

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

vaporousness, as a crumbling, crushed powderiness that lingers without conviction, amidst, yet, a strange sense of the vast mystery of being: 'Ô grands Inexistants!, Stétié can exclaim, Pourquoi ce labyrinthe/ Et jouer contre nous, dans le ciel idéal, à ce tennis d'étoiles?' Mourning, melancholy, deep nostalgia may persist everywhere, but they do not disallow that esoteric dimension stalking Stétié's work and ceaselessly searching for a meaning felt oddly to be ever expanding yet ever evaporating before our grasp. His the work emerging upon 'la grande toile de l'esprit respirant'. His poetry, indeed all of his writing, as the place where the fundamental questions are posed: 'Le quoi et la clé. La maison de qui?' If the feeling of loss is at times overwhelming, all divinity sensed to be biting into being's raw flesh, this is so against the baskcloth of 'le chant le chant le chant et la beauté de l'hymne'.

Si respirer continues the song of doubt and interrogation of self and all that is conceivably other, but it too manages to affirm and doggedly eke out its *poiesis* in the face of a lived fragileness, a sense of pure provisionality that poetry itself desperately seeks to fight off. 'Unproven', erasable, the poet's gesture weaves something of a shroud of its own ephemeral and questioned glory. If *Brise et attestation du réel* can suggest the imminent death of poetry, in a world felt to be one of proliferating materiality, it remains that it, along with *Si respirer*, undercuts this prognosis, and does so with a power of expression that is utterly exceptional. That such residual power is not capable of establishing itself, in Stétié's mind, as the very sign of a beauty and a joy far beyond all concern cannot, of course, be held against a writer whose very authenticity of sentiment is synonymous with the energy propelling it, and all that is.

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