

outset just as today with volumes like *Un suspens de cristal*, *Seize paroles voilées*, and the present *La Parole et la preuve*, always manifest is, not only the surging, swirling, often enigmatic and metaphysically coloured creativity of his poetry, but also the conscious meditation constantly generated upon his own creative act, as well as that of both contemporaries and many great writers of bygone ages and diverse cultures. *La Parole et la preuve* gives us twelve interviews with a wide range of critics and writers — from Michel Orcel and Jean-Marie Le Sidaner to Olivier Apert, Richard Millet and Béatrice Bonhomme. That Salah Stétié's observations move continually back and forth between his own praxis and that of poets and mystics such as Mallarmé, Gibran, Du Bouchet, Djelal, Michaux, Silesius, Nerval, Parmenides, Hölderlin, Hakim, and that he is concerned more with meaning and ontology than with structure and style — none of this should surprise us. Poetry, for Stétié, remains the "obscure servant." The specificities of its articulations, along with its oppositions and paradoxes, tend to dissolve and leave us with a strange sense, a transcendent sense, one might say, of the relativity of utterance — despite its beauties and pertinences —, a sense of a unifiedness, a "purity" even, beyond specification yet buried deep within that "truth" which, as Hallaj put it, "I am." It is little wonder, then, that, for Stétié, form and void may be perceived as identical, and that poetry is ideally placed to encourage this perception. Mind, spirit, as

Stétié quotes Djelal as reminding us, "is the bird of vision and does not come to rest in signs." Inner and outer realities, too, may thus achieve fusion at the same time as an awareness dawns, via the poetic, of their fragile, airy, oddly empty, absent ontic modes. No wonder, either, that for Stétié, there is no definable path, no common way of being: even though we all explore the interrelated, half-shared secrets of "the difficulty of birth and being, the dazzlements engendered within us by the soul and through love, the terrors attached to illness, aging and death," uniqueness reigns supreme. "I am the Truth," the blinded and expectant, brilliant and obscure, caught — yet free — within the reciprocal validations of word and world we endlessly spin.

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**Denise Le Dantec.** *Les Campagnes heureuses.* Vénissieux: Paroles d'Aube. 1996. 84 pages. 85FF. ISBN 2-909096-64-5.

1975 saw the publication of Denise Le Dantec's *Le Jour* with the Éditions des femmes; 1985 brought to *Les Fileuses* d'étope the Prix de poésie de la Société des gens de Lettres; the 1990's have given us a fairly extraordinary range of fascination and voice, with *Le Journal des roses*, *Suite pour une enfance*, *Emily Brontë*, *Splendeurs des jardins de Paris*, *Opuscule d'Oeussant*. The slim but elegant *Les Campagnes heureuses* helps

us place some of this prolific production in perspective by gathering together six separate interviews, along with a few short poetic texts such as "Carnet d'avril" and "Champ-Bretagne" and a number of photographic documents of touching interest for readers of autobiographical, half-lyrical, half-elegiacal 1992 *Suite pour une enfance* or 1997 *Livre du chagrin*.

Always — whether it be the attentive naming or the exquisitely ephemeral, the recollection of spiritual states, the alertness to rhythm and sound, form and meaning's swirl, and their bondness to a purpose "exceeding the sign" — there reigns a sharp, searching, never still and settled sense of the pertinence of poetry, its texts, yes, but more importantly its acts, to everyday experience, the experience of every moment. Poetry less, therefore, as "art [than as] bond," link, to the unconscious, to the Other, to self, or other. The poet: "s/he who maintains the truth of [such a] bond." It is no surprise to find in a Le Dantec's work that every evocation of every line resonates with a most delicate attunement to its ontic mystery, the strangeness of its articulation, its emergence, its retraction. To convince oneself of this, one need only read the 1995 *Strophes*, or, chosen at random, verses such as the following from "Carnet d'avril:"

*Les cataphotes s'allument dans les bois*

\*

*Vieilles sagas des fougères.*

\*

*Il y a des perles et des paniers de feu  
— oiseaux qui jasant entre les lèvres:  
merveille*

\*

*Noires les roses.*

*(Dans la boîte trempée de la mer, tous les bruits.)*

The discretions of the *poietic* front upon its fragrances. All remains, despite our surging or faltering gestures of nomination, oddly veiled still in that very pristiness of enigma hat, in the first place, caught our eye, drew our mind, invited our speech. "Ce qui s'entend provient des confins. / L'image vient après."

A writer, happily, of great subtlety and little pretension.

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**Henri Michaux. *À distance*. Paris: Mercure de France. 1997. 141 pages. 70FF. ISBN 2-7152-2022-7**

We may not have expected any more published poetry from Henri Michaux after immediately posthumous *Déplacements, dégagements* (1985) and *Affrontements* (1986). And, indeed, of the forty-five poems assembled in *À distance* (a title from a 1953 text) by Micheline Phankim and Anne-Elisabeth Halpern, only ten are actual *inédits*, all others having appeared either in periodicals or in short run *plaquettes*. The selection, or better gathering, offered, which spans the entire period of creative production of Michaux, provides, however, some thirteen years after the poet's death, a fascinating