the north Adriatic shore?
Gliding by its famous rocky river? Will it ever come,
that day when I shall glorify your deeds
and have the world celebrate your poetic dramas,
great as the greatest tragedies of Greece?
You are my beginning and my end: take these songs
begun at your command and let my frond of ivy
snake through the laurels of your victory wreath.
    As the cool shade of night faded from the sky
and the flock savored the tender dewy grass,
Damon leant on a smooth olivewood staff and sang.

Damon
Morning star, appear, lead in the kindly light of day,
while, with my last dying breath I call on the gods
— although they have never helped me — and complain
of a cheating lover, not worth my little finger.
    Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.
Swathed in musical whispering pine trees, the Arcadian
mountain listens to herders singing of their loves
and to the goat god who first took up the pipes.
    Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.
She's marrying another man — that's it for us poor lovers!
Winged mambas will mate with zebras, and soon
the springbok and hyena will drink side by side.
    Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.

Mopse, novas incide faces: tibi ducitur uxor.
sparge, marite, nuces: tibi deserit Hesperus Oetam.
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.
o digno coniuncta viro, dum despicis omnis,
dumque tibi est odio mea fistula dumque capellae
hirsutumque supercilium promissaque barba,
nec curare deum credis mortalia quemquam.
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.
saepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala
— dux ego vester eram — vidi cum matre legentem.
alter ab undecimo tum me iam acceperat annus,
iam fragilis poteram a terra contingere ramos.
ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error!
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.
nunc scio quid sit Amor: duris in cautibus illum
aut Tmaros aut Rhodope aut extremi Garamantes
nec generis nostri puerum nec sanguinis edunt.
incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.
saevus Amor docuit natorum sanguine matrem
commaculare manus; crudelis tu quoque, mater.
(crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?
improbus ille puer; crudelis tu quoque, mater.)
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus.
nunc et ovis ultro fugiat lupus, aurea durae
mala ferant quercus, narcisso floreat alnus,
pinguia corticibus sudent electra myricae,
certent et cycnis ululae, sit Tityrus Orpheus,
Orpheus in silvis, inter delphinas Arion —
    incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus
— omnia vel medium fiat mare. vivite silvae:
praeceps aërii specula de montis in undas
deferar; extremum hoc munus morientis habeto.
    desine Maenalios, iam desine, tibia, versus.
Haec Damon. vos, quae responderit Alphesiboeus,
dicite, Pierides: non omnia possumus omnes.

ALPHESIBOEUS

Effer aquam, et molli cinge haec altaria vitta
verbenasque adole pinguis et mascula tura,
coniugis ut magicis sanos avertere sacris
experiar sensus; nihil hic nisi carmina desunt.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.

My rival cuts new torches — he is wedding a wife.
Bridegroom, scatter nuts, the evening star rises for you!
Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.
Woman, you deserve him! You look down on everyone else,
you despise my flute music, my flock of goats,
my bushy eyebrows, the way my beard sticks out —
do you think that the gods do not notice?
Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.
When you were little, I saw you with your mother
in our orchard, picking dewy apples — I took the lead,
I had only just turned twelve and I was able
to reach up and touch the delicate branches.
I saw you, I was lost, mad love swept me away!
Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.
Now I know all about Love: harsh mountain crags
in the fiery Sahara or frigid Antarctica
gave birth to that boy, not of our race or blood.
Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.
Savage Love made a mother pollute her hands
with the blood of her sons — mother, you too were cruel.
(Who was crueler, the mother or the wicked boy god?
The boy was wicked — but mother, you too were cruel.)
Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song.
Now sheep hunt jackals
golden apples hang from the coral tree
narcissus blooms on red alder
amber beads ooze from leadwoods
screech owls sing against swans
Landman is Orpheus in the forest
and Arion among the dolphins —
Panpipes, play in tune with my Arcadian song
— and all things are upside down. Goodbye to the woods!
I shall hurl myself down from the mountain heights
and into the sea: my dying gift to that woman.
Panpipes, end now, end my Arcadian song.
Thus far Damon. You spirits of song, I am not
omniscient: recite the response of Alphesiboeus.

Alphesiboeus
Bring water, tie soft ribbons around this altar
and burn rich incense and impepho
so that magic drives my lover's heart to madness.
Everything is ready, all we need now are my spells.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.



Fig. 24. Drawing for Triumphs and Laments (Bearers of Insignia II), 2016. Indian ink and torn black paper on Hahnemühle paper, 107 × 121 cm.



Fig. 25. Drawing for Lulu (Woman with Necklace), 2014. Indian ink, charcoal and digital print on Shorter Oxford English Dictionary pages, 76 × 52 cm.

carmina vel caelo possunt deducere Lunam,
carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulixi,
frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
terna tibi haec primum triplici diversa colore
licia circumdo, terque haec altaria circum
effigiem duco; numero deus impare gaudet.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
necte tribus nodis ternos, Amarylli, colores;
necte, Amarylli, modo et "Veneris" dic "vincula necto."
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
limus ut hic durescit et haec ut cera liquescit
uno eodemque igni, sic nostro Daphnis amore.
sparge molam et fragilis incende bitumine lauros.
Daphnis me malus urit, ego hanc in Daphnide laurum.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
talis amor Daphnim qualis cum fessa iuvencum
per nemora atque altos quaerendo bucula lucos
propter aquae rivum viridi procumbit in ulva
perdita, nec serae meminit decedere nocti,
talis amor teneat, nec sit mihi cura mederi.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
has olim exuvias mihi perfidus ille reliquit,
pignora cara sui: quae nunc ego limine in ipso,
terra, tibi mando; debent haec pignora Daphnim.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
has herbas atque haec Ponto mihi lecta venena
ipse dedit Moeris (nascuntur plurima Ponto);
his ego saepe lupum fieri et se condere silvis
Moerim, saepe animas imis excire sepulcris,
atque satas alio vidi traducere messis.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
fer cineres, Amarylli, foras, rivoque fluenti
transque caput iace, nec respexeris. his ego Daphnim
adgrediar; nihil ille deos, nil carmina curat.
    ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.
aspice: corripuit tremulis altaria flammis
sponte sua, dum ferre moror, cinis ipse. bonum sit!
nescio quid certe est, et Hylax in limine latrat.
credimus? an, qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?
    parcite, ab urbe venit, iam parcite carmina, Daphnis.

Spells have power to pull the moon down from the sky,
with spells a witch turned Odysseus's men into swine,
and magic spells can burst apart coldblooded snakes.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
First, I bind your image with three triple-colored
threads and carry it three times around
this altar — uneven numbers move the magic power.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
Come, girl, tie triple-colored threads into three knots,
tie them and say, "I tie the chains of Venus."
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
Just as one fire here melts wax and hardens clay,
so let my love make Daphnis hard and soft.
Sprinkle maize meal, set dry bay leaves on fire.
Bad Daphnis burns me — I burn this bay against him.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
All across the veld and through deep bush, a heifer
looks for the calf she loves, but then despairs
and kneels, exhausted, in green reeds beside a stream;
dark night falls; she does not go home — may love like
that seize Daphnis, and I not bother to heal him.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
That traitor left me nothing but these clothes
as tokens of himself: I now bury them under
the threshold; they guarantee me Daphnis.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
These poisonous herbs gathered in the East
(all sorts grow in the East) were given me by a friend:
with them he has changed into a werewolf (I saw him
hiding in the bush), teleported standing crops
and magicked souls from graves deep underground.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
Come, girl, take this ash, throw it over your head
into a running stream and don't look back! ... But ash,
my magic spells and powers won't move Daphnis.
My spells, bring him, bring Daphnis home from the city.
Wait! Before I could move, flickering flames leapt
from these ashes on the altar. Let it be a good omen!
Something is happening — our dog barks at the door.
Can it be? Or do we who love weave our own dreams?
My spells, end now, end, Daphnis is here from the city.

