

**V i o l e n c e  
o f t h e  
W h i t e P a g e**

**C o n t e m p o r a r y F r e n c h P o e t r y**

*T y u o n y i 9 / 1 0*  
1 9 9 1

edited by Stacy Doris, Phillip Foss, Emmanuel Hocquard

# Contents

Introduction, Stacy Doris	/ 6
Anne-Marie Albiach	/ 11
Pierre Alferi	/ 12
G�rard Arseguel	/ 16
Andr� du Bouchet	/ 19
Olivier Cadiot	/ 27
Danielle Collobert	/ 34
Michel Couturier	/ 35
Edith Dahan	/ 40
Jean Daive	/ 41
Michel Deguy	/ 43
Jacques Dupin	/ 46
Claude Esteban	/ 47
Claude Fa�n	/ 51
Dominique Fourcade	/ 56
Jean Fr�mon	/ 57
Liliane Giraudon	/ 60
Roger Giroux	/ 66
Joseph Guglielmi	/ 72
Jean-Luc Herrison	/ 76
Emmanuel Hocquard	/ 80
Edmond Jab�s	/ 81
Leslie Kaplan	/ 82
Alain Lance	/ 89
Pascal Monnier	/ 98
Marcelin Pleyne	/ 103
Anne Portugal	/ 121
Pascal Quignard	/ 127
Jacqueline Risset	/ 131
Denis Roche	/ 135
Jacques Roubaud	/ 137
Agn�s Rouzier	/ 139
Claude Royet-Journoud	/ 142
Esther Tellerman	/ 144
Jean Tortel	/ 149
Alain Veinstein	/ 152
Jean-Jacques Viton	/ 166
Contributors	/ 170

*Tyonyi 9/10: Violence of the White page, Contemporary French Poetry* was originally published in 1991.

All work in this issue is copyright © by the respective authors and / or translators.

Acknowledgements: The editors would like to thank the following individuals whose advice and assistance made this volume possible: Pierre Alferi, Paul Auster, Norma Cole, Antoine Compagnon, Daria Faïn, Dominique Fourcade, Serge Gavronsky, Robert Kocik, Christopher Merrill, Michael Palmer, James Sherry, Joseph Simas, Roxanne Teboul-Boitano, Chet Wiener.

In memory of Edmond Jabès

Dedicated to Rosmarie Waldrop

Violence of the White Page

Stacy Doris  
Preface

American readers have often admired particular aspects of recent French poetry while viewing it overall as too sparse, lacking in substance; ultimately questionable with regard to form and content. To realize the extent of the French language's circumscription within French national culture, it seems useful to distort the categories, and consider French poetry in terms of its *forum* and *context*. Certainly most languages are tied to communities, but a social and political identity would bear more strictly on the language in France, whose development as a country is linked with governmental cultivation and regulation of means of expression, than in the US, where tradition entails a relatively composite, less determinate language being adopted by disparate populations. While French can be clearly traced back to an institutional stabilization of preponderantly Latin roots, a morphological reduction of the English language creates nothing narrower than a historical and evolving field of political and cultural interactions. For poetry, the French forms were finalized by the Academy in the seventeenth century, and served until they were effectively eulogized in the late nineteenth century. Poetry in English, in contrast, offers few indigenous forms and a range of prosodic dilemmas to choose from. Linguistic similarities as well as centuries of exchanging literary influences foster manifold points of comparison between French and American poetry. However, it is hoped that the following consideration of the *differences* between French and American poetry, from prosodic, conceptual, and national standpoints, will help the translations in this volume to be considered in their own light.

I. Forum

The advent of free verse in France more or less meant, as Mallarmé proclaimed, that writing assumed the liberty to express and modulate thought directly. Once the syllabic alexandrine was broken, it was viable for French writers to explore the properties of fluidity and duration in words. Time was no longer imposed in a sequence of numbered syllables; writing could now chart time in a Bergsonian sense, as sonorous, resonant duration. In part to open a field for exploring this new mapping, formal poetic closure was increasingly deferred, so that a sense of the book came to outweigh the page as an underlying criterion of unity. But the transposition of free verse into American poetry, undertaken by Pound and others, did not allow for a similarly absolute freeing of form. Unlike the syllabic French, verse in English is traditionally accentual-syllabic: each word and phrase contains inherent rhythmic as well as syllabic value. Once the measure was broken, therefore, the metric problem was aggravated. Pound's resultant quest, "to break iamb," proved inexhaustible. There may be an infinite number of ways to break the iamb; and endless series of variations in terms of which it reforms. But this field of possibilities which must be navigated between thought and expression precludes the seamless gesture which French writing develops.

While French free verse worked to displace the constructed rhythmic emphases of the line on to a more organic, less clear-cut tension of the book or overall poetic entity, the natural stresses of the English language, in contrast, held within the words, forcing metric issues to be examined on a per-line basis. The break with prosodic conventions thus led American writers to focus all the more closely on the internal structuring of

poems. American free verse in this way encouraged a heightened poetic commitment to building or operating within a corporeal presence on the page, even when the corpus is constructed from fragments or chance inclusions. Since the forms of poetry in English have never been strictly “native,” poets have sometimes felt both less need to reject them and more interest in subverting them through internal experimentation. Free verse, while inaugurating French poetry’s prosodic independence, generally brought American writers an individualized sense of formal responsibility.

In the decades following World War II, both artistically and politically, the traditional forms must have seemed reactionary to French poets. René Char wrote, “The genius of man, who thinks he has discovered the formal truths, reconciles the truths that kill with truths that *authorize* killing.” A feeling of social exigency as well as literary imperatives produced the poems which emanate on the page as thought or strict perception, lexically sparse, spatially expressive of the durations of breath and sound. Such work, often tenaciously phenomenological as in the writing of Michel Couturier, distrusts volubility. Its form unfolds a measure for the truthfulness and accuracy of words by subjecting them to the pressures of description and isolation.

In the 1960s, the collectives which came together around the new journals helped sway French writing to a more expansive formality. The *Tel Quel* collective advocated writing in which discursively theoretical, fictive, poetic, scientific, and conversational textualities are simultaneously employed, while the *Change* group both promoted an awareness of American and international trends, and probed issues of prosody. Interaction between French and American writers has also led French writers to entertain new possibilities for a more solid formality. As with any kind of mutual recognition, the correspondence between French and American writing may make the two more formally intelligible to each other.

Much recent writing, both French and American, has been constructed with an awareness of silence. In America, silence has been felt more in the interstices of texts, as a menace threatening the continuity of language; the “other” of writing. For the writing of consciousness, silence means the end of consciousness, and some poets have experimented with delaying or betraying this end. In French writing, and in some American writing as well, silence has been addressed more as an internal than external pressure. Since French writing more often takes the word over the sentence as a minimal increment of meaning and the book over the poem as a unit for closure, it can explore silence within the sentence with impunity, deploying phrases as suspended movement over the page. Ideally, the words assume duration when they are projected as contingent but no longer dependent on sequence. French writers have been influenced by American experiments with duration. But since the French language recognizes no metric strictures within words, it affords an examination of duration which is unencumbered and can actually serve as a basis for measure.

The use of white space, which might be taken to indicate poetic disembodiment, actually functions in French poetry as the trace of physicality, intended at times as breath. The spaces break syntax, not form, often to dramatize the possibilities of recombination. The sense of absent presence articulated by white space may work to emphasize continuity rather than fragmentation, because it introduces a heightened anticipation. This element of suspense can reside in the play of articulation against breath, disjunction against continuity. Suspense inserts a strong formal pivot in the poem, since the vertigo it produces requires a corporeal awareness to apprehend it. Recent interests in the unwritten components behind texts, including literary and psychological underpinnings of language, also dramatizes the absence of such factors from the surface level of writing.

At present, fewer writers are fundamentally rejecting the notion of form. Joseph Guglielmi, for one, works with traditional French forms in order to test their limits experimentally. For most French writing, this new ambivalence does not approach the general American sense of commitment to form; it takes shape more as curiosity about further possibilities. The poems of Pierre Alferi, for example, exhibit a formal interest which is central yet shifting and tenuous.

## II. Context

In our present American context, the effects of war on every aspect of culture are easy to disregard and hard to overemphasize. It is worth considering, then, that the most determining factors in recent French and American writing stem from World War II and its aftermath. The writers included in this issue were either young or not yet born when the events of the War molded the relations which inform their work. For France, the War means early defeat, invasion, underground resistance, sometimes perfidious cooperation, subjugation, physical reduction and depletion. For America, the same War was more a story of struggle abroad, triumph, liquidation of the enemy, and the magnanimous role of the liberator. To Americans even now, the War seems somehow incredible, nearly fantastic. Books proliferate over the possibilities of how Auschwitz could ever have occurred, and how the US emerged as a world power. For France, the War remains something primarily unspeakable. Rather than hypothesizing and retracting, the national response has been a guarded silence. Although the majority of the French population and its leaders sought to disregard the scars of war and the collaboration under German occupation, such a silence in the literary work often articulates not a belief in forgetting but rather a profound mistrust in words and their power to explain or ameliorate.

These two reactions, the American expansive and inquisitive and the French hermetic, almost lapidary, introspective, bear directly on writing since World War II. For French writing, this becomes clear in a comparison of Surrealist and post-war attitudes. Breton and others were passionate about Hegel and Marx, and *engagés* to the extent that they at times sacrificed the autonomy they held paramount in order to work within the Communist Party. But while the Dadaists and Surrealists advocated automatic, collective approaches to literary production and thought, they still envisioned a resultant freedom that was personalized. In other words, the Surrealist critique of the self aimed to expand the limits of individual selfhood. But the fact of war rendered anterior dreams of social change useless. Post-war intellectuals and artists rejected the Surrealists as dangerously uncommitted because the cultural alternatives they proposed seemed to have failed with the advent of war. The post-war generation criticized the pre-war value placed on personal freedom. After the war the only remaining possibility seemed to be a collective social freedom won through cooperative efforts. This ideal called into question the individualized pursuit of freedom.

After the war in France, it seemed clear that fascism is fueled by the glorification of some particular, symbolic, self, as in the Nazi veneration of Hitler. In addition to their reaction to the political self and their active support of socialist movements, the post-war writers expressed a mistrust of the fundamental self of automatism and pure imagination. The rejection of Surrealism by the generation of writers which came through World War II replaced the vision of a fully autonomous self with a contingent self that functions in terms of relation. From this standpoint isolated consciousness is nothingness; the self can only be formulated in terms of



otherness. The post-war poetry of René Char's followers, including André du Bouchet and Jacques Dupin, consists of fragmentation, reduction, and an insistent focus on the constitution of language. Such work expresses consciousness as a series of inscrutable sparks rather than a continuum. The writing seems pulled toward speechlessness and builds by refusing a palpable urge to silence.

When the injustices of Stalinism became apparent, disillusioned French thinkers and writers began to turn away from strict political allegiance to develop a critique of systems. The Structuralists joined Saussurian linguistic methodology with a reevaluation of Marx and Freud in terms of their uncovering of underlying structures. Structuralism in part replaced a trust in the ideal of social unity with an exploration of methodological congruency. Structuralist poetry, best represented by the bulk of Jacques Roubaud's work, explores contextualization in the generating of elaborate writing structures which often function as schematic games to be played out. Parameters and game rules rather than an individual largely determine form, which in turn determines content. Structuralist experiments provided new formal possibilities for American as well as French poetry.

In a way, for Structuralist literary thinkers, the text thoroughly supplants self. Distrust of the resultant text-in-self or text-as-self is partly what led Tel Quel and other groups in the sixties to try breaking down the text and categories of textuality to the point where such poets as Jacqueline Risset, Denis Roche, and Marcelin Pleynet declared the end of the poem as a separate genre. These writers sought to dissolve the limits of the poem by making it of a piece with theoretical, narrative, and other material; inextricably literary and political at once. This project coincided with Jabès' *Livre des Questions*. Written in light of the Holocaust, Jabès' undertaking emphasizes the inseparability of writing and human life. It regards the adherence to genres within the book framework as threatening to the growth of expressibility and therefore a prelude to literary, and consequently social, genocide.

Once the general concept of the book was expanded, material formerly considered personal—the sexual, the psychological—reemerged as complexly pertinent. This propels the work of Agnès Rouzier and Anne-Marie Albiach. The writing of Claude Royet-Journoud is deconstructive in that its presence is contingent on textual self-destruction. The work is what remains from the annihilation of a sizeable body of prose which the writer churns out and then cuts down to locate “minimal units of meaning.”

When absence becomes so particularly present in a text, the writer is thrown into reflection on the ludicrousness, the near-impossibility of writing as an activity. The sense of satire and humor which has functioned in the writing of Olivier Cadiot, Alain Lance, Pascalle Monnier, Leslie Kaplan, and many others responds to this absurdity uncovered in writing. But irony, ironically, cannot be expressed without the positing of self-consciousness. The self that begins to surface in this writing, then, is the dramatic self, the self best-suited to irony.

Throughout its tradition, the self insinuated to varying degrees in French poetry tends to be theatrical where the self of American poetry can tend to be more confessional. This relates to the general distinction wherein a project of French writing is often the charting of thought (inherently from the self) while American writing more often charts consciousness (implicitly of the self). The separation collapses in the light of much experimental writing, but is to an extent perpetuated by the national stances which followed World War II: the

US's aggressive policies versus the French gamut inclusive of uncertainty and dissembling. While Baudelaire's and Mallarmé's explorations of 'theatre' influence recent French writing, Aragon brings up a central issue in his relating theatre and collage. In Aragon's explanation of collage, "the painter borrows a personage from an old illustration, just as the playwright uses a flesh and blood actor...But the drama lies in that *conflict* of disparate elements when they are reunited in a real form where their own reality is displaced." From this point, the parallel between theatre and metaphor becomes clear: they both represent the conflict resulting from a juxtaposition of disparate elements. Drama is thus meta-metaphorical, and the suspension of a body of words on the page constitutes a poetics by exposing the contradictions of its own composition. In a poetics of conflict, the poem emerges as a struggle for its internal survival. This can generate a formal groping in which stripped-down elements attempt to hook into the field of the page. Words become sparse because the white page has substance, a sort of flesh with which words variously interact. This is radically different from what is considered the traditional English and American approach in which the poem is a substance or body to be transposed on the empty page.

With its theatrical orientation, recent French writing has often taken English and American writing, from Shakespeare to Michael Palmer, as an interlocutor or audience. We have not been passive as spectators, and some interesting interchanges result. Stevens' lovely, once provocative assertion that "French and English constitute a single language" has become an adage. This collection of translations offers, in effect, an extensive group of interpretations, on the part of vital French, American, and English poets, concerning operative possibilities and levels of interaction between our languages.

