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TRANSLATING NICHITA STANESCU'S "UNWORDS": CHALLENGES IN RENDERING POETIC NEOLOGISMS FROM ROMANIAN INTO ENGLISH



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Abstract

Nichita Stănescu is one of the most prominent Romanian poets of the twentieth century, widely recognized for his postmodern, highly symbolic, and profoundly philosophical poetry. The universal relevance of his work was acknowledged internationally through his nomination for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1979. By employing innovative poetic techniques and systematically experimenting with lexical invention, Stănescu established an exceptional semantic relationship between the lyrical and the real. His poetic language transcends conventional semantics, operating instead with metaphysical and cognitive constructs that articulate complex pre- and post-linguistic modes of thought. Central to this linguistic experimentation is his concept of "unwords" (necuvinte), supra-lexical entities that challenge referential language and destabilize fixed meaning.

The artistic translation of Stănescu's poetry therefore exceeds the boundaries of conventional linguistic transfer, even when the poetic function is ostensibly preserved. Translating unwords requires the recreation not only of form and meaning, but also of the emotional, psychological, and aesthetic effects embedded in the source text. Rendering Stănescu's poetic neologisms from Romanian into English thus involves more than mediating between two linguistic systems; it entails re-engaging with the poet's creative intention, sensibility, and poetic intuition. The translator is compelled to share in Stănescu's imaginative risk-taking and conceptual audacity, transforming translation into an act of co-creation rather than mere reproduction.

The present article investigates the degree of both plain and complex translatability in Stănescu's poetry through selected case studies drawn from English translations by Thomas Carlson and Vasile Poenaru. By analyzing translational strategies, the study examines how different approaches negotiate lexical invention, semantic indeterminacy, and poetic innovation, ultimately framing poetic translation as an act of interpretation and re-creation that goes beyond words.

Keywords: *translation, poetry, unwords, poetic neologism, metaphysical cognition, philosophy, trans-linguistic equivalence*

Introduction

Within the modern literary system, traditionally dominated by Eurocentric and Americentric norms of cultural valuation, style, and circulation, a writer from

what critics often call a peripheral literature gaining international acknowledgment is itself remarkable. In terms of world-literary theory (as articulated by scholars such as Pascale Casanova in *The World Republic of Letters*), authors writing in smaller languages or coming from the so-called *literary province*, face inequalities in global reception (Casanova, 2004, p. 95). In that light, the Romanian poet Nichita Stănescu (1933–1983) stands out not only as one of the foremost figures in postwar Romanian poetry but also as a voice that transcended national boundaries through his innovative linguistic and philosophical poetics. His nomination for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980 marked a significant moment in which a peripheral literary voice was proposed for the highest form of international literary recognition. It was a sign both of his poetic achievement and of the ongoing negotiation of literary prestige beyond established cultural centers.

Nichita Stănescu's poetry is known for its freedom of thought and its metaphysical tone. Literary critics observed from an early stage the oscillation of Nichita Stănescu's poetic creation between the cerebral and the metaphysical (Lazăr, 2015). The poet reconceptualizes language in his texts as an open, dynamic cognitive space, fundamentally different from the commonly understood system of referential signs with fixed meanings. For Stănescu, traditional semantics, in which words correspond to definite concepts and stable senses, proved insufficient for expressing fundamental aspects of existence that exceed the limits of conventional vocabulary (such as in case of love, being, time etc.). It seems like in his view, language is a living reality shaped by experience and cognition rather than a static conveyor of dictionary meanings. In his work, language does not simply function as a descriptive tool, but actively interrogates its own limits and possibilities.

A central feature of Stănescu's poetic originality is the invention of the concept of *Necuvinte* (literally "Unwords"), that signify an attempt to go beyong lexical conventions. The poet invented the term *Unwords* (Necuvintele) in order to draw attention to the fact that the old means of communication, the words, acquire in his poetry a new meaning: they communicate the results of the poet's knowledge of a reality situated beyond the sphere perceived by the human senses as governed by the brain (*ibidem*).

The concept of *Unwords* was introduced and clearly defined by the poet in 1969, in Bucharest, with the publication of the poetry volume *Necuvintele*. Functioning simultaneously as a title-concept and as a poetic theory developed from within the poems themselves, most notably in the opening and titular texts, the notion articulates a distinctive poetic and philosophical position. Conceived as a poetic neologism, *Unwords* implicitly designate meanings, states, or truths that precede language or lie beyond its expressive capacity: realities that words may gesture toward or encircle, but can never fully contain or render.

