



*Like
Water*

EDITED BY
HEDINA TAHIROVIĆ SIJERČIĆ

Like Water

Sar o Paj

(a collection of poems by Romani women)

Editor

Hedina Tahiroviæ Sijerèiæ

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Hedina Tahiroviæ Sijerèiæ, Sarah Barbieux,
Julia Lovell, Gina Csanyi-Robah, Yvonne Slee,
Thais Barbieux, Rasa Lee Sutar, Lynn Hutchinson
and Ronald Lee

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Cover image: *Rosa* by Lynn Hutchinson, detail from mural *Greeting to Taniperla*, Toronto, 2000. Rosa was a Romni who travelled with her kumpaniya from Mexico to Canada in the early 20th century. Graphic assistance: Eric Mills

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The Romani translations of the poems by Julia Lovell, Gina Csanyi-Robah, Yvonne Slee and Rasa Lee Sutar’s “Hear the Calm,” “Fate’s Cradle” and “Forgotten” were done by Hedina Tahiroviæ Sijerèiæ



Cristina Scabbia

(Rasa L.S.)

Women grey as they age,
Romani women are no different.

Dzuvljange bala parnjardiven kana phujradiven,
naj si avrechande e Rromnjendje.

Hedina Tahiroviæ Sijerèiæ

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Editor's Note

The idea for this book first came to me in October, 2008, during my participation in the seventh Romani Congress in Zagreb, Croatia. Subsequently, I began to think about asking our women to support my idea to write the first Romani women's anthology of poetry.

At first I faced a number of disappointments: I understand that the bitterness of many of my sisters' lives made them very critical of this project and of publishing their work without financial remuneration. But with this anthology my idea was to show the world - our Romani world and the whole world - our experiences, our dreams, our bitterness, and our lives. How can the world know about us if we remain quiet and say nothing?

Within time some of my sisters emailed me and expressed their willingness to work together on my idea, and we – eight women – gathered our poems. It is wonderful to find eight women together, writing a book like this. Eight women's voices to speak their souls, their bitterness, their joy, and deeply personal view of their lives.

So often we women are excluded from our Romani communities, and under our male leaders it is not easy to speak our minds, express our ideas and make art. It was important to me to work together with our men, but most crucial was that men should be able to accept our work as equals. And I found a man: our kako Ronald Lee from Canada, to help us translate some of our poems into Romani.

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There is no easy way to get acknowledgment or respect in our community, but our way, my sisters, is easier than for our women in the past. For singing and writing her poems our first Romani poet, Romani sister Bronislawa Wajs known as Papsza (Doll) was punished by our Romani brothers as “unclean” and excluded from the Romani community because of her writing. We know what difficult lives Romani women have.

We know how much strength our women need in order to write, along with our work in our families and communities. And here we are. The strength of our women prevails and lives no matter what efforts are made to silence us. We write in the spirit of Papsza.

With our honour to Papsza,

Hedina Tahiroviæ Sijerèiæ

Bronislawa Wajs Papusza (1910-1987)

Bronislawa Wajs Papusza is one of the most famous Romani poets ever known. She grew up with her nomadic family in Poland. She was literate, unusual for Polska Roma of that time - she learnt by trading a chicken for a lesson with local villagers. This was frowned upon, and whenever she was found reading, she was beaten and the book destroyed. Papusza was married in a traditional ceremony at 15 to a much older and revered harpist named Dionizy Wajs. She was very unhappy with the marriage and took to singing as an outlet for her frustrations, with her husband often accompanying her on harp. Soon after learning to sing she began to compose her own ballads and songs based on traditional Romani storytelling and songwriting.

In 1949 she was heard by the Polish poet Jerzy Ficowski who instantly recognized her talent. Ficowski became an advisor on “The Gypsy Question”, often using Papusza’s poems to back him up. This helped lead to the forced settlement of Roma all over Poland in 1950 known variously as ‘Action C’, or “The Great Halt”. Similar legislation began to spring up in neighboring countries soon after such as Czechoslovakia (1958), Bulgaria (1958), and Romania (1962). Papusza herself settled in the western Polish city of Gorzów Wielkopolski, spending most of the rest of her life in a house on Kosynierów Gdyńskich street which today bears a plaque dedicated to her.

The Roma community soon began to regard Papusza as a traitor, threatening her and calling her names. Papusza maintained that Ficowski had exploited her work and had taken it out of context. Her appeals fell on deaf ears and the

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Baro Shero (Head Man, an elder in the Roma community) declared her “unclean”. She was banished from the Roma world, and even Ficowski broke contact with her. Afterwards, she spent 8 months in a mental hospital and then the next 34 years of her life alone and isolated before her death in 1987.

There is a myth that Papusza was punished for being a poet, because, as the myth says, a Romani woman is not permitted to be a poet. However, composing poems is a frequent pastime of Romani men and women.

The time of the wandering Gypsies
Has long passed.
But I see them,
They are bright,
Strong and clear like water.
You can hear it
Wandering when it wishes to speak.
But poor thing, it has no speech
Apart from silver splashing and sighing.
Only the horse, grazing the grass,
Listens and understands that sighing.
But the water does not look behind.
It flees, runs away further,
Where the eyes will not see her,
The water that wanders.

(Qtd. in Ficowski 116)

Her poems are being set to music, and plays are being written and performed about her life. As Adam Bartosz, the director of the Tarnów Ethnographic Museum in Poland, states, “Papusza is as important to the Roma as [Jan] Kochanowski was to the Poles and Shakespeare to Europe.”

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Hedina Tahiroviæ Sijerèiæ



Writer, journalist and teacher **Hedina Tahirovia Sijerëia** was born and educated in Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where she was the first Romani television and radio journalist and producer. Her poems *CV* and excerpt from *Hear, Feel*, were published in the poetry anthology *European Constitution in Verse*, Brussels, Belgium, 2009. She is author of *Romani Folk Tales*, and of children's books *An Unusual Family*, *How God Made the Roma*, and *Romani Prince Penga*, all published by Magoria Books in 2009. Also in 2009, her Romani-Bosnian and Bosnian-Romani dictionaries were published by Bosnian Word Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her poetry book *Dukh/Pain* (2008) was published in Canada by Magoria Books. Her translations include *Hasanaginica; White World, Colourful World; Romske bajke i price - Romani paramicha; Little Prince* in Romani (Bosnian Word, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008); *Gova si amaro dzuvdipe na dzanenaver/How we live* (Medica Zenica, Infoteka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2001); and *Illmihal* in Romani (El-Kalem, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995). In 1999 she was Editor and a contributing author of the book *Kanadake Romane Mirikle/ Canadian Romani Pearls*, RCAC Toronto, Canada. Between 1991 and 1992 Hedina was Editor-in-Chief of the television Program "Malavipe" in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1991 she translated the feature film *Ratvali Bijav/Blood Wedding* from Romani to Serbo-Croatian for TV-Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1989 she was Editor-in-Chief of two documentary films *Adjive Romen* and *Karankoci-Koci* for TV-Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and from 1986 to 1992 she was Editor-in-Chief of the radio program *Lachodzive, Romalen/ Good morning, Roma*, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CVI

I was born in Russia.
I went to school in Poland.
I worked as an apprentice in Romania.
I married in Serbia.
I got a job in Bosnia.

The first child I got in Croatia.
The second child in France, the third
in Spain, the fourth in Germany,
The fifth in Belgium.

I returned to Serbia.
I got the sixth child in Serbia.
I had to escape to Italy,
after the birth of my seventh child.
I got twins.

I endured the biggest tragedy:
My child was found dead and they
said he drowned in the sea.
They drove me away, they burned my
roof, and they wanted to take my
fingerprints.
And from my children too.

I am scared.
They did it once with the fingerprints
not so long ago. I am scared.
I escaped to Holland.
I got the tenth child.
I got the eleventh child in Sweden.
I am forty.

I speak Romani (my mother tongue),
Russian, Slovakian, Romanian,
Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, Italian,
French, Spanish, German, Dutch and a
little bit of English.

What my family needs is literacy
and a fair chance for good education.
We speak mixed European languages.
Then, we speak European language.

My house then is "Europe in small".
I am getting old.

If my house is "Europe in small"
then Europe is "Europe in big".
The first difference between us:
Europe in small is illiterate
Europe in big is literate.

The second difference between us:
Europe in small doesn't even have
money for its mere existence
but she keeps a communal spirit.
Europe in big has more than enough
money for its existence but.....
The third difference.....

I told you I am getting old. I switched
my theme.
I have to follow my CV.

I got the sixth grandchild.
I proposed "Europe in small"
to move to Canada.
I found out there we could go to
school and study English,
regardless of how old we are.
I promised my children
and grandchildren
a future.

Stay with God!

CVI

Me bijandilem ande Rusija.
Me djelem ande skola ande Poska.
Me cherdem buchi sar sikadi ande
Romania.
Me djelem Rromehte ande Serbija.
Me cherdem buchi ande Bosna.

