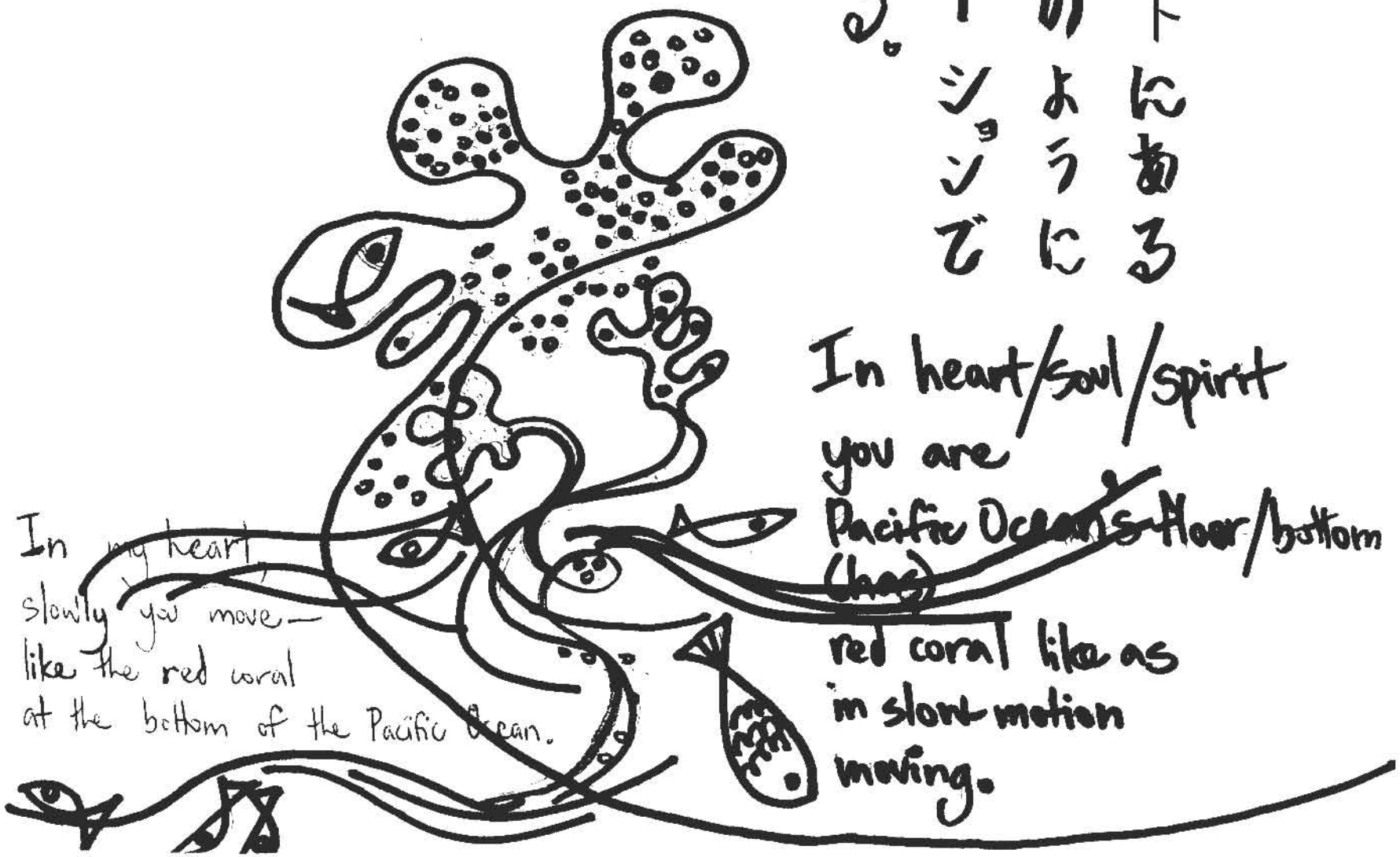
心の中で
あなたが
太平洋の下にある
赤さんごのように
スローモーションで
動いている。

Ceaselessly you move
on the bottom of the
Pacific Ocean of my heart
like red coral.



In heart/soul/spirit
you are
Pacific Ocean's floor/bottom
(base)
red coral like as
in slow motion
moving.

In my heart,
slowly you move—
like the red coral
at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

Wendy Ella Wright (Australia)

This verse is easily translated from Japanese into English and visa versa because it contains no esoteric metaphor or reference difficult to make the inter-cultural transition. There is nothing unlockable to unlock by resorting to parenthesis. There is no cadence or rhythm through literary device that becomes lost when taken into the metier of either language. The vocabulary is colloquial and contains no obscurities. It is compact and does not convey any abstract or metaphysical concepts. Moreover, the original writer did not have to work with an interpreter or translator or use a second or third person to proofread the work to make sure the translated version was linguistically accurate and was as close as possible a reflection of the intended meaning.