—Stacy Doris

Anne-Marie Albiach

A Small Boat is Burning on the Banks of the Port

Her being unaware that she would never know that again

trans. Joseph Simas

Pierre Alferi

from *Les Allures Naturelles*

I.

when nothing entices nothing  
stirs beyond inertia  
becomes agitation impulse aiming at  
nothing but a nothing in the  
way and the slightest contact  
reverses the directional flow (ignorant  
of being observed through two windows, a stranger  
dresses, undresses, sits, gets up, lifts up, sets down  
the receiver): first the incoherence  
of suspended particles  
then the period. An ordinary movement  
filmed in video  
a gesture replayed, its space  
run through in every direction like  
a break-dance whose surface is only  
the other side of the reverse, is already  
something else: a form  
impassive crystalline.

2.

unlike the kaleidoscope  
where tinted glass  
slivers shake, the tomascope  
paves a field of hexagons  
by cutting triangles  
it reverses  
over each side.  
An unfolded detail  
whose edges become axes  
of symmetry.

3.

just this side of a certain pace  
the equilibrium is broken. The sound of the piece  
on its edge reaching the end turning tales  
or heads, spinning on the tangent  
sound that hesitates to sound  
that concentrates and that renounces  
is recognizable anywhere  
like the gasp of the needle when the arm  
rushes to the center and the record  
holds still. Then  
it's not a matter of starting up  
the speed again but of placing the arm  
the head on the fulcrum to see  
contagion spread  
to drop everything that moves: unbreakable bodies  
in silent films (wobbling  
images, indolent  
sound track).

4.

unconstrained movement  
is a state (quasisolid—  
the back and forth the same  
to the same place polish it  
burnish it) and what remains  
a pavement.

trans. Chet Wiener

Gérard Arseguel

from *Portrait of a Heart Under Clouds*

Not Really

What lovely  
paths  
    with woods  
radiant  
    with branches more  
or less

---

What red heat  
    dancing  
under cover  
    of flat desert  
    in time  
    for coffee  
on earth

---

that runs more  
    or less well  
in its  
    wool cover  
rather less

---

and the delicate shells  
    of oysters  
on earth  
    pails of a beautiful yellow  
under the sky

---





---

also flat sidewalks  
                          like quais  
of reeds rotted  
                          or chewed  
fostering winter  
                          (I guess)

---

limbs no doubt but limbs

---

as seen from a train  
                          but very far  
a blue paper  
                          at the end of a  
field  
                          not an image

---

some *algeco* poppies  
                          not really  
                                  red  
but more yellow  
                          cranes  
                          hence the foot  
slips  
                          for no one

trans. Connell McGrath

André du Bouchet

from *The Excess*

and it  
's  
by the going down  
that

it had  
to be.

in  
its block

the sky  
a  
stone as

rejoined the stone of the first block  
here

and without detaching itself here then

sky.

as to the stones  
by a laying bare  
of the mountain

rather  
if you're there  
than  
facing yourself

soon as the void

and  
to the stone

compact

and to stones.

worn down

eyes

til

in the corner

the corner

attraction of the eyes

as

the earth you'll not see here

begins.

to knock against  
the

room

compact

yourself air

such as outside the mountain

air

always

and

outside coming from the north.

as if

to be  
by the insipid again

oriented.



to measure  
the blue unraveling.

to have

and for

a word solely

mined

from the sheerest

water.

trans. Geoffrey Young

Olivier Cadiot

An Extraordinary Adventure  
Who Is An Adventure Extraordinaire

Toute le monde talks weather.

♣ *Pierre who is not there!*

*The blue, this is what goes best for you*

*you're no gentleman, you'll have not my girl*

TOUT LE MONDE (*stupefied*): *Oh!*

*Why won't I have your  
girl?*

*Cause you're no gentle-  
man*

*Ah? I didn't know*

[...] TOUTE (*astonished*): *Oh!*

*I have no other desire than to serve you*

*(for ever, ever, ever...)*

*Ah! That's so beautiful!*

*falling, staying, averting, delaying  
hoping, hurtling*

*It is impossible to part. This is  
impossible*

*I know that you are there. I love when you come*

*It rains. It's beautiful.*

*a) The sea / and the tempests*

*When is it that he's to come? [...]*

*Who? Me? This's absurd?—*

*Completely. You coming? —No*

*He knows not if he has no reason to part.*

*He comes also. He comes no more.*

*I wish, I desire to part...*

*I think in the park—I think there. I think in  
parks—I think there*

*Who comes here*

*Ha! you there!*

*You're not going to come? Sure!*

*remember the / remembering*

*My men friends, my other friends*

*love / am loved*

*entire, entirety, light, slight*

*you part, eh? — part!*

*we sleeping — sleep*

*You love him, me not; me not; not me*

*I have a bit, a bit too much  
pain*

*Part, parting*

*I see Pierre — I see him there*

*Your blue dress. This, your blue dress. Your dress, blue*

*They faced their growing love growing difficult*

*admirably beautiful*

*quite too few, quite few, too few, quite too*

*ah! oh!*

*brr!*

*Then come next to me*

*Dream, \ dream, \ Song \ \ to this night so \ cruel*

*(say, recount, think, believe...)*

*It gets*

*today hardly beautiful*  
*(mediocre nice)*

*Come so's we'll talk*

*Also, is he coming*                      *A chance, that there's rain*

*I saw it all from the balcony (from the balcony)*

*in winter, in summer, in autumn*  
*It's for him that I cry*   *It's now that I weep*

*(excepting, while, prior, during, follows)*

*He has acted badly toward you*

*The love of a child; this child is loved*

*What's doing and who's doing it? Me, part?*

*He has agreed foolishly*

*here (close place) and there (far place)*

*Here! near me*   *There!*      *a far place*

*If I were you, or of you, or*  
*which of you*

*Smash me, I will not speak*

*Like me / to look*  
*for some ham?*

*I'll go, you'll go, we'll go*

*Astonishing to see these guys, or how to see these guys*

*(She) sleeps, (we) sleep*

*It's getting warm, it's humid, it's getting hot, it's clear*

*It's night, it's day, it gets windy*

*I do this which pleases me*

*I do this which it pleases me*

*No, but who is this who was taken to her*

*much less, much more, much too little*

*You look at me, look close, look away*

*it gets somber, it gets good*

*He looks at me and speaks to me. Doesn't look at me; doesn't  
speak to me. Look at me! speak to me!*

*It's night / it's a night marveilleusement*

*Where go you? To Paris. How go you? Rapidly.*

*He walks extremely quick, admirably rapid.*

*A nice guy. This dress is very nice.*

*You come? —Uh huh. You not come? —Sure*

*I come from down there, he leaves from here*

*or stay there, comes there, goes by there*

*That he has not written! Those  
[he did write!*

*That he has not written? Why  
[didn't he write?*

*(Has he ever read?), after "without" (without ever stopping)*



*That it may rain*  
Needlessly  
Needlessly  
Needlessly  
*Weeping, wet*

*(to want, to wish, to tolerate)*

*The tempest ravages*

*drunk, drunkesse; nervous, nerveuse; foolish, foolish(e)*

*Who go and come:* present period  
*Who went and came:* past period  
*He doesn't go by:* future period

*We'll go no more into d'woods.*

trans. Charles Bernstein & Nick Piombino

Danielle Collobert

Danielle Collobert's selection, *Survival*, translated by Norma Cole, can be found in *Crosscut Universe: Writing on Writing from France* (Burning Deck, 2000), pps. 41-43



the bounds of certain gestures  
the number of their gestures is near  
and penetrates and mortal  
between the image of time  
and the image of time  
unbroken separating us  
from a quotient of zero orientation  
throughout slow matters montage  
rapid  
which appear at the brink  
of crossing out  
only while bound by a transparent  
numeral furnishes  
the porosity equidistant from the air  
in the hand the hand closed  
by unpeeling the shadow  
from the shadow  
the furnishings slowly approach us  
at the level

of an invisible sharing-out  
in which a distance concurs  
with a distance it divides  
the edge widens

at their appearance

as in courtyards

intervals of space  
and layers shot through with liquid  
the *wearing down* appears  
along the tables' inclination  
placing on their surfaces  
fully laden surfaces

that which is *dissipation*

mobile outlines  
as seen from a disclosed game measures  
and shares out  
and disfiguring figures in sumptuous oats  
solitary bars

meticulous

suspension of stones and feathers  
in the feather and stone of meticulousness  
the similarity of one point to another  
in its course defines the exactitude  
of the movement

*I was so joyous*

I continue to read to you  
the sea will define itself in these pages  
from one end of the stalk to the other  
an obviousness of the whole curve  
which loses itself and amusing  
in the cloth's existence  
on its stem

in the folds

which lengthen the arms of flesh  
when the elbow defends and  
lifts itself

park closed in the park  
of the substitution of the hand

for the blind hand which glares at such  
and which skirts around the eye  
intrication blind to the future  
in times

gaining nothing

gaining but a thumb  
at the base of windows

in the day

which abstracts itself from the light

it's limpidity

which is bypassed

in the intangible weight

*je souhaite qu'il y*

*ait la mer au fond du jardin*

at the root the furthest

from the air

trans. Robert Kocik

**Edith Dahan**

Edith Dahan's selection, "Giudecca", translated by Norma Cole, can be found in *Crosscut Universe: Writing on Writing from France* (Burning Deck, 2000), pps. 44-47.



Jean Daive

from *Le jeu des séries scéniques*

Me, lunar: to cry out. To cry out? I no longer cry. But I cried once, didn't I. I was crying out. I cried: the Supplements. I am no longer crying out. No. I was dying, fatal, relating the uneven world to the demonic world, obscure and luminous at last. Then she began to disappear, obscure and luminous. She was disappearing. The moon was growing, black, abrupt. The moon was vibrating, dejected. Mysteriously, the moon, pulling nearer to earth the grounds which would not coincide, was raising an immense field of clarity, almost similar to the motionless body, far off, dejected. Moon. She: lunar. And her temple, her wrist, her abbreviated knee were being erased in space and could articulate but this white verticality, unresolved, weakened, still full of that ancient resonance of a step, a cry, a gesture. From me. I am crying out. She is no longer walking, not crying. Transparent to her hallucinatory series. Thus nights were coming in time with all grounds which would not coincide. The nights. A cry. Transparency. A vertiginous never. "Vertigo. One. Never." There was a strip of greenish sky far off, slipping between two forms. "The garden is at rest." The gaping house of mortal apparitions, gray-red illuminations. The bed of unattainable floors. The laundry closet, of shameful wool. The impossible, the unceasing threw a shadow in my way. To speak. To pass through. Who's speaking? Who's passing through? To close. To open. To pass through. A mechanism rendering silence dynamic. Mirrors, steps, surfaces. To die: if I speak, in the inside, if I eat. On the stairs. In the room. In the alley. To speak. To pass through. In the closet of the therapeutic community. I pass through and my shadow throws out a beginning, a solitude of the object. She lets herself begin through the air of the grounds, under nights together. She lets herself reach through an understanding which improvises, less one useful lip than a mouth in my mouth. Motionless, sitting. To rot: if I were speaking, on the inside, if I move. The gestures buried in the body. The head in the head, in the dress. No forehead. On a knee. Far off. The warrior beam. Black hair, drenched in lunar clarity, perhaps still the Supplements of man. Bare feet, sitting on the edge of a half-step, eyes fixed on the garden rising toward her, the Child holds in its hand an object wrapped in rags. She was looking between her fingers at the variable series of worlds fleeing before her or passing through her. I can see the universal rift among the gardens. The room plunged in obscurity: black waters where the half-step appeared like the overturned vault of Hell, spreading over the body's forces an irreconcilable time of the breaths which gave rise to it. To remodel Hell in time with the imagination. No. She crossed through Hell in time with imagination. She surged forth without terror. She watched herself, she could see herself on the inside of a mechanical displacement at the very moment she relearned to breathe and lead these words through: Invention on verisimilitude. All this was taking place under the sign of a desolation with enormous antlers, like the emergence of the word for all memory. The word of the worlds in their ensemble. In the interval between my words and my death, I lived darkly the time of the stone and the time of the Child: a similitude (is it madness, is it silence or the despondency of madness?) was making me wait, under the eaves, on a half-step, my body at obstinence of something decayed, or of my tongue. My body: perhaps an imprint through which a preparatory eternity runs in waiting for the formulas of the body. A mind resembles me, but the head distinguishes me from the fall that we feign. I was obscure, monstrous, supernatural. An ensemble nevertheless, at the bottom of myself, like the cipher which is necessary, and the cipher feigned. An ensemble, the time of the stone, the time of the Child—some similitude. Engulfing nothing, from the decaying pile, from insignifi-

cance, haunted by the abandoned grounds, nearly unreal, throughout my resemblance with the “higher” waiting. What surrounds me: the stone and the Child, the nights and the laws of the main idea. What surrounds me, as real as I, as real as the fear or the odor of what is missing, what surrounds me, can I sit it down in time with the invisible manoeuvres by the word of all manipulations (or in time with all memories of the word of the universe)? Her being seated. Alone: Yes. Sitting together: excrements and me toward the leaving of a sovereign proximity. “I know who I was.” “I know who I was: is that possible?” Subjected, with the dreadful abyss and tree, standing in their foliage, to the laws of the main idea, we managed, excrements and I, to discern our common reality: a condition wavering between exhaustion and relief. From the thing exhausted of possibility. From the “abstract” thing: We. The anus was there, amidst skies and nights, calm and dreadful, at the extremities of pale skin and referring above, to the orifice of the mouth. Between the two, no body, no member, no gaze. Nothing took place: beyond us, a garden. I said, “Standing under their foliage.” I say, “Standing under the threat that no longer recognized the power of some foliage over us.” Abyss-sentence, battle-sentence with the incomparable, inexplicable need-sentence, movement-sentence toward degradation, transparency-sentence, sentence, impure mass-sentence. “But what is impurity?” Sentence, sentence again, sentence, she was sentence, out of breath, beside herself. Degradation. Lower than degradation. Because she could formulate a secret, lunging from the mouth, into that which she had never ceased repressing. “Speak. Speak then. But speak.” She found herself left to nothing, that an infinite succession of awakenings referred to an infinite pathway of enigmas. She was seeking, in the secret, its most literal part. No. She was seeking something else. The mystery of the secret. The subject of the secret. The lunar shore. The infiltration of the absolute argument. An anatomy. The forgetting-dying of the secret. The insistence of the secret inscribed in: “Below walks man, beats the world.” Its fearful sense. In the storage closet, in the basin is the secret. Relating signified the necessity of introducing he-whom she had to name. Upon her, sitting, the secret falls, the Preparator falls, whom I introduce.

trans. Joseph Simas

Michel Deguy

“Sibyllaries” from *Recumbent Figures*

I am looking for you. *Anecdotes*, proposes the etymon as one of your names. our names. *Aventurine*, another, like an adventure of filings thrown aimlessly upon a lukewarm fever. You were saying what are you waiting for. I am waiting for what comes crosslife, sibylline effusion, and why despite these crumbings of state, of earth (It is 6:30, 8:30, 5:30, zero hour), this global destruction that saps rescue parties, computers, why a secret marriage in the upstairs room that closes the planet’s shutters, immunizes against the leukemia of information and gathers the smithereens of the stolen painting, coiled in its error prefers itself as a place