Angluno chavo bijandem ande
Kroacija.
Dujto chavo ande Francuska, trinto
ande Spanija, shtarto ande Germanija,
Thaj pandzto ande Belgija.

Me boldinajvdem ande Serbija.
Me bijandem shovto chavo ande
Serbija.
Musaj te nashavav ande Italija,
thaj kote bijandem mrno eftato chavo.
Me bijandem kote dujorre chave
jekhethane.

Seha-man bari tragedija:
Mo chavo mula thaj von phende sar
vov tasavda ande pajeste.
Von trade amen, von phabarde amen,
thaj von mangan amare najendar
vurma.
Thaj e chavorendar.
Me sem daravni. Von cherde gova
jekhvaratar ando nakhlo vaktio.
Daravni sem.

Me peklem nashipe ande Holandija.
Me bijandem deshto chavo.
Me bijandem deshojekhtato chavo
ande Shvedska.
Me sem saranda bersh phuri.
Me vacharav Rromani (mrni dejaki
chib), Rusicki, Slovaciski, Rumunski,
Serbski,

Bosnaki, Hrvatski, Talijanski,
Francuski, Spanski, Germanski,
Holandski thaj cira Engleski.

Mrni familija mangel thaj trubuj
shajipe pala lachi edukacija.
Amen phenas pe hamisardino
Evropsko chib.
Odolese, amen das vorba pe Evropsko
chib.
Mo cher si jekh „Evropa ande
ciknipeste“.
Phurilem.

Ako si mrno cher „Evropa ande
ciknipeste“ athoska si Evropa „
Evropa ande baripeste“.
Angluno uladipe mashkare amende:
Evropa ande ciknipeste si bilivarni

Evropa ande baripeste si livarni.
Dujto uladipe mashkare amende:
Evropa ande ciknipeste naj-la love
pala dzuvdipe, numaj von san
jekhethane.
Evropa ande baripeste hi-la but love
pala dzuvdipe numaj...
Trito uladipe...

Phendem kaj phurilem. Me paruvdem
mrni vorba.
E vorbasa musaj te dzav ando mrno
trajo.

Astardem shovto chavoresko chavo.
Cherdem jekh turvinjipe e „Evropese
ande ciknipeste“ te dzas ande Kanada.
Kote si shajipe pala amen pala skola
thaj shaj te sikavas Englecki chib,
amen phure tu.
Me dijem alav e chavorende pala
avindipe.

Achen Devleha!

Hear, Feel

Do you hear the ripple of a brook,
Do you hear gentle the waterfall
flowing from stone to stone,
From a smaller rock to the smallest
rock,
Splashes of water in small drops and
splashes of
Drops in dew.
Do you hear it? Do you feel it?

Do you hear the song of the birds,
Do you understand what the song is
about?
Do you hear the speech of the forest,
the whisper of the branches and
The laughter of the leaves.
Do you hear it? Do you feel it?

Do you hear the neigh of the horse, the
barking of the dog,
Do you hear the steps on the road,
The speech of people and the laugh of
children,
Do you hear it? Do you feel it?

If you hear it, if you feel it: they didn't
kill the man within you.

Ashun, Hachar

Ashunes li lenaki vorba,
Ashunes li kovlo pajesko peravipe e
barestar pe bareste,
E barorestar pe baroreste,
E pajesko chhordaripe ande
kavchinora thaj
Kavchinora ande drosin.
Ashunes li? Hachares li?

Ashunes li e chiriklengi djili,
Hachares tu lengo gindo.
Ashunes tu e vosheski vorba, e
krangici vorbica thaj
E patrinango hasape.
Ashunes li? Hachares li?

Ashunes li e grastehko hrmetipe, e
dzukhelehko bashipe,
Ashunes li e porade pe dromeste,
E manushengi vorba thaj chhavorengo
hasape.
Ashunes li? Hachares li?

Ako ashunes, ako hachares: von na
praxosarde chiro manushipe.

CVII

I was born in Germany.
We use to live in Holland.
We escaped to Belgium.

I married.

I got a job: I gathered old iron on the streets.

I got the first child.

I gathered old iron.

I got the second child.

I still gathered old iron on the streets.

I got the third child.

They forbade me to gather iron.

I ask for help. They didn't help me.

I don't have my papers.

I still gathered old iron on the streets,
what else could I do.

They swore my "Gipsy mother" and
they spat at my honor.

I tried to protect myself.

They imprisoned me.

But I don't have identity papers?!

My wife started to work: she begged at
the doors.

I got the fourth child.

She still begged at the doors.

They swore her "Gipsy mother" and
they spat at her honor.

She tried to escape.

They imprisoned her.

But she doesn't have identity papers?!

I ask for job: they didn't give me a job.

I don't have papers!

I don't have children without identity
papers.

I don't have job without papers.

I don't have bread without papers.

I have to go far away.

But where?

We don't have identity papers.

Where without papers?

CVII

Bijandilem ande Germanija.
Dzivas ande Holandija.
Nashas ande Belgija.

Ansarisardem.

Cherdem buchi: chidem phuro
sastruno pe
dromende.
Bijanda mo angluno chavo.
Me chidem phuro sastruno.
Bijanda mo dujto chavo.
Durder chidem phuro sastruno pe
dromende.
Bijanda mo trinto chavo.
Rodem azhutipe. Na dije mandje.
Naj man papira (lila)!

Thaj durder chidem phuro sastruno pe
dromende,
so aver te cherav.
Von akushle mni „Rromani dej“ thaj
chungarde pe
mrne mujeste.
Me akushlem len.
Von phande man ande phandipeste.
A naj-man papira (lila)?!

Mi Rromni cherdarisarda: dzeli kataro
udar dziko
aver udar thaj mangla.
Bijanda mo shtarto chavo.
Mrni Rromni durder mangla kataro
udar dziko aver udar.
Von akushle laki „Rromani dej“ thaj
chungarde pe
lako mujeste.
Voj mangla te nakhel.
Von phande las ande phandipeste.
A naj-la papira (lila)?!

Rodem buchi: na dije mandje khanchi.
Naj-man papira (lila)!

Naj-man chavore bizo papiri.
Naj-man buchi bizo papiri.
Naj-man mahno bizo papiri.

Mora te dzav durder.
Kaj?
Naj-amen papiri!
Kaj bizo papiri!

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If yo call it life
Then, I live.
If you call it luck
Then I'm lucky.
If you call it peace
Then I'm tranquil.

You trample on our dignity,
You underrate our language,
You torment our people.

If you say it was us with God given,
God gave us nothing.

XXX

Ako tumen den vorba gova si
dzuvdipe
Me dziviv.
Ako tumen den vorba gova si bax
Me sem baxtali.
Ako tumen den vorba gova si
shukaripe (miro)
Me sem shukarimaha.

Von ushtaven (chalaven prnenca thaj
phiraven prdal pe) amaro barikanipe,
Cikniven amari chib,
Traden amaro narodo.

Ako tumen den vorba gova si e
Devleha dino,
O Devel na dija amen khanchi.

Logic

If one Rom is a thief,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a criminal,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a drunkard,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a beggar,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a lazybones
Roma are not.

If one Englishman is a thief,
Englishmen are not.

If one Englishman is a criminal,
Englishmen are not.

If one Englishman is a drunkard,
Englishmen are not.

If one Englishman is a beggar,
Englishmen are not.

If one Englishman is a lazybones,
Englishmen are not.

If one German is a thief,
Germans are not.

If one German is a criminal,
Germans are not.
If one German is a drunkard,
Germans are not.

If one German is a beggar,
Germans are not.

If one German is a lazybones,
Germans are not.

If one Italian is a thief,
Italians are not.

If one Italian is a criminal,
Italians are not.

If one Italian is a drunkard,
Italians are not.

If one Italian is a beggar,
Italians are not.

If one Italian is a lazybones,
Italians are not.

If one Hungarian is a thief,
Hungarians are not.

If one Hungarian is a criminal,
Hungarians are not.

If one Hungarian is a drunkard,
Hungarians are not.

If one Hungarian is a beggar,
Hungarians are not.

If one Hungarian is a lazybones,
Hungarians are not.
If one Rumanian is a thief,
Rumanians are not.

If one Rumunian is a criminal,
Rumunians are not.

If one Rumanian is a drunkard,
Rumanians are not.

If one Rumanian is a beggar,
Rumanians are not.

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If one Rumanian is a lazybones,
Rumanians are not.

If one Frenchman is a thief,
Frenchmen are not.

If one Frenchman is a criminal,
Frenchmen are not.

If one Frenchman is a drunkard,
Frenchmen are not.

If one Frenchman is a beggar,
Frenchmen are not.

If one Franchman is a lazybones,
Franchmen are not.

