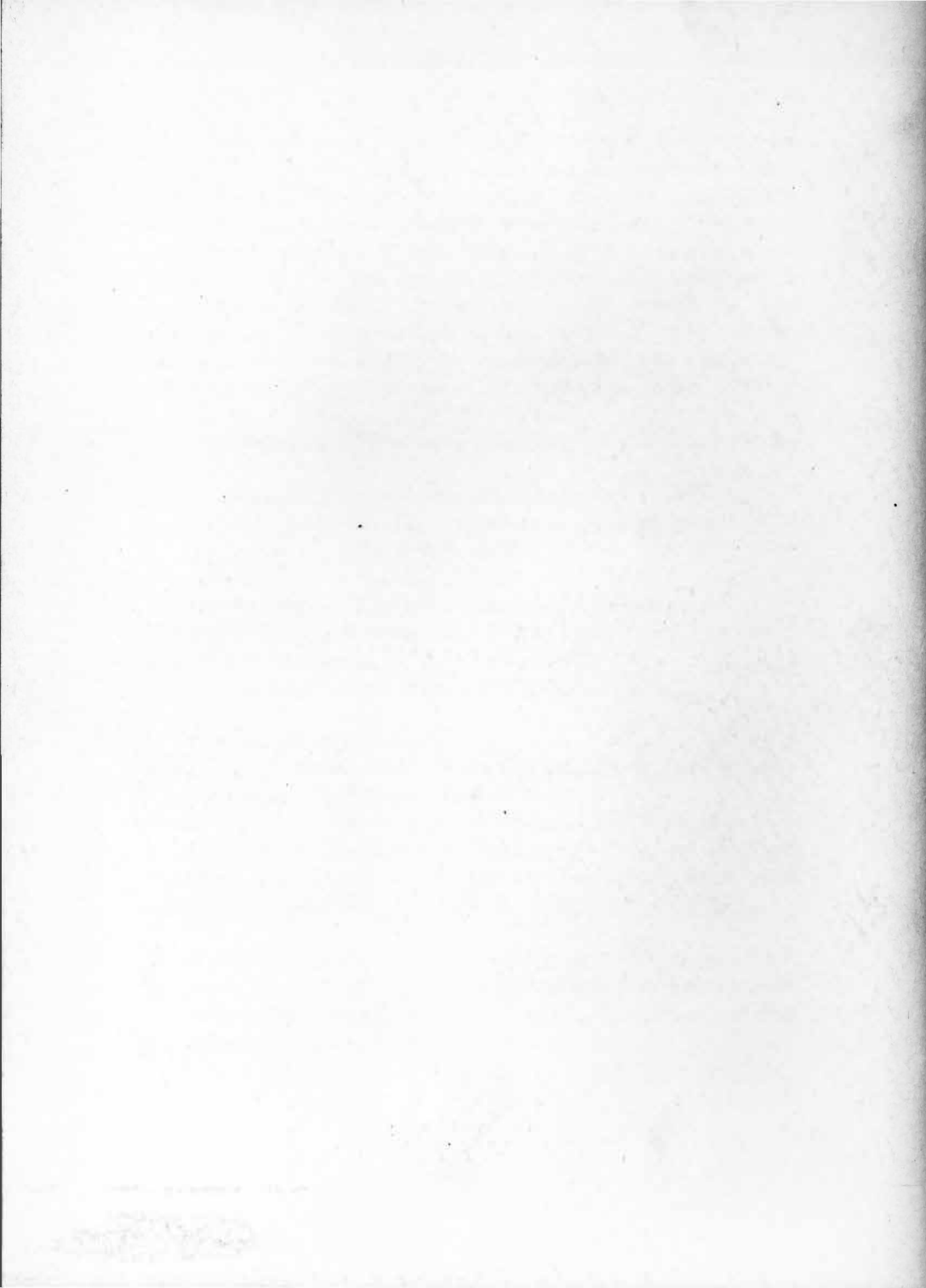


Emmanuel Hocquard

LATE ADDITIONS



SERIE D'ECRITURE NO. TWO

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Serie d'écriture no. 2: Emmanuel Hocquard: Late Additions, 1988

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SERIE D'ECRITURE No. 2:

Emmanuel Hocquard

LATE ADDITIONS

translated from the French
by Rosmarie Waldrop and Connell McGrath

SPECTACULAR DISEASES

1988



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24 November

and the words: shadow of the last tree. Blue above, all the way across. All names buried in the writing box. Neither sharp contour nor color, so only the lighter shades stand out. Not much and as if halfway. Where the air, broken off, does not contain. In infrangible manner, all separation: already the tongue whose single note "and weeps in the confusion of." Even if the outside should have shrunk to one single street. Winter, imperceptibly, in the dark. A place

27 November

come morning, this. And still waiting. Impervious to things. Neither a prop to lean on nor the top of a wall. The hours of the day. Thickened by turbulent air and bundles of rope. Memory exposed in vain.

I do not know if winter or farther off. From farther off yet, a look. Over the "shoulder."

2 March

from over there. Neither growth nor loss of memory since. Well, images have been added. The inside of a dress. Pleats. Neither gains nor falls by the side. But a rigid embrace.

