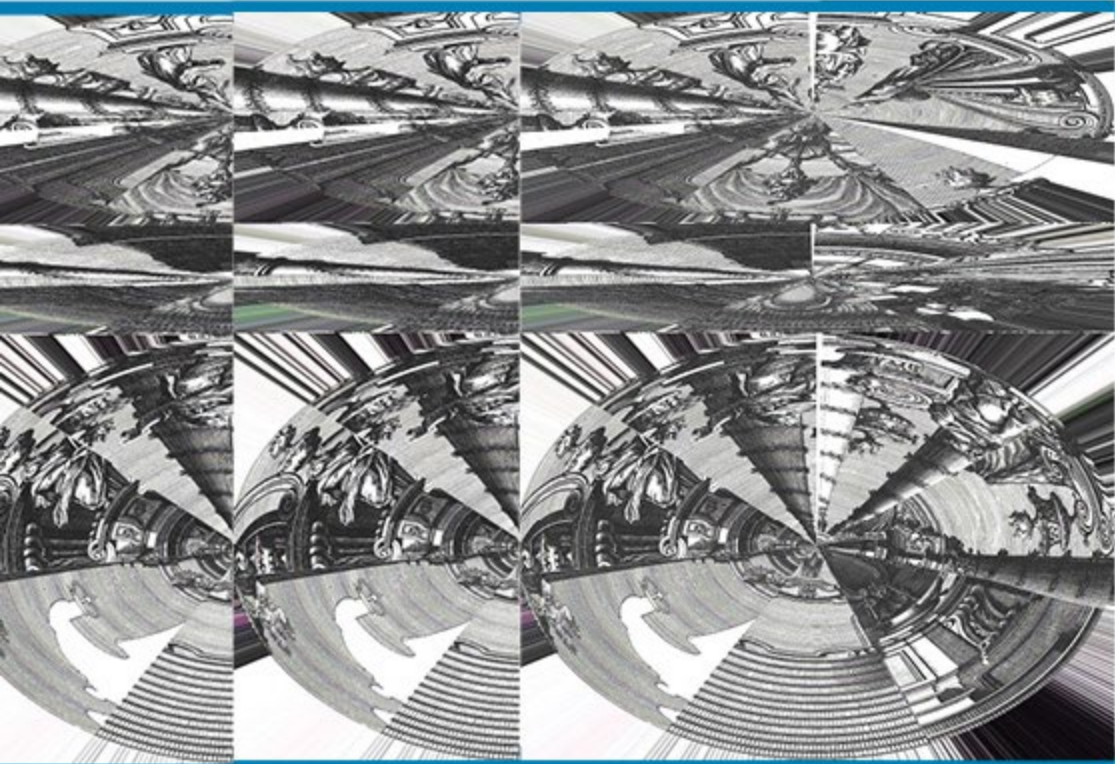




# OSIRIS 93

49 YEARS 1972-2021

english *anglais* german *allemand* french *français* italian *italien* romanian *roumain*



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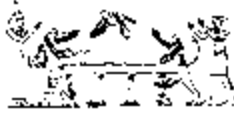
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SIMON PERCHIK • FRANCES PRESLEY • PATTY DICKSON PIECZKA • PAUL B. ROTH

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2021



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# OSIRIS 93

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## VISUAL ART

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WALKING DOWN FROM COPOU

I shall commit a sacrilege: *moment*,  
*stop*, I called without a voice,  
I, the lost man, freshly shaved,  
sniffing your turquoise dress  
kept in the H&M bag, under  
the window sill. Over there  
a rose is throbbing, scarlet,  
like a Shiraz wine, and it  
sways, Irina, without respite,  
the way you swayed your little  
body in the tight dress  
walking down from Copou.  
You were drawing the golden air  
with the most enigmatic bum.  
I stopped. I took your picture.  
You turned around, all of you,  
scent and light.  
The lost man took you in his arms,  
ecstatic, honeylike, without guilt.

COBORÂND DIN COPOU

Voi comite un sacrilegiu: *clipă*  
*Oprește-te*, am strigat fără glas,  
Eu, omul pierdut, proaspăt ras,  
Adulmecându-ți rochița turcoaz,  
Păstrată-n punga H&M, sub pervaz.  
Dincolo pulsează o roză,  
Rubiniu, ca un vin de Shiraz,  
Și se leagănă, Irina,  
Unduiește fără răgaz,  
Cum îți unduia trupușorul,  
In rochia mulată,  
Coborând  
din Copou.  
Desenai aerul auriu  
Cu cel enigmatic popou.  
M-am oprit. Te-am pozat,  
Te-ai întors, toată, parfum și lumină.  
Omul pierdut te-a înlănțuit  
Extatic, mieriu, fără vină.

*Patty Dickson Pieczka*

CRYSTAL VISIONS

\*

Some days words refuse to levitate  
or be pulled from a hat.

They beach themselves  
in sand, sun-drunk and lazy,

will not reach deeper  
than their own shadows

to detect a thin crack growing  
along a porcelain vase

or the faint scent of sorrow  
vining the rose lattice.

Some days words cannot open  
their third eye to read

the names of the missing afloat  
inside this beveled crystal.

\*\*

Inside this beveled crystal  
I see my mouth full of night,  
hands grasping at nothing, hear

my heartbeat's syncopated arrhythmia  
of loss. How will I stand,  
supported by shadows, knee-deep

in memories and hopes so thin  
their ribs show through  
their web-sheer gowns?

The future is best left to itself,  
mumbling secrets to its long fingers  
from inside cages of roots

away from the leafless light. Will  
I drink from this moon-stained river,  
shape a new day from mud?

\*\*\*

Shape a new day from mud.  
Let worries fall like white petals  
in a snow garden,

while memories flap through the sky  
like startled birds, shrinking and fading  
until the horizon inhales them.

Sculpt this morning from gold, jade,  
the wings of egrets.  
Plant yellow wildflowers

in the darkest forest  
while remaining  
hours walk the sundial.

\*\*\*\*

Hours walk the sundial,  
sleepwalk through light.