NINE
LAND & SONG



Fig. 26. You Whom I Could Not Save, 2023. Indian ink and colored pencil on Phumani handmade paper. Main dimensions 122.5 × 163.5 cm.

IX

LYCIDAS
Quo te, Moeri, pedes? an, quo via ducit, in urbem?

MOERIS
O Lycida, vivi pervenimus, advena nostri,
quod numquam veriti sumus, ut possessor agelli
diceret: "haec mea sunt; veteres migrate coloni!"
nunc victi, tristes, quoniam fors omnia versat,
hos illi — quod nec vertat bene — mittimus haedos.

LYCIDAS
Certe equidem audieram, qua se subducere colles
incipiunt mollique iugum demittere clivo,
usque ad aquam et veteres, iam fracta cacumina, fagos
omnia carminibus vestrum servasse Menalcan.

MOERIS
Audieras, et fama fuit; sed carmina tantum
nostra valent, Lycida, tela inter Martia, quantum
Chaonias dicunt aquila veniente columbas.
quod nisi me quacumque novas incidere lites
ante sinistra cava monuisset ab ilice cornix,
nec tuus hic Moeris nec viveret ipse Menalcas.

LYCIDAS
Heu, cadit in quemquam tantum scelus? Heu, tua nobis
paene simul tecum solacia rapta, Menalca!
quis caneret Nymphas? quis humum florentibus herbis

NINE

Shepherd
Where are you going, Goatherd? Along the road to town?

Goatherd
Shepherd, who in their wildest dreams could ever guess
that a settler would snatch our farm and say:
"This land belongs to me — you're squatters here, get out!"
Now, beaten, heartbroken, our lives turned upside down,
we drive these goats for that man — curse him! — the new owner.

Shepherd
But … but I had heard that all this land —
from where the hills slope gently down,
right to the vlei and those trees with their shattered branches —
that the Poet had rescued all of this,
that with his poems he'd saved your land for you.

Goatherd
You may have heard it — that's what people said.
But poetry … Shepherd, when war is raging
these poems of ours have no more power
than tame doves nailed by a swooping eagle.
And if a crow hadn't croaked from a hollow oak
and warned me to cut short that new dispute,
your friend — me, the Goatherd — and, yes,
the Poet himself would no longer be alive.

Shepherd
So much suffering for one man! To think, Poet,
we so nearly lost your lifegiving songs — and you!
Who would sing the water spirits? The earth

spargeret, aut viridi fontis induceret umbra?
vel quae sublegi tacitus tibi carmina nuper,
cum te ad delicias ferres Amaryllida nostras:
"Tityre, dum redeo — brevis est via — pasce capellas,
et potum pastas age, Tityre, et inter agendum
occursare capro — cornu ferit ille — caveto."

MOERIS

Immo haec, quae Varo necdum perfecta, canebat:
"Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis,
Mantua vae miserae nimium vicina Cremonae,
cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni."

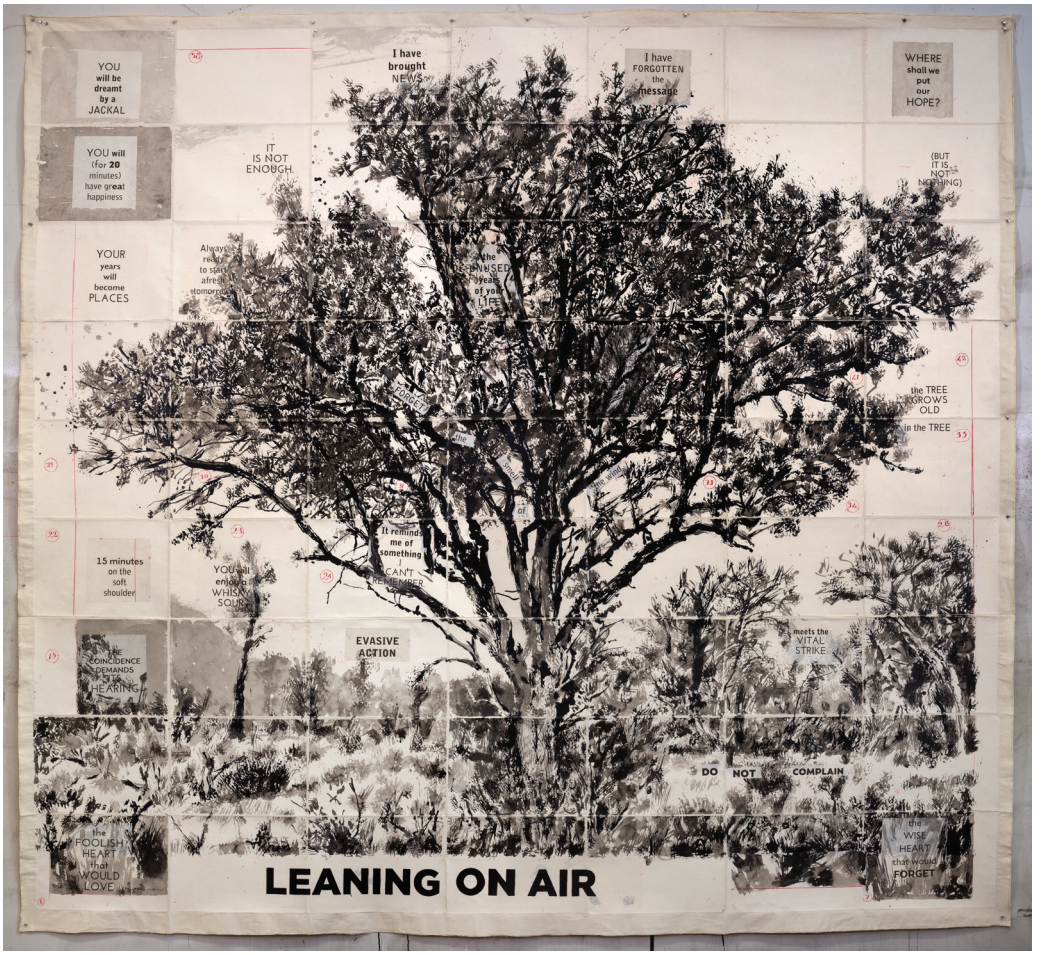


Fig. 27. Untitled (Leaning on Air), 2020. Ink wash on hemp and sisal fiber Phumani handmade paper, mounted on raw canvas, 290 × 330 cm.

all starred with flowers, green shade above a spring?
Or this song that I quietly stole from you
when you were on your way to see our girl:
"Landman, till I come back — I won't be long —
please herd my goats, let them graze, water them,
and while you do, watch out for the male goat — he butts!"