If one Czech is a thief,
Chechs are not.

If one Czech is a criminal,
Czechs are not.

If one Czech is a drunkard,
Czechs are not.

If one Czech is a beggar,
Czechs are not.

If one Czech is a lazybones,
Czechs are not.

If one American is a thief,
Americans are not.

If one American is a criminal,
Americans are not.

If one American is a drunkard,
Americans are not.

If one American is a beggar,
Americans are not.

If one American is a lazybones,
Americans are not.

.....

.....

If one Rom is a thief,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a criminal,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a drunkard,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a beggar,
Roma are not.

If one Rom is a lazybones,
Roma are not.

*You can't seal (shut out) a whole
nation because of one person.*

Logika

Ako hi jekh Rom chor,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom kriminalco,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom matalo,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom trastako,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom bibucharno,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Englezo chor,
Naj san e Englezura.

Ako hi jekh Englezo kriminalco,
Naj san e Englezura.

Ako hi jekh Englezo matalo,
Naj san e Englezura.

Ako hi jekh Englezo trastako,
Naj san e Englezura.

Ako hi jekh Englezo bibucharno,
Naj san e Englezura.

Ako hi jekh Njamco chor,
Naj san e Njamcura.

Ako hi jekh Njamco kriminalco,
Naj san e Njamcura.

Ako hi jekh Njamco matalo,
Naj san e Njamcura.

Ako hi jekh Njamco trastako,
Naj san e Njamcura.

Ako hi jekh Njamco bibucharno,
Naj san e Njamcura.

Ako hi jekh Talijanco chor,
Naj san e Talijacura.

Ako hi jekh Talijanco kriminalco,
Naj san e Talijancura.

Ako hi jekh Talijanco matalo,
Naj san e Talijancura.

Ako hi jekh Talijanco trastako,
Naj san e Talijancura.

Ako hi jekh Talijanco bibucharno,
Naj san e Talijancura.

Ako hi jekh Ungriko chor,
Naj san e Ungrikurja.

Ako hi jekh Ungriko kriminalco,
Naj san e Ungrikurja.

Ako hi jekh Ungriko matalo,
Naj san e Ungrikurja.

Ako hi jekh Ungriko trastako,
Naj san e Ungrikurja.

Ako hi jekh Ungriko bibucharno,
Naj san e Ungrikurja.

Ako hi jekh Rumunco chor,
Naj san e Rumuncurja.

Ako hi jekh Rumunco kriminalco,
Naj san e Rumuncurja.

Ako hi jekh Rumunco matalo,
Naj san e Rumuncurja.

Ako hi jekh Rumunco trastako,
Naj san e Rumuncurja.

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Ako hi jekh Rumunco bibucharno,
Naj san e Rumuncurja.

Ako hi jekh Francuzo chor,
Naj san e Francuzurja.

Ako hi jekh Francuzo kriminalco,
Naj san e Francuzurja.

Ako hi jekh Francuzo matalo,
Naj san e Francuzurja.

Ako hi jekh Francuzo trastako,
Naj san e Francuzurja.

Ako hi jekh Francuzo bibucharno,
Naj san e Francuzurja.

Ako hi jekh Cheho chor,
Naj san e Chehurja.

Ako hi jekh Cheho kriminalco,
Naj san e Chehurja.

Ako hi jekh Cheho matalo,
Naj san e Chehurja.
Ako hi jekh Cheho trastako,
Naj san e Chehurja.

Ako hi jekh Cheho bibucharno,
Naj san e Chehurja.

Ako hi jekh Amerikano chor,
Naj san e Amerikanura.

Ako hi jekh Amerikano kriminalco,
Naj san e Amerikanura.

Ako hi jekh Amerikano matalo,
Naj san e Amerikanura.

Ako hi jekh Amerikano trastako,
Naj san e Amerikanura.

Ako hi jekh Amerikano bibucharno,
Naj san e Amerikanura.

.....

.....

Ako hi jekh Rom chor,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom kriminalco,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom matalo,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom trastako,
Naj san e Roma.

Ako hi jekh Rom bibucharno,
Naj san e Roma.

*Koring jekhese dzenese nashti te
methoden e jekhese themese
(narodese).*

The Earth

Romnije!*

Because of all the dead and all the living,
Because of all Roma,
Put a curse on the Earth
To destroy the rats
To destroy the enemy.
Romnije!

Because of all the dead and all the living,
Because of the Roma
Turn the Earth upside down
And predict black destiny
To distract the devil
To distract the black night.

Romnije!
Because of all the dead and all the living,
Because of the Roma
Cast magic upon the Earth and predict love.
Predict a fire without smoke
Predict damnation with the end.

Cast a magic spell, Romnije, save her!
She is yours, she is mine, Mother of God
THE EARTH.

* Romnije! – Roma woman
To distract the devil- evil forces

Phuv

Romnije!
Pala mule thaj dzuvinde,
Pala e Roma,
Del armaja e phuvjache,
Te nashjares shimijake
Te nashjares dushmaja.

Romnije!
Pala mule thaj dzuvinde,
Pala e Roma,
Chuv teleshoreha e phuv
Thaj del armaja kale sudbinache
Te xoxajves bilache
Te xoxajves kali jrat.

Romnije!
Pala mule thaj dzuvinde,
Pala e Roma,
Del e phuvjache choxanipe thaj del cho mrtik pala
o kamipe
Nek e jag na thuvljardel
Nek o dumutnipe na buhljarel.

Del o chohanipe, Romnije, del cho mrtik pal las
Voj si chiri, mrni thaj Devleski dej PHUV.

LIKE WATER

Sarah Barbieux



Born in Paris in 1958, of Romani and Mediterranean background, **Sarah Barbieux** has worked in performance arts since 1977. In 1980, she founded the troupe *Caravane* in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. In 1995, she composed and developed *Fuego Bohemio* in the Romani and umba-flamenco dance and musical styles. In 2001, she created the *Rendez-vous Romanichel* in Mauricie, and in 2002, she was nominated spokesperson for *Rendez-vous Ethnique* in Trois-Rivières. In 2004, she was a guest speaker and performer at *Romano Drom* Cultural Festival, Toronto; that same year, *Caravane* won the *Prize for Creation in Stage Arts* from the Mauricie Council of Culture. In 2006, Sarah created *Luludji* showcasing Romani songs, and later was the subject of the TV show *Si le monde m'était conté* in the TV series *Les bâtisseurs d'ailleurs*. In 2007, she collaborated with Ljuba Radman in the *Festival Tzigane Romani Yag* to organize the event *Spring of the Roma*, and was nominated as special advisor for the 2nd edition of the festival. In November, 2008 with *Caravane*, she won the *Prize for Interpretation in Stage Arts* from *Culture Mauricie*, for interpretation of Romani songs, dances and stories.

With or without a halo

At school they called me Esmeralda
And they pointed their fingers at me
They said that in my long black hair
The big bad Evil one was hiding
That I believed in no God at all...

But for me, the Evil one only
Existed in our spirits
And God was surely not a “he”
Cause neither beard nor wrath had he!
Like us in the woods he was hiding
Among all that crawls, runs and flies
Swarms, jumps, swims and glides
With or without a halo!

March 1999

Dedicated to Nina Bottaccini

Nimbósa Wórka

Bi-nimbósko

Ánde shkoláte, “Esmerálda” akharde
ma
thai butívar mui-marde ma
dikhle le bi-wuzhes ánde múrre lundji
bal
Véska chi pakyávas an lênge Devles

Núma me pakyav, o bi-wuzho
trayil ándo amáro gi
na telal e phuv ándo yádo.
Thai pêngo Del sas murri Devláika
hai nas la shorra wor xoli
hai amênsa, amari Devlkáika
garavélas-pe ándo wêsh
mashkar le gîndácha, le chirikle, le
bélchi thai le xutamne,
le birovllya, le mashe thai sa l’ avre
zhivutre
nimbósa wor bi-nimbósko.

Mártso 1999

Pakivása kai Nina Bottaccini

Culturocide

My own culture has been ripped from
my hands
lie broken in pieces in a “no man’s
land”.

We had to be ashamed, we had to hide
it!
Citizen of the world! It could not
exist!

For a better life, they have had to
forget
To stop the trickery for somewhere
else I left.

Like a missing link at the end of
mystery
I feel I am hanging. Grandma, Listen
to me!

Teach me the songs that our parents
knew best
Before all becomes ruins and the
children forget .

3rd October 1999
Dedicated to “muro kako” Ron Lee

Mударimos Kulturáko

Chordine múrri Rrómani kultúra
Chordine múrri Rrómani shib
Rrêspimé sim, ánde kotorênde
mashkar le Gazhênde
thai le Rromênde

Trobúlas amên te lazhas
Trobúlas amên te garavés-ame
Me te avav – zhuvli la lumyáko?
Nashti sas te avél-pe!

