Although the translations are, on the whole, precise and of high quality, and although, as translation theorists tell us, there are many equally valid solutions for the rendering of any given line of poetry, there are a few passages that may seem problematic or that may not be as elegant as those provided by other translators. To illustrate, Giuseppe Ungaretti's "Di queste case / non è rimasto / che qualche / brandello di muro" is rendered as "Nothing has remained / of these houses / but some chunks / of plaster" (p. 203), which strikes the present reader as somewhat awkward, especially when the sentence is juxtaposed with Diego Bastianutti's offering, "Of these houses / nothing is left / but a few scraps of walls." Condini's "plaster" seems unnecessarily particularizing with respect to the noun "walls," and the term "brandelli" needs to apply to the humans mentioned in the next line, that is the "tanti che mi corrispondevano." Perhaps "fragments" might have been more appropriate. An example of unnecessary translation gain can be found in the rendering of Salvatore Quasimodo's "lamento / della madre" as "funereal howl / of mother." Elsewhere Condini translates Dino Campana's "Musica fanciulla esangue" with "Musical bloodless girl," which appears to be less accurate than Roberta Payne's "Music bloodless girl."

Given the scope and the technical demands of the task undertaken by Condini, which is to select from an enormous quantity of poetry produced over a span of more than 100 years and to provide accurate, elegant English translations that convey the variety of forms, rhythms, and structures of the original texts, *An Anthology of Modern Italian Poetry* succeeds admirably and constitutes one more important contribution to the process of opening up Italy's formidable lyrical tradition to English-speaking readers.

CORRADO FEDERICI

Brock University

The Selected Poetry and Prose of Vittorio Sereni. A Bilingual Edition. Edited and Translated by Peter Robinson and Marcus Perryman, with an Introduction by Peter Robinson. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006. Pp. xxi, 441. ISBN 978-0-226-74878-8. \$35 US (cloth).

Vittorio Sereni is an important modern Italian poet whose work is very well known and discussed in Italian literary circles, and less well known in the non-Italian speaking world. This situation is, in part, the result of what has been until now the absence of a comprehensive bilingual edition of his poetry. There are several anthologies containing English translations of some of Sereni's poems, including *The Disease of the Elm and Other Poems* (1983) and *Selected Poems of Vittorio Sereni* (1990), by the authors of the present volume, as well as *Sixteen Poems*, translated by Paul Vangelisti (1971), and *The Great Friend and Other Translated Poems* (2002), by Peter Robinson. Luigi Bonaffini's *Variable Star* (1999) is a translation of Sereni's *Stella variabile*. There are, in addition, translations of individual poems published in a variety of journals, such as *Poetry Ireland Review*, *London Magazine*,

New Directions, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, and *Testo a Fronte*. The present publication is almost certain to contribute in a very substantial way to a more profound study and appreciation of the complex lyrical discourse of Vittorio Sereni. In a word, *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Vittorio Sereni* is not merely “the only authorized rendering of Sereni’s verse in English.” It is also an indispensable resource for understanding this poet’s dense, allusive and, at times, virtually untranslatable verses.

As they tell us in their Preface, the authors did not simply select some representative poems and print the original with their translation on the page facing, reprinting their own previously published work. Rather, they compared their own versions of Sereni’s poems with those penned by such noted translators as Ruth Feldman, Brian Swann, Glauco Cambon, and G. Singh, along with the above-mentioned Luigi Bonaffini and Paul Vangelisti. What is more, Robinson and Perryman conducted extensive archival research and interviewed the poet’s contemporaries, such figures as Franco Fortini, Luciano Erba, and Eugenio Montale, as well as the poet’s daughter Maria Teresa and Sereni himself. The information, both biographical and hermeneutical, gleaned from these consultations is reflected in the impressive 37-page *Commentary* on the poems, without which the decipherment and appreciation of Sereni’s work would be next-to-impossible in some instances.