Goatherd
Or what about these unfinished lines he sang
for the commissioner of lands:
"If only we get to keep our land — too close, alas,
to those unhappy farmers who have lost their fields —
then swans will lift your name in song high up to the stars!"

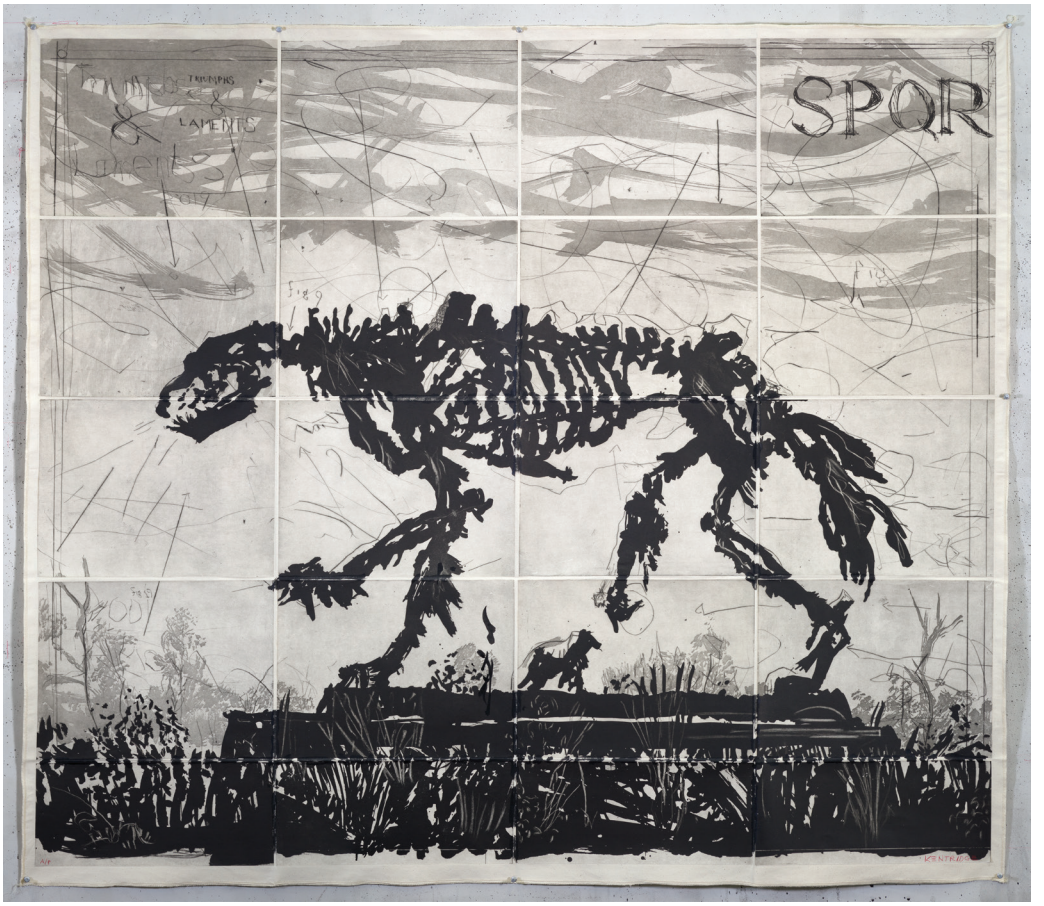


Fig. 28. Skeletal She-wolf, 2020. Coffee-lift ground aquatint etchings, 143 × 164 cm. Edition of 10.

LYCIDAS
Sic tua Cyrneas fugiant examina taxos,
sic cytiso pastae distendant ubera vaccae,
incipe, si quid habes. et me fecere poetam
Pierides, sunt et mihi carmina, me quoque dicunt
vatem pastores; sed non ego credulus illis.
nam neque adhuc Vario videor nec dicere Cinna
digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores.

MOERIS
Id quidem ago et tacitus, Lycida, mecum ipse voluto,
si valeam meminisse; neque est ignobile carmen:
"huc ades, o Galatea; quis est nam ludus in undis?
hic ver purpureum, varios hic flumina circum
fundit humus flores, hic candida populus antro
imminet, et lentae texunt umbracula vites.
huc ades; insani feriant sine litora fluctus."

LYCIDAS
Quid, quae te pura solum sub nocte canentem
audieram? numeros memini, si verba tenerem:
"Daphni, quid antiquos signorum suspicis ortus?
Ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum,
astrum quo segetes gauderent frugibus et quo
duceret apricis in collibus uva colorem.
insere, Daphni, piros: carpent tua poma nepotes."

MOERIS
Omnia fert aetas, animum quoque. saepe ego longos
cantando puerum memini me condere soles.
nunc oblita mihi tot carmina, vox quoque Moerim
iam fugit ipsa: lupi Moerim videre priores.
sed tamen ista satis referet tibi saepe Menalcas.

LYCIDAS
Causando nostros in longum ducis amores.
et nunc omne tibi stratum silet aequor, et omnes,
aspice, ventosi ceciderunt murmuris aurae.
hinc adeo media est nobis via; namque sepulcrum
incipit apparere Bianoris. hic, ubi densas
agricolae stringunt frondes, hic, Moeri, canamus;
hic haedos depone, tamen veniemus in urbem.

Shepherd
Begin! Sing what you can, and may the honey
from your bees be never bitter, the udders
of your well-fed cows be full! The spirits of song have
made me a poet, too, of many poems. The shepherds
call me "imbongi," but I'm not sure they should:
I've sung nothing yet that's worthy of true poets,
I only screech, a goose among tuneful swans.

Goatherd
Well, Shepherd, I've been silently singing this to myself,
let's see if I can remember … it's quite well known:
"Come to me, mermaid, stop playing in the waves!
Here spring is bright, here by the riverbanks
the earth blossoms with flowers, here a white poplar
overhangs the cave where pliant vines weave shade.
Come to me: leave the wild waves to crash against the shore!"

Shepherd
And that tune I heard you singing on your own
under a clear night sky — I remember the beat,
let's see if I caught the words:
"Shepherd hero, the star signs that you watch
are out of date — look, there is the star of love,
the emperor's comet rising! His comet makes
the fruitful fields flourish and colors the ripening grapes
on sun-warmed slopes. Plant your pear trees,
shepherd hero — grandchildren will garner the fruit."

Goatherd
Age takes all things, memory too. I remember
how often as a boy I sang day-long until
I put the sun to rest. Now … all gone from my mind
… my voice going too — jackals must have hexed me.
But the Poet will recall those songs for you.

Shepherd
With your excuses, you only make me keener!
And now, look, the sea is calm and quiet for you
and the noisy blustering breeze has fallen still.
We are halfway through our journey — the Ancestor's
grave is nearby. Here, Goatherd, where the farmers
are stripping back the leaves, here's where we should sing;
rest your young goats here, we'll reach the town in time.

aut si nox pluviam ne colligat ante veremur,
cantantes licet usque — minus via laedet — eamus;
cantantes ut eamus, ego hoc te fasce levabo.