Te ródén mai lasho tráyo
trobúlas te bishtrén.
Me skêpisáilem
avre themêste
te dav gáta
o hatayimos

Sar o atwéto bi-zhanglo
ánde skêlchála
me ambládyovav...
Mamíyo! Ashun mánde!

Sikav mánge amare gilya
kai zhanénas amare phure
mai anglal te sáva xayíl-pe
thai le shavorre bishtrén
pêngi Rromaníya!

3 Octóbra 1999
Pakivása ka “murro kako” Ronald
Lee

But baxt tuke

When you told me that every night
You were asking the “Great God”:
why?
I saw in the bottom of your eyes
The deepest flashes of despair.

When you told me: I don’t understand!
I wait for an answer, a hand.
Is there a huge injustice
That is hounding the Roma still?

With a sight, without an answer
In your ear I softly whispered
One of the most sacred wishes
“But baxt tuke, but baxt tuke!”

Your dark sad eyes turned towards me
And the suggestion of your smile
Is printed in my memory

That’s all I’ve been able to give
A simple wish, a sacred wish,
That’s all I’ve been able to give.

13th April 2000

*Written for Zolt, whom I met only once
between two shows during Romano
Dives on the eighth of April 2000,
somewhere in North America. Later
on, when I asked for news about his
immigration that did not turn out well,
I was told he was dead...*

But Baxt Túke

Kána phendyan mánge ke swáko ryat
rrúgílas tire bare Devléstar: “Sóstar,
Dévla?”
Dikhlem ándo fúndo te yakhênge
ti mizériya thai nêkázó

Kána phendyan mánge: “Chi halyarav!
Azhukerav atwéto, ekh sámno
Sóstar? si desya but persekútsiya
kai perel pe amênde, le Rroma?”

Suspinósa, bi-atwetóska
Shopotisáilem an tire kanêste Sóstar?
Múrro orimos o mai swínto
Godo kai phendem túke
“But baxt túke, but baxt túke!”

Karing mánde ambolisáile
tire kale yakha
hai tiro asamos kovlo
hramosáilo ánde murra gogyáte

Nashti dávas túke mai but
férdi múrro orimos, mo swínto orimos
Si sa kai mánde sas te dav

13 Abrílo, 2000

*Ramome vash O Zolt, azilánto katar e
Ungáriya ánde Kánada. Arakhlem lês
yekhwares mashkar dui spektákulya po
oxto Abrílo, 2000, Saré-themêngo
Rrómano Dives ándo Târánto. Mai
palorral kána pushlem le Rromêndar
sar zhálas le Zoltóske imigrátsiyáko
mangimos, sikilem ke mulo sas,
tasádilo ándo Réko Ontáriyóska
pashal o Hamilton.*

***Because Roma we are
born***

For that blood flowing in our veins
For these traditions so ancient
For that language that makes you sing
For these old songs that make you cry.

Just because we are Roma born
And we refuse to deny it,
We have been chased and judged
Persecuted and condemned.

Let my people find the way again
That leads to the ancestors,
That leads to joy and dignity
Of simply being able to be,

Simply being able to exist...

28th July 2000

*Written for Julia Lovell whom I finally
never met.*

Biyándilam Rroma

ash o rat kai shorrel ánde amáre vûni
Vash amári phurani Rromaníya
Vash e shib kai kerel amên te gilabas
Vash le gilya kai rovlyaren ame

Vêska biyándile sam Rroma
nashti avas aver fyal
gonime thai krisinime sam
kinowisarde thai amrandine
pe swáko rêgá kai zhas

Te arakhen le Rroma pêngo drom
O drom kai del pálpale ka amare
phurênde
O drom kai del ánde lúmiya Rromani
la bukuriyáte thai la pakiváte
Te avas Rroma

Te trayis sar Rroma...

28 Djulyo, 2000

*Ramome pakivása vash e Julia Lovell
kai chi mai arakhlem*

Julia Lovell



Julia Lovell was born in Scotland. She comes from the Roma group known as Romanichels, located mainly in the British Isles, Australia and North America. Her family immigrated to Canada in 1970. Along with Mario Ines Torres, she founded the Western-Canadian Romani Alliance in November, 1996, to help the arriving Romani refugees from the Czech Republic. She also organized the First Canadian-Roman Congress and Symposium in May 1998 and worked with the National Film Board of Canada documentary, *Opre Roma (Gypsies in Canada)* and helped with making the film *Suspino (A Cry For Roma)*. She worked several years as an expert on ethnic legitimacy claims for Romani refugees entering Canada. Julia believes that secrecy served Roma in the past and helped Roma survive, but it should no longer be necessary to hide one's identity. She urges all Roma to take pride in their origin and to stand up and say proudly: "We are Roma – not Gypsies!"

Roma

How strong is that name to me
Our struggle to survive brings tears
To my eyes with all we endure to
Stay alive.

Chains around our feet
Tongues denied to speak
Mothers sterilized
Myths paralyze.

Hitler's blackbird of death flew down
To terrorize, we still survive, Roma
People, strong Roma people.

Generations now arise, a nation
With pride for our own ancestors kept
It alive, we carry their will to
Survive. Roma people, strong Roma
People, shine on Live on...
Stay Rom

Roma

Zuralo si gova anav pala mande
Amaro maripe pala nakhavipe anel
jasva
Ande mrne jakha e pharipenca pala
Nakhavipe-Dzuvdipe.

Lancurja trujal amare prnengo
Chiba na mangen te phenen
Daja e zorasa bibijandeske-biresle
cherde
Siklipa san linosarde.

Hitlereski meripeski kali chirikli ujrel
tele
Thaj mudarden, numaj amen
nakhaven, Roma
Narodo, zuralo Romano Narodo.

Generacije akana ushten, Narodo
E pachapesa pala amare purane istaren
Len dzuvde, amen indjaren lenge
mangipe te
Nakhaven. Roma Narodo, zuralo
Roma
Narodo, strafinen, Dzivinen...
Achen Rom-Roma

Roma sisters

Sisters
How special is this word
My heart sings a song for you
I hope your hearts have heard...
Your beautiful faces shining
Remind me of the moon
And those familiar smiles
Are like the sun in afternoons
Sisters, sweet Roma sisters
Shine on...
This day I blow my love your way
For this and any other day
Thoughts of you, thoughts so sweet
Drifting through the winds of my mind
This to let you know I am always here
For my Roma sisters, gentle and kind.

God Bless you and may love
fall upon your footsteps and on
those paths yet unknown.

Romane phenja

Phenja (phen)
Sar specijalno si gova alav
Mo ilo djilabel djili pala tumen
Me dozacharav kaj tumare ila ashunen
gova...
Tumare muja shukar strafinen thaj
Dichijen sar o chon
Thaj tumare pindzarde hasaporra
San sar o kham ande pala mizmeri
Phenja, gogle Romane phenja
Strafinen...
Gova djive me phurdav mo kamipe
pala tumen
Sar gova thaj vareso aver djive
Gindipa pala tumen, gindipa save san
kamle thaj gogle
Thaj me dzav krzo bahval moresko
gndipesko
Thaj mangav te phenav tumenge, me
sem sajekh kate
Pala tumen, gogle thaj kamle, Romane
phenja.

Neka o Del del tumenge sastipe thaj,
mrno kamipe
neka perel talo tumare prne, pe
Bipindzarde droma.

LIKE WATER

Gina Csanyi-Robah



Gina Csanyi-Robah is a Canadian Hungarian Roma woman born in Toronto in 1974. Her mother's parents are from a long lineage of Roma musicians, and immigrated to Canada during the 1956 Revolution in Hungary. From a childhood on the periphery of society, she became the first member of her family to graduate from high school. She went on to attend the University of Toronto and graduated in 2003 with a Double Major in Political Science and Sociology. She received a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree.

She became involved with the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) in Budapest, Hungary in 2004 and became a human rights and social justice advocate. In 2006, Gina returned to the ERRC where she worked as an advocate to desegregate and equalize the education of Roma children in Hungary. After extensive involvement with the ERRC, she continued her work back home at the Toronto Roma Community Centre (RCC) where she presently serves as Co-President of the Board of Directors. At the RCC, she also continues her work with Roma people through community development, public education and advocacy.

A Life Unremembered,

Goodbye NagyMama

My Grandma is dying right now,
Before my very eyes,
at this very moment.

I have been watching her slip away for
nearly 24 hours, and I have not been
able to take my eyes off her.

The pain is great, but the peace
That God has waiting for her,
and for us, is fueling my soul.

Her death began with the forgetting
disease,
Four years ago.
This new disease is coming after her
with a vengeance.
The Alzheimer's was a slow,
constant predator; cancer is a
voracious beast
that is swallowing her whole.

Bye bye NagyMama,
Gone she is forever,
Just the physical, I hope.
Unfortunately, her mind took flight
many years ago.

