

Olivia Koh  
*For Huntz*

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**CREATIVE**  
VICTORIA



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5. *For Huntz*

Olivia Koh  
*For Huntz*  
 15.02.17—11.03.17

I can't stand to see them shimmering in  
 the impossible music of  
     the Star Spangled Banner. No  
 One accepts this system better than  
 poets. Their hurts healed  
     for a few dollars.

Hunt

The right animals. I can't. The poetry  
 Of the absurd comes through the San  
 Francisco television. Directly  
     connected with moon-rockets.  
 If this is dictation, it is driving  
 Me wild.

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For Huntz by Jack Spicer in *Book of Magazine  
 Verse, My Vocabulary Did This to Me: The Col-  
 lected Poems of Jack Spicer*, Wesleyan Universi-  
 ty Press 2008

## 5. Cho Huntz

Tôi không thể đứng nhìn họ lung linh trong âm nhạc. Không thể của cái cờ được làm bằng nhiều ngôi sao. Không. Một người nhận thấy hệ thống tốt hơn nhà thơ, cái dau của họ được chữa lành bằng vài đồng.

Sẵn sẵn,

các loài động vật, tôi không thể.

Thỏ ca, trong số vô lý đến qua truyền hình San Francisco, kết nối trực tiếp với mặt trăng tên lửa.

Nếu đây là lệnh bắt buộc, thì mình trở thành hoang dại.

**Run-through a poem by Jack Spicer: 5. For Huntz  
in Ten Poems for Downbeat in Book of Magazine Verse  
(1965)**

**Conversation with Olivia Koh and Teresa Vu (2016)**

– OK: So this is the original poem.

TV: So *Tôi không thể* is like; ‘I cannot’. I’m pretty sure this is exactly the same. *of them shimmering...* this means: *the impossible music* but it’s just the way its put; the music comes first, it’s just a grammatical thing.

OK: So the music comes first, it’s flipped.

TV: Yeah so; ‘music cannot’. There’s not really a word for *impossible*, its more like ‘cannot’... *làm bằng nhiều...* it means like ‘a banner with lots of stars’, ‘lots of speckled stars’, that’s the closest thing I got to *Star Spangled Banner*.

OK: Ok it seems to be, these capitals seem to be an American thing.

TV: Yeah would you say that as a direct translation? Or would you say the ‘American Banner’?

OK: So its not the actual inscription?

TV: *No-one can accept* – this is word for word. We’ve translated these lines as *Không: No. Then: One accepts this system better than poets*. Or is it supposed to be ‘No-One’? I’m not sure. They’re different words.

OK: They're on different lines.

TV: They're on different lines but the thing is in English you can say 'No one', but in Vietnamese if you go 'No one' you would change the 'No' to something else; the word 'No' would be completely different.

It could make sense, but I think if you got rid of the full stop it kind of doesn't. You could understand it but it isn't the word you'd use in Vietnamese; you'd add something else in there. Which translation do you want?

OK: Well I think he would say 'No'... cos otherwise he would've just said 'No one', with these two lines he's playing.

TV: Well that playing doesn't come through here, it doesn't make sense.

Ok this line: 'The hurt of people can be healed with a few dollars' – its basically the same, but we changed it from your google translate. *Săn bắn* means 'to hunt'... *animals*...

OK: Which word's animals?

TV: I think the whole thing, *tôi không thể* means: 'I can't'. Oh, this is the hard bit... we did this a while ago and I'm trying to remember... because half of these words aren't in my vocabulary. I wouldn't use them on a day-to-day basis. This was a really big learning thing for me because I was like, woah, is that how you say it cos that's not how I would frame it, I'm basically, Vietnamese is my second language.

OK: You're riffing or something.

TV: Yeah, it's a bit broken, what I say might not

necessarily... *The poetry of the absurd ... trong số vô lý* means 'really strange', or 'a bit strange'... 'comes through the channel of the San Francisco.' Or 'the television'.

OK: So the 'channel' is a word that's related to the T.V.?

TV: I would say personally - my mum says it said television but I think I would say - this translates more as 'through the channel of the San Francisco' but its implied that you would only use that word for a T.V.; its 'broadcasted through the San Francisco television'. You could leave it in the original, that works as well.

OK: Just write those words in English?

TV: Yeah it depends on how... that's what I mean if you want a more 'native' translation some of the words will change because that makes more sense or is more accurate than saying; 'San Francisco T.V.' Or you could say 'San Francisco's television' but also it depends on what you want that to mean.

