

Marie-Claire Bancquart.
Dans le feuilletage de la terre.

Paris. Belfond. 1994. 133 pages. 85 FF.

After some twenty books, largely poetry though a growing number of novels — and I am not taking account of the extensive critical work — Marie-Claire Bancquart's latest collection, *Dans le feuilletage de la terre*, offers us a gathering of multitudinous glimpses and memories that, resisting the temptations of deploration, crossing the threshold beyond bitterness, seek to deploy a reflective serenity and a sense of fused, cosmic meaning, within, still, an optic of lucidness and open interrogation. This is achievable only because Bancquart realises that "openness" is a two-way affair: indeed, it is, despite our finitude, an affair of the infinite, of the world's and our "infiniteisation," as Baudelaire termed it. The "divine" may be in the margins, our margins, it may have lost all doctrinal visage, it may be constantly beset and refused by our individual and global dis-ease, our generalised disconcertedness, by "un hiver alourdi," impie, "difficile" that may seem to shroud all our seasons. But yet, the "divine" is ever bidden by our disarray and our doubt, it equally appears. And what word shall we otherwise apply to the energy propelling every phenomenon, event, texture, flavour, glimmer, every sweetness, every wretchedness even, into the enigmatic pulsation of their presence and their fadingness, their mortal yet moving layeredness and interleaving? "*Imperceptible, primordial*," Marie-Claire Bancquart writes, à la Frénaud, of the ambient invisibility ever shaping and penetrating even to the core of our being.

"Quand je peins, c'est toujours de l'autre côté de la vie," Bancquart thus has the painter argue: not because there is in her work and her poetics, an overriding principle of transcendence, for no rupture with being is sought or postulated; rather is there a residual, intuited sense of the possible integration into what we currently imagine being to be, of its shimmering otherness, half-forgotten, half-discarded, caught, Bancquart feels, in the painful yet salvatory opaqueness of that merest of things we call a poem. Not that any pretention reigns, nor any idle aestheticism, nor even a touch of post-symbolist idealism. For it is the heart and the mind that, only, may pluck the strings of being's living instrument, giving us the chance of some strangely mortal hearing of

"une musique immense, indivisible." To endeavor to "snare / a mere trace of sky in the midst of bombs," may seem all to metaphorical for some; but, in Sarajevo, as in our comfortable back gardens, metaphor is always reality.

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