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**Translation project:  
*Hunger* by Choi Jin-Young**

**Перекладацький проєкт:  
Перекладацький проєкт: переклад книги Чон Джин Йон «*Hunger*»**

BA paper

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Цим пікисом заповідую,  
що в дані на захист  
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## Abstract

This translation project focuses on the reproduction of metaphorical narration in the Ukrainian translation of Choi Jin-young's novel *Hunger*. The study examines the principal elements of metaphorical narration, including allegory, symbolism, biblical allusions, imagery, metaphor, simile, personification and rhetorical questions, as well as their role in constructing the symbolic and emotional dimensions of the novel.

The first chapter presents the author's translation of selected excerpts from the novel from English into Ukrainian. The second chapter analyses metaphorical narration and the translation challenges encountered during the translation process. Particular attention is paid to the translation techniques proposed by Lucía Molina and Amparo Hurtado Albir, including literal translation, modulation, transposition, adaptation, amplification, reduction, established equivalent, compensation and borrowing.

The project may be useful for literary translators, researchers in translation studies and readers interested in contemporary Korean literature.

**Keywords:** metaphorical narration, symbolism, biblical allusion, imagery, translation techniques, literary translation.

## Анотація

Цей перекладацький проєкт присвячений дослідженню особливостей відтворення метафоричного наративу в українському перекладі роману Чхве Чіньон «Голод». У роботі проаналізовано основні елементи метафоричного наративу, зокрема алегорію, символізм, біблійні алюзії, образність, метафору, порівняння, персоніфікацію та риторичні питання, а також визначено їхню роль у формуванні символічного та емоційного простору твору.

Перший розділ містить авторський переклад вибраних фрагментів роману з англійської мови українською. Другий розділ присвячений аналізу метафоричного наративу та перекладацьких труднощів, що виникли під час роботи над текстом. Особливу увагу приділено перекладацьким технікам, запропонованим Лусією Моліною та Ампаро Уртадо Альбір, зокрема дослівному перекладу, модуляції, транспозиції, адаптації, ампліфікації, редуції, усталеному відповіднику, компенсації та запозиченню.

Проєкт буде корисним для перекладачів художньої літератури, дослідників перекладознавства та читачів, які цікавляться сучасною корейською літературою.

**Ключові слова:** метафоричний наратив, символізм, біблійна алюзія, образність, перекладацькі техніки, художній переклад.

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## Introduction

The translation of literary texts is a great challenge for the translator, as it requires not only linguistic accuracy but also the preservation of the stylistic, emotional and symbolic dimensions of the original. Literary translation, refers to the reproduction of narrative techniques, figurative language, cultural references and the individual style of the author in another language. The task is made all the more difficult when the prose is psychologically complex, for emotional meaning is often conveyed indirectly, through symbolism, imagery and metaphorical narration. The translation process therefore requires a detailed analysis of the linguistic and stylistic features of the source text. This work is relevant due to the necessity of developing efficient strategies for the translation of metaphorical narration, symbolic ambiguity and emotional intensity into Ukrainian literature translation.

The current translation project is based on the novel *Hunger* by Choi Jin-young. The novel is the contemporary Korean psychological fiction which integrates the characteristics of fragmented narration, emotional intensity and symbolic storytelling. The narrative is marked by metaphorical narration, large symbolism, biblical allusions, imagery and psychologically loaded figurative language. The theoretical basis of the research is the work of Marie-Laure Ryan and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan on narrative structures and narratology; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Michele Prandi, L. David Ritchie and Karen Sullivan on metaphorical thinking and figurative language; Brendan McGuigan, *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* and Cuddon's *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, which provide definitions and interpretations of stylistic devices; and Lucía Molina and Amparo Hurtado Albir, whose classification of translation techniques provides the methodological basis for the translation analysis.

The **object** of this study is metaphorical narrative of *Hunger* by Choi Jin-young. And the **subject** is characterizing and defining translation techniques applied in the process of translation.

The novel has become a cult classic of contemporary Korean literature, because to its unique psychological depth, symbolic narration and emotionally intense style. However, many literary works are still unavailable in Ukrainian translation, especially those texts that are heavily based on symbolic and metaphorical narration.

The main **aim** of this project is to translate selected fragments of the novel *Hunger* into Ukrainian while preserving the metaphorical narration, emotional intensity and stylistic features of the original text. To achieve this aim, the following **objectives** have been established:

1. to carry out the translation of the novel considering the genre and stylistic features of the source text;
2. to analyse the principal elements of metaphorical narration in *Hunger*, including allegory, symbolism, biblical allusions, imagery, metaphor, simile, personification and rhetorical questions;
3. to examine translation challenges that arise during the reproduction of metaphorical narration in Ukrainian translation;
4. to define and analyse the translation techniques and strategies applied to render stylistic and symbolic elements in the target language.

The **project material** is a fragment of *Hunger* by Choi Jin-young and translation into Ukrainian by the author of this project.

The translation project includes an introduction, a translation part, a translator's analysis and conclusions. The translation project consists of 27 pages of actual translation and 16 pages of translation analysis. The source text consists of 8,907 words and 47,266 characters including spaces. The translated version consists of 7,977 words and 47,732 characters including spaces.

## Chapter 1. Translation of *Hunger* by Choi Jin-young

### SL Text

Will humanity last another thousand years? If anyone reads this, I hope it's a thousand years from the time of writing

I must live for an extraordinarily long time, long enough to witness the end of humanity – which is to say, I want to be the last human alive. That is my only wish.

I wonder what will shock humans in a thousand years. What will they hate, fear, find humiliating? What will they criticise and mock? Who will they label crazy? Which stories will resonate with them? What will they desire? How will they define beauty and ugliness in a millennium? What about good and evil? Will money still rule the world? What will they eat? What will 'humane' evolve to mean? I want to believe that in a thousand years, humanity will be unrecognisable. No, I hope that in a thousand years, there will be no one left to read or write. Yes, I wish to be the last. That is how long I must hold out.

How long ago was the Bible written? It's been around two thousand years, right? Some are still comforted, moved, even enraptured by these ancient texts. And so they believe. They believe in stories of a child born without sexual intercourse and of a dead man coming back to life, tales that far surpass the wonders of rain falling for forty days or the sea parting in two.

... Faith is the key to grasping absurdity. The ultimate test happens when you're faced with something that makes you want to cry out, But that doesn't make any sense at all! Have faith, and sense

### TL Translation

Чи проживе людство ще одне тисячоліття? Якщо хтось це читає, то я сподіваюся, що через тисячоліття після написання.

Я маю жити надзвичайно довго, достатньо, щоб стати свідком кінця людства — так би мовити, я хочу бути останньою живою людиною на планеті. Це моє єдине бажання.

Мене цікавить, що шокуватиме людей через тисячу років. Що вони будуть ненавидіти, боятися чи принижувати? Що вони будуть критикувати та висміювати? На кого будуть вшати ярлик навіженого? Які історії знайдуть своє місце в серцях людей. Чого вони будуть жагати? Як вони будуть описувати красу та потворність через тисячоліття? Як щодо добра та зла? Чи будуть всеще гроші керувати світом? Що вони будуть їсти? У що еволюціонує поняття "людяності"? Я сподіваюся що через тисячу років людство буде неможливо впізнати. Хоча ні, я сподіваюся що через тисячоліття вже не буде нікого, хто міг би читати або писати. Так, я бажаю бути останньою. Саме стільки я мушу протриматись.

Як давно була написана Біблія? Це ж було близько двох тисяч років тому, чи не так? Деякі люди досі відчують заспокоєння, зворушення, навіть захоплення від цих стародавніх текстів. І тому вони вірять. Вони вірять в історії про дитину, народжену без статевого акту, і про мертвого чоловіка, який повернувся до життя, — казки, які набагато перевершують дива сорокаденного дощу або розколу моря на дві частини.

... Віра це ключ до пізнання абсурдності. Найважче випробування настає, коли ти стикаєшся з чимось, що змушує тебе кричати, але ж це зовсім не має сенсу! Майте віру, і сенс з'явиться.

will follow.

What I need is a resurrection, an immaculate conception. A miracle beyond the bounds of science and ethics. A thousand-year leap through time. I need Armageddon or eternal life. I need to lose my head. I don't need to be human – I just need you. Faith is what I need.

What should I do once this story is told? What could I possibly do? Where should I go? I could go to the police and confess. I could visit a priest and confess. I ate a person. A human being. Is that a sin? They'll do with me as they see fit. I could say whatever they tell me to say, go wherever they tell me to go. To tell this story, and to live on: that is all I want.

Gu died on the street. He looked no different from a passed-out drunk. I sat there, cradling him in my arms, waiting for dawn. The wind carried the scent of new clothes. My mind tossed and turned like an insomniac in the dead of night. It's going to rain. What do I do? Rain would be good. No, not yet ...

I stroked Gu's hair, brittle and unruly down to his collarbones. A clump came loose. I examined it in my hand, rolled it into a ball and swallowed it whole. I couldn't bear to lose any part of him. The night stretched on without a drop of rain. I did not cry; Gu did not breathe. Even with his lifeless weight in my arms, I couldn't comprehend that he was truly gone. His physicality and the notion of death seemed to repel each other, like poles of a magnet. Had I imagined it all? Nothing felt real, even weeks after dragging his stiffening body back home.

I knew you'd come. I knew you would, and I waited for you. But I couldn't decide when I wanted you to get here – before

Воскресіння, ось що мені треба, неосяжна концепція. Диво поміж рамок науки та етики. Тисячолітній стрибок в часі. Я потребує Армагеддон або безсмертя. Я хочу з'їхати з глузду. Я не хочу бути людиною – я просто потребує тебе. Віра це те, що мені потрібно.

Що мені робити як ця історія спливе? Що я можу зробити? Куди я маю подітися? Я могла б піти зізнатися поліції. Я б могла піти до священника та зізнатися. Я з'їла людину. Людиноподібне створіння. Чи є це гріхом? Вони зроблять зі мною те, що вважатимуть за потрібне. Я можу говорити все, що вони скажуть, і йти туди, куди вони мені скажуть. Розповісти цю історію і жити далі — це все, чого я хочу.

Ґу помер на вулиці. Він нічим не відрізнявся від п'яниці, який знепритомнів. Я сиділа там, обіймаючи його, і чекала світанку. Вітер ніс із собою запах свіжого одягу. Мої думки плуталися й кружляли, наче безсонний в темряві ночі крутиться в ліжку. Скоро піде дощ. Що мені робити? Дощ був би доречним. Хоча ні, не зараз...

Я гладила волосся Ґу, таке ламке й неслухняне, що спало йому аж до ключиць. Одне пасмо випало. Я розглянула його в долоні, скрутила в кульку й проковтнула цілком. Я не могла змиритися з тим, що втрачаю хоч якусь його частинку. Ніч тягнулася без жодної краплі дощу. Я не плакала; Ґу не дихав. Навіть тримаючи його бездиханне тіло в обіймах, я не могла усвідомити, що він справді пішов. Його фізична присутність і поняття смерті, здавалося, відштовхували одне одного, наче полюси магніту. Чи я все це вигадала? Ніщо не здавалося реальним, навіть через кілька тижнів після того, як я притягла його застигле тіло до себе додому.

Я знав, що ти прийдеш. Знав, що ти це зробиш, і я чекав на тебе. Але я все не міг вирішити коли я б хотів тебе побачити тут – до чи після

or after my end. You always complained that I never knew what I wanted, making you decide for me. And here I was, face to face with death and still figuring myself out.

I decided you shouldn't have to watch me die. I didn't want to leave you with a wound more painful and permanent than my absence. Besides, I had nothing more to say. Or so I thought. I convinced myself that, over the years, I had said everything I needed to. Even if I'd missed something, there was no need to speak it now. Some things are better left unsaid. I thought you knew me well enough to understand. But was I right? Had I really said everything I needed to say? No, who am I kidding? You should have been here, by my side. With my last breath, I realised what I had wanted all along.

I wanted to see you. Not the old, weathered payphone, not some stubborn weed pushing through the grimy pavement.

Not a lonesome cross piercing the foggy dusk. You were what I wanted to see. Do you even know that? Or can you not know because I never told you? The thought of you not knowing kills me. I died with thoughts of you, but without glimpsing you one last time. You should've come a little sooner. My final vision of this world should've been you.

I noticed the light pooled beneath a street lamp at the head of the alley. I looked at it until my eyes drifted shut. Dam will be here any moment now. That light looks so inviting, so warm. Warm like Dam.

кінця. Ти завжди казала що я ніколи не знав чого б я хотів, даючи тобі змогу вирішувати за мене. І я був там, віч-на-віч зі смертю та все ще намагаючись зібратися з думками.

Я вирішив, що ти не маєш бачити як я помру. Я не хотів залишати тебе з раною, болючою і більш тривалою, ніж моя відсутність. До того ж, мені більше не було що сказати. Принаймні, так я думав. Я переконав себе, що за ці роки я сказав все, що потрібно. Навіть якщо я щось пропустив, зараз не було потреби про це говорити. Деякі речі краще залишити неказаними. Я думав, що ти знаєш мене достатньо добре, щоб це зрозуміти. Але чи мав я рацію? Чи справді я сказав все, що потрібно було сказати? Ні, кого я обманюю? Ти мала бути тут, поруч зі мною. З останнім подихом я усвідомив, чого я хотів увесь цей час.

Я хотів побачити тебе. Не старий, пошкоджений телефон-автомат, не якийсь впертий бур'ян, що пробивається крізь брудний тротуар.

Не самотній хрест, що пронизує туманний сутінок. Ти була тією, кого я хотів бачити. Ти хоч знаєш про це? Або ти не можеш знати, бо я тобі ніколи цього не казав? Думка про те, що ти не знаєш, вбиває мене. Я помер з думками про тебе, але не побачивши тебе востаннє. Ти мала прийти трохи раніше. Моїм останнім баченням цього світу мала бути ти.

Я помітив світло, що збиралося під ліхтарем на початку провулка. Я дивився на нього, поки мої очі не заплющилися. Дам буде тут будь-якої миті. Це світло виглядає таким привабливим, таким теплим. Теплим, як Дам.

It's not that I'd never thought about it before. Gu was always on the run, sometimes disappearing for days at a time. The nights he was with me, Gu collapsed from exhaustion like a withered chrysanthemum. An unspoken question hung in the air. What if he dies first?

I resolved that, if it came to that, I would follow him. But what would become of our bodies, I wondered. Who would tend to us? A public servant would probably collect and dispose of us without giving a second thought to the kind of lives we led, what we meant to each other, the memories etched into our skin. They'd simply burn us like roadkill. Gone – just like that. I could accept this end for myself, but not for Gu. I would have to hide his body before taking my own life; that was my revised plan.

I refused to dwell on these dark thoughts. Then one day, when we hid in an abandoned house, scarred and split like an old oak struck by lightning, Gu broached the subject of death. Lying on his side, he pulled me close.

- Are you hungry? I shook my head.
- Are you tired? I nodded.
- Did you weep at your aunt's funeral? I held my tongue.
- Do you want to visit her?

Gu hadn't been around when she passed away. I resented him for this, but ultimately decided against holding a grudge. Let bygones be bygones, I resolved.

— What will you do when I die? The question alone made me want to cry. How cruel of him to ask.

— I'll leave you enough money to cremate or bury me. Turns out even dying's expensive. But you'll have to keep it on the down-low, or else the fuckers will sell off my corpse

I sat up to take a better look at him. His gentle eyes and

Не те, щоб я ніколи раніше про це не думала. Гу завжди був у бігах, іноді зникаючи на кілька днів. У ночі, коли він був зі мною, Гу падав від виснаження, як зів'яла хризантема. У повітрі висіло невисловлене питання. А що, якщо він помре першим?

Я вирішила, що якщо до цього дійде, я піду за ним. Але що станеться з нашими тілами, думала я. Хто б про нас подбав? Державний службовець, мабуть, забрав би нас і утилізував, не замислюючись про те, яким було наше життя, що ми означали одне для одного, які спогади були викарбувані на нашій шкірі. Вони просто спалять нас, як дорожніх трупів. Зникнуть – ось так просто. Я могла змиритися з таким кінцем для себе, але не для Гу. Я повинна була сховати його тіло, перш ніж покінчити з собою; це був мій переглянутий план.

Я відмовилася зациклюватися на цих похмурих думках. Аж одного дня, коли ми ховалися в покинутому будинку, понівеченому і розколотому, наче старий дуб, уражений блискавкою, Гу заговорив про смерть. Лежачи на боці, він притягнув мене до себе.

- Ти голодна? Я похитала головою.
- Ти втомилася? Я кивнула.
- Ти плакала на похоронах своєї тітки? Я промовчала.
- Хочеш її відвідати?

Гу не було поруч, коли вона померла. Я ображалася на нього за це, але зрештою вирішила не тримати на нього зла. Що було, те минуло, вирішила я.

— Що ти будеш робити, коли я помру? Від самого питання мені захотілося плакати. Як жорстоко з його боку запитувати про таке.

— Я залишу тобі достатньо грошей, щоб кремувати або поховати мене. Виявляється, навіть померти дорого коштує. Але ти повинна тримати це в таємниці, інакше ці уроди продадуть моє тіло.

Я підвелася, щоб краще його роздивитися. Його ніжні очі і гарний

handsome nose, his cute ears. His dry, flaky skin that I longed to lick clean. His sad pecs, nice bum and rail-thin legs. I caressed him all over. How could I ever burn or bury such a beautiful body? How could I let that happen?

— I won't be able to do it, so please don't die before me.

— I feel the same, Dam. But it will happen one day. Should I just disappear and die by myself? Would that be better?

— That's the worst thing you could do. Why don't we shelve this conversation and focus on everything we want to do together while we're still here? Once we're feeling better, we'll joke about the morbid stuff and laugh off death like it's nothing.

As I lay back down, Gu spoke again.

— If you die before me, I will eat you.

I take back what I said about hiding his body before killing myself. A ridiculous idea that could only make sense while Gu was still alive. Hide him where? I couldn't even keep him safe in life. And suicide? Idiotic. No, I have a better plan. I will eat you, Gu. I will eat you and live for an extraordinarily long time. I will outlive those who treated us as less than human. Even as they grow old, fall ill, die— until they are long forgotten and their bodies disintegrate into nothingness— I will live. I will carry your remains with me to the very end of time. You will die only when I die. I won't follow you into death; I will have you follow me.

I won't watch you disappear. I will live. I will live to remember you.

Before I met my aunt, I lived with my grandfather. When he passed away, she gave up her life as a Buddhist nun in a mountain-top temple and came down to meet me. Neither of us knew of the other's existence; his death brought us together. So the

ніс, його милі вуха. Його суха, луската шкіра, яку я так хотіла виллизати дочиста. Його сумні груди, гарний зад і худі ноги. Я пестила його по всьому тілу. Як я могла спалити або поховати таке прекрасне тіло? Як я могла дозволити, щоб це сталося?

— Я не зможу цього зробити, тому, будь ласка, не вмирай раніше за мене.

