



by Anna Battaglia



This article describes a teaching/learning experience: the translation of the first story from *La Maison de Claudine* (*My Mother's House*) by Colette (1922), *Où sont les enfants*, where the female narrator describes a place from her childhood, at a distance of forty years. It is only through careful reading, aimed at bringing to light the key features of the text, that one can arrive at a relevant, responsible translation. The issues that arose in discussion with the students concerned the lexis (personification of inanimate objects and plants); the syntax of the verb, which is affected by the time lapse between the moment of writing and the events narrated; Colette's uniquely personal use of the French language, exploiting its flexibility to the limits to satisfy her need for ellipsis and allusiveness; identification of the points of reference used by the memory to process recollections that lie deep within the mind and are brought to life by the narrative act.

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