

Translation Practice 26

Excerpt from *¿El infierno? Una vez escuché esa palabra; no recuerdo dónde*, by Élmer Mendoza

Ulán Bator experimenta una emoción desconocida, como si no quisiera estar allí, en su pueblo, su casa, sus tierras; como si hubiera cometido un error al regresar. **¿Qué será de su primo Yokna Faro?** Ya lo buscará. No tiene problemas de dinero pero en cuanto pueda le pedirá **lo que acordaron por la renta de sus tierras. Impasible** come una barra proteica y bebe el resto de una bebida energética. No hay **alumbrado público** o no sirve. La luz de su celular no le gusta. **Divisa** la vivienda de su primo que en la oscuridad se **vislumbra** como la última vez: grande e iluminada **lo necesario. Los alambres**, tres líneas, son viejos; el cerco seguramente funcionó para impedir el paso de animales.

¿Qué hacer?, ¿dormir en un hotel, ir con su primo **a quien le encargó la casa** o cortar los alambres? Como hay distancia suficiente entre los postes para que entre la camioneta, opta por la tercera. De una pequeña caja de herramientas saca unas **pinzas que sirven para el caso. Batalla** en algo que generalmente no le costaba hacer. **Se esfuerza** y lo consigue. Con la luz del vehículo nota que está bastante deteriorada la pintura. El **portal** de madera blanca se ve ennegrecido y roto. **Los años se le notan a cualquiera**. Sólo lleva una mochila de equipaje, la toma del asiento del copiloto y baja. Sube dos escalones que se quejan bajo sus botas y está en el portal. Algunas **enredaderas** lo han invadido. Huele a vegetación y **desamparo**.

De una pequeña bolsa de cuero donde guarda tres llaves, toma la más grande que es la de la vieja puerta de madera. Abre, empuja con cuidado. Está pegada y **rechina**. Usa su lámpara de mano y encuentra que la sala está **atascada** de telarañas. Son blancas y oscuras. Algunas han invadido el piso. Ilumina el resto y toda la estancia se halla igual. Sonríe. También tengo ganas de verte, amigo. El aroma a encerrado y añejo es intenso. Con cautela camina por el pasillo que conduce a su habitación **que es la que da a la calle**. Con otra llave que extrae de la misma bolsita, la abre, ilumina y está libre de telarañas. Cierra. Es cuando descubre a un hombre sentado en su mecedora de cuero. Gulp. Es casi transparente pero reconoce a su **progenitor**. Siente un **profundo escalofrío**. Se paraliza. **¿Sale o se queda?** No sabe. Su corazón se **acelera**. Su padre, ¿dirá algo?, ¿se moverá? Cada segundo le parece más sólido sobre la silla. **Se toma las manos** para no temblar y respira hondo.

(431 words)

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NOTE: The main difficulties in this text are:

- Some idiomatic vocabulary. In comparison with other translations, nouns, verbs, and adjectives this time are not terribly difficult to translate (note, however, some tricky ones in bold like *imposible*, *añejo*, *pinzas*, *desamparo*, *enredaderas*). Still, there are some idiomatic expressions or particular verbal constructions and collocations that are trickier (e.g. *Los años se le notan a cualquiera*; *¿qué será de...?*; *¿sale o se queda?* is in the reverse order in English: *should he stay or should he go?* (there is a song with that title in fact).

- The syntax is generally easy to translate because it's not too convoluted or twisted. Only a few structures had to be re-structured/re-phrased in English (e.g. *el cerco seguramente funcionó...*).

Text: Excerpt from *¿El infierno? Una vez escuché esa palabra; no recuerdo dónde*, by Élmer Mendoza

Ulán Bator is feeling/experiencing an unknown/unfamiliar emotion, as if/though he didn't want to be there, in his (home) town, his house, his lands; as though he had made a mistake (by) coming back/as if coming back had been a mistake. How would his cousin Yokna Faro be doing? / How may life have turned out for his cousin Yokna Faro? How will his cousin be? What might have become of his cousin Yorka Faro? He'll look for him / he'll go find him at some point/sometime/eventually/later // The time to find him will come. He has no money issues, but as soon as he can he'll ask him for the money they agreed (up)on for renting his lands / the agreed amount for renting his lands. Unemotional/Expressionless/Obliviously/Impassively, he eats a protein bar and drinks what is left of/the last sips of // drinks up an energy/power drink There is no street lighting or it doesn't work / or it is of no use. He doesn't like the light of/on his phone. He spots/squints/sights/catches a glimpse of/catches sight of his cousin's house which, in the darkness/amidst the dark, can be made out / appears as (the) last time: big and lit just enough/with just enough light. The wire, three rows of it, is old; the fence probably kept the animals from crossing/entering.

What now?/What could he do/What should he do? Sleep at a hotel, go to his cousin, whom he had left in charge of the house, or cut (off) the wire? The distance between the posts/poles/stakes is large enough for the van/pick-up (to come through), so he goes for the third option // As there is enough space between the posts/poles/stakes for the van/pick-up (to come through), he goes for the third option. Out of a small toolbox he pulls/produces/takes a pair of pliers that will/should do the job/trick. He struggles with something that wouldn't normally cause him problems/which he would normally do easily/that he had generally had no trouble doing before. He tries harder/battles and makes it/succeeds. The (head)light(s) of the vehicle allows him to see / With/thanks to the (head)light(s) of the vehicle he realises that the paint is quite/badly worn out. The (once) white wooden doorframe/gate/entrance/porch looks blackened/darkened and torn. Age always shows through/Time takes its toll on all of us/Years go by for everyone/Old age always shows/Nobody stands the test of time. His only luggage is a backpack/he is only carrying a backpack (as luggage). He grabs/seizes it from the passenger(s) seat and gets out. He goes/walks up two steps that complain/cry/creak under his boots and he's at the door. Ivy/Creepers/Climbing plants has taken over the place. It smells of vegetation/green/foilage and neglect/helplessness/loneliness.