— Я відчуваю те саме, Дем. Але одного дня це станеться. Може, мені просто зникнути і померти наодинці? Чи було б це краще?

— Це найгірше, що ти можеш зробити. Давай відкладемо цю розмову і зосередимося на всьому, що ми хочемо зробити разом, поки ми ще тут. Коли нам стане краще, ми будемо жартувати про моторошні речі і сміятися над смертю, ніби це ніщо.

Коли я прилягла, Гу знову заговорив.

— Якщо ти помреш раніше за мене, я з'їм тебе.

Я беру назад свої слова про те, що сховаю його тіло, а потім вб'ю себе. Це була безглузда ідея, яка мала сенс, коли Гу був ще живий. Де я його сховаю? Я навіть не змогла захистити його, коли він був живий. А самогубство? Ідіотизм. Ні, у мене є кращий план. Я з'їм тебе, Гу. Я з'їм тебе і буду жити надзвичайно довго. Я переживу тих, хто ставився до нас гірше, ніж до людей. Навіть коли вони постаріють, захворіють, помруть — доки про них не забудуть і їхні тіла не розкладаються в ніщо — я буду жити. Я буду носити твої останки з собою до кінця часів. Ти помреш тільки тоді, коли помру я. Я не піду за тобою в смерть; я змушу тебе піти за мною.

Я не буду дивитися, як ти зникаєш. Я буду жити. Жити, щоб пам'ятати тебе.

До того, як я познайомилася зі своєю тіткою, я жила з дідусем. Коли він помер, вона покинула своє життя буддійської черниці в храмі на вершині гори і спустилася, щоб познайомитися зі мною. Жодна з нас не знала про існування іншої; його смерть зблизила нас. Отже, тітка не

aunt hadn't known she was an aunt, and the niece hadn't known she was a niece.

Auntie had no idea how I came into the world, or how I ended up living with my grandfather. Neither did I. Grandpa took his secret to the grave. I think he had meant to say something to someone, but death took him by surprise. So both Auntie and I remained in the dark. We got by on our wits, without knowing the basic facts and oblivious to our own ignorance. Some secrets are better left undiscovered. Thinking too much only messes with you and brings on headaches. You might end up questioning your entire existence.

After leaving the temple, Auntie got a job assembling products in buildings made from shipping containers.

— What did you make today?

— I made sounds. This meant she'd made speakers.

— What about today?

— Scents. Air-fresheners, obviously.

— And today?

— I made beauty. Hand mirrors. It took me a while to get that one.

— What about this time?

— I made darkness. Light bulbs. This one too I didn't understand. I pressed her about this 'darkness', wanting to know what she meant, until she finally snapped at me. I burst into tears.

— Is it so sinful to not know something?

— Sometimes what you need is time, not an easy answer. The things you don't understand now will start to make sense in time. Ignorance isn't a sin, but impatience can be.

Stunned, I fired back:

— What if I dropped dead right this second? I'd die without knowing! Her eyes widened in shock. We fell into a loud silence,

знала, що вона тітка, а племінниця не знала, що вона племінниця.

Тітка не мала уявлення, як я з'явилася на світ і як опинилася жити з дідусем. Я теж не знала. Дідусь забрав свою таємницю з собою в могилу. Думаю, він мав намір комусь щось розповісти, але смерть застала його зненацька. Тож і тітка, і я залишилися в невіданні. Ми жили, покладаючись на свою кмітливість, не знаючи основних фактів і не усвідомлюючи своєї власної необізнаності. Деякі таємниці краще залишити нерозкритими. Занадто багато думати тільки заплутує і викликає головний біль. Можна в результаті поставити під сумнів все своє існування.

Після того, як тітка покинула храм, вона влаштувалася на роботу, збираючи вироби в будівлях, зроблених з морських контейнерів.

— Що ти зробила сьогодні?

— Я зробила звуки. Це означало, що вона зробила динаміки.

— А сьогодні?

— Аромати. Очевидно, освіжувачі повітря.

— А сьогодні?

— Я зробила красу. Ручні дзеркала. Мені знадобився деякий час, щоб це зрозуміти.

— А цього разу?

— Я зробила темряву. Лампочки. Цього я теж не зрозуміла. Я наполягала на поясненні цього "темряви", хотіла знати, що вона мала на увазі, поки вона нарешті не гримнула на мене. Я розплакалася. — Чи так грішно не знати чогось?

— Іноді тобі потрібен час, а не проста відповідь. Те, чого ти зараз не розумієш, з часом стане зрозумілим. Незнання — це не гріх, а ось нетерплячість — може бути.

Ошелешена, я відповіла:

— А що, якби я впала мертвою прямо зараз? Я б померла, так і не дізнавшись! Її очі розширилися від подиву. Ми занурилися в гучну

probably thinking of Grandpa who symbolised death for us.

— Let's not do this, Dam.

She sighed and turned away, but I wanted to keep talking. Conversation was my only outlet and means of expressing my love for her. Back then, Auntie was the only person I loved. I poured all my affection into her hoping for the same in return, but she was always working. Putting food on the table was how she expressed her love.

To suffer is to experience physical or emotional pain. There can be no love without suffering.

Gu and I were in the same class for two years. I have no memory of our first year together, but when we turned nine, Gu began bullying me. He would steal my backpack, pull my hair, fling my school slippers across the classroom, scribble all over my notebooks and kick my chair. The torment was all physical; he never said a single word. If our paths crossed on the days I got a maths problem wrong or got left out, the days I watched the clouds bloom like flowers across a clear blue sky, I would quietly let a few tears fall. One day, Gu caught me crying and scowled. He fixed his gaze on me or something behind me, who knows, and then muttered something indecipherable. Was it 'fuck off', 'for real', 'stop it', or 'sorry'? I spent the entire day micro-analysing those two syllables.

I didn't hate Gu, my little tormentor.

I was just a little resentful.

A part of me longed to say something, but I could scarcely meet his eyes, let alone say his name. When he pulled my hair, I looked at him from the corner of my eye; when he flicked my eraser off the desk, I stole another glance; and when he kicked my chair, I simply watched him walk away. We turned ten without having ever

тишу, мабуть, думаючи про дідуся, який для нас символізував смерть.

— Давай не будемо цього робити, Дам.

Вона зітхнула і відвернулася, але я хотіла продовжувати розмову. Розмова була моїм єдиним виходом і засобом виразити свою любов до неї. Тоді тітка була єдиною людиною, яку я любила. Я вклала у неї всю свою любов, сподіваючись на те саме у відповідь, але вона завжди працювала. Вона висловлювала свою любов тим, що ставила їжу на стіл.

Страждати – це відчувати фізичний або емоційний біль. Не може бути кохання без страждань.

Ґу і я два роки вчилися в одному класі. Я не пам'ятаю нашого першого року навчання, але коли нам виповнилося дев'ять, Ґу почав з мене знущатись. Він крав мій рюкзак, тягав мене за волосся, кидав мої шкільні капці по класу, писав по моїх зошитах і пинав моє крісло. Це були виключно фізичні тортури; він ніколи не промовляв ні слова. Якщо наші шляхи перетиналися в ті дні, коли я неправильно вирішувала задачу з математики або мене залишали осторонь, в ті дні, коли я дивилася, як хмари розквітають, наче квіти, на чистому блакитному небі, я тихо пролила кілька сліз. Одного дня Ґу побачив, як я плачу, і нахмурився. Він дивився на мене або на щось за моєю спиною, хто знає, а потім пробурмотів щось незрозуміле. Чи було це "завались", "серйозно", "припини" або "вибач"? Я провела весь день, ретельно аналізуючи ці два склади.

Я не ненавиділа Ґу, мого маленького кривдника.

Я просто трохи ображалася.

Частина мене прагнула щось сказати, але я ледве могла дивитися йому в очі, не кажучи вже про те, щоб вимовити його ім'я. Коли він тягнув мене за волосся, я дивилася на нього краєм ока; коли він скинув мою гумку зі столу, я знову поглянула на нього; а коли він штовхнув моє крісло, я просто дивилася, як він відходить. Ми досягли

called each other by name. Gu lived less than ten minutes from me, meaning that we walked the same streets, swung on the same swings, soaked at the same bathhouse. Yet we rarely crossed paths outside of school. Still, I would look around, hoping to see him, only to feel an unfamiliar disappointment gnawing at my heart. One afternoon, by some twist of fate, I called in sick on the very day he too decided to skip school. We finally ran into each other in an empty alley, stopping in our tracks and smiling awkwardly.

— Why are you here?

— Why are *you* here? Despite the interrogation, we were secretly thrilled.

Of course, this wasn't our first encounter.

Neither of us recalled how we first met at eight years old, but we treasured our memory of the first time we called each other by name. I remember every detail: the languid sunlight of midday, the lilac-laced breeze swirling around us, Gu's blue work jacket smelling faintly of coal briquettes. Why are you here? he had asked, wiping his palms on his trousers and kicking the ground as if trying to unearth my answer. From then on, I found room in my heart for Gu and began to love him just as I loved Auntie. And they loved sharing my love. Back then Auntie was making summer. I remember her telling me so. What summer meant, I've forgotten.

We became inseparable, indulging in sugar together day and night. I went to Dam's house almost every day after school. Without the pocket money to fund an afternoon snack, she would retrieve a bag of white sugar from the cupboard and carefully tip some into my cupped hands. Then we would sit against the kitchen sink, licking sugar off the tips of our moistened index fingers.

— What if your aunt finds out?

десятирічного віку, ніколи не називаючи один одного по імені. Гу жив менш ніж за десять хвилин від мене, тобто ми ходили тими самими вулицями, гойдалися на тих самих гойдалках, купалися в тій самій лазні. Проте ми рідко зустрічалися поза школою. Тим не менш, я озиралася, сподіваючись побачити його, але відчувала лише незнайоме розчарування, яке гризло моє серце. Одного дня, за дивним збігом обставин, я подзвонила і повідомила, що захворіла, саме в той день, коли він теж вирішив прогуляти школу. Ми нарешті зустрілися в порожньому провулку, зупинилися і незручно посміхнулися.

— Чому ти тут?

— Чому *ти* тут?

Незважаючи на допит, ми таємно раділи.

Звичайно, це була не наша перша зустріч.

Жоден з нас не пам'ятав, як ми вперше зустрілися у віці восьми років, але ми бережно зберігали спогади про той момент, коли вперше назвали один одного по імені. Я пам'ятаю кожну деталь: мляве полуденне сонце, бузковий вітерець, що кружляв навколо нас, синя робоча куртка Гу, яка слабо пахла вугільними брикетами. Чому ти тут? — запитав він, витираючи долоні об штани і копаючи землю, ніби намагаючись відшукати мою відповідь. З того часу я знайшла в своєму серці місце для Гу і почала любити його так само, як любила тітку. А вони любили ділитися моєю любов'ю. Тоді тітка готувала літо. Я пам'ятаю, як вона мені про це розповідала. Що означало літо, я вже забула.

Ми стали нерозлучними, разом ласуючи цукром день і ніч. Я ходив до Дам майже щодня після школи. Не маючи кишенькових грошей на післяобідній перекус, вона діставала з шафи пакет білого цукру і обережно насипала його в мої долоні. Потім ми сідали біля кухонної мийки і злизували цукор з кінчиків наших зволжених вказівних пальців.

— А що, якщо твоя тітка дізнається?

— Just say we got the hiccups. Dam always had an answer.

Again and again we dipped our fingers into the sugar, until the day Dam bought us ice cream with money she'd found in her aunt's trouser pocket. I didn't ask if she had permission to go through her aunt's closet. I instinctively knew we were stealing and didn't want to embarrass her, but what if her aunt eventually caught on? Should I confess my part, or play dumb? I felt sick just thinking about it, and I didn't have the heart to stop Dam.

The last thing I wanted was for her to feel bad. Dam wasn't a bad kid. She was my favourite person in the world, and I loved spending time with her. I wanted to do whatever she did, go wherever she went. I wanted us to be together without the labels of 'good' or 'bad', 'right' and 'wrong' without deciding who was the better person.

Once a day we rifled through her aunt's closet for loose cash. We were easily excited and easily disappointed. One time, I struck gold before Dam. She studied the note in my hand.

— Put it back. I'll do it myself.

— It doesn't matter who does it. It's still stealing. I'd never called it stealing before, and I instantly regretted it.

— Right. So don't do it.

— Why?

— I just don't want you to.

— So you can but I can't? We locked eyes.

— I'll do it for us both.

— I don't want you doing anything I shouldn't do.

Dam snatched the banknote from my unsuspecting hand and returned it to the jacket.

For a moment she glared at the pocket or sleeve, who knows. I wiped my sweaty palms on my thighs before awkwardly reaching for her hand.

— Просто скажи, що у нас гикавка. Дам завжди мала відповідь.

Ми знову і знову занурювали пальці в цукор, аж доки одного дня Дам не купила нам морозиво на гроші, які знайшла в кишені штанів своєї тітки. Я не питав, чи мала вона дозвіл перебирати речі в шафі тітки. Я інстинктивно розумів, що ми крадемо, і не хотів її соромити, але що, як її тітка зрештою дізнається? Чи слід мені зізнатися у своїй причетності, чи вдавати, що нічого не знаю? Мені ставало погано від однієї думки про це, і я не мав серця зупиняти Дам.

Останнє, чого я хотів, це щоб вона почувалася погано. Дам не була поганою дитиною. Вона була моєю улюбленою людиною у світі, і я любив проводити з нею час. Я хотів робити все, що робила вона, ходити туди, куди ходила вона. Я хотів, щоб ми були разом без ярликів "доброго" чи "поганого", "правильного" чи "неправильного", без визначення, хто з нас краща людина.

Раз на день ми обшукували шафу її тітки в пошуках готівки. Ми легко захоплювалися і легко розчаровувалися. Одного разу я знайшов золото раніше за Дам. Вона вивчила купюру в моїй руці. — Поклади її назад. Я сама це зроблю.

— Не має значення, хто це робить. Це все одно крадіжка. Я ніколи раніше не називав це крадіжкою і миттєво пошкодував про це.

— Правильно. Тоді не роби цього.

— Чому?

— Я просто не хочу, щоб ти це робив.

— То ти можеш, а я не можу? Ми дивилися один одному в очі.

— Я зроблю це за нас обох.

— Я не хочу, щоб ти робив те, чого не повинна робити я.

Дам вихопила банкноту з моєї нічого не підозрюючої руки і поклала її назад у кишеню куртки.

На мить вона грізно поглянула на кишеню чи рукав, хто знає. Я витер пітні долоні об стегна, а потім незграбно простягнув руку до неї. Ми чекали настання ночі, лежачи поруч, а наші шлунки бурчали

We waited for nightfall lying side by side, our stomachs rumbling in protest. Before long, Dam's aunt would return from work. Or my mum would call, summoning me back to my own home.

The night came slowly, as if the last of the light was scrutinising us, putting us to the test. We were in our twenties when I brought up our childhood habit of theft.

— Honestly, I hated lying to Auntie. I felt worse for acting innocent than the actual stealing. Silence settled between us.

Dam looked sad, probably remembering her aunt. My mind drifted to Noma. Maybe Dam was remembering him too. After Noma left us, we never spoke his name again. Maybe we just couldn't. I wanted to ask Dam if she thought we were partly to blame. But had she asked me the question ... I wouldn't have known what to say. So I couldn't bring myself to ask her. Maybe, I thought, I'll find out when I die. Maybe all those questions will finally find answers. But what do I know, really? Turns out we're as clueless in death as in life. The only difference is the dead don't agonise over the unknown. They know to leave some things alone. If Dam asked me now, about Noma, I'd tell her it wasn't our fault. I'd try to ease her suffering.

The summer I turned nineteen, I stole again. A T-shirt from the neighbour's clothes line. It was white, with the red Levi's logo emblazoned across the chest, a stretched-out collar and yellowed armpits. I wanted it worn-in, to look like someone who had grown up in designer brands. I envied people who treated expensive clothes like leisurewear. That was the only thing I ever stole. Yet I somehow found myself buried in debt, owing money I'd never seen or touched. I tried running and ended up here. A realm of nothingness. A formless void without field, sea, sky – and yet, I can

на знак протесту. Незабаром тітка Дами мала повернутися з роботи. Або моя мама зателефонує, щоб викликати мене додому.

Ніч наставала повільно, ніби останні промені світла пильно дивилися на нас, випробовуючи нас. Нам було по двадцять, коли я згадав про нашу дитячу звичку красти.

— Чесно кажучи, я ненавидів брехати тітці. Мені було гірше від того, що я вдавав невинного, ніж від самого факту крадіжки. Між нами запала тиша.

Дам виглядала сумною, мабуть, згадуючи свою тітку. Мої думки полинули до Номі. Можливо, Дам теж згадувала його. Після того, як Номі покинув нас, ми більше ніколи не згадували його ім'я. Можливо, ми просто не могли. Я хотів запитати Дам, чи вважає вона, що ми частково винні. Але якби вона задала мені це питання... я б не знав, що відповісти. Тому я не наважився запитати її. Можливо, подумав я, я дізнаюся, коли помру. Можливо, всі ці питання нарешті знайдуть відповіді. Але що я насправді знаю? Виявляється, у смерті ми так само безпорадні, як і в житті. Єдина різниця в тому, що мертві не мучаться невідомістю. Вони знають, що деякі речі краще залишити в спокої. Якби Дам запитала мене зараз про Ному, я б сказав їй, що це не наша вина. Я б спробував полегшити її страждання.

Того літа, коли мені виповнилося дев'ятнадцять, я знову вкрав. Футболку з сусідської білизняної мотузки. Вона була білою, з червоним логотипом Levi's на грудях, з розтягнутим коміром і пожовклими пахвами. Я хотів, щоб вона була зношеною, щоб виглядати як людина, яка виросла в дизайнерському одязі. Я заздрив людям, які ставилися до дорогого одягу як до повсякденного. Це була єдина річ, яку я коли-небудь вкрав. Проте я якось опинився в боргах, винним гроші, яких ніколи не бачив і не торкався. Я спробував втекти і опинився тут. У царстві нічого. Безформеній порожнечі без полів,

feel you. With every cell of me. I feel you, right here, but you are not here. Or maybe I'm not here? But I am. I am here, and so are you. And I am also not here, and neither are you. Dam is here. And here is a world without Dam.

As the dark began to lift into the blue of dawn, I hailed a cab with Gu on my back. I kept an eye on the driver, making a show of attempting to wake Gu and sighing audibly. He played his part as a drunk passed out against me. I feared the driver might offer to help carry Gu to the front door, but naturally, he did not. After placing Gu inside our room, I set water to boil. I dragged a large plastic basin in from the backyard and scrubbed it clean. On colder days, Gu and I used to fill it with warm water and bathe together. We nestled, tenderly tracing each other's backs and marvelling at the clouds of white steam blooming from our heads, shoulders and fingers.

— What if our bodies evaporate into thin air, like in that legend?

— There's a legend like that?