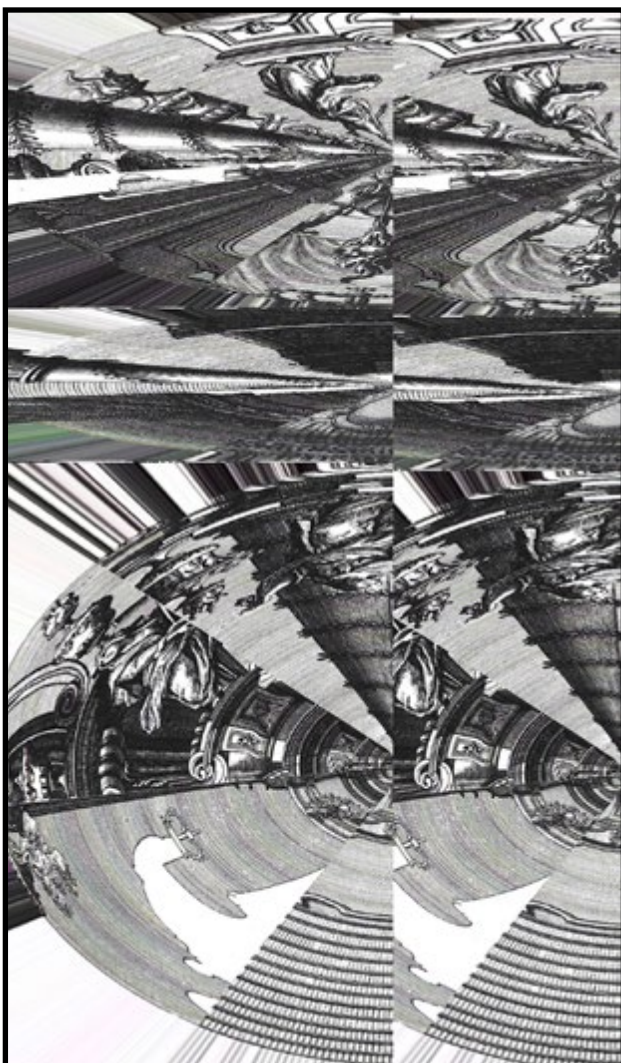
Days keep melting around corners  
as time coos from the mourning

dove's beak and slips like silk  
through rustling leaves.

I want to write a new ending,  
change these visions that

haunt my mind, heavy as stone, but  
some days words refuse to levitate.





CLASSICAL TRANSFORMATION #1  
Robert Moorhead

Charles Hadfield

SILENCES

FOR PHILIPPE JACCOTTET

*Il y a en nous un si profond silence  
qu'une comète  
en route vers la nuit des filles de nos filles  
nous l'entendrions  
from Leçons*

If only I had known before:

I would have written you about  
the creak of trees . . . here pohutukawa, là les aulnes  
the call of birds . . . here tui, là les rossignols  
wash of water . . . here awa, là les rivières, les fleuves  
beyond the reeds, les roseaux

you would have loved these margins of mangrove and sea,  
the rise and fall of twisting tides  
their suck of mud and salt in midday heat...

these hints of larger views beyond our sight  
a sense of fragrance beyond perception  
our landscapes which vary from language  
to language translated into more colours and words

ces montagnes lointaines, here maunga . . . or maybe clouds . . .  
the snows hint of autumn, thaw a hint of spring:  
we live between seasons, these echoes of others' speech  
zwischen la Suisse und die Schweiz, the centre of Europe  
this determination to hesitate . . . hésiter . . . this hesitation  
to determine, this strength to wait . . .  
to think . . . réfléchir  
to explore and reflect on all the possibilities  
while observing the detailed accuracies of expression  
such clarity amid the chaos:

This petal  
This wing  
This aperçu

tout cela dans un moment bref

(DENTRO I CONFINI DELL'ISOLA)

*Giù il mulino, lontano  
fa rabbrivire il cuore e il cervello  
(Thomas Bernhard)*

*Chiamo il mio servo e lui non risponde,  
con questa mia bocca lo imploro!  
Il mio spirito è estraneo alla mia donna  
e così la mia grazia per i frutti del mio ventre  
(Il libro di Giobbe, 19)*

Dentro i confini dell'isola nessun profeta canta.  
I sogni piantati nell'avorio chiedono silenzio,  
le pietre intaccano il rosso della croce e del fossato.  
Una donna conserva le reti per l'inverno,  
nasconde un lupo nella gola –  
è un testamento di sangue e di vento.  
Un uomo recita il rito dell'attesa,  
cerca un segno, ha perduto l'innocenza.

L'isola rivela l'enigma e il suo mistero –  
sono voci di caverna e antichi teschi.  
*I morti dimenticano i piaceri con troppa trasparenza  
e gli animali non offrono rivelazioni.*  
Basta un gesto della mano per capire.  
Gli uccelli migrano sui rami della grande madre,  
l'acqua spinge e si alzano le vele.  
Verrà domani il tradimento della terra?

Dentro i confini dell'isola nessun profeta canta.  
Troppo intenzionale ogni dolore, ogni errore ...  
Solo scintille negli occhi e nella notte.  
La fame chiude il cerchio, un nuovo affanno chiama.  
La precisione *non è ora, non è qui ...*

*Elfriede Gerstl*

*Translated from the German by Wolfgang Görtschacher & David Malcolm*

IN THE RESTAURANT CAR

with honey i keep the bee  
    away from my pear  
i don't like travelling anymore  
dejected i don't like  
    inertly gaping  
repose can't be called  
it's the opposite of impose  
meanwhile the thinking machine  
    comes on  
    with coffee or wine  
and a poem flies in  
    or by  
like a shooting star

IM SPEISEWAGEN

mit honig halte ich die biene  
    von meiner birne fern  
ich reise nicht mehr gern  
mutlos mag ich nicht  
    tatenlos glotzen  
musse lässt sich nicht rufen  
sie ist das Gegenteil von müssen  
mitunter lässt sich die  
    denkmaschine  
    mit kaffee oder wein anwerfen  
und ein gedicht fliegt herbei  
    oder vorüber  
    wie eine sternschnuppe

*Elfriede Gerstl*

*Translated from the German by Wolfgang Görtschacher & David Malcolm*

SENSUALLY—WHAT ELSE

when i really want to  
    i'm the cloud  
        over the schwedenplatz  
i'm the fruit flan  
    and the sticky knife  
        that cuts it  
i crawl into the fading  
    roses  
        on my window sill  
i can stupidly feel my way  
        into this and that  
but i should really  
    just keep it a secret

