

Конкурсное задание номинации «Лучший перевод художественной прозы с английского на русский язык» представлено в двух вариантах [на выбор!](#)

Вариант 1

(рекомендовано для возраста 12+)

Mark Gerson

«In the Classroom»

р. x-xix, p.91-94

[...] In the early spring of 1994 – my senior year at Williams College – I was faced with the same question college seniors all over the country face: What should I do next year?

[...] I decided at some point to go to law school. A lot of the people I respect in a variety of fields have law degrees, so it seemed like the right thing to do. In January of 1994 I applied to two law schools, Harvard and Yale, and was happy to be accepted at both. One visit to Yale confirmed what I had already heard: it is a friendly place with no grades. I decided to go there.

[...] Yale Law School has a generous deferral policy: once admitted, students can hold their spot while spending a couple of years working or obtaining a graduate degree. When this policy was explained to students who visited the campus in the spring, I became quite intrigued. I grew up in Short Hills, New Jersey, an affluent suburb of New York City in which nearly all adults have obtained the highest degree in their field from a top school. Success in Short Hills is so prevalent that children cannot help but grow up and think it perfectly ordinary. Not far from Short Hills, however, is a whole other world, a world in which people are terrorized by crime, saddled by poverty and without any of the sense of abundance that characterizes the part of America with which I was familiar. I wanted to learn all I could about this other place and perhaps help some kids as well. I decided to accept Yale's offer to take a sabbatical from the standard path of Short Hills residents and Williams graduates and to work in a different world.

I thought that I knew how to do this. During high school and college I had spent several summers working at a camp for poor, emotionally disturbed retarded children and adults from Irvington, Newark, East Orange, and Orange all cities within ten miles of my home.

[...] Intrigued by the possibility of spending more than a few months a year with the inner-city poor, I happened upon what I thought was the perfect opportunity: Governor Tom Kean's Alternative Route Program for New Jersey public schools. In this nationally heralded program, college graduates without education degrees could teach in a New Jersey public school while taking education courses at night and on Saturdays. The Alternative Route was a bold effort to bring dedicated and energetic people from various fields into the classroom, where they could share their expertise with schoolchildren. Thus, if Bill Clinton decided to teach high school history in New Jersey after leaving the presidency, the lack of an education degree would not stop him.

The requirements for participation in this program are minimal; all a prospective teacher needs is a college degree and a passing score on the National Teacher's Examinations. I returned from Williams to take this test, which I easily passed. The combination of my test score, my college grades, course work, recommendations, and my published articles amply demonstrated my competence to teach social studies and English.

[...] June passed, and July was doing the same when I ran across what seemed like a promising advertisement in the Star-Ledger: "History, English and Math teachers needed at St. Luke High School in Jersey City. Call 656-4127 and ask for Sister Theresa." Finally, what looked like a real possibility! I could actually talk with somebody!

I called at 9 A.M. the next morning, and the vice-principal, Paul Murphy, answered the phone. I told him that I was responding to the job offer.

"Okay, can you come in for an interview tomorrow?"

"An interview?"

"Yes, an interview. How's ten o'clock tomorrow?"

"Great!"

[...] The next morning I was shown into an office. A woman was sitting behind a metal desk on which neatly arranged papers and books were stacked.

[...] "Are you here for the interview?" the woman asked. She was a heavysset older woman, dressed in a beige blouse and a long blue skirt.

"Yes, I am. I am Mark Gerson."

[...] Her nameplate revealed that this was Sister Theresa, but where was her habit? As I found out later, sisters no longer wear their habits in school; they don't want to intimidate the students. Recovering from my surprise, I answered Sister Theresa's questions about my background: Where did I go to school? Did I have any teaching experience? What was it like at the camp I worked at? Sister Theresa seemed satisfied with our conversation and proceeded to tell me about the school: The 430 students came from forty-two different countries. More than half were on welfare. Some didn't speak English, few were white, and many were from broken homes.

[...] At 9 A.M. the next morning I received a call from Sister Theresa. Would I teach five sections of tenth-grade United States history?

Absolutely.