— Isn't there? Well, we can always make one. The water would soon cool, leaving us shivering and our teeth chattering again.

Ever so gently, I undressed Gu and placed him in the basin. I, too, entered bare. Slowly, I washed him. And as I did, I held him. I feared I would scar him, with even the lightest touch dimpling his skin. I changed the water multiple times and rinsed him clean before patting him dry. I lay him flat and swabbed every inch of him with rubbing alcohol – the insides of his mouth, his nostrils, his belly button, all of it. I clipped his fingernails and toenails, and then swept the clippings into my mouth. I combed his hair and swallowed the strands that fell out. There was even less left of my little Gu now. I sat against the wall and looked at him. His body like a dimming

моря, неба – і все ж я відчуваю тебе. Кожною клітинкою свого тіла. Я відчуваю тебе, прямо тут, але тебе тут немає. А може, це мене тут немає? Але я тут. Я тут, і ти теж. І мене тут немає, і тебе теж. Дам тут. А тут світ без Дам.

Коли темрява почала розсіюватися і з'явилося блакитне небо світанку, я викликала таксі, тримаючи Гу на спині. Я стежила за водієм, роблячи вигляд, що намагаюся розбудити Гу, і голосно зітхаючи. Він грав свою роль п'яниці, що знепритомнів на мені. Я побоювалася, що водій запропонує допомогти нести Гу до вхідних дверей, але, звісно, він цього не зробив. Поклавши Гу в нашій кімнаті, я поставила кип'ятити воду. Я притягнула велику пластикову миску з заднього двору і вимила її. У холодні дні ми з Гу наповнювали її теплою водою і купалися разом. Ми притискалися одне до одного, ніжно гладячи спину одне одного і дивуючись білим хмарам пари, що піднімалися з наших голів, плечей і пальців.

— А що, якщо наші тіла випаруються в повітря, як у тій легенді?

— Є така легенда?

— А хіба немає? Ну, ми завжди можемо її вигадати. Вода швидко охолоджувалася, і ми знову тремтіли і цокали зубами.

Я дуже обережно роздягнула Гу і поклала його в таз. Я теж увійшла голою. Повільно я його мила. І при цьому обіймала його. Я боялася, що залишу на ньому шрами, адже навіть найлегший дотик залишав на його шкірі вм'ятини. Я кілька разів міняла воду і ретельно обмивала його, а потім витирала насухо. Я поклала його горизонтально і протерла кожен сантиметр його тіла спиртом — внутрішню частину рота, ніздрі, пупок, все. Я обстригла йому нігті на руках і ногах, а потім засунула обстрижені нігті до рота. Я розчесала йому волосся і проковтнула пасма, що випали. Від мого маленького Гу залишилося ще менше. Я сіла біля стіни і дивилася на нього. Його тіло було схоже на

candle. No one can know. No one can know Gu died. They won't care. They won't mourn his passing or remember his life, not for even a second. Some of them might even say he's better off. Say his life was barely a life at all, that it was going nowhere. He had heard it all when he was alive. I could not let him hear it again in death. How could they say his death was for the best? How dare they? If those loan sharks find out, they'll try to sell him for parts, no doubt. They'll claim his corpse and sell it off like a slab of meat. Gu has to stay alive in their minds. I'll make those guys search and search for him until they are driven insane. Why should I report his death? For what purpose? For who? I can't do it, not when he's right here, right in front of me, with this beautiful body that I can touch, that I can hold. No one can know. No one cared about him anyway. They put a price on his life, used him and discarded him, and then acted like he never existed. How can someone who never existed cease to exist? I can't bury or burn his beautiful body. Gu is here. Right in front of me.

We grew up at the same pace. I loved how Gu was just like me, neither taller nor shorter but experiencing the world from the same vantage point. The way he would sit through my prattling, occasionally nodding as he looked off into the distance, gave me butterflies. It made the crown of my head tingle. We were twelve when the bullying started.

— Eww, look at them holding hands! I heard they even kiss and touch each other down there. We were immediately cast out. No one wanted to talk or play with us, but they were happy to use us like an X-rated comic passed around the school. The rumours became increasingly bizarre. Allegedly, we drank, smoked, stole from Gu's parents, and when caught doing so, proceeded to set their house on fire. When it was revealed that both his parents' house and store were still standing, the story was revised from 'the house

згасаючу свічку. Ніхто не може знати. Ніхто не може знати, що Гу помер. Їм буде байдуже. Вони не будуть оплакувати його смерть і не згадуватимуть його життя, навіть на секунду. Дехто з них може навіть сказати, що йому так краще. Скажуть, що його життя було ледь життям, що воно нікуди не вело. Він чув це все, коли був живий. Я не могла дозволити, щоб він чув це знову після смерті. Як вони можуть сказати, що його смерть була на краще? Як вони сміють? Якщо ці лихварі дізнаються, вони, без сумніву, спробують продати його на частини. Вони заберуть його труп і продадуть, як шматок м'яса. Гу має залишитися живим у їхніх умах. Я змушу цих хлопців шукати і шукати його, поки вони не збожеволіють. Чому я повинна повідомляти про його смерть? З якою метою? Для кого? Я не можу цього зробити, коли він тут, прямо переді мною, з цим прекрасним тілом, яке я можу торкатися, яке я можу обіймати. Ніхто не може знати. Все одно ніхто про нього не дбав. Вони оцінили його життя, використали його і викинули, а потім поводитися так, ніби він ніколи не існував. Як може людина, яка ніколи не існувала, перестати існувати? Я не можу поховати чи спалити його прекрасне тіло. Гу тут. Прямо переді мною.

Ми росли в одному темпі. Мені подобалося, що Гу був такий самий, як і я, ні вищий, ні нижчий, але бачив світ з тієї ж точки зору. Те, як він сидів і слухав мої балачки, час від часу киваючи головою і дивлячись у далечінь, викликало у мене трепет. Від цього у мене аж мурашки побігли по голові. Нам було дванадцять, коли почалися знущання.

— Фу, подивіться, вони тримаються за руки! Я чула, що вони навіть цілуються і торкаються одне одного там. Нас одразу ж вигнали. Ніхто не хотів з нами розмовляти чи гратися, але вони з радістю використовували нас як комікс для дорослих, який передавали по всій школі. Чутки ставали дедалі дивнішими. Нібито ми пили, курили, крали у батьків Гу, а коли нас спіймали на цьому, підпалили їхній будинок. Коли з'ясувалося, що будинок і магазин його батьків все ще стоять, історія була переглянута з "будинок згорів" на "будинок майже

burned down' to 'the house almost burned down'. In short, we had at least attempted arson.

Gu and I stayed together through it all. The daily taunts infuriated me, but never enough to stay away from my Gu. It wasn't until a big fight broke out between him and a bully, with the bully's older brother and friends getting involved, that the rumours reached adult ears. Our form teacher and Gu's parents, though fully aware of the nature of our relationship, still interrogated us as if we were dirty.

We had shared ladles of plum wine. We had pretended to smoke with cigarette butts taken from a piled ashtray. We had stolen money for ice cream.

We had slept beside each other countless times. As we stood there blankly, hand in hand, neither confirming nor denying the accusations, our teacher demanded that we let go. Or maybe it was Gu's mother, I can't remember.

— You should be ashamed of yourselves. You're too old to be going around holding hands. It's time you both started playing with the other children.

Wait, weren't we the ones being bullied? Did the adults just take things at face value? If Gu hadn't fought back, what would've happened to us? How much bigger would the rumours have grown?

More importantly, why did Gu drop my hand at that very moment? A wave of shame washed over me. Without his hand, every rumour seemed to become true and taint our time together. It was like giving in to the mockery. I felt scared and alone, as if thrown naked into the middle of a crowded square. Then came the anger.

What led up to the fist fight was more than just the teasing. While on cleaning duty one day, I noticed Deoji sitting on the windowsill, eyeing something. I followed his gaze to Dam, who was

згорів". Коротше кажучи, ми принаймні спробували підпалити будинок.

Ґу і я залишалися разом протягом усього цього часу. Щоденні знущання розлючували мене, але не настільки, щоб я відійшла від Ґу. Лише після великої бійки між ним і хуліганом, в яку втрутилися старший брат хулігана та його друзі, чутки дійшли до вух дорослих. Наш класний керівник і батьки Ґу, хоча й повністю усвідомлювали характер наших стосунків, все одно допитували нас, ніби ми були нечисті.

Ми ділилися черпаками сливового вина. Ми вдавали, що куримо, використовуючи недопалки з наповненої попільнички. Ми крали гроші на морозиво.

Ми незліченну кількість разів спали поруч один з одним. Коли ми стояли там, тримаючись за руки, не підтверджуючи і не заперечуючи звинувачення, наш вчитель вимагав, щоб ми відпустили один одного. А може, це була мати Ґу, я вже не пам'ятаю.

— Вам має бути соромно. Ви занадто дорослі, щоб ходити, тримаючись за руки. Пора вам обом почати гратися з іншими дітьми.

Зачекайте, хіба це не з нас знущалися? Чи дорослі просто сприйняли все за чисту монету? Якби Ґу не дав відсіч, що б сталося з нами? Наскільки б поширилися чутки?

А ще важливіше, чому Ґу відпустив мою руку саме в той момент? Мене охопила хвиля сорому. Без його руки кожна чутка здавалася правдивою і псувала наш спільний час. Це було як піддатися глузуванню. Я відчувала страх і самотність, ніби мене оголеною кинули посеред переповненої площі. Потім прийшов гнів.

До бійки призвело не лише дражнення. Одного дня, під час прибирання, я помітив Деоджі, який сидів на підвіконні і дивився на щось. Я прослідкував за його поглядом і побачив Дам, яка переставляла

rearranging the desks after sweeping and mopping the floor. Deoji chewed on his bottom lip, still staring. I couldn't stand the way he looked at her. I had never considered that someone might desire Dam like that. Maybe the bullies actually had a huge crush on her.

Deoji's eyes stayed glued to Dam even as she scanned the room for me. She briefly met his gaze before turning away, pretending not to see him, but Deoji stomped over to make gross comments about her body. A couple of kids snickered and joined in. I hated the way they were all looking at her. I didn't know what to do. If I went to her side, it would only get worse. But if I didn't, she'd have to face their stares alone. I stood there, paralysed by indecision, until she spotted me and walked over without a moment's hesitation. That's how it was with us. Dam always made the first move. She never left me hanging.

A few moments before our fight, Deoji came up to me and started mouthing off about Dam.

— Heard you two fuck like rabbits. I bet that bitch screeches like a dog when you strip her down, tie her up and fuck her with your tiny cock. I'd never heard words like that in my life, but I knew they meant Deoji had been fantasising about Dam. As he sat there, chewing his lip and watching her, his thoughts had wandered into fantasies wilder than the rumours of us smoking cigarettes, sniffing glue and setting things on fire. I'd never been more disgusted. I had no choice but to fight him. It didn't matter that I was smaller and weaker than Deoji. I was ready to take a hundred, a thousand punches, anything to shut his stupid eyes. I needed to smash his head in, claw out his eyeballs and wring his brain dry of any thoughts of Dam. But before I could even get a swing in, Deoji's brother and friends swept in like D'Artagnan and the Three Musketeers.

парти після того, як підмела і вимила підлогу. Деоджі кусав нижню губу, не відриваючи погляду. Я не міг терпіти, як він на неї дивився. Я ніколи не думав, що хтось може так бажати Дам. Можливо, хулігани насправді були в неї закохані.

Деоджі не відривав погляду від Дам, навіть коли шукав мене поглядом по кімнаті. Він коротко зустрівся з нею поглядом, а потім відвернувся, вдаючи, що не бачить її, але Деоджі підійшов до неї і почав робити грубі коментарі про її фігуру. Кілька дітей хихикнули і приєдналися до нього. Мені не подобалося, як вони всі на неї дивилися. Я не знав, що робити. Якщо я підійду до неї, ситуація тільки погіршиться. Але якщо я цього не зроблю, їй доведеться самотійно витримувати їхні погляди. Я стояв, паралізований нерішучістю, поки вона не помітила мене і без вагань підійшла. Так було завжди. Дам завжди робила перший крок. Вона ніколи не залишала мене в підвішеному стані.

За кілька хвилин до нашої сварки Деоджі підійшов до мене і почав висловлюватися про Дам.

— Чув, що ви двоє трахаєтесь, як кролики. Б'юся об заклад, ця сучка верещить, як псіна, коли ти її роздягаєш, зв'язуєш і трахаєш своїм крихітним членом. Я ніколи в житті не чув таких слів, але розумів, що Деоджі фантазував про Дам. Сидячи там, кусаючи губу і дивлячись на неї, його думки блукали у фантазіях, більш диких, ніж чутки про те, що ми куримо сигарети, нюхаємо клей і підпалюємо речі. Я ніколи не відчував такої огиди. Мені не залишалося нічого іншого, як битися з ним. Не мало значення, що я був менший і слабший за Деоджі. Я був готовий прийняти сотню, тисячу ударів, будь-що, аби закрити його дурні очі. Мені потрібно було розтрити йому голову, вирвати очі і вичавити з його мозку будь-які думки про Дам. Але перш ніж я встиг навіть замахнутися, брат Деоджі та його друзі ввірвалися, як Д'Артаньян і три мушкетери.

They beat the shit out of me. I took so many punches I thought I'd die, but I didn't. I kept getting hit. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Dam. Her face was bright red as she screamed, cried, implored them to stop. The blows continued unabated. I watched Dam pick up a chair. Don't, I wanted to shout, Don't get involved, just walk away, but I could barely speak with the blood in my mouth. The last thing I wanted was for Dam to see me like that or, God forbid, fight for me. It was just too much. As soon as she swung the chair, Deoji grabbed it and tossed it aside. He turned to Dam.

— This is none of your business.

— You worthless pieces of shit!

— Shut up and get the fuck out of here. Deoji's brother grabbed a fistful of my hair and with it, dragged me around the room.

Things went from bad to worse when the sixth graders got involved. Our mums were called in. Deoji's bowed respectfully to the form teacher, who returned the gesture. My mum, on the other hand, wasted no time on formalities and got straight to yelling at me. — You little rascal, why the hell have you started getting into fights? You scared the living daylights out of me! It was nothing I hadn't heard before. I knew that she was putting on a show for them, but her words still got to me. Deoji's mum had draped herself in a long black fur coat that looked so silky and soft I almost reached out to touch it. She shrugged it off to reveal a pristine white blouse adorned with pearl buttons and lace trim, paired with a navy skirt. Her outfit was immaculate – not a loose thread or speck of dust to be found. I could tell she had a nice tan. My mum was much paler from sitting indoors, ringing up customers' purchases and counting their change all day. My mum was beautiful. People told her that as often as they asked, How much is this? Dam was also beautiful. That must be why Deoji was eyeing her, chewing on his lip like that.

A new feeling came over me as Deoji's mum demanded that

Вони відгамселили мене. Вони били мене так багато, що вже думав що помру, але я не помер. Я все приймав удари. Краєм ока я бачив Дам. Її лице було гаряче червоним коли вона кричала, плакала та благала їх зупинитися. Удари продовжувалися безперервно. Я бачив, як Дам підняла стілець. "Не роби цього, — хотів я крикнути, — не втручайся, просто йди геть", але я ледве міг говорити через кров у роті. Останнє, чого я хотів, — це щоб Дам побачила мене в такому стані або, не дай Боже, стала за мене боротися. Це було занадто. Як тільки вона замахнулася стільцем, Деоджі схопив його і відкинув убік. Він повернувся до Дам.

— Це не твоя справа.

— Ви нікчемні виродки!

— Заткнися і забирайся звідси. Брат Деоджі схопив мене за волосся і потягнув по кімнаті.

Ситуація погіршилася, коли до справи долучилися шестикласники. Нас викликали до мам. Мама Деоджі вклонилася класному керівнику, а той відповів їй тим самим. Моя мама, навпаки, не витратила часу на формальності і відразу почала на мене кричати. — Ти, маленький бешкетнику, чому ти почав битися? Ти мене до смерті налякав! Я вже не раз це чула. Я знав, що вона грає для них, але її слова все одно мене зачепили. Мама Деоджі була одягнена в довге чорне хутряне пальто, яке виглядало таким шовковистим і м'яким, що я ледь не простягнув руку, щоб доторкнутися до нього. Вона зняла його, і під ним виявилася білосніжна блузка, прикрашена перловими гудзиками та мереживною облямівкою, в поєднанні з темно-синьою спідницею. Її вбрання було бездоганним — жодної нитки чи пилінки. Я бачила, що вона мала гарну засмагу. Моя мама була набагато блідішою, бо сиділа в приміщенні, обслуговувала покупців і рахувала їхні гроші цілий день. Моя мама була красивою. Люди казали їй це так само часто, як і запитували: "Скільки це коштує?". Дам теж була красивою. Мабуть, тому Деоджі дивився на неї, кусаючи губу.

Нове почуття охопило мене, коли мама Деоджі зажадала, щоб

Dam and I let go of each other's hand. Am I allowed to like Dam?

Wouldn't it be better if Deoji liked her? I keep getting Dam in trouble. It was Deoji who stopped her throwing that chair. Not me. My head spinning, I let go of her hand. Dam stared at me, stunned, as if a bomb had just detonated. When she reached for my hand again, I attempted a fist but couldn't clench it shut. Dam wrapped her hand around mine, squeezing hard, before letting go in anger. She tried again to pry my fist open but eventually gave up. After that, we went right back to passing each other without a second glance. Whenever we crossed paths, or she crossed my mind, I'd recite my new mantra: I'm trouble. I'm not good for her.

The cold persisted, preserving a thick sheen of ice on the ground that refused to melt. Our bodies grew small and stiff. I lay facing Gu and listened to the songbirds, the cockerels, the wind. The room was cold as stone and enveloped in darkness. I couldn't keep myself awake long. Once, I cracked the door open to snowflakes falling like flower petals. The night sky was strangely bright without a moon or star in sight. No, it's not light outside. It's dark inside, I muttered, hoping to wake Gu. I wanted him to say something, anything, even whine about the cold or order me to shut the door. I boiled water. I drank some and used the rest to wipe him down with a towel. I consumed everything that fell away: skin, hair, nails. Then I swabbed his body with rubbing alcohol again. I pressed my ear to his stomach and closed my eyes, hoping for sound. I missed his voice. How could I live without its music? I rested my head on him, tasting my own tears, until I thought I felt him take a breath. I opened my eyes to his penis. All night long I stroked and sucked on it, before finally biting in.

The damp air hung heavy with the promise of rain. Sweat trickled from the nape of my neck down my back. I wiped it away

Дам і я відпустили руки один одного. Чи можу я любити Дам?

