

edition, “a remarkable psychic exercise” which he likens to a kind of yoga or, better, “a waking dream séance of Jungian inspiration”. Pichette himself terms his own work a *mystère profane*, a kind of deeply (self-) searching mystery play put on for the first time on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1947. (The production was by Georgette Vitaly, the cast included Gérard Philippe, Maria Casarès, Roger Blin and Michel Michalon, the music was Maurice Roche’s, the backdrops Matta’s.) At the centre of this five-part creation (1. La Genèse; 2. L’Amour; 3. La Guerre; 4. Le Délire; 5. L’Accomplissement) lies the question — and, of course, the practice, the performance — of creative articulation and the art of writing ultimately connected to self-transformation *Les Épiphanies* undertakes. Despite the evident surrealist qualities and fascinations of Pichette’s perhaps most compelling work — the marvelous, “dream” and vision proliferate — there is much that remains coherent here, both in its expression and the “purposing” that is always felt in the midst of swirling emblem and metaphor. The poem-play closes in characteristic mode (my translation) by the Poet declaring (at the end of “L’Accomplissement”, we should recall):

It is probationary blood and immortal blood suspended and in space and on and on shall I go hot on the track of us all from earths to moons, a solemn fantasy, and through waves and through fluids still further yet, disdainful of all ordeals, in freedom in the light, until the supreme pulsation of the world.

A worthy work by which not to forget Henri Pichette...

**Michael Bishop**  
*Dalhousie University*

**Louise Herlin.** *Synchronies*. Creil: Dumerchez, 1998. 53 pages. ISBN 2-912927-02-1

**T**he first text of the first of three sections of Louise Herlin’s *Synchronies* — “Réflexions d’angle”, “Progrès” and “Rivières et rêveries” — sets a tone, a psychological mode, that will essentially persist throughout the collection. A consciousness of contrast reigns, and the paradox of attenuated possibility where yet “la joie neuve aurorale, sa clarté / lavée de frais / court sur l’ardoise des toits, / ricoche sur les façades brique et blanc, / gagne les esprits chagrin”. Grace, power, this opening text tells us, are to be felt and perceived all about, and desire, a sense of being given something pure, “treasures” no less. Yet slippage in time, impermanence, “drifting”, are held to be problematic. The natural ontology of becoming — which rests on a logic of constant offering of newness, difference — is lived also simultaneously as loss, “deprivation”, and

leads to a tug-of-war between welcome and “mourning”. Moreover, this sense of loss is related, in Herlin, to a feeling that the full, contrastive, paradoxical *saying* of being (as the poet lives it, believes it to be) is equally slipping away. “Synchrony of what lies around and the inner gaze”, Herlin writes, hinting that such sensitivity to the available dynamism of psyche, heart and soul may, for her, be more vulnerable at the close of the millenium than earlier. Needless to say, these are delicate and debatable equations in a world admittedly, full today of greater, more challenging contrasts than ever before. The advantage of this, as Herlin seems to sense whilst half-humorously pitting herself against it, is that further desire is born, choices can and must be made, life urges its dynamic living upon us, dissuading us from resignation to the humdrum, the drabness that, for Herlin, poetry can so miraculously shatter with its “feu fées rimes Muses prosodie”. This said, the dilemma remains of desire’s felt impotence in the face of the equally felt need to “inflect” life. Words may enchant and exalt, but, in Herlin’s experience, they equally can “cut”, “deceive” and “kill”. No easier transcendence seems finally available to Herlin than to, say, Mallarmé, implicitly evoked in the closing terse summary of the human condition:

Le sort minime de la terre, des terriens  
 Ensemble lancés dans l’espace  
 filant  
     défilant  
         défiant l’obstacle...

**Michael Bishop**  
*Dalhousie University*

**Salah Stétié.** *Fenêtre d’aveugle*. Mortemart: Rougerie, 1998. 51 pages. 54FF. ISBN 2-85668-026-7./ *Le Vin mystique*. Fata Morgana, 1998. 95 pages. ISBN 2-85194-459-2

**T**wo very arguably different books are given us here by the author of *L’Eau froide gardée* (1973), *L’Être poupée* (1983) and *Fièvre et guérison de l’icône* (1998). *Fenêtre d’aveugle* offers photographic images of a number of Kijno’s *papiers froissés* with a brilliantly insightful reading of them. Stétié argues, of course, the tensions of matter and mind in Kijno’s crumplings of paintings, papers, engravings, the question of origin that haunts his gesture, the fragility he exposes and the powerful cosmic magma his “objects” yet cause us to contemplate, the interplay of creation and death underpinning his “ontology”, the “blindness” of an act yet visionary, revelatory. But his last comments are reserved for the elaboration of an equation of violence and love, nervous seizure and caress.

*Le Vin mystique* offers, firstly, a beautiful translation of Omar Ibn al-Farîdh’s celebrated *Al-Khamriya*, accompanied by the extraordinary original scripted by Ghani Alani, and ,