But negligent, we legendary restive ones, unconcerned with me, even, we threaten each other with a like insecurity, merry neighborhood of sharing where one invents worth-to-be

I write you not knowing where begins

Where do you begin

russet swaths like chimneys your vessels posed like cows and shrubs on November placed on your body at the borders like factories used to pose

Where the premises end

How to get out of torpor without hurting you, you, you? We negligent ones guilty of guilty negligence and unconcerned with self, even, fettered

versus everything like an obese man going upwind  
capture seized in the street line stencil  
you tack galley-slave backward against and against  
disfiguration that blurs the glimpse  
or the inadequate parable of words  
which land without a pass between us  
against the beggar women’s troubled petition and the whole  
thick obstacle the blocking of directions  
the syzygy of books governs the skull’s ebb tide

on a break hesitating where to put the pause, the mark,  
busy with tabature as in the delicatessen,  
or stacking verbs helter-skelter at the other end  
pompous on the songfest committee,  
celebrated and cracked in the face under spittle  
in the tidal wave of origin and apocalypse  
cited slandered getting others to do our crimes  
no longer knowing how to commit the old iterations

Do not deprive me of you I would like to copy my poems for the new Dedication like Hokusai his lion  
each morning ink-bathed and offered to the sun You told me about it

To which proportions to devote oneself I turned round anemic gone down like a deaf-mute into the  
muted language, the soundless poem of words without music, mindful of the contradictory Orpheus who now  
freezes with his turning and now stirs the stereotypes, losing illiterate music in the aphonic phrase, having  
entered agnosis in order to know it I am looking for you thus deprived of timbre with timbres and without  
pitch at the pitch, without a bass in the voice, unbounded in the interior screed, atonal with tones, devoid of  
accents or durations to entrust to accents and to say them, noiseless in the thesis-free percussion of language,  
what music convicted of silence, we say interior, we say within, in the hush of the mouth without a tune down  
to the sexual slice of the larynx, to the spasm of the glottus swallowing Mallarmé, and aidless testifier to its  
rhythm, without music, the soundless, to hear it, with all that is heard, like phoneticians to say *voicing* slice your  
sibylline cords and say its neume with their teeth, the palate, Hertz...

I offer the braille of readable words to the deafness of the poem reader who takes in the amusicity of  
language and translates it with music, as I take in my love for you, take in your pain and the movement of  
keeping these things in the heart since the Virgin, or as painting discolors chromes, transcribing alphabetic  
visibility to take in the seen—and by dint of not speaking to you and not knowing how to speak to you, sporting  
this beast on my lip, in hatred of ptosis and the movement that disjoints lips—so as to steal to return to redo it  
in what it is not, its intimate enemy homologue made of its material's strict negation: like a blue from here might  
be for not being that blue over there, worked on how long for what is called recreating with what was not  
created?

Where your sibylline body begins I shall not reach  
If your body had the perfection of your body  
You would not die or like Goethe at the end  
Under Eckerman's sheets with more light

I write you the sharing. There is of course what I do with you, make of you, what I carry off and carry,  
these wages snatched by so-called poetic rapacity, for me, I will give you some for examples (you had come to be  
that gift of yourself raised to the sixth heaven where one goes on to the you, Danaë visited, tomorrow your  
dream continued at intersections with naked men in daylight like a film)

and then what I perceive in you, which has to do with your finishing, no one else, the enticed singular  
knowledge that ends with you; that discovers your lucidity, your penetrating abruptness, your accuracy that  
times our vespers, your absence of illusion about me, you with me, us (that you have a poor opinion of me, one  
me would say, does not bother me only for myself but because over there in you, the altered one that is not one  
me alone, something would not rejoice in something, withdraws, accuses, frowns, would contract). There is this  
sharing; I call me that which you cannot enjoy

The departure machine makes a vacuum We drove ourselves back to Houston, to Belgrade And also  
the children's change of absence inclines scarf and palms to pose on the being met by chance; and the violent  
instinct, said Jouve, to seek intimacy with the last comer, she who bleeds and guides

Swaths like reddened chimneys your vessels posed like cows and shrubs on November at the borders placed on your body where the outcomes begin

Danaë raised up to the sixth apartment-house heaven where one goes on to the you, or visited by Correggio's cloud, but she it is the Dorothea who tips Pygmalion over into a painter desiring to turn the nude into poems, his hard nudification having been delight; and what else besides a cloud if I sweep myths along these lines into torment.

trans. Jacques Servin & Wilson Baldrige, in collaboration with the author

## Jacques Dupin

Jacques Dupin's selection, from *Songs of Rescue*, translated by Paul Auster, can be found in *Jacques Dupin: Selected Poems* (Wake Forest University Press, 1992), pps. 165-191.

Claude Esteban

from *Elegy on Violent Death*

Your body has no place. It changes, it lives in the air, and it is there, in the morning, I breathe you in. It is the earth, at noon, between moss and the soil's warmth. I go down with you, pursue you in your caverns. Six o'clock in the evening. I know which road leads to the sea. The one that belongs to you. And it is over there, quite far from the house, that you, cool as can be, carry me away on the foam. No longer does your body have a place. Your body embraces all places. You cannot die.

\*

They waken me. They tell me it is daytime and I believe it since I have a fever. A woman takes my hand and says I must eat now and I believe her since I am no longer hungry. A friend gives me a book and tells me I must read it and that it will cure me, and I am willing to believe him since there are so many words written on the pages. A man I do not know asks me the name of a street and I no longer remember in what city. I walk, I come to a place where they say they have had no news from me. I listen to them, one after another, and believe them. Later on, it is daytime again, I awaken.

\*

Night returns. It is an easy sea for those in love. For myself, all the unknown. I know you are the one who dies, but no way to stop. One must go on, climb atop a wall, have the strength to look at this beach. I know it is an empty dream. Let it be repeated in the ear's echo. Tomorrow, here already, I can take a distance from it, break it down into sufficient reasons. In vain. It wins, every evening. I find it again and lose it when you fall. Your blood is odorless. It flows, it creeps toward the sea. It says: gather me up. Then the wave washes it away.

\*

It was me they were coming to see and I was never, ever there. I had been living, since September, in a vacant house. Not yet sold, but deserted, with lamps that pierced the night and this horror of walking in the large rooms alone. So who knocked, occasionally, at the shutter? I no longer had a name, nor lips to answer. I was living in a dead house, and those who knew about it, the living, did not stop by.

\*

These phrases from another September, when she was here. Fear already was approaching, indecipherable between the trees and the exact room. I spoke only of myself. I had my tricks, my secret paths to catch myself unawares. So many lost suns. Work was coming along, nonetheless, line by line. At times shade intermingled with writing's second sight. I made it worse. And the book got done, down to the last page's farewells. It is I who went away. It is I who crossed the sea, not knowing misfortune remained on the shore and death was growing, still tiny, in a body.

\*

It is a dream. I am young. I am walking in the middle of the yard. I take my little girl in my arms. I lift her up as high as the tree branches. She laughs, she picks a pink plum, then another. She is five years old. Her dress, too, is pink. Suddenly I notice blood running down her lip, but it is not her own. I know it. It is old blood, full of gravel, as found on roads. I say to her: spit. But she keeps eating and the blood falls to the ground and forms a sort of crust in the grass. I am afraid to set the child down. I would not want her to soil her white shoes. No one to help me. Besides, there is no longer a yard. A nurse passes by in the hallway. She is naked under her blouse, she is a dark brunette. Your daughter looks so much like you, she whispers into my ear. Do not worry, it is nothing. She pushes me aside, takes the little one and carries her off. I remain alone. It is a dream, but it continues. In the distance I hear the helicopter coming.

\*

September that will not end. Useless September on the clocks. September paralyzed like an arm. September like a sun that burns. September in flasks of formaldehyde. September on the pupil of stones. September with curdled blood. September in the bees' sting. September deep in stained beds. September in a bicycle's wheels. September in the police report. September in a throat screaming. September in the streets on Nantes. September that ceases no more.

\*

The same heart beating is no longer the same. It thinks it suffers, but it is nothing. A mere edginess of the fibers, a mechanical twitching of weary flesh. The same heart died, one summer day. And what lasts is time deserted, space written in monotonous memory. The same heart works, it is so old. No other hope for it than this strange stir of a forge. A breath, yet another breath. And then tomorrow, the head that accepts no more, the short gash.



\*

“What wounds you shall cure you. What enslaves you shall set you free. That which dies is life for you.”  
I hear the words and I do not understand the meaning of this language. Who is speaking, who hides while speaking? I would like to see, lean on an able arm in order to believe. Nothing but the voice, from afar, which insists. “Thirst is what quenches. It is night that shall enlighten you.”

\*

In the room, a mirror. In the mirror, the reduplicated space of things. Who can live when nothing moves any longer? Self and the reverse side of self. A way to imagine a gesture and to destroy it. This rush, then the dread of feeling the surrounding air, solid, inert. The mirrors are ageless, but we who look at them, what do we read if not the already concluded story that sweeps us aside? The mirrors have no soul, but they live on our blood, they steal what is ours alone, a face come to light, a missing body.

\*

They walked. They crossed streets. They said the sun was useless. They knew desire. They forgot about desire. They pretended to believe it. They lost their house. They wept against a tree. They chased away all of their friends. They pronounced unintelligible sentences. They wrecked their bodies. They found fear delectable. They read books that knew everything. They lied. They gave their word to unbelievers. They wanted to disappear. They lived. They walked till daybreak.

\*

I saw them, the dead, lucid, inalterable. Released from their being and pure. As regards their retiring manner, everything appealed to me. They slept there, like exact winter in the shells. No flesh, no tears. Perfect profiles. And then I saw. The terrible reduction of powers, the pupil that stares and does not respond, the empty mouth. I loved them, the dead. In the words which did not hurt, images.

\*

The road that used to lead to you, blocked. The tree with its round fruit, broken branches. So this time, they want to forbid me everything, tear my history away from its living places. I shall fight. I will make myself small in order to survive. I will be this lizard between the twigs, this bark when the rain comes. I will endure. I

will rot, perhaps, in immobility. They wanted to rub out everything about you. I continue.

\*

What is time? A pale blue door closing again. What is memory? Three children who play without looking at me. What is fear? A boat at anchor in the empty harbor. What is fatigue? This barely eaten piece of bread. What is death? A table where I write these indifferent phrases. What is love? The table where I write that you are no longer here.

\*

Save me. Deliver me from my wound. Wanderer, open your sojourn up to me. Fragile one, have me share this force that defeated you, these stones that shattered your head. Let me rest. Let my body take root in this yard. Let me be a branch, the oldest one, in the big tree. Let me bear my fruit, you who died childless.

\*

No, you did not die. You did not fall on the road one Tuesday. You did not scream. You did not say to the doctor: do something fast. You did not vomit in the helicopter. You did not arrive at Challans unconscious. You were not delirious in a waiting room. You did not roll among the cadavers on a cart. You did not stay, all one morning, in the emergency room. You did not see me crying in the hallway. You did not feel the gimlet drill into your skull. You did not breathe through the tubes for a week. You did not know I telephoned Nantes six times a day. You never had that inert hand in my hand. You did not sleep like an Egyptian statue. You did not die a violent death one Friday. You were not aware of being laid out in the morgue. You did not go into your parents' putrescence. You did not hear me read a poem at the grave. You were not where I was looking for you.

\*

I separated you from night. I stole you from the ancient earth that smothers you. I brought you back up to the sea. Now both of us are here, secretly united in a thicket of heather. The heavens pass by at a great distance. A bit of sand has piled up against my mouth. We will sleep here, if you wish. We will wait, you and I, until no one remembers.

trans. by Wilson Baldrige

Claude Faïn

from *Vincent to Theo*

As many surprising gestures to write  
injustice distorted by time.

Body which escapes reason,

    Soon as the act draws from death

a force opposes,

encrypts,

—Is it from the one original the

overrun of the other

Time renews disorder,

As the forgotten is the safeguard, the

circle a minimal response

just before overflowing,

without power to gather into works

or the speech or the orator,

When strengths empty,

    “Blue” shaping and crossing as far

as Jerusalem

This affirmation against the thing

and the curse,

from an uncontrol the object released without return

Countryside extends, while the drawing measures

Back from where

    in a tailspin of negations

reaches ultimate the impact

plunged where no place exists

    An incessant conflict assures

Burns at the invading,

That it be from an interpreter, point by point  
or play of similarities,  
body in the body,

The approach has a common root in THE DREAM OF  
ICARUS

Its memory a destructive invention,

terrible wording which distance serves to  
weaken

Too much for intimacy

or adhesion  
by fear neither of erasure

nor of death,  
(from one envelope another envelope)

cut-off places set adrift watertight  
against all movement

the constant presence its shifts carry  
along and in each detail which the eye  
traces the mark, the color,

This letter

from the other demanding to exist,  
the dividing up of cities

of meetings the garden as if suspended  
midway in the abyss,

Such void and sense of the indefinite  
until out of one's skull creates the search  
for refuge never found

These gestures from a remote truth which  
incites the fear,

Mingled with words from a world already  
suspect in another,

Where resonance answers resonance

O what guilt or what pardon  
facing dead eyes

refusal moves away from shore  
the insufferable marked off in desert  
each day of a line,

In the brute denuding

Where angles' austerity divested of jest  
and of complaint,  
the instant of hiding places streams out,

And arms which strike send back below  
language words without echo

TO WANDER is space, cage the wandering

to keep intact the dark world with  
color

from where the attention was born which obstructing itself awakens crossing the street. Let this loose, in-  
fringes from an old sky and from branch by the rhythm of the sea.

trans. Robert Kocik

## **Dominique Fourcade**

Dominique Fourcade's selection, from *Xbo*, translated by Robert Kocik, can be found in *Xbo* (Sun & Moon, 1993), pps. 35-40.



Jean Frémon

## Ceremony

He calculates the movement of the stars  
He corrects the day's denominations  
He consults the turtle and the yarrow

reform the calendar  
is his first task

spell out the work and the errors  
fix the scale of penalties  
the second and the third

XXX

In the shells rubbed with ink  
older than our fathers

in the thousand blades of grass  
out of which balms are made  
(after having wounded him in combat  
the king bandages a king)

he reads the yes and the no

what will be is  
written in what was

XXX

The works are  
those that seasons dictate  
unique principle

the punishments totaling five were executed  
to the sound of eight types of instruments.

The punishments are: the black mark, amputation  
of the nose, confinement, burial,  
the fifth was not mentioned.

Furthermore, the edict said:

That crimes committed audaciously were to be punished twice.  
That the severity of justice shall be tempered by compassion.