*Elfriede Gerstl*

SENSUALISTISCH—ODER WAS

wenn ich grad will  
    bin ich die wolke  
        überm schwedenplatz  
bin der obstkuchen  
    und das klebrige messer  
        das ihn schneidet  
ich krieche in den verblühenden  
    rosenstrauss  
        auf meinem fenstersims  
blöd hineinfühlen kann ich mich gut  
                    in dieses und jenes  
nur geheimhalten  
    sollte ich es halt

Elfriede Gerstl, Werke, hrsg. von Christa Gürtler und Martin Wedl  
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*Elfriede Gerstl*

*Translated from the German by Wolfgang Görtschacher & David Malcolm*

**SUGGESTION**

don't visit me in my flat  
visit me in my books  
or among the shawls and hats  
where the fine brooches brood

**VORSCHLAG**

besucht mich nicht in der wohnung  
besucht mich in meinen büchern  
oder bei den tüchern und hüten  
wo die feinen broschen brüten



LAST QUARTER

I see myself crush leaves on the pavement in one language, then another. The wind picks up and the street suddenly smells of vinegar. Or I am blinded by a flash, a reflection in a passing car, as the rain begins to fall in shades of blue and brown.

You walk in front of me, my beautiful Sphinx with the velvety pout, all, all silky and take me to bed. The tempo slows down: everything revolves around a man's back. In the passing car, I hear the driver talk to her passenger about memory, a sign that doesn't fade away: it's the blood on the key.

I remember being weightless before. That's what the cards said—keep breathing fire. I wave as I walk past, you are on your phone and don't look up. I so want to be your Medusa.

The blackbird has not moved from the roof all morning. The light is powdery, almost ashen when I walk down to the Plain. In the light of day, pleasure, like skin, turns yellow and loses its shine. When a large animal sits on me, I drop the flowers, take a knife and cut through your bones. Anger has made me powerful and ugly.

I make you cross the river, as it were. My memories become a single bed but the desire to name everything won't go away. I have picked up all the pebbles by the time you ask me: what's left?

FROM BLACK FENS VIRAL

Black Fens Viral began in summer 2020 when I was recovering from Covid and lockdown was lifting. I travelled to Norfolk on the slow train which goes through the Black Fens of East Anglia. This flat, almost hedgeless and treeless, agricultural landscape of black peat was once marshland, before the drainage of the fens. I often write about landscapes I love, such as Exmoor or the north Norfolk coast, protected by national parks and nature reserves, but I needed to write about this damaged landscape, where plants are exploited and biodiversity ignored. It corresponded to the damage caused by the pandemic, a result of human incursions into wild places.

‘Viral’ refers both to Covid and to a text generator known as the Markov chain: a strange rearrangement of text according to an algorithm based on repeated vowels and consonants, sometimes used for predictive spelling. When I input my notes from the train, the outcome resembles the viral assault on my mind and body, but also lends itself to discovering new semantic and syntactical patterns. I took images from *An Introduction to the Black Fens* by H J Mason (1973), which were then ‘glitched’ by poet and artist Steven Hitchens. The first part of *Black Fens Viral* (June 20) was published in the shape of a flexagon for Hitchens’s Literary Pocketbook series. Some poems have also appeared in the online journal *Molly Bloom*.

MARCH 2 I

cry out from the flailed hedge angular black bird muntjac deer browse by  
the rusted side rail please make sure you are wearing your mask correctly  
its jaws are firmly clamped on my nose and mouth at night he wears a  
black mask, earphones and a smartphone I'm envying the man with a  
coffee flask and high biceps who wears a black silt his brown rucksack  
looks like fabric says Forces 33 poplars look more closely at the rusted  
side rail Shippea Hill red tractor stationary at the lake look more closely  
this lives at night a black silt for our planting muntjac deer browse by the  
lake hear the flask is he Forces the soil is getting darker at Shippea Hill he  
lives in me deer hear the train stacks of tyres stationary at the hurdles the  
soil is getting a black mask, earphones and high biceps I'm envying the  
soil getting a black silt to sink beneath us make sure its jaws are the lake  
lack bird explore a populace of poplars look more closely this lives in me  
deer hear the soil

2

where are the tulips paint my strips of order on the dark earth paint my  
strips of colour why are the tulips there can be no other strips of colour  
than the tulips paint my stripeooking there can be no other stripeatches  
of colour paint my stripe order these swatches of colour the dark earth  
just a background paint my love of colour to the horizon where are the  
tulips why are the tulips is this my love of o

*Simon Anton Diego Baena*

## CROSSING THE PACIFIC AT NIGHT

On the moon  
the captain stumbles  
upon the gravestones  
placed in the sky

## DOLOMITE BEACH, MANILA BAY

In the shade of a parasol the earth blinds you with light, but the rain is in your eyes, as the child gathers scraps snort out by the waves: pieces of plastic and fragments of glass, used diapers from the smog coated city; the mumbling of the gulls, echoes across the horizon of a fire rainbow. Magellan's caravel crawled into these islands like a slow-moving funeral.

*Ray Keifetz*

## HOW TO FREE A LION

I gave you lions.  
You searched for cages,  
burning roofs, ashes  
floating down on beasts and street,  
the ones who did it.  
You strip searched me  
for knotted sheets, files, saws—  
I *swallowed* the bars.  
I swallowed the bars,  
jailors, ashes,  
and all the prisons  
where human shapes shrink or swell  
in the iron light of lions.  
I gave you lions,  
but you returned them  
unopened.

MA DOULEUR PLANÉTAIRE (extraits)

L'après-pluie pose sa main  
sur la campagne froide. L'arbre dérégulé  
façonne bourgeons de plein hiver puis  
dessine les branches délicates que  
le ciel accélère.

Demain sera une amande  
tombée sans que personne ne la cueille.

Tous les acheteurs fabriquent les foules  
des centres commerciaux tandis que les derniers noyers  
se tordent avant la chute insoupçonnée et  
meurent avec les vigneronns du siècle passé.

Ne reste aucun pommier, et les cognassiers  
s'étouffent de lierre et vignes vierges  
sans léguer leur souffle tordu aux randonneurs  
qui ne font que passer, juste avant  
les chasseurs trapus et orangés.