MOERIS
Desine plura, puer, et quod nunc instat agamus;
carmina tum melius, cum venerit ipse, canemus.

Or if we're afraid the evening will bring rain,
let's walk on singing — the way will seem less long —
and as we walk, to help us with our song,
I will take your burden from you.

Goatherd
No more, young man, let us complete our journey.
We'll rather sing our songs when the Poet comes.

TEN

THE LOVES OF LYNTHIA



Fig. 29. Untitled (Nandi in Pool of Water), 1994. Charcoal and colored paper collage on paper, 148 × 99 cm.

X

Extremum hunc, Arethusa, mihi concede laborem:
pauca meo Gallo, sed quae legat ipsa Lycoris,
carmina sunt dicenda: neget quis carmina Gallo?
sic tibi, cum fluctus subterlabere Sicanos,
Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam,
incipe; sollicitos Galli dicamus amores,
dum tenera attondent simae virgulta capellae.
non canimus surdis, respondent omnia silvae.

Quae nemora aut qui vos saltus habuere, puellae
Naides, indigno cum Gallus amore peribat?
nam neque Parnasi vobis iuga, nam neque Pindi
ulla moram fecere, neque Aonie Aganippe.
illum etiam lauri, etiam flevere myricae,
pinifer illum etiam sola sub rupe iacentem
Maenalus et gelidi fleverunt saxa Lycaei.

stant et oves circum — nostri nec paenitet illas,
nec te paeniteat pecoris, divine poeta:
et formosus ovis ad flumina pavit Adonis.
venit et upilio, tardi venere subulci,
uvidus hiberna venit de glande Menalcas.
omnes "unde amor iste" rogant "tibi?" venit Apollo:
"Galle, quid insanis?" inquit. "tua cura Lycoris
perque nives alium perque horrida castra secuta est."

venit et agresti capitis Silvanus honore
florentis ferulas et grandia lilia quassans.

TEN

Poet
Spirit of shepherd song, grant me this final task:
a few songlines for Lynthia
(who would not sing for Lynthia?)
but songlines to be read by her beloved.
Spirit, begin! As you glide under the Indian Ocean
may no salt waters embitter your sweet stream.
Let us relate the bewildered loves of Lynthia
while snub-nosed she-goats crop new acacia leaves.
Our song will not fall on deaf ears —
the bush echoes all that we sing.
River spirit girls, where were you,
in what grassland or forest,
as Lynthia was dying from a love not worthy of her?
You were not in Xhoeroepoort, Kakamas, or Keimoes,
no delay kept you on the heights of Gakarosa
nor of Rooiberg, nor on the Namakwaland plain.
Even the wild pear and impepho wept for her,
even the aloes wept, as she lay alone
by the crystal waters of Kuruman's Eye.
The sheep stand around her — divine poet,
they do not shame us, don't let them shame you:
even handsome Adonis herded sheep.
The shepherds and the swineherds came,
and the Poet came, itching from the winter feed.
All ask: "Who do you love?" The god of poetry came.
He said: "Lynthia, why this madness?
Your darling man is campaigning up north,
in love with another woman."
The god of the Namas came, she wore a rustic crown
and shook pelargoniums and spekboom in her hands.

Pan deus Arcadiae venit, quem vidimus ipsi
sanguineis ebuli bacis minioque rubentem.
"ecquis erit modus?" inquit "Amor non talia curat,
nec lacrimis crudelis Amor nec gramina rivis
nec cytiso saturantur apes nec fronde capellae."
tristis at ille "tamen cantabitis, Arcades," inquit

"montibus haec vestris, soli cantare periti
Arcades. o mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant,
vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores!
atque utinam ex vobis unus vestrique fuissem
aut custos gregis aut maturae vinitor uvae!
certe sive mihi Phyllis sive esset Amyntas
seu quicumque furor — quid tum, si fuscus Amyntas?
et nigrae violae sunt et vaccinia nigra —
mecum inter salices lenta sub vite iaceret;
serta mihi Phyllis legeret, cantaret Amyntas.

hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,
hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer aevo.
nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis
tela inter media atque adversos detinet hostis:
tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere tantum)
Alpinas, a! dura nives et frigora Rheni
me sine sola vides. a, te ne frigora laedant!
a, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!

Ibo et Chalcidico quae sunt mihi condita versu
carmina pastoris Siculi modulabor avena.
certum est in silvis inter spelaea ferarum
malle pati tenerisque meos incidere amores

The goat god came from Arcadia — our own eyes
saw him — face crimson with berries and ochre.
He said: "Will you never stop?
All this means nothing to Love.
Love can never have enough of tears —
nor grass of water, bees of clover,
goats of tender shoots."
Heart-broken she said:

Lynthia
"At least you Arcadians will sing of my love to your hills —
Arcadians alone are true poets!
Oh, if only your panpipes
set music to my loves,
how softly my bones would rest!
And if only I had been one of you,
to herd your dorpers
or trim your spreading vines!
For sure, if I were crazy in love
with a shepherd girl or boy
(and so what if he were Black?
Karoo violets and
nastergal berries are black),
my love would lie by my side
under the willows and vines:
she would gather flowers
and he would sing me songs.
My lover, soft grass is here
and trees and springs of cool water —
here I could live forever with you!
But now I'm madly in love,
at war with myself,
assegais flying,
the enemy right in my face —
and you far from home
(I can hardly believe it!)
staring at snow and frozen rivers
without me.
Oh, do not let the frost harm you!
Oh, do not gash your feet on the jagged ice!
I shall go, and tune to the shepherd's panpipes
those poems I wrote in the northern Cape tongue.
For sure, I would rather die among dense thickets
and dens of wild beasts, and carve my lovers' names



Fig. 30. Drawing for Lulu (Lulu), 2014. Indian ink, charcoal and digital print on *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* pages, 53 × 52 cm.



Fig. 31. Untitled (Woman's Head in Blue), 1997. Charcoal, pastel, and collage on paper (dimensions not available).

arboribus: crescent illae, crescetis amores.
interea mixtis lustrabo Maenala Nymphis
aut acris venabor apros. non me ulla vetabunt
frigora Parthenios canibus circumdare saltus.
iam mihi per rupes videor lucosque sonantis
ire, libet Partho torquere Cydonia cornu
spicula.

Tamquam haec sit nostri medicina furoris,
aut deus ille malis hominum mitescere discat.
iam neque Hamadryades rursus neque carmina nobis
ipsa placent; ipsae rursus concedite silvae.
non illum nostri possunt mutare labores,
nec si frigoribus mediis Hebrumque bibamus
Sithoniasque nives hiemis subeamus aquosae,
nec si, cum moriens alta liber aret in ulmo,
Aethiopum versemus ovis sub sidere Cancri.
omnia vincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori."

