Pierre Chappuis. *Mon murmure mon souffle.* Paris: Corti, 2005. 77 pages.11,50 euros. ISBN 2-7143-0893-7.

T exts of great fragility, yet gracile and supple, texts of flashing brevity, elliptical yet ever anchored in an appreciable traversal of self's relationship to the earth, texts at once caressed into their simple beauty of witness and eschewing any flagrant aesthetic project, the poems of Pierre Chappuis' latest collection, *Mon murmure mon souffle*, root themselves deeply in lived time and space whilst seeming to float above them. Here is an example, characteristically untitled, though equally characteristically parenthetically post-(un)situated:

> De proche en proche
> ombres, ajours se relaient,
> jalonnent l'heure, la route.
>
> Mouvantes conjugaisons.
>
> Comme chat sur braises,
> se glisser entre elles
> dans un souffle.
>
> > *(sur un chemin de nulle part)*

The experience of being as, simultaneously, a presence and an absence, something revealed and masked, veiled, gathering or at least deploying its 'moving conjugations', but of what verb, what infinitive, cast into its *chiaroscuro*? We are in the world, yet curiously beyond it, or on this side even of its window upon being's meaning: at best metaphorisable, *comme chat sur braises*, not truly speakable, *between* the phenomena of the senses or even intellection, an invisible presence in ourselves – yet alive and breathing from a hidden space of being buoying up living and breathing, a space, perhaps, too, *de nulle part*, unlocalisable, as oddly other as our being-here-and-now.

Pierre Chappuis' book enacts in this way a discreet drama of things given and things barely perceptible, half conjured away. Over it all hovers a psychology, perhaps even an ethics, of What Is. 'Ni ombre ni éclat. // En flottaison, vaguement, / dans le jour pâle, / le laisser-aller, / les brassées de novembre'. A book of intense though inconspicuous searching, honest, unpretentious, diaphanous, motivated yet, one knows, by a sense of that *mystère de la vie* Baudelaire felt Hugo to be most apt to convey.