Quel fruit  
remplira nos paniers sinon prunes minuscules  
dans l'été écrasé de cigales et  
les dernières cerises ravagées dans les vergers  
plus abandonnés que le siècle, promis aux  
lotissements rapides  
— le premier trottoir  
du village a vu le jour cette année de pandémie  
évidente, avec toutes les pestes pardonnées  
par la lune et les chemins capitulés,  
bordés  
d'amandiers pauvres et de calcaire,  
marchés  
par inadvertance avec l'automne sanglé sur les nuits

\*

Nous avons recroquevillé la pénombre  
et nous déchiffrons des silences fictifs, derniers  
fruits de l'hiver grandis sous la paume de la pluie.

Plus aucun vent ne déplie les arbres nus et vivants  
tandis que vos villes arborent des luminescences triomphantes  
et des routes rectilignes.

C'est ainsi que les mondes  
vaquent à la douleur, taisant le réel et le ciel  
et défroissant les nuits hivernales.

Puis les oiseaux  
récalcitrants cachés sous la pliure des jours  
s'octroient des langues étrangères et toute la pluie  
tombe sur les terres tarifées, promises  
aux promoteurs immobiliers aux lotissements  
perpendiculaires aux trajets linéaires aux arbres  
décapités à la garrigue bétonnée aux tracteurs  
disparus à notre inconscience estivale à nos erreurs bleues  
à l'arborescence des capitalismes et aux facilités urgentes.

Alors ma voix s'amenuise,  
tel un citronnier en décembre soupesant ses fruits d'incertitude.

\*

le ciel a offert un bleu d'hiver, et je parle  
les mots urgents, syntaxe aléatoire, phrases  
empêtrées de la mémoire des insectes anonymes,  
enfance accélérée par la peur, adjectifs incomplets  
que les humains façonnent par inexacitude

avec les solitudes que les ordinateurs mettent  
bout à bout hors les chemins, clandestines  
solitudes armées de sites web de forums de tchat  
avec connexions et réseaux sociaux cerclés  
d'isolement perplexe et sans arbre aucun où  
gravitent les fantômes épuisés de nos voix,  
la modernité est une sorcière bien élevée mais  
aucune caissière ne flashe le code-barre de la joie

et face à l'hiver tu ne cultives plus  
que l'effondrement plus qu'humain, face à l'écran  
tu découps la réalité du givre et plus rien  
ne peuple les arbres, la mortalité est un mot  
stupéfiant mais ton corps se fait matière  
dans l'aube inoculée par la brume

mais ton corps se fait frigidité pierreuse  
ton corps assoupli par les vents, mangé par le temps et cerné  
de quatre-voies lumineuses

ton corps obsolescent  
en devenir-terre, face aux cheveux des arbres

\*



voix par zoom, voix par skype, voix sur discord  
et ensuite voix réalisée de la pluie reine  
voix étanchée d'avenir ou bordées  
d'inconséquence, déréalisées par intermittence

*(coupures du réseau, aux abords des villages)*

voix du monde verticales à l'aplomb des plantes  
et voix oblongues des automnes biodégradables

voix tombées du ciel avec les pestes survivantes  
parmi les décharges et les supermarchés

voix griffées par les arbres adultes et dépliés  
attendant le mistral pour parler la langue  
éconduite des perdants,

voix sourdes des  
racines peuplant les potagers potentiels  
et les frasques des femmes insatisfaites  
de naissance,

voix courbées de lune  
et de garrigues naines où le thym  
prend l'odeur du monde exsangue,

voix des pluies  
réalisées dans l'aube-crêpuscule après la nuit-déluge  
taisant l'autre voix, celle des oiseaux plus invisibles  
que ma solitude mûre à la voix déparlée  
face aux écrans,

ma solitude féminine comme chanteuse muette



LOCK STREET, TARENTUM, PENNSYLVANIA

Andrea Moorhead

*Paul B. Roth*

## WATER'S TEARS

That first drink  
from a cup  
must have caused  
water to feel uneasy  
trapped as it was  
in something other  
than handfuls  
simple puddles  
rock hollows  
broad leaves  
open spaces of sand  
or ice  
without knowing  
escaping this cup  
was possible  
if spilled  
swallowed  
lapped  
or better yet  
left to evaporate

*Paul B. Roth*

TAKING A BREAK

Drop the pen  
extend your hand  
palm side up  
just to feel sun's coin  
burn your flesh  
down to your tendons  
and char your bones  
until your blood quenched  
by unwritten words  
steams  
off its surface  
in short  
but indelibly bright bursts  
of blinding white ink

## FINGERS

Hurried out the door, you leave your fingers behind in bed where they used to sleep clenched by your sides. Soon enough, living without them convinces you they were never there. And, later on, perhaps out of pity, you're taken in by strangers who, saying little at first, fall into silences so prolonged that you begin to feel unnoticed. Numb to everything, you wonder if warm fingertips exist that through this winter's cold glass could ever touch and bring your own back to life. Fingertips tired from having spent way too much time filling pockets with secrets. Fingertips thawing Modigliani-like sculptures frozen mid-air above the illuminated spray of a broken water fountain. Fingertips comforting a wind squatting all by itself until a wall's door or window cracks itself open. Fingertips that still believe they can suture the veins your palms split open just to feel their last snow. If only you hadn't left them behind.

*Günter Kunert*

*Translated from the German by Gerald Chapple*

NATURE'S MESSAGE

When silk  
slips down along skin  
unstoppable  
longing to be like waterfalls,  
never running dry  
smoothness and splendor  
frisson and lust,  
denuding what will turn to earth  
someday, but always  
too soon.

*Günter Kunert*

## NATURKUNDSCHAFT

Wenn die Seide  
an der Haut herabgleitet  
unaufhaltsam,  
als wolle sie Wasserfällen gleichen,  
nie versiegen  
Glätte und Glanz  
Schauer und Lust,  
entblößt, was zu Erde wird  
einmal, aber immer  
zu früh.

*Günter Kunert*

AT ONE TIME COLUMNS WOULD MARCH

through the streets bearing  
red flags, fanfares sounding,  
marching in step, unintelligible  
inflammatory words from loudspeakers.  
Around the next corner, though,  
people assumed  
their true shape, rolled  
up the flags and  
toddled off.