Haec sat erit, divae, vestrum cecinisse poetam,
dum sedet et gracili fiscellam texit hibisco,
Pierides: vos haec facietis maxima Gallo,
Gallo, cuius amor tantum mihi crescit in horas
quantum vere novo viridis se subicit alnus.
surgamus: solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra,
iuniperi gravis umbra; nocent et frugibus umbrae.
ite domum saturae, venit Hesperus, ite capellae.

on the trees: as they grow, my loves too will grow.
And I will range Meintjieskop
with the water spirits
and hunt the fierce warthog.
Ice will not stop my hunting dogs
circling the poorts of the berg.
In a vision, I'm roaming
the cliffs and echoing heights,
bending my Nama bow
and shooting reed arrows…
As if any of this could cure my mad passion!
As if human pain could melt the Love god's heart.
Now the spirits of the forest and my shepherd songs
are hateful — enough of you woods and wild places!
Even if I drank from Arctic streams in midwinter,
or ranged Antarctic snowfields in a storm,
or drove sheep in Ethiopia under a tropical sun
where the scorched bark withers and dies on the trees —
all that I suffered could never change Love.
Love conquers all: all must submit to Love."

Poet
You spirits of shepherd song, goddesses, your poet
has sung long enough as he sat, weaving slim reeds to shape
a small basket, which you will make great for Lynthia —
Lynthia, my love for whom grows hour on hour
as much as the green restios shoot up in spring.
We must go: the dark is harmful to singers;
shade harms the coral tree, and shadows, the crops.
You have fed well — the evening star rises — go home my she-goats.

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Glossary & Index of Names

Abbreviations — Afr.: Afrikaans / pr.: pronounced / *Ecl.*: *Eclogues* / L.: Latin / SA: South Africa or southern African / SAE: South African English. Where line numbers are given, these are the line numbers of the Latin text, which match, or approximate, the line numbering of the translation. Cross-references within an entry to other items in the Index are indicated in bold.

Achilles — son of a mortal father and an immortal mother; greatest warrior of the Greeks in their siege of the town of **Troy**, which they capture and destroy shortly after Achilles's death

Adonis — male divinity and lover of **Venus**, he dies young while hunting, gored by a wild boar; Virgil (*Ecl.* 10.18) imagines him as a shepherd

Adriatic — the sea between Italy and the Balkan peninsula; at its northern end, the river Timavus, modern Timavo (the "famous rocky river", *Ecl.* 8.6) bursts from rocks to flow into the Adriatic

African marigold — *Tagetes erecta*; despite its common SA name, native to the Americas

Alphesiboeus — herdsman, mentioned in L. text of *Ecl.* 5.73, and a participant in the friendly singing competition of Eclogue Eight, where the narrator attributes to him and his counterpart the powers of **Orpheus** over nature; his name is not in **Theocritus**

Apollo — also known as Phoebus, youthful male god with multiple associations including healing, poetry and music, and prophecy and oracles; the god's attributes are the lyre (a stringed instrument), bow and quiver, and a wreath of **bay leaves**; brother of Diana the **Moon** goddess, Apollo was also identified with the sun; hence I have translated Apollo variously as **oracle** (*Ecl.* 3.104), **Sun god** (*Ecl.* 4.10), **god of poetry** (*Ecl.* 4.57, *Ecl.* 5.9, *Ecl.* 10.21), **poetry god** (*Ecl.* 6.73), **poetic god** (*Ecl.* 3.62, *Ecl.* 6.66, *Ecl.* 7.62:); "his river" in *Ecl.*

6.83 is the Eurotas, to which Apollo recounted the tragic death of his beloved boy Hyacinthus

Arcadia (1) — mountainous region at the center of the Peloponnese in Greece, home to the **goat god**, Pan; Arcadia becomes in Virgil's *Eclogues* the very home of pastoral poetry, and Arcadians the quintessential shepherd singer-musicians; Virgil uses the name of its main mountain, **Maenalus**, to signify "Arcadian" or "pastoral"; I translate "Maenalus" as "Arcadian mountain" at *Ecl.* 8.22 and the words *Maenalos versus* (literally, "Maenalian verses") as "Arcadian song" in the refrain of Damon's song in Eclogue Eight

Arcadia (2) — a suburb in the administrative capital of SA, namely Pretoria, Gauteng province, where the hill **Meintjieskop** is located

Arion — semi-legendary musician and singer; a dolphin is said to have rescued Arion from drowning in the sea and carried him back to the city where he lived

Athena — virgin goddess (also known as Pallas Athena) of warfare and of the arts, especially spinning and weaving; she is closely associated (as in *Ecl.* 2.61) with the city named after her, Athens, of which she is founder, protector, and patron

Bacchus — the wine god and god of the vine, intoxication, ecstasy, masking, and drama; he and his ecstatic followers, the female maenads, carried the thyrsus, a stalk of giant fennel capped with ivy leaves; in art, he is sometimes accompanied by a fat, drunken old man, Silenus (*Ecl.* 6.14, "the **wine god's podgy friend**")

bay, bay trees, bay leaves — also known as "laurel(s)," the leaves of the bay tree *Laurus nobilis* are especially associated with **Apollo** in his role as god of poetry; because of **Apollo**'s function as god of prophecy, the crackling of dried bay leaves burned in magic rituals was thought to foretell the future (*Ecl.* 8.82 and 105–8)

blackjack(s) — *Bidens pilosa,* a weed with spiky, hooked growths that irritatingly cling to and penetrate clothing; originally from South America, but widespread in SA

Boscia tree — *Boscia albitrunca,* also known as the shepherds' tree, or Afr. *witgat* (white-hole) tree; provides deep shade (sometimes the only shade) in hot and arid areas of SA

boy piper, the — (Virgil's "Amyntas") a youthful character referred to several times in the *Eclogues*; in *Ecl.* 2.35 and 39, and *Ecl.* 5.8, 15, and 18 he is skilled on the panpipes; he is a boy beloved of **Menalcas** at *Ecl.* 3.66 and 83; in *Ecl.* 10.37, 38, and 41, "Amyntas" is the generic name of a beautiful boy in pastoral; the name occurs in **Theocritus**

buchu — small flowering shrubs of the SA *Agathosma* genus, used for making medicine and perfume

buffalo thorn — *Ziziphus mucronata* (the "wait-a-bit" tree), small SA tree armed with spiked and hooked thorns

bush, the — SAE for uncultivated wilderness areas, especially in the north and east of SA

bushbuck — *Tragelaphus scriptus,* medium-sized antelope, dark-colored with some white spotting

candle thorn — *Vachellia hebeclada,* shrub or small tree which forms dense, spiny thickets; widespread across the northern areas of SA

Cape ash — *Ekebergia capensis,* large handsome tree indigenous to SA, with a lush, green-leafed canopy, and bearing red berries

caracal — a lynx-like African wild cat of medium size, also known as the Afr. *rooikat* (red cat); a fierce predator of poultry and sheep

Circe — see entry **Odysseus**

Codrus — a poet of Virgil's time whose identity is unknown

commissioner of lands — see entry **Varus**

Conon — (first half of the third century BCE) a Greek astronomer and mathematician from the island of Samos, famous for identifying stars close to the constellation of Leo as a lock of hair of Berenice, queen of Ptolemy III

coral tree — *Erythrina lysistemon,* medium to large deciduous SA tree with bright orange-red flowers