XXX

The eight sounds were:

the sound of metal  
the sound of stone  
the sound of stretched animal gut  
the sound of wood crossed by breath  
the sound of clay turned  
the sound of skin tight and tanned  
the sound of wood being struck

The voices stopped.

XXX

The stones had been carved into tablettes, pierced with a hole  
and suspended from a gallows or a transom so that the sound would  
escape from all sides.

They were arranged according to thickness.

They were struck with a metal hammer.

The purest sound came from jade  
one revered their muted clap.

Brilliant in the sunlight, the metal instruments were  
the first to be played and then the stone instruments.

At the sound of brushed strings the pantomimes began.

XXX

There are two sorts of pantomimes. One with shields  
and axes, the other with flutes and feathered fans.

One began with flute and fan pantomimes  
(the fan to hide the face.) They mimed

errors committed in daily life, liable for the first  
or second punishments.

Faults committed against the public order  
were mimed with shields and axes.

XXX

To the sound of clay. To the sound of drums.  
To the sound of wood being struck the last  
three punishments were executed.

When a man dies  
his rational soul rises to heaven  
his sensitive soul descends to the earth.

Thus the Ancients, speaking about the dying,  
said they rose or they descended.

trans. Serge Gavronsky

Liliane Giraudon

What Day Is It

*Fazer o que seja é inútil  
Não fazer nada e inútil  
Mas eze fazer e nã fazer  
Mais vale o inúfil do fazer*

*Joãl Cabral de Melo Neto*

to do anything else  
is useless  
flowers  
and they are tulips  
  
at the end of the corridor  
you wait  
to be carried away  
that day  
will be night

savage and limp  
they have never seemed  
so beautiful

their shadow is soft  
in the mirror

I look at them  
and the coffee beside me  
steams gently  
near my cigarette  
gone out  
in the general muddle  
imprecision of statement

what day is it

it is time for a new attack  
on the inarticulate  
Hello Eliot!  
and you Cabral  
de Melo Neto imprecision of statement  
as at the first corner  
of the second floor  
the man yellow  
with sanded sawdust  
swirls  
in the evening air

you have cut  
the tulips  
very short evening  
will soon fall  
what else falls  
as steadily  
as the evening

Here  
is partial testimony  
of the sort of activity  
that takes up  
most of my time  
and my life  
like yours  
falling  
steadily

you cut  
the tulips  
too short  
they are cramped  
in the pretty glass jar

to do nothing  
is useless  
but between doing and not doing  
far better  
the uselessness of doing

as the sky  
changing behind your head  
is the exact colour  
we are speaking about  
of course life  
is no longer the same  
that is what I told myself  
this morning  
in the dark barely awake crossing  
quickly past the murmuring  
rubbish tip  
if

the image itself  
and it alone  
should still be  
the sole possibility  
of holding suffering  
well  
what use continuing  
to write the  
Berlingots don't taste  
the same any more even  
those from Carpentras  
today  
is another matter

the gallery brightens  
as sunlight comes  
brusquely  
neither outside nor in  
then red  
yellow and pink  
lonely sour almost  
an effect of seclusion  
when nothing  
any longer stays the same  
but

we already made  
a similar comment  
about another  
case of this type  
on page 48 of the second notebook  
right beside  
the polaroid portrait  
cigarette papers  
*RIZ LA +.*

it concerned  
something there is nothing more to say about  
and after so much time  
it seemed that finally  
we were getting near  
to doing it  
because that is more difficult  
than not doing it  
easier than

this was not done  
for anyone  
which is why you continue  
to do it  
not knowing if  
one day  
you have truly begun  
and for whom  
this thing

continues  
nor sometimes  
how it is all possible

like soaking  
your lips  
in dark  
liquid  
it is cold outside

the light  
fades  
almost completely  
it is time  
to turn on the lamp  
to prepare for night

sticky face-cream

after a bath  
don't forget

the dead skin  
and then eat  
the 2 small cucumbers  
a few strawberries



*All these life-size details.*

*The poem is not a depository, but a dump and a temporary altar, for suffering. Writing in the ordinary surroundings of night but as if in profile. What day is it? What is the weather like? Not the qualification of the moment: rather that of detail. Which makes writing resemble a Ring Road. What day is it? What is the weather like? When no bright ideas come (to be inside a dark fist).*

*“The litre receives and envelops the water.”*

*The woman goes to bed. You should notice how strange her son’s voice seems. Writing to reach such a speed that I will no longer realize I am writing. Note: the right hand ages faster than the left. Because of the wave passing through it, little volleys, powder magazine, slight jerks. Something empties itself out that way. When sky and sun glare that is the hand you raise to shade your eyes. It lifts food to your lips. And all liquids. And the tiny flame that darkens your lungs.*

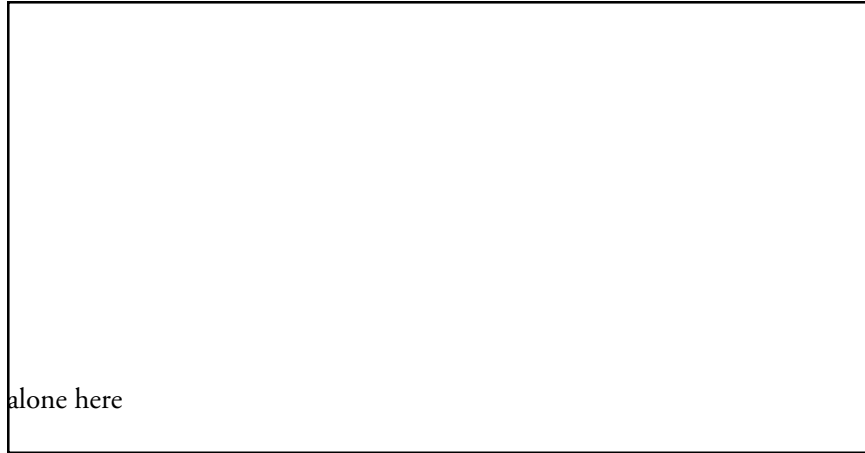
*I dream of another reader of these poems.*

*A reader too crushed to even be able to open a book, to turn the pages like lettuce-leaves. Green enters your mouth, is ground up, shrinks, then vanishes from your face. Write no more for the keepers. The disciple is also the betrayer. Remember that. Don’t forget to remember. What is done for no-one will therefore be of use to all those whom Benjamin called ‘the crushed’...precisely those with whom, historically, one does not go into details.*

trans. Tom Raworth

Roger Giroux

Theater

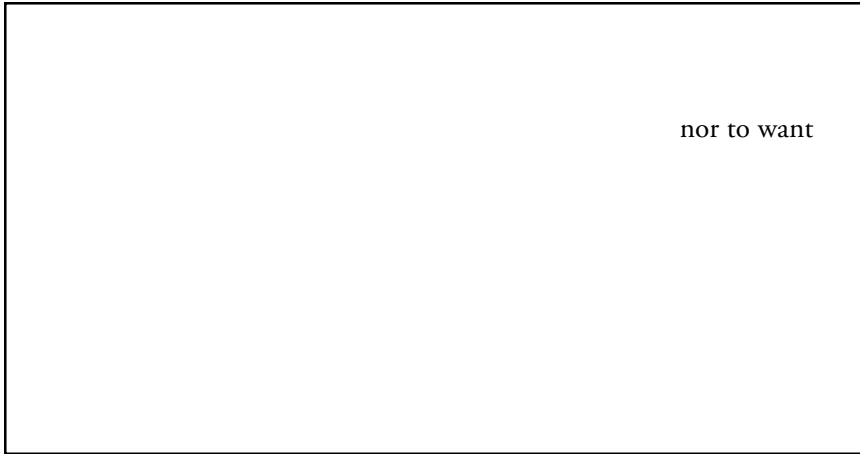


alone here

and  
per-  
haps

aflame

neither to lure



nor to want

SOMEONE

moves across the

chest

Traces

Which the night stops

all around

like an irrefutable proof of

the fine wall of the eye

here

all around

it would be NIGHT, NUDE NIGHT

no

NIGHT

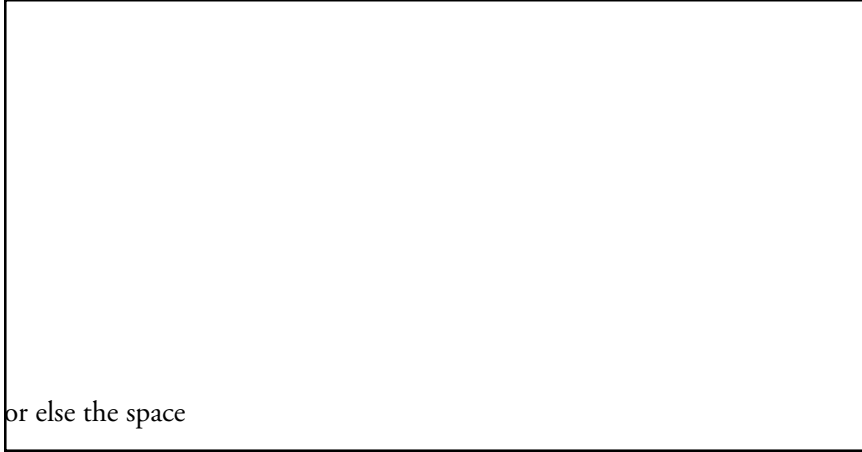
pistil

then

fell

from his ear

space



or else the space

or else

LAKES

trans. Anne Lauterbach

Joseph Guglielmi

from *Le mouvement de la mort*

*Subversion is writing's actual working:  
that of death.*

*Edmond Jabès*

When man has used up his life  
let his remains tell us  
Cruel wound of this  
wind shatters where I watch  
time's ghost the arm the  
Memory of full force  
of Hölderlin *zum Reste zeigt*.  
The signs that we leave.  
Images of the river and naked  
age at once dark and blue.  
Body and soul superimposed  
and let  
Death overflow with rain.  
Teeth bared like a sea,  
a flower on the ground of  
stone dissolves in silence.  
A scornful sun shows  
up among the carnations.

\*\*\*

Time, space, life  
nor death the answer.  
Shame on the symbols!  
Pity the metaphors!  
But there is the page of moon,  
miniature labyrinth  
toes in a fan.  
*Bello sguardo* page twenty-seven  
this look of blue or grey



where his arm in the hollow sky  
remembers another life,  
another colorless blue  
*d'Italia finestra alte*  
*Via Palazuolo* or other.  
Italy's high windows,  
a bridge a young woman,  
the melancholy of eyes,  
*bello sguardo* of her body,  
grassy split of her life  
there could moisten bite...  
Hours make think corpse,  
body in the water works  
body and he would like to be able  
to say *Kaddish* blue place,  
long letter on the earth  
that he is writing like a poem.  
Close it! Eat my words!  
Eat my mouth my mind,  
buy a prayer book,  
get yourself off with my pleasure!  
It is day we are dead,  
full of breezes and charms.

\*\*\*

And if a person cries and shakes  
a nice day nothing but sunshine  
And Castel d'Appio in sky  
in the breath of distant blues,  
the olive tree's grimace,  
the hollow of your dampness.  
The story is about a siren  
untitled at the secret junction  
Hostage of the sky in fresco.  
Romantic air ass ass  
an insult to the mind or  
the brain, I feel your holes of  
intelligence bottomed out...  
A gleam occludes in your mouth  
Come poet taste my words,  
Silence! I enter the casket  
like a fuck.

The serpent around the tree,  
no shelter in me brain  
My *bite*, my nose, my heart  
myriad exits towards  
the same new universe.  
Poor bones sucked white  
cinder-grey, grey *over* prose  
The petard of its mind,  
delirium mastered on  
sidewalk would be eating the moon  
for simple reason of aging

\*\*\*

fragrant as dreams  
in the future morning torpor.  
Delights of an animal  
Saying love causes hate,  
Return of the ritual cypresses,  
of the tunnels *caduta massi*  
purified by the snow,  
the dew, the rain, the sage  
the oak and the juniper.  
And the beauty of the mind  
in the dawn a mountain lake,  
drawing from the last Cantos,  
the nine Parques are over,  
Citadel of desires  
Memories of the blocks of childhood,  
peaks that verbalize,  
Poetry logos of the logos,  
or brandy's firmament,  
Supernatural medallion,  
grandiose nor imprecise,  
Pythian heritage  
A deception even so!  
Whistling the octopus of pleasure  
A hole  
    seated  
        in its voice  
in the voice fill me!  
I am dark, hot, open  
*a gap in my verses too*      Caesuras

of sail time.

Alas! the eternal rock  
the music of silence

\*\*\*

Here deep into this hollow  
on a pillow of stone  
against meaning withdraws.  
Notes' dust  
turns pleasure's key,  
the concept and the name-less  
That other half of life  
Blind flash in the meaning,  
in the song, the *chan* of tongues,  
bursting, fresh, swallowed  
at the sun's every step.  
Higher, far in scent,  
you open to me like a flower,  
a flower of asia or china  
Its mysterious dew,  
nature's rest

trans. Norma Cole

Jean-Luc Herisson

from *The Little Land*

“The Industrial Zone of J...H...”

Teeth laugh at the body.

Lose the chart and lose land; under  
the charts it is black.

The little lot whistled well, but is  
is no musician for that. There where they  
hang, they are dry.

Each street lit for itself. A speaking  
pain is an islet.

Two little vapors meet, who will get  
the best of it?

The sky scrapes its handle.

Love has no color.

Those on land guard the boats.

She hasn't taken a turn on me.  
Behind booty is not body.

Speech in mouth had a charge.

The wharf is nothing,  
it's uncaring who's the master.

The weeded land was full of respect.  
the cut land holds its fence.

Send off the voice, but eat its  
biscuits.

The grand taste of love is not gas.

The coast had to be undressed to see  
its goodness.

trans. Stacy Doris

## **Emmanuel Hocquard**

Emmanuel Hocquard's selection, from *Theory of Tables*, translated by Michael Palmer, can be found in *Theory of Tables* (o-blek editions, 1994).



## Edmond Jabès

Edmond Jabès's selection, from *The Book of Resemblances, Book 3: The Ineffaceable The Unperceived*, translated by Rosmarie Waldrop, can be found in *The Book Of Resemblances, Book 3: The Ineffaceable The Unperceived* (Wesleyan University Press, 1992), pps. 29-40.

Leslie Kaplan

from *L'excess - L'usine*

The factory, the huge universal factory, the one that breathes for you.  
There is no other air than what it sucks in, throws out.  
You are inside.

Every inch is occupied: Everything is useless. The skin, the  
teeth, the glance.

You wander among walls without form. You encounter people,  
sandwiches, coke bottles, instruments, paper,  
boxes, screws. You move vaguely, outside of time. Neither  
beginning, nor end. Things exist together, simultaneously.

Inside the factory, it never stops.

You're inside in the huge universal factory, the one that breathes  
for you.

