

## The Panther

From seeing the bars, his seeing is so exhausted  
that it no longer holds anything anymore.  
To him the world is bars, a hundred thousand  
bars, and behind the bars, nothing.

The lithe swinging of that rhythmical easy stride  
which circles down to the tiniest hub  
is like a dance of energy around a point  
in which a great will stands stunned and numb.

Only at times the curtains of the pupil rise  
without a sound . . . then a shape enters,  
slips though the tightened silence of the shoulders,  
reaches the heart, and dies.

--Trans. Robert Bly

# *The Panther* (4 Translations)

## THE PANTHER

His tired gaze--from passing endless bars--  
has turned into a vacant stare which nothing holds.  
To him there seem to be a thousand bars,  
and out beyond these bars exists no world.

His supple gait, the smoothness of strong strides  
that gently turn in ever smaller circles  
perform a dance of strength, centered deep within  
a will, stunned, but untamed, indomitable.

But sometimes the curtains of his eyelids part,  
the pupils of his eyes dilate as images  
of past encounters enter while through his limbs  
a tension strains in silence  
only to cease to be, to die within his heart.

--Trans. Albert Ernest Flemming

## The Panther

The pacing past the bars, the steady stare  
A tiredness grown so nothing holds him here  
Of a thousand iron bars he seems aware  
A thousand bars, no world beyond this sphere.

With supple strength, with soft and gentle mode  
He turns in smallest circles about his flank  
It's like a dance of power around a node  
His great volition standing stunned and blank.

Sometimes his eyelids rise so he can sense  
A picture enter in the moment's part  
Descend through limbs of sinew, silent, tense  
And thinning, fading, cease within his heart.

--Trans. by Gerald Duffy

*by Ranier Maria Rilke*

## THE PANTHER

His gaze, so worn with passing through the bars,  
holds nothing now, not even its own stare.  
There is, it seems to him, a thousand bars,  
and past the thousand bars, no world out there.

The soft padding of his strong paws on the floor,  
Revolving in the smallest ring of all,  
is like a dance of power round a core  
in which a mighty will stands stunned, in stall.

Sometimes the shutter of his pupil parts  
without a sound – and then an image will  
slip through the silent tension of the limbs  
until, stopped in the heart, it's still.

--Trans. by Winslow Shea

# The Panther

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This poem by Rilke is given to you in four different translations from the original German. For this exercise I want you to create a google doc in this assignment and answer the following three questions about your reading. The next part of the assignment involves you working with re-creating the poem.

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## The Questions

**Q1:** What is the apparent focus , think tone and the emotion/reaction created within you the reader, of each of the four translations? What is your reason for suggesting this focus for each?

**Q2:** In which poem do you as a reader feel them greatest empathy for the panther? How can this panther's situation be related to in human terms (offer a story)?

**Q3:** Which of the four translations do you prefer and why?

## The Reconstruction

1. **Compare each individual line of each of the four translations. Select the strongest line 1 and retype it below. Do the same for line 2, line 3, etc.**
2. **Now, bold the individual word in each of the lines which you feel is the most emphatic or necessary word in the line.**
3. **Create a new poem using just these single lines from each of the poems.**
4. **Revise if needed.**
5. **Publish with a graphic and/or fancy scripting or formatting.**