From a small leather bag, he pulls out the largest of three keys, the one for the old wooden door. He opens and pushes gently. It's stuck and creaks/grinds/screeches. He uses his (handheld) lamp and finds/only to find the room riddled with cobwebs/spider webs. They're white and dark. Some have invaded the floor. He lights/shines the light on the rest of the room and it all looks the same.

Comentado [AB1]: You may have written *wouldn't* but the construction *as if/though* is always followed by hypothetical past simple or past perfect, but **never** *would*.

Comentado [AB2]: You may have written *village*, but that word is sort of a false friend, as a *village* is extremely small. The accurate translation for pueblo would be *town*.

Comentado [AB3]: It happened to several candidates that they read the original *come* as *como* and so translated *come una barra proteica* as *hard as a protein bar*.... Please, be careful and make sure you read the original accurately. Thank you.

Comentado [AB4]: *Lorry* or *truck* is not as accurate for *camioneta*.

Comentado [AB5]: Several candidates wrote *space enough*. Careful with word order: adjective + *enough* (*large enough*), *enough* + noun (*enough space*).

Comentado [AB6]: Very few candidates could remember this term. There were several good attempts, although not entirely accurate, I'm afraid:

- *Tweezers* (careful with spelling): used for picking up very small things or for pulling out hairs.
- *Tongs*: used for cooking;
- *Shears*: this could be the closest, although it's generally employed for cutting bushes and hedges
- *Some sort of scissors*

If you don't know a term, you must struggle to provide, at least, a near-synonym. **But never leave it blank**.

Comentado [AB7]: Several candidates wrote *manages*, but this verb requires an object, e.g. *and manages to do it*.

Comentado [AB8]: Many candidates wrote *painting*, but I'm afraid that word has a completely different meaning: "a picture that has been painted". Careful with those silly mistakes, which I'm sure all of you know.

Comentado [AB9]: Several candidates couldn't remember this word and used *front seat* instead, but I'm afraid that would also include the driver's. Some other candidates found their way out by writing: *the seat next to him*. That would be more accurate.

Comentado [AB10]: Many candidates wrote *gets off*, but remember:
Get in / out (of) a car, van, lorry, truck, taxi, etc.
Get on / off a bus / train.

Comentado [AB11]: Very few candidates knew the term for "enredadera" in English.

Comentado [AB12]: Several candidates wrote *smell to*. Careful! The preposition following *smell* is always *of* (or *like*).

Comentado [AB13]: Several candidates wrote *cramped* - I guess they meant *crammed*, which could be an option. *Cramp* is a very unpleasant pain that you feel when your muscles contract. You could use other alternatives like *packed* or *clogged*, for example. *Full* would lose the nuances of meaning in the original.

Comentado [AB14]: Several candidates wrote *enlighten*. Although the translation into Spanish is also *iluminar*, the meaning is completely different. To enlighten somebody means "to give somebody information so that they understand something better"

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He smiles. (Me too), I'm also looking forward to seeing you/I can't wait to see you either, (my friend). It smells intensely of closed and old/The smell is musty, aged, and intense/The smell of enclosure and old age is intense. Cautiously he makes his way down/walks through the corridor leading to his room, the one facing out on/overlooking/looking onto the street. With another key from the same small bag, he opens the door, lights the way/shines a light, and the place is free/devoid of cobwebs / spider webs. He closes (behind him). That's when/It is at this moment that he discovers a man sitting on his leather rocking chair. Gulp. Though he looks almost transparent, he recognises his parent. He feels a strong/profound shiver/he feels a deep chill. He freezes. Should he stay or should he go? He doesn't know. His heart speeds up/races/is racing. His father, will he say something/anything (at all)? Will he move? With each passing second / Every second he/his figure looks more stiff/solid on the chair. He clutches his (own) hands/clasps his hands together to avoid trembling/shaking/shivering and takes a deep breath.

Comentado [AB15]: Some candidates opted for *mate* or *buddy*, but they wouldn't be appropriate because of register and style.

Comentado [AB16]: Many candidates wrote *sat*, but this would be a case of transposition.

Comentado [AB17]: Very few candidates got this term right.

Comentado [AB18]: Some candidates wrote *progenitor*, which indeed exists in English, but with a completely different meaning: it is a synonym of *ancestor* or refers to the person who starts an idea or a development. Other candidates opted for *father*, but the original doesn't say *padre*. The fact that it opts for a near-synonym has its reason, which must be kept in the translation.

Comentado [AB19]: This is a set phrase in English, which shouldn't be altered.

Comentado [AB20]: Some candidates wrote: *will he make a move?* But I'm afraid that expression has a completely different meaning.

- 1) To try to start a sexual relationship with sb
- 2) To try to pass somebody who is in front of you in a race.