Corydon — a herdsman whose monologue of desperate unrequited love occupies most of Eclogue Two; in Eclogue Seven Corydon competes with another herdsman, **Thyrsis**, in a song contest and is declared the winner; the name "Corydon" is used by **Theocritus**

cosmos — *Asteraceae,* colorful nonindigenous, daisy-like flower, widespread over eastern areas of high northern plateau of SA

Damoetas — herdsman, participant in the drawn song contest of Eclogue Three; name occurs in **Theocritus**

Damon — herdsman, mentioned in L. text at *Ecl.* 3.17 and 23, and a participant in the friendly singing competition of Eclogue Eight, where the narrator attributes to him and his counterpart the powers of **Orpheus** over nature; his name is not in **Theocritus**

Daphnis — in mythology, a semidivine figure, born of a minor goddess identified with the laurel tree (*daphnē* in Greek); in Idyll One of **Theocritus**, Daphnis is a heroic shepherd, dying because he has rejected love and its patron goddess; when a similar larger-than-life, semidivine Daphnis appears in Virgil's *Eclogues* (a figure to whom Virgil uniquely, at *Ecl.* 5.30–31, attributes the introduction of the rites of **Bacchus**), I alternate his name with **shepherd hero**; elsewhere, when "Daphnis" seems to name an ordinary human, as in Eclogies Three, Seven, and Eight, I retain the name or substitute a paraphrase, "the boy"

dekriet — type of grass-like reed, used in SA chiefly to make ceilings or as roofing thatch

dorper — a hardy breed of sheep well-adapted to arid areas, created in SA by crossing Dorset Horn and Blackhead Persian sheep
emperor's comet — see entry **star of love**
evening star — see entry **torches** etc.
Exile — see entry **Meliboeus**
Fates — in Greek myth the three Fates are goddesses who control human life: Clotho spins the thread of a person's fate, Lachesis allots the appropriate amount, and Atropos cuts the thread at death
flame lily — *Gloriosa superba,* climbing plant with bright red flame-like petals; found from northeast SA up to Kenya
forest-spirit girls — see entry **spirits of the forest**
Friend — see entry **Pollio**
Gakarosa — a mountain in the Northern Cape province of SA, not far from **Kuruman's Eye**
goat god — the god Pan, whose cult started in the **Arcadia** (1) region, then spread all over the Greek world; god of flocks, and associated with wild places, Pan is represented with male torso and the head and shaggy legs of a goat, very often holding panpipes in his hand; the god later multiplied into numerous "Pans"; Pan and his panpipes are a central feature of Virgil's idea of a pastoral **Arcadia** (1)
goat gods — Fauns, from "Faunus," the Roman god of wild forests, who came to be identified with the Greek **goat god** Pan and, like him, multiplied into many "Fauns"
god of poetry — see entry **Apollo**
god of wheat — in mythology Demeter (Greek)/Ceres (Roman), goddess of vegetation, especially grain crops and corn
goddess of the hunt — Diana (twin sister of **Apollo**) born on the island of Delos, thus, at *Ecl.* 7.29, called in the L. "Delia"
golden apples — "the girl" (*Ecl.* 6.61) Atalanta, who had run faster than all her previous suitors, was finally won by Hippomenes when she stopped to pick up **golden apples** that he had dropped to lure her; the apples came from a tree guarded by sisters, the divine Hesperides, near the coast of the extreme northwest of Africa
Golden Fleece — a mythical ram's fleece of gold that was kept guarded at the extreme eastern edge of the Greek world; it was the task of the hero Jason and his crew of heroes, the Argonauts, sailing in the ship Argo, to go and carry off the Golden Fleece
Hercules — hero associated with the poplar tree; famous in myth for his Twelve Labors, Hercules was one of the Argonauts and lover of **Hylas**
Hesiod — poet of around 700 BCE, author of the extant *Theogony,* telling of the origins of the Greek gods, and *Works and Days,* on traditional wisdom about rural life, farming, the seasons, and the gods; Hesiod also produced other (mainly lost) poems on mythic

genealogies; Virgil in *Ecl.* 6.71–72 attributes to him powers associated with **Orpheus**

Hylas — a beautiful boy beloved by **Hercules**; during the expedition to carry off the **Golden Fleece**, Hylas is stolen by **water spirits** and is given up for lost by the crew of the Argo

imbongi — SA praise poet, traditionally attached to the household of a chief to perform his praises; the praises of a chief are regarded as one of the highest forms of poetry in traditional SA society

impala — *Aepyceros melampus,* a very common, medium-sized SA antelope

impepho — various species of the genus *Helichrysum,* a perennial or annual plant with silvery-grey foliage and golden flowers; important in SA in traditional African ritual and medicine

Indian Ocean — I use this reference (*Ecl.* 10.4) in the spirit of Carla Bocchetti's introduction of the *Odyssey* to the Indian Ocean; text and video on Bocchetti's exhibition *Homère et l'Océan Indien/Homer and the Indian Ocean* is available online (IFAS-Research 2024)

inspan — to yoke or harness draught animals to a vehicle

Justice — at *Ecl.* 4.6, by the phrase "Justice (L. *Virgo,* virgin) *returns*," Virgil reverses the idea in earlier poetic myth that the goddess Justice had left the Earth when the Silver Age declined into the Bronze Age

Kakamas — town in Northern Cape province of SA

kalander — (Afr.) *Afrocarpus falcatus,* the yellowwood tree, a fast-growing SA evergreen (which can reach a large size) with narrow, pointed, dark green leaves arranged in a spiral

Karoo violet — *Aptosimum procumbens,* the Karoo carpet flower, low-growing perennial producing violet or dark blue flowers

Karoo — arid plateau area of SA; also used adjectively, as in **Karoo violet**

kehla — "old man" in SAE; from isiZulu *ikhehla,* meaning an adult man entitled to the dignity of wearing a head ring, or a man whose hair is turning grey

Keimoes — town in Northern Cape province of SA

khakibos — *Tagetes minuta,* common name "khaki weed"; upright, herbaceous, flowering weed; native to South America, now invasive everywhere in SA

kloof — SAE for gorge, ravine, or narrow valley

knobthorn — *Acacia nigrescens,* tree with thorns growing from knobs on trunk and branches; found in drier areas of SA and as far north as Tanzania

koppie — SAE for hillock, small hill

kraal — (noun and verb) to pen up livestock; a corral, pen for livestock

krantz(es) — SAE for rock face or overhanging cliff

kudu — *Tragelaphus strepsiceros,* large antelope, grey-brown with vertical white stripes, the males adorned with magnificent spiraling horns; found in woodlands of SA and eastern Africa

Kuruman's Eye — the Eye of Kuruman, a powerful spring in the town of Kuruman in the Northern Cape province of SA producing 20,000 cubic metres of crystal-clear water daily

land commissioner — see entry **Varus**

Landman (in Virgil's L. "Tityrus") — (pr. *Lund/munn*), an ordinary Afr. surname, appropriate for a character who, in Eclogue One, has retained his land and herds; there, Landman seems a significant figure, possibly hinting at Virgil himself, who may have retained land threatened with confiscation; also in *Ecl.* 6.4 Landman seems to be a pastoral persona for the poet, but at *Ecl.* 3.20 and 96, *Ecl.* 5.12, *Ecl.* 8.55 and *Ecl.* 9.23, Landman plays the role only of a simple herdsman

leadwood — *Combretum imberbe,* medium to large semi-deciduous bushveld tree, with grey-green leaves and extremely hard, heavy wood

leiwater — irrigation water from a dam, provided along channels at set times; a common feature of country towns in the Western Cape province of SA