*Günter Kunert*

## EINSTMALS ZOGEN KOLONNEN

mit roten Fahnen durch  
die Straßen, Fanfarenklänge,  
Marschtritt, aus Lautsprechern  
unverständliche anfeuernde Worte.  
Hinter der nächsten Ecke jedoch  
nahmen die Menschen  
ihre wahre Gestalt an, rollten  
die Fahnen zusammen und  
trollten sich.

## LA DANSE DE L'OUUD

De même que le vrai objet du pardon est l'impardonnable, que le vrai objet de l'espérance est l'inespérable, le vrai objet de vers est l'inatteignable

Je vais vers Sèvres. Je sais que j'irai. Serena y est, elle m'attend et je l'atteindrai. Je vais à Sèvres.

Avec toi, ce n'est pas pareil. Même quand tu es là, tu n'y es pas. Pas tout à fait. Tu manques à l'appel

Que je te voie ou ne te voie pas n'est pas le problème. Tu m'attires mais je ne t'atteins pas

Je vais vers toi, je ne cesse d'aller. Parfois je vole. Parfois sans doute je te traverse mais je ne le sais pas. Et je te manque

Entre toi et moi, ce qui manque, c'est la coïncidence. Voilà pourquoi de ma vie vers toi, on pourrait dire qu'elle est une danse. Une danse de la non-coïncidence. Ou simplement de la distance

Sur la corde de l'oud, je danse la danse de la distance et c'est pour toi que je danse ma mélodie sans guide, mon ivre danse de l'imminence

Je suis le fil, tu es l'aiguille. Je suis l'aiguille tu es le fil. C'est une course poursuite dans les métamorphoses. Qui suit qui ? Bien malin qui pourrait le dire !

Je prends mon élan et hop ! Je cours vers toi. Quand j'arrive, tu n'es pas là. Juste à côté. Comme si le vent de ma course t'avait déplacée. Ou comme si tu ne voulais pas, que tu l'avais fait exprès. Ou comme si moi je ne voulais pas. Comme si ... Tout ce que je pourrais en dire sera toujours à côté. Le vent de ce que je dis.

## MERCY

Piano keys trampled the Black Forest  
like the Black Forest was a common  
aberration in Medieval days.

But piano keys armed with three-quarters  
of millennia knowledge warned this planet,  
this solar system, this galaxy,  
this entire universe not to forsake  
a godforsaken humanity.

Piano keys under suspicion for all sorts  
of misdeeds: stalking elk through the king's  
forest without a license, hunting quarks  
shedding their antler fuzz while depositing clots  
of blood between the pine needles  
like Hansel's crumbs of faith.

Piano keys like Easter Isle visages vaporizing  
behind every bloodshot moon.

Piano keys appearing like koi in a backyard  
Lantana Beach pond bordered  
by six boysenberry bougainvillea.

Piano keys floating like flotsam  
upon the borders & veneers that crack  
the cosmic whip to attention.

Piano keys pounding ivory echoes  
inside amethyst eggplant blossoms  
via dewdrops caressing each canary iris,  
this piano cocoons amethyst petals  
to release its astral soul for iconic gods  
in the known & unknown universe  
unintended plus every god worth tending  
to & every virgin these gods discarded into  
the hysterical hours of night collapsing  
into dawn—every time I hear this banana  
peel scenario like the weather girl's scoop-  
necked sundress preceding an auto dealership  
commercial attacking brain cells with virtual  
bullshit, each time I recall a giant coconut  
crab scaling the arthritic thigh of a Bikini  
Isle palm for a radiated coconut, knowing  
I graduated from that dreary fraternity  
eons ago, so I no longer cotton to its  
algorithmic aberration of a world order,  
its pasteurized & homogenized world order  
trapped between the bloodstained claws  
of every alien god's mercy.

*Silvia Scheibli*

ELECTRIC MONSOON SYMPHONY

*Remembering Duane Locke, 1921 - 2019*

Rasping chatter  
of riotous orioles

Chirping crickets & *Zzzzzz* of cicadas

Paint a lavender-misted sky —

A mystic Dasein  
in our unconscious veins  
as we reach  
    for a magnetized instant  
yet to be disclosed, or embraced

And nurture the ever quiet whisper  
of creating poems  
behind this seemingly  
lost page

Auf unserem Weg  
es war geschrieben,  
„Ach, wie schön,  
wie schön  
mit Deiner Stimme  
zusammen sein.“

*Silvia Scheibli*

COLD IN MARCH

Pine tree candles  
glowing at dusk  
are extinguished

Crows gathering palm fibers  
cluck like gravel  
on snare drums

I sense  
your furtive voice  
at my shoulder  
tracing indigo words  
of longing  
by folded sleeves

This apple tastes  
as bitter  
as the sky  
tonight

*Ioan Flora*

*Translated from the Romanian by Adam J. Sorkin & Andreea Iulia Scridon*

## SMOKE FALLEN TO THE GROUND

Sunday, October 27. Last night I came over to see my dad  
(unshaven, tired, irascible, alone).

Clear, so clear you could see  
even Semenic Mountain.

In the courtyard, through the floor of green bricks  
nettles climb to the sky, barren vines.

Towards noon I gathered nuts from the thicket of ripe broom.

An unsettled feeling.

Call home, I remind myself.

Scrubbed potatoes soaking in a bowl,  
in the aura of quicksilver and cold water.

Sunday, quiet and sun, Mother is smoke  
fallen to the ground.



## FUM SURPAT ÎN PĂMÂNT

Duminică, 27 octombrie. Aseară am venit să-l văd pe tata  
(neras, obosit, irascibil, singur).

Seninul, senin, încât ai putea întrezări  
până și Semenicul.

În curte, prin pardoseaua de cărămizi verzui,  
suiete la cer urzicile, vița stearpă.

Spre prânz am adunat nucile din desișul de mături coapte.  
Sentimente razante.

Să sun acasă, îmi zic.

Cartofii curățiți se scaldă în blid,  
în aure de argint viu și apă rece.

Duminică, tihnă și soare. Mama e fum  
surpat în pământ.

*Ioan Flora*

*Translated from the Romanian by Adam J. Sorkin & Andreea Iulia Scridon*

## DAFFODILS FROM MY MOTHER'S GARDEN

It's snowing in large flakes over the lindens already leafed out,  
over the chestnuts in bloom.