The *Unwords* function as anti-lexical units, they cannot be fully understood through usual semantic categories. In Stănescu's vision, the purpose of these units is not to designate pre-existing referents in the world but to provoke new modes of understanding. They act as semantic catalysts, destabilizing familiar signification and compelling the reader toward conceptual reorientation beyond the dictionary.

For Nicolae Manolescu, the author of the *Critical History of Romanian Literature*, the *Unwords* are "nothing other than words in full freedom[5]" (Manolescu, 2008, pp. 1018-1019). Eugen Simion, who prefaced Stănescu's collected works, wrote that Nichita Stănescu "constructed a model (metalinguistic poetry)" through his approach, as exemplified by the *Unwords* (Simion, 2002, p. XV). Professor Traian Lazăr argues that the Unwords serve to express the results of metaphysical cognition, which is superior to practical and rational knowledge.

Some scholars argue that *Unwords* function as expressions of trans-linguistic thought, that is, they transcend cognitive phenomena reflected in conventional linguistic categorization and extend beyond its reach (Glodeanu 2023). In this framework, the *Unwords* are not arbitrary neologisms but attempts to articulate what lies before or after conceptual language, above and outside the bounds of it: cognitive impulses that resist encapsulation in standardized vocabulary. By invoking *Unwords*, Stănescu suggests that modes of thought and experience can be far wider than language can express, and that language itself must be reimagined to approach them. Here, language is not merely communicative but transformative: it reshapes the reader's cognitive field by inserting unfamiliar constructs that defamiliarize habitual linguistic associations and open spaces for affective, intuitive, and non-conceptual insights.

In this way, Nichita Stănescu's linguistic innovation, particularly through the notion of *Unwords*, challenges the traditional link between word and fixed semantic content, thereby complicating the possibility of translating his poetry. Conventional notions of translation assume a correspondence between words in two different language systems; Stănescu's approach problematizes this assumption by treating words not as mere referential markers but as cognitive instruments. His poetry reconceives language as an epistemological pursuit, and translating it becomes a particularly complex task: the translator must not only command the languages involved but also resonate with the poet's state of mind, perceptions, and creative intentions. Stănescu's inventive lexicon reveals the fluidity of meaning and the latent potential within language to approach the ineffable, situating his poetics at the intersection of linguistic philosophy, cognitive exploration, and poetic transcendence. In this sense, translating *Unwords* demands not only linguistic fidelity but also an attunement to the transformative and metaphysical dimensions of the poet's vision, highlighting the interdependence of cognition, language, and artistic expression in his work.

Translating *Unwords* through words

In classical translation theory, artistic, particularly poetic, translation is fundamentally distinct from mere linguistic transfer, insofar as it privileges recreation over replication and the preservation of poetic function over the reproduction of surface form. Roman Jakobson famously characterizes poetry as "untranslatable" at the level of strict equivalence, yet nonetheless recreatable through creative transposition (Якобсон/Jakobson, 1978, p. 24). Thereby he underscores that poetic

[5] Translation from Romanian is ours.

meaning resides not in lexical correspondence alone but emerges from the interplay of form, rhythm, sound patterning, and semantic tension. This view is reinforced by Antoine Berman's analysis of the systematic deformations imposed on foreign texts in translation (Berman, 1985, p.68), which demonstrates how strategies aimed at fluency, domestication, or formal mimicry frequently compromise the ethical and aesthetic alterity of the original. Umberto Eco, in turn, reframes translation as a negotiation of meaning, in which the translator consciously makes an interpretative hypothesis about the effect programmed by the original text (Eco, 2008, p. 45), and has to manage losses and gains in order to approximate that effect rather than replicate the text's primary structure.

Taken together, these perspectives converge on the understanding that poetic translation is not a derivative reproduction of linguistic content, but an autonomous artistic practice whose aim is to reactivate the poetic function within a new linguistic and cultural system. Yet this multifaceted process, however creative, remains fundamentally grounded in words as the primary material support of translatable meaning. In the case of Nichita Stănescu's *Unwords*, this premise is radically destabilized. Here, the challenge of poetic translation becomes even more acute, since the poet explicitly cautions the reader that the locus of meaning is not to be sought in words themselves. By foregrounding meanings that precede, exceed, or resist verbal articulation, *Unwords* place translation before a paradox: how to translate a poetry that thematizes the insufficiency of language itself, and whose poetic effect emerges precisely from the tension between language and what lies beyond it.