Love — (L. *Amor*) the winged boy god (Roman "Cupid"), armed with bow and arrows, who causes erotic desire in human beings; he is the constant companion of **Venus**

Lynthia — Lynthia Julius (b. 1993), of **Nama** origin on her mother's side, a contemporary SA writer of poetry, plays and short stories; winner of major literary prizes, Lynthia Julius writes in the Afrikaans of SA's northern Cape (**northern Cape tongue**); in my translations of Eclogues Six and Ten, I have substituted Lynthia for Virgil's poet friend Gaius Cornelius Gallus

macadamia — large nut of several trees of the *Protaceae* family, native to Australia, but very widely cultivated in the subtropical parts of SA

Maenalus — see entry **Arcadia** (1)

mamba — the green and the black mamba are deadly venomous SA snakes of the genus *Dendroaspis*

marula — *Sclerocarya birrea,* medium-sized to large SA tree, producing edible, succulent, sweet-sour fruit, with yellow skin and white flesh

matjiesgoed — (Afr.) reeds of several species used for weaving baskets and mats

Medea — mythical sorceress who, to punish her husband Jason for his infidelity, kills their two sons

Meintjieskop — a hill comprising the highest part of **Arcadia** (2) in the city of Pretoria, Gauteng province, SA

Meliboeus — a goatherd who has lost his land and goes into exile in Eclogue One (hence named "**Exile**" in my translation of that poem); despite his Greek name "one who cares for cattle," Meliboeus seems to be a shepherd in *Ecl.* 3.1, while he is a goatherd in Eclogue Seven and the narrator of that poem; does not occur in **Theocritus**

Menalcas — a herdsman in Eclogues Three, Five, Nine, and Ten, who appears under his own name in my translation of Eclogue Three; but since it is suggested that "Menalcas" may also function as a figure of the poet, Virgil (in *Ecl.* 5.86–87, the opening lines of Virgil's Eclogues Two and Three are attributed to the "flute of Menalcas"), in my translations of Eclogues Five, Nine, and Ten, I have rendered "Menalcas" as "the Poet"; the name occurs in a poem attributed in antiquity to **Theocritus**

mermaid — my translation of "Galatea," a female sea deity wooed by the Cyclops, already part of the pastoral world in **Theocritus**

mielie(s) — SAE for maize or corn

Moon — (Virgil "Lucina") identified with the goddess of the hunt, of childbirth, and of the moon, Diana, sister of **Apollo**

Mopsus — herdsman who engages in a friendly singing exchange with **the Poet** (**Menalcas**) in Eclogue Five; does not occur in **Theocritus**

morning star — (L. *Lucifer,* "light-bringer") the planet Venus, which appears just before dawn

mother — (*Ecl.* 8.47) see entry **Medea**

mountain of poetry — (*Ecl.* 6.65) the mountain is Helicon (in Boeotia, central Greece) sacred to the **spirit(s) of song**

Muse(s) — see entry **spirit(s) of song**

Nama — an indigenous, originally pastoral, people of Namibia (which derives its name from their language), Botswana, and the Namakwaland area of the Northern Cape province of SA

Namakwaland — "land of the Namas" (for whom, see entry **Nama**), earlier, "Namaqualand," a large arid area in the far northwestern corner of SA

nastergal — the Black Nightshade shrub, *Solanum retroflexum* (Afr. *nastergal*), indigenous to SA; its purple-black berries are used for making a very sweet jam or syrup

Nguni(s) — a breed of cattle kept by the Nguni people of SA whose main representatives are the Xhosa, Zulu, and Ndebele peoples

northern Cape tongue — see entry **Lynthia Julius**

num-num — *Carissa macrocarpa,* a spiny evergreen shrub with dark green, leathery leaves which produces a red edible fruit; occurs along the east coast of SA

Nyanga panpipes — reed instrument made up of small tubes of decreasing length; named for the Nyungwe people of Tete province in Mozambique

Nymphs — see **water spirits**

Odysseus — the hero whose adventures and return home are narrated in Homer's epic, the Odyssey; in the epic, Odysseus encounters the witch **Circe** who uses magic to turn some of his followers into pigs, and the six-headed, cave-dwelling monster **Scylla**, who snatches up and eats six of Odysseus's crew

Olympus — home of the major gods, the heaven of Greek mythology; in geographical reality, a mountain in northern Greece

oracle — see entry **Apollo**

Orpheus — a mythical musician and singer of great power, whose songs moved rocks, trees, animals, and even the grim king of the dead; Orpheus's father was the **poetry god** (**Apollo**), his mother one of the **spirits of song** (**Muses**)

Palaemon — a character (presumably a herdsman) who features only in Eclogue Three, where he appears suddenly and is chosen as referee of the song contest between **Damoetas** and **Menalcas**; not found in **Theocritus**

panga — a heavy broad-bladed machete, used for clearing brush or as a weapon

Pan — see entry **goat god**

pelargonium — the genus of flowering plants *Pelargonium* (belonging to the same family, *Geraniaceae,* as geraniums) with hundreds of species, 90% of them native to SA

penny whistle — a small metal end-blown flute, popular among Black township residents in the twentieth century

Phaethon, sisters of — Phaethon, son of the sun god Helios, attempted to drive his father's sun chariot but crashed to Earth, into the north-Italian river Po; his continuously mourning sisters metamorphosed into alders ("**rooiels** trees" in my translation)

Philomela — in Greek myth, a woman who, on a visit to her sister Procne, is raped and has her tongue cut out by Procne's husband Tereus; when the crime is revealed, the sisters kill and serve up Tereus's son Itys to him at a banquet; in the end, Philomela, Procne, and Tereus are transformed into birds

plated lizard — SA dark brown or black lizard, *Gerrhosaurus validus validus*

platteland — (Afr.) SAE for country districts or rural areas; iterally, "flat land"

Poet, the — see entries **Landman** and **Menalcas**

poetic god — see entry **Apollo**

poetry god — see entry **Apollo**

Pollio — ("**Friend**" in my translation) Gaius Asinius Pollio (76 BCE–4 CE) was a Roman soldier (he celebrated a triumph, *Ecl.* 8.9–13), orator, politician, and consul ("leader") in 40 BCE at the time that Virgil wrote Eclogue Four; a figure in literary circles, Pollio seems to have been a critic, and he composed tragedies and other poetry; in his youth he was a friend of the poet Catullus; later, a friend and early patron of Virgil who writes of "songs begun at your [Pollio's] command" (*Ecl.* 8.12)

poort — SAE for a narrow pass or defile through mountains

Priapus — a god, protector of gardens, associated also with fertility generally and with herds; his red-painted wooden statue, holding a sickle or cornucopia, and with erect phallus, commonly stood in Roman gardens

prickly pear — spiny cactus with flat stems, of the genus *Opuntia,* an invasive, widespread in the arid parts of SA; used as animal fodder in times of drought