The factory, let's go. Everything's there. Let's go.  
The excess - the factory.

A wall to the sun. Extreme tension. Wall, wall, the small seed,  
brick upon brick, or concrete or often white, white  
invalid or the fissure, a little bit of earth, the grey. The massive wall.  
Meanwhile, this sun. Life is, hatred and light. The furnace  
of life, before the beginning, complete.

You're taken, you're turned, you're inside.

The wall, the sun. You forget everything.

Most women have wonderful toothless smiles.

You have a coffee at the coffee machine.

The courtyard, to walk across it.

To be seated on a crate.

Tension, obliterated.

It's Spring. The factory is grimy and cold.

You look around, outside.

You get there by the fields, by going across the fields.

You pedal in the closed air, transparent.

The countryside is yellow and green.

You pass between anonymous trees. The trail fragments, fragile.

You roll in the jagged pieces, dry stones, gravel.

Around the very small animals flying across the flat sky.

You see her from a distance. She is perched on the grass, light. The sheet metal is thin, corrugated.

The windows are open, banging. The air circles, identical.

You put the bicycle down. The courtyard is paved with stones, rounded.

At the back, the stage. The stones form a specific surface,  
calm.

You cross the air. Between the stones, the weeds spring up.

Nothing disappears, ever. The air swells, each second with  
odors.

You continue down the round courtyard. Above the sky, naive. You're  
afraid, without stopping.

The women arrive in their supple corsets. You've got eyes, you  
see their breasts.

Space is divided, it's terrible.  
You're not protected.

You come, you go. Spring cruel and wet.  
Factory, the factory, first memory.

Sometimes you walk to the cemetery.  
It's far, beyond roads.

You enter by the main, round gate. The gate is huge,  
immobile. You slide underneath.  
On the other side are all the trees.

You walk down the drifting rows. The air is sweet, fluid.  
Damp slope, bushes and everywhere trees, spare. The  
leaves hang poised from the branches like lies.

Off to the side there are marble plaques and small awkward  
houses. The inscriptions are faded. You read them. Names,  
dates, history. Nothing is well marked. The sky moves, full  
of water.

The animals play. It's free.

Something is there in the frayed air, transparent.  
You don't know, you remember.

You pass between the leaves. The grass could glide, so green. The  
words make no sense. Where, but where, are the dead?

from *The Book of Skies*

I'm going farther, in a big city in the center, among  
hills. The sky, beautiful, modern. The refineries are there.

Around the refineries, the sky is violent.  
There are no women, there are no roads.

The highway, huge, grim, and the sky brilliant.  
I go around and around in a car with friends. It's ignorance.

The small house, the room. I go inside.  
Everyone is there. Walls and chairs, curtains.  
It's compact, massive.

I eat. The nouns and verbs can circulate.  
Everyone is there, face to face.

The food is really good, very heavy.  
Bodies of animals swallowed, with vegetables.  
Also cream, milk.  
Everyone eats.

The walls are far far away. The radio is silent.  
You're nonetheless engulfed. I feel the wallpaper.

The invisible strings working the scenery, there aren't any.  
There are eyes, and the hate, without object, tolerant.

trans. Cole Swensen



## Alain lance

### Poems

Pretending to ignore the growing discomfort her insistence caused him, she didn't stop asking the hangman in her cage indiscreet questions about his private life.

What's surprising is that the other, whose reserve is well-known, didn't completely evade these interrogations, contenting himself with steadily turning the conversation toward a thin volume of verse by an unknown writer, entitled *The Fall of Hercules* offers, emphasizing the sober dust jacket and elegance of the title in blue typeface on a background of snow.

\*

On the last floor before the roof of a large department store crowded with clergymen in uniform, she uses an umbrella to club to death the president-actor who just retired. Already wrinkled, the joker shrivels up into a quivering greenish wad: ah! it's breathing, you didn't kill it, he tells her, even as he glimpses — by the empty counter — the only witness, that detested writer who must be silenced, for security reasons.

\*

With steel bars the others broke the high cage of glass where her golden fish were sleeping. Havoc. Deluge. The city and all the judges are already covered with mud. Carried off by the flood, he passes under the green eyes of a woman who once set fire to his senses.

\*

At the far end of the depot a man swore the towers were going to fall. She was coming out of a long film with him just as night was turning pale blue. They were filled up to the stars with confidence, alive and talking to each other.

## *Debating Rostrum*

### *Humidity Isn't Fatal*

The shop-post examined recent atmospheric phenomena contradicting the calendar of central heating.

The shop-post expresses its surprise, its reproach before the commencement of the drizzle, rain, and hail, a commencement which announces itself in flagrant violation of meteorological principles set out in our almanac.

The shop-post considers it a duty to call each of the ill-timed inclemencies to a new reflection.

Following its set course, the shop-post invites the universe to create — as soon as possible — favorable conditions for the general drought.

---

*Coarse Tobacco*

What to do  
With the crumbs

At the end of the glued days  
Here's that shortness of breath  
Hindering  
My breathing and yours  
Comrades

The clouds' mirror of tricks  
Calls down flocks of birds

Paper talks to paper  
In no time we'll have  
Superb pigs

---

We saved  
The mummy of disaster

As for us  
Let's pace the narrow sidewalk  
Dressed with meats

In a nook of the woods  
Turned into paper  
The blood of history  
Buries itself

---

Once the separation ended  
There was silence there was babble  
Philosophy was served  
In blood pudding and fists  
Stuck to gummed tables

Breath: a stew of rancors  
Neighbor's eye: pincushion of beams

And so the young smart alecks change  
Hairstyles once again

---

*Round Table*

- A. considers the odds
- B. drinks them under a different fire
- C. laughs at the crisis of the changing brooms
- D. brings up the issue of the Great Mogul
- A. points out the thickness of the bed
- B. cuts the speech short and eats it
- C. is willing to take the hare's place
- D. refuses to throw out the Great Mogul

---

*Spring*

Spring and all, the tulips  
Hold up a red goblet: drink a little  
Sunshine flush with the wall to the east.  
After all, why not spring  
Which makes you feverish and whose song goes past  
Dripping with music and muzak.  
Spring's an objective fact  
Abject fête fictitious object, etc.  
Why do spring the other would have said  
To have a body and fear's absence  
I didn't say anything about it: to breathe  
Without lying isn't on **the** agenda.

Spring's on sale! Glory to white onions!  
Tarragon chives and watercress!  
Let's get cooling, my friends, because life  
Etc.

Raw spring includes the absent ones.

---

*Caught Short*

1. The boredom of the uniform

There's no excuse

Thee law isn't ignorant of

The nerves' state of war

Nothing's impossible

Everything can be stopped

A tiny bayonet

Indicates the time.



2. Figawo

O admiwable working crass O etemaw Powand  
On your feet pwoles To solidawity  
Twoops waise the cwoss high  
Eweybody behind the hory sacwament the Great Fwee World  
And Wonald Weagan its pwesident

3. Permanent correspondent

And the streets have regained  
Their usual appearance  
And around here the patrols  
Are much lighter now  
And even the snow, etc.

—trans. by Jeanie Puleston Fleming & Christopher Merrill

Pascal Monnier

In the spacious and flower-decked salons  
there was  
    a refreshment table laid out as in the past  
    with orangeade, cakes  
    and sweet cordials

the lindens had grown  
and shaded  
    those sitting on the little bench

while in the laurel grove  
    the sparrows continued  
    to hide

in the fishing boat  
was placed  
    a small old-fashioned armchair  
    and sail-cloth cushions

and in the carriage  
    a precious footstool  
but in the orchard  
    the ground was covered with fruit  
    that no one had gathered up

near the kitchen garden  
    a statue of a woman

under a chestnut tree  
and near other lindens  
    a bench  
    where strollers could rest  
    the third day when Phylostrato reigned  
    they lay down in the ideal valley  
    and bathed in the coolest and purest water  
    the servants had brought tables  
    amid the songs, laughter and dancing

under the elms, the aspens, the poplars  
the sun burns sometimes  
and a smell of rot drifts  
here and there on the river  
pike, trout, and perch still live there

in the blue bedroom among the armchairs  
the carpets, the tapestries, the objects  
another smell drifts but different  
from that of perfume mingled with ashes

and windward of the parents' bedroom  
and from the smell  
of the corridor with the flowered wallpaper

Luck is now sent to you  
you will receive this luck within four days  
you will receive it by mail  
do not send money  
good luck has no price

do not keep this letter  
it must leave your hands  
within the next 96 hours

an officer in the R.A.F.  
received 7000 pounds

Mr. Million received 40,000 pounds  
and returned them because he had  
thrown away the letter

while in the Philippines  
Gene Walch  
lost his wife  
7 days after receiving it

however  
before his death  
he received 7,755,000 pounds

Kiss someone  
you love  
when you receive this letter  
and that becomes magical

this paper has been sent to you  
to  
bring you luck

it has been around the world  
9 times

please  
send 20 copies

and see what happens  
during 4 days  
the letter comes from Venezuela  
and was written  
by Bual Anthony de Groof  
a South American missionary

after a few days  
you will receive a surprise  
even if you aren't superstitious  
take note of the following fact

Constantine Dias  
received the letter in 1953  
a few days later  
he won 2 million \$  
in the lottery

Arla Addit  
an office worker  
received the letter then forgot it  
he lost his job  
later  
he mailed 20 copies  
a few days afterward  
he obtained  
a better job

Allan Fairchild  
received the letter  
and didn't believe in it  
and threw the letter away  
9 days later  
he died

kiss the one you love  
send 20 copies  
please  
see what happens  
don't keep this letter  
it must leave your hands

## The Murphy Bed

It was hot, so hot that Alvin had stopped taking showers during the day. The reaction of his body to the cool water was violent, uncontrollable and hot. His circulation increased, his limbs shivered, his skin was covered with tiny drops; for a long moment Alvin's brain became inflamed. After finishing work he wrapped himself in damp cloths and stretched out on the tile floor. His apartment was situated on the 82nd floor of the Empire State Building. He was an oral surgeon. He lived and worked in the same place. His clientele was made up primarily of children.

On days when school was closed children were taken to the Guinness Museum, then to admire the view from the top of the building, and finally to the office of Alvin T. Fensterheim the dentist. The waiting room, which doubled as the living room after office hours, was permanently littered with children's magazines and comic strips. He had read and reread them hundreds of times, since he usually waited for patients rather than the reverse.

Lying on the tile floor, wrapped in damp cloths, Alvin's body rested agreeably. The metallic parts of the dental equipment, heated by the sun all day long, were untouchable. He slept in his dentist's chair, completely naked, in the light of the setting sun. Then the room was bathed in moonlight without his having wakened. Cars circulated noiselessly a hundred yards below him; airplanes flew around him in silence. His sleep was peaceful. On the same floor, on the same landing, in the next apartment, another man slept peacefully on a small leather couch placed in the antechamber of his office.

78 floors below, on a small stool, leaning back against the wall of lobby B, the guard dozed. He was snoring and sometimes his body thrashed about in search of a less uncomfortable position. He slept a lighter and more troubled sleep than that of the two other men.

On the 62nd floor, Martin Hoover was studying an important dossier for an insurance company. He was very sleepy. A few minutes later he fell asleep at his work table, his head cradled in his folded arms.

On Central Park West at the corner of 52nd, a man carrying a suitcase got into a red Mercury driven by a chauffeur.

trans. John Ashbery

Marcelin Pleynet

## The Method

The correct method of teaching poetry,  
Art is limited to the propositions  
of acknowledged sciences, with all clarity  
and possible exactitude, leaving the poetic  
enunciations to the student and proving to him,  
every time there is a chance, that they are  
without meaning.

Distressing reduction of the vocabulary  
of modern poetry  
syntactic retention  
galloping schizoid  
exploitation  
dissimulation  
mental misery.



Misery of poetry.  
Poetry of misery.

Mallarmé:

“The vulgarity of Men of Letters...is perfect,  
I'm still furious,  
even though I'm so little one among them.”

At best

contemporary poets

make literature (men of letters).

When one knows that literature in France  
means the XIXth century!

The XIXth century once and for all...?

What a bore!

Mallarmé

today required detour via Villon (Céline)

Mallarmé

too intelligent for the poets

he immediately convinced them

“What comes out of teaching must go back to it.”

Break the Mallarmean lock:

esoteric pulp.

Pick up Villon—classical rhetoric—

experience:

Racine-Baudelaire.

Exoteric Rimbaud.

(“Gelding? Not an inch.”)

Living language. Spoken language  
(Written language is a bureaucratic language)

Quality of language: Quality of a body  
Experience quantity  
Experience the quantity of a body

Living tradition: Logic of experience.

The qualities of the French language  
Are indissociable from the science of language:  
rhetoric, the new science,  
The cornerstone of our own practice.  
Guillaume de Saint Amour  
The first to have used this new science.  
Guillaume de Machaut  
“the great rhetorician of this new form.”  
La Fontaine.  
Bossuet: oratory art

Baudelaire:

“If you haven’t studied rhetoric  
With Satan, that clever master,  
Junk it! You haven’t learned a thing.”

Lautréamont:

The phenomenon passes, I look for laws.

Necessity of maintaining everything.

Precipitation of actions.

Precipitation of informations:

diversity

practical truth

volume of languages

as quality

and as quantity

(everything in state in *Stanza*)

“Materialism is in itself grandiose poetry”

Against that miserable idealism of contemporary poetry

Stupid idealism...how sad!

Mallarmé: “You’ll note that one cannot write  
luminously in a dark field...  
man pursues black on white.”

Black on white:            “If I do not lose the seed I sow  
In your field when the fruit is fine  
God commands me to smoke and borrow  
That being the reason you are mine.”  
Villon.

“and the preacher became corrupted  
since he could not explain  
the corruption of nature.”  
Sade.



A man corrupted by nature is  
a man who refuses to know  
the corrupt nature of man,  
a sort of vegetable

cf. a vegetable or a mineral poetry.

Lucette Destouche on Céline:

“He can be compared to those Hindus who cannot come. They can stop on their way to an orgasm. He was the same. It was his matter, *his instrument*.”

*Rime, Venetian love, The Women and he*  
(lighter). Experience is never  
quantity but variation:  
clavier...volume.

“Joyously that’s what lovers sign  
Love writes it in his volume  
That being the reason you’re mine.”  
Villon.

Clavier:           the body of thought  
If in fact as Diderot writes:  
“My thoughts are my whores.”

Daily exercises.  
Quite agreeable to say the least:

eroticization of vocabulary  
quantity  
enraptured by quantity  
quality  
    without waiting  
        the practice  
        exercising the sexual body  
        (isn't that so?)  
        energy  
        action  
        swiftness of decision  
        fusion of reasoning  
        breath  
        rhythm  
        time  
        eternity  
        vital force.

You cannot go breathless!