AER

I

Her words as a lament. Or its echo. Having built her words like a ghost town. On foreign soil. From which, ruined and stripped of *gestures*, she expects only what grows between stones.

A few stone steps leading up. Grass. In the wind. Without saying a word. The grass dry from the moment it grows. The town, ahead, like a dead language. Scratched into foreign soil. Into its colors. Scorched grass. Ashes if the sun.

A brighter line. White, shifting with the wind. Just a change of color as the wind turns. The town. Ahead. Where it ends. Where its name no longer carries. And the wind. Air moving instead of gestures. A town or her words.

II

Happened. But nothing did. Stood empty for eighteen years. Uninhabitable. A map. A simple chart. Lines. Never got used to the wind. The East wind. They called it. Blew over the straits. Won out. Over her voice and over the town. Changed its lay-out. Has not moved a limb in eighteen years. Could not. But the wind

III

One day hurt her foot. A stone. Nothing. Or almost. Had rolled to the edge. Fallen on her foot. From a mass of geraniums. Or a wall. Had struck. Not her. The earth. But her blood. It sided with the earth. Against her. And her pain. Somewhere. Deep. Rose up in her from the earth. Got lost deep inside her. Up from the earth. With a smell of geraniums. Against her body. With the blood. The wound before her had sided with the earth. And her surprise.

IV

Thought: dead. Already. For eighteen years has staked her remains against her property. Already there. A foreign woman. Earth *instead of* body. Has not forgotten.

V

But she. *To seem not to seem.* Tried to sleep. Tried. Every night. They said: it's the wind. But the wind. That night like any other. Died down. She, delighted and surprised. Stunned. To see herself: thus. Dressed in tatters. Her body torn to shreds by the wind. A scarecrow whose rags. They don't cover. Anything. Not her nakedness. Her, stripped of her nakedness. But the torn rags in a constant flutter.

The sound of the wind at night. Its noise when night. The air. Giving shape, as it were, to the struggle with the wind. Incessant shape. Sky against earth. She loved this noise. Breathed easier.

VI

Loved. Unceasingly. Ever. Around her. All that was dressed up. Herself dressed up for love. Every night. Around her. Shreds of cloth flapping in the wind. Only the wind whistling. Dressing an absent body. Her eyes. Looked around. Loved. Like the blind, all that moves. Instead of gestures, the materials which cover her. Stripped of her nakedness forever. *This* shape. Inhabited as absent. Dressed in a flutter of cloth instead of gestures. Rock in the sun. Rock as if warmed by daylight. Taking the shape of light and wind. As such venturing into the wind.

VII

And her words. A form would always arise. Folds in a piece of cloth. Her spangled dress in the Emsallah gardens. Because her words exactly. Giving as if form to the air. What she says. What she doesn't say. Same thing. Works at painting her mouth. Her lips. Forever silent. An image of grass between stones. How it gives form, external form, to the earth. Color. The old town. Ruined by the wind.

For eighteen years. Her words, unconsolated. Like a lament. Or the echo of a lament for lack of gestures. Instead of body. Yet falls asleep. Asleep. Every night.

VIII

Without voice, at night, she listened. Nothing. The wind. The wind dying down on the rock for lack of wind. And now. Stops listening. Watches. The leaves falling. Can't hear them. But her eyes. Grown larger. As if used to the dark.

IX

Excavating the foundation of a building, at the beginning of the fifties, the workers discovered a female statue from the reign of Augustus. Her stone eyes packed with earth and dead leaves.

She walks. Looks ahead. At leaves falling. Air moving through leaves. Marvels. This motion of air now, because of the leaves. Not a pain. Not really. Something that is there. Familiar. The color. No. More like its presence inside her. In its place. The place of the statue. The hollow of her form in the ground. Her own color *in place of* her pain. They fall, already dead in their color. To the ground. By themselves, by their own weight. Beside. Wind and rain. The color of earth, already. Of stone. Random fall. But her eyes.

X

Their fall. How they fall. Come to rest. She doesn't listen anymore. Can't hear any more. Watches the leaves blowing by. Nothing. Her body perhaps if body. Where the leaves fall. How they fall if they fall.

She remembers. No, not her. Has no name. No name any more. Doesn't have.

The sea. Changed color. With the sky. This dividing line. Not yet. Wanted the blue to coincide with the sea. The words. Never managed. In eighteen years. Never.

But the edge. The borderline. There is none. The edge of her body. The edge of day. She holds out her hands.

XI

In the neighborhood of the Emsallah there was a very large empty lot all taken up by vestiges of an ancient settlement.

She walks. Indifferent. Her room. The tiles. The blue railing of the French window. Yes, looked out on the trees of the garden. Directly onto the leaves. The highest branches. A mulberry tree perhaps. She forgets. But at night. Trying to sleep, the lighthouse. Burning a hole into the night from the foreign coast. Every night. The reflection on the sea, the walls. At regular intervals. From across the straits.

She remembers. No. She holds back. Indifferent. Some pictures of her. The same. A tree, in summer. The tree's shadow on the grass. At a crossroad. Like souvenirs. Or reflections. That's all. She breathes. Marvels.