Proetus, daughters of — punished by a god, the daughters of Proetus (king of the ancient Greek town of Tiryns) were driven mad and wandered the countryside mooing, believing themselves to be cows

Prometheus — one of the Titans (an early race of giant gods who rebelled against the rule of Jupiter); out of pity for primitive humans, Prometheus steals fire from the gods and gives it to mortals; Jupiter punishes him by chaining Prometheus to a cliff and sending a vulture ("vultures" in Virgil's version, *Ecl.* 6.42) to eternally eat away his liver

Pyrrha — wife of Deucalion (in Greek myth, a kind of Noah); after a great flood sent by the angry king of the gods has destroyed humankind, Pyrrha and Deucalion alone are spared; they repopulate the world by throwing stones over their shoulders: those thrown by her become women, those thrown by him, men

queen of Crete — Pasiphaë, wife of Minos, legendary king of the Greek island of Crete; punished by the gods, she fell in love with a beautiful white bull, by which she became mother of the half-man, half-bull Minotaur

red alder — see entry **rooiels**

restio — a genus of flowering plants with tough, upright, reed-like stems, belonging to the family *Restionaceae*; the variety *Restio multiflora* is widespread in the Western Cape province of SA

rhus — *Searsia (rhus) lancea,* common name "karee," a small- to medium-sized tree with dark to light green leaves and thick canopy; widespread in SA

river spirit(s) — L. *Nais, Naides* (naiad[s]), minor female deities who inhabit moving water, especially rivers

Rooiberg — a mountain in the Northern Cape province of SA

rooiels — (Afr.) the attractive evergreen tree *Cunonia capensis,* with lush, glossy green leaves and sweet-scented small white flowers; found in Afromontane forests; also known as **red alder**

Saturn — in Roman mythology, first king of the gods and father of Jupiter; Saturn presided over the happy period of the Golden Age on Earth

satyr — a rustic deity depicted in art as a man with the beard, horns and shaggy legs of a goat; as a group, satyrs were lascivious, drunken followers of **Bacchus**

Scylla — see entry **Odysseus**

settler — a loaded word in SAE, often used in a negative sense of white inhabitants of SA who do not regard themselves as Africans, with the implication that they are colonists

shepherd hero — see entry **Daphnis**

singer hero — my translation of "Linus," a renowned mythical singer, associated with a traditional song of lament; like **Orpheus**, the singer hero Linus was a son of the **poetry god** (**Apollo**)

song spirit — see spirit(s) of song)

southeaster — the prevailing wind during the summer in the Western Cape province of SA

spekboom — *Portulacaria afra,* succulent SA shrub, sometimes growing to the size of a small tree, with small, fleshy, rounded, light green leaves and lilac-pink flowers

spirit of shepherd song — see **spirit(s) of song**

spirit(s) of song — the goddess **Muse(s)** (also called Pierides), daughters of Memory, patrons and inspirers of music, poetry, and the arts; "my spirit of song" in *Ecl.* 6.1–2 is the particular Muse Thalia, inspirer originally of comedy but, for Virgil, of pastoral poetry and pastoral song; because **Theocritus** was from Sicily, Virgil at *Ecl.* 4.1 calls the Muses of his eclogues **spirits of pastoral** (my translation); in *Ecl.* 10.1, **spirit of shepherd song** is my translation of "Arethusa," a sea goddess associated with Sicily and so with the pastoral poetry of Sicilian **Theocritus**

spirits of pastoral — see **spirit(s) of song**

spirits of the forest — Dryads (*Ecl.* 5.59) and Hamadryads (*Ecl.* 10.62), minor female nature deities who inhabit and are identified with trees

springbok — *Antidorcas marsupialis,* a medium-sized SA gazelle with white underparts and brown back, found in arid terrain

squatter — in earlier SA law, designated Black people living on land — sometimes for generations — owned by whites and at their arbitrement; a loaded, contentious term in SA

star of love — (literally, in the L., "the star of Dione's [Venus's] Caesar") refers to a comet that was seen in the northern skies of Italy in

July 44 BCE, a few months after the assassination of the proto-emperor Julius Caesar; through the reference to Venus, Virgil alludes to the claim of Caesar's clan, the Julii, that they were descended from the goddess

Stimichon — a character, presumably a herdsman, in *Ecl.* 5.55; does not occur in **Theocritus**

Sun god — see entry **Apollo**

Tereus — see entry **Philomela**

Theocritus — a Greek poet (around 310–250 BCE) of Sicily who wrote, for a sophisticated urban audience, poems known as "Idylls" (brief sketches), many in dramatic form, featuring herdsmen and their lives; inspired by Theocritus, Virgil took from him not only many incidents and turns of phrase but also numerous elements — the central importance of song and unrequited love in the lives of herdsmen, songs sung solo or competitively in alternation, pleasant settings for song by a spring or under the shade of trees — that Virgil in the *Eclogues* refined into a complex pastoral world that became a model for later European poetry

Thyrsis — herdsman who in Eclogue Seven competes against another, **Corydon**, in a song contest and loses; "Thyrsis" is the name of a shepherd singer in the first Idyll of **Theocritus**

torches, nuts, evening star — (*Ecl.* 8.29–30) features of the Roman wedding ceremony, which began with the rising of the evening star, Hesperus, and in which the new bride was led to her husband's home in a torchlit procession and walnuts were scattered among the onlookers

Troy — coastal town in the northwest corner of ancient Asia Minor (modern Turkey), besieged by the Greeks for ten years before they conquered and destroyed it

Tugela — the largest river in the KwaZulu-Natal province of SA

Varus — Alfenus Varus, born in the same north-Italian region as Virgil, was a jurist, military figure (*Ecl.* 6.7 speaks of his "grim campaigns") and stand-in consul in 39 BCE; in 41 BCE, at the time of the composition of the *Eclogues,* Varus acted as **land commissioner** in northern Italy supervising the expropriation of land to be given to military veterans; he may have been influential in sparing Virgil's land from confiscation, or having it restored to him

veld — SAE for open, wild, dry countryside

Venus — goddess of lovemaking, closely associated with *Amor* (**Love**, Cupid) and, in Roman mythology, often said to be his mother; myrtle and wreaths of myrtle are attributes of Venus and her rites

vlei — shallow natural pool of water, or marshy area

water spirits — "**Nymphs**," female deities who personify and inhabit water of many sorts — the sea, a pool, a river, or a spring — but who

are also closely associated with mountains and caves; at *Ecl.* 7.21 the water spirits are conflated with the **spirits of song** (**Muses**) and associated with the "holy mountain," here possibly Libethrium, a peak sacred to both water spirits (Nymphs) and spirits of song (Muses)

wild pear — SAE for the small deciduous tree, *Dombeya rotundifolia*; at the beginning of spring, its bright white, sweet-scented flowers stand out spectacularly against the browns and greys of the bushveld

wine god and **wine god's podgy friend** — see entry **Bacchus**

witch — see **Circe** in the entry **Odysseus**

Xhoeroepoort — locality in the Northern Cape province of SA