OK: Yeah I hadn't really thought about it... I know he was from there I don't know if that is, that location is important. I think that's because he was talking about the moon landing and that kind of thing being televised,

TV: Yeah, '*Directly connected with moon rockets*'

OK: I think that's why he's referencing where he is in the world sort of like a transmission.

TV: Ok, I think you can keep it like this. You can change it to-

OK: I don't think it needs to be changed. You've implied that it's a place.

TV: This is a direct translation: 'the moon' and 'rockets'.

OK: Two words. But they're not hyphenated.

TV: Yeah, k, I think this part is: *if this is what we've been forced to do, or what we've been told, then its making me like a wild person.*

OK: mmm...

TV: *driving me wild* that's a phrase, so-

OK: An American-English thing-

TV: Yeah so *its making me like a wild person* but there's no little thing that makes, like, *driving me wild*; d'you think that's, what does that mean to you or what do you want the meaning to be?

OK: I think its related to this talk of animals and-

TV: Yep so you want to keep the wilderness like, ok, then I think keep it.

OK: *making me like a person.*

TV: *making me a person in the wild* but there's no phrase that – because you said *driving me wild* – it doesn't make sense because you're talking about driving a car in the translation...



OK: Yeah...

TV: So it doesn't make sense.

OK: But I guess that's where it comes from, some sort of 'driving'.

TV: I think it's like; 'a drive', its not a direct link to driving a vehicle.

OK: No? Oh ok I thought there was a saying that it came from, you know?

TV: I don't know. I thought it was like 'driving my emotions'.

OK: I have a drive to do this-

TV: I took it to be this drive more than the other drive. But it all depends on what you want, the meaning...

OK: Well I'm just interested in what, in what's possible and what the Vietnamese version makes.

TV: But the thing is, this is only one person's translation, it would be really interesting to see if you got someone else to translate it and see if they got the same... I don't really know what your project is. I'm still unclear.

OK: Yeah, well, me too... I guess, I was going to ask you about dictation because the project is about... what is possible through...

TV: My computer's breaking, I think its frozen. It's logged in but the DVD... Just take it out and see what happens... Yeah so, the dictation thing was in your original poem but I don't think there's a word for that, you have to describe it

with a series of words, like sometimes in languages there's just no word that translates but you can describe it.

OK: Yeah, 'this is an action someone's doing'...

TV: from what I know I can't, we can't, but if you've got someone that's more of an academic Vietnamese person they'll have a wider vocabulary. So that's a thing.

OK: Yes, I guess if the project is about anything at the moment it's about the relationship to this poem to the academic and people that... everyone's gonna insert their knowledge and subjectivity into a translation so-

TV: So is it about the translation or about the poem?

OK: It's... the act of translating this particular poem.

TV: Ok.

OK: Because of the kind of imagery it has, like 'stars' and 'moons'...

TV: I think it still comes through. Like, for some of it I can... it comes through for me. Some of it I'm not so sure because it's new vocabulary it doesn't immediately spark anything, because I'm trying to focus more on translating it. But I would probably say this part and this part is good... and some of this... but *systems* and stuff, they're new words for me, and animals mum used a more, like I would say 'thú vât'. But it's just another word for it, I think there's a more common or a simpler way of saying it.

OK: Like beasts?

TV: I don't really know I've never come across that. 'Vật' I think means animal and that might be the right animal. But thú vật, that's what I'd call them.

OK: And that's here?

TV: *tôi không thể* - that means 'cannot', *dông vật* is like animal. But it could be to do with how the sentence is.

OK: I'm still figuring out how I can even put this in a space so that its communicated, but that's interesting that's how it comes through and those images, like the objects rather than... like, what you lose in this is kind of the vernacular but what you get is an image of somebody in the wild or somebody crazy or somebody a bit like an animal.

TV: mmm, like more primitive or something...

OK: Yeah, and so I'm interested in how, you know, because he's American... that idea of imperialism - its pretty broad – but yeah how these images of... if there's ambiguity within a solid image that comes across when you try and put it into another language... but its hard with art, its like, is this coming across? You don't know.

TV: So what do you want to have in your show, in your exhibition?



I acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations, the Traditional Custodians and continuing custodians of the land and waters on which this work is made and exhibited, whose sovereignty was never ceded. I pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

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