Now, I grieve, once again.
My prayer, my wish is that
she will be a sound whole,
Once she enters the kingdom of
Heaven.

Her eyes are drained, as they stare
upwards
Through tiny slits beneath her eyelids.
Her face is drawn and sunken in,
gaunt,
Her cheekbones are protruding,

and stretching her thin,
moist skin across them.

Her body has taken on a skeletal form,
As she no longer desires food.

Her skin is cold, and darkened from
bed sores.
Purple is now the colour of her fingers,
hands, feet and legs.

I witness the progress of her pain and
suffering,
As her body becomes increasingly
cold,
Yet at the same time,
Her skin is burning up.

Her mouth is wide open,
As it is the tunnel that she uses
to grasp her few last breaths.

Her breath is strained,
she struggles to suck/breathe life,
for a few more seconds.

Each breath is a promise
of another moment we share.
At any moment,
it can be the last.
They are becoming less frequent,
As I count 5-8 second intervals
between them.

Her soul has been slipping away from
her body.
Her face tells the tale,
As it is frozen in her increasingly
Lifeless state.

I hear the Gypsy music
forever playing in the background,
as my Gypsy Queen leaves us.

This is twice the pain, twice the grief,

LIKE WATER

And the last day that I will share with
my NagyMama,
my Grandma,

I hold her body, and her face close to
mine,
As I whisper reassurance in her ear,
And feel the final sigh of her life.

*4:34 pm will forever be etched in my
soul.*

*Written on Friday December 30, 2005
St. Michael's Hospital, Room 64 3:00
pm*

Dza Devleha mrni Phuridej

Mrni Phuridej merel akana,
Angla mrne jakhende,
gova momento.

Dikhav lako suno pala 24 sahaturja,
thaj nashti te chudav rigate
mo dikhipe latar.

O dukh si baro, thaj o miro
Te o Del azhucharel las,
thaj pala amen,
pherel mrni odji.

Lako mulipe astarta e bistardesko
nasvalipesa,
Angla shtar brshengo.
Gova nevo nasvalipe avel sar lako
irisaripe.
Nasvalipe sasa polohko,
Sajekhesko dzungalo;
O kancero si doshalo dzivutro savo xal
la sasti.

Dza Devleha, Phuridej,
Djeli si biirimo,
Dozacharav, numaj e trupesa.
Bibaxtalipesa, lako gindo lija nashipe
but brshengo angla.
Akana, mulo si mo dji.

O Devla, mrno mangipe si kaj voj
trubul te avel o bashipe,
Kana avel ando Del.

Lake jakha shucharde, sar kaj dikhen
upre
Krzo cikne putardipa.

Laki facuri si sar makhli thaj shuchi,
chishli,
Lake chameske kokala san avri,

LIKE WATER

thaj inzarel laki sani,
chingali morchi prdal pe.

Lako trupo hi sar o baro skeleto,
Sar voj na mangla te xal xape.

Laki morchi si shilali, thaj kali e
dukhatar.
Lila si akana bojava
lake naja, vasta, thaj prne.

Dikhav laki dukh thaj dukhipe,
Sar lako trupo dzal shilalender,
Thaj, ande pale gasavo vakto,
Laki morchi phabarel.

Lako muj si putardo,
Sar o tunelo krzo savo
voj chorel agoresko phurdipe.

Lako phurdipe si zuralo,
voj phurdel
o dzuvdipe,
pala varegachi sekunde.

Sako phurdipe sar sovli
pala amaro dujto momento.
Sako momento,
shaj te avel agoresko.

Naj si but vakto,
Djinav 5-8 sekundurja mashkare
phurdipa.

Lako dji sovel avri lako trupo.
Lako muj phenel paramichi,
Sar kaj si phaosardi late
Bidzuvdipesko chachipe.

Ashunav “Cigansko” bashalipe
Bashalel ande palunipe,
sar mrni Rromani Thagarica mukhel
amen.

Gova si dujdromeski dukh,
dujdromesko dukhipe,
Thaj agoresko djive savo ulavav e
Mrnesa NagyMama,
Mrnesa Phuridejasa.

Astarav lako trupo, thaj lako muj
pasha mrno,
Sar me dav vorbica ando lako kan pala
amaro avindo dikhipe,
Thaj hacharav lako agoresko
dzuvdipesko semno.

*4:34 pala mizmeri ka achel sajekh
ande mrni odji.*

*Xramosardo ando Parashtuj,
Decembro 30, 2005
St. Michael's Hopital, Room 64 3:00
pm*

LIKE WATER

Be

My body aches and my heart bleeds,
I feel lost and confused
in this vessel that I dwell in,
I search for a beacon, a glimpse of
guidance,
A reason to be.

I feel sad that where I once thought
was a promise
of unconditional love,
and true happiness,
now appears to have manifested as
something cold, calculating,
untrustworthy, and stifling.

I am near my breaking point,
But I continue to swallow it,
And absorb the pain until it becomes
numbing compliance
and an infinite burn that razes
through my empty spaces.
I no longer can Be.

Written on July 3, 2008

Be

Mrno trupo xandzol ma thaj mo ilo
ratvarel
Me hachardivav xasardi thaj habime
ande gova bereste ando savo beshav,
Me cherav rodipe pala jagal'ajka,
xarno dikhipe pala o drom,
Pe savo rodav o shajipe pala trajipe.

Bibaxtali sem odolese so jekh drom
gindisardem kaj kate sasa o alav
pala bichinadipesko kamipe,
thaj chacho baxtalipe,
akana del pe mandje kaj kate si vareso
shudro, vareso so djinaven pes,
hamisardo, thaj tasavno.

Me sem bibaxtali thaj avilem dziko
phanglo agor,
Numaj me xav gova durder,
Thaj pijav o dukh dziko o dukh astarel
te avel
mrno capenisardo achavipe
thaj bizovakteski jag savi bajrovel
krzo mrne chuche thana.
Nashti dur te avav – te trajiv.

Xromasardo ando Julio 3, 2008

LIKE WATER

Yvonne Slee



Yvonne Slee grew up in Germany and spent a lot of her childhood at her Sinti grandmother's place, and after listening to her grandmother's stories about her family's suffering through two world wars and the treatment of Romanies in Europe, she resolved to do anything she could to get those stories read so people could see the racism Roma and Sinti endured. Yvonne lives in Australia with her husband and three children and is a writer with four published books, one of them a biography of her grandmother's life through two world wars. She has done Romani Culture presentations in schools, arranged a Romani History exhibit in the North Queensland Museum, a three day Romani exhibit in Perth, WA and has spoken on many radio stations in Australia about Romani history and culture. Yvonne is always looking for ways to create public awareness of her culture.

Her books, published by Amber Press, include *Torn Away Forever*, *Sharon's Sins*, *Sharon Sins...Again*, and *Sharon's Sins...Down Under*. Yvonne runs an organisation called the Sinti Romani Community of Queensland, Australia (www.sintiromanicommunity.org) and is the sitemanager of The Rromani Connection website (<http://rromaniconnect.org>).

Make us count

As wild as Jasmine
As spicy as Cayenne
I think this describes
Most Romani women and men

So Romale
Every adult and every child
All have one thing in common
Which makes us fight for our rights
It's the genes from our forefathers
That reminds us of the truth

Whether it be in Paris,
London, Madrid or Perth,
We are here to keep and protect
our heritage and culture on this earth.
It's not the years in our lives that
count.
It's the time in our years we spend
making a difference for the better
is what counts.
Opre Romale!

Cher amen te djinaven

Dilori sar Jasmine
Xoljarno sar Cayenne
Me gindiv kaj gova ramosarel
But Rromnjen thaj Rromen

Ake Rromalen
Sako pherdebrshengo thaj sako chavo
Savore hi-len vareso so hi amalimahko
So cherel amen te mardiven pala
amaro chachipe
Gova si e amarendar puranendar rat
Savo amendje del godji e chachipese

Shaj te avel ando Parizo,
Londono, Madrigo jal Pertho,
Amen san kate te astaren thaj arakhen
amaro puranipe thaj kultura pe gova
phuvjate.
Naj san bersha save djinaven ande
amarende dzuvdipende.
Isi o vaktto save amen dzivina ande
amarende bershende
kaj cheren avrechende pala lacheder
si sa so djinavel.
Opre Rromalen!

Together

Doing what you are born to do
gives a really good feeling to you.
When fighting the passive battle
of our Roma cause so that the gadje
learn to include us and show some
remorse.

Things could work out even better
if Roma united for our future's sake.
To carry on together, not divided in
our hearts
for our children, for our forefather's
sakes.
Let all Roma work together and make
it our task
to show the world who we really are.