XII

She says. Doesn't finish her sentences. Her loves. Keeps them separate. Held at a distance. By reflections.

XIII

Looked. At nothing. The sky. Edge of buildings against the sky. Against nothing. In the tall windows, the morning light. Opposite and above. Reflecting the sky. Her own reflection high up in the windows. Like limpid air. Things. Transparent. Too clearly opaque this transparency. Of her own body. Like a surface reflection. Empty reflections.

XIV

She was lying on the beach. Not yet. She had put her hands on the wooden railing. Ahead, the sound of the sea. At this hour, like its silence. Except a thin rim of foam at the water's edge. Looked out. At the glittering sea. In the sun. The bay still grey. Glints of morning. The row of cabins. Farther back: between the beach and the railroad.

Later, the cabin floor under her wet feet. The heart cut out of the door. Her reflection in the bit of mirror nailed up inside. A little too high.

Now she looks straight ahead. Her hands on the railing. Looks toward the raft. Fixes the white line. Immobile, at water level. Forgets.

XV

The Villa Harris remained closed for a long time.

From the other side of the bay. Four walls. Toward the end of the afternoon. A big rectangle enclosed by four walls. White. Outside town. On, above, the water. Its name, yes. And grass all around. Scorched by the sun. The wind, above all. Scorched grass at the foot of the walls. At the four corners of the rectangle. She remembers.

The door was closed. Always. In the wall facing the sea. The tall door. Blue like sea and sky. The edge of the high walls. A vertical line dividing the color: only a change of color.

A rectangle of weeds, walled-in, toward the end of the afternoon. She walks. Outside. She breathes. Walks all around.

XVI

He took her hand as the outside corner of the surrounding wall came into view again. No. Much later. There had been a party. In the gardens of the Villa Harris. She remembers. The trees. The large orange blossoms. One in her hair. The water in the ponds. The leaves. Early summer. She had been dancing. Laughing. Like in the old days, under the trees. At night. The heavy scent of flowers. Her hair. Her feet in the grass. Before going to sleep.

XVII

Never went back. She has had a dream. Ever since. The same one. Often. A large house. Hers. Drowned in weeds. She stays outside. Cannot enter. Only she cannot. Still can't.

XVIII

A terrace. Strips of tar on the cement. Along the cracks. Because of the rain. Stone railing. Beyond the garden, the straits. A child fell into the greenhouse just before the afternoon snack. His blond hair. Sound of broken glass. Laughs. Laughs and long hair, the fall, shattered glass on the flagstones. Sun on the terrace.

XIX

Had woken up one winter morning. Facing the window. Her hands on the sheets. Flat. Silence. Facing the opening in the wall. A simple rectangle of light in the wall. As if the sky, or the light of the sky. White. As if white. She grows quiet. Becomes the dazzling passage where words. What is erased. Walls. Like a dead language. Drowned in air. She hears the white of the sky falling endlessly with the winter rain. Faints.

The page is undated. She is outside. What breathes. Would go still farther. She. A dry whiteness in her fists.

XX

The wind. From the East. Over the straits. Hit the town toward mid-morning. By the terraces. Fixed the town in its map. Its lay-out. Its light. Streets intersecting streets. Air divided among things. Affected everything down to the rates of money changers in the streets. Blue bits of paper whirling along with the sand. All day. Tarnished the surface of the Embassy pond.

After eighteen years still not used to the wind. Nobody is.

XXI

Comes from nowhere. Goes nowhere. Passes *through*. Takes the entire town in a movement of air. Makes it uninhabitable forever. Lethal. Even love, on the days of wind. White pages of her notebooks.

XXII

Any day. Would shortchange her. Body and goods. She *names it: death*. Forgets. Loves. Takes the side of what shortchanges her. Head over heels. Stakes her tongue against a field of yellow clover. Alone. One morning. Before *the small house*. In the sun.

Has gone to lie in the yellow flowers. Like foreign soil. There. Stripped of her voice. As if blind. Not seeing. What envelops. Surrounds her. Stretched out. Immobile, undisturbed by any sound. When it sounds. An idea slipped from her. Terrible. Slipped overboard.

Saying. With her eyes wide open, *saying* a new lightness: the air. Above the field of yellow clover. Her. Airy or serious. The same. Her, detached from her familiar traits. Her own face. As if naked. For *one* first time. Whence even she could not come back. Could never come back on board. Nor escape. Forever outside. Her eyes darkened in their brightness. On the ground. Stretched out. Outside.

In the distance.

ELEGY 3

The seen is as the seeing and
seeing as the seen. But who
can pronounce upon the
nature of this unity?

Plotinus, *The Enneads* V, 3

Behold the man

in the heraldic stillness of things
 out of date
 hawthorn
 nightingale
 goat's milk
 his shriveled-up story
 gulped into the bellies of sacred beasts
 the embalmer's hands
 the garden
 (is) a winter garden
 sycamores
 tetradrachms
 the dolphins of Syracuse

Behold the man

 listening to the iron filings
 scraping his veins
 and weeps
 standing triumphant guard
 by empty walls
 "I'm the jolly lad of a barbarian dad
 and don't give a damn for the songs of the
 Han"
 unless you want to call castle
 this abandoned adobe
 hut and my love
 an orderly graveyard.