Чи не було б краще, якби Деоджі її любив? Я постійно втягую Дам у неприємності. Це Деоджі зупинив її, коли вона кинула стілець. Не я. У мене закрутилася голова, і я відпустив її руку. Дам дивилася на мене, приголомшена, ніби щойно вибухнула бомба. Коли вона знову простягнула руку до моєї, я спробував стиснути кулак, але не зміг. Дам обхопила мою руку своєю, сильно стиснула, а потім злісно відпустила. Вона знову спробувала розтиснути мій кулак, але врешті-решт здалася. Після цього ми знову почали проходити повз одне одного, не обертаячись. Щоразу, коли ми зустрічалися або вона спадала мені на думку, я повторював свою нову мантру: я — проблема. Я не підходжу їй.

Холод не відпускав, залишаючи на землі товстий шар льоду, який відмовлявся танути. Наші тіла ставали маленькими і скутими. Я лежала обличчям до Гу і слухала спів птахів, півнів, вітер. Кімната була холодна, як камінь, і оповита темрявою. Я не могла довго не спати. Одного разу я прочинила двері і побачила сніжинки, що падали, як пелюстки квітів. Нічне небо було дивно яскравим, хоча ні місяця, ні зірок не було видно. Ні, на вулиці не світло. В середині темно, пробурмотіла я, сподіваючись розбудити Гу. Я хотіла, щоб він щось сказав, що завгодно, навіть поскаржився на холод або наказав мені закрити двері. Я закип'ятила воду. Випила трохи, а рештою витерла його рушником. Я видалила все, що відпало: шкіру, волосся, нігті. Потім знову протерла його тіло спиртом. Я притулила вухо до його живота і заплющила очі, сподіваючись почути звук. Я сумувала за його голосом. Як я могла жити без його музики? Я поклала голову на нього, смакуючи власні сльози, поки не відчула, що він дихає. Я відкрила очі і побачила його пеніс. Всю ніч я гладила і смоктала його, а потім нарешті вкусила.

Вологе повітря було насичене обіцянкою дощу. Піт стікав з моєї шиї по спині. Я витерла його і подивилася на небо. У горлі утворився

and looked up at the sky. A lump formed in my throat.

Friends, school, my future – none of it mattered. I barely saw Gu in secondary school. His absence did nothing to stop my obsession. I replayed our time together, wondering what he might be doing now and if I ever crossed his mind. My thoughts circled until they eventually turned against him. It didn't occur to me to think about anything or anyone else, let alone focus on homework or making new friends. My brain registered nothing but Gu. It was only when my thoughts of him began to fade, and new ones took shape, that I realised. Gu was everything. Nothing could touch the depth and intensity of his existence.

A drift in missing him, my feet instinctively led me to his house. No sound came from behind the rusty gate. Should I wait? What if he comes out? What should I say? How's it going? Life is boring without you? My head buzzed as I silently called out to Gu, but neither the house nor the street answered. Gu must have forgotten about me.

Of course he had. If we really shared a special bond, how could he not sense my soul's call? The sky let fall raindrops as large as hailstones, the splatter forming circles in the muddy road as if to say yes, yes to my suspicions. Yet I couldn't stop obsessing. As I walked home, I wondered what I would do if Gu were to suddenly materialise. And then, there he was, standing at my front door, just as I had stood in front of his moments earlier.

— Gu. — He turned around slowly. — How long have you been standing here?

He sighed softly.

— I should ask you the same.

I often found myself standing outside Dam's house. I was now a young man, and sharing a small room with my parents had become a bit awkward. Too proud to cry or pretend to sleep through

ком.

Друзі, школа, моє майбутнє – ніщо з цього не мало значення. Я майже не бачила Гу в середній школі. Його відсутність ніяк не вплинула на мою одержимість. Я переглядала в пам'яті наші спільні моменти, гадаючи, що він зараз робить і чи згадує він мене. Мої думки кружляли, поки врешті не обернулися проти нього. Мені не спадало на думку думати про що-небудь або кого-небудь іншого, не кажучи вже про те, щоб зосередитися на домашньому завданні або пошуку нових друзів. Мій мозок не сприймав нічого, крім Гу. Лише коли мої думки про нього почали зникати, а натомість з'явилися нові, я усвідомила: Гу був усім. Ніщо не могло зрівнятися з глибиною та інтенсивністю його існування.

Загублена в суму за ним, мої ноги інстинктивно привели мене до його будинку. За іржавою брамою не було чутно жодного звуку. Чи варто чекати? А якщо він вийде? Що я йому скажу? Як справи? Життя без тебе нудне? Моя голова гуділа, коли я тихо кликала Гу, але ні будинок, ні вулиця не відповідали. Гу, мабуть, забув про мене.

Звичайно, забув. Якщо між нами дійсно був особливий зв'язок, як він міг не відчутти поклик своєї душі? З неба падали краплі дощу, такі ж великі як град, і розбризкувалися колами на брудній дорозі, ніби підтверджуючи мої підозри. Але я не могла перестати думати про це. Ідучи додому, я думала, що б я зробила, якби Гу раптом з'явився. І ось він стояв біля моїх дверей, так само, як я стояла перед його дверима кілька хвилин тому.

— Гу. Він повільно обернувся. — Як довго ти тут стоїш?

Він тихо зітхнув.

— Я мав би запитати тебе про те саме.

Я часто стояв біля будинку Дам. Я вже був молодим чоловіком, і ділити маленьку кімнату з батьками стало трохи незручно. Занадто гордий, щоб плакати або вдавати, що сплю під час їхніх сварок, я провів

their fights, I spent many nights alone in a tiny room attached to the store. Lying on the floor, I thought of Dam. Listening to my parents argue, I thought of Dam. Eating radish kimchi with white rice, I thought of Dam. Watching the sky change colours at dusk, hearing faint footsteps in the alley at night, or feeling myself get hard in the early hours, I thought of Dam. I walked to her house and silently called out to her night after night, as if keeping a journal, every page scrawled with my steps to Dam. Does she ever think of me? If she did, she would know I was here. But she didn't. She never came outside, not once in all those nights.

I guess she's forgotten me.

I doubt she thinks about me before bed. She probably sleeps like a baby. I convinced myself of it. I was both comforted and crushed that she was sleeping so well. I guess I still couldn't figure myself out, but Dam would get it. She helped me understand myself. I wasted countless spring nights wandering in circles, watching new blooms wilt and get trampled underfoot. The first day of the monsoon season, with the rain starting to wash away the perfume of the flowers, I found Dam standing at my front door, just as I had stood at hers the day before. I was torn between joy and heartbreak, knowing too well what must be running through her head.

Sure, we patched things up – but something had shifted. We could no longer walk hand in hand, lie side by side, or spend every waking moment together.

Something held me back.

I could tell at first glance that she had changed. Her breasts looked like she had stuffed two choco pies down her shirt. Her arms, thighs and bum had filled out. Her neck had grown longer and slimmer. It was like going to a theme park. Does she get periods? I didn't dare ask. I felt strangely cut off from her changed body and, honestly, a little intimidated by it. I couldn't even look her in the

багато ночей наодинці в крихітній кімнаті, приєднаній до магазину. Лежачи на підлозі, я думав про Дам. Слухаючи, як сваряться мої батьки, я думав про Дам. Поглинаючи кімчі з редьки з білим рисом, я думав про Дам. Дивлячись, як небо змінює кольори в сутінках, чуючи слабкі кроки в провулку вночі або відчуваючи, як я стаю твердим рано вранці, я думав про Дам. Я йшов до її будинку і щоночі тихо кликав її, ніби вів щоденник, кожна сторінка якого була заповнена моїми кроками до Дам. Чи думає вона про мене? Якби думала, вона б знала, що я тут. Але вона не знала. Вона ніколи не виходила на вулицю, жодного разу за всі ці ночі.

Мабуть, вона забула мене.

Я сумніваюся, що вона думає про мене перед сном. Вона, мабуть, спить як немовля. Я переконав себе в цьому. Мене і втішало, і пригнічувало те, що вона так добре спить. Мабуть, я все ще не міг розібратися в собі, але Дам це розуміла. Вона допомогла мені зрозуміти себе. Я змарнував незліченні весняні ночі, блукаючи по колу, спостерігаючи, як нові квіти в'януть і топчуться під ногами. У перший день сезону мусонів, коли дощ почав змивати аромат квітів, я знайшов Дам біля моїх дверей, так само, як я стояв біля її дверей напередодні. Я розривався між радістю і розпачем, занадто добре знаючи, що, мабуть, коїться в її голові.

Звичайно, ми помирилися, але щось змінилося. Ми більше не могли ходити рука в руку, лежати поруч або проводити разом кожную хвилину.

Щось мене стримувало.

Я відразу помітив, що вона змінилася. Її груди виглядали так, ніби вона засунула під сорочку два шоколадних пироги. Її руки, стегна і сідниці стали об'ємнішими. Шия подовжилася і стала стрункішою. Це було як похід у парк розваг. Чи є у неї місячні? Я не наважився запитати. Я відчував дивну відстороненість від її зміненого тіла і, чесно кажучи, трохи боявся його. Я навіть не міг дивитися їй в очі.

eye.

Where she had grown into a woman, I remained short, scrawny and weak. I wasn't as good at football and basketball as the other boys, but I was a strong cyclist. I could pedal for hours without stopping, no matter how tired I was.

When Mum asked where I was going at night, I'd either say I was getting some air or not respond at all. It didn't matter if she was suspicious, indifferent or happy for me – I wanted to keep my relationship with Dam private. What other people thought of us always felt slightly out of sync with our reality. Dam wasn't as chatty as she once was. Her words now carried a note of callousness. Like: Our English teacher is soo cool. He picks me to read out loud all the time. He's only ten years older than us. Or: Hyoseok keeps calling my phone.

Then she started freaking out about her weight, grabbing at her stomach and insisting that she was fat under her clothes, my reassurances falling on stony ground.

Meanwhile, I focused on her bra straps underneath the thin white fabric of our summer uniforms, and with a squint, could even make out the design and colour. Taking note of her bare legs, I couldn't help but wonder if she was wearing anything but panties underneath her skirt. Occasionally, her arm would brush against mine and leave me shivering in the middle of summer. Dam had developed a habit of running her fingers through her bobbed hair before tying it up into a ponytail, releasing the scent of her floral shampoo laced with her sweat. I watched the beads slip from behind her ear down to her collarbones as she fanned herself lazily with one hand. Her lips looked as slick as an eel. Her skin as pale, firm and dewy as a freshly peeled chestnut. It was all too much.

Every detail about Dam sent me flying over the edge. I imagined her naked skin every time I laid eyes on her, and when I

Вона перетворилася на жінку, а я залишився низьким, худим і слабким. Я не був таким вправним у футболі та баскетболі, як інші хлопці, але я був сильним велосипедистом. Я міг крутити педалі годинами без зупинки, незалежно від того, наскільки я був втомлений.

Коли мама питала, куди я йду ввечері, я або казав, що йду подихати свіжим повітрям, або взагалі не відповідав. Неважливо, чи вона підозрювала щось, була байдужою чи раділа за мене — я хотів зберегти свої стосунки з Дам в таємниці. Те, що інші люди думали про нас, завжди здавалося мені дещо невідповідним нашій реальності. Дам вже не була такою балакучою, як раніше. Тепер її слова мали нотку байдужості. Наприклад: “Наш вчитель англійської такий класний. Він завжди вибирає мене, щоб я читала вголос. Він лише на десять років старший за нас”. Або: “Хьосок постійно дзвонить мені на телефон”.

Потім вона почала перейматися своєю вагою, хапаючи себе за живіт і наполягаючи, що під одягом вона товста, а мої запевнення не мали ніякого ефекту.

Тим часом я зосередився на її бретельках бюстгальтера під тонкою білою тканиною наших літніх форм і, примружившись, міг навіть розгледіти їхній дизайн і колір. Помітивши її голі ноги, я не міг не замислитися, чи носить вона під спідницею щось, крім трусиків. Іноді її рука торкалася моєї, і я тремтів посеред літа. Дам мала звичку пропускати пальцями по своєму короткому волоссю, перш ніж зав'язувати його у хвіст, вивільняючи аромат свого квіткового шампуню, змішаного з її потом. Я спостерігав, як краплі ковзали з-за її вуха до ключиць, коли вона ліниво обмахувалася однією рукою. Її губи виглядали слизькими, як у вугра. Її шкіра була блідою, пружною і свіжою, як щойно очищений каштан. Це було занадто.

Кожна деталь про Дам змушувала мене втрачати голову. Я уявляв її оголену шкіру щоразу, коли дивився на неї, і навіть коли не дивився.

didn't. The guiltier I felt, the bolder my imagination grew. I could barely look her in the eye, but there was no inch of her I hadn't already tasted in my mind.

Desire and shame wrestled within me. It pained me to look, and it pained me to look away. I wanted to get closer, and I feared being closer. I had to remain on my very best behaviour. Dam, on the other hand, was as nonchalant as ever. She had this breezy, carefree way about her, like she'd just stepped out for a casual stroll in the fields. It crushed me. And it comforted me.

Gu had changed a lot. He spoke less and his voice was weaker. Even his actions were, how to put it, oddly stunted. It was as if the rest of his body had continued growing and forgotten his heart somewhere inside, like a huge sheet of paper crumpled into a tiny ball. He was never the extroverted type, but he used to speak his mind when needed. Now, it was as if his entire being had been soundproofed. It broke my heart. I wished he'd let the walls down for me. Auntie was thrilled about our reconciliation and didn't hesitate to offer her unsolicited advice.

— You can't be glued together like before. A peck on the cheek is fine, but things can easily get out of hand now that you're teenagers. If anything happens, you need to tell me right away.

I got her worries; I was also worried, but for the opposite reason. Gu was acting like a perfect priest. He wouldn't budge an inch, not even to hold hands. I fantasised about linking arms and leaning on his shoulder. Kissing was another world altogether, as distant as the stars in the night sky. Auntie had no idea what I was going through. And so, without any real justification, she became the unwitting target of my frustrations. I resolved to never tell her anything about my relationship with Gu. Whatever happened between us, stayed between us. That's how it was with us. But as

Чим більше я відчував провину, тим сміливішою ставала моя уява. Я ледь міг дивитися їй в очі, але в моїй уяві не було жодного сантиметра її тіла, якого я б ще не скуштував.

Бажання і сором боролися в мені. Мені було боляче дивитися, і мені було боляче відводити погляд. Я хотів наблизитися, але боявся наблизитися. Я мусив поводитися якнайкраще. Дам, навпаки, була як завжди байдужою. Вона була такою легкою, безтурботною, наче щойно вийшла на прогулянку по полях. Це мене розчарувало. І втішило.

Ґу дуже змінився. Він став менше говорити, а його голос ослаб. Навіть його дії були, як би це сказати, надиво скутими. Ніби решта його тіла продовжувала рости, а серце десь всередині забулося, наче великий аркуш паперу, зім'ятий у маленьку кульку. Він ніколи не був екстравертом, але раніше говорив те, що думав, коли це було потрібно. Тепер ж ніби все його існування було звукоізольоване. Це розбивало мені серце. Я хотіла, щоб він зняв ці стіни заради мене. Тітка була в захваті від нашого примирення і не вагалася давати свої непрохані поради.

— Ви не можете бути так згуртовані, як раніше. Поцілунок у щоку — це нормально, але тепер, коли ви підлітки, все може легко вийти з-під контролю. Якщо щось трапиться, ви повинні відразу мені про це сказати.

Я розуміла її стурбованість; я теж хвилювалася, але з протилежної причини. Ґу поведився як ідеальний священик. Він не поступався ні на сантиметр, навіть щоб потриматися за руки. Я мріяла обійняти його за плечі і спертися на них. Поцілунки були для мене чимось з іншого світу, далекими, як зірки на нічному небі. Тітка не мала уявлення, що я переживала. І тому, без будь-яких реальних підстав, вона стала мимовільною мішенню мого розчарування. Я вирішила ніколи не розповідати їй про свої стосунки з Ґу. Що б не трапилося між нами, це залишалось між нами. Так було між нами. Але коли підозри тітки

Auntie's suspicions grew, Gu remained uninterested in creating any secrets with me – a sharp blow to my ego. In retaliation, I began saying things I knew would make him jealous. I wasn't actively trying to hurt him, but I wasn't not trying to hurt him. I don't know, I was a mess back then.

The winter after graduating middle school, I went in for a kiss. I aimed for a tender moment like I'd seen on TV but ended up nearly sucking his face off. He stepped back, stumbling further into a dead-end alley until his back hit the wall. With nowhere to go, he slowly slid to the ground. I followed and kissed him again. I have no idea how long we stayed there, feverishly exploring each other's mouths like there was no tomorrow. Then Gu moaned in pain. I figured his lips were sore, just like mine, but it hurt so good I didn't even mind the taste of blood. I traced his lips with my finger. Not there, Gu breathed. He adjusted himself before abruptly walking away. Back then, I knew nothing about erections. The way a penis could lengthen and harden was far beyond my imagination. It wasn't until secondary school that I learned the anatomical details.

Eventually, I shared my belated realisation with him. My giggles soon became moans as he slid inside me with very little resistance. Even though we knew we belonged to each other, and even when we had time to waste, we couldn't help but rush. As if we might be interrupted or separated at any moment. With his trousers barely down his legs, he'd insert himself as soon as I'd spread mine. Our lips never parted as we writhed against each other, knocking teeth and slobbering everywhere, wrestling and pinning each other down with screams. Nothing could separate us: not the walls, nor the floors, not even our own bodies. We were one. Our nights together, everything from our first kiss, were secrets kept between us. Now, I keep them alone.

зростали, Гу не виявляв інтересу до створення будь-яких таємниць зі мною — це було сильним ударом по моєму его. У відповідь я почала говорити речі, які, як я знала, змусять його ревнувати. Я не намагалася активно його образити, але й не намагалася цього не робити. Не знаю, я тоді була в жахливому стані.

Взимку після закінчення середньої школи я спробувала поцілувати його. Я хотіла, щоб це був ніжний момент, як я бачила по телевізору, але в підсумку майже відсмоктала йому обличчя. Він відступив, спотикаючись, і зайшов у глухий кут, поки його спина не вперлася в стіну. Не маючи куди подітися, він повільно опустився на землю. Я підійшла до нього і знову поцілувала. Я не маю уявлення, скільки часу ми провели там, гарячково досліджуючи роти одне одного, ніби завтра не настане. Потім Гу застогнав від болю. Я подумала, що його губи болять, як і мої, але це було так приємно, що я навіть не звернула уваги на смак крові. Я прослідкувала його губи пальцем. Не там, прошепотів Гу. Він поправився і раптово пішов геть. Тоді я нічого не знала про ерекцію. Те, як пеніс може подовжуватися і тверднути, було далеко за межами моєї уяви. Лише в середній школі я дізналася про анатомічні деталі.

Врешті-решт я поділилася з ним своїм запізнілим усвідомленням. Мої смішки швидко перетворилися на стогони, коли він без особливого опору увійшов у мене. Хоча ми знали, що належимо одне одному, і навіть коли мали час, який можна було згаяти, ми не могли не поспішати. Ніби нас могли перервати або розлучити в будь-яку хвилину. Ледь знявши штани, він входив у мене, щойно я розсувала ноги. Наші губи ніколи не розлучалися, коли ми звивалися одне на одному, стукаючи зубами і слинячись, борючись і притискаючи одне одного з криками. Ніщо не могло нас розділити: ні стіни, ні підлога, ні навіть наші власні тіла. Ми були єдиним цілим. Наші ночі разом, все, починаючи з нашого першого поцілунку, були таємницею, яку ми зберігали між собою. Тепер я зберігаю її сама.