[...] And so I became a teacher at St.Luke and gradually developed a working relationship with my students and colleagues. I also learned about trust between teachers and students. The acquisition of trust is a gradual process that escapes easy articulation. The students who came to trust me and other teachers did so one by one for unique reasons and in different ways. One day when I got back to my classroom, I was greeted by Rosalita. She was one of the best students in 10Y, but I was a bit concerned to see her. In early October Rosalita had given me a note saying that someone in her class was anorexic. She wouldn't tell me who, so I suspected her. I asked her a few days later, and she said I was correct. Throughout the month, we took long walks before and after school to discuss her family situation and her eating problems. On my recommendation she had started counseling, and it seemed to be going very well.

"It is not about me," she assured me. "It is about Charles."

"Charles. What about Charles?"

"Charles," she said, waiting for a few moments, "took a lot of pills last night."

"Do you mean..."

"I mean he tried to kill himself. And he took so much he almost did it. I'm not a doctor or nothin', but he took too many pills."

"Oh God."

"And he told me."

"What did you tell him?"

I told him that he ought to get help. He said he knew, but would only talk to you. But you know Charles, Mr. Gerson, he's too shy, so he wouldn't come on his own. I told him I would tell you first."

"Rosalita, you're an angel. I'll get him now."

"Want me to come?"

"No, Charles and I better handle this alone. We'll get you later if it's appropriate."

I sought out Charles during lunch. "Charles," I said catching up to him after ten minutes of looking, "why don't you have lunch with me in my room today?"

"Well, okay, Mr. Gerson." We walked up the stairs, making small talk and knowing that our conversation would immediately become extremely serious as soon as my classroom door shut behind us, guaranteeing privacy.

"Charles," I said as soon as we were safely in my room, "I know what happened. Rosalita told me."

I waited for his response, but he didn't say anything. Instead, he began to cry softly. I put my arm around him, pulling him close to me. He began to cry even harder. "Charles," I said softly.

"Charles, really, we have got to continue this after school. Twenty-five students will enter this room in about two minutes, and they shouldn't see you like this." He composed himself after about a minute and said that he would come back after school.

When Charles returned to my room after the last period of the day, he had calmed down considerably. His speech was still broken by a teary cadence, but he made his points nevertheless. Charles had no father and lived with his mother and three younger siblings. His older brother, Bill, to whom he was very close, had been shot to death the year before. Bill, who was not involved in anything criminal, had been shot in a dispute over a woman outside his apartment. After Bill's death his mother had experienced wild mood swings and spent most of her time in depression. Responsibility for the three younger children – ages six, nine, and ten – fell to Charles, who was simply overwhelmed.

After discussing his situation for about an hour, Charles concluded with a demand: "Mr. Gerson, maybe I should have said this when we started talking. But you can't tell my mother."

"Okay, Charles, I won't."

"And you can't tell anyone else, either."

"Charles, I think it would be really helpful if you let me speak to Mr. Murphy or Mr. Siderville. Both like you a lot and are as concerned as I am about you. They would help you and would help me to help you as well."

"Mr. Gerson, please. I don't want you to tell anyone. Just between me and you. I wouldn't have told you if it could not be kept a secret."

At first I agreed not to tell anyone. It was good that Charles had at least been able to confide in me. But I wanted backup; I was required by law to obtain it. Teachers must report suicide attempts, both to ensure that the child receives proper mental health treatment and to protect themselves. If, God forbid, Charles had subsequently harmed himself and a friend of his then said, "Mr. Gerson knew that Charles was thinking about it, and Mr. Gerson didn't tell anybody" well, the ensuing nightmare is apparent enough. When I first heard this rule, I thought it was rather cold but I then realized that it was, in our litigious climate, essential and would not harm any child.

"Charles," I said, "I would greatly appreciate you letting me talk to Mr. Siderville and Mr. Murphy. I will swear them to secrecy, and we won't do a thing without telling you."

"No, Mr. Gerson," he demanded, "Like I said before, I don't want you to tell anyone."

