

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,

the Middle East and North America. Few writers, let it be said moreover from the outset — for the charm and pertinence of these interviews greatly depend thereupon — demonstrate such spontaneous elegance, coherence and relevancy of articulation as Salah Stétié ever is able to summon in conversation.

The latter shifts from childhood and formative years to issues of poetic initiation and apprenticeship, back to cultural, even socio-political issues and linguistic choices and affinities. Char, Michaux and Schehadé, Duchamp and Balthus, Kant and Mohammed, Rumi, Rilke, Shakespeare : vast and coherently perceived is the panoply of writers and thinkers that are evoked in these exchanges that depict the fine mosaical details of a mind's explorations. This is not a book that seeks or can seek to penetrate into that complex but luminous "obscure lamp" that is the poetry proper of Stétié, but it does allow for a broad appreciation of the experiential matter out of which may grow an œuvre as intricate and as startlingly original as that founded in *L'eau froide gardée* (1973) or *Inversion de l'arbre et du silence* (1981) and blossoming into *L'autre côté brûlé du très pur* (1992) or *Fièvre et guérison de l'icône* (1998).

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