I always lost weight in my lower body first. Before dying, my thighs had become as thin as my calves. You're like a twig, Dam would pout and lovingly massage my legs with her small hands. A man should have thick thighs. She liked to rest her head on my lap, periodically rolling over to sniff my stomach or suck me off. During sex, she would straddle me and hold on tight with all four limbs. It wasn't my favourite position, but I liked watching her gazelle neck and waist arch back. Our bodies intertwined, becoming one. Our writhing, both thrilling and pathetic. I drank in the view, her eyes rolling back in pleasure. I wanted to feel all of her with all of me. I wanted her to exist on top of me.

And now she's eating me, crying. Was that blood or pus running down her face? Did she realise she was crying? Could she feel me watching, listening? I used to think death was the end, but my mind is still here. I wish I could take the burden of my body with me and leave her only my heart. I wish she could eat my love for her. I remember everything: our first kiss, so sweet and silly, and all the nights spent reminiscing about it. Here, I remember you because that's all I can do. These memories are my future. These memories of you. My future is you.

Gu got a job as soon as he turned seventeen. After evening study hours at school, I would station myself outside the factory and wait. Sometimes he surfaced as I arrived; other times, I loitered for over an hour. In reality, the wait began not at the factory gates but from the moment he left my side. My heart was on permanent standby, no matter where I was or what I was doing. I waited all day long, knowing perfectly well when we'd agreed to meet. Even when we were together, I was waiting for him. And even when he was the one waiting for me, I was still waiting for him. Does loving someone mean waiting forever? Even now, with Gu dead, I find myself waiting for him. Is he waiting for me?

Я завжди худнув спочатку в нижній частині тіла. Перед смертю мої стегна стали такими ж худими, як і литки. "Ти як гілочка", — бурчала Дам і з любов'ю масажувала мої ноги своїми маленькими руками. Чоловік повинен мати товсті стегна. Їй подобалося класти голову мені на коліна, періодично перевертаючись, щоб понюхати мій живіт або зробити мені мінет. Під час сексу вона сідала на мене верхи і міцно трималася всіма чотирма кінцівками. Це не була моя улюблена поза, але мені подобалося дивитися на її шию газелі і вигнуту спину. Наші тіла перепліталися, стаючи одним цілим. Наші звання були одночасно захоплюючими і жалюгідними. Я насолоджувався видом, її очі закочувалися від задоволення. Я хотів відчути її всю всім своїм еством. Я хотів, щоб вона існувала на мені.

А тепер вона їсть мене, плачучи. Це була кров чи гній, що стікав по її обличчю? Чи вона усвідомлювала, що плаче? Чи вона відчувала, що я дивлюся, слухаю? Раніше я думав, що смерть — це кінець, але мій розум все ще тут. Хотів би я забрати з собою тягар свого тіла і залишити їй лише своє серце. Хотів би я, щоб вона могла з'їсти мою любов до неї. Я пам'ятаю все: наш перший поцілунок, такий солодкий і дурнуватий, і всі ночі, проведені в спогадах про нього. Тут я пам'ятаю тебе, бо це все, що я можу зробити. Ці спогади — моє майбутнє. Ці спогади про тебе. Моє майбутнє — це ти.

Ґу влаштувався на роботу, як тільки йому виповнилося сімнадцять. Після вечірніх занять у школі я ставала біля фабрики і чекала. Іноді він з'являвся, коли я приходила, а іноді я чекала понад годину. Насправді очікування починалося не біля воріт фабрики, а з того моменту, як він відходив від мене. Моє серце було в постійній готовності, незалежно від того, де я була і що робила. Я чекала цілий день, добре знаючи, коли ми домовилися зустрітися. Навіть коли ми були разом, я чекала на нього. І навіть коли він чекав на мене, я все одно чекала на нього. Чи означає кохати когось — чекати вічно? Навіть зараз, коли Ґу помер, я все одно чекаю на нього. Чи чекає він на мене?

He wasn't back then. Gu was always working. He sorted vegetables at a supermarket before dawn, went to school during the daytime, and loaded and unloaded trucks until midnight. At the weekend, he split himself between two convenience stores. I had no idea how anyone could sustain this lifestyle, but somehow, Gu made it work. The twenty minutes it took to walk home from the factory was the only time we had to ourselves. The moment he appeared dragging his bike, the first smile of the day would break across my face. I'd take my place on the back of the bike and wrap my arms around his waist, breathing in his warmth and his scent.

— Aren't you tired?

— I'm okay. He always said he was 'okay'.

I eventually banned the word.

I asked him which job was the hardest. The convenience store gig, he decided, because all the standing around led his mind to wander anxiously. And he didn't like handling cash. Why was he holding in his piss through peak hours when not even a tenth of the money coming in would reach his pockets?

— Working with my hands clears my head, but the time goes by way too fast.

— Isn't that a good thing?

— It scares me, how life is passing me by. He hesitated.

— Like I'll wake up one day and it'll all be over.

— Never. It'll be okay. I made sure to speak without hesitating, but a person can work themselves to an early death. This, I know now.

— I don't hate working. I just don't want work to be the only thing I do, you know. I don't want to live like this forever. His voice trembled, more frightened than exasperated. — We just have to get through this bit. It'll be different when we're adults. It'll be okay. I was breaking my own ban. Did I say the wrong thing? Should I not have said that? What should I have said? He was facing

Тоді він не чекав. Гу завжди працював. Він сортував овочі в супермаркеті до світанку, вдень ходив до школи, а до півночі завантажував і розвантажувал вантажівки. У вихідні він працював у двох цілодобових магазинах. Я не уявляла, як хтось може витримувати такий спосіб життя, але Гу якось це вдавалося. Двадцять хвилин, які ми йшли пішки від заводу додому, були єдиним часом, який ми мали для себе. У той момент, коли він з'являвся, тягнучи за собою велосипед, на моєму обличчі з'являлася перша посмішка за день. Я сідала на заднє сидіння велосипеда, обіймала його за талію і вдихала його тепло і запах.

— Ти не втомився?

— Я в порядку. Він завжди говорив, що "в порядку".

Зрештою я заборонила йому говорити це слово.

Я запитала його, яка робота була найважчою. Він вирішив, що робота в магазині, бо через те, що доводилося довго стояти, його думки блукали в неспокійному напрямку. І йому не подобалося мати справу з готівкою. Чому він терпів, не ходячи в туалет у години пік, коли навіть десята частина зароблених грошей не потрапляла до його кишені?

— Робота руками прояснює мої думки, але час проходить надто швидко.

— Хіба це не добре?

— Мене лякає, як швидко проходить життя. Він завагався.

— Ніби одного дня я прокинуся, і все закінчиться.

— Ніколи. Все буде добре. Я постаралася говорити без вагань, але людина може довести себе до передчасної смерті. Тепер я це знаю.

— Я не ненавиджу працювати. Просто не хочу, щоб робота стала єдиним, чим я займаюся, розумієш. Не хочу так жити все життя. Його голос тремтів, більше від страху, ніж від роздратування. — Треба просто це пережити. Коли ми станемо дорослими, все буде інакше. Все буде добре. Я порушував власне правило. Чи сказав я щось не те? Чи не слід було цього говорити? Що я мав сказати? Він дивився на світ, а

the world, and I was facing his back. Fuck living to work. We won't end up like those people. Would those words have helped him? They did nothing for me.

Besides, I had no interest in the future. The moments spent holding him, leaning on his back, were enough. I needed nothing more.

Joy led us to sadness.

Noma was six years younger than us. He skipped over to the factory after his after-school tutoring sessions to see his parents who worked day and night, his backpack bouncing on his back. Noma waited patiently in the small office doing homework, eating and warming his hands by the heater. The other workers weren't particularly fond of him, but they weren't bothered by him either. They'd catch glimpses of the boy slinking around like a stray cat and think of their own children in after-school classes, with granny, or watching TV. Emotions were left at the factory door. The machines were indifferent to humans, and fatal accidents could happen in the blink of an eye.

Noma's parents tried to keep him out of the way, but he wouldn't be deterred.

— I'll be quiet. I'll behave, I promise. I won't be any trouble. He rattled off his lines whenever anyone so much as glanced in his general direction, like a robot.

— You really like it here, don't you? Noma peered at me, probably sizing me up, before giving me a curt nod. I put on my best casual voice.

— Do you, Noma? He was silent for a long time.

— There are no kids here.

— Kids? What kids? You mean your friends? Without a word, Noma whipped out a beat-up workbook from his backpack. In the upper right corner of each page sat a small drawing. A flip

я дивився на його спину. До біса життя заради роботи. Ми не станемо такими, як ті люди. Чи допомогли б йому ці слова? Мені вони не допомогли.

До того ж, майбутнє мене не цікавило. Мені вистачало тих миттєвостей, коли я обіймала його, схилившись над його спиною. Мені не потрібно було нічого більше.

Радість привела нас до смутку.

Нома був на шість років молодший за нас. Після занять у репетитора він біг на фабрику, щоб побачити своїх батьків, які працювали день і ніч, а його рюкзак підстрибував на спині. Нома терпляче чекав у маленькому офісі, роблячи домашнє завдання, їв і грів руки біля обігрівача. Інші працівники не особливо його любили, але й не звертали на нього уваги. Вони помічали хлопчика, що крався, як бездомний кіт, і згадували своїх дітей, які відвідували заняття після школи, були з бабусею або дивилися телевізор. Емоції залишалися за дверима фабрики. Машини були байдужі до людей, і смертельні нещасні випадки могли статися в одну мить.

Батьки Номи намагалися тримати його подалі, але він не давав себе відлякати.

— Я буду тихим. Я буду поводитися добре, обіцяю. Я не буду створювати проблем. Він повторював ці слова щоразу, коли хтось навіть поглядав у його бік, наче робот.

— Тобі тут дуже подобається, правда?

Нома придивився до мене, мабуть, оцінюючи, а потім коротко кивнув головою. Я спробувала говорити якомога невимушено.

— А ти, Нома? Він довго мовчав.

— Тут немає дітей.

— Дітей? Яких дітей? Ти маєш на увазі своїх друзів? Не кажучи ні слова, Нома дістав зі свого рюкзакa пошарпаний зошит. У правому верхньому куті кожної сторінки був невеликий малюнок. Фліпбук. Він

book. He gave me permission to flick through.

A boy with his head hanging low slowly lifting his right arm raising his fist high and giving a thumbs up bigger than his own head. I let out a laugh. Noma smirked.

I took him home whenever his parents were required overnight, teaching him how to ride the bike. He got the hang of it quickly, taking only a few tumbles before pedalling alone with us walking either side. Some nights, Dam and Noma would walk hand in hand and leave me to push. The bike seemed almost alive, as if it might cycle off by itself. I let go, and it fell. I let go again, and again, it fell. We giggled like fools every time it fell.

Noma would doodle in every single one of his school workbooks. I waited impatiently for him to get through the modules and unveil his latest creations. Two eyes morphing into weird shapes spelling out 'EYES OFF'. A ribbon unravelling to reveal a massive turd shooting out of a gift box. In another, the sun, the moon and a star converging to form the three hands of a melting clock. In yet another, a person picking their ear to unearth a second turd, a knife, a flower and a diamond. Finally, a man, a woman, a boy and a bicycle fading into the distance until they are stars.

Our walks had a quiet warmth to them. Noma between us made me feel safe and soothed my nerves, as if an angel were watching over us. Or as if we were looking out for each other, wrapped in the arms of the night. They plucked the thorns out of my heart. They made me a better person. We licked ice cream in the summer and munched bungeoppang in the winter, losing ourselves in the beauty of the spring flowers and autumn leaves. At the end of the night, I'd wait for Noma to lock his door and kiss Dam goodbye. Then it was a shower and four to five hours of sleep before doing it all again, but there was a warm ball of rice in my heart that exhaustion and the future could never spoil.

дозволив мені погортати його.

Хлопчик із опущеною головою повільно піднімав праву руку, високо піднімаючи кулак і показуючи великий палець, більший за його голову. Я розсміявся. Нома посміхнувся.

Я забирав його додому, коли його батьки залишалися на ніч, і вчив його їздити на велосипеді. Він швидко навчився, лише кілька разів впавши, перш ніж почав самостійно крутити педалі, а ми йшли поруч. Деколи ввечері Дам і Нома йшли рука в руку, а мені доводилося штовхати велосипед. Велосипед здався майже живим, ніби міг їхати сам. Я відпустив його, і він впав. Я відпустив його знову, і він знову впав. Ми сміялися, як дурні, щоразу, коли він падав.

Нома робив малюнки в кожному зі своїх шкільних зошитів. Я з нетерпінням чекав, коли він закінчить модулі і покаже свої останні творіння. Два ока, що перетворюються на дивні фігури, які утворюють слова "EYES OFF". Стрічка, що розмотується, відкриваючи величезний кал, який вистрілює з подарункової коробки. В іншому малюнку сонце, місяць і зірка зливаються, утворюючи три стрілки танучого годинника. У ще одному малюнку людина колупає у вусі, витягуючи звідти другий кавалик, ніж, квітку і діамант. Нарешті, чоловік, жінка, хлопчик і велосипед зникають у далечині, перетворюючись на зірки.

Наші прогулянки були сповнені тихої теплоти. Нома між нами давав мені відчуття безпеки і заспокоював мої нерви, ніби ангел охороняв нас. Або ніби ми піклувалися одне про одного, обійняті ніччю. Вони вирвали колючки з мого серця. Вони зробили мене кращою людиною. Ми лизали морозиво влітку і жували бунгеоппан взимку, загубившись у красі весняних квітів і осіннього листя. Наприкінці ночі я чекав, поки Нома зачинить двері і поцілує Дам на прощання. Потім я приймав душ і спав чотири-п'ять годин, перш ніж все повторювалося знову, але в моєму серці була тепла кулька рису, яку ні втома, ні майбутнє не могли зіпсувати.

Once, I asked Noma a question I couldn't answer myself.

— What do you want to be when you grow up? The scariest question of all.

— What do you want to be when you grow up? Touché. I took the coward's way out.

— You go first.

— I'm going to be a good dad.

— A good dad?

— Yeah. The bestest dad in the world.

— What kind of dad is the bestest dad in the world?

— The bestest husband makes the bestest dad. Duh.

— Is that what your mum says? He rummaged through his bag, ignoring me. Our Noma. The bestest kid in the world.

One of those nights, Noma was riding the bike with us walking either side. He matched our pace, wiggling the handlebars and zigzagging, pedalling backwards. He had grown taller that year; we remained unchanged. Everyone's faces, fingers and toes throbbed with cold that winter.

— I have to finish this new workbook over the break. The teacher hit me for drawing in them, but I'll show you guys before rubbing everything out. The thought of him erasing the drawings, the small curls of rubber piling up, really got to me.

— What will you draw this time?

— Something super sexy. I'm going to erase it anyway. I wondered what Noma's idea of 'sexy' was. It probably wasn't any different to mine

— Hey, when did you guys start liking each other?

— When we were younger than you are now.

— How did you become friends?

— We just did, naturally.

— What do you mean, 'naturally'? Noma braked so

Одного разу я задав Номі питання, на яке сам не міг відповісти.

— Ким ти хочеш стати, коли виростеш? Найстрашніше питання з усіх.

— Ким ти хочеш стати, коли виростеш? Туше. Я обрав шлях боягуза.

— Ти першим.

— Я буду хорошим батьком.

— Хорошим батьком?

— Так. Найкращим татом у світі. — Який тато є найкращим татом у світі?

— Найкращий чоловік — найкращий тато. Ну.

— Це твоя мама так каже? Він переривав свою сумку, ігноруючи мене. Наш Нома. Найкращий хлопчик у світі.

Однієї з тих ночей Нома їхав на велосипеді, а ми йшли по обидва боки від нього. Він підлаштовувався під наш темп, крутив кермо, їхав зигзагами, крутив педалі назад. За той рік він виріс, а ми залишилися незмінними. Тієї зими всім боліли від холоду обличчя, пальці на руках і ногах.

— Я мушу закінчити цей новий зошит під час канікул. Вчителька біла мене за те, що я малював у них, але я покажу вам, перш ніж все стерти. Думка про те, що він зітре малюнки, а маленькі кульки гумки накопичуються, дуже мене зачепила.

— Що ти намалюєш цього разу?

— Щось суперсексуальне. Я все одно це стеру. Я замислився, що Нома вважає "сексуальним". Мабуть, це не відрізнялося від мого уявлення.

— Гей, а коли ви почали подобатися одне одному?

— Коли ми були молодші за тебе. — Як ви стали друзями?

— Просто так, природньо.

— Що ти маєш на увазі під "природньо"? Нома так різко загальмував, що велосипед з'їхав управо. Я була єдина, хто злякався.

dramatically the bike swerved to the right. I was the only one who startled.

— Want me to push you? Noma ignored Gu's offer. — Dad promised he'll buy me a bike in secondary school. The boys his age biked to and from school, no matter where they lived. Hundreds of bikes stood parked in a corner of the schoolyard. They looked like notes on a staff.

— When I get my bike, I'm going far. All the way to the ocean.

— Maybe wait until you're a bit older. Gu patted Noma's back.

— Okay but how do you get close to someone 'naturally'? Noma wasn't done. When you really like someone, there's nowhere to hide it from them, I almost blurted out

— You two are dating, right? Gu and I laughed drily. We were well beyond 'dating'.

— The kids at school are dating too. It had been months since graduation, but one of our bullies still hit up my phone.

— They're not like you guys though. They're dumb. The bike swerved again, this time to the left. Gu barely caught it.

— So, who do you want to be dumb with? Gu was joking, but Noma's face grew grave.

— It's not like that. I just want someone to be nice to me. Noma pedalled hands-free, ours steadying the bars.

— So I can be nice back. It was undeniable: the boy was experiencing his first crush.

Our usual spot grew in the distance. It was right before closing, meaning the vendor lady would either give us the leftovers for free or be all out. We always placed bets on how many bungeoppang remained. Three, Noma guessed. Gu seconded. None

— Хочеш, я тебе підштовхну? Нома проігнорував пропозицію Гу.

— Тато обіцяв купити мені велосипед, коли я піду в середню школу. Хлопці його віку їздили на велосипедах до школи і з школи, незалежно від того, де вони жили. Сотні велосипедів стояли припарковані в кутку шкільного двору. Вони виглядали як ноти на нотному стані.

— Коли я отримаю свій велосипед, я поїду далеко. Аж до океану. — Може, почекай, поки трохи подорослішаєш. Гу поплескав Нома по спині.

— Гаразд, але як можна "природно" наблизитися до когось? Нома не закінчив. Коли ти когось дуже любиш, це неможливо приховати, — ледь не вирвалося в мене.

