

has herself been given at times to dwell upon existential problem more than her residual vision but real resurgent sense of primordial grace. Gazing upon what is, respecting ‘reality’, is so often our individual and collective mode of being and leads almost fatally to feelings of void(edness) and confusion. Writing, however, for Hân, remains that means of maintaining our deep ontic flow, of generating a more cosmic meditative gathering of self and other, of treading some real *chemin d'étoiles* amidst the ambient darkness. *Ne pensant à rien* thus articulates a dialectics of conceivable fragility and dispersal, marvel and energy – an energy that dictates our profusely ever upsurging “desire to live”. The final poem, possibly in part an ekphrastic reflection on Marchetti’s terminal *encre*, wonders why we allow to develop within our consciousness the less-than-perfect when, I read, the very feasibility of creative flow is a denial of imperfection.

Françoise Hân’s work is one of the most important feminine poetic oeuvres of the last forty years in France and merits our greater critical attention.

Jean-Michel Maulpoix. *Chutes de pluie fine.* Paris: Mercure de France, 2002. 185 pages. 15,50 Euros. ISBN 2-7152-2317-X.

The poetic voice of Jean-Michel Maulpoix is amongst the most distinctive and lyrically, ethically urgent of the past twenty or more years. It has tended to move towards a free-flowing yet intensely articulated prose manner, as here, one that spontaneously establishes its rhythms, the music of its annotations, what Reverdy termed that personal “discipline” constantly surging forth, visceral yet informed by a *justesse* that obeys no aesthetic outside of its own intuitive self-assembly. *Chutes de pluie fine* is something of a travel diary. “Le réel est toute ma pensée”, Maulpoix writes (13), thereby seemingly distancing himself from those “excarinating” aspects of poets such as Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Rimbaud who, yet, have frequently preoccupied his critical mind. If what he has termed, after Mallarmé, *un instinct de ciel* continues to hover above this and other volumes, it engenders no escapism: life itself is a baroque, difficult but nearly sufficient act and place of art; the experiences it affords, the poet merely gathers, “put[s] together” (13), collages into reciprocated offerings: “ce sont là mes histoires d’amour: chutes ou poussées de fièvre à la pointe de la plume” (49).

Of course, Baudelaire and Rimbaud – like Van Gogh, quoted liminally – never cease to embrace a world they were not excessively fond of and

thus sought to flee via differing tactics of transcendence; and Mallarmé, too, must be read not only in the light of a dream of pure poetry but, too, in that light flooding his very early *Sa fosse est creusée*, his Easter eggs and *loisirs de la poste*, his extraordinary *Tombeau pour Anatole* and, of course, the realised “failure” of *Un coup de dés*. Maulpoix is explicit: “*Always somewhere in the universe*” (53). He is – like us all – “ce point instable et vibratoire sur lequel toute altérité vient jouer sa musique” (36), and if he – like us all – can experience doubt, self-derision, inadequacy and a persistent inadequation of language to the lived, equally can he – perhaps unlike us all, but, unpretentiously (: we are beyond poetic prophetism), *for* us all, should we care to *want* (cf. Bonnefoy) – respect his deeper feelings of urgency, pertinence, ontological splendour (and what he has recently called *responsibility* to that strange splendour of being and possible doing). This is a geopoetics – inevitably centered in self as the sole source of all feasibility of being and doing – less developed than lived. Language is thus used to realise and confirm a visceral, sensual and affective relation to what is, in principle all that is, which it can so easily intellectually deny. “Je n’ai jamais eu d’autres projets que d’habiter cette terre”, he writes, “Les mots ne m’en sépareront plus” (96).

A writer that must be read.

Pascal Commère. *Bouchères*. Paris: Obsidiane, 2003. 111 pages. 14 euros. ISBN 2-911914-60-0.



author of a wide range of writings over the past twenty years – from *Les Commis* (1982), *Chevaux* (1987), *Dijou* (1989) to *Lointaine approche des troupeaux à vélo le soir* (1995), *Vessies, lanternes, autres bêtes cornues* (2000) and *La Grand’ soif d’André Frénaud* (2001) – Pascal Commère is a poet, a very fine one, moreover, close to the Burgundian earth he lives and breathes, close too to an intimate, vigorous and intricate language capable, without sentimentality, preferring irony or compassion or discreet yet in-the-face questioning, of speaking this ordinary yet intense livedness.

Agricultural, rural life, its softnesses, its hard-edged realities, its fascinating “banalities” and its unrealised – unrealisable? – dreams: these are Commère’s major preoccupations here, lived in the heart of contemporary “peasant” France with its deontology of production and economic survival guaranteed to terrify even the most hardened beef-eater. *Bouchères* bears