

Christian Morgenstern,  
The Werewolf

*tradukita de Alexander Gross*

A Werewolf, troubled by his name,  
Left wife and brood one night and came  
To a hidden graveyard to enlist  
The aid of a long-dead philologist.

“Oh sage, wake up, please don’t berate me,”  
He howled sadly, “Just conjugate me.”  
The seer arose a bit unsteady  
Yawned twice, wheezed once, and then was ready.

“Well, ‘Werewolf’ is your plural past,  
While ‘Waswolf’ is singularly cast:  
There’s ‘Amwolf’ too, the present tense,  
And ‘Iswolf,’ ‘Aewolf’ in this same sense.”

“I know that—I’m no mental cripple—  
The future form and participle  
Are what I crave,” the beast replied.  
The scholar paused—again he tried:

“A ‘Will-be-wolf?’ It’s just too long:  
‘Shall-be-wolf?’ ‘Has-been-wolf?’ Utterly wrong!  
Such words are wounds beyond all suture—  
I’m sorry, but you have no future.”

The Werewolf knew better—his sons still slept  
At home, and homewards now he crept,  
Happy, humble, without apology  
For such folly of philology.

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Christian Morgenstern,  
The Banshee (An Approach)

*tradukita de Max Knight*

One night, a banshee slunk away  
from mate and child, and in the gloom  
went to a village teacher’s tomb,  
requesting him: “Inflect me, pray.”

The village teacher climbed up straight  
upon his grave stone with its plate  
and to the apparition said  
who meekly knelt before the dead:

“The banSHEE, in the subject’s place;  
the banHERS, the possessive case.  
The banHER, next, is what they call  
objective case—and that is all.”

The banshee marveled at the cases  
and writhed with pleasure, making faces,  
but said: “You did not add, so far,  
the plural to the singular!”

The teacher, though, admitted then  
that this was not within his ken.  
“While bans are frequent”, he advised,  
“A she cannot be pluralized.”

The banshee, rising clammily,  
wailed: “What about my family?”  
Then, being not a learned creature,  
said humbly “Thanks” and left the teacher.

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*Traduko de la Germana poemo “Der Werwolf” de CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN (Kristiano Matenstelo, \*1871-05-06 – †1914-03-31) en la Anglan de Alexander Gross.*

*Arg-825-1657 (2013-02-13 18:39:45)*

*Tiu ĉi angligo troviĝas en <http://bertilow.com/literaturo/lupfantomo.html>.*

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*Arg-825-1660 (2013-02-13 22:36:06)*

*Tiu ĉi angligo troviĝas en <http://bertilow.com/literaturo/lupfantomo.html>.*

*Pri la tradukinto Max Knight vidu: [http://www.jbeilharz.de/morgenstern/morgenstern\\_poems.html](http://www.jbeilharz.de/morgenstern/morgenstern_poems.html) kaj [http://www.123people.de/ext/frm?ti=ersonensuche%20telefonbuch&search\\_term=mx%20k%C3%BChnel&search\\_country=DE&st=suche%20nach%20personen&target\\_url=aHR0cDovLd3dy5saXRlcmlcmF0dXJoYXVzLmF0L2luZGV4LnBocD9pZl](http://www.123people.de/ext/frm?ti=ersonensuche%20telefonbuch&search_term=mx%20k%C3%BChnel&search_country=DE&st=suche%20nach%20personen&target_url=aHR0cDovLd3dy5saXRlcmlcmF0dXJoYXVzLmF0L2luZGV4LnBocD9pZl)*