Translating so-called *Unwords* presents a particularly demanding task, as it entails not only the search for existing lexical equivalents but also a high degree of linguistic creativity aimed at transferring Stănescu's original poetic neologisms, forms that are, by definition, absent from any dictionary. One widely adopted strategy involves the re-creation of neologisms in the target language, an approach that seeks to replicate the generative gesture of the source text rather than its stable semantic content. For such neologisms to function poetically, however, they must remain morphologically and phonologically plausible within the target language, so as to activate a comparable interpretive horizon.

Alternatively, translators may opt to preserve ambiguity or opacity, deliberately resisting explanatory paraphrase in order to sustain the semantic indeterminacy that constitutes the poetic force of the *Unword*. From this perspective, partial obscurity is not a translational shortcoming but a deliberate aesthetic choice, one that aligns with theoretical models of poetic meaning as emerging from tension, suspension, and interpretive openness rather than from referential transparency.

When direct recreation proves unfeasible, translators often resort to compensation strategies, displacing semantic or affective intensity to another point in the poem through rhythm, imagery, or syntactic deviation. Thus, even if the lexical novelty of the source text cannot be fully retained, the translator may attempt to compensate for the loss of lexico-semantic density in an *Unword* by intensifying sound patterning, introducing rhythmic irregularity, or syntactic disruption. In

this way, the target text can reproduce the experiential impact of the original, if not its formal singularity. Such solutions acknowledge that poetic translation operates through a redistribution of effects rather than through one-to-one correspondence.

Ultimately, the translation of *Unwords* requires an acceptance of partial untranslatability as a constitutive poetic effect, in line with theoretical approaches that conceive translation as negotiation rather than restitution. By prioritizing strangeness and creative deviation, the translator preserves not the linguistic artifact itself, but the poem's capacity to resist closure and to unsettle habitual modes of reading.

Building on the theoretical premises outlined above, we will turn to a detailed analysis of Stănescu's poetry, focusing on the English translation by Thomas Carlson and Vasile Poenaru of the poem *Necuvintele*, as presented in the volume *Bas-Relief with Heroes* (Memphis State University Press, 1988). Through a close examination of the translational strategies employed in the rendering of the poem, we will explore how the translators handle lexical invention and negotiate semantic indeterminacy and poetic innovation, highlighting the distinct interpretive choices made at the levels of form, sound, and meaning.

Necuvintele
El a întins spre mine o frunză ca o mână cu degete.
Eu am întins spre el o mână ca o frunză cu dinți.
El a întins spre mine o ramură ca un braț.
Eu am întins spre el brațul ca o ramură.
El și-a înclinat spre mine trunchiul
ca un măr.
Eu am inclinat spre el umărul
ca un trunchi noduros.
Auzeam cum se-nțetește seva lui bătând
ca sângele.
Auzea cum se încetinește sângele meu suind ca seva.
Eu am trecut prin el.
El a trecut prin mine.
Eu am rămas un pom singur.
El
un om singur.

Unwords
He offered me a leaf like a hand with fingers.
I offered him a hand like a leaf with teeth.
He offered me a branch like an arm.
I offered him my arm like a branch.
He tipped his trunk towards me
like a shoulder.
I tipped my shoulder to him
like a knotted trunk.
I could hear his sap quicken, beating
like blood.

He could hear my blood slacken like rising sap.
I passed through him.
He passed through me.
I remained a solitary tree.
He
a solitary man.

In the poem *Necuvintele*, Nichita Stănescu explores a mode of communication between the poet and the vegetal world, representing nature and the broader world, which results in a mutual assimilation: the absorption of the vegetal into the human, and of the human into the vegetal. This process evokes the poet's integration into the cosmic chaos (Lazăr, 2015).

Translation fidelity versus translation shifts

When assessing the overall quality of the translated text, it is gratifying to identify numerous instances of translational fidelity and adherence to the source text, as these testify to the translator's skill and competence. At the same time, it is equally interesting to observe certain translation shifts and to attempt to explain or justify them, where possible and plausible.

