

EXERCICES DE TRADUCTION

français ----> anglais

La sueur collait sa chemise à la peau ; avec peine le facteur poussait son Solex dans le sable ; il transpirait, sa figure brillait, le buste en avant, les mains solidement posées sur le guidon, avançant légèrement la bouche ouverte, il gravissait le mamelon de sable tout en maudissant les habitants et les autorités : « Qu'est-ce qu'on attend pour asphaltier cette rue ? » pensait-il.

Des ménagères de retour du marché l'apostrophaient pour le taquiner :

- Eye ! homme, tu mouilles.

Elles le dépassèrent. Il s'arrêta ; appuya l'engin sur son ventre qui pointait outrageusement ; s'essuya la face avec son mouchoir de cotonnade. Ses yeux ne quittaient pas le dos des femmes ; prestes, légères, les Calebasses en équilibre sur la tête, elles semblaient à peine toucher le sol. Il reprit sa marche d'une allure ralentie. [...] Le facteur gara son Solex sur le pieu tordu de la porte d'entrée. À son assalamelec, deux femmes assises à même la terre, d'un ton méfiant, répondirent. Elles le connaissaient, mais par son emploi, l'homme traînait derrière lui un préjugé défavorable.

- Femmes, votre époux, Ibrahim Dieng est-il présent ? [...]

- Dans cette maison, tu n'as jamais apporté de bonnes nouvelles.

- Justement, c'est le contraire ce matin. C'est de l'argent.

- Il vient d'où ?

- De Paris... Un mandat.

- Paris ? Qui Ibrahim connaît-il à Paris ? Tu es sûr que c'est pour lui ? Bah, ne nous tue pas avec l'espoir.

- Il y a même une lettre avec. Je connais mon métier.

- Tu as entendu, Aram, lança Mety joyeuse à l'adresse de la seconde épouse qui s'était approchée. Elle était plus jeune, maigre, les joues creuses, le menton pointu.

- Un mandat de combien ? demanda encore Aram.

- 25 000 francs.

Elles épilogaient entre elles sur l'énormité de la somme.

- Yallah est venu, Mety, toi qui te lamentais, disait Aram. Mety, l'avis et la lettre dans la main, éprouvait comme une douce sensation de puissance, la fortune :

- Une lettre et un mandat ! Qui peut les lui envoyer ?

- Un toubab. À Paris, il n'y a que des toubabs ! Penses-tu, Mety, que notre homme nous dit tout ?

- Si on donnait la lettre à Bah ?

- Non, femmes, non. Mon métier n'est pas de lire ou d'écrire les lettres ; disant cela, le facteur s'éloigna.

Adapté de Sembène Ousmane, *Le Mandat*, Ed. Présence africaine

TRANSLATION EXERCISES

English ----> French

My Beginnings

My grandfather, Agbefia, was a wealthy fisherman. He owned four large dragnets and three fishing boats. He did not employ people but he was the head of a fishing company. A group of men in the village where he lived helped him to cast his nets and to draw them in, and in return they received a proportion of the catch, which their wives sold in the market. But they had no shares in the nets or boats and were free to leave my grandfather whenever they liked.

Every morning, the old man would leave his house before dawn and walk on the sea-shore. He watched the changing colours of the sea and studied the movements of the clouds in the sky. From these he foretold what the weather would be like, and decided where and when to cast his nets that day. Many of his company slept on the beach, and when he had made his decision he would wake them, and give them their instructions before he returned to his house. [...]

During my childhood, my grandfather had four wives, and between them they had twenty-five children. He had had, in all, eight wives, but the other four had proved unfaithful, or in some other way unsatisfactory, and he had sent them away.

My own grandmother, Yakuvi, was his favourite and the one who stayed with him to the end of his life. In middle age, my grandfather built a small, but strong and beautiful house, a few hundred yards away from the great family house and compound, which was by then teeming with his children and grandchildren. And he took only my grandmother Yakuvi with him, and together they spent the years of their old age in peace there. And during their last days, he married her for a second time in a Christian ceremony.

Yakuvi had eight children and my father, Nani, was her fourth son. He was the first of his family to go to school. He attended first a French primary school in Lome, and then a Roman Catholic school in Denu. He did well, and was one of the very few young men selected to attend the only Teacher Training College in the whole country. I remember a faded photograph that hung on the sitting-room wall during my childhood. It was of a group of students with my father, Nani, among them.

Adapted from Francis Selormey, *The Narrow Path*, Ed. Heinemann