When the Queen of Sheba met Solomon

“No *rûah* was left in her”  
(she then lost her breath  
she was transported  
her animation and her vitality were as if suspended  
by an extraordinary spectacle:  
loss of *rûah* (breath)  
diminution of vitality  
entered the sphere of death)

## II Kings 2

Elijah wishes to have a double share  
of Elisha's *Rûah*

"I pray you, let me inherit a double share of your spirit."

Truly a question of Elisha's vitality removed and transmitted  
at the end of his life. Elijah will first make use  
of it to cross the Jourdan (miracle)  
then to render fertile (gift of progeniture)  
the earth watered by the source or Elisha's Fountain.

Needless to say it's how you want it.

Poetry, however, must say everything.

trans. Serge Gavronsky



Anne Portugal

from *De quoi faire un mur & Le plus simple appareil*

You who know painting thoroughly  
the true distance  
stepping back  
tomcat's eye in the manufacture of marbles  
flower pot to flowers  
it's strong  
the red of red beans  
you need an American uncle  
even beat  
even creepy  
rodeo's hereditary symmetry  
mad longing  
to set your bowling pins dancing  
whistling silently away  
think of the Cliff boy  
who both relaxes  
and hands you a scrap  
You who know painting thoroughly

the landscapes of day are looked at piecemeal  
differently  
from the neighboring  
and if he chooses to cut out  
the other hedge  
he's pleased  
the other hedge  
he's attracted by compassion  
for the other hedge

the hour glass

me I'm enchanted by this landscape here seen from the sea  
so brief that an hourly pedal boat rental is  
a senseless waste not to mention a room  
by the half-day

in this case cat who in turn sticks  
a butterfly back of the windpipe  
which gesture sends it into a rage in reverse  
ah would I ravish a bombardier

since I see two hemispheres I think  
I am passing the poles  
I push a plane on to Melbourne I feel in a state  
of post-sentimentality

on the slanted garden

a slant a garden

public

which makes the two gardeners of the city of Paris

seem to be

mural

allegories

nearly on the slant

they hold like mountain

cows

though it's vertical and almost

giving in

to their mutuality

so that the height of the boots on each leg

is proportionate

to the boy's bent

to pick a flower

in season

which shakes his root

to high firmness

of houses

if these boys shake up armfuls

of flowers

it's that they have to rip them

from threshers

on orders

from city hall

the two boys

I found they were trellised the white arm  
and at the same time everything moved a little

that distinguishing two three separate  
the window left an elbow at the fastener  
whose impression is canvas and the following  
returns the little profile or little else

the limits site the rest and arrange  
you whom I adore who go beyond the countenance the clan  
the women's set have you said all your things  
works the dismantling by default

the quality of a stooping hairdressing multiple  
that I would watch

this idea of cube  
the cross it was delight  
to cross the empty court  
as far as the wall  
and then to turn  
sighting the heart the diagonals  
crossing the voices  
indigenous inclines  
and women on the balcony spelled b  
they facing you thought of me as from a p  
lashing of hesitant ship  
to the hold

trans. Norma Cole

Pascal Quignard

In Air

Among the Branches of Breech

Subject to fear. (I speak in tears.  
Enraged. "The outside! The wordless!")

Farther than field's end  
(In forest. No silence.  
No uproar.)

---

(Subject to fear.) He turned back to see.  
A blinding chaos: foliage unchecked en-  
dangering the harvest. A wilderness  
(they've taken a steep path which rises in  
utter silence. Sheer. Nothing seen.  
Fog a knife could slice) - to say

---

makes a terrifying noise

---

No uproar but nothing at peace. The  
silence of rage is identical with the  
silence of utmost terror.

- while we were talking

---

Fled while we were talking

Take

(They took the path  
mentioned above...)

in the territories beyond. (Amid deep  
silence?)

---

(Still, when we try to achieve silence,  
clenching our teeth to hold our breath,  
as we gather it at the edge of our lips,  
with what eloquence sounds:

“st”)

But, “Sag!” it’s “The Howling!”

---

Silence peculiar to night:  
Her! She is being dragged  
backwards.

(But, “Sag!” it’s “The Howling!”  
It’s the word for the sound the waves make  
as they resonate.  
Let me put it this way, it’s as if you  
heard a sigh from the high seas.)

---



(He dies while writing

“from the high seas...”

but in what is foreign to  
language! At field's end!) Winter  
beginning at the mouth's opening

without community. Without enigma

---

more fluid than the wind

starting from these cliffs

(I say)

in the air  
among the branches of beech:

---

end of the field and

fear. (What - me!)

Throughout the night the air is “freer  
from turbulence because

nights are quieter.

(Without uproar, with nothing peaceful.)

---

Thomist but

(What? Certainly not a

a creature of the woods

alone

among the beeches,

no matter what foolishness

to cry out

being accustomed to

trans. Michael Palmer (After the French translation by Emmanuel Hocquard and Pascal Quignard, with a glance at Quignard's Latin).

Jacqueline Risset

Equivalent To: Love

Pages

: Book, we should be able to undo it  
what's the role of stone in  
his books—Crowd, church, gravel pit

this ridge ideas get  
on some days  
sacrifice  
    of the child  
so that the earth / mother  
a lot all this  
which equals

your life, painful in  
    / broken  
us

Earthquake  
earth wind  
deep purple flash, sleep,

crossing the river,  
thunder bolt,  
rested eyes

D's Voice H's Voice

*D's Voice:*\*

they, like shepherds,  
and I, like a goat,  
have fallen asleep on the bank

and as a bow  
bursts with arrows  
I burst into sobs and sighs

when she spoke  
far side of the river  
the old flame

rekindled inside me  
with its old color of blood  
“for you I went through water and fire”

*H's Voice:\*\**

it wasn't for heaven  
it wasn't for anything higher than you but for you  
hurt so that you should know

hurt tossing from side to side  
in the narrow bed of the song  
excited ready for

even virtue even order even school  
believing nothing but your warmth  
and that your name your sign

I say we I say sisters  
but it's me crumbled for love of you  
crumbled to bits

into river runs to surround you  
wherever

\*Dante, \*\*Heloise

## Forest

she started saying my name  
with her voice her mouth  
with the colors I knew  
right after that she reproached me  
and I cried  
Toward Easter I dreamed  
that I dreamed her dream  
when I woke up  
I didn't know where we were me and her  
outside or inside this dream

from time to time  
when she touches the point where her love lies  
sleeping

her tongue wakes and comes back  
to say  
"I am here I see you do you see me?"  
"I sing"

to say:  
"my body, dear  
I fear  
I see you disappear"

trans. Rosmarie Waldrop

Denis Roche

from *Prose Ahead of a Woman*

I had reached the middle of the park when something changed in the oblong arena of the landscape I was watching. It was rather far ahead in front of me, slightly to the right, along the path which comes up from the tennis courts, in the direction of the local road. And while a horse appeared with a lady rider, I couldn't help but, I was only able to compare my field of vision—and I still feel it as I think about it—to a vast attic window with softly rounded angles, greyish and moth-eaten by the interior penumbra of the mind, the one which represses by degrees the brilliance of the world we see and which at times extinguishes it, a bit as one must surely see flickering and then go out in an invisible flight of smoke the portrait of a loved one enclosed in the pocket of a wallet or the firefly which dies because it had emerged too early on before nightfall.

I later learned that the rider's name was Blanche Castle, a character in this story who had found it appropriate, according to the initial outline, to give me a number of details concerning this young woman, knowing that I would need them later on as a narrative commodity, but also because of the desire for this type of need and all the information which was going to complete her character; in the same way that, in reality, the future lover knows he'll have to accumulate as many details as possible, pieces of information, paid for on a prorata basis of an enterprise becoming more imminent from day to day, all that "necessary material" around seduction, having for its solitary goal the dilation of time, to make of it a vertiginous moment half-way between the first meeting and the first caresses, between the glance and the touch. I must admit that, standing in the midst of this large grassy square, I had already begun to think about it, I envisaged a mix-up over the clothing, not because they were going to be removed, but because they were belted and double-breasted or buttoned up, that is to say, at a stage where all ideas of precariousness had been excluded; I joined to these parcels of images, cohorts of details, fluctuations in narrative verisimilitude, among those which sinuously rise in the slow and so suave overexcitement of the imagination.

Conscious of this obligation whose initial effects were only then beginning to be felt, I looked out firmly, one might say, forced into this profit, this person who slowly began to be called Blanche Castle, who was slowly coming towards me in the slow pace of her horse, brought here both by the weather and the dramatic action, both offering to me, on a pebbled tray, here and there pierced by some incongruous grass whose only destiny in this world was or was not to be crushed under the hooves of this fictitious horse.

I remained motionless, but that was all.

Despite the whirl of the moment and the absolute light of the sun on this scene, I was aware of the repetitive absence of sound, or should I rather say, of a continuous absence of all sounds. But can one say about the absence of sound that it detonates? No horse's clippity-clop, whose hooves nevertheless I saw strike the ground, no crackling of the silex on the path, though these noises certainly had occurred, borne under this chestnut beast and propagating all around the shape of invisible orbs, as true as the ocellates of peacocks, stretching to the point of crushing themselves against the fences, closing in, enribboned around tree trunks, coiling as so many tender

reptiles or languid whips at the angle of the abbey's main building, or else finishing up by fainting for lack of strength, having forgotten their conviction in the air or the light.

When both horse and woman were no more than a few yards away from me, it was for me no longer possible to take in the inventory: the horse, the robe on the horse; the woman, the robe on the woman; the color of it all, the colors of the flesh and the clothes; the gait of the one and the carriage of the other.

trans. Serge Gavronsky



Jacques Roubaud

from *Quelque chose noir*

Nolife

Neck squeezed by the rope of waking  
Body all heaped together to the forehead  
Stretch of flat desert with bad soundtrack  
Wanting desperately to make its words stick somewhere  
And smiling emptily in front of your black face  
Licking your skin sandy sometimes with music  
Caught in a circular hell of seeing and seeing  
Ceaseless your face quenched the breath remote  
As at that deepest moment where I understood

Nolife, II

Null vision at the bottom of thick brown glass  
Caught from the surface of veins but never told  
Never told on the wavering field of your dwindling voice  
Groping for your throat endlessly backlit  
Maybe hidden behind the topsoil even  
Wide open sky of endurable brilliance  
At the center of your flesh and draining a sound of flies  
That frown on the horizon where it turns blue  
One more vertical hour but just your lungs

Nolife, III

Renounce me eye out front and looking  
At the uncurling wave of genuine surcease  
Answer neither me trembling to tell and opening to say what  
Say to whom now opening wide inside your mouth  
Without knowing it breathless since you were born  
Skin grey sudden drunkenness of oxygen

Pure phrase of liquid with no teeth  
Far from me footing lost in the unbreathable  
Blood and threw the sheet over your hair

#### **Nolife, IV**

Say it am I going to die say it  
Die so that I won't know anymore say it  
Tide wave of imperceptible space  
Comes scraping the instant of your afterlife  
Say it the wave of time and of what  
Of lights of clouds of everything that makes everything  
Squeezing my hand shoving night back a little  
The door pushed back of light  
I recognized your death I saw it

trans. Robert Kelly

Agnès Rouzier

from *Non, rien*

As if each step, each word dissolved you—and you collapse—or at the same time you overflow, with such laughter, such affectation, such pauses,—you move forward to the undulating edge of a frontier where you are the only one who knows the handles, the coves, the passages; you feel happy swallowing this incomparable grey dust, while the swiftness orients you, pushes you by the shoulders, more than alone now, while around you drift solid and shapeless masses, skimmed through and dispersed by a finger, you skirt windowpanes that reflect you, dressed mannequins, undressed, bald or with wigs, on a street that would never have any architecture, no walls, no house, and that nothing, beyond you (but you?) traverses (but that speaks and breathes), at the edge of this page that is neither page, nor paper, nor whiteness, nor reflection, nor madness, nor wisdom, nor sense, nor book, not your hand, not your head, but a beginning splitting through an experience, a kind of present that doubles without end, without ever petitioning to an up-coming future, cassation, lack of grace—already you fall.

But give me a body. Or answer, chosen from among so many others: silence is a word that is not a word.

Here we will arrange what remains of men for us before the sea. And we will stare at her, on the beach, debased, supreme, simply mediocre, outside our gaze that adorns her in a myth. Body, called superb, and that I call, on my knees, with my tongue, adored. Here we arrange, facing the sea, what remains of men for us, in a sex-line, red, called obscene, drawn up, bust nude, immortal. fusillade that immediately assassinates them and starts up again, while a spring releases at their feet. Puts them back in place. You. Nude. Or us.

Here what you see. What is. What speaks.

Forward, facing premonition, facing impossible accomplishment—here what you see, erase, speak—forward, behind this powerful blue, this sun, these baths, words from breakfast, morning, water, sleep, sea, fisherman, river, meadow, forest, verdure, desert, fish, desert, forward, outside, at the most transient and sublime, until rain, the country, the city (up to this particular snickering) up to these round stones, rough, palpable (but not phantoms) until this...but nothing more (what you see, what is, what speaks). Shutters clatter. A moment you fall. As if wanting you and disappearing.

The hottest month is not yet behind us. Convention that makes death dreadful, then, immediately, tames it again.

So light, impossible, sounds reverberate inside of...Him, you, me, us: kind of conch of repetition. (At the heart of this work, of this apprehension, which will not leave them, not before not after). But you face if I invented you, if you move, and you deeper, more muffled, you, blood under open lips, path that goes, goes beyond,

deranges, and behind...

Can we call this silence empty? (sea of ice)—and hot enough to burn flesh.

It appears from the very start. Nothing appears, but the onset is there, in these palms, in these turned-up hands, held up and undone, under these nails.

Let it come. Let the thread spread, and the ink, inchoate, appear. I, you, quiver. Let yourself, one thousand, die, run. Symbol of millepertuis. I don't know.

This is rest. Peace. Or unbounded, terror.

Inland, not even a tree, object, to give it measure or immoderation. Silence is a word that is not a word, and breath an object that is not an object.

Playing sounds, until like points their appearance limbers, disarticulates.

We learned to be blond. To have green eyes. Curls. Painted figures. (By fantasy of resurgence.)

Silence is a word that is not a word and breath an object that is not an object.

By fancy into resurgence.

That beast who, all night, like a mole... Thus desire marries itself to expectation. Bang. I love, we love, the crusty scent of earth at your fingertips, under the nails. Painful image. Her laughing, radiant image. Sun. How distant you (they) are. How I...

The Vespers of the Virgin (Beata Virgine) enwrapping everything. As you, as I, we, radiant image, we are...

Hotel room, traditionally gloomy, narrow, hot. Sink, bidet, soiled objects. We look around. Asmodeus or the demon of... Worship. Narrow. We look.

Pleasant, the village square, where some children wait. Then they got up. Absence. As you, as I, we are... Sun.

This angel is not ugly.