On the communal bus, my fellow villagers speak

Romanian in a whisper:

it's Saturday and they're going to the City – to school, to the hospital,  
to the market.

Worried: what will the cardiologist say?

At noon, I'll pick an armful of daffodils from her garden,

I'll wrap them in the shape of a candle,

I'll set them on the cross as delicate as smoke.

As delicate as smoke.

NARCISE DIN GRĂDINA MAMEI

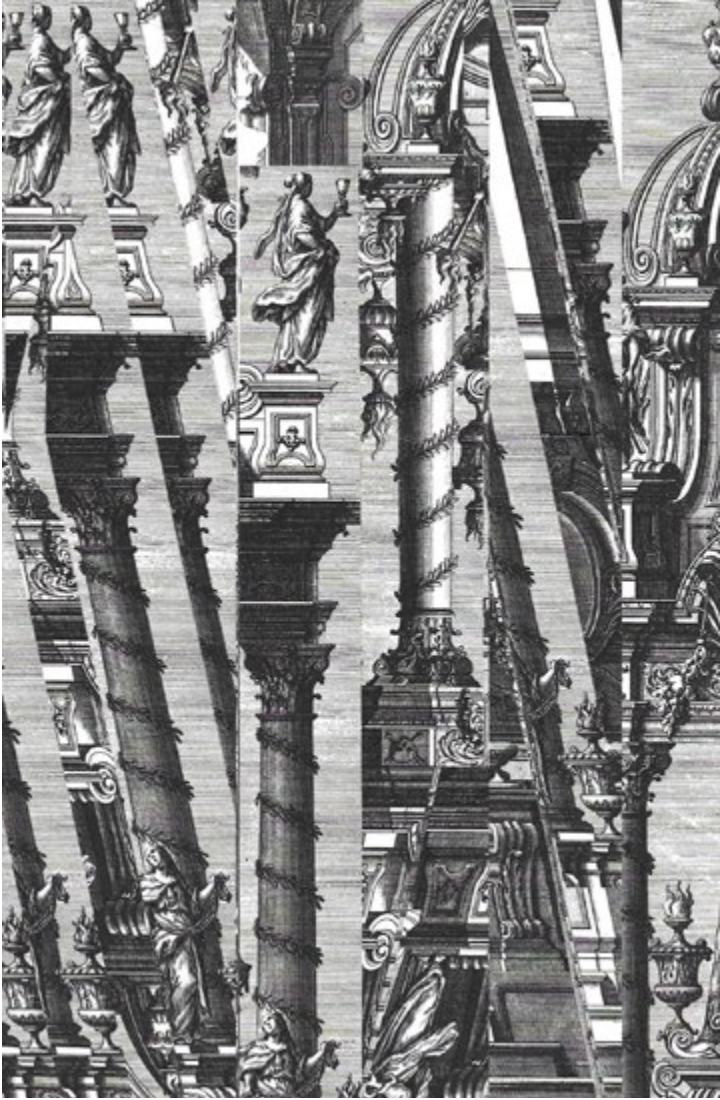
Ninge cu fulgi mari peste teii înfrunziți, peste  
castanii în floare.

În autobuzul comunal, consătenii mei vorbesc  
românește în șoaptă:  
e sâmbătă și merg la Oraș – la școală, la spital,  
la piață.

Îngrijorat: ce-o să spună cardiologul?

Pe la prânz voi culege un braț de narcise din grădina ei,  
le voi înveli într-o lumânare,  
le voi așeza la crucea subțire ca un fum.

Subțire ca un fum.



CLASSICAL TRANSFORMATION #2  
Robert Moorhead

NO ASH REMAINS

He burned his dreams every morning. Pulled them out, bundled them with binder's twine, hauled them out back. A burn pile, invisible to others, but the flames were high and the smoke thick. We couldn't follow him out there, the woods were dense and it wasn't a good place to light a fire. We never found any ash, and his face was almost translucent when he returned. Several cups of coffee, a large piece of coffee cake, and color would return. He kept the windows open, and fed the birds. We never spoke about his dreams; maybe they were too similar to ours.

**SONG OF A BIRD**

Language clattering on the sidewalk, shoes, bare feet, nails,  
the sweep of the sun, while you stand there amazed, stunned even at  
the extent of the spill, the ungodly mess left for someone else to clean  
up, pick up, sweep off the sidewalk, releasing the fumes of the alphabet,  
the shady undertones of syllables, the crust, the rind, the shell, the pit,  
the seed of thought, language clattering in the street now, wheels and  
spokes and boots, the sheen of the streetlights, flickering tail lights, in  
the steady headlight beam your voice tries to escape, hitting the yellow  
light red light green light without remorse a bird in a cage fluttering in  
the evening sun, slipping her feathers between the bars, finding only the  
whoosh of wind, the sudden occlusion of rain, until someone opens the  
door and flight becomes a sudden reality, a sweet updraft unexpected,  
feathers soaring above while you try to redirect traffic, put up barriers  
again to protect the still clattering language, the brazen stains that blind  
like Medusa and her wild unspoken daughters, riding the currents until  
the night wind dies down and the only sound you can hear now is the  
song of a bird somewhere above us.

FAR LIGHTS

It's silver in your hair and snowflakes, an inevitable transformation while we're walking along, the edge of the road frayed like pages of a book, summer heat sings the type, ink flows all around the night, spotting the windows with curious signs, moving forward and backward around our dreams, it's silver in your hair and snowflakes, an inevitable image while we're wondering if night meets day always and forever, or if golden threads wind around the clocks, stop the pendulums in antique shops, let in the throb of another counting, it's wild out tonight, the wind the road our feet moving and moving quickly slowly, the edge of the road wandering off and in and out of focus, we're not able to record anything, I haven't paper or phone or camera, nothing but a voice and a gaze, so far out now that they meet the birds coming down coming back coming all around in the soft still dark.

LONG COURS (EXTRAIT)

Quand les prés auront blanchi, je pourrai  
noircir de sommeil, être la souche

d'une terre enfin libérée par l'oubli,  
le seul témoin de la vie.

Comme le font les racines qui sondent  
à l'aveugle une source lointaine, je glisse

vers la première présence. Est-elle  
encore née – elle arrive pourtant, jamais vue.

Même, avant que ne parvienne la bonne nouvelle,  
le fond des choses remue ; le rouge petit s'agite

au cœur des champs jaunes, avec le vent. Fleur ou cœur.  
On se précipite pour la recevoir, nouvelle ou personne.