II

Greetings, grandma cockroach.
I leave you some white bread
as well as my books
 and three barren banana trees
 still good for shade
as well as the hollow ships of the Achaeans
 and all my love
 as a bonus

 you'll make
good use of my knowledge for you understand
 (my crazy heart)
 you with your life
written into the earth's rind

 Listen, grandma cockroach,
 osier supports cold
and rough climates more easily than the white willow

 Listen again:
and if the wind had swept lots of leaves
 in wet packets
 and stones
under the leopard-belly of trees in the storm

never again will kisses reach under her dress
 her skinny body

 Oh, grandma cockroach *and*
from the far bank of the river I take off my hat
 to you

Pretending to be Propertius here
 has not gotten me one inch ahead

III

...AND that, one saturday morning
 she, Martina second name Maria
wore this pink this very thin dress
and that her arms were skinny, idem
 her legs
 idem her chest and on
 her wrist a blue vein

Had nothing Elizabethan
her mouth pronouncing horrors like
 shit and don't give a damn...
 but did not take away from her grace;
just read--after a bath and a night
 cut short by this council meeting
 a page of Plotinus on how the *one*
forms an island and that
 the ultimatum from Monsegur
should perhaps be taken into consideration
 "Her bones (were) of jade"
even though
the equestrian can be classed among the legends
 like Jerusalem the GOLDEN

and the nightingale-dogs of the flatland
will be the first to break the silence in your honor

a crane too / red / crcherch crcherch
and five feet off this sign
just like this / OFF LIMITS
on the fence /
As the wind carried off) the rest
the insect or something reached
the pointed tip (of the leaf)
its antennae / red
crcherch crcherch too
/ the second crane its jib
projecting / on the side of the fences
(like) black bamboo

Even to the familiar spirits, this time: farewell
 the body laid out
 like a metal sheath (a FLUTE) forgotten all
 night among the wild
 gladiolas / orange

...procession of weeping women but no
 oh, above all no relatives
 beeches and rocks
 nibbled ferns
 the sand / black
 as if burned

wrote a letter to Monsegur where the wind blows
 up a storm / ideal view
 of a carboniferous landscape
 rambling remarks / laughs and bracken
 ratchets / insects
 and batrachians
 diffuse sunlight through a screen of haze
 T. S. Eliot taking the tube every night after the bank
 no flower (is) colored
 violent storms, driving rain
 when it snows the burned walls / arrows
 ROCKS & FERNS
 FERNS & SAND
 black)

VI

Is it a kingfisher? two already

been killed

this week

I told you! in those developments

THOSE KIDS

break the young willows

"Abdella! if I catch you one more time!"

things are bad / the smoke

very white

rose

from the trees / and the white sky

yesterday they brought in an old green

locomotive

complete with tender

it was raining

VII

I went a bit

of the way
to Tomis
with Ovid

while off
to bury myself in Provins

en route both of us refreshed by an hour's swim
in a heated pool

near Nangis
on the right of the road, just after
the refinery *and*

he didn't understand--neither did I--
about the little white bubbles
which after sundown spread over the water

behind glass
the man sitting in

his booth
yaaaawned and (a firecracker)
exploded (in) his head
just as he fell asleep

venit in hoc illa fulmen ab acre caput

VIII

Thus Milarepa erected his nth tower
(geological slowness) and
midsummer day (will be)

the signal

crate the books
and paintings

rather than finish the job
and

take leave

first heartbeat of a
child with one foot on of the sidewalk
walking the edge and the other
on the
street

to see LONGUEVILLE painted in royal blue
on bright white
like the name of an ocean liner

or 3 Massey Ferguson
silver and amaranth

waiting

on the platform of a railroad car
with WRITTEN overhead, still legible, the name

of its home station

THE SOUP TUREEN

kairos:

a minuscule bird painted
in its little cage of gilded wood

un merited surprise

rat displeasure
rat sigh

rat death

funeral

and you / such
as he must have seen her ruin

in black water

on the way to Egypt

Theocritus / you saw

Syracuse covered with aloes in bloom

bits of paper strewn

the rat tail
sticking out of the coffin

wake of the trireme

violet hills of Bethlehem
(shadow theater)

kites
spinning tops
mandarins

sad sententious brother
I'll kill you like Polonius

and already the cloud of death envelops him

amid the bloom: passion flowers

(and)

in the quiet
hen house

even the dog fleas
joyfully

with renewed appetite

now you

can scratch your tibia
airily

violence of gifts
innocence of encounters

: Archimedes' death

with presents
up the chimney

**THE LAST NEWS OF THE EXPEDITION
IS DATED FEBRUARY 15, 17..**

The peasants did not know these things. They made love in their beds during the battle.

Antonio Cisneros (David)

THE MERCHANT

Contact between the two civilizations can be proved from commercial transactions.