Jekhethane

Te cheren gova so tumen san bijande
te cheren
Del chacho hacharipe pala tumen
Kana maren pasivno maripe
Pala amaro Rromano problemo gadija
kaj gadje
sikljoven te thoven amen jekhethane
thaj
mothoven amendje cira kovlipe

Dzuvdipe shaj dzal lacheder
ako Rroma jekhethane pala avindipe
cheren
Lundjaren jekhethane, biulade ande
amarende ilende
pala amare chovore, pala amare purane
mishtipa
Muk sa e Rroma cheren jekhethane
thaj cher gova
amaro resipe
te mothoven e themese kon san amen
ande
chachipeste

School and kids

I am in a school alone teaching gadje
children our Romani culture,
our Romani history.
Where are the other Roma to stand
here by my side
to show our unity,
our past and our pride.

I know I'm doing the right thing
for my children's sake,
Showing these school kids who we are
Before all Roma assimilate and
disappear in time

Skola thaj chavore

Me sem ande skolate kaj sikljovav e
gadjikane
chavore
amari Rromani kultura, amaro
Rromano nakhipe
Kaj san aver Rroma te aven kate pasha
mande
te mothoven amaro jekhipi, amaro
nakhipe thaj
amaro barikanipe

Me dzanav kaj cherav chacho
pala mrno chavoresko mishtipe
Mothovav e skolake chavorende kon
san amen
Anglal deso sa e Rroma gadjisajven
thaj
xasardiven ande vakteste

A little Tradition

My Sinti gran and I had a little
tradition
We'd go walking in nature observing
things
While watching birds sitting in the
trees
She'd mimic all their different calls
Then it was off to pick some berries
And enjoy the smell of pines
Wafting on the breeze.

Afterwards it was down to the stream
Winding its way through the woods
to sit on a rock and dangle our feet
in the cold clear water and watch
leaves
as they bobbed on by.

We'd collect fresh herbs and
wildflowers
And dry them to use in our food
And when we were tired
we'd make our way to a big old oak
tree
and sit under branches that had been
growing
for over a thousand years.

Gran called it her resting place
This was our little tradition.

*In loving memory of my grandmother,
Elsa*

Cikni Tradicija

Mrni Sinti phuri dej thaj me seha-
amen cikni
tradicija
Amen djelam ande natura thaj dikhlam
sheja
Ando gasavo vakto kana dikhlam
chirikle sar
beshen pe kashende
Voj seha-la muj sar e chirikleng
avrechende
chichiripa
Thaj gova sasa kana chiden cira kalina
Thaj kana hacharen shukar kalo
voshesko sung
Savo ujrael pe bahvaljate.

Athoska, gova sasa tele kaj si o len
Savo banginajvel lako drom krzo
vosha
kaj amen beshen pe bareste thaj
xutaven amare
prne
ando shudro paj thaj dikhen patra
sar sigo peren trujal amen.

Amen chiden uzhe draba thaj
voshehke luludja
Thaj shucharen len te cheren len pala
amaro xape
Thaj kana amen avilam chindile
amen djelam pe amaro drom koring
baro balano
kash, kopachi
thaj beshen talo kranga save bajroven
prdal pe milja brshengo

Phuri dej akharda gova lako
achimasko than
Gova sasa amari cikni tradicija

Hope

We look around this world for places
where there is work and education for
our children
So we can be better off
and live in a safer place for our kids
to grow and flourish

My children are reading Romani
books
wanting to know our traditions
because one day they will talk for us
and keep the Roma spirit strong
and give us hope for the future

Pachape

Amen dikhen trujal gova them pala
thana
kaj buchi thaj edukacija pala amare
chavore si
Kaj shaj lacheder te aven
thaj dzivinen ande shukareste thaneste
pala
amare chavore
kaj shaj te bajroven thaj luludjisaren

Mrne chavore djinaven Rromane
knizhke
thaj mangel te dzanen amari tradicija
odolese so jekh djive von mangel te
vacharen
pala amen
thaj arakhajven Rromani odji zurali
thaj den amendje pachape pala
avindipe

Thaïs Barbieux



Thaïs Barbieux was born in Montréal in 1984 of mixed ethnicity, including Romani, and has been a member of Troupe Caravane since childhood. In 1990, she adapted her dancing for *Fuego Bohemio*, the troupe's flagship scenic production. Since 1992, she has worked on maskmaking and percussion workshops, and from 1996 she has been Caravane's bass player and the troupe's tabla player since 2001. In Caravane's performances, she plays different types of marching drums and miscellaneous percussion instruments.

In 1999, Thaïs began to make mandalas, creating her own working method for the drafting and painting of the pieces. Her work is shown in various cultural venues. Additionally, she produces mandala-themed colouring books. Since 2006, Thaïs has collaborated with instrument-maker Sylvain Chiasson by painting the decorative designs on his unique celtic harps models.

In 2004, she wrote the tale *La Reine Louve* for use in the song-andlegends show "Les Fleurs de Fougère", in which she performs alongside her mother. In 2009, she published two books with la Fondation littéraire Fleur de lys: the novel *Le poète anonyme* and the theatre play *La chute de Thésée*.

I am a dove

The dove attempts to fly
up to the hopeful star.
It is the wings that are important,
more so than the heart that beats.

The blood of a life
and the lifeblood of a people.
A dagger through the heart,
a blade in one's soul.

But always the dove flies on.

The great freedom of birds
is found in open palms.
When there is war upon this earth
souls are blinded to the Light.

I am a dove
but where is my homeland?
There is no blue sky beneath my wings
and no such sky, even in my heart.

But always the dove flies on.

I am a dove and I have my star
I am a spinning feather.
Thus, reach out, with vigor
towards your promised hope.

The courage of a life
and that of a people.
Forgiveness in one's heart
forgiveness in one's soul.

2008

Me Sim Golumbáika

Zumavel te huryal e parni golumbáika
karing e cheran nyedezhdimáski
e zor si ánde l' pakha
kai si mai zorálé le yilêstar
kai marél-pe zurales

Múrro rat o rat Romano
o xanzháli ándo yilo e shuri ándo gi

Mai dur huryal e golumbáika

E slobóda le chiriklêngi
arakhel-pe ánde l'phuterde páلمي
Kána si marimos pe phuv
Korryárdilam la lumináte

Me sim parni golumbáika
Núma kai si múrri ródina?
Manai wúnato chéri telal murre pakha
Manai wúnato chéri ándo múrro yilo

Mai dur huryal e golumbáika

Me sim parni golumbáika
Si-man murri cheran
Me sim e amblimáski por
Nã le la zorása an tyo wast
si tíro shinayimos-nyedzhdimásko

E tróma le trayoski
e tróma le Rromêngi
o yertimos ándo yilo
thai o yertimos ándo gi

2008

Yesterday's Tale

Just as in yesterday's tale,
sing to me of mystical paths.
Just like the princess, Mommy
dance for me the revel of faeries.

Just as in yesterday's tale,
banish all that is evil.
Just like the knight, Mommy
spirit me away.

Just as in yesterday's tale,
wake me with a fateful kiss.
Just like the queen, Mommy
protect me with a smile.

Just as in yesterday's tale,
summon the mighty dragon.
Just like the wizened mage, Mommy
find Truth among the mists.

Just as in yesterday's tale,
tell me of all these wondrous things.
Just like your little girl,
never forget the age of dreams.

2008

E Paramichi Arakyuni

Sar ánde paramíchi arakyuni
Gilaba mánge farmakuyime vúlmi!
sar e rakli le thagarêski, Dále,
khel mánge le vilángo kólo!

Sar ánde paramíchi arakyuni
gonisar sáva kai si nasul!
sar o kavaléro po grast
ankalav man, Dále!

Sar ánde paramíchi arakyuni
zhivindisar man la baxtalya chumyása!
sar e shukar thagarni, Dále,
ferisar man asamása!

Sar ánde paramíchi arakyuni
akhar o mûndro sherkáno!
sar o phuro vrêzhitóri, Dále,
sikav man o chachimos ánde mágla!

Sar ánde paramíchi arakyuni
phen mánge mûndri treyábi!
hai sar tyi sheyorri, Dále,
na bishter o véko le sunêngo.

2008

The silken road

This is a dance of hope,
a dance for all my lost steps
away from the sorrowful bonfires
away from the melodies of anger.

This is a road on which no one rolls,
on which my heart dances freely
away from the prison of numbers
away from golden dowries.

This is a road of silk
a dance for my more innocent thoughts
away from ceaseless torment
away from a world no longer mine.

2008

O Drom O Kezhlano

Múrro khelimos
Si khelimos nyedezhdimásko
vash sa múrre pásurya xasarde
dur katar le zhálníchi yaga
dur katar le gilya xolyáke

Kako si drom kai chi phirel kónik
kai mo yilo khelel-pe bi-lopuntsime
dur katar e rrobíya le numeryêngi
dur katar le zástri sumnakune

Kako si o drom o kezhlano
o khelimos múrre mai wuzhe
gînduryènge
dur katar o kinowimos bi-ashimásko
dur katar kakya lúmiya ke nai murri

2008

Tears

A mirthful smile
for when the branches of a tree dance
and the green frog breaks into song.

