

ness at the heart of the adopted formal constraint: 1. the artist's seizing upon the ephemeral, its intrinsic trace, offering but a trace of a trace; 2. the power of such a trace in the eyes – and the only indirectly evoked spirit of artist and spectator; 3. the sheer beauty recognised via this given creation, which, yet, is felt to be less definitively inscribed on the stone than fleetingly traced, like all of presence – and, for that, more beautiful, more in touch, oddly enough, with that *fond d'originel* from which it, like all else, has arisen; 4. art as an implicitly mystical 'sacrifice', but without the full spiritual paraphernalia to give it a fullness of meaning; 5. art's flagrancy does not erase its ellipticalness: like the poem, or indeed any natural phenomenon, it is there, indisputable, yet cloaked in its inalienable strangeness; 6. the path that art offers, that *Chemin d'ardoise* offers, constitutes 'a path towards the self gone astray': in that sense all doing, all slowly unfolding being, is something of a path to our origin, our source, a path of return and restoration, of self-coincidence; 7. doubt melds here with (self-)invitation, finds its ease in the fact that 'life crackles at one's fingertips', the place of self-reenergising lying within: we are our own source, one might conclude; 8. meaning is thus to be found not in repose, in withdrawal, but rather 'in the eye of the whirlwind', at the centre of all our whys and dizzinesses and desires; 9. art's relation to presence is a central and continuing preoccupation, a question without firm response, Noël feels, yet one offering oblique and 'furtive' hints and surprises – and, if he feels too that this leaves us without basis for true knowing, his own persistence, like that of the artists he endlessly is drawn to, suggest that knowing is merly mobile, becoming, not a fixity, but an infinite journey.

Les yeux dans la couleur is a book for all shelves and one that confirms Bernard Noël as one of our greatest living poets and authentic thinkers.

Christian Doumet. *Horde*. Sens: Obsidiane, 2003. Version définitive. 61 pages. ISBN 2-911914-70-8. 11 euros; *La décharge de la lumière*. Nancy: La Dragonne, 2004. 59 pages. ISBN 2-913465-33-1. 18 euros.



fter the fire at the Belles-Lettres warehouse in 2002, various reprintings have been managed by Obsidiane, in difficult circumstances, and, in the case of Christian Doumet's *Horde*, this has allowed for the final tinkering with a powerful text oddly fusing some desired density and an aerated transparency and offering loosely contextualised fragments of a prose devoted to the life of the lords of Berzé. It is the

château de Berzé that remains today to haunt the mind and imagination of the poet and critic Doumet, and, understanding as he does both the relativity of language's gesture of seizure of the real and the latter's yet critical *poietic* feasibility, even duty, in relation to this same real, it is not surprising to find here a text, a long poem, straining the limits of semanticity and grammaticality in order to reach to the earthy core of existence at once separating and linking our contemporary 'civilised' consciousness and the being-in-the-world of banded itinerant ravaging mediaeval warriors who finally determine to build, yield up their nomadic ways to a dream – political, social, spiritual even – which those initiating such action would never themselves physically live. Flashing preoccupations of food, images of vineyards, blood, sexuality, stone and wood, roaming animals, the soul yet floating amidst the light and the darkness of it all, life at its most visceral and yet its most intensely and freely psychically emerging peak, life at once terrifyingly uncertain and admirably, though near-incomprehensibly, heroic – the way Hugo saw the legend of human existence slowly form through the centuries, and, indeed, is it not the now planetary challenge we face today as we seek to integrate horror and vision? Are the seigneurs de Berzé not the barely conceivable image of our contemporary faces, caught between dire and instinctual and even ideological bloodiedness and a sense of 'the slow rehearsal of God with the earth'? And all of this in the swarming and still discreet intuition of a poet far from flagrant ethics and moral certainties, steeped as his text remains in the deep soil of our collective being.

La décharge des années lumière does not discontinue the ellipses of Horde, perhaps even rendering them more flagrant despite the opening lines that seem to want to offer clarity of context and urgency of purpose and focus:

Ici où les terres inclinées se rassemblent
Forment caillou, fresque, chevaux avec le souffle
La rage, la touffe agitée

Ici qu'aucune demeure ne creuse plus
Ne contient aucun nom

Ici commence la décharge des années lumière

Christian Doumet's work here, as elsewhere, seems to struggle with an unnameable that the poet both cannot release into its evidence and perhaps

half wishes to detain, contain, in the realm of the shadowiness and semi-intuitedness of its *poiesis*:

Qu'est-ce que mais qu'est-ce

Le nommable est sans forge sans éclairs

Gongue plutôt ton caillou creux
Avec les cataractes
Un ciel tombe sur le parquet

Egrenant au passage les sonnailles d'un troupeau vertical

The illustrations of Bénédicte Plumey give a haunting sense of our terrestrial strangeness, our proximity to the life of animals other than human, to the dark and disturbing unknown and neglected life of animal non-selves, 'l'élémentaire le mouvant / Quelques vestiges de crin / Pris dans les barbelés', states of being that make one ask: 'Quel charbon photographique fardant quelle foudre / Dessine l'œil si inquiet d'autre chose que soi'.

Two volumes that, along with his *Poète, mœurs et confins*, make Christian Doumet a poet of depth and strength.

Salah Stétié. *Brise et attestation du réel.* Fata Morgana, 2003. 63 pages. ISBN 2-85194-607-2. 13 euros; *Si respirer.* Fata Morgana, 2004. Np. ISBN 2-85194-611-0.



fter the two wonderful opportunities which L'Imprimerie nationale has offered us to penetrate into the extraordinary world of Salah Stétié – *Fièvre et guérison de l'icône* (1998) and *Fiançailles de la fraîcheur* (2003) – Fata Morgana now allows us to enter what seems like the terminally embracing phase of the imagination of one of France's greatest living poets. *Brise et attestation du réel* is a collection of seering intensity, of involuted, densely metaphorised language gathering, exploring and exploding the 'débris de nos mythologies', the shimmering 'daughters' of mind and pen. The book is a dance of loss and recognition, a 'lamp' searching along the obscured corridors of mind and emotion for those 'papillons de joie pure' that persist and haunt in the exquisiteness of their delicate self-trajectory. Presence is lived increasingly as smoke and