On the day before the 9th --market day--
he had, in the cold of the morning, unloaded
his salt, currency prized by the shepherds.
The merchant, a regular in the Thermae and Forum
--little roast birds, fried fish--
tired from the voyage, made love to a young woman from
Greece:
even the common people bought cherries
and sometimes oranges and lemons from the East.
As for him, throwing his dice
far from the shutters of home and the
willow branches,
before his earthenware cup: night lights in his heart,
heart beaten by the wind from the sea,
the black beacon network of Carthage,
seafarers' safeguard.

THE SOLDIER

*The situation changed with Roman expansion toward the East
and the building of the Empire.*

The sentinel after the battles:

Barbary figs have cleared his memory
of oaks and willows and even the threshold plank.

Nobody knows the emperor by
name--chariots, purple, golden coins.

Behind my father's plow, not playing games,
that's where I got my stamina for combat.

This new field the general assigned to me
before the triumph.

Took a wife at the edge of the desert,
my kids never heard of auspices or harangues,
they eat white bread.

Grass is growing all around my round shield
and, this fall, the vines broke my spear.

SPURIUS MAELIUS

*The city had, however, grown strong through constant efforts
to establish institutions of a unified State.*

I

In a time of shortage,
had bought grain
in Etruria, out of his pocket,
which he distributed
free of charge.

This made him so popular that
he began to hope he
--a plebeian--
could become Consul.

The patricians having accused him
of aiming for kingship,
Gaius Servilius Ahala, Captain of the Cavalry,
caught up with him in the Forum
and killed him.

On orders from dictator Cincinnatus,
his house was immediately razed:
memento of a blasphemous attempt.

II

Peace with the neighbors and domestic quiet:
Rome in 440.

But after a poor harvest,
famine.

Lucius Minutius is named superintendent of supplies.

The measures he takes are ineffective
and make him unpopular.

At this point, a wealthy citizen
uses his connections to buy grain
and distributes it to the populace.

The patrician Lucius Minutius--
who had failed in his official capacity
where Spurius Maelius, a plebeian,

had succeeded on his own--
denounces before the Senate
Maelius' monarchic schemes,

his plotting a *coup d'etat*
with the complicity of the Tribunes.

Afraid of the latter's intervention, the worried Senators
declare a state of emergency.

Cincinnatus is proclaimed dictator
by one of the Consuls. G. S. Ahala,
promoted to Captain of the Cavalry by the dictator,
goes to summon Spurius Maelius
to appear before the Senate.

III

Spurius Maelius gets cold feet.

Giving his pursuers the slip
he runs to solicit the help of the plebs.

He is the victim, he says, of a plot of the *patres*,
because of his benevolence toward the people.

He begs the crowd to come to his aid
in this extreme peril and not to let
him be assassinated before their eyes.

IV

Servilius Ahala catches up with him among outcries
and kills him.
Still covered with blood,
escorted by a group of young patricians,
he reports to the dictator
that Maelius has received his deserved punishment.

V

And the dictator:
"Rest reassured,
Servilius,
you have saved the Republic."

VI

Maelius' house was razed to the ground,
his property put up for sale.

VII

Shortages after a poor harvest.

"The peasants had neglected their fields
for the distractions of the city."

Riddled with debts, unable
to cultivate their fields, the peasants
abandoned them,
thinking to find work in the city where they went idle and
hungry.

VIII

The Records of those years confirm
the existence of a Minutius
as superintendent of grain supplies,
an office reserved for *aediles*.

IX

When both Consuls are called away from Rome,
the last to leave appoints a delegate
to preside over the Senate and maintain order
during the Consuls' absence.
In 440, Rome was at peace with its neighbors,
both Consuls were home.

X

The story of Spurius Maelius
--timeless anecdote
handed down independently of the Annals--
must have been around among the people
toward the end of the 2nd century.
But when chronology became important in history
the problem was
to tie this roving legend
to some fixed point.

XI

The heart of the story: the murder
of a *homo sacer*,
Sp. Maelius, by a certain Ahala.

XII

Sp. Maelius' hosts and clients.

Probably connections of a commercial nature
which Maelius kept up outside Rome,
especially in Etruria (of which his name
seems to show him a native),
relatives or friends
with whom he stayed on business trips
or whom he put up in his house
when they had to come to Rome.

XIII

Spurius Maelius,
of plebeian birth (absence of surname),
a rich plebeian who, no doubt because of his wealth,
was a member of the Equestrian Centuria.

XIV

The Senate having decided,
the Consul rises during the night
and consults the auspices.
If favorable (*silentium*)
he proclaims the dictator.

XV

The version of Dionysius of Halicarnassus:

"Pronounced *sacer* by the Senate
(for having aspired to be king),
Sp. Maelius may be killed by the first to come along:
Servilius leaves the Curia,
a dagger hidden in his armpit,
and executes him."

D. H., II-8-2

XVI

Maelius' association with stories of grain.

Shortages had been frequent
since the expulsion of the Etruscans.
Ten were counted between 487 and 411,
their memory preserved in the *fasti*.

XVII

Late addition of the name of Minutius.

1. The grain tradition of the Minutii family:
the Aequimaelium (where Maelius' house had stood)
is very close to the Porticus Minutia
(where,
though only since the reign of Claudius,
grain distribution to the populace took place).