We will therefore begin with a commentary on cases of source-text fidelity, which are, in fact, predominant. Then, we will turn our attention to instances of translation shifts, seeking to discuss the degree of their acceptability.

The translation of the title *Necuvintele* **/** *Unwords* is particularly revealing from a poetic and translational perspective. First, from a morphological and structural point of view, *Necuvintele* is a neologistic construction in Romanian, formed by the prefix *ne-* (negation/absence) and *cuvintele* (the words). Similarly, *Unwords* reproduces this structure almost exactly through the English negative prefix *un* attached to *words*. This creates a strong formal and structural equivalence, preserving the inventive, non-standard nature of the original title.

Second, in terms of semantic and conceptual fidelity, both titles suggest the idea of language beyond language a realm where meaning is conveyed through gestures, silence, transformation, and communion rather than conventional speech. This aligns perfectly with the poem's content, where communication occurs through physical and symbolic exchange rather than verbal expression. The English *Unwords* captures this abstraction without explanatory paraphrase, respecting the original's ambiguity and poetic density.

Regarding poetic and stylistic effect, *Unwords* maintains the same strangeness and defamiliarization as *Necuvintele*. It sounds slightly unnatural in English, just as *Necuvintele* does in Romanian, which is a deliberate and effective choice. Instead of opting for a more interpretive title such as *Beyond Words* or *Wordlessness*, the translator preserves the experimental tone and minimalist force of the original.

In conclusion, the translation of the title demonstrates high fidelity on structural, semantic, and poetic levels. It exemplifies a successful case of creative equivalence, where the translator mirrors not only the meaning but also the linguistic innovation and aesthetic intention of the source text.

Even a simple visual comparison of the original poem in Romanian with its translated version proposed by Thomas Carlson and Vasile Poenaru, reveals that

the English translation demonstrates a high degree of structural fidelity to the Romanian original *Necuvintele*, in terms of lines organisation and length. A more attentive analysis, proves that the translation also preserves the poem's mirrored syntax, short-line rhythm, and alternating perspective between *he* and *I*.

In the text of the poem *Necuvintele* (*Unwords*), Stănescu employs short, parallel lines and mirrored exchanges, crafting a rhythm that emphasizes repetition and subtle shifts in metaphor, often moving between human and tree forms. The poem's brevity and formal symmetry reflect his broader inclination toward fragmented, image-driven compositions. Through the interplay of repeated phrases and progressive variations, Stănescu generates distinctive textual accumulations, where meaning emerges not linearly but through layering and resonance. This technique highlights the tension between clarity and ambiguity, inviting readers to explore the liminal spaces between images and associations.

The musical effects, rhythm, and melody of *Necuvintele,* but also of its English version are subtle and rely less on sound ornamentation and more on syntactic parallelism, repetition, and cadence.

One important point is that the rhythm of the poem is created through balanced sentence structures and the systematic alternation between "El…" (*he*) and "Eu…" (I), which produces a steady, almost ritualistic beat. The repetition of the same grammatical patterns ("El a întins… / Eu am întins…" - *He offered me… / I offered him*…) acts like a refrain, creating a slow, meditative rhythm that differs from traditional metrical regularity. The rhythm of the poem remains effective despite the absence of rhyme. This rhythm mirrors the gradual approach and merging of the human and the vegetal, reinforcing the poem's overall thematic progression.

Another key aspect concerns the musicality of the verses, which in Romanian is enhanced by phonetic echoes and alliteration, especially in lines involving organic processes ("seva", "sângele", "suind"), where sibilant sounds create a flowing, circulatory acoustic effect that evokes sap and blood. The English translation preserves this effect partially through soft consonants and flowing verbs ("sap quicken", "blood slacken"), though some of the natural sonic density of Romanian is inevitably reduced due to linguistic differences.

Finally, the melody of the poem emerges from its descending and ascending intonation patterns, particularly in the central lines where sap and blood are contrasted. Short, declarative sentences ("Eu am trecut prin el"./"El a trecut prin mine". - *I passed through him./He passed through me*.) introduce a sharp rhythmic pause that acts as a melodic break before the quiet ending. Both versions conclude with isolated, nominal phrases ("un pom singur/un om singur" – *a solitary tree / a solitary man*), whose minimalism produces a soft, fading cadence. Overall, the poem's musicality is not lyrical in a traditional sense but is instead structural and semantic, arising from repetition, symmetry, and controlled pauses rather than rhyme or meter.