((And so ceremoniously they bowed and told sweet stories of bygone days, violins in hand (and that color rose, contemptuous of the green of leaves, pre-spring)

angels on their knees rigid, strikingly distant, proud, angels that face us. Does it matter anyway what I saw that you I saw, and cried.))

New laughter.

(Density promised until damnation and that you offer, now, redemptress. Little box, opaque, between your hands, that you caress, open. Nothing breaks loose, but erases you, unsteady, further off, “almost to suicide.”)

Bubbles, bulls from a tumultuous current: morass. The Bleeding Nun or King Lear.

Then the walls no longer resemble walls. He takes a taxi. Streets traditionally gloomy, narrow, burning, versus the country, vast, open.

I recount the severity of a dream that is not dreamt, of a labyrinth without enigma. I recount the flaky density, absorbent cotton's hole.

Here the itinerary of whatever joy is traced, of whatever fear, laughter, suffering, secret denunciation, absence. Let it come. Let it.

A freestone house. Polyester husks. Habitation. Cockpit. *Amica mea*. Open lips. Misery of those through whom the scandal-silence-suicide arrives).

Infinitely reassuring, these characters in cornets. But the story doesn't end here: spating, the other feels the words trace a path with him that carries him away (stammering, frothing, flows down.)

Having completely lost any notion of the limits that make up definite being, gradually sinks.

Tumultuous current, morass: the Nun or the King.

trans. Chet Wiener

Citations:

*But give me a body.* Kierkegaard

*Silence is a word that is not a word.* Georges Bataille

*Silence is a word that is not a word, and breath an objet that is not an object.* Georges Bataille

*Almost to suicide.* Mallarmé

*Amica mea.* (The Vespers of the Virgin) Monteverdi

Claude Royet-Journoud

The Narrative of Lars Fredrickson

draft one

she crosses over

from one border to another

repetition

in that named space  
of the neutral

on the pressing spread  
where interrogation and rest  
figure in

\*

...near the muscle  
an infinitive pain



Esther Tellerman

from "1st and 2nd Door," a section of *Three Inhuman Maps*

She came  
gravel color  
head overturned on the columns  
only to delay the threat  
the temple's development.

\*

What was the conflict's nature?  
Position.  
Hammered to the edges of the mark.

\*

East wall:  
the whole landscape figured.  
Palms and other essences.  
Canals.

\*

He's still asleep  
You see every feature  
around falsification.  
The wheel moved air.

\*



Refraction.  
Through the effect of two mirrors  
his laid out son.

In hell  
several red points  
broke the bodies.

\*

3rd and 4th hours of the night.  
Dark flesh.  
Rite of the opening of the mouth.  
And we were the cards  
in rarified air.

\*

Negative confession:  
do not reproduce.  
Overturn the face.  
Air's absence.

Sudden the green  
upstream  
the day's variations.

\*

A prince mixed in the ships of infancy.

1st and 2nd door.  
Fix the mirror.  
Transparency  
must be taken.

\*

Among fragments  
the end of lands.  
How many live  
directly?

\*

And under their over-white skin  
brusque movement of departure.  
Certain men.  
The one the other.  
Redhead  
but was rejected.

Parted the man's thighs  
with a black tip.

\*

He begs them:  
take the same way back.

Retraced glaze.  
Double of the dead's face.  
the other bank  
revealed him.

\*

The image had to be multiplied  
along the yellow stream.  
We were looking for an edge  
water bathed the blue herbs  
that morning already.

\*

5 meters  
aperture at 4  
with the day's outpour.  
Morning's salt rubs out the traces.

\*

The bend of low waters.  
Essences.  
Torpor.  
These points  
opposing their own strength.

\*

Hold back  
deviate the route.

It was a very old departure.

“And if by chance  
freed of the abyss  
that night's fire.”  
A song passes over the water.

\*

And so they lived  
once again  
as long ago their children.

\*

When she reached the shore  
the signs no longer had  
the usual rhythm.

\*

trans. Stacy Doris

Jean Tortel

The Body to Relocate

Certain green        certain leaves  
Certain reflection of green on leaves  
immeasurable        but  
Measures of awakening        and this  
Unforgotten which sleeps  
Still and whose nights I have crossed  
Fortunately often

According to some green        certain  
Reflective leaves  
are not measurable        but.

---

The day is livid winter.  
Day means twenty-four hours.  
A completed revolution.  
Without stopping to begin.  
Is again what it was.  
The same circumference.  
Divided into two segments.  
Unequal each morning.  
That the troubled eye rebuilds.  
By sleep        it's day.  
That is to say a facade.  
Appeared        the eye does not follow.  
Neither why        nor if it's true.  
That lividness could be.  
Different within itself.

---

That which rises from the water half black.  
Disintegrated but who could be.  
Picture the day the body.



Shudders in the writing  
of its disjointed appearance but she  
Was her own impenetrable night  
Walled in by herself and protected  
By the figures coming out of her theater  
Such as the dancers.

---

Random body that knows nothing.  
Of either the duration or the depth.  
Neither of the two possible meanings.  
Steering the curves toward nothing.  
Form and its power don't know.  
To name those things visible to the eye.  
Open closed it's the same thing.  
The same agreed upon the same.  
Revival and torque.

trans. Cole Swensen

Alain Veinstein

Between Body and Soil

Here, with all my strength,  
from a great distance.

So painful  
to hold on.

Position of a man  
who lays hands on death.



Master of his pen, of the fright that forms a plot of land, since that *other* and *only* time, he is no longer alone. But *nobody* as long as he drags along this land of prey.

I should have let them carry on:  
words lead to body.

He comes back from his labors  
hand buried in soil.

The land is not large enough  
for this kind of hand!

To ground myself, to construct a story under my ribs and in my throat, I push far the study of this hand that folds me into death.

Deep in the whitish soil, a few steps from mere dust, my hand feeds the fire...

*As far as the eye can reach*

As far as the eye can reach, upset in his labor, not joining gesture to word...

The first fields have made him turn to a story that never takes place, where he never arrives.

From here on,  
in my depression,  
in spite of accidents,  
I hold on to all that's misshapen in the land  
so as not to lose my body.

A day laborer making the rounds.  
Libertine.

At liberty to come and go  
I burn, a good page,  
at the heart of things.

I approach the fire that has already  
consumed all the characters.

Incapable of moving faster, half my body as if bathed in dust, I try to rise to ground level, toward the other part of death.

*As in his infancy  
plays havoc with his land;  
then fights against death  
with swollen lips.*

*And his land  
but holes dug with bare hands  
death's looking glass*



If I continued with this line, in my image, without trying for the least advance, I would dry out, far from my body, in the unwavering flame.

All movement of the pen.  
(Light among ashen bodies.)  
All movement that leads away  
from the light.

And the fugitive whom no hand holds back, who is space lost...

I am not only here.  
But there is no other hand

So buried in writing...  
Without a breath of air. Without issue  
or menace.

In this clutter where there is no story  
but death's progress.

*The light*

Nothing is lost. Nothing has budged.  
I entrench myself in my hand,  
choked with light.

Like a gesture answering a gesture:  
the light.

From the first line to the last,  
I borrow the name of the light.

*Light*

Light: this lack of strength.

But, he, unable even to reach  
a 'window.'

Tied to this word—between limb and land—  
where words find no place.

trans. Rosmarie Waldrop

Jean-Jacques Viton

Fractured Whole

the pigeon's gait is spasmodic  
it should not be called slow  
if it is observed calmly  
it can be comfortably studied  
on a balcony railing  
the ease of the method  
is guaranteed to bemuse

at each contact of the foot  
another measurement  
time has no significance  
steps often being taken  
with a touch of distractedness  
to run faster it's enough  
simply to lengthen stride

changing place is a focused domain  
resulting from the positions of the head  
which the gaze must never leave  
you've noted that frequently I move  
my left hand at the touch of voices  
a different situation I belong  
to the second generation of robots

the respiratory rate is maintained  
under constant tension  
the duration of contact hardly varies

they attempt to verify this  
sight cannot choose  
the moment of touching the ground  
walking is compromise

before the ordeal they followed  
the rodent's lively climbing  
the monkey's inspired leap  
the hare's bounding escape  
on a short color film  
in which skeletons are articulated  
like transparent sentences

crabs move in all directions  
to normalize progression  
at each step mistakes are compounded  
even-numbered legs are seen  
to swerve ascend descend  
sheathed in aquatic crust  
sprouting from limber sockets

a salto is more than a creature  
just count the rebounds  
a forward salto is expansive  
a backward salto more compact  
while eyes blur  
the head is never stable  
take a good look at the diners'

clearing a hurdle  
is managed in short strides  
something perfectly regular

the tempo tightens  
in acrobatic postures  
variations in rhythm  
are negligible  
above each target

never divert the sightless  
momentum toward the narrow boards  
regulating movements is tricky  
all data are exploited  
at five o'clock on Sunday morning  
in the silvery wheels of bikers  
the wind sets obstacles aquiver

a passive stretch of the foot  
is expressed in terms of influence  
simple reflex of engagement  
a strong clench blocks  
the complete unfolding of limbs  
streets have become impassable  
a pointless ordeal by exhaustion

we know that for an average stride  
the prescribed speed has been stored  
the mental image tends to disappear  
but it's under other conditions  
for instance a less persistent sun  
I ask you to look in my direction  
the response may alter the season

a woman is running on the cinder track  
breasts compressed by her T-shirt



her blond hair can be seen for a long time  
her great yearning for speed  
like at the confines of this lake  
the horsewoman's arrival at a gallop  
it's a fractured whole

the instructions are to stay upright  
feet set on a platform  
the child stands there naturally  
a series of leaps to be made  
a hundred steps to quartering  
ordinary stride method  
the term *model* is equivocal

the obstacle zone is necessary  
for the ankle's angulation  
a certain forward motion of the body  
without intermediary or hesitation  
the arm's abrupt acceleration  
like a perfectly commonplace gesture  
but the trunk remains slightly unreal

the mechanical beat of the finale  
suddenly intensifies its blast  
time to admire the taped athlete  
wrists glued to knees  
he slowly flies on his back  
like a little white projectile  
into the stadium's gaping morgue

Aix-en-Provence, February 1987

## Contributors:

Anne-Marie Albiach, 1937-

Author of *Flammigère* (Siècle à mains, 1967), *État* (Mercure de France, 1971; English translation by Keith Waldrop, Awede, 1988), *Mezza Voce* (Flammarion, 1984; English translation by Joseph Simas, with Anthony Barrett, Lydia Davis & Douglas Oliver, The Post-Apollo Press, 1988), *A Geometry* (translated by Keith & Rosmarie Waldrop, Burning Deck (Serie d'écriture Supplement #3), 1998), & *A Discursive, Space: Interviews with Jean Daive* (translated by Norma Cole, Duration Press, 1999).

With Claude Royet-Journoud & Michel Courturier, she edited the journal *Siècle à mains*, where her seminal translation of Zukofsky's "A-9" first appeared.

Pierre Alferi, 1963-

Founded, with Suzanne Doppelt, the magazine *Détail*, &, with Olivier Cadiot, *Revue de Littérature générale*. He is the author of (all from P.O.L.) *Le Cinéma des familles* (1999), *Sentimentale journée* (1997), *Fmn* (1994), *Kub Or* (1994), *Le Chemin familial du poisson combattif* (1992), & *Les Allures naturelles* (1991; translated by Cole Swensen as *Natural Gaits*, Sun & Moon Press, 1995), as well as *Guillaume d'Ockham. Le Singulier* (Minuit, 1989) & *Chercher une phrase* (Christian Bourgois, 1991).

Gérard Arseguel, 1938-

Author of *Décharges* (Christian Bourgois, 1979), *Ce que parler veut dire* (Ulysse Fin de Siècle, 1987), *Portrait du coeur sous les nuages* (Flammarion, 1988).

André du Bouchet, 1924-2001

Co-founded, with Jacques Dupin, Michel Leiris, & Paul Celan, the journal *L'éphémère* in the 1960s. Among his numerous books of poetry are *Sans couvercle* (GLM, 1953), *Dans la chaleur vacante* (Mercure de France, 1961; translated by David Mus as *Where Heat Looms*, Sun & Moon, 1996), *Ou le soleil* (Mercure de France, 1968), *Dans leur voix les eaux* (Maeght, 1980). A selection of his poems was translated by Paul Auster as *The Uninhabited* (Living Hand, 1976; reprinted in *Paul Auster: Translations*, Marsilio, 1997). du Bouchet has also translated the work of Mandelstam & Celan.

Olivier Cadiot, 1956-

Founded, with Pierre Alferi, *Revue de littérature générale*. He is the author of *Sept détails assez lents* (Quiffi & ffluk, 1983), *Le dernier des Mohicans* (Quiffi & ffluk, 1983), *L'art poétique'* (P.O.L., 1988; translated by Cole Swensen as *Art Poetic'*, Green Integer, 1999), *Rouge, vert & noir* (Block, 1989; translated by Charles Bernstein & Olivier Cadiot as *Red, Green & Black*, Potes & Poets, 1990), *Futur, ancien, fugitif* (P.O.L., 1993), & *Les Colonel Zouaves* (P.O.L., 1997).

Danielle Collobert, 1940-1978

Born into a family active in the Resistance during World War II. She moved to Paris at the age of 19. Her journals detail her engagement with writing, as well as her involvement with the FLN during the Algerian war for independence. She is the author of *Meurtre* (Gallimard, 1984), *Dire I-II* (Seghers/Laffont, coll. Change, 1972), *Il Donc* (Seghers/Laffont, coll. Change, 1976; translated as *It Then* by Norma Cole, O Books, 1989), & her final work, *Survie* (Orange Export, Ltd., 1978).

Michel Couturier, 1932-1987

Author of *De distance en château* (Siècle à mains, 1964), *L'Ablatif absolu* (Maeght, 1975), *Constance patitée* (Le Collet de Buffle, 1977), *Lignes de partage* (Le collet de Buffle, 1985).

Edith Dahan

Author of *Epoques pour la guerre* (Flammarion, 1984).

Jean Daive, 1941-

Edited the magazines *fragment* (1970-72), *fig* (1989-1992), & *FIN* (1999-). He has also translated Paul Celan & Robert Creeley, among others. He is the author of numerous collections of poetry, including *Décimale blanche* (Mercure de France, 1967; translated by Cid Corman as *White Decimal*, Origin, 1969), *Fûbâti* (Gallimard, 1973), his multi-volume *Narration d'équilibre* (P.O.L., 1982-1990; of which *Une leçon de musique* (translated by Julie Kalendek as *A Lesson in Music*, Burning Deck (Serie d'écriture #6), 1992) is the seventh part), *La Condition d'infini* (P.O.L., four volumes, 1995-1997), & *Objet bougé* (P.O.L., 1999).