"Charles, look now. You trusted me to help you, and I want to do just that. Now let me. Mr. Siderville and Mr. Murphy can help you get counseling, permanent counseling, even lasting through the summer. Of course, you will be able to see me and talk to me whenever you want. You have my home number, and I encourage you to keep using it. But I won't be around all the time and I may be unreachable by phone for a couple of days for some reason during the summer. You trusted me to help you, and you have to let me do what I know is best. "

Charles reluctantly assented, and I told Paul Murphy. I had told Nathan Siderville the day before, without Charles's permission. I had few qualms about breaking my word with Charles because I trusted Nathan Siderville completely. He was a kind, compassionate, and competent man who would know how to help Charles – and how to help me help Charles. As I expected, Nathan told me to keep on seeing Charles and to come to him for advice whenever I wanted. What Charles told me would remain in confidence until the boy was ready to speak to someone else. At that point we would refer Charles to a counselor (as we had done with Rosalita), and I would continue to be available to him as well. I gave

Charles my phone number (as I had done with Rosalita). I told Nathan Siderville that I had done this, and he said it was fine. Rosalita had never abused having my number, and I did not think Charles would, either. I was right. We spoke several times over the Christmas break, and Charles agreed to see a counselor when school resumed in January.

(Gerson, M. In the Classroom: Dispatches from an Inner-City School that Works / Mark Gerson. - New York ; L. ; Toronto ; Sydney ; Singapore : The Free Press, 1997. - 258 p.)

Вариант 2
(рекомендовано для возраста 18+)

Miss Read

«Emily Davis»

p. 127-147

Billy remained an only child, and a highly satisfactory one. He was almost thirteen when his father returned from the war and working well at the grammar school. He had found the transition from the little school at Springbourne to the large boys' school somewhat unnerving, but by the time his father came back he had settled down and was enjoying the work.

Eventually, he gained a place at Cambridge, obtained a good class Honours degree, and became a mining engineer. His work took him all over the world, but at the time of Emily Davis's death he was in Scotland with his wife and two children. His assignment there was for approximately two years, and the Doves had rented a house for that time. The job was an interesting one. On the site of a long disused coal mine, other mineral deposits had been discovered, but at a depth and angle which made them difficult to work. It was Billy Dove's job to overcome the problem.

He had been chosen expressly for it by his firm because he had done so well on a similar project for the Italian government. On the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily, certain minerals had been discovered in the volcanic rock which were of great interest to the chemical industry. Billy found the work arduous but fascinating. He was at work there for six weeks, and there was a possibility of returning for a further month when the drilling had reached the second stage. It was a prospect which he viewed with mixed feelings. For, to his mingled delight and guilt, sensible, steady Billy Dove, devoted husband and father, regular church-goer and wise counsellor to those asking his advice, had fallen head over heels in love with a girl in Sicily. Her name was Mary.

[...] In the days that followed, Billy felt himself the battleground of conflicting emotions, and very exhausting he found it. He had been a fairly uncomplicated character for almost forty years, distrusting violent emotion, and impatient with those who seemed to have no control of their feelings. He had met many "philanderers" in his travels, and had a hearty dislike of them. Those who boasted of their conquests he found doubly boring. They did not impress Billy Dove. "Time you grew up," he would tell them, yawning, and walk away.

And here he was, behaving in exactly the same way. The guilt he felt when he thought of his disloyalty to Sarah and the boys was overwhelming, but only momentarily so. It was swept away by this new wave of fierce, youthful, exulting happiness. Before its onslaught he was powerless.

Mary's passion matched his own. It was as though, with so little time before them, their love had an added urgency. They spent every possible hour together, turning their minds away from the inexorable advance of the day of Billy's departure, like children who hide their eyes from a wounding light. The town of Taormina, and the golden girl, were heartrendingly beautiful when that last day came. "You'll come back? Say you'll come back!" pleaded Mary, clinging to him. "You know I can't promise that," said Billy. She knew about Sarah and their two children, and he had been careful not to raise her hopes by telling her of the possibility of further work on the site. Cruel though it seemed, they must make the break.