2. As for the Porticus,
it was erected
(to the glory of an M. Minutius for
victory over the Scordisci)
only in 106.
Cincius Alimentus had already
(at the end of the 3rd century)
inserted Minutius into Maelius' story.

XVIII

Probable tampering in the Minuti archives.

The tradition associating their name
with grain supplies
has been carefully cultivated,
the Minuti family have always taken great pains
that their services in grain
should not be forgotten.

XIX

440/439: Cincinnatus dictator.

Rushing chronology a little,
we could in a pinch connect
this 3rd dictatorship of Cincinnatus
with the name of Minutius.
A Minutius had in fact been at the root of
an earlier dictatorship of Cincinnatus.
This was consul Minutius,
in trouble with the *eques* around 448.

XX

The delegates from the Senate who came for Cincinnatus found him ploughing his three acres of land.

Before hearing them, the man who was asked to be dictator left the field to put on his toga.

XXI

Cincinnatus' prestige was used to cover up the murder of Sp. Maelius.

THE BARBARIAN

The barbarians invading the Roman Empire were amazed to discover a very advanced, even refined civilization.

He broke the wax tablets between his fingers
to see what was inside
and asked (without a glance at the pious
colored image on the wall)
for land
for himself and his family.
Then worry won out over laughter
and green pants.
This winter the rain will still keep
the ranks of bowmen away from him,
and the weeds won't yet disturb
the mineral disposition of the temples.
And if he's not killed (inordinate pride of his race)
during some jolly brawl
at a safe distance from soldiers who can read
and whose shiny eagles now often
break their necks in the snow
under the sharp eyes of campfollower crows,
he'll be back in the spring, laughing,
asking for land for himself and family.

VIRGIL

In the face of the fresh spell of murders
--11% more than the year before--

Virgil, stubborn old man, kept working
on his national epic.

But, put ashore in Brindisi by the Imperial vessel,
he died in early autumn,

before the calends of October,

heart heavy with doubt: this anchor

he had rashly cast into the raging fires of Troy,

and that old fool Anchises, forgotten hero of one of
those wars,

always bringing the same old toast at the banquets:

"Remember, Roman, you are born to
rule nations."

He, Virgil, had been neither good nor bad, and that was,
after all, no matter for congratulations.

So what! Varius and Plotius--those vultures

of his glory--didn't seem to have that strong an impression
of irreparable decline.

Already he sees their grief evaporate:

the book vowed to the flames by the dying author

would be a great success,

the conservative party proud of him.

While night and dense sleep

passed over the earth,

enveloping women, ramparts, grass and marshes in rest,

one of the machinists on the locomotive thought he saw

on the ground, next to a haystack, a white sow

suckling her thirty farrows.

Here, Virgil, inlaw of the goddess,

here is the site of the City,

here our trials begin.

"Mantua gave you your life, Calabria

took it, and Naples now

guards your body. You sang

pastures, fields, arms and the man."

OF FOLIAGE, GRAMMAR, A LOVE

to Olivier Cadiot

After his second shipwreck, Pollard forswore the sea. *He cried: I've had it! No shipmaster will ever entrust a whaler to me again!* "Finished his days as a night watchman in the town of Nantucket, guarding the houses and the people against darkness."

Image of night: peonies whiten in the light of lamps. Clear notes in the darkness of an interior shipwreck. *No shipmaster will ever entrust a whaler to me again!* Daily violence and grammatical movement: water boiling, foliage stirring in the cracked head of a night watchman.

Grammar: *in a frenzy they squeeze the body of their love, they mix their saliva with hers, they breathe in her breath, sharp teeth against her mouth.*

If wind and foliage met, the leaves would absorb the wind. Or the wind the leaves. *Vain effort since they can take nothing of the body they kiss, nor can they enter it, melting with it entirely.*

If wind and foliage met, everything would stop. *Forever. Everything would dissolve, then, in a tonic of darkness and the total absence of movement.*

Movement: neither consolation nor rest. From this semblance of a meeting is born a visible disturbance. The image of leaves in the wind, or a speaker in conflict with words. Swirls.

Swirls: a love is born this way. A love or a grammar. Without consolation, without rest, *since no part of a beautiful face can be ours to love, except these mockeries, these impalpable mockeries that the wind shows us, then carries away.*

Grammar or a love: words which quiver at the lips' opening, swirling foliage in the air.

Hiatus: foliage entered by the wind, gives its form to the wind, the form of foliage. Opening, hiatus. Wind and foliage, one single movement. Because foliage is without insides. Unless the wind is its inside.

Leaves: the open. The wind neither enters nor opens the leaves. Wind is the open of leaves.

Violence of blood running down the veins, of water boiling in the pot, of waves on the sea, of leaves in the wind.

Foliage, grammar, a love: movement which tends toward rest, toward silence, toward surfeit. Vain aspiration, but *love always hopes that the object which sparks this ardent flame is at the same time able to extinguish it.*

Daily violence. Non anecdotal, non individual. Constant, no matter which form it takes: foliage, grammar, a love.

And which intensity it wears. Because the softest carresses, the sweetest murmurs come from the same violence as the most furious, most tumultuous assaults. Violence more or less stifled according to the dimension of the hiatus. The separation of edges: a strait, a mimosa.