Always for the first time this bathroom mirror  
begins its life as a windshield, not yet bent  
from leaning down for mist and a better look

becomes the only instrument you can trust  
—to your face shows where the sky once was  
and with the same silence reaches up

is over and over washing your hands  
watching them fall as rain or no rain  
though the glass you can't see through

is in pieces one by one filling each faucet  
with engine sounds from this small sink  
as if nothing now will close or let go.



Like the cover for a fashion magazine  
this picture frame warms its corners  
wants you inside—there's room now

and though her portrait is safely out  
the emptiness is held in place  
by a wall so close even you can't tell

what's paint, what's human  
what's buried in the notice the staff left  
when one letter couldn't attach to another

never became the word growing inside you  
as grass and buttercups, telling the woman  
to come back, look for you in the note.



It's the same bottle, filled with a silence  
that's not rain though at night this pen  
becomes too heavy and falls, breaks apart

the way stars still gather to survive  
and you are holding the moon  
as your only chance to find one word

nearing another yet here is where you live  
alone, in a mountain stream that pours ink  
half black, half from a make-shift fountain

—still it's an envelope and like you, trembling  
almost hiding its words between your arms  
as you unfold it for a second time.



These strange wells dug side by side  
silence each splash with a small wish  
as if the only sound they know

brings them to the surface, rescued  
by a raft made from paper, adrift  
where the shore should be

—for such a thirst you leave a letter  
still folded with you inside  
falling through the Earth

as if on the way down surrounding you  
there was no island in the water  
to want this love in writing.

ALEA JACTA EST

I

Je vais avec toi, cheval,  
comme on se résout à la lenteur qui,  
après l'effort, désarçonne ceux  
que nous fûmes facilement.

II

Tu me peins le visage, il  
ne manque que les plumes  
tout autour. Sous ta main  
de glaise je prends conscience de moi,  
apercevant alors, dans le regard d'or du destin,  
le silex de mes os. Si quelqu'un passait,  
je pourrais, sous ses pas, tournoyer  
comme peut le faire un témoin de poussière.

III

Faire une promesse, en l'absence  
du présent. Demain est une montagne  
gravie, le souffle le vent, déjà.  
L'esprit change l'erreur en bourgeon  
et les arbres prochains sont nos corps.  
Contre toute attente, le bourdon s'est élevé <sup>(1)</sup>.  
Le fleuve de Jim Harrison coule dans les deux sens.

IV

J'aurais pu revenir bien plus tôt,  
faire que la porte s'ouvre avant  
de le décider, entraîner à mon passage  
un tapis de feuilles vives et saluer  
ceux qui se rassemblent autour du foyer.  
*J'aurais pu* est un temps détestable,  
je l'ai vu dans ces bottes que l'on chausse  
d'ordinaire lors d'une résolution, investies  
par une colonie de champignons  
depuis trop longtemps.

(1): « Le rapport mathématique entre les ailes et le poids du bourdon nous démontre que voler lui est impossible mais le bourdon l'ignore, c'est pourquoi il vole. » Igor Sikorsky

V

De notre petit horizon point  
l'infini. Le mot appelle son semblable.  
Comment être aujourd'hui  
sonne le futur, tout comme on appelle.  
À peine la question retentit-elle,  
le long du bois dur, qu'elle s'échappe,  
l'arbre est ici, l'écorce vibrante,  
tandis que ses feuilles dressées frôlent  
un toit bleu dont on détient,  
pour soi seulement, la dimension.

L'INTERO DELLA NEVE (7 PROFILI INNEVATI DA NARBONA)

dal centro di un seme  
l'intero bosco spinge

luce, nella luce che permane  
preme, nel peso dell'origine

un impasto d'ordine e materia  
sulle siepi gli aghi della galaverna

nervi esili di mondo, filamenti  
inerti per il fine dello spazio

e corpuscoli sterrati intorno  
e, indurite sotto coltri di poltiglia,  
scaglie, scorie, spore, polveri  
di tralci d'edera riscossi

lascia la saliva il cervo sulla resina,  
l'odore impregna la corteccia  
asciutta; calpestato il fosso, scalcia  
la pietra che ogni notte il lupo annusa,  
batte lo zoccolo sul tronco  
bagna la zampa sottile  
nell'acqua non ancora dura  
poi tra le balze scatta per sparire

rinserrati lentamente nelle tane,  
assetati, amalgamati ai fili d'erba,  
animali occhieggiano fermando il cuore  
da che frasche sgorghi il sole  
da che fresche fonti l'acqua



poi la neve cade a caso  
sul paesaggio già innevato

altri torsoli di mela copre,  
bacche e tronchi rosicchiati,  
biancastre piaghe di licheni  
sui rami snervati, nòccioli  
e gemme succhiati dai caprioli

spazzata ai piedi degli abeti  
sigilla i buchi delle tane  
lo stampo ghiacciato delle impronte  
che non portano lontano

a vederla diradarsi lentamente  
rigirando in aria, poi sedimentare,  
a fatica rifinirsi in un disegno

e nell'unirsi ai corpi  
equilibrarne i pesi  
nella metrica del contatto

ricopre il prato che divide  
stelo e stelo, e croco e cardo  
ripiega sull'argilla e sull'ardesia fa  
fiorire il ghiaccio

neve, negli occhi di ogni bestia,  
è il bianco in cui sta  
il bosco intero e per metà  
è luce e per metà silenzio

**SIMON ANTON DIEGO BAENA**, author of *The Magnum Opus Persists in the Evening* (Jacar Press). His poems have appeared in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *The Bitter Oleander*, *San Pedro Rover Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, among others.

**ANNE BARBUSSE**, née en 1969, habite dans un petit village du Gard. Elle est agrégée de Lettres Classiques et elle enseigne le français langue étrangère aux adolescents migrants. Elle a publié deux recueils *Les quatre murs le seuil au lit* aux éditions Encre vives et *Moi la dormante* aux éditions Unicité.

**ALAN BRITT** has been nominated for the 2021 International Janus Pannonius Prize awarded by the Hungarian Centre of PEN International for excellence in poetry from any part of the world. He currently teaches English and Creative Writing at Towson University.