[...] But the decision to make a clean break with Mary was seriously undermined when a letter arrived from his firm asking him to return to the Sicilian site for the second stage of the work. What did he feel? What did he feel, echoed Billy! He put the letter to the side of his breakfast plate, and gazed out at the wooded Scottish hillside. In the garden John and Michael raced round and round pursued by a floppy-eared puppy. There were his two fine boys, full of roaring high spirits. He must do nothing to hurt them. He looked across the table to Sarah, immersed in *The Caxley Chronicle* which had arrived with the morning letters. She looked very young and defenceless, despite her thirty-odd years, in her blue and white cotton frock. A little frown of concentration furrowed her smooth brow. "There's an Emily Davis in the "Deaths"," she remarked. "Could it be your old teacher?" "I should have thought

she'd died years ago," remarked Billy absently, his mind on his problem. "Well, she was eighty-four," said Sarah, her eyes still fixed on the paper. "Died at Beech Green. Might well be, don't you think?"

She looked up. Billy was standing at the window, gazing into the garden. It was apparent that he had not heard her remarks. She was accustomed to his complete withdrawal from the world around him when his mind was perplexed, and was not unduly upset.

"Heavens, it's late!" she cried. She ran to the open window and called to the boys.

Billy shook his head, as though he had just emerged from deep water. He put his arms round her swiftly and kissed her with sudden fierceness. Sarah laughed. "Don't dally, darling," she said, "or the boys will be late for school."

Within two minutes, the three were in the Land- Rover waving goodbye to Sarah at the window.

The village school stood back from the road with a wide green verge before it. As Billy drew up, the bell was clanging from the little bell-tower, and the children were already forming lines ready to lead in. The two boys gave him hasty wet kisses, scrambled down, and raced to join their fellows. The schoolmaster was a stickler for punctuality. He waited to see them take their places in the lines. John turned towards him and gave an enormous wink of triumph, as if to say: 'Done it!', just as the lanky form of the headmaster appeared at the school door.

Amused, Billy drove off slowly. There was a lot to be said for a village school education when one was eight, robust and cheerful.

He had been eight, he remembered sharply, when he was at Beech Green Village School. But, though he may have been robust, he had been far from cheerful at that time because his seaman father was presumed killed. What would he have done without Emily Davis just then? And she was dead? Is that what Sarah said this morning? Eighty-four, and at Beech Green? That would be Emily Davis, without doubt. He sighed deeply. She was a grand old girl! His thoughts strayed to another phase of his school life when, as a bewildered eleven-year-old, Emily Davis had come, once more, to the rescue.

The transition from the tiny world of Springbourne to the comparatively large one of Caxley upset the boy more than he would admit. Instead of racing the few yards along the village street from his home to the school, he now had to rise much earlier and catch a bus into the town. His comfortable hand-knitted jerseys and flannel shorts, now gave way to a grey flannel suit with long trousers. Black laced shoes, polished overnight, took the place of easy well-worn sandals, and on his head he wore the familiar Caxley Grammar school cap, with much pride, but some irritation – for wasn't it just one more thing to take care of, and to remember to bring home at night? At times, young Billy felt burdened with all these belongings. They weighed as heavily upon him as the shining new leather satchel which bumped against his hip as he walked. He was bewildered too by the sheer size of his new school and by the hundreds of boys. When you have been one of forty or fifty children at school assembly, and one among only twenty or so in the classroom, it is unnerving to be cast among four hundred-odd boys, all larger than oneself. To Billy, some of the prefects were men. Certainly, some of them looked quite as mature as some of the young masters. They filled the boy with awe with their tasselled caps, their gruff voices and their sheer size when they passed him in the corridors. The standard of work, too, presented a problem. At Springbourne School he had held his own with little effort. Now he was among boys brighter than himself. There were new subjects to tackle, such as French, Latin and Algebra. At times, sitting at the cottage table, with his homework books spread out in the light of the Aladdin lamp, he came near to despair. Would his mind ever be able to hold all this mass of new knowledge?

But it was the affair of the conkers which brought all his troubles to a head. Billy had always loved the glossy beauties which tumbled from the Springbourne trees in the autumn gales. He collected them with the eye of a connoisseur, and Billy Dove was recognised by the other boys as a champion in the conker-playing field. He was delighted to find a stout horse-chestnut tree on the way from Caxley station to the school, and he filled his new jacket pockets with some splendid specimens. At playtime (which he tried, in vain, to remember to call 'break' now), he turned out his collection on the grass of the school field and, squatting down, began to sort them out for size. At that moment, a shadow fell across him, and looking up he saw one of the prefects who was on duty.