A peaceful smile
for when the humble musicians play
and the newly born sleeps.

A prideful smile
for when the fire crackles
and the flowers heal.

A blissful smile
for when lovers dream
and the night brings a perfumed
breeze.

Every night I will allow myself
a tear for the rivers
another for the starving
but two tears for my people.

Because this world is beautiful
I must weep for its sorrow
Because it is unique,
I must also sing for it.

But, oh God
that I may never lose my smile!

2008

Ekh Aswin

Ekh asamos woyáko
kána khelén-pe le kryênzhi
le rukhênge
kána gilaban, le zéleni bráshki

Asamos pacháko
kána bashaven le lavutárya
kána sovel e glatútsa

Asamos barikamásko
kána phabol e yag
kána sastyaren, le lulugya

Asamos baxtalo
kána dikhen sune
o piramno thai e piramni
hai kána e balwal
ingarel shukar mirishyála

Swáko ryat me mukav-man
ekh aswin le doryavênge
ekh aswin le bokhalênge
hai dui aswa le Rromênge

Vêska shukar si e lúmiya
musai te rovel ánda láki dukh
vêska e lúmiya si mûndro
musai te gilabav ánda láki dukh

Dévla!
Na mek man te xasarav murre asamáta

2008

Starved for Light

Too starved for Light are we all,
to cultivate it actively in these dark
times.

We have lost this amazing power,
which allowed us to tap into our
hearts.

One does not ask the sufferer
to seek his own cure in the marshes.

One does not beg the dying man
to dig his own grave.

Who then will heal this leprous
humanity
with love and compassion?

I will not fear
for even if we know the true face of
the torturer,
our hearts will recover their dignity.

2006

Xasardyam E Vyedyáriya

De but bershêndar trayísas bi-
vyedyariyáko
ke nashti vyedyaris zorása kako têmno
véko

Xasardyam e múndro pudyáriya
godya kai pravarel amáro gi

Kána wárekon dukhála
chi pushes lêstar te lichíl-pês

Kána wárekon si merimásko
chi pushes lêstar te angropól-pês

Kon sastyarel kakya lúmiya naswali
pêske kamimása thai milása?

Chi daras
Nítála zhanas kon si amáro kinowitóri
amáro yilo kam-lel pálpale
pêski pakiv

2006

Rasa Lee Sutar



Rasa Lee Sutar was born in Augsburg, Bavaria in 1980. She is Latvian Roma and Jewish on her mother's side (from the Sutar family), and Romanichal on her father's side (from the Lee and Cooper families). She is the President of the Opre Foundation, and a Board Director for Grupo Caiman. Her bibi is the Chairwoman of Romani Roots in Redditch, UK. Rasa won an award for *Fate's Cradle* in 2005, and is currently writing her first book of poetry. She believes that Roma need to use their voice to awaken America, and is disappointed that those who have a voice powerful enough to be heard, have chosen to stay quiet. How can we improve our situation if we become too scared to speak out? To have the biggest impact, it must come from within us, not from sympathiser's like Madonna, who has never had to endure our hardships.

Forgotten

Condemned by a storm to a foreign
sand,
milled by the land
Our birthright surrendered, too distal
to remember
Our home built in rose, thorn
overgrows the roads
Each auric grain forgot us

Butterflies across the leaves like a sigh
among the trees
Fear wafts across like a flame to sear
the moths
Our footstep makes no sound,
nor marks the ground
Our path lay forgotten

Dragged by the black train, noosed by
the legion
The shadow of the larger herd,
apathy's poisoned sherd
Slaughtered and quartered, nearly they
devoured
What was left wept "forget us"



Forgotten

Bistardo

Krisisardo e zurale bahvaljendar ande
avrechende chishajeste, pishlo e
phuvjatar
Amaro bijandesko krisipe, majzuralo
te hacharen
Amaro cher e djulendar cherdino,
pherde karna pe dromende
Kaj sako galbeno kuchin bistarel
amen.

Paparuga prdal pe patrina sar o semno
mashkare kasha
Daravipe phiravel prdal pe opashimata
sar o jag savo xal insekturja
Amaro prno na cherel bashipe, na
cherel semna pe phuvjate
Amaro drom si bistardo

Crдино e kalestar dzedzeshestar,
umblade e kaletar legijatar
Uchalin e barestar bovestar, e
apatijatar drabardi phangli achimata
Chindi thaj uladi, numaj cira thaj von
xale
Sa so sasa muklino roven „bistaren
amen“

Come Along

What the hell did my four walls
Crash into you didn't
Leave a message at least I
Coulda cuddled in your voice one last
time
Daily mind feels this good
Any tick by killing until my time by
you
Won't tear my heart it's crackin'
Knowing I'll never hold you in real
life
So I lay down screaming kicking
A love I cannot feel I stub my toe
It made me cry I need you
To kiss my pain away

What's it like there, can I come?

Háide Mánsa!

Ánde sóste perádile
murre shtar zúdurya?
Chi meklan mánge
chi yekh swatorro.
Nashti mai yekh dáta
te ashunav tiro kámlo gláso.

Merav ánda túte
ges gesêstar
kána zhanav po chachimos
ke chi mai ándo múrro kálo tráyo
shai lav tut ánd angáli.

Róvindoi thai dándó púnrré
Shudáv-man tele
O kamimos ke nashti halyarav
Malavav múrro nai le púnrrêsko
Rovlyardyas man.
Trobul ma tut
Te chumídes mándar
múrri dukh.

Sar si kai san tu?
Shai aváv-man kothe?

Hear the Calm

Oh dear dead, can you see me now
Vulnerable, wisdom came to hear
Waves are in my thoughts
Currents will shed the oceans away

I don't question her existence
I just question all that I need

I see the word in the church
Which way to go, glass stained
Whispers in the sane
Tune in fine tone, wish you'd hold on

All my dead, walk beside me
The deflection of the soul cautiously
flickers
Laced to the shadow's back
The answers are fade on

Carry the weight of the moon
My lips are sealed

Ashun

Oh, kamlo mulipe, shaj te dikhes man
akana
Phadjeodjaki, bizhajipe avilo te
ashunen
Izdraripa san ande mrne gindipa
Pajeski struja ka chorel okeane ande
duripeste

Me na phuchav lako trajipe
Numaj phuchav sa so me trubuj

Me dikhav alav ande khandjirate
Savo drom te dzav, staklo makhilino
Vorbica ande godjako sastipeste
Lachipe ando lacho tonno, me mangav
te achaves

Sa mrne mule, phiraven pasha mande
Godjako bandjipe bizhajimaha
izdravel
Phanglino pala uchalinake zeja
Atveturja san xasarde

Phiravav e chonako pharipe
Mrne vushta san phangle sar e tatosa

Wave Goodbye

Every hurtful thing you ever said
is ringing in your ear
And everything of beauty that you see
It only brings a tear
When you miss somebody

They tell you things will get better
over time
Stay strong, wear a smile
So the selfish can pretend they've
brightened up your day
When all you really wanna do is lay
down and die

Pleading for any kind of answer or a
sign
So many questions left
Why don't you hear me crying
Don't say goodbye

Now every single theft you see leads
to a tear in the eye
And every time you hear them say it
improves
You tell them it's a lie
Now wave goodbye

Say goodbye

Zha Devlésa!

Sa le akushimáske swáturya
kai mothodyan mánge
bashaven ándo tíro kan
thai sáva le shukarimáta kai dikhes
Den túke zhálnichi aswa
Kána dorís-tu warekáske.

Mothon túke ke lashárdyol tíro tráyo
Ash zorali! De anglal asamos!
Te halyaren le xanzhwale
ke loshardine tíro trísto ges
hai tu, kames te soves
hai te meres.

Mangav atwéto, ekh sámno
Si man preya pushimáta
Sóstar chí ashunes man
kána rovav?
Na phen mánge
Zha Devlésa!

Akana, swáko dáta
Kána chores
Kerel mai yekh aswin ánde yakháte
swáko dáta ashunes lèn te phenen
te mai lashárdyol e treyába
mothos lènge ke xoxayimáta si.
Akana sikav tyo wast!

Motho mánge: 'Zha Devlésa!'

Fate's Cradle

The sky is my canvas. Rain, my gravity.
The charcoal earth burdens my shoulders,
Displaces my spine, exhausts my ankles.
Still my empathy surpasses desire to cast it away,
To drift away as the crow flies,
Seal the door and draw the shades,
Bury my bones beneath my covers,
Close my eyes and paint my sky,
Let my soul glide eternal in reverie.

