



June 19

Hi Mary,

I went to Pusan with my room-mate Saturday evening, and met a friend of ours who had gone down earlier. I probably told you I was going down there and mentioned I was going to get a tattoo. That was the plan, but we couldn't find a tattoo place. Oh well, next time.

I had a good time there, though. There's a street in Pusan called Texas Street, and many foreigners hang out there, especially Russian sailors. Many of the store signs are in Russian. American soldiers also frequent the area. There are a couple of nice-looking bars there, but even they are rather seedy. There are dancers on stage (in bikini-style costumes) every half hour or so. There are also prostitutes in these places, which leads me to an amusing story.

When the Hollywood Club closed at 3 a.m., we (and an American we met) were standing outside the club wondering what to do. A Russian sailor was also outside trying to bargain with a prostitute. She wanted ₩ 400,000 but he would only offer her ₩ 300,000. He was really getting on her nerves so we were going to get rid of him for her. I kept saying to him, "Sarong, no." ("love, no"). Finally, she told him to wait a minute and went inside the club. He hung out for a while, but she didn't come out again. There was a woman cooking ham, egg, and cheese sandwiches across the road, so we took him over and got him to try one. He seemed pretty happy after that, and he hung out with us. We went to another bar and had a shot of whiskey, then we went searching the 24 hour stores for some 'real' Russian vodka. We found Alexander Russian vodka, but he said (in the very little English he knew) that it wasn't the real stuff. After a while we went our separate ways.

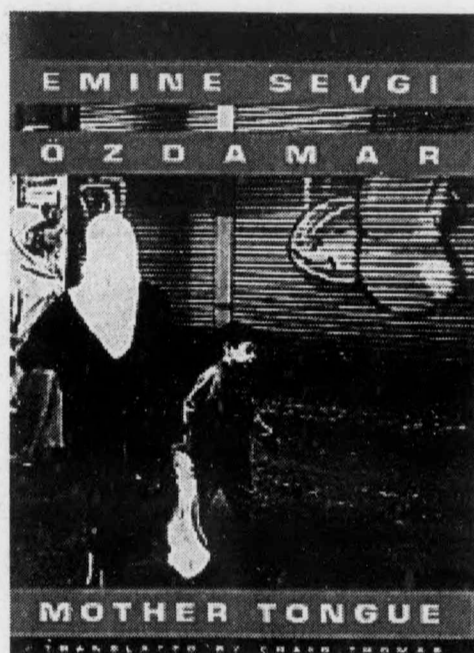
The next day the three of us (from Taegu) went to Pusan tower and met a couple of guys from the Philippines. We were talking to them for a while; they were quite nice. Then we walked through the fish market, which was pretty disgusting for the most part. We walked to the docks and looked for someone to take us around the harbour in a boat. We found two guys in a big open boat who, after a little arguing, decided to take us for ₩ 3000 each. We waited around for a while until another Korean man and two women jumped into the boat with some raw fish and soju (Korean alcohol). We started out, but he cut the motor after a short time and had a picnic time. I didn't have any fish, but I had a shot of soju with them. We drifted into some big steel fishing boats after a while. We (the foreigners) had some worries about having to swim to shore, but the Koreans (despite being drunk) didn't seem worried. I got out my Korean dictionary and asked them to "drive." We got safely around the harbour (and only had to yell at the driver once to avoid an oncoming boat) and said goodbye.

My only regret about the trip was that my companions (especially my room-mate) were often ignorant, and assuming that just because most people didn't speak English (or only a little) they were simple and they often treated them that way. Sometimes they were insulting in their 'play.' No wonder foreigners are often despised in foreign countries.

Mother Tongue
Emine Sevgi Özdamar
translated by Craig Thomas
157 pp. Coach House
Press, Toronto

review by Mimi Cormier

Mother Tongue is one of a series of books by international authors recently put out by Coach House Press (other authors include Liliana Heker and Marco Denevi). The editor of this series, Alberto Manguel, introduces



each series author to the English-language readership with a biographical sketch included as an afterward.

Özdamar's moved to Germany as a young woman from her native Turkey to work with Berlin's *Berliner Ensemble*. A Communist, Özdamar was

attracted by the theatre ensemble's reputation for producing agitprop theatre, because the company was linked with the radical playwright Brecht.

Özdamar's experiences in Germany have been effected by the rise of xenophobic violence during the 80s and 90s, much of it directed against Germany's Turkish migrant workers.

In 1991, she was awarded the prestigious Ingeborg Bachmann Prize, the German equivalent of the English Booker Prize.

However, many German critics emphasized that Özdamar was not a German writer, but a foreigner writing in German, at the same time praising her achievement. Özdamar views such patronising, double-edged attitudes with contempt, saying, "I was accepted, but merely as a "guest-writer."

Dislocation pervades *Mother Tongue*, a book that self-consciously pulls apart conventional forms and genres. It is divided into four "stories," containing what appears to be fiction (particularly the

Turkish Germany), mixed with autobiographical elements. Özdamar has stated that each story can also be read for the stage. "A Charwoman's Career / Memories of Germany" is spoken from the perspective of a young Turkish migrant to Germany who works as a

charwoman at the Berliner Ensemble.

The style gives a vivid impression of how the ability to communicate is taken for granted unless total immersion into a new language, and culture, makes it difficult--if not impossible--to cope with social interaction. The veneer of social norms accepted without question in one's native country become threatening in a new place. The immigrant learns what it is to be continually misunderstood and even to be suspect.

The sense of loss and self-deception resulting from the acquisition of a new language is another theme explored by Özdamar. In "Mother Tongue" the speaker observes, "A tongue has no bones: twist it in any direction and it will turn that way." She later recalls a story told to her by a neighbour in Turkey about a young man hung for anarchy: "These sentences, said by the mother of a hanged man, I can only remember them as if she had said the words in German."

The one sticking point I found with this book is the flip side of its strength: Özdamar's imaginative mixing of languages. Özdamar's occasionally impenetrable prose style makes *Mother Tongue* challenging reading.

While some of the social and political context is undoubtedly lost on this side of the Atlantic, we have seen and heard enough of current xenophobia to make it worthwhile to open our minds to *Mother Tongue*.

BRIDGE

by W.T. Watson

The answer to last week's bridge quiz: with hearts as trump, North and South will win 8 tricks.

In playing the hand, South will be declarer and uses both his hand and his partner's hand. Once West makes the opening lead, North (the dummy) will place all of his cards face up on the table. He keeps quiet while his partner plays. The first thing South does is to count his losers. He has 0 spade losers (but has to trump one in the dummy), 0, 1 or 2 trump losers, 2 diamond losers and 1 club loser. Where the trumps actually lie, South can make eight tricks.

Last week was the first bridge lesson, introducing some of the basic mechanics of bridge. If you know how to play whist, you would have recognized last week's mechanics as the rules of whist. This is true; after all, whist is just bridge without the bidding.

Bidding is the process by which partners decide how many tricks they can take and what trump they should set if any at all. However, when people bid they

must start at a book which is 6 tricks. For example, a bid of 2♥'s by South means that he will take eight tricks with hearts as trump. The eight tricks is the basic book of six plus the bid of two.

What happens if there are no trumps? Nobody can ruff in when they run out of your long

suit, but you must set up your long suit before they do.

Well, the hand below is the same as last week and South can make 8 tricks with hearts as trump. However, what happens if East has the opening lead in no trump? The answer will be discussed next week.

	North		
	♠ 8		
	♥ T 9 6 4		
West	♦ T 9 5 3		
♠ Q 9 5	♣ A T 7 4		
♥ K J 3			
♦ K Q 8		East	
♣ J 8 5 2		♠ J T 7 6 3 2	
		♥ —	
		South	
		♠ A K 4	
		♥ A Q 8 7 5 2	
		♦ J 2	
		♣ Q 9	
		♠ K 6 3	
		♦ A 7 6 4	



After the Senators finished raking the tobacco company executives over the coals, they started on Haagen Dazs.