All language culled in the twofold *je t'aime*. Each opening to the other. All grammar brought back to: *t'*.

t':...*they breathe in her breath, sharp teeth against her mouth.* But one always speaks breathing out.

t': hiatus, interior limit of that which is neither inside nor finite: foliage. The language culled, in its entirety, against the teeth at the lips' opening. In exhaling.

Then, an explosion of a sail in the wind. A rip in the night. The open. Foliage. A language. A love. *t'*.

translated by Connell McGrath

DIPTYCH

to Raquel

Diptych: two
or double.
I don't know how to talk of
what I love: I'm tight-lipped.
What of it, this passage
from eyes to words? Love
and silence are mirror images.
Does Medusa differ
from her reflection in the shield?
Her eyes petrify
whoever looks.
Volcanoes work up
their light,
and their color changes
before our eyes.
All I have found to give you
(instead of words)
are two handfals
of lapilli. *Graciosa's*

what they call this island,
black chaos under the sky.
A relief map of the earth
would also map the bottom of the sea:
the jeep tosses us
over the lava fields
as a boat would over waves,
and their motors make
the same noise as the
drinking water factory and
power station.
Toward the end of the day
the young woman
leaned forward
and said: *en mi casa*.
Words of comfort
or desolation. Her voice
a bit harsh,
and the rocks rough.
Diptych: two
are not
one plus one.
Outside and inside
are useless
when we speak
of a crater's edge.
Where is the dividing line?
The shadow line,
the crease,
always darker
than the darkest color.
In my house
color and voice
do not touch
any more than eyes
touch the light.
The dark
not
a limit.

TUM COLOR

tum color in nigris existit nubitus arqu
Lucretius

Listening *listening to*

the whiteness -- on the
clothesline -- lift off

*You would nearly think a fall
wind even though it's already
winter*

No matter how wild the place
is -- *was* --

his clear memory does not
come from the past

scene: *flowerbeds* where yes-
terday is a rehearsal for
today

-- and instead of a souvenir:
the same day starting over
after *sleep*

ONE DAY, THE STRAITS

What remains to be said --remainders-- I know this is the exact replica of the other bank.

The story of shores:
one day will do.

You, so totally heedless of everyday things.
The mingling of waters. Everything in place.

Talk. "*So thou wilt have it so I'll say.*"

You remain my memory. You walk into the straits, neither earth nor air. A place where the voice chokes. Long ago.

The character remained on the ground.

Had I known how to gauge the distance, the wood under the painting having worked itself apart, familiar language split right down the middle of the horse.

Tiredness shared by clothes and back. This place worn down by the wind

: light smoke between the houses.

OF CLOUDS AND FOG

to Maurice Olender

*...for the human race is eager
for anything that catches the
ear.*

Lucretius IV, 594

Through its history, the word vividly evokes the loop of sound that rumor forms. When it first entered the language it meant a loud noise. The din of arms. Today it designates, like the earlier Latin *rumor*, anonymous whispers mingling in the streets to hawk good or bad reputations.

One day in 1954, there was talk of a beached whale on the shore. In the sidewalk cafes, this was at first considered unlikely. But the next day's newspaper carried the item. There was even a photograph. So the discussion turned to origin and exact nature of the dead beast. That night, the thesis that it was a sperm whale rather than a right whale seemed to win out in the streets. On the third day, trustworthy witnesses repudiated this opinion. Then the entire city went to the site. Everybody had a chance to see for himself, and some, before going home, climbed the wreck as you would a small cliff. And told the tale. On the fourth day, the carcass was towed out to sea.

I have all this from stories I heard about it. All agreed on one point: the color black.

Any other name for noise has its corresponding verb in French. This is useful. Where there's a verb, there's a subject. But no French verb corresponds to *rumeur*. This is handy also. For where there's no verb, there is no subject either. Rumor cannot be apprehended.

To compensate, we make rumor itself into a subject. We say a rumor is spreading, is going around... These verbs of motion are appropriate. Rumor is always on the move. Let the motion of a rumor stop, and you stop the rumor. Then there's silence. Silence cannot be apprehended either.

A rumor is not a noise like any other. You cannot hear it. You hear it talked about by people who have in turn heard it talked about. It is a noise by hearsay.

No matter what it says, a rumor always also says something else. That there is more. A truth hidden underneath appearances. A rumor always hints: there's something we are missing.

"Sometimes I think that there is naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him."

The eye of the rumor is this pocket of fear. Rumor: a trail of fear.

Then again: rumor always says the same thing. *Where there's smoke there's fire.* Rumor feeds on the idea which supports it least: the idea of origin.

Neither superstition nor belief. Rumor is born of doubt. Sporadic, ephemeral, it is tied to specific events in particular places. It is a conjuring of the moment.

A conjuring of voices. Rumor exists only in language. Or, rather: where language turns into noise.

To conjure what?

Rumor spreads from mouth to mouth. But not just any way, not anywhere.

In Tarifa, in the Straits of Gibraltar, the wind is so violent that no noise can hold its own. The wind takes its place. On the other side, in Tangiers, a rumor can't put on flesh either because it is divided among too many different languages. Nor will a small island do better: everybody knows everybody. Unless of course the rumor concerns a stranger passing through. Or the people of a different island.

