

Jacques Imbert. *Les Fils conducteurs*. Remoullins : Brémond, 2000. 93 pages. 150 FF. ISBN 2-910063-54-2.



book of discreet revelation and self-deployment, *Les Fils conducteurs* speaks, as does for example « Le temps que perd la mort », of earth and dream, of love and hurt, of desire and loss, of continuity or simple residue. It is, of course, too, a book of beginnings and openings, but then complicated by memory and maturity, knowledge and the felt power of time. Texts may vary considerably in their pitch and mode : if all is prose, length is utterly inconstant; narrative clarity can mingle with allegory and rich metaphor or can dip into the oneiric or the meditative; smooth, fluid syntax can suddenly dissolve into staccato rhythm, fragmentation, ellipses both formal and ideational; « Où le cou se repose », with its teeming cultural and temporal specificities, can yield to that barely composed self-exposure of « L'Ombre du cœur » : « Il n'a plus le bruit alterné des feuilles, sa part de murmures. Il désespère un peu »; a terrible and flagrantly avowed sense of the self's "monstrous[ness] and buried[ness]" can, though with rarity, give way to glimpses of the implicitly swarming options in human exchange and in language.

For the most part, however, this is a book of sobriety and bare continuity, of minimal impetus and "urgency". Or, put better, the latter power, channelled into the poetic, cannot raise language to the level of song or hymn. At best it can speak of existence as an experience of lack that only desire realised might raise to a stage of self-transformation permitting poetry's own exultation in itself.

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Pierre Oster. *Paysage du Tout*. Paris : Gallimard, Collection Poésie, 2000. 311 pages. ISBN 2-07-041146-X.



he writing of Pierre Oster goes back some considerable time and the present volume, no doubt something of a revelation nevertheless for many readers, offers samplings of the full range of his œuvre, from 1951 to 2000. A revelation because, although Oster's earlier work appeared with Gallimard (*Le champ de mai* [1955] and *Solitude de la lumière* [1957] down to *Les dieux* [1970]), all of his subsequent books have been associated with smaller presses such as Babel, Obsidiane or L'Alphée; but a revelation, too, because of the intense lyricism — « L'adéquation de l'esprit au réel est d'abord lyrique », he

affirms in one of his aphoristic flourishes —, the hymn-like explosiveness, or indeed serenity, of the cascading rhythms that his texts develop. Modally, too, from the outset, Oster's work instinctively opts for freedom despite a rigorous meditative discipline that, in the thick of exclamations, apostrophes, syntactic heightening, parenthesis, ellipses, capitalization and so on, manages to generate a poetic prose of great limpidness, great skipping fluidity.

Here, all is acclamation, recognition, exultation; even the questioning never slips into the dysphoric. Oster's vision is at once rooted, sensual, earthy, and mystical, alert to a non-physicalness not to be separated out from matter and flesh. If fullness is the order of the day, yet further fulfilment is available via giving oneself to what is given; this is at the heart of Oster's sense of the poetic act: a flowing through the latter of what is to produce a reciprocally resplendent growth. His articulations can be almost overpowered at moments by the felt vastness of the fused physical and non-physical enigma. But Oster's writings are not occasions for the working out of rational equations, but the place in which may be brought about a more complete intuiting of that principle of love ever sensed within all material manifestations. « Le vieil edifice céleste occupe mon cœur et mes yeux », he will write of his contemplation of the earth. The latter's minutiae assist us, if we so will, to perceive the grandeur of every phenomenon, and, in turn, such perception can alert us to a "nudity" beneath our words in no way dismaying, but rather returning us to that improbable but exalting task of, via one's writing, "staging light, becoming the actor of a relationship to the sky".

A very fine collection that, in many ways, can kickstart contemporary perceptions of the poetic...

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Salah Stétié. *Sauf erreur.* Grigny : Paroles d'Aube, 1999. 264 pages. 99 FF. ISBN 2- 84384-29-5.



These are not by any means the first interviews with the author of the recent *Fièvre et guérison de l'icône* and the remarkable *Mahomet*, but they are by far the longest and most revealing and are preceded by two short pieces by the interviewers, David Raynal and Frank Smith. The subjects covered are numerous but centre naturally upon the life and work, the fascinations and motivations of a poet and essayist whose contribution to modern literature and our understanding of it have been very widely recognised throughout Europe,