As my eyes go grey, and my thoughts grow delicate,
Nearing the final gate, my path confining me,
Clenching the breath that flows through my veins,
Solace devours my carcass as this vast cumberance is lifted,
Embracing another, sustaining its ageless journey.
My skin does not wither away. It grows.
Fed by the tears of those I loved,
A feather for every drop,
I fly to the clouds to sign my masterpiece.

In memory of Janis - my loving mother, and best friend.

Baxtaki Kuna

O del si mrno poxtan. Brshind, mrni gravitacija.
Kali phuv phajrel mrne дума,
Bandjarel mrno zejengo kokalo,
chindel mrne zhgolbane.
Mrno dzuvdipe bajrovel mangipe te chudav gova pestar.
Te phirav e pajeha sar kali chirikli ujrel.
Te cherav tato pe udareste, thaj makhav uchalina.
Praxosarav mrne kokala talo mrne kura.
Phandav mrne jakha thaj makhav mrno del.
Mukh mrno odji te phiravel bimerimahko ande suneste.

Sar mrne jakha parujen ande praxali bojava,
thaj mrne gindipa bajroven kovle,
Pashajvav e agorutnese dromese, mrno drom phandel man,
Capenisarav haburo savo phiravel krzo mrne venurja,
Korkoripe xal mrno trupо sar kaj gova baro pharipe si vazdino,
Del angali pala aver, thaj arakhel piro bimerimahko dromardipe.
Mrni morchi na dzal khatinde.
Bajrovel.
Parvardivel e jasvenca e govendar save me kamlem.
Por pala saki kavchin,
Me ujrav ande nuvera te ramosajvav mrni majlachi buchi.

Pala Janis – mrni kamli dej thaj mrni majlachi amalin.

Lynn Hutchinson



Painter, muralist and multimedia artist **Lynn Hutchinson** lives in Toronto, Canada. She is descended on her father's side from the Romanichal Lee family from Lancashire, England. Her father's family travelled as musicians and entertainers in England and later on in southern Ontario, Canada.

Lynn's works have been exhibited in Canada, Mexico, and Havana, Cuba. She has painted murals in Havana, Toronto and Guatemala City. From 1998 to 2007 she served on the board of Roma Community Centre as cultural programmer, where she was artistic director of two editions of the cultural festival *Romano Drom; Loki Gili*, an arts project with Romani women and youth; and *Shukar Lulugi*, a project with refugee girls and women who survived war and hardship to find a new home in Canada.

Five poems for daddy

Pansh Gilya Murre Dadorrêske

one

yekh

England

Ande Angliya

In Lizzie Lee's vardo there were
mirrors all over
you could see yourself everywhere
even from behind

Gledáli sas ándo vordon la Liziyáko
E Lizzie Lee
Shai dikhlán-tut pe swáko rêgá ánde
lênde
vi katar e palal

She bore four children
Daddy the last
plays violin
makes wooden puppets
that tower over him

Shtare glaten biyandyas
Mo dadorro, o mai paluno
Wo bashavel e lávuta
Kerel papúshi kashtale
Kai si lêstar mai vuche

the wheels of the vardo
carry them across the north
and back again

Le rróti le vordonêske
Ingarel lèn pa l' gava
ándo lanórdo, hai pálpale

stop at a layby
make a fire

Arakhen than te tôrdyón
Kerén-pênge yag

Sleep, children

Soven shavorrále!

Eight years old
Daddy lost an eye

Óxtone bershêngo sas múrro dad
Kána xasardyas pêski yakh

here is his new eye made of glass
brown iris that looks everywhere
sees nothing

Áke pêski nevi yakh
e shtakláki
Melaxno vudud kai dikhel pe swáko
rêgá
hai chi dikhel khánchi

two

Leaving

The shore disappears

they are pulled away by wind and
currents
no vardo no mirrors
nobody throwing stones
at Lizzie Lee and her children

they want to cast off their skins
in a new country
on a new road
wide and clear

Canada, without shadows
beds in a shed
on a tobacco farm near Tillsonburg
then a wooden house they build
outside town

picking tobacco
travelling with the puppets

Daddy grows up
leaves them behind
Lizzie, Father, Willy, May and Lillie

dui

O Telyarimos

Duryávol o brégo
kána tsírden o vapóri
e máriya thai e wultárya
Manai vordon, manai gledáli
Núma kónik chi shúdel barra
la Liziyáte thai pêske shavorrênde

Kamen te peraven pêngi morki
e morki Rromani
ándo káko them o nevo
po drom o nevo
kai anzol ángla lênde
lúngo thai bi-zhanglo

E Kánada si bi-wushalinángo
Soven ándo hambári
pe férma le dohanóske
Pashal o Tillsonberg*
Mai palorral ándo kashtêsko kher
kai anzaren avryal o fóro

Kíden doháno pe l' férmi
Tráden le papushênsa po drom

Baryol múrro dad
hai mekel pêski familíya
“Lizzie, Táta, Willy, May thai Lillie”

three

Love/hate

Daddy loves
fields and rivers
painting
making necklaces
Karl Marx
buying low
selling high
cameras
cars
sewing machines
silver
lighting a fire
driving past farms into the bush
finding the right place for the trailer

Daddy hates
remembering

trin

Kamimos/vorrûtsomós

Kamel mo dad
Mala thai doryávurya
Kamel te farbol
shukar patréturya
Te kerel izgyárdi le zhuvlyánge
Kamel o Karl Marx
Kamel te kinel yéftini kola
hai te bikinel pe bari dobúnda
Baro tavárrro tergólas
kámeri, móbilya, mashúnki kai súven,
chísto rup
Kamel te kerél-pe yag
Kamel te zhal pa l' gava
hai te zhal ándo wêrsh
te garavel pêski tréla

Vorrûtsíl múrro dad
Te del-pe gogi
So trobul te bishtérdyol

four

Crying

He cried only once
on his knees in the dirt
arms lifted to the sky
his voice too big for his throat

I am twelve I think
he might be praying
I don't know why he'd cry
in the shadow of our trailer
the shadow a dark slash
that swallows my father

it is late
the sun low in the sky
people are watching
his hat on the grass
fallen off lying there
good eye clenched
glass eye staring
tears pouring from both eyes
the living and the dead

shtar

Róvindoi

Zhalisáilo eg-dáta férdi
múrro dad
pe l' changa ánde chik
pêske wása karing o chéri
pêsko gláso mai zuralo lêster

Desh-u-do bershêngi sim
Gíndísávov
Shai-vi te rrûgisávol
Múrro dad
Chi zhanav pála sóste rovélas
ánde wushalin amare vordonêski
e kali wushalin
kai vulisarel lês

O ges merel
Hulel o kham
Zhene dikhen pe murre dadêste
pêski stagi po char
e zhívindí yakh phangli
e shtakláki yakh phuterdi
Aswa shorren soldoné-yakhêndar
e zhivindi thai e muli

five

Story

The story he was about to tell
caught in his throat
at the last minute
breath rattling like leaves

it will never be heard

the thread
that winds into the past,
tying together
mirrors, vardo, violin

the language they swallowed
when they got off the ship

will never be heard

and is pulled back
into the cave of his body
his breath roars
then stops

what remains are two puppets
sometimes we bring them from the
attic
working their mouths, speaking for
them in silly voices
but their truth is withheld
swallowed by him
in his last breath

pansh

O Hiro

O híro kai sas te phenel
Mo dadorro
Xasáilo an pêski korr
Ánde wúrma
Pêsko hábuo suspiníl-pe
sar le patrya ánde balwal

Chi mai ashúndyol gádo híro

O Drom
kai del ánde l' gesa nakhle
Kai anel ánd-ekh-than
le gledáli, o vordon, e lávuta

E shib kai bishterde
pêngi Rrómani shib
kána huliste katar o vapóri
ánde Kánada

Chi mai ashúndyol

Tsírdyol o híro pálpale lêste
Xasáwol ánde lêste
Pêsko hábuo tsipíl-pe mai eg-dáta
Pórma - ashél-pe
Swágdar.

So ashel lêstar akana?
murre dadorrêstar?
férdi dui papúshi
De vrémi ingaras lén katar e sóba
opral
Sar papushárya zumavas te zhivindis
lén
Te vorbís lénge ánde l' glásurya
dilivane
Núma pêngo chachimos
nashti anklel
Wo tasadyas lês
mo dadorro
kána mulo.



This image from Lynn Hutchinson's multimedia project *O Chamudaino* features a photograph of the artist's father and a puppet he made in his youth.

If there are no more borders between countries,
Why do the borders for the Roma remain?

Ako naj-len akana grancurja mashkare phuvja,
Sose san kate pala Rromen?

Hedina Tahiroviæ Sijerèiæ

LIKE WATER

**Blessed
your eyes that see what others can't**

**Blessed
your spirit**

**Blessed
your romni heart**

**Blessed
your hand which writes and speaks of our women**

**Lolo del Carders,
2009**