In addition to providing valuable information regarding the date and circumstances of the publication of the poems in this anthology, the *Commentary* is extremely useful in describing the historical and biographical context, which is to say Sereni’s involvement in World War II and its aftermath, in both personal and social terms. Certain names, places, and phrases would not easily yield their meaning to the reader without the punctual explanations provided by the authors. To illustrate, such poem titles as “Strada di Zenna,” “Strada di Creva,” “Periferia 1940,” “3 dicembre,” “Il male d’Africa,” and “L’otto settembre” would be extremely difficult to decode were it not for the explanatory notes. In many instances, the title is deliberately preserved in the original Italian, leaving the English-language reader perplexed, until he or she reads the relevant gloss. This is the case with such titles as, “Mille miglia” and “Il piatto piange.” In addition, the authors identify the many italicized phrases, and clarify intertextual references; for example, they point out that the title “Nel vero anno zero” alludes to Roberto Rossellini’s film *Germania: Anno Zero*.

The volume also includes an important 29-page *Introduction* that elegantly weaves biography, social history, and a critical overview of each of Sereni’s major collections, namely *Frontiera* (Frontier), *Diario d’Algeria* (Algerian Diary), *Gli strumenti umani* (The Human Instruments), and *Stella variabile* (Variable Star). The prose selections are drawn from *Gli immediati dintorni* (The Immediate Surroundings), and include the previously untranslated short story *L’opzione* (The Option). Rounding out this fine book are 13 photographs both of the poet at various stages in his life and of the original manuscripts of the poetry collections.

One may take issue with some of the translation solutions, such as rendering “binari” with “lines” (p. 56), “fari” with “rays” (p. 62) and “semafori” with “signals” (p. 50). There are also instances of avoidable translation loss or gain, as when

the authors write: “Suddenly the evening seizes us” for “Improvvisa ci coglie la sera” (p. 62), in which the adverb “Suddenly” replaces the adjective “Improvvisa,” thereby producing a different effect in the target text. Something similar occurs in the translation of “Un altro ponte / sotto il passo m’incurvi ove a bandiere e culmini di case / è sospeso il tuo fiato, / città grave” as “Another bridge / beneath my feet you lead me / when from the flags / and house heights / our breath hangs, / grave city” (p. 48). The image of the curving bridge is lost here, while the “grave city” introduces connotative meaning that is not present in the Italian “grave.” The overall quality of the translation, however, is unquestioned and the authors do remarkably well to capture the diction, syntax, and allusiveness of the original.

The approximately 100 pages of prose translations are also of high quality and constitute a representative sampling of Sereni’s subtle reflections on his own experiences as a defeated Italian soldier and as a prisoner of war, as well as on the events pertaining to that period in history. The prose selections complement the poetry very well and give the reader a comprehensive view on the art and thought of a literary figure who merits greater critical attention outside of Italy.

CORRADO FEDERICI

Brock University

Cesare Pavese & Anthony Chiuminatto: Their Correspondence. Edited by Mark Pietralunga. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. Pp. 309. ISBN 0802092942. (Cloth) \$ 60.

La parabola creativa di Cesare Pavese romanziere assomiglia stranamente a quella del Salvatore Quasimodo poeta: entrambi sono stati quasi del tutto dimenticati. Un altro aspetto che li accomuna, ma questa volta in senso positivo, è la loro attività di traduttori. La notorietà del primo risiede nella magistrale resa in italiano di *Moby Dick*, quella del secondo va ravvisata nella versione dei *Lirici greci*.

Il volume curato da Mark Pietralunga sulla corrispondenza fra l'autore di *Lavorare stanca* e il giovane musicista di origine piemontese Anthony Chiuminatto ha lo scopo di gettare luce proprio sull'aspetto ancora poco noto del Pavese traduttore e ricercatore di termini e idiotismi d'oltreoceano. Gran parte degli scritti di Pavese indirizzati a Chiuminatto mi era già nota per via della scelta parziale fattane da Lorenzo Mondo e Italo Calvino per Einaudi nel 1968. Ricordo la delusione da me provata nel constatare che dall'edizione erano state omesse le lettere di Chiuminatto. Oggi questa lacuna è stata colmata grazie alla raccolta approntata da Pietralunga e contenente l'intero carteggio: 38 lettere di Chiuminatto, 31 di Pavese.

Le lettere — redatte in anglo-americano — trattano prevalentemente della difficoltà del cantore delle Langhe di procurarsi i libri che a lui più interessavano, e evidenziano la eccezionale disponibilità del musicista nel volere assecondare l'amico, conosciuto a Torino attorno al 1927. È dunque la storia di un sodalizio che si protrae per quattro anni, dal 29 novembre 1929 all'8 marzo 1933. Pavese si serve di Chiuminatto per entrare in possesso di opere più o meno recenti, in prosa e in