— Ви ж зустрічаєтеся, правда? Гу і я сухо засміялися. Ми вже давно переросли "побачення".

— Діти в школі теж зустрічаються. Минуло кілька місяців після випуску, але один із наших кривдників все ще дзвонив мені на телефон.

— Але вони не такі, як ви. Вони дурні. Велосипед знову з'їхав, цього разу вліво. Гу ледь встиг його впіймати.

— То з ким ти хочеш бути дурним? Гу жартував, але обличчя Номи стало серйозним.

— Це не так. Я просто хочу, щоб хтось був до мене добрий. Нома крутив педалі без рук, а ми тримали кермо.

— Щоб я міг бути добрим у відповідь. Не можна було заперечувати: хлопчик переживав своє перше кохання.

Наше звичне місце віддалялося. Було вже майже час закриття, а це означало, що продавчиня або дасть нам залишки безкоштовно, або все буде розпродано. Ми завжди робили ставки на те, скільки бунгеоппанга залишилося. Три, вгадав Нома. Гу підтримав його.

today, I predicted. And there were none. We lay claim to the remaining fish cake skewers. Tomorrow, I'm going to stuff my face with bungeoppang, Noma muttered between mouthfuls. Gu scooped some broth into a paper cup, handing it to him. I tore off a tissue and wiped his mouth.

— Thanks, Noma said. It was unusual to be thanked; we'd never thanked each other for the small things before. After we paid and left the stall, I licked some soy sauce smeared on Gu's hand. He gave me a shy smile, and I probably returned a dumb joke. Noma looked back at us, securing his left foot on the pedal before swinging his right leg over the seat.

Сьогодні не залишилося, передбачила я. І дійсно, не залишилося. Ми забрали собі залишки рибних шпажок. Завтра я наїмся бунгеоппанга, пробурмотів Нома між ковтками. Гу налив трохи бульйону в паперовий стаканчик і простягнув йому. Я відірвала серветку і витерла йому рот.

— Дякую, — сказав Нома. Було незвично отримувати подяку; раніше ми ніколи не дякували один одному за дрібниці. Після того, як ми заплатили і залишили кіоск, я злизала трохи соєвого соусу, що залишився на руці Гу. Він сором'язливо посміхнувся мені, а я, мабуть, відповіла дурним жартом. Нома озирнувся на нас, закріпивши ліву ногу на педалі, перш ніж перекинути праву ногу через сидіння.

## Chapter 2. Challenges of Rendering Metaphorical Narrative of Choi Jin-Young's *Hunger* into Ukrainian

### 2.1 Characteristics of the book and the author's biography

Choe Jin-young's novel *Hunger* is considered one of the most original and emotional works in contemporary South Korean literature. It has the elements of the psychological novel, noir fiction and even horror and is difficult to categorise. The book is also very much a psychological work, being very much about human emotions, especially love, sadness and inner emptiness. Another reason that makes it unique among other works is its symbolic and disturbing style of narration that remains in the memory of the reader for a long time. Born in 1981, Choe Jin-young began to write in 2006. Her first book won a literary prize, and she became a well-known writer in Korea. In her books she often addresses complex themes such as emotional suffering, societal expectations and a sense of loss of identity. She likes to write about love, but she doesn't write about it as something perfect but rather as something painful and complicated, she shows that sometimes love can make people suffer. Originally published in 2015 as *Gu's Proof*, the book became better known as *Hunger* and gained popularity with young readers. The book didn't initially garner much interest but grew popular around 2020 as people started telling their friends about it and 20-year-olds took a great liking to it, so it eventually became a bestseller. That the concerns expressed in the book are of value and of interest to readers (Goodreads, 2026)

The story is centred around two people with the names Dam and Gu. They were friends since childhood, and their friendship had only deepened with the years. They did not have it easy, they did not have much money, nobody listened to them, society pressured them, they grew up in difficult circumstances, from the beginning it was clear that the future was going to be hard. This background is very important, it makes us understand why they cared so much for each other, why they were indispensable for each other. The main event is at the beginning when Gu is killed and Dam finds his body. But she cannot bring herself to accept that he is dead. So she takes his body home and decides to eat it. This act might seem very shocking, even frightening, but in the book it makes sense, because it shows that eating him was not only an act of violence, but also a way of expressing her love, a way of expressing her grief and even to fight back and to resist a cruel society. Dam thought she could keep him alive this way. If she ate him she'd be in her. What makes this story unique is that it is told from two perspectives: one from the perspective of the living and the other from the perspective of the dead. Gu continues to 'be there' after his death, like a voice that keeps on watching what's happening, while Dam feels his grief in a very intense and very real way." These two voices are juxtaposed, implying they are still together, but simultaneously creating a feeling of loneliness, as they are no longer able to speak to each other properly and are now separated. This structure heightens the emotional impact while making it even more confusing. (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002)

The author said she had the idea for the book when she was thinking about love. Choi Jin-young said that she wondered if people really needed love, especially since love often causes pain and loss, so she wanted to portray a love that is not perfect but rather difficult, even awkward. She also connected the notion of love with that of food, as in Korea, people sometimes say they want to 'bite' the person they love; thus, the book's idea that people can eat one another is shocking, yet at the same time rooted in culture and emotion. (ArtReview, 2025)

The book also explores society and depicts a world where financial problems are rife, where debt and injustice are serious issues, and where Gu's death is linked to financial difficulties and loan sharks, illustrating just how much financial systems can harm people. That is why this book is a sad story of an individual, but also a story of wider social issues. The book's idea of 'hunger' is complex, not just physical hunger but hunger for love, for meaning, for stability and purpose, which gives the book great depth despite the simplicity of its language. The power of the book is said to be in its symbols. The book makes the readers feel a lot and at the same time think about what it all means. (Ryan, 2007; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002)

It has received mixed reviews, where some people have said that it was very intense and a beautiful story of love and sadness, while others have said that it was too strange or confusing. The emotions in the story were something that some readers could really feel, but others found it hard to distinguish the characters and also felt the plot jumped too quickly from one thing to another. The fact that there are such different opinions shows that the book is quite profound and can be interpreted differently. The writing is simple but very emotional, and the author doesn't explain everything right away, which can sometimes be confusing for readers. The story is also told differently, and it's not always clear what's real, but maybe that's what it's supposed to be, to show what the characters are going through inside.

All in all, Choi Jin-young's *Hunger* is a complex book that stimulates the reader to think about love, sadness and life and is full of deep insights on human feelings, some surprising scenes and strong symbols. All this makes for a one of a kind read. The idea of the book is closely connected to the author's personal reflections and contemporary life in Korea. That is why the book is not only a story but also a work that records life in our time.

## 2.2 Metaphorical Narration in Choi Jin-young's *Hunger*

The use of metaphoric narration is one of the most important artistic features of *Hunger* by Choi Jin-young. But the novel is metaphorical in a way that does not mean simply that there are a great many metaphors in the text. As L. David Ritchie (in *Metaphorical Stories in Discourse*) (2017) states, metaphorical stories are meaningful because they have narrative situations, symbolic actions and conceptual structures which let the reader understand abstract emotional experiences through concrete events. Metaphor in such narratives works not only at the level of language, but also at the level of plot, characterisation and narrative organisation.

This understanding is particularly relevant for *Hunger*. The novel is a disturbing story of love, loss and grief told through an unconventional narrative of death and cannibalism. But the text cannot be taken as literal. The shocking events described in the novel are symbolic representations of emotional attachment, memory and existential suffering. Therefore, the narrative gains metaphoric significance not as a result of individual metaphoric expressions but of the interplay between allegory, symbolism, biblical allusions, and images and figurative language.

The narrative structure of the novel highlights its metaphorical nature. The story is narrated through the alternating voices of two protagonists, Dam and Gu. Even after his death, Gu keeps describing events, and in the physical world, Dam feels grief and emotional ruination. Narrative voice, as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan argues, is one of the main ways in which literary meaning is constructed. The narrator of the living and the dead coexist, creating a space of narrative where reality and metaphor are always overlapping. As a consequence death is not merely a biological event but a metaphorical condition which allows for explorations of memory, attachment and emotional continuity.

One of the most important elements of metaphorical narration in *Hunger* is allegory. **Allegory** is defined in *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2006) as "a narrative technique in which the literal events are said to simultaneously stand for another level of meaning." Cuddon, for example, defines allegory as "an extended narrative in which the characters, situations and actions have a secondary symbolic significance in addition to their surface meaning" (Cuddon, 2013).

The narrative structure of *Hunger* is characterised by many allegorical features. The story of a woman who eats the body of her dead lover operates on two interrelated levels. In a literal sense, it represents an action that looks disturbing and socially unacceptable. However, symbolically, the identical act becomes a sign of utter devotion and resistance to separation. Dam does not eat Gu because he is physically hungry, but because he is trying to preserve his existence in her. So, the act of consumption acquires an allegorical meaning, as a sign of the human desire to overcome

death and to maintain an emotional attachment beyond the physical absence. This allegorical interpretation becomes particularly evident in the following passage:

*I will live. I will carry your remains with me to the very end of time. You will die only when I die* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 18.) .

The passage is translated by literal translation, maintaining its semantic content and symbolic implications. On the surface the narrator talks about carrying the remains of the dead loved one. On the allegorical level, however, the image means the impossibility of emotional separation and the desire to keep love beyond death. The remains are not merely the physical remains of a body but also the symbols of memory, attachment and ongoing emotional presence. Thus the literal action also conveys a deeper meaning, which is a defining characteristic of allegory.

Another example further illustrates the allegorical dimension of the novel:

*I tried running and ended up here. A realm of nothingness. A formless void without field, sea, sky – and yet, I can feel you. With every cell of me. I feel you, right here, but you are not here.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p.25–26)

This passage has also been translated literally, so that the allegorical imagery of the original may not be lost. The “realm of nothingness” can be understood literally as the space the narrator inhabits after death. At the same time, it serves allegorically as a symbol of emotional vacuity, loss and existential isolation. The narrator lives in a void, in other words, without any physical reality, but even so, he is able to feel the presence of the beloved. The difference of absence and emotional presence reinforces the novel’s primary allegorical notion that love occupies the space of the absent body after the body’s death.

Therefore, the entire narrative may be interpreted as an allegory of love confronting mortality. Through symbolic actions, impossible situations and emotionally charged imagery, *Hunger* transforms a disturbing story of death and consumption into a broader reflection on memory, attachment and the human desire to preserve emotional bonds despite death and separation.

**Symbolism** is also one of the basic components of metaphorical narration, closely associated with allegory. Symbols are usually defined as objects, actions or images that represent meanings other than the literal ones. Marie-Laure Ryan, in *Toward a Definition of Narrative* (2007), asserted that narrative meaning is often constructed by the recurrence of motifs and symbolic associations that gradually construct readers’ interpretation of a literary text. Hence, symbolic structures play an important role in the construction of narrative meaning.

Hunger is the major symbol of the novel. The title seems to refer initially to a physical need for food, but the idea is later given broader emotional and existential meanings. Hunger symbolises loneliness, emotional deprivation and the need for human contact. The protagonists are poor, socially neglected and have difficulties to establish a meaningful relationship with the surrounding world. In such cases, hunger is a metaphorical representation of their psychological emptiness and emotional needs. Thus, the title encapsulates the essential thematic concern of the novel: the unending desire for love, understanding and belonging.

Another important symbol is eating itself. Consumption in the story is more than its biological function, it becomes a symbolic expression of eternal attachment. This symbolic meaning is clearly illustrated in the following passage:

— *If you die before me, I will eat you. I will eat you, Gu. I will eat you and live for an extraordinarily long time*(Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 17–18) .

Here eating does not mean violence but is rather a symbolic gesture to keep the beloved alive after death. The symbolic logic of the narrative suggests that the unbearable loss can only be countered by keeping the loved person alive in oneself. Thus consumption is a symbolic act of remembrance, emotional continuity and resistance to disappearance.

The same idea is reinforced in another passage:

*I won’t watch you disappear. I will live. I will live to remember you* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 18.) .

Life itself becomes a symbol of devotion in the obsession with memory. The act of remembering is a method of saving emotional bonds, a notion that love can survive physical absence and even death.

There are many other symbolic motifs in the novel. One of the most recurring is light, which is often associated with warmth, comfort and emotional intimacy:

*That light looks so inviting, so warm. Warm like Dam.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 15.)

In this example, light symbolises emotional security and human closeness. The comparison between light and Dam transforms a physical phenomenon into a representation of affection, warmth and belonging.

Another recurring symbol is emptiness, which reflects existential isolation and emotional loss:

*I tried running and ended up here. A realm of nothingness.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 25.) .

The “realm of nothingness” is a symbolic representation of loneliness, grief and emotional emptiness. Literally, it could refer to the narrator’s posthumous state, but it also expresses a profound sense of absence and disconnection.

Symbolic meaning is also conveyed through the representation of interpersonal relationships. For example:

*Conversation was my only outlet and means of expressing my love for her.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 20.)

*Putting food on the table was how she expressed her love.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 20.)

In each case, common actions take on symbolic meaning. Conversation and food are signs of affection, care and emotional connection. Love is not said. It is not announced. It is not stated. It is an act. It is a simple act. Yet as the narrative unfolds, it takes on a deeper emotional connotation.

The symbolic association between love and suffering is explicitly written in another passage:

*To suffer is to experience physical or emotional pain. There can be no love without suffering.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 21.)

Here suffering stands for emotional commitment and the unavoidable vulnerability that comes with real attachment. The statement highlights one of the central symbolic ideas of the novel: love and pain are two sides of the same human experience.

Finally, symbolism is also linked to death itself. This can be observed in the following example:

*We fell into a loud silence, probably thinking of Grandpa who symbolised death for us*(Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 20.) .

The grandfather transcends his role as an individual character and becomes a symbolic embodiment of mortality. Through such recurring symbols, the novel constructs a complex network of meanings that connects love, loss, memory, suffering and death.

The novel contains additional symbolic motifs. Light is often a symbol of warmth, emotional comfort and human contact. Flowers are a symbol of fragility, beauty but also transience of existence. The human body itself is a symbol of memory and presence. Gu’s body, even in death, remains a site of emotional attachment and personal identity. The recurrent symbols constitute a regular network of symbolism, through which the novel expresses its main ideas.

**Biblical allusions** are another important feature of the metaphorical narration. Allusion, as Brendan McGuigan (2007) puts it, is an indirect reference to a literary, historical, cultural or religious source that extends textual meaning through related associations. The narrative of *Hunger* is peppered with references to resurrection, miracles, faith and Armageddon. These are not religious statements, but a symbolic framework within which the questions of life, death and transcendence can be explored.

One of the most explicit biblical allusions appears in the following passage:

*They believe in stories of a child born without sexual intercourse and of a dead man coming back to life, tales that far surpass the wonders of rain falling for forty days or the sea parting in two.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 13)

There are many biblical references in this passage, but they are used ironically. The conception of a child without sexual activity alludes to the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, while the return of a dead man to life alludes to the Resurrection. The references to forty days of rain and the splitting of the sea remind us of the stories of Noah's Flood and Moses' leading the Israelites through the Red Sea. The novel juxtaposes these miraculous events with a sceptical narrative voice, questioning the boundaries between belief and disbelief. At the same time, these allusions support one of the main concerns of the novel: the human desire to overcome death and to preserve emotional bonds beyond a physical existence.

The motif of sin appears in another passage:

*The things you don't understand now will start to make sense in time. Ignorance isn't a sin, but impatience can be.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 19-20.)

The reference to sin introduces a biblical moral framework to the narrative. But the statement is not primarily religious. Rather the idea of sin is metaphorical in the sense of a reflection on human behaviour, emotional maturity and accepting difficult experiences. The tale uses a common biblical motif to place individual trials within a larger ethical and philosophical framework.

Faith itself becomes an important symbolic motif in the novel:

*...Faith is the key to grasping absurdity.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 14.)

Here faith is not only a religious virtue, but a means of coming to grips with the irrational and incomprehensible in existence. The statement is one of the dominant themes of the book: how to make sense of situations that are emotionally intolerable or logically incomprehensible. Therefore, faith acts as a religious allusion and as a metaphor for hope, endurance and emotional perseverance.

The motif of resurrection is especially important in the symbolic structure of *Hunger*. The narrative constantly refers to resurrection as an expression of an impossible, but highly desired, event. In the novel, resurrection is a symbol of the universal human desire to undo loss, to reclaim what has gone, and to regain emotional wholeness. Similarly, biblical references to miracles suggest the desire to overcome the limits of ordinary reality and the inevitability of death.

Hence biblical allusions in *Hunger* serve a function much beyond religious reference. They provide a symbolic framework in which themes of love, grief, memory, faith and mortality can be investigated. Biblical imagery enhances the novel's philosophical dimension and the metaphorical narration of the whole text, relating the personal experiences of the characters to universally recognised religious narratives.

**Imagery** also plays a major role in building a metaphorical narration. Imagery is defined in *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2006) as language which appeals to the senses and converts abstract ideas into concrete experiences. In *Hunger* emotions are always expressed in visual, tactile, olfactory and bodily images. These descriptions of the senses make psychological experiences tangible and allow readers to see emotional states as physical realities.

One example of tactile imagery appears in the following passage:

*I wiped my sweaty palms on my thighs before awkwardly reaching for her hand.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 24.)

The image of sweaty palms is a physical symbol of anxiety, nervousness and emotional vulnerability. Rather than directly narrating the protagonist's feelings, the story communicates those feelings through the feelings of the body, allowing readers to experience the emotional state of the character through a particular sensory image.

The novel frequently combines several types of imagery within a single passage. This can be observed in the following description:

*I remember every detail: the languid sunlight of midday, the lilac-laced breeze swirling around us, Gu's blue work jacket smelling faintly of coal briquettes.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 22.)

It is full of visual, sense of smell, and physical imagery. The sunlight gives a vivid visual picture, the breeze gives movement, the smell of coal briquettes gives an olfactory impression of memory and intimacy. By gathering sensory details, a mundane memory turns into a vivid emotional experience, and the connection between memory and physical perception is made stronger.

Imagery of nature occupies a particularly important place within the symbolic structure of the novel. Flowers, seasons, light and weather conditions frequently reflect the emotional state of the protagonists. This tendency can be observed in the following passage:

*Or as if we were looking out for each other, wrapped in the arms of the night. They plucked the thorns out of my heart. They made me a better person. We licked ice cream in the summer and munched bungeoppang in the winter, losing ourselves in the beauty of the spring flowers and autumn leaves. At the end of the night, I'd wait for Noma to lock his door and kiss Dam goodbye.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 23.)

This paragraph includes a rich mixture of nature, tactile and emotional imagery. The changing of the seasons represents the passage of time and the continuity of life, while the images of spring flowers and autumn leaves bring to mind thoughts of beauty, change and transience. The metaphorical image of removing "thorns" from the heart further turns emotional healing into a tangible physical act. These sensory descriptions portray personal relationships as lived experiences inscribed in the natural world.