Michel Deguy, 1930-

Editor-in-chief of the journal *Poésie*. His publications include *Fragment du cadastre* (Gallimard, 1960), *Actes* (Gallimard, 1966), *Figurations* (Gallimard, 1969), *Poèmes 1960-1970* (Gallimard, 1973), *Donnant donnant* (Gallimard, 1981), *Gisants* (Gallimard, 1985), *La poésie n'est pas seule* (Seuil, 1987), *L'Hexaméron* (Seuil, 1990), & *Au sujet de Shoa* (Belin, 1990). A selected poems entitled *Given Giving*, edited & translated by Clayton Eshleman, was published in 1984 by the University of California Press.

Jacques Dupin, 1927-

With André du Bouchet, Yves Bonnefoy, & Paul Celan, was a member of the editorial board for the journal *L'Ephémère*. His publications include *Gravir* (Gallimard, 1963), *Dehors* (Gallimard, 1975), *Une apparence de soupirail* (Gallimard, 1983), & *Contumace* (P.O.L., 1986). His *Selected Poems* (edited by Paul Auster; with translations by Paul Auster, Stephen Romer, & David Shapiro) was published by Wake Forest University Press in 1992.

Claude Esteban, 1935-

Author of *Dans le vide qui vient* (Maeght, 1976), *Terres, travaux du coeur* (Flammarion, 1979), *Conjoncture du corps et du jardin* (Flammarion, 1983), *Le Nom et la Demeure* (Flammarion, 1985), *Elégie de la mort violente* (Flammarion, 1979). Has also translated from the Spanish, including Octavio Paz, Jorge Guillén, & Jorge Luis Borges.

Claude Faïn, 1926-

Author of *Versants annulés* (Le Collet de Buffle, 1974), *Le rite* (Le Collet de Buffle, 1980), *Le démantèlement* (Le Collet de Buffle, 1980), *Il n'y avait que reflet dans cette matérialité* (Æncrages & Co., 1983), *Le rite, recommencement du geste* (Spectres familiaires, 1984).

Dominique Fourcade, 1937-

A Matisse scholar as well as a poet, is the author of *Epreuves du pouvoir* (José Corti, 1961), *Lessive du loup* (GLM, 1966), *Une vie d'homme* (GLM, 1969), *Rose déclin* (P.O.L., 1984; translated by Keith Waldrop as *Click-Rose*, Sun & Moon, 1996), *Xbo* (P.O.L., 1988; translated by Roger Kocik, Sun & Moon, 1993), *Outrance Utterance* (P.O.L., 1990), *Le sujet monotype* (P.O.L., 1997), & *Everything Happens* (translated by Stacy Doris, The Post-Apollo Press, 2000).

Jean Frémon, 1946-

Art-critic, novelist, & poet. His publications include *Echéance* (Flammarion, 1983), *Théâtre* (Editions Unes, 1989), *Le Signe mendiant* (P.O.L., 1991), *L'Île des morts* (P.O.L., 1994). & *Painting* (translated by Brian Evenson, Black Square Editions, 1999).

Liliane Giraudon, 1946-

Poet, novelist & co-founder, with Jean-Jacques Viton, of the journal *Banana Split*. She is also on the editorial board for the journal *Action poétique*. Her books include *Têtes ravagées: Une Fresque* (La Répétition, 1979), *La Réserve* (P.O.L., 1984), *Pallaksch, Pallaksch* (P.O.L., 1990; translated by Julia Hine, Sun & Moon Press, 1994), & *Fur* (P.O.L., 1992; translated by Guy Bennett, Sun & Moon Press, 1995).

Roger Giroux, 1925-1974

Author of *L'arbre le temps* (Mercure de France, 1964, 1978; translated by Anthony Barnett as *Time and the Tree*, Open Township, 1987), *Et je m'épuise d'être là...* (Éd. Unes, 1982), *L'autre temps* (Éd. Unes, 1985).

Joseph Guglielmi, 1929-

Author of *Aube* (Seuil, 1968; translated as *Dawn* by Rosmarie Waldrop, Serie d'écriture, 1991), *Pour commencer* (Action poétique, 1975), *La préparation des titres* (Flammarion, 1980), *Fins de vers* (P.O.L., 1986), & *Kou Le dit*

*du passage* (P.O.L., 1992). Has also translated into French works by Norma Cole, Cid Corman, Clark Coolidge, Larry Eigner, Rosmarie Waldrop, as well as Jack Spicer's *Billy the Kid*.

Jean-Luc Herrison, 1950-

Author of *Le devisement du monde* (Flammarion, 1990).

Emmanuel Hocquard, 1940-

Author of numerous books, including *Une journée dans le détroit* (Hachette/P.O.L., 1980; translated as *A Day in the Strait* by Maryann DeJulio & Jean Staw, Red Dust, 1984); *Aerea dans les forêts de Manhattan* (Hachette/P.O.L., 1985; translated as *Aerea in the Forests of Manhattan* by Lydia Davis, The Marlboro Press, 1992), *Une privé a Tanger* (P.O.L., 1987); *Le Cap de Bonne-Espérance* (P.O.L., 1988); *Les Elégies* (P.O.L., 1990); *Théorie des Tables* (P.O.L., 1992; translated as *Theory of Tables* by Michael Palmer, o-blek editions, 1994), *Une test de solitude: sonnets* (P.O.L., 1998; translated as *A Test of Solitude: Sonnets* by Rosmarie Waldrop, Burning Deck (Serie d'écriture #12, 2000), *Le consul d'Islande* (P.O.L., 2000) & *Ma haie* (P.O.L., 2001); as well as, in English, *This Story Is Mine: Little Autobiographical Dictionary of Elegy* (translated by Norma Cole, Instress, 1999), *Codicil & Plan for Pond 4* (translated by Ray DiPalma & Juliette Valéry, The Post-Apollo Press, 1999), & *Personae* (translated by Ray DiPalma, Duration Press, 2000). He has also translated the work of Charles Reznikoff, Paul Auster, Michael Palmer, & Benjamin Hollander.

Edmond Jabès, 1912-1991

Author of *Le Livre des Questions* (8 volumes, Gallimard, 1963, '64, '65, '67, '69, '72, '73; translated by Rosmarie Waldrop as *The Book of Questions*, collected in two volumes, Wesleyan University Press, 1991), *Le Livre des ressemblances* (3 volumes, Gallimard, 1976, '78, '80; translated by Rosmarie Waldrop as *The Book of Resemblances*, Wesleyan University Press, 1990, '91, '92), *Le Petit Livre de la subversion hors de soupçon* (Gallimard, 1982; translated by Rosmarie Waldrop as *The Little Book of Unsuspected Subversion*, Stanford University Press, 1996), *Le Livre du Dialogue* (Gallimard, 1984; translated by Rosmarie Waldrop as *The Book of Dialogue*, 1987), *Un étranger avec, sous le bras, un livre de petit format* (Gallimard, 1989; translated by Rosmarie Waldrop as *A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Book*, Wesleyan University Press, 1993), *Désir un commencement Angoisse d'une seule fin* (Fata Morgana, 1991; translated by Rosmarie Waldrop as *Desire for a Beginning Dread of One Single End*, Granary Books, 2000).

Leslie Kaplan

Author of *L'excès-usine* (P.O.L., 1982), *Le livre des ciels* (P.O.L., 1983), *Le pont de Brooklyn* (P.O.L., 1987; translated by Thomas Spear as *The Brooklyn Bridge*, Station Hill, 1992).

Alain Lance, 1939-

Author of *Les gens perdus deviennent fragiles* (P.J. Oswald, 1970), *Les Réactions du personnel* (E.F.R., 1977), *La Première Atteinte* (La Répétition, 1979), *Ouvert pour inventaire* (Belfond, 1984), *Comme une frontière* (Atelier de Grames, 1989), & *Temps criblé: Poèmes, 1962-1999* (Obsidiane / Le temps qu'il fait, 2000). Has translated many German writers including Christa Wolf & Volker Braun.

Pascal Monnier, 1958-

Pascal Monnier is the author of *Bayart* (P.O.L., 1996), a selection of which, "Spring," translated by Cole Swensen, was published by Duration Press in 2000. Her work can also be found in the anthology *Tout le monde se ressemble* (ed. Emmanuel Hocquard, P.O.L., 1995).

Marcelin Pleynet, 1933-

Former associate editor of *Tel Quel*, & author of *Comme* (Seuil, 1965), *Stanze* (Seuil, 1973), *Rime* (Seuil, 1981), & *La Méthode* (Collectif génération, 1990).

Anne Portugal, 1949-

Author of *Le plus simple appariel* (P.O.L., 1992; translated by Norma Cole as *Nude*, Kelsey Street Press, 2001), *Fichier* (Editions Michel Chandeigne, 1992), *De quoi faire un mur* (P.O.L., 1987), & *Les Commodités d'une banquette* (P.O.L., 1985).

Pascal Quignard, 1948-

Former Secretary General of Gallimard. His publications include *L'être du balbutiement: Essai sur Sacher Masoch* (Mercure de France, 1969), *Le lecteur* (Gallimard, 1976), *Sang* (Orange Export, Ltd., 1976), *Hiems* (Orange Export, Ltd., 1977), *Sarx* (Maeght, 1977; translated by Keith Waldrop, Burning Deck (Serie d'écriture Supplément #2), 1997), *Les tablettes de buis d'Aphronenia Avitia* (Gallimard, 1984), *Les escaliers de Chambord* (Gallimard, 1989), *Petits Traités I-VIII* (Maeght, 1990), & *Le nom sur le bout de la langue* (P.O.L., 1993).

Jacqueline Risset, 1936-

Formerly a member of the editorial board of *Tel Quel*. Her books of poetry include *Jeu* (Seuil, 1971), *Mors* (Orange Export, Ltd., 1976), *La Traduction commence* (Christian Bourgois, 1978; translated as *The Translation Begins* by Jennifer Moxley, Burning Deck (Serie d'écriture #10), 1996), *L'Amour de loin* (Flammarion, 1988), & *Petits Eléments de physique amoureuse* (Gallimard, 1991).

Denis Roche, 1937-

Author of *Récits complets* (Seuil, coll. "Tel Quel," 1963), *Les Idées centésimales de Miss Elainze* (Seuil, coll. "Tel Quel," 1964), *Éros énerguemène* (coll. "Tel Quel," 1968), *Le Mécrit* (coll. "Tel Quel," 1972), *Louve basse* (Seuil, coll. "Fiction & Cie," 1976), *Notre antéfixe* (Flammarion, Coll. "Textes," 1978), *Dépôts de savoir & de technique* (Seuil, 1980).

Jacques Roubaud, 1932-

Poet, mathematician, long-time member of Oulipo, author of numerous books of poetry & prose. His publications include *Les sentiments des choses* (Gallimard, 1970), *Trente et une au cube* (Gallimard, 1973), *Quelque chose*

*noir* (Gallimard, 1986; translated as *Some Thing Black* by Rosmarie Waldrop, Dalkey Archive Press, 1990), *Les animaux de personne* (Seghers, 1991), *Les pluralité des mondes de Lewis* (Gallimard, 1991; translated as *The Plurality of Worlds of Lewis* by Rosmarie Waldrop, Dalkey Archive Press, 1995), *Soleil du soleil* (P.O.L., 1991), & *La forme d'une ville change plus vite, hélas, que le cœur des humaines* (Gallimard, 1999). With Octavio Paz, Charles Tomlinson, & Eduardo Sanguinetti, he collaborated on the historic *Renga* (Gallimard, 1971; translated by Charles Tomlinson, George Braziller, 1971).

Agnès Rouzier

Author of *Non rien* (Seghers, 1974), & *Le fait même d'écrire* (Seghers, 1985).

Claude Royet-Journoud, 1941-

Author of, from Gallimard, *Le Renversement* (1972; translated as *Reversal* by Keith Waldrop, Le Collet de Buffle, 1973), *La Notion d'Obstacle* (1978; translated as *The Notion of Obstacle* by Keith Waldrop, Awede, 1985), *Les Objects contiennent l'infini* (1983; translated as *Objects Contain the Infinite* by Keith Waldrop, Awede, 1995), & *Les Natures indivisibles* (1997). Selections of the last book have appeared, in Keith Waldrop's translation, as: *A Descriptive Method* (The Post-Apollo Press, 1995); i.e. (Burning Deck, Serie d'écriture Supplement #1, 1995); & *The Right Wall of the Heart Effaced* (Duration Press, 1999). He was also co-founder & co-editor, along with Anne-Marie Albiach & Michel Couturier, of the journal *Siècle à mains*. With Emmanuel Hocquard, he has edited two anthologies of American poetry, *21+1: Poètes américains d'aujourd'hui*, & *49+1: nouveaux poètes américains*.

Esther Tellerman, 1947-

Author of, all from Flammarion, *Première apparition avec épaisseur* (1986), *Trois plans inhumains* (1989), *Distance de futie* (1993), & *Pangéia* (1996). Her work also appeared in the anthology *Une anthologie immédiate* (ed. Henri Deluy, Fourbis, 1996).

Jean Tortel, 1904-

Author of *Élémentaires* (Mermod, 1961), *Les Villes ouvertes* (Gallimard, 1965), *Relations* (Gallimard, 1968), *Limites du regard* (Gallimard, 1971), *Instants qualifiés* (Gallimard, 1973), *Des corps attaqués* (Flammarion, 1979), *Arbitrares espaces* (Flammarion, 1986).

Alain Veinstein, 1942-

Author of *Répétition sue les amas* (Mercure de France, 1974), *Recherche des dispositions anciennes* (Maeght, 1977), *Vers l'absence de soutien* (Gallimard, 1978), *Corps en dessous* (Clivages, 1979), *Sans elle* (Lettres de case, 1980), *Ébauche du féminin* (Maeght, 1981), & *Même un enfant* (Collet de Buffle, 1988). Books in English translation include: *Archaeology of the Mother* (translated by Tod Kabza & Rosmarie Waldrop, Spectacular Diseases, (Serie d'écriture #1), 1986), & *even a child* (translated by Robert Kocik & Rosmarie Waldrop, Burning Deck (Serie d'écriture #11), 1997).

Jean- Jacques Viton, 1933-

Co-founded, with Liliane Giraudon, the journal *Banana Split*. Author of numerous books including *Au bord des yeux* (Action Poétique collection, 1967), *Image d'une place pour le requiem de Gabriel Fauré* (La Répétition, 1979), *Terminal* (P.O.L. / Hachette, 1981), *Le Wood* (Orange Export, Ltd., 1983), *Douze Apparitions calmes de nus et leur suite*, *Qu'elles provoquent* (P.O.L., 1984), *Décollage* (P.O.L., 1986), *L'Année du serpent* (P.O.L., 1992), *Les Poètes (vestiaire)* (Fourbis, 1996), *Le voyage d'été* (P.O.L., 1999), & *Poème pour la main gauche* (La main courante, 1999). He has translated, into French, works by Nanni Balestrini, & Michael Palmer.

When information was available, bibliographic entries have been updated to reflect new publications in France, & new works in translation.

--Jerrold Shiroma, May, 2001