"Whose are these?" said he disparagingly. "Mine," said Billy, blinking against the sunlight.

"Stand up when you talk to me." Billy obeyed briskly. "What are these for?" continued the lofty one.

"To play with." "To play with", mimicked the older boy. "You'd better learn pretty smartly that we don't play kids' games like conkers here. Chuck them away." "But why?" began, Billy rebelliously.

"Don't argue. Throw them in the dustbin. And pronto!" "Can't I take them home?" The prefect took hold of Billy's left ear, and twisted it neatly. "You talk too much, young feller. Do as you're told or I'll report you. And pick up every one. Understood? If they get in the school mower old Taffy'll murder you." Furious at heart, Billy collected the shining conkers, grieving over the satin skins so soon to wither in the dustbin. The prefect accompanied Billy to the dustbin and watched him deposit his treasures.

This happened on a Friday. He returned home, moody and pale-faced, his satchel heavier than ever with weekend homework, and his heart heavier still. His mother was wise enough to refrain from questioning, but she watched anxiously as the boy fiddled about with his exercise books at the table, obviously unable to concentrate. He slammed them together eventually, and spent the rest of the evening slumped in a chair with a library book. There was still a good deal of work to be done, his mother knew. Usually, Billy tried to get the major part of it polished off before the weekend began, but it was plain that he was in no mood to tackle it tonight.

He was little better next morning, and his mother sent him to the village shop for some goods. It was there that he met Miss Davis, also armed with a basket. Her quick glance noted the heavy eyes and unusually sulky mouth. "How's school?" she asked amiably. "All right," said Billy perfunctorily. "Lots of prep?" "Too much. Much too much." Billy sighed. Miss Davis felt a pang of pity. "Have you got time to help me saw some logs this afternoon?" Billy's face brightened. "Yes. I'd like to. What time?" "Any time after two. Ask your mother if she can spare you for a couple of hours. I'd be glad of a hand." She packed her basket neatly, smiled at Billy, and departed. Cheered at the prospect of some physical activity, Billy set about his shopping in better spirits.

Clad in his comfortable old jersey and shorts, Billy reported for work at a quarter past two. Emily was already hard at it, at the end of the garden, saw in hand. "My poor old apple tree," she told him, pointing the saw at the fallen monster. "It's been rocking for two or three years, and last week's gale heeled it over." "We'll never get through the trunk with these saws," observed Billy. "No need to. It's just the branches we'll have to do. A man's coping with the main part next weekend."

They applied themselves zealously to the smaller branches. Billy found the work wonderfully exhilarating. The smell of the sawn wood was refreshing, and a light breeze kept him cool. He enjoyed stacking the logs in Emily's tumble-down shed, and made a tidy job of it. The rough bark, grey-green with lichen, was pleasant to handle, and his spirits rose as the stack grew higher and higher. "It will probably be enough for the whole winter," he said, sniffing happily. Emily straightened up and, hands on hips, looked at their handiwork with satisfaction. "Easily, Billy."

She gave a swift glance at the boy, now flushed and panting with his exertions. "Have you had enough, or shall we finish the job?" "Let's finish," said Billy decidedly. They worked on in companionable silence. Sawdust blew across the grass, as the saws bit rhythmically through the branches. By half past four the job was done, and only the twigs and chips remained to be collected into a box for kindling wood. "I've got two blisters!" laughed Emily, holding out her hands. "I haven't," said Billy proudly, surveying his own grimy hands. "We deserve some tea," said his old headmistress, leading the way to the house.