The recurring imagery of nature in the novel takes the form of flowers, changing seasons and fading light. The decline of emotion, of sadness and of time are often depicted with images of wilting flowers, seasonal change and decreasing luminosity. At the same time, bodily imagery is repeatedly linked with emotional suffering. The body becomes a site where memory and longing and grief are embodied so that internal psychological experiences can have a visible and sensory form.

Therefore, imagery is among the main devices utilised to construct the metaphorical narration in *Hunger*. Imagery makes feelings into visual, tactile, olfactory, and physical sensations to make psychological states into tangible realities for the reader. Hence, abstract themes such as love, loneliness, memory and loss become concrete, emotionally engaging and symbolically significant.

In *Hunger* **metaphors** often link emotional experience with natural phenomena, bodily states and material objects. Similes do the same thing, they make the abstract feelings visible and accessible. Metaphor is usually defined as a figure of speech in which one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another. A metaphor is an implicit comparison between two unlike entities not using comparative markers such as "like" or "as" (Cuddon, J. A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (5th ed.) 2013). Repeated comparisons with flowers, light, trees and weather conditions turn the emotional suffering into concrete sensory images. Thus metaphor and simile are not just embellishments of the narrative but part of the process of meaning.

Another important element of metaphorical narration is **personification**, as McGuigan(2007) states, personification refers to the use of human qualities and actions to abstract ideas or inanimate objects. Death, light, memory, thoughts, even silence are often active forces in *Hunger*, capable of influencing human behaviour. Personification gives agency to emotional experiences, which can then be players in the narrative world. So, the boundary between an inner psychological state and the outer world is obscured, intensifying the dream-like and symbolic nature of the novel. One example can be observed in the description of the sky:

*...the clouds bloom like flowers across a clear blue sky...*(Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 21.)

The verb *bloom* attributes a characteristic associated with living plants to clouds, transforming an ordinary natural phenomenon into a vivid and dynamic image. Through this

personification, nature reflects the narrator's emotional perception of the world and contributes to the poetic quality of the narrative.

Another example appears in the phrase:

*Death took him by surprise.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 14.)

Here, death is represented as an active agent capable of performing a human action. Rather than functioning merely as a biological event, death becomes a force that intervenes directly in human life. Such representation strengthens the symbolic dimension of the narrative and emphasises the inevitability of mortality.

Personification is also evident in the following sentence:

*An unspoken question hung in the air.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 28.)

The question is posed like a physical object sitting in the space between the characters. This image makes an abstract psychological state real and visible, externalising emotional stress and uncertainty.

Similarly, temporal experience is personified in the expression:

*The night stretched on.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 23.)

In this example, the night appears capable of extending itself, reflecting the protagonist's subjective perception of time. The personification conveys feelings of loneliness, anticipation and emotional exhaustion, transforming the passage of time into an active participant in the narrative.

Therefore, in *Hunger*, personification is not only a stylistic device, but also an important metaphorical mode of narration. It transforms abstract ideas and natural elements into active participants in the fictional world, thus enriching the symbolic and psychological depth of the novel by making emotions, memories, and existential truths active participants.

Finally, the **rhetorical questions** are important for the philosophical aspect of the story. Rhetorical questions, by McGuigan (2007), are questions not asked to get you information, but to get you thinking and to point out ideas. The protagonists keep posing questions about love, loss, loneliness and the meaning of life. Seldom do the questions receive a direct answer. Instead they show doubt, emotional insecurity and existential dread. Rhetorical questions thus become a significant narrative device for externalising internal conflict and inviting the reader into the process of interpretation.

**Simile** also plays an important role in the construction of metaphorical narration. According to Cuddon (2013), a simile is a figure of speech in which one thing is directly compared with another, usually through the use of words such as *like* or *as*, making the relationship between the compared entities explicit. Unlike metaphor, which establishes an implicit connection between concepts, simile presents the comparison openly and therefore makes figurative meaning more immediately accessible to readers. In *Hunger*, similes frequently transform emotional and psychological experiences into vivid and concrete images, allowing readers to visualise abstract feelings through familiar objects, situations and phenomena.

One example can be observed in the following passage:

*...as if thrown naked into the middle of a crowded square.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 25.)

The comparison conveys an intense feeling of vulnerability and exposure. Rather than describing emotional discomfort directly, the narrator associates it with a humiliating public situation, enabling readers to experience the character's anxiety through a vivid visual image.

Another example appears in the description of life and death:

*Turns out we're as clueless in death as in life.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 25.)

Here the simile establishes a direct comparison between the uncertainty of life and the uncertainty of death. The image challenges traditional assumptions about knowledge and understanding after death and emphasises the existential confusion experienced by the characters throughout the novel.

Similes are also used to characterise social attitudes and personal perceptions:

*I envied people who treated expensive clothes like leisurewear.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 33.)

In this case, the comparison highlights the contrast between social classes and attitudes towards material possessions. Through a simple everyday image, the narrator expresses feelings of insecurity, envy and social alienation.

The emotional impact of sudden shock is conveyed through another comparison:

*Dam stared at me, stunned, as if a bomb had just detonated.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 34.)

The simile intensifies the emotional response by likening it to the immediate effects of an explosion. The image turns surprise into a dramatic visual event, and the psychological state of the character becomes more tangible and memorable.

A more humorous comparison appears in the following description:

*Her breasts looked like she had stuffed two choco pies down her shirt.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. ..8 )

The simile is witty in tone, but it adds to the vividness of the narrative by converting a physical description into an arresting visual image. The comparison is made with the familiar everyday objects, so the description becomes more expressive and memorable.

Finally, simile is used to express emotional distance and unattainability:

*Kissing was another world altogether, as distant as the stars in the night sky.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 40 )

Kissing is compared to distant stars to emphasise the feelings of longing, unattainability and emotional distance. The celestial imagery distances the intimate human experience, making it seem almost out of reach, and thereby heightening the emotional atmosphere of the novel.

So the similes in *Hunger* are not merely stylistic devices, but are part of the metaphorical narration. They make the abstract psychological states palpable and understandable by creating clear analogies between emotional experiences and concrete images, adding to the narrative's symbolic and emotional content.

Therefore, the metaphorical narration in Choi Jin-young's *Hunger* is constructed through the combination of various literary and narrative elements, instead of the isolated use of metaphorical expressions. Allegory sets the novel's overall conceptual framework, symbolism adds deeper layers of meaning, biblical allusions provide philosophical and spiritual associations, imagery translates emotions into sensory experiences, and metaphor, simile, personification and rhetorical questioning further expand the interpretative possibilities of the text. Together these elements turn an apparently shocking story into a profound reflection on love, grief, memory and the human desire to preserve emotional bonds, despite death and separation.

### **2.3 Translation Techniques for Rendering Metaphorical Narration in *Hunger***

Metaphorical narration is difficult to translate because the literary meaning of Choi Jin-young's *Hunger* is formed not only from the poetic individual lexical units but also from the complex interactions of symbolism, imagery, biblical allusions and figurative language. As discussed in the previous section, the metaphorical narration in the novel is built by allegorical structures, symbolic motifs and recurrent figurative patterns that turn everyday actions and objects into carriers of emotional, philosophical and existential meanings. Thus, the work of translation involves not only the transfer of propositional content but also the preservation of conceptual associations that affect how readers interpret the narrative. Literary translation, from the point of view of translation studies, tries to reproduce not only linguistic structures but also to convey the stylistic, emotional and aesthetic functions of the source text. Mona Baker stresses that equivalence in literary translation has semantic, pragmatic and textual dimensions. Peter Newmark contends that the translators should preserve the expressive value of literary discourse wherever possible. It follows that special attention needs to be paid, in translating *Hunger*, to the symbolic uncertainty, emotional intensity and metaphorical complexity that constitute the artistic basis of the novel.

The analysis carried out in this section is mainly based on the classification of translation techniques proposed by Lucía Molina and Amparo Hurtado Albir in their article *Translation*

*Techniques Revisited: A Dynamic and Functionalist Approach* (2002). The scholars define translation techniques as procedures of analysis and classification of the operation of translation equivalence with regard to the source text. According to Molina and Hurtado Albir, translation techniques are functional mechanisms through which translators reproduce meaning, stylistic effects and communicative intentions in another language, affecting micro-units of discourse. Therefore, their classification is used in the present analysis to identify and describe the strategies used to maintain the symbolic, emotional and metaphorical dimensions of Choi Jin-young's *Hunger*. Such techniques as literal translation, modulation, transposition, amplification, reduction, established equivalent, borrowing and compensation are given special attention as they play a crucial role in reproduction of metaphorical narration in the Ukrainian translation.

Consequently, all translation examples discussed below are analysed in accordance with the taxonomy developed by Molina and Hurtado Albir, which provides the methodological framework for the present study.

### **Translating Allegory**

One of the major challenges in translating the metaphorical narration in Choi Jin-young's *Hunger* is the reproduction of allegorical meaning. The translator must convey not only the surface meaning of the text but also the conceptual associations that underlie the narrative, because the novel functions on both a literal and symbolic level at the same time. In many cases, this goal is achieved by literal translation, which leaves the symbolic ambiguity of the original available to the target readers without further explanation.

A example can be found in the following passage:

**(1-s):** *I will live. I will carry your remains with me to the very end of time. You will die only when I die.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 18.)

**(1-t):** *Я буду жити. Я буду носити твої останки з собою до кінця часів. Ти помреш тільки тоді, коли помру я.*

The translation is literal. The lexical structure and imagery of the source text is preserved, and the allegorical meaning can be deduced from the context. Literally, the narrator is talking about carrying the remains of a dead loved one. But, on the allegorical level, the picture symbolises the denial of emotional separation and the wish to maintain love beyond death. The remains are not merely the physical remnants of the beloved, they are symbols of memory, of attachment and of continuing emotional presence. The translation does not add explanations or reformulations of interpretations. Thus, it preserves the openness of the original allegory and allows the readers to build its meaning on their own.

Another example illustrates how literal translation can successfully preserve complex allegorical imagery:

**(2-s):** *I tried running and ended up here. A realm of nothingness. A formless void without field, sea, sky – and yet, I can feel you. With every cell of me. I feel you, right here, but you are not here* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 25-26).

**(2-t):** *Я спробував втекти і опинився тут. У царстві нічого. Безформеній порожнечі без полів, моря, неба – і все ж я відчуваю тебе. Кожною клітинкою свого тіла. Я відчуваю тебе, прямо тут, але тебе тут немає.*

A further example demonstrates how literal translation preserves the allegorical dimension of the original text:

**(3-s):** *I won't watch you disappear. I will live. I will live to remember you.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 18).

**(3-t):** *Я не буду дивитися, як ти зникаєш. Я буду жити. Жити, щоб пам'ятати тебе.*

The translation of the passage is literal, which maintains the semantic content and symbolic implications of the original text. The narrator, on a superficial level, simply states that he intends to survive after the loss of a loved one. But on an allegorical level the statement is resistance to oblivion, the resolve to preserve emotional attachment through memory. Life itself is transformed

into a symbolic act of remembrance, while memory serves as a way to conquer death. Thus, the translation does not explicate the original wording and manages to keep the allegorical openness of the source text, leaving the readers to interpret its deeper meaning on their own.

The passage is translated by means of literal translation as well, preserving its semantics as well as its allegorical dimension. The phrase 'a realm of nothingness' can be taken literally to refer to the narrator's life after death. It is also an allegory of grief, emotional emptiness and existential isolation. The narrator is in a space of absence and void but the emotional presence of the beloved is still there. The juxtaposition of physical absence and emotional presence reinforces one of the central allegorical ideas of the novel: love persists even after death removes the beloved from the physical world. The original imagery is preserved, so the allegorical meaning is not spelt out.

These examples demonstrate that the main method for reproducing allegory in *Hunger* is literal translation. An over-adaptation or over-explicitation of the novel could reduce the complexity of the original narrative, for its allegorical structure depends on symbolic ambiguity and multiple levels of interpretation. The translation, faithful to the imagery and conceptual structure of the original text, successfully reproduces the allegorical dimension of the novel and preserves its contribution to the broader system of metaphorical narration.

### **Translating Symbolism**

One of the important elements of metaphorical narration in *Hunger* is symbolism. As noted in the previous section, symbolic meaning in the novel is revealed through repeating images and actions which acquire a significance beyond their literal meaning. The ideas of hunger, light, death and corporeal presence are not merely narrative components but symbolic representations of loneliness, attachment, memory and emotional survival. Therefore, the translator's task is not just to reproduce the lexical meaning, but also the symbolic associations that help to metaphorically narrate the novel.

One of the most important symbolic passages appears in the protagonist's reflection on preserving the beloved beyond death:

**(4-s):** *I will live. I will carry your remains with me to the very end of time. You will die only when I die.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 18.)

**(4-t):** *Я буду жити. Я буду носити твої останки з собою до кінця часів. Ти помреш тільки тоді, коли помру я.*

This example shows the use of literal translation according to the classification proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir. The symbolic meaning of the passage is maintained, as the lexical units and syntactic structure of the source text are reproduced identically. In the metaphorical narration of the novel, the image of carrying the remains of another person symbolises memory, devotion and resistance to separation. The reader is left to draw his own symbolic conclusions, rather than being led to a specific interpretation by the translator, by retaining the original language. Thus, the literal meaning translation expresses the emotional impact and symbolic depth of the original passage.

Another recurring symbol in the novel is light, which is consistently associated with emotional comfort, intimacy and psychological security.

**(5-s):** *That light looks so inviting, so warm. Warm like Dam.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 15)

**(5-t):** *Це світло виглядає таким привабливим, таким теплим. Теплим, як Дам.*

This example is a combination of literal translation and modulation. Lexical items light, inviting and warm are literally translated, keeping the central symbolic image. At the same time, modulation allows us to compare it with the sound that is natural in the Ukrainian language system, to preserve its conceptual meaning. The connection between light and emotional warmth remains the same in translation. Hence, light continues to be a metaphor for safety, affection and human connection, and remains within the metaphorical narration of the novel.

The symbolic representation of existential emptiness appears in another passage:

**(6-s):** *I tried running and ended up here. A realm of nothingness.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 25.)

**(6-t):** *Я спробував втекти і опинився тут. У царстві нічого.*

Here we use the literal translation. The symbolic image is translated into Ukrainian without any explanatory additions or semantic alterations. The phrase a realm of nothingness is a description of the protagonist's location and a symbolic representation of loneliness, emotional isolation and existential uncertainty. The metaphorical narration of *Hunger* is very much dependent on ambiguity. With the original formulation, the symbolic meaning may be naturally unfolded in the broader context of the narration. So, the literal translation preserves both the philosophical complexity and the emotional resonance of the source text.

As the analysed examples show, in *Hunger* symbolism is mainly replicated by literal translation, adding modulation only when linguistic or stylistic reasons require it. These techniques enable the translator to maintain the symbolic network that constructs the novel and accounts for its metaphorical narration. The Ukrainian translation reproduces the symbols of memory, emotional attachment, warmth and existential emptiness successfully, preserving the conceptual and emotional depth of the original text.

### **Translating Biblical Allusions**

Another important element of metaphorical narration in *Hunger* is biblical allusions. An allusion, McGuigan says, is an indirect reference to a literary, historical, cultural or religious source that adds associations and enriches the meaning of the text. In Choi Jin-young's novel, biblical references are less overt religious statements than symbolic tools for the characters to make sense of death, grief, faith and the possibility of transcendence. Therefore, the preservation of biblical allusions in the translation is important for the philosophical dimension of the metaphorical narration to be maintained.

One of the most significant biblical references appears in the following passage:

**(7-s):** *What I need is a resurrection, an immaculate conception. A miracle beyond the bounds of science and ethics.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 13.)

**(7-t):** *Воскресіння, ось що мені треба, неосяжна концепція. Диво поза межами науки та етики.*

The translation is characterised by structural modulation and literal translation. The fundamental biblical notions of resurrection and miracle are reproduced in a direct way, preserving their religious and symbolic significance. At the same time, the structural modulation allows to bring the sentence into compliance with Ukrainian syntactic norms. In the symbolic narration of the novel, resurrection stands for the desire to undo death and to restore emotional wholeness, while the allusion to miracles signifies the hope of the protagonists for an impossible change of reality. The translation preserves these allusions and thus the philosophical depth and emotional intensity of the original text.

Another biblical motif is represented through the concept of faith:

**(8-s):** *Have faith, and sense will follow.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 14.)

**(8-t):** *Майте віру, і сенс з'явиться.*

This example shows the usage of literal translation. In Ukrainian the notion of faith has an equivalent cultural and religious value, that is why the lexical structure of the original utterance is reproduced directly. The story uses faith as a theological term but also as a metaphor for hope and emotional resilience. The original formulation allows the symbolic meaning of the statement to remain accessible to target readers without additional explanation.

Apocalyptic imagery appears in another example:

**(9-s):** *I need Armageddon or eternal life.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 14.)

**(9-t):** *Я потребую Армагеддон або безсмертя.*

In this example the translation is a mix of literal translation and established equivalent. The biblical name Armageddon is translated through its established Ukrainian equivalent *Армагеддон*,

keeping both its cultural recognisability and its religious associations. At the same time, the phrase "eternal life" is translated by a direct lexical equivalent. The opposition between Armageddon and eternal life provides a symbolic opposition between destruction and immortality, echoing the emotional extremity and existential uncertainty of the protagonist. The target text preserves the semantic content and symbolic value of the biblical allusion by means of an established equivalent and literal translation, thus keeping its contribution to the metaphorical narration of the novel.

Another biblical allusion appears in the following passage:

**(10-s):** They believe in stories of a child born without sexual intercourse and of a dead man coming back to life, tales that far surpass the wonders of rain falling for forty days or the sea parting in two. (*Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 13*).

**(10-t):** Вони вірять в історії про дитину, народжену без статевого акту, і про мертвого чоловіка, який повернувся до життя, — казки, які набагато перевершують дива сорокаденного дощу або розколу моря на дві частини.

The passage is reproduced mainly by literal translation. The biblical imagery is retained without adaptation so that the references to the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, Noah's Flood and the parting of the Red Sea are recognisable in the target text. These allusions contribute to the philosophical side of the novel, offering the characters' hopes and wishes as references to events that seem impossible. Such a literal translation allows the Ukrainian reader to recognise the religious associations and to understand their symbolic meaning in the narrative.

A further example involves a biblical reference to the concept of sin:

**(11-s):** The things you don't understand now will start to make sense in time. Ignorance isn't a sin, but impatience can be. (*Choe Jin-young, 2025, pp. 19–20*).

**(11-t):** Те, чого ти зараз не розумієш, з часом стане зрозумілим. Незнання — це не гріх, а ось нетерплячість — може бути.

The translation is literal as the concept of sin has a direct equivalent in the Ukrainian religious and cultural discourse. The biblical quotation is not merely a theological statement, but a moral reflection on human suffering and the limits of understanding. The translation preserves the lexical form of the original, and thus manages to convey both the religious association and the symbolic meaning of the statement.