**CLARA BURGHELEA**, Romanian-born poet and translator, Review Editor of *Ezra, An Online Journal of Translation*, and recipient of the Robert Muroff Poetry Award. Dos Madres Press published her collection *The Flavor of the Other*.

**FABRICE FARRE** a récemment publié *Avant d'apparaître* (éditions Unicité), *Implore* (Bruno Guattari), et *Sauf* (éditions du Cygne). Son blogue: *Poésie contemporaine... peut-être*.

**FEDERICO FEDERICI** si occupa di arte concettuale, scrittura, fisica. Suoi lavori sono usciti su «Art in America», «Diagram», «Jahrbuch der Lyrik», «Semicerchio» e altre. Tra i libri: *L'opera racchiusa* (2009, Premio L. Montano), *Mrogn* (2017, Premio E. Pagliarini) e altri.

**MÉLISANDE FITZSIMONS**, poet and translator who lives in Plymouth, UK. Her work has appeared in *Tears in the Fence*, *Quartet*, and *The Fortnightly Review*. Leaf Press published her second collection, *Life Here Is Full of Tomorrows*.

**IOAN FLORA (1950–2005)**, author of fifteen books of poetry, including *Lecture on the Ostrich-Camel*, *The Swedish Rabbit*, *Medea and Her War Machines*, died days after his final book of poems,

*Luncheon Under the Grass*, was published, from which all these poems derive.

**ELFRIEDE GERSTL (1932–2009)**, born in Vienna. In 1963, she received a scholarship from the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin. In 1999, she received the Erich Fried Prize and the Georg Trakl Poetry Award. Her *Collected Works* are available in four volumes (2012–2015).

**WOLFGANG GÖRTSCHACHER**, Senior Assistant Professor at the University of Salzburg and editor of *Poetry Salzburg Review*. Author of *A Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Poetry, 1960–2015*, with David Malcolm, (Wiley Blackwell, 2121).

**CHARLES HADFIELD** now lives in New Zealand. In the 1970s, while living in Bordeaux, he wrote his Master of Letters thesis on the poetry of Philippe Jaccottet. “Silences” is a small tribute to this wonderful poet to whom he owes so much.

**RAY KEIFETZ** is the author of *Night Farming In Bosnia*, winner of The Bitter Oleander Library of Poetry Award. Recent or forthcoming publications include *Gargoyle*, *I-70 Review*, *Kestrel*, *Phantom Drift*, *Rhino*, and *Schuylkill Valley Review*.

**GÜNTER KUNERT (1929–2019)**. His poems first appeared in *Osiris* 57 (2003) in German and in Gerald Chapple's English translation. Born in Berlin, he lived for many years in the former GDR and was widely respected and honored in his native Germany.

**STEFAN MANASIA**, editor of *Tribuna*. He founded Thoreau's Nephew Reading Club in Cluj in 2008, with Szántai János and François Bréda. Author of *The Aroma Stabilizer*, a collection of essays and literary chronicles, and *The Chronovisor*, a collection of short stories.

**FRANCESCA MARICA**, poeta e artista visiva, vive e lavora a Milano, Italia. Sue poesie sono apparse su diverse riviste e hanno ricevuto diversi riconoscimenti; l'ultimo la vittoria del Premio Montano, XXXV edizione. Autrice di *Concordanze e approssimazioni* (2019).

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**DAVID MALCOLM**, professor of English at SWPS University of Humanities and Social Sciences, Warsaw. He co-edited and co-translated *Dreams of Fire: 100 Polish Poems, 1970-1989* (Poetry Salzburg, 2004). In 2016, he published his first spy novel, *The German Messenger* (Crime Wave Press).

**ANDREA MOORHEAD's** collections include *À l'ombre de ta voix* (Le Noroît) and *The Carver's Dream* (Red Dragonfly Press). The Bitter Oleander Press will publish her *Tracing the Distance* in 2022.

**ROBERT MOORHEAD** recently exhibited paintings at Von Auersperg Gallery at Deerfield Academy and The Burnett Gallery of the Jones Library (Amherst, Massachusetts). *Saraswati #15* (France) featured his work.

**SIMON PERCHIK's** poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *Forge*, *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, and elsewhere. His collections include *The Osiris Poems* (box of chalk, 2017). Visit his website at [www.simonperchik.com](http://www.simonperchik.com).

**FRANCES PRESLEY** has published several collections of poetry, including *Ada Unseen* (Shearsman) and *Halse for hazel* (Shearsman). She has co-translated the work of two Norwegian poets, Hanne Bramness and Lars Amund Vaage, both for Shearsman.

**PATTY DICKSON PIECZKA's** third book, *Beyond the Moon's White Claw* won the David Martinson—Meadowhawk Prize from Red Dragonfly Press (2018). Her second book, *Painting the Egret's Echo*, won the Library of Poetry Book Award from The Bitter Oleander (2012). <http://www.pattywrites.net>.

**PAUL B. ROTH**, editor and publisher of The Bitter Oleander Press, is the author of seven collections of poems, including *Owasco: Passage of Lake Poems* (Finishing Line Press, 2018) and *Long Way Back to the End* (Rain Mountain Press, 2014).

**SILVIA SCHEIBLI**, born in Hamburg, Germany. Recent books include *Under the Loquat Tree* and *Parabola Dreams*, co-authored with Alan Britt. Her work appears in *The Bitter Oleander*, *Ann Arbor Review*, and *Of / With Journal*.

**ANDREEA IULIA SCRIDON**, Romanian-American writer and translator whose translation of Ion D. Sîrbu's short stories is forthcoming from ABPress. Broken Sleep Books just brought out Traian T. Coșovei's *Night with a Pocketful of Stones*, translated with Adam J. Sorkin.

**ADAM J. SORKIN**, Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus, Penn State Brandywine. His recent books include *Lavinia and Her Daughters* by Ioana Ieronim, translated with the author (Červená Barva Press) and *The God's Orbit* by Aura Christi, translated with Petru Iamandi (Mica Press).

**JEAN MARC SOURDILLON** a édité avec José-Flore Tappy et Hervé Ferrage les oeuvres de Philippe Jaccottet dans la Pléiade. Auteur de plusieurs recueils de poèmes dont *En vue de naître* (L'Arrière-pays) *La vie discontinuée* (La part commune) et *L'unique réponse* (Gallimard, 2020).



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