At a compositional level, the analysis of the original poem and its translation focuses on the lexical correspondence between the two texts. In general, the poem's message relies on highly concrete, corporeal nouns, which the translation

consistently renders through direct lexical equivalents. This choice avoids abstraction and keeps the meaning grounded in physical perception. Consequently, the English reader encounters the same embodied semantics as in Romanian, where understanding arises from tactile and visual recognition.

By privileging direct equivalences over complex paraphrasing or substitutions, the translation does not attempt to clarify or rationalize moments of semantic indeterminacy. Even seemingly simple lines, such as *"Eu am trecut prin el. / El a trecut prin mine"* → *"I passed through him. / He passed through me,"* should not be read as amateurish, word-for-word transposition. Rather, they reflect a deliberate strategy designed to preserve the semantic opacity and the *Unwordly* potential of the translated words.

A further compositional consideration concerns the similes, which are methodically accumulated in both the original and the translated versions of the poem. The visual imagery they generate, and the expressiveness of the lexical choices are central to both texts, and they play a decisive role in conveying meaning beyond language, what the title itself defines as *unwords*.

The poem is built almost entirely on similes (comparisons) introduced by "ca" - *like*, which function not as decorative devices but as mechanisms of metamorphosis. Each comparison destabilizes fixed categories: a leaf becomes a hand, a hand becomes a leaf with teeth, a branch becomes an arm, and an arm becomes a branch. These reciprocal images create a visual chain of hybrid forms, where human and vegetal identities continuously overlap. In translation, these comparisons are largely preserved in both structure and imagery, allowing the English reader to access the same progressive blurring of boundaries. The literal retention of *like* maintains the comparative logic and ensures that the metamorphosis unfolds gradually rather than abruptly.

The artistic visual images created by these comparisons are vivid and tactile. The reader can see and almost feel the transformations because they rely on concrete, corporeal nouns, faithfully preserved in the translated version, where direct equivalents are chosen for the central concepts: "mână" – *hand*, "degete" – *fingers*, "frunză" – *leaf*, "braț" – *arm*, "dinți" – *teeth* etc. The translator's choice to keep this lexical concreteness strengthens the imagistic power of the poem in English. Even when minor semantic adjustments occur, the images remain strikingly physical and sensorial, preserving the poem's visual density and symbolic tension. This is particularly important when considered in relation to the transcendent concept of Unwords, which relies on sensory suggestiveness.

The same principle applies to the poem's final semantic contrast—*pom singur* vs. *om singur* — *solitary tree* vs. *solitary man*—which is faithfully maintained. The translation achieves lexical and semantic equivalence, as well as morphological and syntactic correspondence. Beyond the level of discrete words, the shared adjective conveys a sense of sameness, while the nouns assert difference. In this way, the translation preserves the poem's concluding semantic tension between fusion and separation, unity and irreducible individuality.

The expressiveness of the chosen words lies in their simplicity rather than ornamentation. Both versions avoid abstract vocabulary, favoring elementary, al-

most primordial terms associated with body and nature. This simplicity enhances expressiveness by allowing meaning to emerge through association and inference, not explanation. The reader is invited to infer unity, empathy, and existential solitude from the images themselves. In translation, this economy of language is respected, ensuring that expressiveness arises from structure and imagery rather than stylistic embellishment.

Finally, the comparisons lead the reader *beyond verbal meaning*, into the realm of *unwords*. As the poem progresses, language seems to dissolve into gesture, sound, and movement ("Eu am trecut prin el./El a trecut prin mine" - *I passed through him./He passed through me*). These moments resist paraphrase, there is no need to reword or explain them in simpler terms. Even if their translated versions may seem too plain and literal, we should bear in mind that their meaning is not explicit anyway. Instead, they require the reader to actively interpret them, drawing conclusions based on context, intuition, and personal understanding. The final effect depends entirely on the reader's interpretive inference. In such a way, the straightforward translation succeeds in maintaining the openness and flexibility of meaning. As a result, the comparisons, equated in translation, do not merely describe; they perform meaning, transforming the poem into an experience in which communication occurs at a trans-linguistic level.

In sum, on an expressive level, the translation preserves the comparative structure, visual imagery, and expressive restraint of the original, allowing the poem's symbolic inferences to unfold in English as *unwords* - meanings felt, seen, and intuited rather than explicitly spoken.

Key relational and surreal images: such as the transformations of leaf into hand, branch into arm, and sap into blood, are carefully maintained, ensuring that the poem's symbolic interplay between human and natural forms remains intact. Line breaks and isolated statements, particularly in the pivotal passages, are faithfully reproduced, retaining the dramatic pacing and emotional resonance of the original. Still, there are also some minor semantic adjustments, such as rendering "ca un măr" as *like a shoulder* instead of the literal *like an apple*, slightly alter the metaphorical imagery but enhance readability and interpretive clarity for English readers. The rendering of „ca un măr" as *like a shoulder* reflects the translators' intention to maintain the poem's overall chiastic pattern, whereby human and vegetal elements are reciprocally exchanged in the preceding lines:

> "El a întins spre mine o *frunză* ca o *mână* cu degete. Eu am întins spre el o *mână* ca o *frunză* cu dinți. El a întins spre mine o *ramură* ca un *braț*. Eu am întins spre el *brațul* ca o *ramură*. El și-a înclinat spre mine *trunchiul* ca un *măr*. Eu am inclinat spre el *umărul* ca un *trunchi* noduros." - He offered me a *leaf* like a *hand*_with fingers. / I offered him a *hand* like a *leaf* with teeth. / He offered me a *branch* like an *arm*. / I offered him my *arm* like a *branch*. / He tipped his *trunk* towards me like a *shoulder*. / I tipped my *shoulder* to him like a knotted *trunk*.

The close formal resemblance between „măr" and „umăr" in Romanian, distinguished by only one letter, enables a subtle lexical substitution that functions as a sophisticated interplay of form and meaning, reflecting the core principles of the

Unwords concept. Because this formal effect is unattainable in English, the translator compensates by adhering more closely to the chiastic construction of the earlier lines, thereby maintaining a semantic pattern consistent with the poem's overarching message.

Another translation choice that departs from the general tendency toward strict fidelity is the use of the verb *offer* to render the Romanian „a întinde" („El a întins spre mine o frunză ca o mână cu degete. Eu am întins spre el o mână ca o frunză cu dinți". — *He offered me a leaf like a hand with fingers. I offered him a hand like a leaf with teeth*.). By selecting this occasional equivalent, the translators produce an explicitation effect: they interpret the pragmatic value of the gesture, making the action more semantically determinate. The original Romanian, by contrast, maintains a greater openness of meaning; in the translation, this openness is somewhat constrained, as the gesture is presented as already interpreted by the translator. In this particular case, we observe the difficulty of rendering not only formal and semantic equivalence, but also the interpretive ambiguity and freedom inherent in the text, the very quality of the Unwords encoded by the poet.

A slight loss of figurative resonance can be observed in the translation of the Romanian verb „a înclina" as *to tip* („El și-a înclinat spre mine trunchiul ca un măr. Eu am inclinat spre el umărul ca un trunchi noduros". — *He tipped his trunk towards me like a shoulder. I tipped my shoulder to him like a knotted trunk*.). Despite the semantic correspondence, „înclinat" in Romanian can convey subtle attentiveness or a deferential, intimate gesture, whereas *tipped* emphasizes the physical action over the relational nuance. As a result, some interpretive subtlety or semantic openness is somewhat reduced, rendering the gesture more literal in English. Nevertheless, this choice preserves the physicality, reciprocity, and overall semantic clarity of the poem, in line with the translation's general strategy of prioritizing meaning and experiential immediacy.

Conclusion

Overall, the translation succeeds in maintaining both the formal structure and the dynamic relational imagery of the original, achieving a careful balance between literal fidelity and poetic functionality.

In conclusion, translating Unwords requires far more than selecting the right words or conveying a clear meaning. A translator must also recreate the spiritual and aesthetic effect encoded by the author, generating an atmosphere that inspires the reader to engage beyond the literal text. The task is to convey a metaphysical message that transcends language and speaker, allowing the experience of the poem to resonate independently of the original linguistic medium. Successful translation of Unwords thus involves preserving semantic ambiguity, sensory and corporeal immediacy, and symbolic tension, so that the English reader can encounter a parallel depth of perception, intuition, and interpretive openness as intended in the original.

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