The analysed examples reveal that biblical allusions in *Hunger* are reproduced mainly by means of literal translation, sometimes supported by structural modulation. These techniques maintain the recognisability of the religious references while enabling them to perform their symbolic and philosophical functions in the narrative. Thus, the Ukrainian reader can understand the biblical images as well as the original text readers, and this guarantees the preservation of the metaphorical narration of the novel.

### Translating Imagery

Imagery is one of the primary means by which *Hunger* constructs metaphorical narrative. The novel repeatedly converts the emotions and psychological states into sensory experiences that may be seen visually, physically or emotionally. The use of imagery makes abstract ideas such as loneliness, fear, love and memory more concrete and allows the reader to more directly experience the emotional states of the characters. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve imagery in translation to keep not only the aesthetic qualities of the narrative but also its metaphorical structure.

A vivid example of tactile imagery appears in the following passage:

**(12-s):** *I wiped my sweaty palms on my thighs before awkwardly reaching for her hand.* (*Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 24.*)

**(12-t):** *Я витер пітні долоні об стегна, а потім незграбно простягнув руку до неї.*

The translation is a mixture of reduction, modulation, transposition and structural modulation. Reduction. It removes insignificant elements that are not important for the transmission of the image. Transposition and structural modulation. They change the grammatical structure of the sentence to the norms of the Ukrainian language. Modulation, on the other hand,

keeps the emotional perspective of the original. The sweaty palms image is a physical representation of anxiety and emotional vulnerability. By the combination of these techniques the translation is able to reproduce the sensory quality of the image as well as its psychological significance.

A more complex example combines visual, olfactory and kinetic imagery:

**(13-s):** *I remember every detail: the languid sunlight of midday, the lilac-laced breeze swirling around us, Gu's blue work jacket smelling faintly of coal briquettes.* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 25.)

**(13-t):** *Я пам'ятаю кожну деталь: мляве полуденне сонце, бузковий вітерець, що кружляв навколо нас, синя робоча куртка Гу, яка слабо пахла вугільними брикетами.*

This is an example of structural modulation, transposition and modulation. Structural modulation enables the sentence to be re-organised in accordance with Ukrainian syntactic patterns. Transposition alters the grammatical structures without altering the meaning. The modulation maintains the descriptive perspective and mood of emotion of the original. The merging of visual, olfactory, and kinetic images creates a vivid memory linked to intimacy and nostalgia. The translation keeps the sensory details as well as the emotional resonance, part of the metaphorical narration of the novel.

Another example demonstrates the reproduction of visual and seasonal imagery:

**(14-s):** Or as if we were looking out for each other, wrapped in the arms of the night. They plucked the thorns out of my heart. They made me a better person. We licked ice cream in the summer and munched bungeoppang in the winter, losing ourselves in the beauty of the spring flowers and autumn leaves. At the end of the night, I'd wait for Noma to lock his door and kiss Dam goodbye. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 23).

**(14-t):** *Або ніби ми піклувалися одне про одного, обійняті ніччю. Вони вирвали колючки з мого серця. Вони зробили мене кращою людиною. Ми лизали морозиво влітку і жували бунгеоппан взимку, загубившись у красі весняних квітів і осіннього листя. Наприкінці ночі я чекав, поки Нома зачинить двері і поцілує Дам на прощання.*

The translation is a combination of literal translation and modulation. The seasonal imagery of flowers and autumn leaves creates a lively sensory representation of memory, friendship and emotional warmth. The metaphorical image of “thorns” being plucked from the narrator’s heart is retained as well. The target text well captures the visual and emotional richness of the original passage, allowing the imagery to preserve its narrative and symbolic role.

A further example illustrates the use of visual imagery associated with nature:

**(15-s):** ...the clouds bloom like flowers across a clear blue sky... (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 21).

**(15-t):** *...як хмари розквітають, наче квіти, на чистому блакитному небі...*

The translation corresponds to a literal translation. The image turns a familiar natural phenomenon into a lively visual scene. The author compares clouds to blooming flowers, giving an impression of beauty, renewal and emotional tranquillity. The aesthetic and symbolic effect of the image is preserved because it is directly translated into Ukrainian. The example shows how visual imagery participates in the metaphorical narration of the novel, and how a literal translation can retain the expressive power of this imagery.

The examples above show that the imagery in *Hunger* is based on sensory description to convey emotional experience. The translation preserves visual, tactile and olfactory dimensions of the original text, while ensuring linguistic naturalness in Ukrainian through reduction, modulation, transposition and structural modulation. Thus the imagery continues to serve the narrative and symbolic purposes of the translated text.

### **Translating Metaphors and Similes**

Metaphors and similes are an important part of metaphorical narration construction, because they transform abstract emotions into concrete and memorable images. Metaphor, as Lakoff and

Johnson (1980) suggest, is a conceptual device that makes it easier for people to understand complex experiences, and similes are explicit comparisons that facilitate the reader's understanding of emotional states. In *Hunger*, the figurative comparisons frequently express vulnerability, shame, emotional suffering and social alienation.

One example appears in the following comparison:

**(16-s):** *...but they were happy to use us like an X-rated comic passed around the school. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 45.)*

**(16-t):** *...але вони з радістю використовували нас як комікс для дорослих, який передавали по всій школі.*

The translation uses adaptation and transposition. The phrase X-rated is a cultural phenomenon and may not evoke the same associations among Ukrainian readers, so adaptation is needed. So it gets translated as комікс для дорослих which keeps the implication of taboo / inappropriate content. The comparison is shifted to a different grammatical construction so that it sounds natural in Ukrainian. These techniques allow the translation to reproduce the original image and its social and emotional connotations.

Another simile conveys a powerful sense of vulnerability:

**(17-s):** *I felt scared and alone, as if thrown naked into the middle of a crowded square. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 30.)*

**(17-t):** *Я відчувала страх і самотність, ніби мене оголеною кинули посеред переповненої площі.*

This example combines transposition, amplification and structural modulation. Amplification enhances the emotional effect of the image by making implicit elements more explicit. Transposition and structural modulation change the grammatical organisation of the sentence. The comparison makes an abstract emotional condition a concrete visual of public exposure and helplessness. The retention of this figurative scene makes it possible for the translation to reproduce the emotional intensity of the original text and participate in the metaphorical narration of the novel.

Another simile is used to convey emotional shock and disbelief:

**(18-s):** *Dam stared at me, stunned, as if a bomb had just detonated. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 33).*

**(18-t):** *Дам дивилася на мене, приголомшена, ніби щойно вибухнула бомба.*

The translation is a combination of generalisation and structural modulation. The comparison is quoted verbatim, with the effect of a sudden explosion. The simile transforms an emotional response into a vivid visual scene, allowing readers to visualise the intensity of Dam's shock. Grammatical structure is slightly changed to correspond to Ukrainian norms, but the expressiveness of the initial image is preserved.

A further example demonstrates the translation of a figurative comparison associated with social perception:

**(19-s):** *Her breasts looked like she had stuffed two choco pies down her shirt. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 38).*

**(19-t):** *Її груди виглядали так, ніби вона засунула під сорочку два шоколадних пироги.*

The translation maintains the humorous and visual character of the comparison through structural modulation. The image gives an exaggerated description which makes the readers immediately picture the character's appearance.

The final example combines metaphorical and simile-based imagery:

**(20-s):** *Kissing was another world altogether, as distant as the stars in the night sky. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 40).*

**(20-t):** *Поцілунки були для мене чимось з іншого світу, далекими, як зірки на нічному небі.*

The translation is modulation-based. The target text preserves the metaphor "another world" and the simile comparing this world to distant stars. Together they form an image of emotional

detachment and desire. By keeping both figurative elements, the translation has been able to maintain the symbolic and emotional aspects of the original narrative in this way.

The examples discussed show that the metaphors and similes in *Hunger* are reproduced by adaptation, amplification, transposition and structural modulation. These methods keep the expressive imagery of the original and make it accessible to Ukrainian readers. Thus, the figure of speech continues to carry out its symbolic and emotive functions in the translated narrative.

### **Translating Personification**

Personification is central to the metaphorical narration of *Hunger*, as it endows abstract concepts and mental states with human qualities and agency. Brendan McGuigan describes personification as a figure of speech where non-human objects are represented as being able to do human actions or have human feelings. Choi Jin-young's novel, personification helps to create a symbolic narrative space in which thoughts, death and emotions become active participants of the protagonists' experience. So, the preservation of personification in the translation is necessary for the preservation of both the emotional atmosphere and the metaphorical dimension of the text.

One example of personification appears in the description of intrusive thoughts:

**(21-s):** *Thinking too much only messes with you and brings on headaches. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 44.)*

**(21-t):** *Занадто багато думати тільки заплутує і викликає головний біль.*

Translation is achieved through transposition, reduction and structural modulation. Structural modulation rearranges the sentence according to the Ukrainian syntactic conventions, while transposition alters the grammatical structure of the source text. Reduction excludes elements that are not necessary to maintain the communicative effect of the utterance. Even with these structural changes, the personification is still there. The overthinking is personified as an active force that can act upon a person and make them physically ill. The combination of these techniques thus enables the translation to preserve both the figurative meaning and the psychological implications of the original passage.

Another significant example concerns the representation of death:

**(22-s):** *...death took him by surprise. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 14.)*

**(22-t):** *...смерть застала його зненацька.*

Here the translation employs an established equivalent. The Ukrainian expression *смерть застала його зненацька* is the idiomatic equivalent, naturally carrying the same figurative meaning as the source text. Death is still an active agent in the poem and can do human actions. The personification is thus fully preserved. In the novel's metaphorical narration, death is considered not only a biological event but a force directly interfering in human existence. The use of an established equivalent allows the translator to preserve in the translation both the stylistic naturalness of the text in the target language and the symbolic significance of the original image.

Another example of personification appears in the following passage:

**(23-s):** *An unspoken question hung in the air. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 28).*

**(23-t):** *У повітрі висіло невисловлене питання.*

The translation is mainly literal. The abstract question concept is imprinted with a physicality that allows it to occupy space and hang in the air. This picture shows tension, uncertainty and emotional discomfort between the characters. Since Ukrainian allows the same figurative construction, the personification is retained without loss of meaning or stylistic effect. Hence the translation is successful in reproducing the symbolic and emotional features of the original image.

A further example demonstrates the personification of time and night:

**(24-s):** *The night stretched on. (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 23).*

**(24-t):** *Ніч тягнулася.*

This example is reproduced with an established equivalent and literal translation. The night is personified as a being that can do an action of a human type. In the story, the picture reflects emotional exhaustion, longing and psychological tension. The Ukrainian equivalent preserves the

same figurativeness and the emotional charge, thus the symbolic role of personification is preserved in the target text.

The analysed examples show the reproduction of personification in *Hunger* by a combination of established equivalents, transposition, reduction and structural modulation. These techniques preserve the agency attributed to abstract concepts so that the emotional and symbolic functions of personification can be preserved in translation. So, thoughts and death are still active elements of the novel's metaphorical narrative, increasing its emotional intensity and philosophical depth.

### Translating Rhetorical Questions

Another important element of metaphorical narration in *Hunger* is the use of rhetorical questions. In the words of McGuigan, rhetorical questions are interrogative structures that are not used to elicit real answers, but to stimulate thought, to convey feelings or to draw attention to particular ideas. The novel is full of rhetorical questions, which articulate the protagonists' uncertainty, grief and existential anxiety. They are often associated with moments of reflection and they invite the reader to be part of the interpretive process. Therefore, in the translation, it is important to maintain their communicative and emotional functions to preserve the psychological depth of the narrative.

One of the most expressive examples appears in the following passage:

**(25-s):** *I wonder what will shock humans in a thousand years. What will they hate, fear, find humiliating? What will they criticize and mock? Who will they label crazy? Which stories will resonate with them?* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 12-13.)

**(25-t):** *Мене цікавить, що шокуватиме людей через тисячу років. Що вони будуть ненавидіти, боятися чи принижувати? Що вони будуть критикувати та висміювати? На кого будуть вішати ярлик навіженого? Які історії знайдуть своє місце в серцях людей?*

The translation consists in reduction, modulation of structure, equivalent established, modulation and particularisation. By means of structural modulation the syntactic organisation of the rhetorical sequence is adjusted to the Ukrainian norms, by means of modulation the communicative perspective is preserved. The particularisation provides the necessary specificity to achieve clarity and naturalness in the target language. The established equivalent is *вішати ярлик навіженого* to render the expression *label crazy*, which preserves the figurative meaning and evaluative connotations of the original. In its various transformations the rhetorical chain preserves its reflective and philosophical character. The repetition of questions makes the readers think about the relativity of social norms and moral values, thus strengthening the existential dimension of the metaphorical narration.

Another rhetorical question addresses the problem of existence and identity:

**(26-s):** *How can someone who never existed cease to exist?* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 27.)

**(26-t):** *Як може людина, яка ніколи не існувала, перестати існувати?*

This is an example of translation through particularisation. The technique allows the translator to make the conceptual content of the original more explicit, while preserving its philosophical nature. The rhetorical question does not want an answer; it wants a reflection on existence, memory and the line between presence and absence. These themes occupy a central place in the metaphorical narrative of the novel. The translation preserves both the interrogative form and the conceptual paradox of the original statement, and thus preserves its intellectual and emotional impact.

Another rhetorical question appears in the narrator's reflections on love and suffering:

**(27-s):** *Why do people suffer so much when they love someone?* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 21).

**(27-t):** *Чому люди так сильно страждають, коли когось люблять?*

Translation is done by the technique of literal translation. The rhetorical effect is similar in both languages and the interrogative structure is preserved with no major changes. The question is

not meant to be answered, but rather to get the reader thinking about the connection between love and suffering that is so inextricable, one of the central themes of the novel. The translation keeps the original structure, and thus the philosophical and emotional impact.

A further example demonstrates the use of rhetorical questioning to express uncertainty and existential doubt:

**(28-s):** *What if none of this means anything at all?* (Choe Jin-young, 2025, p. 29).

**(28-t):** *А що, якщо все це взагалі нічого не означає?*

The translation is a combination of literal translation and structural modulation. The rhetorical question is not really asking for information, it is rather expressing anxiety and uncertainty. The translation maintains the interrogative and the emotional tone of the original, reproducing the narrator's inner conflict and adding to the existential atmosphere of the novel. The example demonstrates how rhetorical questions are an important part of the metaphorical narration, stimulating the reader to participate in the interpretation of the text.

The examples analysed show that rhetorical questions in *Hunger* are reproduced through reduction, structural modulation, established equivalents, modulation and particularisation. These techniques enable the translator to preserve the reflective and philosophical tone of the original discourse and adapt it to Ukrainian linguistic norms. Thus, rhetorical questions remain vital tools of self-reflection and existential questioning, and they serve to complement the emotional and metaphorical depth of the novel.

## Conclusions

The present translation project was dedicated to the translation and analysis of some excerpts from Choi Jin-young's novel *Hunger*. The study successfully achieved its objectives. First, the source text was translated into Ukrainian, taking into consideration its genre and stylistic features. Secondly, the main components of metaphorical narration in the novel were identified and analysed. Thirdly, the translation techniques for reproducing these elements into Ukrainian were analysed. In translation, the challenge was to retain the emotional intensity and symbolic ambiguity of the original, as well as the narrative complexity, while keeping the language natural in the target language.

The novel analysis showed that *Hunger* is characterised by a unique metaphorical narration. It is achieved not only through individual metaphors but also through a complex interaction of allegory, symbolism, biblical allusions, imagery, metaphors, similes, personification and rhetorical questions. These stylistic devices compose a multilayered narrative structure that contributes to the representation of grief, love, loneliness, memory and existential anxiety.

The study also identified the principal elements of metaphorical narration in the novel and examined the ways in which they were reproduced in translation. The analysis revealed that symbolism constitutes the dominant component of the narrative, followed by imagery, biblical allusions, metaphors and similes, personification, allegory and rhetorical questions. The percentage distribution of the analysed stylistic devices is presented in Appendix A.

Particular attention was paid to the translation techniques employed to reproduce the metaphorical narration. The analysis was conducted according to the classification proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir. The results demonstrate that literal translation was the most frequently used technique, as it allowed the preservation of the symbolic and metaphorical structures of the original text. The frequency of the translation techniques is presented below (See Appendix B):

- Literal translation – 38.7%;
- Modulation – 17.7%;
- Transposition – 17.7%;
- Reduction – 8.1%;
- Amplification – 8.1%;
- Adaptation – 3.2%;
- Generalisation – 3.2%;
- Established equivalent – 1.6%.

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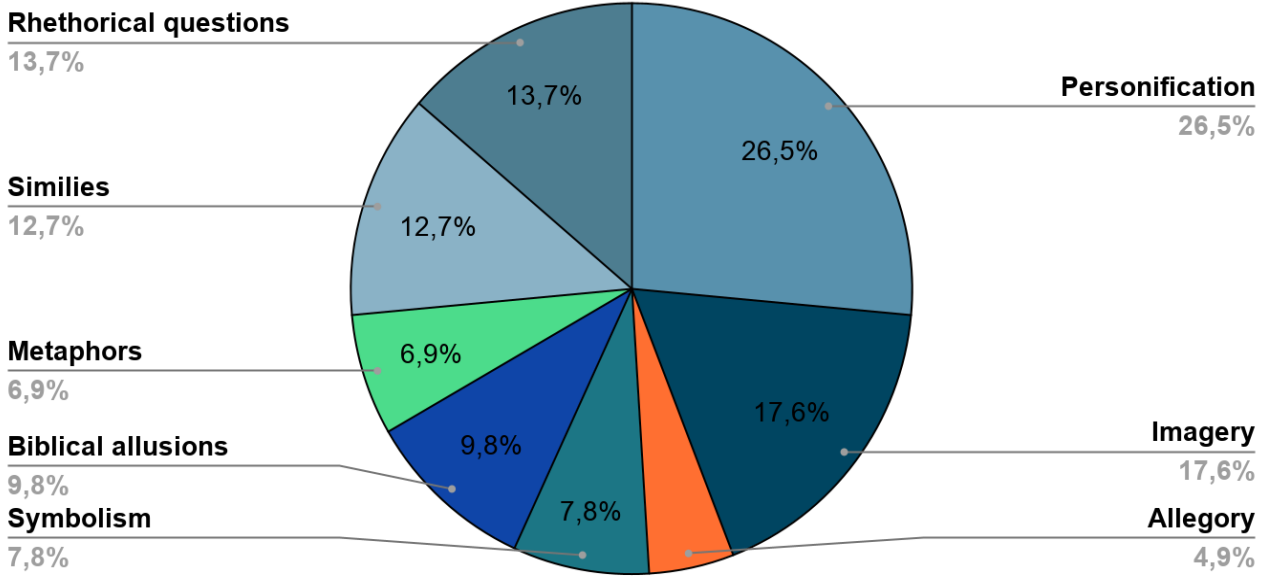
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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Literary and rhetorical devices



### Appendix B

#### TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES

