

He told me that when he was little, his parents visited Zim, which was then Rhodesia, and bought him a small red seed with a tiny cap on it. He opened it and out fell ten tiny ivory elephants.

Jimmy sat quiet for a long time. "I think they gave me a seed like that."

We had just started the patrol early the next morning, the sky still gray and low, when I saw one of the elephants step on a land mine. Black smoke and flames. The sound of the explosion and mixed in with that the awful sounds of the other elephants screaming and screaming as they ran away. My hands felt like rocks and I worried I would drop my gun.

The lieutenant radioed ahead to get a land mine report. "Exploding elephants. No wonder we don't see many of them," said PK.

I looked and looked but the others never returned. We continued to walk. By midday we were in thick bush and somebody said we were getting closer, just a mile away.

"Closer to what?" I asked.

"The border, man. We cross it. We go after SWAPO, right into Angola."

We cut our way through tangled vines, the muddy smell of the Cunene River in the air.

"We wait for orders. Maybe we cross later tonight," Retief said.

We set up camp and double-checked our weapons. I was sweating, the air was sweating, and Rina's last letter was plastered to my chest. I didn't have to read it again. I could feel how unhappy she was.

I walked away soon after that. There wasn't going to be much of a sunset. We were in a hollow, night would pour down on us, not like in the open stretches of Ovamboland, where it flew in on wings. I climbed an anthill. The wide banks of the Cunene were broken up with hoof marks. At the river's edge I saw the imprints of the huge pad. The spoor of a lion, so fresh the water still seeped into the tracks. They headed down river and I followed. Too much sun, too much loneliness, too much broken heart, too much fear of ever having to shoot a man. I saw my own heart beating across the skin of the earth and I followed.

It was Jimmy who noticed I hadn't returned from the river. He'd broken what was left of that Mandrax tab in two and was waiting for me. He mentioned something to

Boet, who then spoke to Retief, who sent the two of them to search for me.

They followed me following the lion and found a few remains under a tree. The lion sat two hundred feet away, bloody faced and full, and when it heard their voices, it moved off. Boet shot two vultures and, weeping, he carried them back into camp by their featherless necks.

Retief swore when they told him it was a lion that killed me. In an act of compassion that stunned the other *ous* in my section, he said, "No, my chinas, it was a land mine that killed Rifleman Viljoen." Retief had relatives in the higher-ups and they made it official. I died an honorable death.

The souls of dead soldiers rest in the border rivers—the Cunene, the Okavango, the Zambezi, the Orange, the Limpopo. That is why, after Jimmy was killed during that hot pursuit into Angola, his mother hung herself along the banks of the Orange River near Pofadder. We drift past hippos walking along the riverbeds, we float through the crooked mouths of crocodiles. Purple water lilies blossom above us. When the rivers dry up, we sink back into the sand; our tongues, our fingertips, our fragmented chests, the gall of our terror leaching out.

**Lisa Fugard** is the author of *Skinner's Drift* (Scribner, 2007), a New York Times Notable Book and a runner-up for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. Her novel was also a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction. Her short stories have been published in numerous literary journals, *Outside*, and the British Council's *NW 15: The Anthology of New Writing*; featured on *Selected Shorts*; and anthologized in a Houghton Mifflin Harcourt textbook of world literature for high school students. She has also had numerous travel articles in the *New York Times*. Originally from South Africa, Fugard currently teaches writing workshops in her hometown of Encinitas, California.

**KO UN**

## When I travel around the world

—Translated from the Korean by  
Clare You and Zack Rogow

When I travel around the world  
I visit restaurants  
in several countries  
among them  
*Ristorante Acqua Pazza* Crazy Water Restaurant  
in Saint Mark's Square  
Venice Italy

It's at the corner of the piazza  
right by my apartment for this half year

From time to time  
I stop by that chatty *ristorante* of the locals  
to soak in the Crazy Water  
to get a little drunk and  
to get a little full  
before I go home

The moon lingers over the slanting campanile  
floating motionless  
and spreads its moonlight echo over the cobblestones of the piazza

**Ko Un** is the leading contemporary South Korean poet. During the period of the dictatorship, he was imprisoned for his dissent. While in jail, Ko Un began a monumental work entitled *Ten Thousand Lives*, where he attempted to write a poem for each person he had ever met.

**Clare You** taught in and coordinated the Korean program at the University of California, Berkeley. She also served as chair of the Center for Korean Studies at UC Berkeley. She has cotranslated modern Korean poetry and fiction into English, including books by Ko Un, Oh Sae-young, and Moon Cheung-hee.

**Zack Rogow** is the author, editor, or translator of more than twenty books and plays. He has received the PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Award and the Bay Area Book Reviewers Association Translation Prize.