Regarding the psychological and technical process of translation as an art in itself, in the "Forward" of the Heian anthology *Manyoshu* (*Ten Thousand Leaves)*, the prolific translator Donald Keene says:

> The first translations from the Manyoshu into a European language date back more than a century, well before Japan was opened to the West. One envoy ("hanka") to a long poem was translated as early as 1834 by the celebrated German orientalist Heinrich Julius Klaproth (1734–1835). Klaproth, having journeyed to Siberia in pursuit of strange languages, encountered some illiterate Japanese castaways, fishermen, hardly ideal mentors for the study of eighth century poetry. Not surprisingly, his translation was anything but accurate. (Keene *Manyoshu*, iii.)

However we cannot know for certain if any inaccuracies were due to misinterpretations by the "celebrated orientalist" Klaproth. Were the negotiations as to the meanings of various characters rendered into Roman letters taped and then cross-referenced? And is it irrefutable that Klaproth's translations have remained unembellished since the time they were first written? In this sense translation is an unending progressional process. While reading the above work I remembered some people of a like description to "castaways, fishermen" appear as being the ideal interpreters for poetry in the famous Noh play *Atsumori* by Zeami Motokiyo. *Atsumori* is one of many classical plays being re-interpreted and re-translated for the new audiences of each generation. To set the scene of the play: the title, *Atsumori*, is the name of a beauteous young man who died fighting in the battle of Heike. The one who killed Atsumori in this legendary battle wanders as a Buddhist priest to atone his guilt. In his wanderings he encounters some reapers of seaweed and brushwood who are chanting in song together:

To the music of the reaper's flute
No song is sung
But the sighing of wind in the fields.
PRIEST: Hey, you reapers! I have a question to ask you.
YOUNG REAPER: Is it to us you are speaking? What do you wish to know?
PRIEST: Was it one of you who were playing on the flute just now?
YOUNG REAPER: Yes, it was we who were playing.
PRIEST: It was a pleasant sound, and all the pleasanter because one does not look for such music from men of your condition.
YOUNG REAPER: Unlooked for from men of our condition you say! Have you not read?
'Do not envy what is above you
Nor despise what is below you?'
Moreover the songs of woodmen and the flute-playing of herdsmen,
Flute playing even of reapers and songs of wood-fellers
Through poet's verses are known to all the world.
Wonder not to hear among us
The sound of a bamboo flute."(Keene *Anthology* 287, 288)

It transpires in the play that the reapers are actually the former regents who lost in the battle in which the protagonist Atsumori was slain. Later in the play they sing:

We slept with fishers in their huts
On pillows of sand.
And when among the pine trees
The evening smoke was rising,
Brushwood, as they called it,
Brushwood we gathered
And spread for carpet.
Sorrowful we lived
On the wild shore
Till the clan of Taira and all its princes
Were but villagers…"(Keene *Anthology* 291)

The princes of Taira were forced into exile and lived as fishermen, although the spirit of poetry within them never died. The exilic experience perforce produces the human instinct to transmit messages from afar and to express the feelings of alienation or reminiscence. Much of the world's literature is an artistic product of this universal truth.

Regarding the multi-faceted experience of creating literature while in exile from the "other" culture of one's existence, often I have walked down the street alone, speaking or singing to myself in the language of the culture I was then separated from. There was nobody to speak in that language with me just then and nobody to hear me sing—so I just wanted to hear the sound of the words in my own voice. Maybe it was to see if I still remembered the words I loved so much. An experience in a library once took me back to Japan. This experience is an example of the process of translation from one language into another while living in a state of exile. Translating poetry in the library alone, I had to look in the dictionary to find the meaning of every character of a Japanese poem. In between the pages, where long ago I had marked the place of some now unfamiliar and forgotten character, there lay a pressed sprig of cherry-blossoms that smelt of a certain Tokyo street and time. The Japanese-English

dictionary led my memories to the shelves to find the "Tale of Genji." I remembered the book having had a certain illustrated cover in another of its published editions. The new edition was now covered in an intense purple, velvety to the touch. The colour seemed to speak to me in a low evocative voice. To touch the soft purple cover of the book as my thoughts traveled to an old Kyoto, I was discovering a lost past. My memories arrived at Kyoto's Nijo Palace where Murasaki Shikibu wrote the Tale of Genji inspired by her own life. The name of the main protagonist in this major Japanese classic is Murasaki.

Before putting the book about Genji and Murasaki back, I knelt down with it in between the shelves to take a last look. My heart jumped—there was my own handwriting in pencil on a scrap of paper I had forgotten to remove before returning the book. The handwriting was from another chapter of "before going back to Japan from Adelaide…" In home-sickness for Japan I had quoted on the scrap of paper –

"Were it not for these old romances,
What would we do to pass the idle hours?"

Still in the library, crouched in between the book-shelves, I stared at my own hand-writing, until the overhead lights had automatically been turned off.