

Esther Tellermann. *Pangéia*.
Paris: Flammarion. 1996. 121 pages.
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“The work of Esther Tellermann,” Yves di Manno has written, “is the relation of a quest indefinitely reassumed — since it is endless, without origin — for some uncertain but essential unity.” The relation of this quest, however, remains in *Pangéia* as in earlier volumes such as *Distance de fuite* (1993) and *Trois plans inhumains* (1989), elliptical, intermittent, ordered into yet fragmented “furtive notations,” as Claude Esteban calls them, in a delicate blending of the continuous and the discontinuous. Enigmatic references abound, identities remain unrevealed, contexts flicker and blur at best, and yet a manifest discursiveness prevails and develops, centred moreover on questions of being and meaning, appearance and belief. Emotions and sensations such as pain, suffocation, loss, incapacity, fear dot Tellermann’s texts, but with that strange admixture of blatancy and discretion that, in the albeit more extreme case of and Anne-Marie Albiach Paul Auster can term a “sublime lyricism.” “Quoi s’épanche?” Esther Tellermann lucidly inquires of herself, “fond forme?”

Indeed, although there is nothing artificially, theatrically contrived about a book like *Pangéia*, it does have the air of a miniaturised theatre of the mind, with its shifting personas/personae and scenes, its quoted speech and its unreferenced, richly allusive snippets and narrative fragments. What Tellermann terms her presumable textual / mental “fissures comme transcription / Scories / comme transcription” seem to result, on the one hand, from the experience of “l’abrupt / d’une seule fois,” the painful yet perhaps essential tearing open of existence to glimpse its depths; on the other, from the poet’s questing, beyond transcribed scoria, for “l’envers du point visible,” for that place of original, vertiginous fullness, that kind of absolute *vrai lieu* intuitable via the *hic et nunc* and which the title theorises.

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