The site of rumor has no boundaries because, like clouds up in the high, imprecise regions of the sky, rumor never has any definite outline. Nor any end. Unless it scatters as it began. In vagueness. Like clouds and fog.

The number of supporting voices does not augment it. Or modify it. Rumor is not a quantity. Voices in relay. The same voice always. The same bucket of water going from hand to hand in the chain. But at the end of this chain there's no fire to put out. There is smoke without fire.

Rumor turns in a circle. The site of rumor is a circle of voices. And rumor, one and the same single voice. Unanimity. Almost unity. On the back of others? On its own. Remember the Ripolin ad.

In a rumor, everyone is the only one. To say what all others say. One single mouth, one single pair of ears. The only one from mouth to mouth.

If you are into rumor you are into your own voice. Into the thick of leaves rustling, of eavesdropping. With a glib tongue well hung.

If you are into rumor, rumor is in you. The site of rumor is not a city or a small island, it's the head. Here is its origin. The source of rumor is the ear that welcomes it. If you are into rumor you are talking to yourself. By hearsay. Noise going back and forth between your mouth and ears.

I once knew a dog. Who barked all night. Each bark falling into two stages. Two tones. The first rather masculine. Then, without transition, his voice changed into a painful, insistent echo. Silence. Then the dog answered, again in two stages, his own call of distress. Loneliness. Effigy of a crowd. Faking an exchange. All by himself the animal filled the space of night with his howls and his response. What a story!

Faulkner knew well the rumors of the South, of the deep South peopled with garrulous ghosts. *"It seems that this demon--his name was Sutpen--(Colonel Sutpen)--Colonel Sutpen. Who came out of nowhere and without warning upon the land with a band of strange niggers and built a plantation--(Tore violently a plantation, Miss Rosa Coldfield says)--tore violently. And married her sister Ellen and begot a son and a daughter which--(Without gentleness begot, Miss Rosa Coldfield says)--without gentleness. Which should have been the jewels of his pride and the shield and comfort of his old age, only--(Only they destroyed him or something or he destroyed them or something. And died)--and died. Without regret, Miss Rosa Coldfield says--(Save by her) Yes, save by her. (And by Quentin Compson) Yes. And by Quentin Compson."*

Whether writer or poet, if you are into stories you are into rumor like Faulkner's deep South and likewise peopled with garrulous ghosts. A rumor of words to conjure with or almost a rumor of words. A book to conjure the world?

The rumors of books are like the rumors of the world. A noise in the head. Headstrong summons of countless voices to relay one single voice. The blank voice of a book. Or a reader. Smoke without fire. A cloud.

Take a printer's typecase. Full. Of little metal characters arranged in a certain order. (For orientation). Shiny, with a matte glint. Mute. Picked up, one by one, by a skilled hand and pushed next to each other in a different order, these characters form a text.

The form (Lucretius would have said: figure), inked and pressed into the paper, leaves a legible impression in the page. The same impression as many times as desired.

The skilled hand unlocks the form (the figure). One by one, having washed off the ink, it redistributes the small shiny characters in the case. What a relief. What a happy gesture. To undo with your own hand what you had done.

Remains the impression. The printed signs, circulating for a while, waiting for oblivion, for rats, for the paper to rot in dank cellars. Lucretius wrote that diseases spread "like clouds and fog (*nubes nebulaeque*)."

The rumor of books is in this backwash. Signs circulating from reader to reader. A repeated bite. Agenbite. Re-morse.

If you are into the rumors of stories the rumors of the world are a book of them. A collection of legends. If you are into the rumors of the world, the rumors of books are wind.

When you write you lend one ear to the rumors of the world and one ear to the rumors of books. Your head is full of echoes and hollow dreams. Writing, you may look for silence. You only carry your part of wind to the rumor mill.

When you read you are in a fog. You are led by echoes.
You don't know your head from a hole in the ground.

When you read you have one eye on the world and one
eye on the story. You are all at sea. Your eye is an ear
catching ocean sounds in an empty shell.

Can't you hear rumors of other voices within mine?

NOTES

Emmanuel Hocquard, born 1940, grew up in Tangiers and now lives in Paris. With the artist Raquel, he is the editor and printer of "Orange Export Ltd.," a small press which has published both French and American poets. (The texts have been collected in the volume *Orange Export, Ltd.*, P.O.L., 1986). He has written poetry, criticism and a novel, *Aerea dans les forets de Manhattan*, for which he has received the Prix France-Culture. With Claude Royet-Journoud, he has edited an anthology of new American poets, *21 + 1: Poetes americains d'aujourd'hui* (Delta, 1986).

The originals of the texts translated in this issue can be found in:

Album d'images de la villa Harris, Hachette, 1978

*Les dernieres nouvelles de l'expedition sont datees du
15 fevrier 17...*, Hachette, 1979

Un prive a Tangers, P.O.L., 1987

Other titles by Emmanuel Hocquard include:

Une Journee dans le detroit, Hachette, 1980

Une ville ou une petite ile, Hachette, 1981

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