

too is he gently vigorous in urging upon us our options. « Invente / ce que tu veux en toi, » he writes, ever beseeching us to see in the things of the world — streams, birds, a cow's udder, prairies — a natural, uncomplicated « frisson de l'universel » which we all share, know, but from which we somehow have grown to dissociate ourselves. Seen through the strictly sociological microscope, the world may seem to seeth with a hurt that « traverses me. » Seen in the mirror of eternity and an eternity ever born now, innocence exists and never ceases to thrust before and within us the model of its secret.

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Yves Bonnefoy. *Remarques sur le dessin.*

Paris : Mercure de France, 1993. 15 pages. 89FF.

The writings of Yves Bonnefoy are today extraordinarily extensive, ranging from the earlier *Peintures murales de la France gothique* (1954), *L'Improbable* (1959) and *Un rêve fait à Martoue* (1967), through the growingly intense *Rome 1630* (1970), *L'Arrière-pays* (1972) and *Le Nuage rouge* (1977), to the wonderfully and so varyingly focussed *Sur un sculpteur et des peintres* (1989), *Alberto Giacometti* (1989) and shorter pieces such as *Pierre Alechinsky, les Traversées* (1992). The present *Remarques sur le dessin* gathers together the three texts of the limited 1992 edition *Comme aller loin, dans les pierres* (« La Sente étroite vers tout, » « Devant la Sainte-Victoire, » « Comme aller loin, dans les pierres »), but without the original's lithographs by Cartier-Bresson, and a fourth text, « L'Arbre, le Signe, la Foudre, » appearing earlier in 1993 with work by Alexandre Hollan.

What may be said initially to fascinate Bonnefoy in these texts where the root assumptions and purpose of artistic and poetic practice are rethought with ever new delicacy, is a residual fullness attaching to « le presque rien d'une ligne qui hésite, qui s'interrompt, » a sense that persists, through insufficiency and minimalness, of origin, source and unspeakable meaning. Giacometti's questing and constant *recommencement*

and quickly conjured, caught but dynamic in the tensions of erasure and desire to « live one's absolute. » To draw is to adventure forth into a blankness wherein « la précarité des acquis » is ever thrust before one. What is produced points far less to its production, less still to its aesthetic or intellectualisable nicety. « Le dessin, » Bonnefoy writes, « est dans la peinture l'amande de l'invisible, non la quintessence même suprême des formes intelligibles. » Whiteness, artistic or poetic, is the exquisite reminder of an unknowing overflowing our traces and our conscious knowledge. In this sense, however, it offers illumination, but a light dazzling and exceeding our gaze and our signs.

Poetry, for Bonnefoy, resembles drawing to the extent that it, too, ekes out a flimsy line of consciousness of its own incapacities and intransitiveness. This does not at all mean that poetry or drawing retreats into the comfort of its interiority, but it does imply a constant sense of the non-identifiableness of reality and language. « Dessiner, dé-signer, » Bonnefoy asserts, « briser le sceau, ouvrir l'enveloppe — mais elle reste fermée. » Presence is precisely that which escapes our conceptual entrapments, defies and transcends our signs, « s'absente de tout emploi qu'on puisse faire des signes. » Poetry's, like drawing's, merit lies in its refusal to construct a « world, » its persistence in hearing « dans chaque mot un silence qui est l'équivalent, dans l'espace propre au dessin, de la non-couleur, du vide. » What interests Bonnefoy, at bottom, is not language's extraction of aspectual fragments from the « quarry of Being » but the unity of the world. Poetry tends to maintain the latter by its endless transgression of, and breaking with, meanings, systematising discourse per se. Meaning as a whole is not at issue ; just the unceasing fragmentation and reconstruction that words can perpetrate. Poetry still represents, as does drawing, a way and a « hope » of seeing, but it is not a road to epistemological firmness. « Le grand dessin, » Bonnefoy argues, « n'identifie pas, il fait apparaître, » zen-like, one might say, just as « le grand dessinateur se tient, lui, en ce point au-delà de la perception — au centre de ce qui est... »

To recognise one's ignorance is, then, for Bonnefoy, to risk a saving of the world. Certainly, he feels — as, no doubt, we all do — that there is

more of a divine presence in clouds and pebbles than in the notional constructs of language : « qu'il n'y ait plus alors dans les mots, » he urges, « que les passages rapides de l'ombre et de la lumière. » Such a writing, such a use of words, may help us maintain a sense of the fusion, the non-separation of inside and outside. Such a « Plotinian » approach is at the heart, Bonnefoy feels, of drawing : « il va droit à l'Un, il ne s'est pas laissé empiéger dans ses rêves d'Intelligible. » Our seeing, linguistic, artistic, spiritual, can be like that of the « zen bowman, who does not need to look at what he is aiming at. » The invisible, the unsayable, can suddenly blossom within the visible, the spoken, in an experience of « la profondeur que le nom celait » — if, at once, we wish this to occur and we relinquish our desire to spell it all out in some definitive, finally stilled algebra. Our substitutions for the earth tend to sign, rather, our exile ; to experience presence is to come home to a simplicity that, somewhere, never left us, or anything : « c'est comme si rien de ce que nous rencontrons, dans cet instant qui a profondur, n'était laissé au-dehors de l'attention de nos sens. »

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Béatrice Braise. *Les Franco-Ontariens et les cure-dents.*

Hearst (Ontario) : le Nordir, 1993. 51 p.

Raymond Quatorze n'a qu'à bien se tenir, un autre pseudonyme constelle désormais de sa plume l'horizon littéraire de l'Ontario français. Béatrice Braise fait la preuve par quatre que le marché restreint du recueil de poésie elliptique et de son véhicule privilégié, le vers libre, n'a pas son pareil dans le processus d'autonomie d'une culture. Dans cette perspective, *les Franco-Ontariens et les cure-dents* que nous livre madame Braise compte cinquante et une pages incluant la page de garde, la page-titre, la page des crédits et celle des remerciements dont Robert Yergeau, éditeur et metteur en page, est la co-vedette. Décidément, force est de