

About the electronic manuscript *Home*

The electronic manuscript *Home* is the result of my collaboration with the translator John Irons. In 1996, the Municipality of Odense published a dual language book *Odense* in Danish and English, with photographs by Peter Brandes and poems by Pia Tafdrup and myself. The book was designed for visitors to the city and was to give an impression of the city and the surrounding countryside.

John Irons translated a series of my poems from the collection *1001 Digt (1001 Poems)* (1995) for the book, and it was in this way we came into contact with each other. We discussed details concerning the translation and John Irons became interested in my authorship. I told him about my book *Hjem (Home)* (1985), which I claimed was untranslatable. I gave him a couple of examples from the centre track of the work, where the cybernetic system that structures the work twists language out of joint in what is almost 'the poetry of tongues', as in the following:

herrelse
vor herrelse
du som bandt os i
 nærslen
 du som samlede
os i værslen
 du som knyttede
 os i
 bogstavelsen
 du som bandt
os i menskeningen
 du bryder os
også kærlens segl
(s. 584)

lording
our lording
you who bound us in
 nearment
 you who gathered
us in beingment
 you who linked
 us in
 the letterment
 you who bound
us in the humaning
 you will also break
for us lovemement's seal

John Irons took up the challenge and began initially to translate individual sequences, but soon was involved in translating the entire work, which he was unable to let go until the translation was complete. We discussed the translation at weekly meetings, where John worked on his computer and updated the English translation to the point we had now reached. It was a significant and highly inspiring project for both of us and led us deep into the way in which Danish and English operate semantically in the formation of words; time and again we were confronted with the challenges of translation. The electronic manuscript is now available in a version that the reader can use and access, either in the form of sequences of poems or as a complete printed version for personal use. The starting and finishing points of any reading are also open, which actually reflects the original intention and execution of the work.

It is important to me that the work in which I have made use of a cybernetic and systemic form of writing in a very large scale is now accessible in a form that in fact corresponds to its fundamental form, i.e. an electronic manuscript.

Klaus Høeck 2005