It was over home-made fruit cake and steaming cups of tea that Billy told his tale. He had never felt any shyness in Emily's presence, and their shared labours that afternoon made it easier for him to speak, as Emily had intended. There was little need for her to probe. The boy was glad to find someone to talk to, and the new problems came tumbling out. They were not new, of course, to Emily Davis. She had seen many children in the same predicament. There were very few, in fact, who went on to the large Caxley schools from Springbourne, who did not find the journey, the pace of work and the numbers

surrounding them, as daunting as young Billy did. And then came the sorry tale of the conkers. If Billy had expected sympathy, he was to be surprised. Emily took the account of his discomfiture with brisk matter-of-factness. "If "no conkers" is a school rule – although I doubt it – you must just abide by it. Nothing to stop you enjoying a game at home, anyway. And as for that prefect, well, you'll find people like that everywhere, and he was only trying to do his duty, poor young man." "Poor young man", indeed, thought Billy resentfully! But he had the sense to remain silent. Emily refilled his tea-cup and went on to talk, as though at random, of the difficulties of adjusting oneself to new situations. Billy was soon aware that he was not the only person to have suffered growing pains. It was true, as Miss Davis said, that one's world grew bigger every so often. It was an ordeal to leave home for one's first school; it was a bigger one to change to a larger school, as he had just done. "And then you'll plunge into a deeper pool still, if you go to a university", said Emily, "and probably nearly drown when you dive into the world of work after that! But you'll survive, Billy, you'll see, and be able to help a great many other young people who are busy jumping from one pool to the next and floundering now and again!"

It was all said so light-heartedly that it was not until many years later that Billy realised how skilfully the lesson had been imparted. At the time, he was only conscious of comfort and the resurgence of his natural high spirits, and put both down to energetic sawing in the open air, and Emily's excellent fruit cake. At the gate, Billy turned and surveyed the old familiar playground next door. "I wish I were back", he said impulsively. Emily shook her head, smiling. "You don't really. You're much too big a fish for that little pond now, and I think you are beginning to know it."

She looked at Billy thoughtfully. "What was the name of that prefect?" Billy told her. She was silent for a minute, and then seemed to come to a decision. "I'm going to tell you something which you must keep to yourself, but I think you can do it, and I think it will help you." "I can keep a secret", promised Billy "That boy went from Fairacre School to Caxley. The family moved later, but this is what I want you to know. Miss Clare told me that he was so upset in his first term that his parents thought he might have to leave. From what you tell me, he seems to be keeping afloat in his bigger pond now." "He's unsinkable!" commented Billy ruefully. "Well, think about it. I've only told you because I believe it might help you to understand people. But not a word to anyone, Billy." "Not a word", he echoed solemnly, and ran home with half a crown as wages in his hand, and new-found hope in his heart.

Wisps of white mist were drifting in from the sea as Billy Dove drove his Land-Rover over the rutted site to his office. The sun was almost blotted out now, faintly discernible now and again, riding moon-like through the ragged clouds. Billy hated this sea-mist, which local people called "the haar", which swept in unpredictably and wrapped the countryside in icy veils. He shivered as he entered the small granite house where his office was situated on the ground floor. He was the first to arrive. He took out the letter and read it again. Taormina! And Mary! Gazing into the swirling whiteness outside, he longed to return to the sunshine, the flowers, the cypress trees – and, above all, to the warmth and love of Mary. It would be so easy to return, and have a week or two of utter happiness in the sun. God, it was tempting! He stood up suddenly, hands in pockets, and went to the window. Coins jingled as he turned his loose change over and over in his nervousness. This was a situation he must face alone. No wise old Miss Davis to turn to now. He gave an impatient snort of derision. What would Emily Davis know, anyway, of a man's feelings? Much use she would be to him with a problem like this. Her advice would come out ready-made, as automatically as a packet from a slot machine. "Your duty, my boy, is to your wife and children! The rest is temptation. It is SIN, put before you by the devil himself." How simple life must have been to those old Victorians with their rigid rules of conduct! But how much they must have missed! He faced about, turning his back upon the blank whiteness now shrouding the hill side in impenetrable clammy fog. Nevertheless, it was the only course to take. He had made up his mind to stay in Scotland as soon as he read the letter. Temptation, the devil, Emily Davis and all the other faintly ridiculous issues which clouded his mind, at the moment, as confusingly as the mist outside, made no difference to his decision. He had made the break with Mary. He would not go back. He smiled as he drew a piece of writing paper towards him. He would remain in Scotland. The decision was made and, bitter though it was, it was the right one. One thing, Miss Davis would approve.